

Poetry.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

BY FRANCIS BERNCK, ESQ.

I.
With lofty song we love to cheer
The hearts of daring men;
Applauded thus, they gladly hear
The trumpet's call again.
But now we sing of lowly deeds
Devoted to the brave,
Where she, who stems the wound that bleeds,
A hero's life may save.
And heroes saved exulting tell
How well her voice they knew;
How sorrow near it could not dwell,
But spread its wings and flew.

II.
Neglected, dying in despair,
They lay till woman came
To soothe them with her gentle care,
And feed life's flickering flame,
When wounded sore, on fever's rack,
Or cast away as slain,
She called their fluttering spirits back,
And gave them strength again;
They might not see the smiling face,
Which suffering could dispel,
But they could turn and kiss the place,
On which her shadow fell.

III.
When words of wrath profanely rung,
She moved with pitying grace;
Her presence still'd the wildest tongue,
And holy grew the place.
They knew they were cared for then,
Their eyes forgot their tears;
In dreamy sleep they lost their pain,
And thought of early years,—
Of early years, when life was fair,—
Of faces sweet and pale:
They woke—the angel bending there
Was Florence Nightingale.

—Ladies' National Magazine.

Select Tale.

TWICE WEDDED.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

BY MRS. MARY C. VAUGHAN.

A group of gay young girls went one summer afternoon to take tea with old Mrs. Kennedy, who lived all alone in a neat little cottage by the river-side. We all loved to visit "Grandma Kennedy," as we called her, but this time there was sadness mingled with our enjoyment. Everything reminded us of Lucy Kennedy, the old lady's grandchild, who had been the playmate and companion of us all. She had died in the early spring time, and her grave was beneath the green mound at the foot of the great weeping elm in the garden. We had seen her all the winter fading away like the snow wreaths, and at last beheld her in her coffin, white as they, with her small hands folded on her still bosom, and her bright hair laid smoothly back from her peaceful brow. And now the flowers were springing above her grave, and the old grandmother was all alone.

All the afternoon we had wandered about, as we had been wont to do when Lucy was with us, gathering flowers and berries, but the charm was gone. Our tones were modulated as we spoke to each other, we moved lightly, as in the presence of death, and if, by chance, a laugh burst from one of us, it jarred so painfully upon our excited feelings that it was almost sure to be followed by a hysterical sob from each.

We had gathered in a group upon the smooth grass by the river-bank, and were unconsciously, in low tones, discussing the mystery which had attended Lucy's sickness and death.

We only knew that she had returned in the later days of the stormy Autumn of the past year, from a lengthened visit to some distant relatives. That the news of her return had been immediately followed by that of her illness, and that without other visible disease than was indicated by a slight cough, she had gradually, but surely, gone down into the grave that on one of those brilliant mornings of March, which come as forerunners of approaching summer, was opened to receive her.

While, in subdued tones, we were thus conversing of our lost friends, we saw the old lady come to the door of her cottage. She stood for a moment, regarding us who were grouped upon the bank, and we knew by the quick movement of her hand that she wiped away a furtive tear, called to her dim eyes by the memory of the dead, of whom our presence and our youthful forms and voices reminded her. There was a most attractive air about that aged figure, clad in soft, falling black robes, and with her white hair put back from her lofty brow, and covered by the snowy cap, crossed by its broad

black ribbon. And when she raised her voice and called us to the tea-table, we soon surrounded her, almost as joyfully as of old.

"Grandma Kennedy" was beloved by all who knew her, for she was the friend of all. Much of her life was passed in active kindness. There was scarcely one of us who had not from infancy associated her with the scenes of suffering and sorrow into which she had been wont to come as comforter, or the household festivals, where she had been an honored guest. And later, we had learned to love her for sweet Lucy's sake.

So, joyously, in spite of the shadow of that green mound beneath the elm tree, we gathered round her board, and "Grandma Kennedy," with her placid brow and her still handsome though aged face, laid aside for the time all her griefs, to join in our merriment.

But bye and bye the name of Lucy stole into our conversation. It would have been strange if it had not, where everything reminded us of her, and, gathering courage from our old friend's composed though serious features, one of us, bolder than the rest, told her of our conversation by the river-side, and begged her, if she might, to tell us more than rumor had informed us of Lucy's sickness and death. She assented, and rising from the table, for by this time our meal was concluded, she led the way to the little parlor where Lucy had died. And there she told us the story which I have embodied in the following sketch.

Business or inclination had led James Kennedy in his youth to the small inland city of L——, some hundreds of miles from his own rural home. L—— was then but a little cluster of settlers' houses, and James finding the situation promising for future trade, had built a cabin and a rude store, and commenced business. His prospered well, and in a few years took to himself a wife, the daughter of one of the first settlers of the place. A few years afterwards, his health failing, he gave up his regular business, and entered into land speculations. All he had was thus invested, and he seemed in the high road to fortune, when his wife suddenly sickened. In his close attention to her, business was neglected, and on the day he laid her in the grave, the first of a long series of financial misfortunes occurred to him. He had purchased land with a defective title to the amount of many thousands of dollars, and lost the whole. Misfortune succeeded misfortune, and a year afterward he died penniless, and left his little daughter, Lucy, to the care of such friends as fate might raise up to her.

As soon as "Grandma Kennedy" heard of her son's dangerous illness, she hastened to his side. And when he was no more, and the funeral services were over, she signified to the parents of his wife that she would willingly take the little girl to her humble home. No objection was made, and when she returned, the orphan accompanied her to the cottage by the river side.

Thenceforth that was Lucy's home, and she became the light of the aged woman's eyes. Letters from the relatives of her mother occasionally reached her, and sometimes they were accompanied by trifling gifts. But until she reached the age of eighteen, she had received no invitation to visit them.

Whether rumours of her extraordinary beauty had reached them, or late compensations for their neglect had visited them, I know not, but on Lucy's eighteenth birthday a letter came, enclosing a sum of money sufficient for outfit and expenses, and requesting her to proceed at once to L——. The letter was filled with protestations of affection, and bore the signature of her mother's only sister, the wife of a wealthy professional man, and purported to have been written by request of her grandparents and the whole family circle.

Lucy could not refuse, and soon after, on a bright June morning, she bade adieu to her grandmother and her pleasant rustic home, and started upon the long anticipated visit.

Mrs. Kennedy bade her darling farewell with many undefined forebodings, but Lucy gaily promised to return again ere long, to make her happy, and she kindly forbore to damp her joy by one sad word, and forced back the starting tears until she could shed them in the solitude of her deserted home.

Lucy was received with open arms and profuse expressions of affection, and listened with painful blushes, to a thousand encomiums upon the beauty which before she had scarcely been conscious of possessing. She found herself the petted guest of a large circle of wealthy relatives, and was introduced to the best society of the young city. And in society the adulation she met was only equalled by that of her friends.

The influences which now surrounded her would have spoiled almost any other rustic beauty, thus suddenly transplanted to bloom among the exotics of

fashion, but Lucy's pure and simple heart was a sufficient shield. She never lost the sweet humility and unselfishness of her character.

One more hackneyed might have discovered the anxiety of her city friends that she should make what is technically called "a good match," and their disappointment when she rejected two or three of the most unobjectionable matches in the city; young men who were members of the aristocracy, simply because she did not love them.

One more hackneyed might have suspected that she had been invited to partake the tardy hospitality of these friends in order that they might, in the pleasantest way to themselves, discharge their long neglected duty to her by getting her married well in a worldly point of view, to the upbuilding of their own pride, and the comforting of their own consciences. But Lucy thought of none of these things; but gracefully pursued her way, enjoying all her new advantages to the utmost, and gladdened the homes she entered by the freshness of her beauty and her simple heart.

But Lucy could not always remain heart free.—The time came when the warm blood mantled in her cheek at the sound of a familiar voice, and she trembled as the touch of a familiar hand met hers. She loved, and knew she was beloved.

Richard Harvey had lately made his residence in L——. He was said to be a Southerner, and immensely rich. He talked of his plantations and his city houses, his sugar mills and his servants, and pompous papas invited him to costly dinners, while their sons feebly imitated his vices without dread of the paternal frown. He talked of his box at the Opera, his Parisian furniture, and the family jewels deposited in the deep vaults of the family patronized bank until a fair lady should be found to wear them, and mamma's petted and lionised him, and their daughters displayed all their airs for his admiration.

He might have won the proudest and loveliest of L——'s galaxy of beautiful girls, but his heart turned to Lucy with its first sincere affection, and she, with tremulous joy, promised to be his, her heart aching the while with the mighty burden of a happiness which she was utterly unable to comprehend.

When it was known that Lucy would marry Richard Harvey, she was more petted and caressed than ever before. Rich presents were showered upon her by her selfish relatives, whose whole study seemed to be to add to her happiness. And with Harvey always by her side, she passed many weeks in a delirium of delight such as seldom absorbs the being of any of the daughters of humanity.

Letters full of Lucy's joyous anticipations frequently came to "Grandma Kennedy" at this period. The old lady rejoiced in her darling's happiness, but could not quite restrain a sigh as she thought of her own lonely future.

Lucy had won a promise from Harvey that her home should be the home of "Grandma Kennedy," but the old lady had far too much knowledge of human nature to believe that her rusticity would be welcome amongst the splendor which would surround Lucy in her new relation; and she tried to look forward with calmness to the remaining years of her solitary pilgrimage. Alas! how little did she foresee how those years were to be darkened.

The time appointed for the marriage of Richard Harvey and Lucy Kennedy was fast approaching. Preparations were being made upon a scale of magnificence hitherto unknown in L——, and rather proportioned to the reported fortune of the bridegroom elect, than even to those of Lucy's wealthy grandparents.

As the time approached, Lucy often observed a shadow upon her lover's brow, that even her presence and her caresses sometimes failed to chase away. To all her questions he spoke of business, of letters from his agents, or perhaps of trivial indisposition. And then he would talk lightly of other things, of his beautiful home, or the countries of the old world he had visited, and Lucy would forget that sadness had ever visited the brow upon which she loved to gaze.

One evening, a week before the time appointed for their marriage, they drove together through one of the green country roads in the environs of L——. It was a lovely evening, early in the Autumn, and the sunlight came shining down through the yet untouched foliage of the overhanging trees, and glorified Lucy's bright locks and pure uplifted brow; but it fell with a lurid glare upon the swart forehead and black crisp curls of her lover, as, gazing moodily out of the window, he seemed to forget his fair and loved companion.—Lucy had been too full of happy thoughts to note the silence, till the almost fierce pressure of the hand which lay in his, caused her to turn quickly to meet his dark gaze. With a cry, almost of fright, she sprung to his side, and wept in her vague unknown fear. The expression of his face as she turned, had been almost fiendish.

It was long before her entreaties could win him to speech, and then he told her of fresh business difficulties that might call him from her side at a moment's notice. There was a fear, he said, that his best estate might be lost through some mismanagement, and in a way she could not understand; and if his present fears were confirmed, he must leave at once, and endeavor by his own aid and presence to save it. And then he reassured her by loving words and caresses, and Lucy forgot that fearful look.

They drove on and on, and the sun sank, and the twilight began to steal over the scene. Lucy spoke of return, and he gave some orders to the coachman, and then drawing her to his bosom, he whispered his fears of a parting till Lucy grew very sad. And then he besought her to become his wife that night, so that if the necessity of that sudden parting came before the wedding day, he might know that she was really, if secretly, his. And Lucy was simple and trustful, and never dreamed of saying nay.

Just then the carriage drove up to a pleasant country inn, and Lucy saw the firelight shining through the small windows of a snug sitting room, and out into the gathering gloom. Without one thought of evil she alighted, and, leaning upon her lover's arm, went in. An hour afterwards a clergyman, who had been hurriedly summoned made them one.

A supper was laid in the pleasant little room which, after the singular wedding, the clergyman partook with the young couple. Firmly believing the statement which had been made to him, and rejoiced at the large fee handed him by Richard, which made such a providential addition to his narrow income, he departed, first giving the bride her certificate of marriage, and the pair were at length left alone.

Full of their strange new happiness, they lingered a little while, though the carriage stood at the door, and the horses pawed the ground impatiently. Again and again they smiled each in the other's face, as they thought of the little secret which they would keep for a week, and which need never be told unless Richard should be called away; and they waited for more last loving words, standing with arms entwined, upon the hearth, with the red firelight shining over them, when the door was rudely opened, and two men entered the room.

Harvey turned in surprise and anger to confront them. But a heavy hand was already upon his shoulder, just where Lucy's small palm had lain and a coarse voice calling him by his name of Richard Harvey, a numerous aliases, arrested him as one, the leader, of a daring band of counterfeiters who had long infested the country.

I cannot describe the scene. Lucy only remembered that there were shouts, and a struggle, and curses; that shots were fired, and that some strong arm bore her to the sofa.

When she awoke from her long unconsciousness, the good clergyman and several women stood around her with looks of deep compassion on their faces, but Richard and the men who had arrested him, were gone.

She would have returned to her home that night but when she strove to rise she found herself quite unable. It was not until noon of the next day, that accompanied by the clergyman who had married her, she approached her grandfather's house. The tidings of her marriage and the arrest of Harvey had proceeded her, and the doors of that House which, but the day before resounded with the preparations for her wedding, were closed against her. The pride and self-love of its inmates had been wounded, and now they spurned the suffering orphan-bride from their door.

Lucy returned to the Minister's house, and there she remained until she had recovered, from the first fearful shock, enough of strength to suffice for a journey to her old humble home. On her way she visited the jail where her husband was confined and learned from his own lips that there was no hope of an acquittal.

No man is all bad, for there lurks a germ of goodness in the vilest heart, and in the most sin-corrupted soul that ever was created in the Divine image.

Harvey had completed all his preparations for a permanent abandonment of his evil life. That very night he intended to flee far from the pursuit of justice, and find among strangers, a new home where he might commence a better life. When this was done, he meant to call to his side the beautiful girl whom he had made his wife, and whom, since he had known her, he had looked upon as his saviour. So pure was she, that he never once dreamed of linking her to himself until he had forever abandoned his life of sin.

But his sin had followed him, and justice had overtaken him upon the very threshold of reformation. When they parted in that dismal jail-room, both felt that it was forever.