

Poetry.

MEMORY.

BY WINTHROP M. PRAED.

Stand on a funeral mound,
Far from all that love thee;
With a barren heath around thee,
With a cypress bower above thee;
And think, while the sad wind frets,
And the night in cold gloom closes,
Of spring, and spring's sweet violets,
Of summer, and summer's roses.

Sleep where the thunders fly,
Across the tossing billows,
Thy canopy the sky,
And the lonely deck thy pillow;
And dream while the chill sea foam
In mockery dashes o'er thee,
Of the cheerful heart and the quiet home,
And the kiss of her that bore thee.

Watch in the deepest cell,
Of the foeman's dungeon tower,
Till hope's most cherished spell
Has lost its cheering power;
And sing, while the galling chain
On every stiff limb freezes,
Of the huntsman hurrying o'er the plain,
Of the breath of the morning breezes.

Talk of the minstrel's lute,
The warrior's high endeavour,
When the honeyed lips are mute,
And the strong arm crushed for ever;
Look back to the summer sun,
From the mist of dark December;
Then say to the broken hearted one,
"Tis pleasant to remember."

Select Tale.

ISABEL LUCAS.

A HEROINE OF HUMBLE LIFE.

About thirty five years ago a woman by the name of Isabel Lucas kept a small lodging house in the southern suburbs of Edinburgh. She was the daughter of a respectable teacher in the city, who, at his death had bequeathed to her, as his sole surviving relative, about £300, together with the furniture of a house. The latter part of the legacy suggested to her the propriety of endeavoring to support herself by keeping lodgings, while the part which consisted in money promised to stand effectually between her and all the mischances that could be expected to befall her in such a walk of life. She accordingly, for several years let one or two rooms to students and other persons, and thus contrived to live very decently, without trenching upon her little capital, till at length she attained the discreet age of two and forty.

Isabel had at no period of her life been a beauty. She had an iron-grey complexion, and a cast of features bespeaking rather strength of character than feminine grace. She was now less a beauty than ever; and for years had tacitly acknowledged her sense of the fact, by abandoning all those modes and materials of dress which women wear so long as they have any thoughts of matrimony. Where, however, is the woman at that or any more juvenile period of life in whose bosom the spark of love lies dead beyond recall? If any such there be, Isabel's was not of the number.

Among her lodgers was an individual of the name of Fordyne, who kept a grocer's shop of an inferior order in the neighbourhood. This person, gave himself out for a native of the Isle of Man, and stated that he had made a little money as mess-man to a militia regiment, by which he had been enabled to set up in business. He was a large, dark, coarse man, of about five and thirty, with a somewhat unpromising cast of face, and a slight twist in his left eye. Fordyne seemed to be a man of great industry and application, and used to speak of his circumstances as agreeable in every respect, except that he wanted a wife.—This, he said, was a great want. There were many things about his shop which no one but a female could properly attend to. Without such a helpmate, things were continually going wrong; but with her all would go right. One point, however, he must be clear about; she who should be his wife would require to bring something with her, to add to his stock and buy the necessary house furniture. He cared little about good looks, if there was good sense; and, indeed, a woman of some experience in the world would answer his purpose best.

Honest Isabel began in a little while to turn all these things in her mind. She one day took a steady look at Fordyne, and discovered that he had a good upright carriage of body, and that, though his mouth was of the largest, yet his teeth were among the best she had ever seen. Next

time she visited his shop she took a glance at the room behind and found that it had a nice outlook upon Salisbury Crags. Fordyne, observing that she glanced into his back shop, invited her to come in and see what a fine house he had, for such in reality it was, though unfurnished. Isabel very quickly saw that there was one capital bed-room, a parlor, and a kitchen, and a vast variety of closets where the things "could be put off one's hands. One press Mr. Fordyne showed was already furnished, being tenanted with a huge dram bottle, and a server full of short bread, which he said had been required to treat his customers on account of New Year. Of this he made Isabel a partaker, drinking in his turn to her good health, and a good man to her before the next recurrence of the season. This exchange of compliments did not take place without some effect. Isabel ascended the stairs in a kind of reverie, and found herself entering the door above before she was aware. In a month thereafter the two were married.

Three days after the nuptials, Mrs. Fordyne was sitting in the parlor, waiting supper for her husband, and reflecting on the step she was about to take the next day—namely, the transference of her household furniture to the apartments behind Fordyne's shop, and the surrender of her little fortune into his hands. Her eye happened, in the course of her cogitations, to wander to a portrait of her father which hung opposite, and as she gazed on it, she could hardly help thinking that its naturally stern and even sour features assumed an expression still sorer and sterner. No doubt this was the mere effect of some pleading of conscience, for she could not but acknowledge secretly to herself, that the step which she had taken was not of that kind which her parent would have approved. She withdrew her eyes with a disturbed mind, and again looked musingly towards the fire, when she thought she heard the outer door open, and a person come in. At first she supposed this must be her husband, and she began to transfer the supper from the fire to the table. On listening, however, she heard that the footsteps were accompanied by the sound of a walking cane, which assured her that it could not be Fordyne. She stood for a minute motionless and silent, and distinctly heard the sound of an old man walking along the passage with a stick—sounds which at once brought to her recollection her departed father. She sank into a chair, the sounds died away in the distance, and almost at that moment her husband came in to cheer her, calling to the servant as he passed, in his loud and boisterous way, that she had stupidly left the outer door open.

Though Isabel Lucas had committed a very imprudent action in marrying a man who was a perfect stranger to her, nevertheless the predominating feature of her mind was prudence. The impressions just made upon her senses were of a very agitating nature; yet, knowing that it was too late to act upon them, she concealed her emotions. There could be no doubt she had received what in her native country is called a "warning;" yet, conceiving that her best course was to go on and betray no suspicion, she never faltered in her promises to her husband. She was next day installed in Mr. Fordyne's own house, to whom in return, she committed a sum rather above £400; for to that extent had she increased her stock in the course of her late employment.

For some time matters proceeded very well.—Her husband professed to lay out part of her money upon those goods which he had formerly represented himself unable to buy. His habits of application were rather increased than diminished, and a few customers of a more respectable kind than any that he had hitherto had, began to frequent the shop, being drawn thither in consideration of his wife. Among the new articles he dealt in was whiskey, which he bought in large quantities from the distillers, and sold wholesale to a number of the neighboring dealers. By and by this branch of trade seemed to outgrow all the rest, and he found himself occasionally obliged to pay visits to the places where the liquor was manufactured, in order to purchase it at the best advantage. His wife in a little while became accustomed to his absence for a day or two at a time, and having every reason to believe that his affairs were in a very prosperous state, began to forget all her former misgivings.

On one occasion he left her on what he described as a circuit of the Highland distilleries, intending, he said, to be absent at least a week, and carrying money with him to the amount of nearly £1,000, which he said he would probably spend upon whiskey before he returned. Nothing that could awaken the least suspicion, occurred at their parting; but next day, while his wife superintended matters in the shop she was surprised, when a large bill was presented, for which he had made

no provision. On inspecting it, she was still further surprised to find that it referred to a transaction which she understood at the time to be a ready money one. Having dismissed the presenter of the bill, she lost no time in repairing to the counting-house of a large commission house in Leith, with which she knew her husband to have had large transactions. There, on making some indirect inquiries, she found that his purchases, instead of being entirely for ready money as he had represented to her, were mostly paid by bills, some of which were on the point of becoming due. It was now but too apparent that the unprincipled man had taken his final leave of her and his creditors, bearing with him all the spoil that his ingenuity could collect.

Isabel Lucas was not a person to sit down in idle despair on such an occasion. She was a steady Scotchwoman, with a stout heart to master difficulty; and her resolution was soon taken. She instantly proceeded to the Glasgow Coach offices, and ascertained, as she expected, that a man answering to the description of her husband, had taken a place for that city the day before. The small quantity of money that had been collected in the shop since his departure, she put into her pocket; the shop she committed to the porter and old servant Jenny; and, having made up a small bundle of extra clothes, she set off by the coach to Glasgow. On alighting in the Trongate the first person she saw was a female friend from Edinburgh, who asked, with surprise, how she and her husband happened to be travelling at the same time?

"Why do you ask that question?" returned Isabel.

"Because," replied the other, "I shook hands with Mr. Fordyne yesterday, as he was going on board the Isle of Man steamboat at Broomielaw."

This was enough for Isabel. She immediately ascertained the time when the Isle of Man steamboat would next sail, and, to her joy, found that she would not be two days later than her husband in reaching the Island. On landing in proper time in Douglas, in Man, she found her purse almost empty; but her desperate circumstances made her resolve to prosecute the search, though she should have to beg her way back.

It was morning when she landed at Douglas.—The whole forenoon she spent in wandering about the streets, in the hope of encountering her faithless husband, and inquiring after him at the inns. At length she satisfied herself, that he must have left the town that very day for a remote part of the Island, and on foot. She immediately set out upon the same road, and with the same means of conveyance, determined to sink with fatigue rather than return without accomplishing her object.—At first the road passed over a moorish piece of the country; but after proceeding several miles, it began to border on the sea, in some places edging the precipices which overhung the shore, and at others winding into deep recesses of the country. At length, on coming to the opening of a long reach of the road, she saw a figure, which she took for that of her husband, just disappearing at the opposite extremity. Immediately gathering fresh strength, she pushed briskly on, and after an hour's toilsome march, had the satisfaction, on turning a projection, to find her husband sitting right before her on a stone.

Fordyne was certainly very much surprised at her appearance, which was totally unexpected; but he very soon recovered his composure. He met her with more than his usual kindness, as if concerned at her having thought proper to perform so toilsome a journey. He hastened to explain that some information he had received at Glasgow, respecting the dangerous state of his mother, had induced him to make a start out of his way to see her, after which he would immediately return. It was then his turn to ask explanations from her; but this subject he pressed very lightly, and, for her part, she hardly dared, in this lonely place, to avow the suspicions which had induced her to undertake the journey.

"It is all very well," said Fordyne, with affected complaisance, "you'll just go forward with me to my mother's house, and she will be the better pleased to see me since I bring you with me."

Isabel, smothering her real feelings, agreed to do this, though it may well be supposed that, after what he had already done, and considering the wild place in which she was, she must have entertained no comfortable prospect of her night's adventures. On, then, they walked in the dusk of fast approaching night, through a country which seemed to be destitute alike of houses and inhabitants, and where the universal stillness was hardly ever broken by the sound of any animal, wild or tame. The road, as formerly, was partly on the edge of a sea-worn precipice, over which a victim might be dashed in a moment, with hardly

the least chance of being more seen or heard of and partly in the recesses of a rugged country, in whose pathless wilderness the work of murder might be almost as securely effected. Isabel Lucas, knowing how much reason her husband had to wish her out of this world, opened her mind fully to the dangers of her path, and at every place that seemed more convenient than another for such a work, regarded him, even in the midst of a civil conversation, with the watchful eye of one who dreads the spring of the tiger from every brake. She contrived to keep upon the side of the road most remote from the precipices, and carried in her pocket an unclashed penknife, though almost hopeless that her womanly nerves would support her in any effort to use it.

Thus did they walk on for several miles, till at length, all of a sudden, Fordyne started off the road, and was instantly lost in a wild, tortuous ravine. This event was so different from any which she had feared, that for a moment Isabel stood motionless with surprise. Another moment, however, sufficed to make up her mind as to her future course, and she immediately plunged into the defile, following as nearly as possible in the direction the fugitive appeared to have taken. On she toiled, through thick entangling bushes, and over much soft and mossy ground, her limbs every moment threatening to sink beneath her with fatigue: which they certainly would have done very speedily, if the desperate anxieties which had filled her mind had not rendered her in a great measure insensible to the languor of her body. It at length became a more pressing object with her to find some place where she could be sheltered for the night, than to follow in so hopeless a pursuit; and she therefore experienced great joy on perceiving a light at a little distance. As she approached the place whence this seemed to proceed, she discovered a cottage, whence she could hear the sounds of singing and dancing.—With great caution, she drew near to the window through which the light was glancing, and there, peeping into the apartment, she saw her husband capering in furious mirth amidst a set of coarse, peasant-like individuals, mingled with a few who bore all the appearance of sea-smugglers. An old woman, of most unamiable aspect, sat by the fire-side, occasionally giving orders for the preparation of food, and now and then addressing a complimentary expression to Fordyne, whom Isabel therefore guessed to be her son. After the party seemed to have become quite tired of dancing, they sat down to a rude but plentiful repast; and after that was concluded, the whole party addressed themselves to repose. Some retired into an apartment at the opposite end of the house; but most stretched themselves on straw, which lay in various corners of the room in which they had been feasting. The single bed which stood in the apartment was appropriated to Fordyne, apparently on account of his being the most important individual of the party; and he therefore continued under the unsuspected observation of his wife till he had consigned himself to repose. Previous to doing so, she observed him place something with great caution beneath his pillow.

For another hour, Isabel lay at the window, inspecting the interior of the house, which was now lighted very imperfectly by the expiring fire. At length, when every recumbent figure seemed to have become bound securely in sleep, she first uttered one brief, but fervent and emphatic prayer, and then undid the fastening of the door, and glided into the apartment. Carefully avoiding the straw pallets which lay stretched around, she approached the bed whereon lay the treacherous Fordyne, and slowly and softly withdrew his large pocket-book from beneath the pillow. To her inexpressible joy, she succeeded in executing this manœuvre without giving him the least disturbance. Grasping the book fast in one hand, she piloted her way back with the other, and in a few seconds had regained the exterior of the cottage.

As she had expected, she found the large sum which Fordyne had taken away nearly entire.—Transferring the precious parcel to her own bosom, she set forward instantly upon a pathway which led from the cottage apparently in the direction of Douglas. This she pursued a little way, till she regained the road she had formerly left, along which she immediately proceeded with all possible haste. Fortunately, she had not advanced far when a peasant came up behind her in an empty cart, and readily consented to give her a lift for a few miles. By means of this help, she reached Douglas at an early hour in the morning, where, finding a steamboat just ready to sail, she immediately embarked, and was soon beyond all danger from her husband.

The intrepid Isabel Lucas returned, in a few days to Edinburgh, with a sufficient sum to satisfy all her husband's creditors, and enough over to