

Poetry.

The Strength of the Hills.

My thoughts go to that old house,
With its low roof sloping down to the east,
And its garden fragrant with roses and thyme,
That blossom no longer, except in rhyme,
Where the honey-bees used to fly.

Afar in the west the great hills rose,
Silent and staid, and gloomy and gray;
I thought they were giants, and doomed to
keep
Their watch, while the world should wake or
sleep.
Till the trumpet should sound on the
Judgment Day.

I used to wonder of what they dreamed,
As they brooded there in their silent night,
While the March winds moaned to them, or June rains
fell,
Or the snows of winter their ghosts slept.
Wrought in the long and lonesome night.

They remember a younger world than ours,
Before the trees on their top were born,
When the old brown house was itself a tree,
And waste were the fields where now you see
The winds stir in the tasselled corn.

And I was as young as the hills were old,
And the world was warm with the breath
of Spring,
And the roses and the lilies white,
Duddled and bloomed for my mother's delight,
And the birds in my heart began to sing.

But calm in the distance the great hills rose,
Deaf to raptures and dumb unto pain,
Since they knew that Joy is the mother of
Sorrow,
And remembered a butterfly's life is brief,
And the sun sets only to rise again.

They will brood, and dream, and be silent, as
now,
When the youngest children alive to-day
Have grown to be women and men, grown
old,
And gone from the world like a tale that is
told,
And even whose echo forgets to stay.

Literature.

TEMPTATION:

OR

The Lady of Ashurst.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE FIRST FLIGHT FROM HOME.

At the last it was with extreme reluctance that Bessie parted, for the first time in her life, from her darling Minny. But for Mrs. Ashley's firmness in insisting that she should go, in spite of the young girl's eager desire to leave the scenes of her childhood for a season, her affectionate heart would have prompted her to give up this charming town sooner than leave the lady of Ashurst alone in that deserted and solitary mansion.

But Mrs. Ashley clearly saw the revival in Bessie's spirits which the mere prospect of change had caused, and she quietly overlooked the packing of her clothing, said that every garment was in proper order, and drew from her banker a sufficient sum to cover every expense her daughter could possibly incur. This was placed in Mr. Welby's hands for Bessie's use, and every arrangement made that she thought could promote her darling's enjoyment.

When the morning actually came and the carriage was at the door, Mrs. Ashley staidly put aside the regrets which she saw only increased the nervousness of her companion, and quietly assumed her seat in the vehicle.

Bessie had already taken leave of the servants, but old Jupiter, with the freedom of a privileged retainer, came up to the side of the carriage, and respectfully lifting his hat from his grizzled head, said:

"I hopes as you'll come back to us safe, Miss Bessie; but I members how Miss El'nor went off to Dor' just as you is a gwine, an' she never come back again no mo'. She run off from N'gry, an' dat was de las' dose eyes ever seen of her bright face."

"Don't fancy that you are going to get rid of me so easily, Uncle Jube, for I have not the least idea of going away from my beautiful home to stay forever. Like a bad penny, I shall be sure to be returned on your hands again."

"Dat's as it maybe, young Mistis; but ef you vally de ole place as much as ye lets on, you must be keeful to hold on to yer own right in de way dat was p'nted out. Dere's two on you to claim dis house, an' ef you don't stay true to Marse Frank, in course as you is de gal, you'll have to give it up to him. You is gwine away, an' I jes' thought I'd use my 'sperience to warn you of what'd ought come to pass while you is a gallivantin' around, forgettin' what's due to de young marmar."

"Thank you, Uncle Jube: I shall remember your caution, and when I come back I will bring you a roll of fine tobacco for your thoughtfulness in making it."

"Thank you in my turn, Miss Bessie. You don't look a bit like any of de ole stock, but I mus' say dat you's as pretty spoken as any 'em ever was."

"Drive on," said Mrs. Ashley, in a sharper tone than she was in the habit of using, and the coachman instantly obeyed her.

Bessie glanced at her face, saw that she was annoyed, and said:

"The old man is almost in his dotage, and he was so faithful a servant to my grandfather that I can bear with his freedom of speech."

"I know that, love, but Jupiter often tires and vexes me without intending to do so. But let us not speak of anything unpleasant in this last hour of uninterrupted communion for many weeks to come. You will write to me every other day, Bessie, and oh! my darling, still continue to confide in me as you have hitherto done. Tell me all your thoughts, describe each new impression made upon you in the scenes in which you are about to appear, and if you can, Bessie, try and discipline your feelings to accept the destiny which, I am sure, will bring happiness to you."

In that parting hour, poor Bessie would have pledged Jupiter to anything her beloved Minny asked, and with a tremulous thrill in her voice she said:

"I have tried, Minny, but I will make a yet stronger effort to reconcile myself to the path duty points out as the right one. Now that I am separated from Frank, and there will be no one to urge his claims upon me, I may be able to think more competently of uniting my fate with his. I am a very wayward person, I am afraid, and perhaps, when I am left to the dictates of my own feelings, I may choose to love him better than anyone else. I will do my best not to disappoint your wishes. I know that you only seek my good, and I thank you as sincerely as if your views and mine agreed on this momentous subject."

"The, must yet agree, my darling, and all will be happily settled at last. If I did not part from you in this belief, I should be very, very unhappy."

"Yes," replied Bessie, vaguely, "God will direct us in the right path, and I pray constantly to him for guidance."

Mrs. Ashley seemed to shrink within

herself at this reply, and she remained nearly silent till the end of the drive, holding the hand of Bessie tenderly clasped in her own.

At length the carriage drew up in front of the station house, a rough and noisy place, the platform of which was covered with the luggage of our travellers. The rest of the party was already there, and they were momentarily expecting the shrill warning which gives notice of the approach of the train.

Mrs. Ashley had scarcely time for a few parting words when the piercing whistle of the engine was heard; in a few moments the cars thundered past them, were suddenly checked, and the conductor's voice was heard:

"All aboard!"

One convulsive embrace, a long, long kiss, and Bessie was parted from her mother; again that wild shriek pierced the air, the train went rushing onward, and Mrs. Ashley stood desolate, almost despairing as she caught the last glimpse of her vanishing idol.

She regretted now that she had not gone with her—anything would have been better than to yearn with every passing hour for a glimpse of that beloved face—to grow helpless for the sound of that fresh young voice. But it was now too late—Bessie was gone, and she must return to her lonely home, and endure her absence as she best could. She mechanically stepped into her carriage, and went bitterly all the way back to Ashurst.

She endeavored to stifle the forebodings of evil that assailed her, but they would not be set at rest, and long before the day closed in she had deeply repented allowing her daughter to leave her.

In the meantime, Bessie had almost been reconciled to her separation from her beloved Minny. When they parted, it seemed to her that scarcely a moment had elapsed before she was whirled away with the speed of the wind, leaving behind her the scenes she had once regarded as the very Eden of the world. Yet she was gladly leaving them, with such anticipations of the brilliant panorama about to open before her, that only the young and inexperienced could indulge in a few bitter tears were shed, but the life and bustle on the train soon caused her to forget everything but what was passing around her. Her travelling companion sought to divert her mind from dwelling on the recent parting, and when they reached Philadelphia late in the night, she declared that she had enjoyed her trip exceedingly, and already felt better for the change.

After two days' stay in the city of brotherly love, our travellers set out for New York, and there our two youthful novices found a new pleasure in selecting their own dresses and ornaments—a privilege which had hitherto been exercised and sold by their elders.

Mrs. Welby decided that so far from her own home, it would be perfectly proper for Miss Ashley to appear in half mourning, and the most exquisite demure, with rich black trappings, were chosen for her, to be worn with jet ornaments.

No style of dress could more charmingly have set off the natural attractions of Bessie. Her radiant complexion and golden brown hair seemed to harmonize with the grave colors, and the brilliant animation of her pliant face rendered her an object of attention wherever she appeared.

After ten days spent in New York, the party set out for Niagara. Pleasant rooms had been secured for them in the Cataract House, and the one assigned to Kate Welby and her friend overlooked the rapids above the fall on the American side. They were much surprised and rather disappointed that the thunderous roar of so mighty a volume of water did not shake the buildings to its foundations.

But like everything else that is grand and mighty, Niagara slowly impresses the beholder with its wonder power. It pours down its vast volume of water with a majesty which, after a while, becomes awful. The mind gradually comprehends how powerless man must become in the grasp of that element which is ordinarily so submissive to his use, and the sublime effect of the cataract is heightened by the vague dread with which it fills the imagination.

The first day was spent in exploring every nook, and both the American and English sides of the river were visited, for so eager were our young troops to see all that was to be seen as possible, that Mrs. Welby, who naturally consented to allow them to take a cursory view of every object of interest, thought they were to be again visited and enjoyed.

Mrs. Welby declared herself too much fatigued to appear that evening, but the two girls could not resist the sounds of gay music which came from the ball room, and after a crowd had collected in the scene of gayety, Rufus Welby, feeling as proud as a peacock in his fine plumes, entered the brilliantly lighted saloon with his fair sister leaning on one arm, and Bessie, stately as a young princess, on the other.

The fire of expectation lighted up her beautiful eyes, and brought back the roses to her cheeks, the ruby red to her mobile lips. Already had her health marvellously improved, and in her new freedom, she only gave a thought to the shudder which had so deeply eaten into her soul in the solitude of Ashurst.

Young Welby found many acquaintances who had been known to him while at a northern college, and he found himself soon beset by requests for introductions to the two fair young creatures he had escorted into the ball room.

Kate was soon on the floor, whirling around in the fascinating mazes of a waltz, but Bessie declined dancing. She promanaded with several of her new acquaintances, and charmed each one by the mingled simplicity, shrewdness and native wit her conversation displayed.

As the evening was drawing to a close, Rufus came toward her, accompanied by a tall, finely-formed young man, with a dark, expressive face, and large, black, dreamy eyes.

He presented the stranger as he gaily said:

"Miss Ashley, my college chum and particular friend, Mr. Ernest Delancey, wishes to make your acquaintance. He had been going into ecstasies over your exquisite hair, which, to tell you the truth, I think is almost as red as my own."

A faint color flashed into the olive cheek of Delancey, and bowing before Bessie, he said:

"Pray excuse my friend's freedom, Miss Ashley, and do not attribute any want of respect to me. I merely asked an introduction to the young lady with radiant hair which wears the hue that painters love."

Bessie smiled graciously, shook her finger and said:

"Mr. Welby and I have been children together, and he feels privileged to say what he pleases to me. As to the color of my hair, persons differ. Some call it red, others golden auburn; but so long as it suits the style of my face, I do not care what name it receives."

"You are quite philosophical on the subject, I perceive, Miss Ashley; but if it were less becoming, I fancy you would care a little," replied Delancey, with an admiring glance at the gleaming tresses which glittered in the flood of light that filled the room. "When you passed through New York did you visit the Dusseldorf gallery?"

"Of course that is one of the chief attractions to be found in the city."

"Then you saw the picture of Tasso reading the poem of Jerusalem delivered to the family of Este. Do you remember the beautiful hair which two of the ladies have? Yours is precisely of the same tint."

"Yes, I remember; but I think the painter has taken the liberty of bestowing locks of his favorite color on at least one of them. History does not tell us that Leonora D'Este had blonde hair."

"I am not sure that history gives any accurate description of her; but as the portrait was ideal, with an attractive woman in his eyes, would enhance her charms. Do not you agree with me?"

Before she could reply, Welby, who had remained near them, laughingly said:

"A curious taste he must have had if he considered red hair an attraction."

With a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, he made his escape, and Delancey offered his arm to Bessie as he said:

"Shall we promenade, Miss Ashley? That is, if you are not already fatigued with walking the pavement in the heat and glare of the ball room."

"If we can escape from it into the open air, I shall be very glad to take a short walk to some point on the moonlight upon the fall," she thoughtlessly replied. "Half its solemn beauty must be lost in the garish light of day."

"That is my own feeling exactly," said Delancey, with a sudden touch of awakened interest in his voice. He had been struck by her pretty face, and commenced as all men do with an attractive woman, by flattering her; but her last words showed him that there was something in common between them, and he earnestly went on:

"I am familiar with every point of view from which this mighty wonder can be seen to the best advantage, and if you are not afraid to venture out in the night air in evening dress, I shall be happy to point out to you a few of them."

"Oh, I walk out in the night air when I am at home with nothing over my head. I do not think that of an hour's walk in the falls will do me any harm. But there is Mrs. Welby coming in now. I suppose she was afraid to trust us too long out of her sight, so set aside her fears as follows:

Delancey conducted her to the side of her chaperon, who seemed to have quite recovered, and looked around with an air of enjoyment as she said to her friend in the anxious mother of a family:

Mrs. Welby at first objected to her young charge leaving the ball room, but the entreaties of Bessie prevailed. But before she left, the elder lady took from her own shoulders a lace shawl, and insisted that Bessie should throw it over her head.

This was readily agreed to, and in great glee at her success, the wilful young girl threaded her way through the crowd with her cavalier and soon found herself standing with him on the wide bridge leading to Goat Island, the glittering stream sweeping down in silent majesty on the upper side; on the lower one foaming and chafing over huge boulders of rock till it reaches the abrupt ledge over which the American fall precipitates itself.

The moon was full, and the wild panorama was as distinctly seen as by day, yet clothed with that misty light which softens every asperity, and gives its own charm to all it shines upon.

The usual loungers seemed to have abjured romance and left the scene to night and solitude, for the bridge was quite deserted; and the young pair leaned on the railing of the rustic bridge, and talked as neither of them had ever talked before. Each one felt a charm in the mere presence of the other which they made no attempt to define, and the open sesame of hearts must have been applied to theirs, for they spoke together more as friends of old standing, than as acquaintances of an hour.

Delancey at length pointed out the exquisite effect of light and shadow in the scene before them, and desecrated with such earnest interest on the beauties of the structure, and talked so long and so well, that Bessie had never felt before, for they spoke together more as friends of old standing, than as acquaintances of an hour.

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