



LITERATURE.

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THE VOICE OF THE MONTHS.—SEPTEMBER.

I come with clear, unclouded skies, blue, beautiful and bright,
Dyeing wide nature's verdant breast with hues of brilliant light;
All things a proud, rich lustre wear, given by those radiant skies,
Whose arching depths have caught the hues from Autumn's earliest dyes.

The golden corn no longer waves upon the smiling plain,
Mine is the garner richly stored with sheaves of yellow grain,
I give the grass a russet tinge, faint nature's sober hue,
And from the flowers my north wind's wing purloins the glistening dew.

I come—and bring the cool, bright morn, that bathes the mountain side
In floods of sunshine, mantling all with more than kingly pride,
And mine the gorgeous sunset time, when myriad hues are blent,
And weave a rich but short-lived robe around the firmament.

I come—and with stained fingers touch the forests green array,
Till each leaf wears a hectic hue, foreshadowing decay;
Bright flowers still blossom in the vale and by the road side green,
Studding the rugged space with gems meet for a regal scene.

I come—and bring the ripened fruits to garden and to wild,
The peach with velvet cheek, as well as nature's forest child,
I perfect all the summer's germs, mature their blushing bloom,
And give to earth the last faint sigh borne from its sweet perfume.

I come—and things, though bright, are touched by foot-prints of decay,
Ye trace them in the fields, the streams, the leaves all line the way,
I sit a queen in regal state, yet fading in my pride,
And put my changeful garments on, a widow, not a bride.

I come—and glorious though I seem, a funeral voice is heard,
In the low whispering of my streams, the music of each bird,
A mournful and prophetic voice, low, spirit-filled, yet clear,
A voice that sighs the summer's dirge, and sounds the autumn here.

THE HAG OF THE BOG.

A TALE OF THE WILDS OF CONNAUGHT.

BY W. D. WADE.—Concluded.

"I know what makes Thomas so willing to go," said Dennis, sneeringly. "It is not only because he is too tinder-hearted to jine in and help us with our work—Pretty Judy has got ashamed of his surly looks and dismal ways, and she is talking to Sam Murphy. That's the real reason."

"Indeed, and that's true for ye. But it ill becomes ye to cast it up to me when it's all along of your misdeeds that I am forced to run the country. It is hard for me to bear the blame of that same, and lose the girl I love better nor life itself—and yet I'm not able to clear myself, for fear of harming my own mother. O mother dear, it's breaking the heart of me intirely to think what the end of all will be for ye. And Judy, too, the darling of my heart, when she hears that I am gone, wont she feel lonesome—for she loved me, Dennis, till her brothers swore she should not marry me to be brought home here, with the ill name we have got!"

"Then take her wid ye, boy!" said the mother, who, bad as she was, felt touched for the time by her youngest son's heart-felt misery.

"I'm afraid it would be no kind of use to ask the like of her."

"But what is to be done with him under the bed?" interrupted the hardened Dennis.

"Sure and I was forgetting all about him myself," said the old hag; "but it's small odds, he can lay quiet and peaceable, till morning, where he is. At daylight we'll wake up the young fellow, and after he's gone will be time enough to throw the corpse into the bog along with the rest for company. Now let us count these yellow boys for fun, and then we'll stow them away and go to bed."

"Suppose in the meantime the chap wakes, he'll see us through the cracks in them boards there."

"De'll a fear of that. I tell ye he'll sleep till I call him, if indeed he ever wakes again at all in this world—for my hand was not very steady, the stuff was purty strong, and he drunk it out dry, just like a man. Any way the dog is outside the door, and out of this he cannot get if he would wake. Thomas, my boy, kape up your heart, you'll get Judy yet. Only jist mind how the girls smile on your brother here, becase of his plizant ways, and there's nothing ailing yourself but the downheartedness."

"It was unlucky too that this young doctor came along to-night before we got the old man out of the way. I wonder who he is?" said Dennis.

"It's one there'll be a stir about, I'm thinking, for it's aisy seeing that he's one of the real quality touches, by the fine linen, and the great big gold watch, and the rings on his fingers, besides the purse itself."

If he had not shown that same well-filled purse at the door when he was paying for his drink, we would have missed it all," continued Dennis; for by the look of his outside coat it was little I thought of him, and he was for being off without coming in at all."

The old hag now interposed, saying more talk was for no good, and that it was time for bed; so after covering

up the fire they all mounted the ladder, and the listener below heard them throw themselves down on the straw which, heaped on the loose boards, formed the resting-place of the guilty family whenever a traveller occupied the mother's only bed-chamber, if it deserved that name, for truly it was rude enough! The floor was earthen, hard as a rock, the bedstead was formed of rough boards fastened against the partition. The front, instead of a valense, was boarded up as though to keep the pigs and tawls from running beneath, but a good bed and covering were above. A large box, or chest as it is there commonly called, was the only other article of furniture, except an old fashioned looking-glass.

What a night was before the anxious occupant of that bed! Beneath him, he now knew, lay the scarcely cold limbs a murdered fellow-being, and above, in dreadful porpinqity, the ruthless hag and her savage son are ready to take his life also, should the slightest cause for suspicion be given. The faithful dog, too, who had rendered such efficient service in the recent, bloody transaction, kept vigilant watch and ward on the outside. True to his instinct, the noble beast would do battle to the death for the masters who were recreant to their nature, and abhorrent to humanity.

For a time, though abstracted by these gloomy reflections, the prisoner still remained silent and motionless, till a long repressed nervous cough at length escaped from him, and he heard the old wretch above rise up instantly as if to listen. As all remained quiet save his natural breathing as though asleep, she again composed her aged frame to slumber, and the young man was shortly relieved from a heavy load by hearing her snoring violently.

On reflection, after vainly thinking of any way which might hold out a chance of escape, the traveller came to the conclusion that he must just get through the night the best was he could, and trust that in the morning no obstacle would be offered to his quietly taking his departure. Still his curiosity as well as his sympathy was aroused about the unknown victim of the cruelty and cupidity of the ruthless Old Hag of the Bog.

How was he to reveal this horrid deed, this untimely end, and be credited that it was not all a dream, if all traces of the bloody deed should be removed ere he returned with the police, and there would be time enough for this. It was plain that there was a place as secure and safe, in which the booty was secreted, as the fathomless hole in the bog to which the body would be speedily consigned.

If no trace of either were to be found in or about the hovel, would his assertions appear probable or credit-worthy, especially as he could give no description of the murdered person, and did not know his name even or any clue to his whereabouts. They might retort and say it was all a mere fancy, an idle creation of his brain, and thus failing to prove his charges, the guilty wretches would be left at large, and in revenge wo betide any future unfortunate traveller who might fall in their clutches. How could he watch their proceedings and learn in what part of the bog they disposed of their victims, and where they hid the clothes, etc?

Plans to effect this purpose miserably beguiled his mind and kept it busy for many hours; still he could not but reflect that his fate might render vain such calculations and perplexities, for he too might suddenly and shortly be added to the fearful list of the slain.

Dennis slept soundly, but Thomas groaned audibly and tossed restlessly on the straw that could be distinctly heard rustling in the silent darkness of that awful hour. Presently he got up. His mother heard the step and quickly demanded the cause of it. The uneasy and suspicious consciousness of guilt rendered even her sleep a sort of watchfulness and dread.

"Never mind, mother; it's only me," said he, "I cannot sleep to-night; my mind is troubled; I'll go and rouse up the fire and take a smoke for comfort and the company of the pipe."

How did the sleepless occupant of the bed below rejoice that he had not trusted to the apparent depth and soundness of the rest of them in the chamber above. Had he attempted alone and unarmed to escape, how instant and certain his fate! Even the unwilling participator in the desperate deeds of the rest would have known that his death was necessary (in such case) to ensure the safety of them all; so his assistance might, of necessity, have been relied upon by them. It appeared that the poor traveller was destined to be kept all the time on the *qui vive*, which was equal to a mental rack.

In reply to something which the old woman whispered to her son, but which escaped even his faculty of hearing, stretched as it was to the very utmost tension, Thomas said:

"Never fear, I wont wake him, you may depend; but I will look in and see. I want some tobacco out of the chest, any how."

Never had any previous night appeared so long and anxious as this. There was no occupation but wearing thought to banish the approach of insidious sleep that might prove the precursor of death. Yet he felt no disposition (in view of the dread prospect of a sudden and most horrible entry upon the vast sea of eternity) to drowsiness. On the contrary, he feared that he might not be able to feign well enough to deceive the crafty and suspicious people with whom he had to deal. He had, however, succeeded so far very well, and determined to persevere, and in the morning he purposed to pretend to be indisposed, call for breakfast, and delay so as to gain information, if possible, that might enable him effectually to bring the guilty wretches to justice. He also meant to try with the first dawn of day, if practicable, to take a peep at the shocking sight beneath the very bed on which he lay. In the mean time he lay fearfully still. Presently he heard the door of his room softly pushed open, and Thomas entered. He walked up to the bed, and said aloud:—

"Did you call, sir?" to which, of course, there was no reply. He then walked away, calling out: "You are mistaken, mother, he did not call."

It was very plain that this was a mere pretence, but the man took something out of the chest and began to smoke

by the fire which he had previously kindled, and which sent a faint, flickering light into the dismal bed-chamber, the door of which had been left open. The lid of the chest was raised up as appeared also intentionally, for in a short time Thomas again came softly into the room, walked straight up to the open chest and took from out of it a coat and some other things, leaving it open still, when he retired to the other room.

The attentive traveller had so fixed himself in bed that he was able to note all of this, and from the troubled behaviour of the man, his frequent visits to the chest, and the circumstance that he was dressing in his best garments and making up a bundle, it seemed probable that the unhappy Thomas was making ready secretly to leave a scene that was doubly hateful to him now that his love had discarded him, and which, it may be remembered, he had sworn to do. Day was just beginning to dawn—Thomas had completed his preparations and was approaching the outside door intending to go out, when a low growl from the dog on the outside arrested him. It was quickly succeeded by a fierce, loud bark, then a pistol-shot and a groan of anguish proclaimed that the faithful sentinel was dying at his post, true to his duty in death.

The alarm was given, and quickly the old hag and Dennis descended the ladder in amazement and fear.—The door was strongly barred and resisted some violent attempts to force it, which were made after a demand to open in the name of the king. After a hurried whispering it was flung open, and a large body of police well armed rushed into the room. The leader of the party instantly collared poor Thomas, saying:

"I arrest you in the name of the king."

The wretched man seemed paralyzed and powerless as there he stood in his best Sunday clothes, with his hat on and his bundle and stick in his hand, evidently prepared for flight, whilst it was equally apparent that the mother and brother had suddenly turned out of bed just as they were when that instant disturbed.

"Arrest me?" said Thomas, "and what for?"

"For the murder of Mr. Watson, three days since, to be sure."

"Indeed! and I never saw the man in all my born days, and never heard of the murder till this minute," faintly replied the terrified Thomas.

"Of course, that's just what I expected you'd be saying; but as I've got a warrant for you, you must come along and clear yourself if you can on the trial. I'm thinking it's a hard job you'll find it to do so though, for you've been a marked man this long time, and answer exactly to the description that we've got of the murderer."

"Where was it, and how?" said the mother, recovering herself; for, at first, she feared that the officers were come after the recent and still undisposed of victim.

"About ten miles off, only—he was found in the garden at the hall, with his skull fractured and his throat cut across from ear to ear. You know the place well enough, and, I'll warrant, all about the murder, too."

"I'm innocent! I'm innocent!" muttered the wretched Thomas, and he fell on the ground in a fit, whilst Dennis stood silent and afraid to attract attention to himself. The fact of the prisoner having been found in the act of quitting the house thus appalled and at this early hour, with his guilty appearance, was pointed out by the officer to his men, and seemed confirmation of that guiltiness which none of them in the least doubted. In vain his wretched mother, conscious of his innocence of the crime imputed to him, alternately supplicated and fiercely imprecated as they were roughly raising him (still senseless) to bear him away, when they were surprised by the entrance from the inner apartment of a man barefoot with a blanket wrapped around his nether limbs in the absence of his clothes. In a loud and commanding voice the apparition shouted:

"Stop, my men, you have got hold of the only innocent person of this horrid set. Seize, I charge you, instantly, that accursed hag and her guilty accomplice there."

Consternation was visible in the looks of both the accused, and surprise in all the rest.

"Murder has been committed on this very spot, I say; seize them instantly, and search under the bed."

That very moment were the whole three securely bound without time or opportunity for resistance; in fact, the assailing party were overwhelming, and it was not even attempted. They felt all was up, and yielded in sullen despair. Without further ado the policemen followed the stranger to the bed he had just quitted, and as the boards were hastily torn away, too surely there lay the body, stark, stiff and gory, of—

"Gracious God, my father!" shrieked the horror-stricken stranger, as the face of the corpse was turned round to view. "Merciful Providence, why was I not permitted to arrive in time to save him? Only one half hour sooner or less and he would have been preserved!"

He sank on his knees beside the dead body, took the cold hand in his own and bathed it with his scalding tears. "My father, O, my father, is it thus we meet!" he groaned, in bitterness of spirit, while, spell-bound with surprise and commiseration, no one interrupted this outbreak of grief and affection.

"It is old Colonel Freeman who has been murdered," said the police officer to his men, "and this is the young lieutenant."

"Yes," continued the afflicted stranger, "It is two years since I left home and crossed this horrid, accursed bog on my way to join my regiment in Londonderry, and now I was returning (on leave of absence) to see my friends. I had written that I should leave on Thursday last, and had not the post-chaise broke down I should have been home last night. Leaving my things to come after me at leisure, I set off on foot across the moor, still hoping to reach home by the appointed time; but being beaten I was obliged to stop here for the night. O, what a terrible night! Yet how far more dreadful this wretched day has just begun; and there is my poor mother still to face and wound with the heart-rending tidings of her cruel bereavement."

Lieutenant Freeman then briefly narrated the substance of the foregoing account of what had passed, and expres-