

Poor Robin.

BY MARY F. MOFFAT.

Margery Nixon made a pretty picture as she stood in the doorway one bright June morning. The sun glistened down and turned her flaxen hair to gold, and showed how delicate was the texture of her dainty skin as its warm rays deepened the rose-flush which colored it. But a troubled expression looked out of her sea-blue eyes, and hovered about the crimson curves of her parted lips. She had just told George Lee—her faithful lover since she could remember—the champion of her childish days—the defender of her girlish ones—that she never hoped to call her his wife. And George—tall, handsome and stalwart—stood before her with an angry light in his eyes, and bitter words upon his lips. "You do not love me, lass, or you would not be so quick to make an excuse to send me off. I have always had a fondness for Robin, and am as willing to take him under my roof-tree and care for him as though he had been of kin to me. Oh! Margery, think again of it! Do not break your truth to me. You can trust to me, I am sure."

the scene at the very moment of Henry's victory. From that time he was no longer called "daft Robin," but "Robin the Prophet." Not long after, as Margery was busy at her household duties, she was startled by Robin's sudden appearance from the door, where he had been at work. He rushed up to her, and said, with a piteous look: "Hide poor Robin. The king wants him, and he will be clammed if he goes to the palace." [Clammed is an old Saxon word for "starved."] Margery tried to soothe him, but in vain. He would not be comforted until she humored his singular whim (as she thought it), and suffered him to hide behind a pile of unbroken fax in an out-house. A few hours later a messenger came from the king with orders to bring Robin to him. He had heard an account of his peculiar gifts, and with his usual shrewdness wished to turn them to account by keeping him near his person. Margery was greatly surprised at Robin's evident knowledge of the King's intentions; and she was also much troubled by the extreme terror it had occasioned him. For if his forebodings were true, he would be going to his death. But kingly commands must be obeyed, and Robin was soon on his way to Henry's presence. He threw himself pale and trembling at his sovereign's feet and begged to be sent home again before night-fall. "I am of no use to any one but my brother George and my sister Margery," he pleaded; "and if you keep me here I shall surely die. I know it! I shall be clammed."

"No, no," answered the king, smiling at the very idea of a person being starved amid the plenty that reigned in his household, "we will see to that. You shall live on the best that a king's larder can supply. You will soon be so fat that your own people will not know you. Now, my lad, can you tell me of the whereabouts of a choice stone which disappeared from among my treasures? I should be ill-pleased to lose it." "Those who hide shall find," answered Robin, sentimentally, to the king's great surprise. He had himself secreted the gem, and had put the question to the boy to test his powers, secretly distrusting them. But his ready reply caused a change of opinion in the king's mind, and Robin was at once installed a prime favorite at court. Presents and petting were the order of the day from the proudest courtier to the humblest menial. But envy filled the hearts of those who seemed to make the most of him. It was galling to their pride to bow down and worship an "innocent"—a "daft idiot"—as some unkindly called him; ignoring the gift of prescience which had thus elevated him above their heads. So Robin's roses had their thorns, after all. For he could read their secret aversion and envy, and never lost his first fear of starvation. Meanwhile the little household at home thrived and prospered in the reflected light which ever emanates from a king's favorite. George added field to field and flock to flock until he became quite an extensive landed proprietor. Last and not least of his acquisitions was a fine horse, the gift of a friend. He was made the father of a fine boy, who while in the midst of rejoicings over the new-comer, a messenger came with tidings which cast a gloom over the hearts in which poor Robin had always held such a peculiar tender place. During the king's absence from the palace, an officer of the court who had been especially charged to care for Robin, and who had taken the precaution to confine him in a room, so that he himself could attend to his wants, lest some mishap might come to him, was suddenly sent for to attend upon his sovereign, and had in his haste forgotten either to release his charge, or to tell any one where he had been placed for safe keeping. Upon his return about four days after, to his great dismay he found that Robin had, as he had predicted from the first, starved to death! He had foreseen his own fate. The king was filled with regret when he learned the truth, and sent princely gifts by the messenger who conveyed the sad tidings to Margery and George. But the only comfort which soothed the devoted sister's sorrow was not found in the golden baubles displayed to her. It was in George's whispered words: "We will call the baby Robert after poor Robin. So his name will be lost from among us." And Margery dried her tearful eyes, as she pressed her little consoler to her heart. NOTE. Robert Nixon is a historical character. He was a contemporary of the famous Mother Shipton, and some of his prophecies are still extant, and are probably believed in by the lower classes of the English people. The incidents mentioned with regard to him in my story are true ones, and the words used are his own.

Fiction as a Means of Education. Those who object to fiction claim that it has an injurious effect on the persons who read it by making them dissatisfied with their present condition and by giving them exaggerated views of life. They also assert that nearly all of the stories published at the present time are not only improbable, but many of them exceed the limits of possibility. But these statements are subject to modifications, and the views therein contained are in some respects erroneous. One need only read the papers which give the daily news to satisfy himself that very little can be written or conceived which is impossible, or even incredible. A person who makes such sweeping statements only betrays his lack of knowledge of the actual events of the story. It is quite true that there are stories written whose influence is undeniably bad. But shall we denounce all fiction on that account? As well might we say that because there are charlatans and quacks among physicians we will never employ a doctor. No result of human effort is perfect or free from liability to abuse. Nearly all persons have at times a strong craving for mental exhilaration. Especially is this noticeable when the body has been exercised during the day with constant manual labor, while the mind has not been fully employed. In such cases persons wish to be interested and amused without either mental or physical exertion. They, therefore, take up a good book or newspaper, which proves a source of agreeable and innocent enjoyment. When written with a skillful hand fiction may be made a powerful means of education. Its style interests the masses, and it has an important influence in forming the tastes and characters of those who read it. Useful instruction can be given and moral principles inculcated in the form of fiction where they would not be heeded in any other form. Essays, lectures, and sermons, which by many are considered more suitable educators, are seldom heard or read by the masses, who, in their hours of leisure, generally seek means of amusement or entertainment rather than instruction. But yet it is necessary that they should be educated, for in the same ratio that the people at large are educated, will crime be diminished; and where the greater majority of persons are fond of reading, the larger portion of them read nothing but fiction. The value of fiction as an educator is shown by its introduction into the New Testament in the form of parables. The very name parable signifies a fable or allegorical relation or representation of something real in life or nature, from which a moral is drawn for instruction. If, therefore, the Deity considers fiction a worthy means for imparting useful moral lessons, shall any of His creatures deny its value? All works of fiction portray character, and thereby have a tendency to create a taste for biography. They also chronicle events, and lead the way to history and travels. In many cases a skillful presentation of these points excites the ambition of the reader, and stimulates him to enter upon particular lines of action in the serious business of life. Bentham, in describing the influence which the pursuit of Telemachus exercised upon his mind in boyhood, said: "That romance may be regarded as the foundation-stone of my whole character.—The starting-point from whence my career of life commenced. The first dawning in my mind of the 'Principles of Utility' may, I think, be traced to it." Since, then, fiction has been shown to be an important means of education, it seems necessary that it should be written, and quite proper that it should be read by all classes. But it must always be borne in mind that care should be taken to read only such books as have been indorsed by competent critics, or stories published in papers bearing an established reputation both for purity of tone and for high literary merit. O. A. CHENEZ.

Traveler's Column. 1820-81. International Steamship Co. Winter Arrangement. TWO TRIPS A WEEK. ON and after MONDAY, November 22nd, and on after MONDAY, November 29th, the splendid sailing Steamship 'PALMOUTH', D.S. Hall, Master, will leave Boston, Monday, at 10 o'clock, for Chatham, and on after MONDAY, November 29th, will leave Chatham, Monday, at 10 o'clock, for Boston, and on after MONDAY, November 29th, will leave Boston, Monday, at 10 o'clock, for Chatham, and on after MONDAY, November 29th, will leave Chatham, Monday, at 10 o'clock, for Boston. Freight received Wednesday and Saturday only, up to 6 o'clock. H. W. CHISHOLM, Agent.

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Horse for Sale. The subscriber offers for sale 1 Drought Horse, sex years old, 1400 lbs weight. If desired, a 1 year old of your coat will be taken in part payment. WM. KERR. Napton, Oct. 30, 1880.

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Lime Juice. 1 Case, Montreal Lime Juice from the PUE JOURN OF THE LIME FRUIT. For sale by J. R. GOGGIN.

Underwriting. The undersigned respectfully intimates to the public that he intends to give his attention to the business of UNDERWRITING.

London House, CHATHAM, N. B. The Subscriber is going out of the dry goods business and will sell at a small advance on cost, all stock in his store, consisting of DRESS GOODS, PRINTS, COTTONS, FLANNELS, TWEEDS, HOSIERY, SCARVES, UNDERWEAR, TRICOT, AND FANCY GOODS.

Patronize the Dairy. I beg to inform the inhabitants of Chatham, and vicinity, that I have secured a cow, and am now running on my farm, and all orders left with me, will be promptly attended to.

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REMOVAL. DR. J. S. BENSON, has removed to the build says of 10, corner of Duke and St. John Streets opposite Canada House. Chatham, Sept. 1879.

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