

Poetry.

SUFFER THEM TO COME.

BY LILLIAN.

Open wide the garden gate,
Let the little wanderers in;
Let them now no longer wait,
Though their lives are soiled by sin.
There is room enough for them
In the perfume-laden bowers,
Room for many a sparkling gem
Mid the garden's living flowers.

Take them from the sin-tost flood,
Moor them at the Eden-isle;
Sprinkled with atoning blood,
Theirs shall be an angel-smile.
Shield them from the world's stern care,
Guide their footsteps right,
Let them breathe the heavenly air,
Let them see its living light.

Suffer them to come to him,
Shepherd of the Cherub band;
He can light the valley dim,
Leading from this desert land.
Nurtured with a kindly care,
All the weeds of sin kept down,
Golden fruit their lives shall bear
Till they win the sparkling crown.

And with golden harps in hand,
Gladdening all that blest abode,
They shall shine a star-gemmed band,
In the coronal of God.
Open then the garden-gate,
Let the little wanderers in,
See the blessed Saviour wait—
Wait to save their souls from sin.

—Godley's Ladies' Book.

Select Tale.

THE PEASANT'S COT.

FROM A SHIPMASTER'S LOG-BOOK.

BY CHARLES CASTLETON.

On my last voyage to Bristol, the owners of the ship took passage with me. The whole cargo belonged to them, and they not only wished to do some business in England, but they had a desire to travel some. Besides the three owners, I had four other passengers in the cabin. The passage from New York to England on that occasion was the most severe and stormy I ever made. I have experienced heavier storms, but never such continued hard weather. The old ship was on a strain the whole of the time, and though I ran her into the Avon without losing a life or an important spar, yet she had received much damage. Her mainmast was sprung, her rudder damaged, her timbers strained, and for the last week the pumps had to be kept going all the time, owners, passengers, officers and all, doing their share of work at the breaks.

As soon as we could get the cargo out, the ship was hauled into the dock for repairs, and we found, upon examination, that it would be a week at least, before she could be fit for sea, and that if she had all the repairs which she absolutely needed, it would take her nearer two weeks. A contract was made for the job, and one of the owners agreed to stay by and superintend the work. This left me at liberty, and I began to look around for some places to visit. I had heard much of Salisbury Plain.—The famous Stonehedge was there, and so were the other relics of Roman and British Antiquities. Accordingly, to Salisbury I resolved to go. When I went on board the ship to make arrangements with the owner who had remained there, I found one of the passengers just leaving. His name was Nathan Leeman. He was a young man, not more than thirty years of age, and I supposed him, from his features and idiom, to be an Englishman. I told him I was going to Salisbury, and he informed me that he was going the same way.

Leeman had been intending to take the stage to Devizes, and from thence to take some of the cross coaches; but I had resolved to take a horse, and travel where, and how, and when I pleased, and he asked the plan so well that he went immediately and bought him a good saddle horse.

It was about the middle of the forenoon when we set out, and I found that Leeman intended to visit the curiosities with me, and then keep on towards London, by the way of Andover and Chertsey, he having sent on his baggage ahead to Salisbury, by the great mail route, which ran many miles out of the way. I found my companion most excellent company, and on the way he told me some passages from his own life. He was born in England, but this was the first time he had been in the kingdom since he was fourteen years of age, and I was led to infer that at that time he ran away from his parents. During the last six years of his residence in the United States, he had been engaged in Wes-

tern land speculations, and he was now independently rich.

We took dinner at Bradford, a large manufacturing town, six miles southeast of Bath, and as soon as our horses were rested we set out again.—Towards the middle of the afternoon, the sky began to grow overcast, and we had promise of a storm. By five o'clock, the great black clouds were piled up in heavy masses, and it began to thunder. At Warminster we had taken the direct road for Amesbury, a distance of fourteen miles, and when this storm had come close upon us we were about half way between the two places. I was in no particular hurry, and as I had no desire to get wet, I proposed that we should stop at the first place we came to. In a few moments more we came to a point where a small crossroad turned off to the right, and where a guide board said it was five miles to Deptford Inn.

I proposed that we should turn into this byway, and make for Deptford Inn as fast as possible, and my companion readily assented. We had gone a mile when the great drops of rain began to fall; but, as good fortune would have it, we espied a small neat cottage, not more than a furlong ahead, through a small clump of poplars. We made for this place, and reached it before we got wet.—There was a good sized barn on the premises, and a long sheep-shed connected it with the house.—Beneath this shed we drove, and just as we alighted, an old man came out. We told him that we had got caught in a storm, and asked him if he could accommodate us over night. He told us that we should have the best his humble place could afford, and that if we would put up with that, we should be welcome.

As soon as the horses were taken care of, we followed the old man into the house. He was a gray-headed man, certainly on the down hill side of three score, and his form was bent by hard work. His countenance was naturally kind and benevolent, but there were other marks upon his brow than those of age. The moment I saw him I knew he had seen much of suffering. It was a neat room to which we were led, a living room, but yet free from dirt and clutter. An old woman was just building a fire for supper, and as we entered she arose from her work.

"Some travellers, wife, caught in the shower," said the good man.

"Surely, gentlemen, you're welcome," the woman said, in a tone so mild and free that I knew she only spoke the feelings of her soul. "It's poor fare we can give ye, but the heart o' the giver must e'en make up for that."

I thanked the good people, and told them I would pay them well for all they did for us.

"Speak not of pay," said the woman, taking her tea-kettle from the hob, and hanging it upon the hob.

"Stop wife," said the old man, tremulously.—"Let not your heart run away wid ye. If the good gentlemen have to spare o' their abundance, it becomes not such sufferers as us to refuse the bounty."

I saw the woman place the apron to her eyes, but she made no reply. The door close by the fireplace stood partly open, and I saw in the room beyond a bed, and I was sure there was some one on it. I asked the old man, if he had sickness.

"Yes," he said, with a sad shake of the head. "My poor boy has been sick a long while. He's the only child I have—the only helper on the little farm—and he's been sick now all the spring and summer, and I have not been well. I've taken care of the sheep, but I couldn't plant. It's hard but we don't despair. My good wife—God bless her—shares the trial with me, and, I think, she takes the biggest share."

"No, no, John, don't say so," uttered the wife. "No woman could do the work you do."

"I didn't mean to tell too much, Margaret, only you know you've kept me up."

A call from the sick room took the wife away, and the old man then began to tell me, in answer to my questions, some of the peculiarities of the great plain, for we were on it now,—and I found him well informed and intelligent. At length the table was set out, the clean white cloth spread, and we were invited to set up. We had excellent white bread, sweet butter, some fine stewed damsons, and a capital cup of tea. There were no excuses, no apologies—only the food was before us, and we were urged to help ourselves. While we were eating, the rain ceased falling, but the weather was by no means clear, though just as we moved from the table, a gleam of golden light shot through the window from the setting sun.

It may have been an hour after this—it was not more than that—when a wagon drove up to the door, in which were two men. The old man had just come in from the barn, and it was not yet so dark but we could see the faces of the men in the wagon. They were middle-aged men, one of them

habited in a sort of jockey hunting garb, and the other dressed in black clothes, with that peculiar style of hat and cravat which mark the officer. I turned towards our host for the purpose of asking if he knew the new comers, and I saw that he was very pale and trembling. A low deep groan escaped him, and in a moment more his wife moved to his side, and put his arm about his neck. She had been trembling, but that groan of her husband's seemed to call her to herself.

"Don't fear, John," she softly said. "They can't take away our love, nor our souls. Cheer up. I'll be a support to ye, John, when all else are gone."

A tear rolled down the old man's cheek, but when another started, he wiped it away, and, having kissed his wife, he arose from his chair.—Just then the two men entered. He in the jockey coat came first, and his eyes rested upon Leeman and myself.

"Only some travellers, Mr. Vaughan," said our host.

So Mr. Vaughan turned his gaze elsewhere about the room, and at length they were fixed upon the old man.

"Well," said he, "what about that rent?"

"We haven't a penny of it yet, sir," answered the host, tremblingly.

"Not a penny?" Then how'll you pay the twenty pounds?"

"Twenty pounds!" muttered the old man, painfully. "Alas I cannot pay it. You know Walter has been long sick, and every penny I could earn has paid the doctor. You know he was to have earned the rent if he had been well."

"I don't know anything about it," returned the landlord doggedly—for Mr. Vaughan owned the little farm, it afterwards appeared. "All I know is, that you have had the house and the land, and that for two whole years you haven't paid me a penny. You know that I told you a month ago that you should have just one more to pay me.—That month was up last night. Can you pay me now?"

"No! no!—O, God knows I can't."

"Then you must leave the house."

"When?"

"To-night."

"You do not mean that. You will not turn me out so quickly as—"

"Out upon your prating! What do you mean by that? You had notice a month ago. How long a notice do you suppose I give! If you haven't had time in a month to move, then you must look out for the consequences. To-night you move!—If you want a shelter you may go into the old house at the horse-pond."

"But there is not a window in it."

"Beggars shouldn't be choosers," remarked Mr. Vaughan. "If it hadn't been for hunting up the officer, I should have been here this morning. But 'tis my fault. Now I can have a good tenant right out, and he wants the house to-morrow. So there's not a word to be said. I shall take your two cows, and your sheep, and if they go for more than the twenty pounds, after taking out the expenses, you shall have the balance back."

The poor peasant gazed for a moment, half wildly, at his landlord's face, and then he sank down into his chair, and covered his face with his hands.

"My cows! My sheep?" he groaned spasmodically. "O, kill me and have done with it!"

"In God's name, Mr. Vaughan," cried the wife, "spare us them. We will leave the cot, and we will work with all our might until we pay you every arthing, but do not take away our very means of life. My poor boy will die! O, you are rich, and we are poor!"

"Nonsense!" uttered the unfeeling man. "I'm used to such stuff. I make my living by renting my farms, and this farm is one of the best I have. A goodman can lay up more than ten pounds a year here."

"But we have been sick," urged the woman.

"That isn't my fault. If you are paupers, you know here to go to get taken care off. Now I don't wait another word. Out you go to-night, unless you pay me the twenty pounds; and your cows at sheep go, too."

I was just upon the point of turning to my companion to ask him if he would not help me make up the sum, for I was determined that the poor folks should not be turned out thus. The woman had sundown, and she, too, had covered her face with her hands. At that moment Nathan Leeman sprang this feat. His face was very pale, and for the first time I saw that tears had been running down his cheeks.

"Look ye, sir," he said, to Vaughan, "how much do these people owe you?"

"Twenty pounds," returned he, regarding his interlocutor sharply.

"And how did that amount come due in the year?"

"It was just due one month ago. The rent is twelve pounds but I allowed him four pounds for building a bridge over the river."

"Show me the bill."

The man pulled out a large leather pocket book, and from thence he took a bill. It was receipted. Leeman took out his purse, and counted from thence twenty golden sovereigns. He handed them to the landlord, and took the bill.

"I believe that settles the matter, sir," my companion said, exerting all his power to appear calm.

"Yes, sir," returned Vaughan, gazing first upon the man who had given him the money, to see if he was in earnest, and then turning to the window to see if the gold was pure. "Yes, sir," he repeated. "This makes it all right."

"Then I suppose we can remain here now, undisturbed."

"But I have no surety of any pay for the future. A month is already run on an unpaid term."

"It is right you should have your pay, surely. Come to-morrow, sir, and I will arrange with you,—only leave us now."

Mr. Vaughan cast one more glance about the room, but without speaking further he left—and the officer had to follow him, without having done anything to earn him a fee. As soon as they were gone, the old man started to his feet.

"Sir," he uttered, turning towards Leeman, "what means this? Do you think I can never pay you back again?"

"Sometime you can," returned my companion.

"Yes—yes, John," said the wife, "sometime we shall surely pay him."

"Alas! when?"

"Any time within a month will answer," said Leeman.

Both the old people looked aghast.

"Oh! You have only planted more misery for us, kind sir," cried the old man. "We could have borne to be stripped of our goods by the landlord, better than we can bear a noble friend. You must take our stock—our cows and sheep!"

"But not yet," resumed Leeman. "I have another way. Listen: Once you had a boy—a wild, reckless, wayward child."

"Yes," murmured the old man.

"And what became of him?"

For some moments the father was silent, but at length he said:

"Alas he fled from his home, long years ago.—One night—we lived then far north of here, in Northamptonshire—my boy joined with a lot of other youths, most of them older than himself and went into the park of Sir Thomas Boyle and carried away two deers. He was detected, and to escape punishment, he fled,—and I have not—seen him since. But Sir Thomas would not have punished him, for he told me so afterwards."

"And tell me, John Leeman, did you never hear from that boy?"

"Never," answered the old man.

As soon as I heard my companion pronounce the old man's name, the truth flashed upon me in an instant; and I was not alone in the conviction. The quick heart of the mother had caught the spark of hope and love. At that moment the fire on the hearth blazed up, and as the light poured out into the room, my companion's face was fully revealed. The woman arose and walked towards him. She laid her hand upon his head, and tremblingly she whispered:

"For the love of heaven don't deceive me. But speak to me—let me call you Nathan—Nathan Leeman!"

"And I should answer, for that is my name!" spoke the man starting up.

"And what would ye call me?" the woman gasped.

"My Mother!"

The fire gleamed more brightly upon the hearth, and I saw that aged woman upon the bosom of her long lost boy. And then I saw the father totter up and join—and I heard murmured words of blessing and of joy. I arose and slipped out of the room and went to the barn, and when I got there I took out my Handkerchief and wiped the tears from my cheeks.

It was an hour before I returned, and then I found all calm and serene, save that the mother was still weeping, for the head of her returned boy was yet resting upon her shoulder, and her arm was about his neck. Nathan arose as I entered, and with a smile he bade me be seated.

"You know all as well as I can tell you." "When we first stopped here I had no idea of finding my parents here, for when I went away, sixteen years ago, I left them in Kingsthorpe, upon the Nen. I knew them, of course, but I wished to see if they would know me. But from fourteen to thirty is a changing period. I think God sent me