

Poetry.

THE BLIND BAIKIN.

BY ISA.

The wee blind bairnie sits
Close to that woman's feet,
An' there he nestles frae the cauld,
An' shelters frae the heat.
An' ken nae if he be her ain,
But kindly does she speak,
For blessed God makes woman love
The helpless an' the weak.

I'm wae to see his wistfu' face,
As weary, day by day,
He cowers sae still and silent there,
While ither bairnies play.
The sigh that lifts his breastie comes,
Like sad winds frae the sea,
Wi' sic a dreary sigh as wad
Bring tears into yor'e.

I'm wae to see his high braid broo,
Sae thochtful and sae wan;
His look o' care, that were mair fit
For a world-weary man.
Oh! the dark emptiness within,
Thoughts that no rest can know,
An' shapeless forms that vex him
Wi' their hurrying to an' fro.

An' noo she lifts him in her arms,
His wakin' nicht is past,
An' round his sma' and wasted form
Her tattered shawl is cast.
His face is buried in her neck,
An' close to her he clings;
For faith and love hae filled his heart,
An' they are blessed things.

She bears him through the bustlin' crowd,
But noo he fears nae harm,
He'll sleep within her bosom, too,—
To him it's soft and warm.
Oh, her ain weary heart wad close
In wretchedness and sin,
But he keeps in 't an open door
For God to enter in!

Select Tale.

From Silver Lake Sketches.

THE VERMONT COUSIN.

"It is too provoking, isn't it, that father will insist upon inviting that Yankee cousin to come and stay at our house, and go to school. I don't see, for my part, how he came to have such counseled relations; but since he has, I think he might let them stay up among their own green mountains, instead of bringing them down to mortify us in the city, with their awkward ways and nasal twang."

Thus spoke out Miss Julia Acton to her younger sister Helen, after they had retired to their room one evening, during which the expected arrival of the Vermont cousin had been one theme of conversation.

"I am sure I have more reason to be mortified than you, Julia," answered Helen, "for I have to walk with her to and from school, and of course I cannot conceal from the girls that she is my cousin; and I know they will all ridicule her, and make all manner of fun of her. Brother Ned stopped there last year, when he was travelling through New England, and he says they all say 'neow,' and 'sawout,' and 'dew tell,' and I am sure I shall sink if she talks so before the girls."

"Well, I think no one has as much reason to dread her coming as I have," answered Julia; "for what do you think Herbert Ferguson will say when he finds we have such a Yankee set of relations; he has such a horror of everything unrefined, I should not wonder if he would desert me altogether, after she comes to the house, rather than be brought into contact with anything so vulgar. He has been more than usually attentive, too, lately, and mamma says he is the greatest catch in town."

"Well, now, I have heard that Herbert Ferguson cares only for intellect: that he thinks nothing of looks in comparison."

"I can tell you you are mistaken, Miss Helen; if he has no regard for looks, as you say, you ought to know what he said to me lately. But no matter, I won't tell you; I only wish father was n't so obstinate, and mamma is quite as much vexed about it as we are: why, even the servants will laugh at her, I know.—Thomas is so excessively genteel."

"Well, well, it can't be helped. Father feels under great obligations to Lucy's father: the brothers all agreed that father should be sent to college, and the others remained at home, and provided the means of his education; and now he thinks he ought to assist them in return. But one thing I would suggest, Miss Julia, and that is that you have your party over before she comes: of course she will not go out, as she is only a school-girl, but

I know father will insist upon having her in the room, if we have company at home."

"Well thought of, Helen; let's see,—I am engaged every night for a week to come; I certainly cannot get an evening till the latter part of next week,—O! I am so afraid she will come before that time; it will just spoil all my pleasure, and I expected so much."

The invitations for Miss Julia's party were all sent out, and the extensive preparations were proceeding most swimmingly, when, the very day before that on which the party was to be given, a stage laden with trunks drew up before the door of Mr. Acton's elegant mansion. From this, in the first place, alighted a stout, sun-burnt young farmer, who was immediately followed by a slender girl of about sixteen years of age,—this latter being none other than the much dreaded Vermont Cousin.

"Well, if this isn't a little too much!" exclaimed Miss Julia, who had been drawn to the window by the bustle; "here is a clod-hopper of a man cousin come too; this is rather more than we bargained for! I declare," she continued, half-crying with vexation, "if that man stays I will pretend I am sick, and countermand the invitations to my party."

Cousin Arthur Holmes proved to be a very different youth, and one dinner among such fine folks as the Actons was all he could stand. He was on his way to Yale College, his uncle having, from his own observation, and from what he had heard of the young man, been convinced that to keep him laboring upon a farm, without the advantages of education, would be to hide under a bushel a light which, if trimmed and fed, and suffered to shed its beams, might shine forth for the illumination of its own and future generations. And with this expectation he sought and gained a willing consent from his elder brother, to his proposed plan of taking the education of Arthur under his care.

As I said before, Arthur was not at all at ease among his fine relations, who, with the exception of his uncle, took no pains to make him feel so; and therefore, to Miss Julia's great relief, he took his departure, that very same evening, for New Haven.

Cousin Lucy—but I am afraid you will set her down as ugly, if I simply describe her features, and she is such a favorite of mine that I could wish her to make a favorable impression upon my readers from the first. Now I cannot deny that Lucy had bright auburn hair,—Julia called it red, but Julia was not always good-natured, and did not always adhere so closely to the truth as she might. Lucy's nose was slightly inclined to turn up at the point, and her complexion was one of those exceedingly fair ones which easily freckle; but she had a pair of the loveliest laughing, deep-blue eyes, and the sweetest smiles, and the most brilliant teeth; and when she spoke or smiled (and she seldom did one without the other), there was a charm about her whole face which made you forget hair, and nose, and freckles, and you only looked upon it as a face to love.

True, she had what Julia called a "Yankee twang," and she was not dressed in the height of the latest fashion; but in spite of these drawbacks you loved her still,—at least, some people did. There was a great deal more about Cousin Lucy, too, to call for respect and admiration; but this will all come out in time.

As she was, she had come, and now she must appear at the party, and be introduced as the cousin of the Miss Actons. It was mortifying—it was distressing,—but there was no help for it now.

The evening of the party proved clear and bright, and, as it was well known that the entertainment at the Actons' would be one of the most brilliant of the season, none of the invited who could get there remained absent. By ten o'clock the brilliantly-lighted rooms were filled. Cousin Lucy, simply attired in white cambric (for she had rejected the ornaments and other embellishments with which her cousins, for their own sakes, would have adorned her), sat alone in one corner of the sofa. She was introduced to very few: she did not look in the least neglected, however, but sat in unaffected enjoyment of the new and brilliant scene.

An hour after the other guests were all assembled, sauntered in leisurely, as if for a call, with his hat under his arm, and his slight little cane in his hand, an exquisite of the first water, rejoicing in the euphonious name of Mr. Meredith Fitz-Henry. This is one of those brilliant youths, whose whole time during his day—which begins perhaps at twelve o'clock—is spent lounging in saloons, studying the fashions, sauntering up and down Broadway, and staring at the ladies, or driving on the fashionable thoroughfares; and in the evening dressing for public entertainments, and attending them. He aims at being

"The glass of fashion and the mould of form," and has no higher ambition in life than to be stu-

died and copied as the perfection of dress. He fancies himself a Beau Brummel as to manners, a Count D'Orsay in point of beauty and grace. He may be handsome,—we cannot tell, for the immense amount of hair about his face renders it impossible to distinguish any feature, except a pair of great round light eyes, and a sharp and very effeminate nose. Occasionally he condescends to smile, and then his white teeth gleam through the mass of hair surrounding the lower part of his face, like lightning from a dark cloud.

Mr. Meredith Fitz-Henry, unfortunately, sets up for a wit, and his silly speeches are laughed at and repeated by sillier young ladies, till he is really deluded into the belief that they are worth repetition.

On entering Mr. Acton's parlor, Mr. Meredith Fitz-Henry, with his glass fixed in his eye, stared about him with great nonchalance and impudence, till at length his attention was attracted by the Vermont cousin, sitting so quietly in her corner, utterly unconscious of his observation.

"Ah! what vision of loveliness and grace is that I see before me?" exclaimed he to Miss Laura Wilton, a very young lady, enjoying her first winter out.

This brilliant speech was greeted with the usual titter by the young lady, who was exceedingly flattered by even this mark of attention from the perfumed and bewhiskered exquisite.

"Oh, that is a country cousin of the Actons, from Vermont,—a farmer's daughter, excessively verdant, I assure you," answered the young lady.

"From Vermont, is she! ah, well. I suppose I must pay Vermont a little attention. I wonder who will lay me under everlasting obligations by giving me an introduction to so fair a creature."

"Oh, I will introduce you," answered Miss Laura, in great glee; and then by signs she telegraphed to those near her to draw up to the sofa, as great fun might be expected. Gradually the crowd thickened in that part of the room, all pretending to be engaged about something else, but all eager to hear the witty Meredith Fitz-Henry quiz the Vermont Cousin.

Herbert Ferguson sat quietly looking over a book of plates at a table near the sofa, on which, the introduction having now taken place in due form, the perfumed exquisite threw himself, with his head thrown back, and his delicate little shining boots thrust out, determined to show himself off to his admirers, and have some fun out of the unsuspecting country girl.

"Ahem! lately arrived, I believe," said Fitz-Henry.

"Yes, sir, I came yesterday," answered Lucy, very simply.

A few more questions were asked, to which Lucy replied in a perfectly lady-like manner, thinking all the time she was conversing with a very soft-pated coxcomb, but being too good-natured to let him see how great a fool she thought him. At length the exquisite remarked:

"Everything's very green up there in Vermont, ain't it?"

This witticism was followed by such a giggle, that Lucy casting her eyes quickly found on the group before her, and seeing the look of eager expectation on almost every face, understood at once that the silly fop at her side was intending to make a butt of her, for the amusement of the bystanders; brightening up at once, she began to take an interest in the conversation, and replied:

"Oh, yes, we have green things there, but I have seen greener ones already since I came to the city."

"Now! du tell!" said the unsuspecting dandy, imitating Lucy's tone of voice; "how is wheat now?"

"Well, wheat's poor," said Lucy, apparently with great interest.

"La! is it now, what a pity! what's the matter of it?"

"Why they say it all runs to beard this year, and when that is the case there is little or no head, and if there is, it hasn't anything in it."

A few laughed heartily now, who had not laughed before, and Herbert Ferguson laying down his book, fixed his eyes on the Vermont cousin, as if he expected some real amusement.

The young fop fidgetted, and turned red, and tapped his little boot with his cane, and laughed a silly laugh, as if he did not know just what to make of the girl, and then said:

"Now I suppose you mean to grace the theatres and opera with your presence, don't you?"

No, Lucy said, she thought not.

"La! now why not, but perhaps your ma don't approve of your going to such places."

"My parents did say they thought I had better not have my mind distracted by such amusements, especially while I was at school."

"Well it is bad for the mind; I found it so, and my pa had to prohibit my going to such places at all."

Here came a perfect shriek of delight from Mrs. Fitz-Henry's admirers.

"Ah!" answered Lucy, "I should have thought you were perfectly safe from anything of that kind; did you ever attend a menagerie?"

"No, my pa won't let me go there, either; he keeps me very close."

Excessive delight on the part of Mr. Fitz-Henry's friends.

"Oh now," said Lucy, in a patronizing tone, "I shouldn't think that would hurt you. We had a very fine one through our place this fall, and I was perfectly delighted with it."

"Now, dew tell! now what did you see?" asked the dandy.

"Why, I saw a baboon dressed up like a man, a regular fop, you know, and really," said she, screwing up her eyes, and looking at Mr. Meredith Fitz-Henry from head to foot, "really the likeness was so perfect that I should hardly have been able to tell which was which; it was really perfect, dress, cane, eye-glass, and all; but I never imagined that one of the first exhibitions I should see on my arrival in New York city would be that of a man endeavouring to see how much he could look and act like a baboon."

The room now fairly rung with shouts and screams of laughter, and as soon as he could be heard, Herbert Ferguson, who had enjoyed the whole thing mightily, said:

"Now, Fitz-Henry, you had better beat a retreat, as soon as possible, for you are only getting deeper into trouble." And the discomfited young coxcomb who had just begun to perceive that he was caught in his own trap, muttered something about "another engagement," and sneaked off, all that could be seen of his face being of the deepest crimson. From then the Vermont cousin was quite safe from his attacks; indeed he seemed uneasy in her presence, and if she even came on the same side of the room, which she sometimes did on purpose to tease him, he always found some excuse for changing his seat.

"Why, Lucy! you were rather hard on that poor young man, to-night," said Mr. Acton to his niece, after the company had retired; "and it must have come the harder, as he is accustomed to nothing but adulation from all our wise young ladies."

"Well, uncle, all I can say is he brought it upon himself; it is very unpleasant to me to hurt the feelings of any one, and I was perfectly civil to that young man, though it was something of a piece of self-denial to talk to such a poor creature, till I found that it was his aim to hold me up to ridicule as an unsophisticated country girl. I thought it was only fair to turn his own weapons against him."

"I think so too, Lucy, and I rather think it is the last time that any one here will attempt to quiz you."

Helen Acton and Lucy Holmes began school together the next term, at one of the first schools in the city, and it was not long before those who had Lucy's education under their care, became convinced that in the Vermont young lady they had no ordinary mind to deal with. She came really to acquire knowledge, while most of the girls in the classes with her, looked upon their school life as a sort of ordeal through which it was necessary to pass, before they could come out as young ladies; and spent their time in novel reading, trusting to chance or cheating, for the manner in which they should acquire themselves in the class.

Lucy applied herself intensely, and soon outstripped all in her classes, and was obliged to go on with her studies alone. At every examination she was the observed of all observers—excelling in every branch of study, and taking the first prizes in every department; her compositions, in particular, were regarded as master-pieces, and in short Lucy was the pride of the school.

During the last two years of her life in New York, her manners too had acquired a polish only given by association with people of refinement, and even Julia was proud to introduce "her cousin, Miss Holmes." Lucy's example and assistance were of great use to Helen, who proved under her influence a very different character from what she would have been if left only to the guidance of her gay and fashionable sister Julia. Though inferior in intellect to Lucy, she was still far superior to the superficial young ladies with whom she associated; she really learned to love knowledge for its own sake, and was prepared, on leaving school, to relish a style of reading more improving than the light trashy works of the day, which form the only reading of many of our gay young ladies. Helen was really a very fine girl, and uncommonly attractive and interesting.

During the two years in which Lucy made her home at her uncle's, Herbert Ferguson continued to be a constant visitor there, and Julia often won