

Literature, &c.

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THE
YOUNG FLAGEOLET PLAYER.

BY MISS LOUIRA STUART COSTELLO.

As THE tourist or the traveller enters the gates of the fine park of Chatsworth, the pride of Derbyshire, approaching from the pretty villages of Rowsley and Beeley, he passes along a hollow road, very much overgrown, and somewhat gloomy, till, having gained the top of the hill, he reaches the open space called Lindslow, where, if there is ever any wind, it is sure to salute him at that point.

Instead of keeping straight on, should he happen to take the upper road, which winds beside a fine grove of high elms, he will arrive at a preserve, where fat bucks, destined to immolation, and a group of curious goats are usually seen. After pausing a few moments, to remark the gambols of the kids, the most light-hearted of animals, he may follow the palings; leaning against which, are the majestic victims, their companions, which gaze with large serious eyes on the intruder, their lofty spreading antlers waving over their heads, as they rise indignantly, and move to a greater distance, as if to avoid observation.

The stranger soon comes to a second gate, having Beeley Moor and its Druid stones before him, and part of the old park and its mysterious recesses on his left hand, in the distance: suddenly he perceives a small hamlet, so concealed in the *bocage* which encircles it, that it does not shew itself till the last moment.

This secluded nook is called Calton Lees: it is composed of five or six houses only, of which two have been beautified, so as to keep up their original form of the Elizabethan age, with additions. One of them is conspicuous for the beauty of its little gardens and lawns and bowers, into which opens a large bay window, the centre part forming a door, and leading by a flight of steps into the miniature shrubbery. Roses and honeysuckles creep almost entirely over its exterior, and all kinds of flowers bloom in the parterres.

As the cottage stands on the acclivity of the hill, there is a rather extensive view of the moors and mountains from its upper windows; but the most admired object with the inhabitants, is the view it commands of "the Duke's stand," a fine ancient tower, in the midst of the woods, on a great elevation, where the red flag flying tells of the arrival of the master of Chatsworth.

A group of thatched roofs peep forth from the opposite tuft of trees on the answering hill, and a forest of pines, chestnuts, peaches, and oaks, crowns the heights above. The most luxuriant meadows spread abroad in all directions, some leading down to Darley Dale, others upward to "the Hill Top," as a romantic elevation, surmounted by a curious old house, is called. A thick grove of magnificent trees leads up a steep ascent to a fine open space of meadow, dotted thickly with hawthorns of great age: this is named Calton Hill—descending from whence, and being now in the Rutland territory a rugged path, through a tangled wood, conducts to the Dale of Bakewell.

It is impossible to conceive anything so retired as this charming Hamlet of Calton Lees, whose quiet and decent inhabitants are mostly farmers and cottagers of a better order. In the smallest of the tenements—all of which are kept in the greatest order, and have a most picturesque appearance—lived a widow, familiarly called by her neighbours Betty Swain. She had several sons, all the most industrious lads in the neighbourhood, and one daughter, the prettiest girl in any village near. Ellen Swain was about seventeen, and might be seen every evening setting out, with her shining milk pails, to the fields by the Derwent-side, to milk her two cows, which, knowing her voice, left their numerous companions in the clover, and came to pay their daily tribute.

Troops of young girls from Beeley and the hamlets around were accustomed to take their evening's walk, bent on the same errand; and their fresh complexions and neat appearance are sufficiently attractive, although the white cap, check apron, and worsted hose of old time have given way to the fashionably-made gown, and bonnet, and smart shoes, and stockings of modern improvement.

When these rural damsels all meet under the trees in the park, waiting to rest and to select their cows from the herd, there is generally a good deal of conversation, and all the news of the country is discussed. Information is given of approaching wakes, and well-flowerings, cricket-matches, and tea-drinkings; and parties are formed, and meetings agreed on.

Ellen Swain was always ready to assist any of her companions on these occasions, and her lively conversation and agreeable anecdotes always made her arrival amongst them a matter of congratulation to the assembled milkers. It was rarely that she failed to come; although, if otherwise occupied, her little brother Jacob was sometimes sent as her substitute; but this was regretted, even though he was a great favorite, and not yet old enough to interrupt them, or cause any commotion in their minds at his sight. This, however, might not have been the case if Mary had sent her elder brother Edward, for he was acknowledged to be the handsomest lad in Derbyshire, and as gay and lovely, and, by some, thought as agreeable as his sister.

Every evening, after his work was done, his flageolet might be heard at the Lees, as he stood at his mother's cottage door, playing all sorts of airs with taste and skill quite astonishing, considering that he was his own instructor, and had caught all the airs by ear. Old Betty used to delight in hearing him, and Ellen was never tired of listening and dictating as he went

on, like a bird, making the woods echo with his sweet music.

It chanced that an invalid gentleman, on his way to Buxton, where he had spent some weeks for the benefit of the waters, paused at Chatsworth, to make the usual visit at the Palace of the Peak, and, roaming through the park, took the turn lately described, instead of the high road, and found himself at the hamlet of the Lees before he was aware of his mistake. He was so much delighted with its calm, tranquil appearance, that, entering into conversation with the mistress of the pretty cottage with the bay window, he found she was not averse to receive him as an inmate, as the greater part of her house was now unoccupied, her married son and daughter, and their children, having recently left her to settle at Sheffield.

The invalid was enchanted with the appearance of the whole neighbourhood, and imagined that he had at last found the spot of all others which would best suit him for the summer, far removed from the noise of cities, to which he had been too long accustomed, and away from all the troublesome acquaintances with which a bachelor is usually pestered in a great town, or a small one.

Here, then, Mr Ashe resolved immediately to take up his abode, without seeking further; and accordingly he became installed possessor of the pretty parlour, with its cheerful window, and the bedchamber where honeysuckles peeped in at the casement.

Every day he took long solitary strolls, and found new beauties to reward him for the trust he had placed in this charming retreat. He wandered amongst the solitary moors, and sought out the remaining altars of that strange worship which has never been explained. He sat for hours in the thick wood, listening to the fall of waters. He strayed in the thickly-flowered meadows, by the river side, and gazed on the blue distant mountains of the Peak, towering above the dark forest. But not the least of his amusements was to sit at his open window, in the evening, and listen to the concert which Edward Swain never failed to afford his neighbours. Although Mr Ashe had a fastidious ear for music, was an excellent critic, and had heard the best performers in all parts of the world, the simple melody which Edward drew from his flageolet pleased him extremely; and, when he heard the first notes, evening after evening he took his accustomed seat, and gave himself up to delicious musings.

One evening in August, when the hay-harvest, which is extremely late in Derbyshire, was going on, Mr Ashe, as he approached his window, was aware of an unwonted stir in the hamlet, and remarked that the tones of Edwards flageolet were unusually brisk, and that he was playing with more than his wonted energy. He soon found that he was performing jigs and country dances to a party who had, like him self, been employed all day in hay-making, and whose joyous voices, as they made up their stack in a neighbouring field, the invalid had heard with amused attention during the afternoon, while the gurgling of a small waterfall, in the valley immediately below, seemed to form an under current of lively music.

"That young man," mused Mr Ashe, if properly instructed, would make a great musician. It is of such stuff performers are formed who set the civilised world mad with enthusiasm. Is he happier to remain the admired musician of his native village, or would it be better to bring him forth from obscurity, and introduce a genius to the admiration of mankind?"

It was this train of thought that led Mr Ashe from one image to another, until he pictured to himself Edward Swain the most celebrated flageolet player in Europe: rich, admired, sought, the centre of a circle; and still, as the lively sounds mingled with merry laughter went on without, he continued his dreams till the object of them was lost sight of. Suddenly the instrument ceased, and, after a pause, another strain of melody broke the stillness which had succeeded the mirth of the half-weary party.

A clear, deep, pathetic voice presently echoed along the valley, and the singular words of an Irish melody, in the original language, were heard giving force to the strain. So wild, and sweet, and solemn, was the song, that the musical enthusiast, for such was the invalid listener, was reft with delight:

"Only he thought the sounds too quickly passed,
And every note he feared would be the last."

When the song was over, he stepped out into his shrubbery, and, anxious to come nearer to the scene of action, strolled down the little laurel walk, which brought him, unseen, close to the party divided from him, only by a fence; he could, therefore, plainly hear the following conversation:—

"How did I come by such a voice, is it? Faith they tell me it was given me by the fairies, who, in my country, sing like nightingales, although it was never my luck to hear them, seen 'em I have often."

"Oh," said the laughing tones of Ellen Swain, "how can you say so? but you Irishmen are such deceivers always, one can never believe any of you."

"And can you say that, Miss Ellen," replied the first speaker, "when didn't I say the very last thing last summer when I went back to Ireland after the harvest, that I'd be back this, and sure here I am; did I keep my word in that?"

"Yes," said Ellen, "that's true; but when I read your letter to farmer Turner, offering to come as usual, I thought you might change your mind for all, though he wrote to say he should be glad of your helping hand."

"So you saw my letter, then," was said in a lower key, and in a tone of peculiar softness; "and you saw that when I sent my respects to

all the neighbours, your mother was not left out."

"Yes," answered the young girl, her voice partaking somewhat of the sweetness of her companion's, and you said your mother was well to—did you leave her so? how glad she must be every time you go back after the harvest in Derbyshire!"

"How gladder she'd be if I took a sweet little wife wid me," whispered the melodist; but Mr Ashe heard no more, for the laughter, talking, and confusion around.

"So then," he reflected as he strolled back to his window, "this is the young Irishman, whose letter, so quaintly written, my landlady brought to shew me a few weeks back: it was full of good feeling, though a little oddly expressed: it seems he is proud of being a scholar, and writes every year to the farmer to offer his services, taking the proceeds of his labour to his mother. How happy these people must be, toiling as they do, yet always light-hearted. Yet suppose he marries this pretty Ellen, what has he to give her?—what is their prospect but poverty and a life of privation? He would, nevertheless, persuade her to it, and she would consent. Shortsighted mortals!"

"Thus runs the world away!"

It was evening when Mr Ashe made himself acquainted with Edward Swain, and found in him an ambition answering to the talents he possessed, which were, in all respects, superior to the status he held. Although he fulfilled his daily duties cheerfully and without murmuring, yet he had aspirations and soarings far beyond his humble occupations; he had acknowledged that, when occasionally he had been admitted by the servants of Chatsworth to hear concerts there, he had formed wishes of being able to distinguish himself like the artists he saw caressed and admired. Visions of independence for his mother, and sisters, and brothers, flitted before his mind's eye, and he wished for a wider field for his talents than the hamlet of the Lees. All the conversations which he had with Mr Ashe confirmed his wish, never hitherto expressed, to try his fortune in another sphere; but he had no hope of an opportunity occurring which could give him the means of carrying out his wish. A musical education was requisite to make his talents of any avail, and how was that to be attained? He had scarcely ventured to ask himself the question, when the means was offered him by his new acquaintance.

With uncontrolled delight did he hear him propose that he should accompany him to London, to defray all his expenses, to place him at a public musical institution, and afford him the chance of future fame and fortune.

What amusement to Betty Swain, what pride to Ellen, when Edward informed them of the proposal made! It was too flattering to be rejected—no such thought entered their minds—all was gold, all glittered before them, and, as the widow kissed her son and congratulated him, her remark was "Well, dear Edward, don't keep your carriage too soon!"

When the chilling days of autumn, felt very sensibly in the peak, began to warn the invalid that he must seek a warmer climate, the family of the widow felt that there was something besides exultation in their hearts, for they must part with Edward. What a loss he was to them and to all the hamlet no words could express, and when he drove away on the box of a hired carriage with Mr Ashe, every one repeated that his departure was not opposed. He went himself, however, in high spirits, and had a thousand words of comfort to say to all his old friends, besides the encouraging assurances that he left with his weeping mother and sister, and as he hugged little Jacob who tried to smile through his tears—he bade him be a man, and when he came back, he should have a new harness for the donkey, a promise which went a great way towards restoring his peace of mind.

Ellen felt for some time after he was gone, a depression which she could not shake off; nor were her spirits increased when she received a letter from her admirer, Arthur Connor, the youth whose sweet voice had won the ear of Mr Ashe as well as her own, informing her, that as the wheat harvest in the South was over, and as he had had a tempting offer from the directors of the Paris and Rouen Railroad to join a party of his countrymen on the line, he was about to quit England for a time. The addition, that he looked forward to a speedy return with plenty of money, when he hoped she would allow herself to be convinced that an Irishman could make the best husband in the world, carried some balm with it; but still she felt more lonely and unhappy than ever.

The bleak snowy winter of that part of the country, where it is generally exceedingly severe, had passed away sadly enough; the sharp spring had succeeded with little that was genial about it; but summer appeared earlier than usual, and brought weather as fine and warm as any that is known in the south. With sunny days came all the hosts of tourists and idlers who run through Derbyshire for its own sake, or on their way to the Lakes of Cumberland, and in every pretty wayside inn, fashionable anglers had taken up their abode, their tackle complete, and their "Walton" in their pockets.

Of all the beautiful little hotels to be found in this county, where all are tastefully and artistically got up, none may compare in attraction with that at Rowsley, poetically pronounced by the country people, whose dialect is not in general too refined, *Rosely*. It was formerly in Elizabeth's days, a private mansion, belonging to some substantial yeoman, and is large and commodious, all gable ends, low doors, and diamond casemented windows, high, ornamented chimneys, and shelving roofs of various heights. It stands in a beautiful garden, quite full of roses of every sort and

kind, is overgrown with flowering shrubs, and shadowed with light graceful trees, and is close beside a pretty bridge, and one of the charming trout streams, the pride of the country. There is a great competition amongst the amateur anglers to get possession of certain favorite parlours which look into the garden, and almost always the inn is full of company throughout throughout the season. Though this was very agreeable to young Sir Lionel Vane, who was charmed to meet several of his college companions there, it was found too bustling for his invalid mother, and she was not sorry to hear from the physician at Bakewell, who attended her, that she could be received in the retired house of the Lees—quite as pretty, and infinitely more quiet, than Rowsley. Lady Lucy Vane had been a woman of fashion, and a beauty; she was highly sentimental, and extremely fanciful, and was always in extremes of one kind or another: the first sight of the "Peacock, at Rowsley," had thrown her into ecstasies of admiration, which had lasted a full fortnight, but at the end of that time she longed to change her sylvan retreat, and the Lees offered exactly the asylum from noise and bustle which she sighed for.

"Good Heaven, mother," exclaimed her son, one morning as he entered the open window of her little parlour, "I have just had a vision! Have you seen her? The most beautiful creature that poet or painter ever imagined. Who would have believed such beauty existed in England?"

"Dearest Lionel," said his mother languidly, "what can you mean? is it some lamb you have met in the meadows that has so enchanted your imagination? I have seen nothing here so transcendent."

"Then you have not seen Ellen Swain," continued the young angler; "for I ascertained her name from the boy who leads your donkey every day, she is his sister, and a perfect angel!"

"A Madonna, I dare say," said Lady Lucy: "if she rode the donkey instead of me, and there were but a village Raphael to paint her, all would be complete. Do you remember, dear, when we were travelling in Italy, the amazement of a group of peasants on seeing me, thus mounted, suddenly appear before them: 'Santa Maria!' cried one of them; it is the Holy Virgin herself!" I was, it is true, handsomer then than I am now," added the lady, sighing, as she stood before a glass.

"You never looked so lovely, sweet mother," said her son. "How well this air of Derbyshire agrees with you, and with me, too. I am in no hurry to quit it. I will walk over these enchanting meadows every morning to see you: there is magnificent fishing just below here."

Sir Lionel kept his word for he found many attractions in his walks, and he not only came in the morning, but his filial affection frequently led him along those same meadows in the summer evenings: he admired and enjoyed the rural fetes everywhere, and there was not a well-flowering at which he was not a guest.

These well-flowerings are very pretty meetings, peculiar to this part of the country, and lately revived with great animation, and encouraged by all classes. There are not so picturesque now as they were formerly, in monkish days, when masses were said on the brink of the well, and garlands of flowers were thrown into the waters, and left on the margin to propitiate the good saint or spirit; nor were they even then so brilliant as when the Druid priests, and the white robed priestesses, with golden girdles, came in procession to offer flowers to the Goddess of the Crystal Spring: but still this relic of old usage, though not now altogether religious, is interesting and characteristic.

In most of the villages handsome fountains had been erected, and it is in honor of these useful buildings, that, on a certain summer day in every year, a sort of wake or fair is held in the square where they stand: before the fountain is placed a framework screen, covered with flowers, disposed in mosaic, in the most intricate patterns, introducing the arms and mottoes of the public benefactor, who was at the expense of the fountain, or *tap*, as it is here called. This brilliant screen is of every hue that flowers will yield, and glows and gleams in the sun with infinite gorgeousness; a band of music enlivens the scene; booths filled with toys and fruit attract the visitor, and groups of smartly-dressed men and maidens parade about the little village where the ceremony takes place, waiting till the hour arrives when dancing concludes the festivity. A service is performed in the church, at which several companies and clubs attend, the banners of their respective callings ranged along the walls, making the old arches gorgeous. The members of these fraternities, after church, walk out in gay procession to the house, where a feast is prepared for them, and where their hilarity commences.

Carriages filled with strangers may often be seen among the peasant groups, for it is become quite a fashion to visit the well-flowerings; and in one of these Lady Lucy Vane and her son were to be seen at the meeting, at the pretty village of Joulgrave. But far more than the ceremony did young Sir Lionel admire the appearance of pretty Ellen Swain, as she wandered about with pleased looks, accompanied by numerous female friends, not one of whom had half her beauty or animation.

"What a pity not to educate such a creature," said Lady Lucy; "she should not blush unseen amongst these mountains. I vow it would be a charming task, which would amuse me of all things. I wonder if masters can be had at Bakewell."

The idea, encouraged by her son, having once got possession of the mind of the enthusiastic lady, she was resolved to put it into execution. Ellen soon became a confirmed