

Literature, &c.

From the Illustrated London News. MABEL MARCHMONT. BY THOMAS MILLER. Concluded.

The old woman halted not until she had reached the outside of the churchyard wall, where her further progress was interrupted by a long line of gypsies, who, with their donkey carts, dogs, horses, children, and baggage, were journeying onward to a fresh summer encampment. The old woman waited until figure after figure glided by—an almost endless succession—the children swinging and singing in the pinnacles, while their black-haired and olive-complexioned mothers joined in choruses, and their swarthy fathers occasionally chimed in with a blow or an oath, to hasten the lagging pace of their jaded and over-driven animals. Kettles and camp-poles rattled against each other, and on trudging women in men's coats, and children wholly buried beneath their father's garments, the buttons of huge velvet breeches knocking against their little brown ankles; some bare-headed, and others with their dark curly locks buried in large old hats—such as might once have covered aching heads—but they knew no pain but that of hunger—so onward they went, laughing and singing, untroubled by the thoughts of either rents or taxes.

That aged woman never once raised her eyes as the long train passed by, but stood motionless, gazing on the ground, while the tall stranger—partially hidden by a turning of the wall—stood with his arms folded on his breast, watching her narrowly. The last cart rolled by; then came a group of loiterers on foot, and amongst these was a young woman, who, halting suddenly, pointed to the old lady, and said to an aged woman behind her, "She is here; we shall not have to call at the old Manor House now."

They exchanged a few cant terms with each other, then beckoned to a tall athletic young man, with hair dark as midnight, and a countenance bronzed by sun and wind, who sprung forward with giant strides, and in a few minutes returned, leading a white pony, on which a little boy was seated, his bare legs rough as rasps, and the soles of his feet hard as horn. Alfred and Mabel stood silent spectators of the scene.

"This is the child," said the elder gypsy, beckoning Amy's father to approach; "and here stands the old lady I had the money from. This old-fashioned silver pounce-box I snatched from her mantel piece on the very night I took away the child. Here is one of the bills she had printed the next day, offering a reward for the trinket. I have carefully kept them both, as she would allow me nothing but an old blanket to wrap the infant in, lest it should some day or other be produced as a proof of its birth."

Half unconscious of everything around her saving the lost box, the old woman made one desperate spring, and seized it in her trembling hands, exclaiming, "It was my mother's, and was stolen on the night—"

"Carried off the baby from the Manor house," shouted the old gypsy in her ear. "Have you forgot how the wind blew, and the rain fell, and how I covered the infant with my old cloak, lest the horrible lightning might affect its little eyes; and how in my heart I cursed you for your cruelty, although my poverty compelled me to take your twenty pieces of gold, which you seemed to begrudge as much as if they had been drops of blood from your heart. There he sits—look at him—the bleak air of the heath, and the stark-naked sunshine that walked forth in the early summer morning, and sat upon his brow, neither disgrace nature, nor the old gypsy nurse, who washed him in the forest brook, and let him run to dry himself where the morning breezes blew—kinder compassions than such stony-hearted wretches as consigned him to my care. Heaven bless him; and the old gypsy woman kissed the sun-bronzed brow of her foster child.

"Let me go, you old granny," exclaimed the young vagabond, striking the sides of his shaggy pony with his hard horned heels. "I don't like you to kiss me so well as I do Zillah;" and the hopeful young scion of Boswell's gang jerked the corner of the rough halter from the gypsy who held it, and with his bare brown legs glancing in the sunset, shot off to join the ragged cavalcade.

"A promising young heir," exclaimed Amy's father unconsciously. "And this is the reward of ambition! Justice has decided aright."

"A strange son to present you with," said Alfred, looking at Mabel.

"A wild daisy to transplant," sighed Mabel. "Would to God this were the worst."

"Heaven bless his little heart," said his old foster mother, moving the yellow handkerchief a little from her brow, that she might have a better view. "It is just like him. He is worthy of being the King of our race. My husband loves the lad, and taught him to smoke almost as soon as he could walk. Lord bless you, sir, he can drink like a man; as to riding, he would gallop a sunbeam to death, if he could but once get his little legs fairly across it."

"Excellent qualities in a gamekeeper!" muttered the tall grandfather to himself; "but I dread his first appearance in my wife's drawing room. And as to school, after such an education—Poor, dear, much-injured Amy!" and he hid his face in his hand—being for once in his life, and very properly, ashamed of himself.

"I know not what his mother might feel, were she here now," said Alfred; "but after—"

"Stop," said Mabel; "I pray you stop. She would feel like a woman—like a mother—like your wife. She would feel what only a mother can feel."

There spoke the woman; there gushed forth the assurance of a fond and pure heart—that

pity, which, for its very unselfishness, is worthy of the angels themselves. Oh, how superior did Mabel at that moment look, as she stood, side by side, with her lover! How open, how sincere the expression of her countenance! No man could ever look as she then looked. The very softness of our sterner sex seems like a shadow thrown upon the wall, unless mirrored in the sweet countenance of woman. When with her, the softness of his voice is no longer assumed; his smile, if the offspring of love, is sincere; his kindness ceases to be affected; for by him stands earth's only divinity, the idol which his own heart bids him worship. Imagine this world without her presence; fancy the globe untenanted by woman—motherless, wifeless, sisterless, and daughterless; what a savage desolation would then hang about our homes; what an aching void would then wait filling up in the heart! Love dead! beauty vanished! all household virtues extinguished! the light of life darkened! and the wide earth one savage sounding solitude! What an abode of fiends would this beautiful world then be!

Love and Friendship are two different beings: the one is of earthly, the other of heavenly origin: Love adores, worships, dies; has no existence of its own—for that is emerged into the life of the object beloved—for love cannot love itself; it is a heavenly gift, given to another—the soul leaving its old abode, and taking up its existence in a purer shrine. Friendship is warm, passionate, sincere; can sympathize with sorrow, and mingle its tears with trouble; give its smile to pleasure, and send its sigh across the grave; it is Charity with a warm heart—Pity at her own hearth—Sincerity with her slippers on, easy, and at home. Love has no utterance for its sorrow; it is Grief with a broken heart, Joy beside itself—Misery laid senseless—Hope looking into Heaven—Happiness delirious with delight—or Despair, darker or more desolate than the grave. For Love it changeth not—

"But Love is Love for evermore."

And Alfred loved Mabel for her superior virtues, for there was an unassumed dignity about her which he felt belonged not to himself. Unconscious of her power, she had made him feel like a man. Approach her whenever he might, she was still the same, for her self-possession was inherent. Nursed in comparative solitude, and left at an early age an orphan, she had communed much "with her own heart," while her mind had become tinged with the same solemn tone of thought which much reading had rendered almost natural to her grandfather. The Bible was her chief book, then came the older dramatists, followed by Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. She knew "Comus" by heart, and understood its fine moral beauty—alas! how very few young ladies are acquainted with that faultless production. The words that Mabel uttered roused Alfred Ehrington, and he strode up boldly to where the stranger stood, putting but one brief and husky interrogation to him, as he said, "I know you, Sir; that child you have so long sought is my son. Where is Amy?"

"Dead, dead!" muttered that miserable man. "The wide ocean was her grave. I will tell you all some other time. My whole estate is now your son's. Would that she were alive, or that I were dead!"

"I would that she were," said Mabel Marchmont, now approaching; "but that wish can never be fulfilled. Give up the child to me. I ask but for twelve months' trial—God will assist me—and, if by that time he owneth not me as a mother, and obeyeth me not like a dutiful child, then will I"—but tears came to her relief. She had loved but once, and her heart was too full to finish the sentence. She would have fallen, had not Amy's step-father caught her in his arms, as he said, "I see it all. Woman," added he, addressing the old gypsy, "bring hither the boy."

After a time the boy was brought, reluctantly enough on his part. "Will you go with me," said Mabel, having by this time recovered. "I will be kind to you,—I will love you like a mother."

"But will you love my pony," said the child. "I will not go without him. I could love you, if you loved him. You look so kind—so is he. You shall be my mother, instead of Zillah. If I may have my pony I will try to love you."

"Come then," said Mabel, "and I will love him for your sake." She held out her arms, and the child sprang towards her, and she clasped him to her bosom, exclaiming, "Oh that I were indeed thy mother!"

A short conversation took place between the old gypsy woman and Amy's father, which ended by the latter putting several gold pieces into her hand, after which she took her departure, first kissing both the pony and the boy. As for the old Lady of the Manor House, she began to argue in her usual manner, and said all was for the best. "The child has had good air and good exercise," continued she; "and what if his manners are a little bit rude, his health is excellent. He might have been kept up in a confined room, nursed, and spoiled, and fondled to death, until he had been fit for nothing. It's all for the best, depend upon it, and will prove so in the end."

"Cheat not yourself thus, wicked old woman," exclaimed Amy's father; "the hour of reckoning is fast approaching, when these excuses will be of no avail. You have deceived me; but remember there is One you can never deceive. Your old age protects you from any vengeance of mine. As for myself, I have still my own conscience for a tormentor. The past we can never undo—the dead is beyond our recall—but there is still the living to look to, and the future to repent in. My poor fallen victim," added he, looking in pity on the idiot, "goes with me. And now we," said he, addressing Alfred, "will accompany you and this young lady to her grandfather's. We will see what effect time produces in altering the manners of

this child, and then I will decide what is to be done with him. To your care, young lady, I shall resign him for the present, confident that I could not place him in better hands than your's and your venerable grandfather's, for he and I are not altogether strangers."

It was a beautiful picture to see the meek Mabel leading that lost child by the hand through the long green lane that led to her grandfather's cottage, while the last rays of sunset streamed through some opening in the hedge, gilding her own sweet countenance, and turning to dark gold the bronzed cheek of her little companion, while it fell in a full flood of light upon the white pony. But far more beautiful was the mind of that matchless girl, for tender thoughts beamed in her eyes; and as she looked down upon the little outcast that trudged along bare footed by her side, a painter might have taken the expression of her countenance, and drawn the Holy Mother, bending with fond and anxious looks over her God-born child. Could the pale faces of the dead look again upon those they have left behind and loved, the spirit of Amy would have hovered in the departing rays of that calm sunset, and smiled upon the kind protector of her child. There was a wild beauty about the look of that boy—something in his very gait that outstripped the drilled walk of a home-nursed child. And as he ran to and fro to gather the wild flowers, and promised Mabel that he would on the morrow pull as many as would make a bed for her tent, she felt that she had still affection to build upon, and doubted not but that time would rightly model the mind when she had once won fully the heart.

A pretty life did that wild boy lead old Miles Marchmont and his daughter Mabel for the first three months. Sometimes he was absent for hours in the wood, for only hunger or night would drive him home; and more than once they had found him asleep in the moonlight at the foot of a tree. But when he found that his absence gave such pain to Mabel, he gradually abandoned this out-of-door life—he was, as the old women in the village said, "as wild as a March hare." By degrees he took to learning his letters, being at first, like Alfred of old, allured by the pictures, although he cared but little for them unless they were colored, and he would often ask Mabel why the trees and the grass were not green, and the sky blue; he could not understand why dark tints only were used in engravings.

And what befel poor Amy? Reader, as thou goest seaward from London think of her fate! Broken-hearted and unconscious to all around her, she sat on the deck of a vessel and was borne along down the majestic Thames, past the steep red coast of Sheppey, with its huge, barren banks, onward to where the Reculvers seem to rise out of the ocean, for a change of air was recommended by the physician, and she was hurried off to Margate even before her baby was turned a month old, for they had told her it was dead. The day was fine; she sat and watched the slow measured and stately march of the waves, as they rose and fell, each following the foot mark of the other as if they strode onward and onward to some far distant coast or grave—some steep dark cavern into which they rolled and were no more. She saw the sky stretch on either hand like a vast and boundless desert, and when the dim coast again hove in sight, she felt like one in a swoon. Patches of green, and red, and white, glided by her like a painted canvas that uncoiled for miles and miles, still striped with the self-same colors. She was sick and weary of life. Still onward strode the sea, here rolling through purple, there through a domain of silver, which far and wide away stretched into a sea of gold; and she saw the white sea gulls flapping over her head like spirits, now poised in the air as if looking fixedly upon her, then sailing away as if to tell of what they had seen to their snow-breasted companions that floated over the distant and purple ether. She was ill and faint, and her attendant left her for a few moments to procure something to allay her thirst, and while she was absent, Amy rose from her seat. She walked along the deck of the vessel, scarcely knowing where she was—one of the gangways stood open (through which two men had been emptying the ashes out of the engine room into the sea)—and at the moment she was passing it the vessel gave a lurch, and as she put out her hand to save herself from falling, she fell head foremost, and never rose again. The deep sea closed over all her troubles. After the sun went down, a storm heaved up, and all night long the wind seemed to moan and sob over her cruel children, the waves, as if claiming back poor Amy. But the waves rolled along, and lashed, and tore at the cliffy coast, seeking more victims, until they went growling further out into the sea as if they were an hungered for food.

So Amy died!—There is no stone to mark her resting place, nothing but the Two Sisters, (as the Reculvers are called), which stand shoreward, opposite to where she perished. If you try to fix your eyes on the fancied spot, the waves come and go and roll upon each other, and when you look again towards the coast you find yourself far beyond it.

"Full fathom five, poor Amy lies, Of her bones are corals made; Those are pearls, that were her eyes, Nothing of her that doth fade. Sea Nymphs hourly ring her knell"

Reader, if you are at all fanciful, "this music will creep by you upon the waters, for it is no mortal business, nor so sound the earth owns." The sea towards Margate is haunted with it. The inhabitants say that on a windy night, Amy walks the long pier at Herne Bay, and shrieks into the broad sea as if calling for her child, and that the waves make answer in hollow and sepulchral and pitiful moans. This the old sailors laugh at, and avow it is but the white spray, washing above the tottering and sea-shaken piles. Yet they confess that the old

pier is an awful place to walk alone on, in "an unruly night," that to seaward, down its slimy and seaweed-strangled steps, "is a naughty place to swim in," when the waves are rolling mountains high. The dark angel of death, they allow, seems alone to stand sentry on those gloomy steps on a windy night. To us who knew Amy well, these old sea kings, the white cliffs, have now a solemn look, nor could our Mabel, after her marriage with Alfred, ever gaze on them without a shudder. If thou wouldst visit "fair Margate aright," go in winter, and hear how the winds sing to the waves all night long, as if she tried in vain to quiet her stormy children. Listen, but for a week, to the billows, which seem as if they would overleap "the pale faced shore," which now looks affrighted at the angry sea, as he comes raving with hunger from his darkest caverns, as if "seeking whom he may devour." Visit the grim old sea-king when he has awakened from his summer's sleep—when neither the bee nor the butterfly dare venture a yard from the yawning cliffs, to show their shadows on his beating bosom—over which only the death black muscles dare to crawl.

Then hear the natural language in which the gruff stormy old fellow only speaks, as if to tell you that he is awake—when he neither "seeth visions, nor dreameth dreams," then he will [unless thou art a child of the ocean], make thee acknowledge his power.

SO ENDS OUR TALE.

For it will add but little interest to it to tell how the old lady of the Manor House was found dead in her bed, her drawers broken open, and her plate and money taken away, and how narrow an escape two of her servants had from being found guilty of both robbery and murder; how Amy's step-father sunk into his grave, "a sadder and a wiser man" before his death than he ever was in the palmy days of his ambitious villainy. As to the poor idiot, he still lives; and Mabel has taken care that "the Gates of Bethlem" shall never close upon him. He still exists, and so do the accursed model prisons, which we hope to God the first thunder bolt launched from Heaven will bury "deeper than ever plummet sounded."

As for Mabel, although yet a young wife, she became a mother to the bold gypsy boy. That sweetness and obedience which were so natural to her she instilled into him; and never did old Miles Marchmont seem so happy since he lost his own son as he was while instructing or wandering with that beautiful boy. When of age he will become the owner of a wealthy estate; and there is no doubt but that the gypsies will find comfortable summer encampments within the neighbourhood. As for Mabel, she is Alfred's faithful wife—

And he as rich, in having such a jewel, As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl, The water nectar, and the rocks pure gold.

The British Magazines

FOR FEBRUARY.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

[We select the following from an article entitled "An Exiled Contributor" who is at present residing in New South Wales. It will give our readers some idea of this remote part of the world.]

I am unable to give you an accurate notion of the general appearance of the country. Speaking in broad terms it is wooded, but not so densely as on the Sydney side, Van Dieman's Land, or New Zealand. The peculiar and beautiful feature of this country is the open plain which is found at every ten or twelve miles, spreading itself over a surface not less than three miles in length, and half that distance in breadth. It is as smooth as a lawn. A magnificent tree rears itself to a great height here and there upon the sward, on either side of which appears a natural park, the finest that taste could fashion or art could execute. Nature has done in fact what no art could accomplish. Gaze upon these grounds, and for a moment imagine that the enormous bullocks before you, with their fearful horns, are a gigantic herd of deer, and you have a sight that England, famous for her parks, shall in vain attempt to rival. But against this royal scene—set off a melancholy drawback, one which I fear may never be made good even by the ingenuity and indomitable energy of man. The land has an awful want of spring water. There are a few small holes, called lagoons, the remains of ancient rivers, met with now and then; and strange to say, while one of these holes will be found to contain salt water, another, within a very few yards of it, has water quite fresh, or nearly so. In the former are found large sea fish, such as cod, mullet, sea-carp, and a fish similar to our perch. I am speaking of holes discovered at a distance of a hundred and twenty miles from the sea, and having no visible communication with it. In several districts there are large rivers, but their course is uncertain, and it is impossible to say, that any one river empties itself into the sea. Goulburn is a fine river, and ninety miles from this, on the banks of that river, are found very large lobsters, and other shell fish. To stand on an eminence, and to cast your eye down into the valley beyond and beneath you, is to have an enjoyment which the ardent lover of nature alone can appreciate. Far as the eye can look, there is uninterrupted harmony. Splendid plains covered with the fleecy tribe, and here and there [alas! only here and there] a speck of water, enough to vindicate nature from the charge of utter neglect—and no more. A glance thrown in another direction brings to your view an endless tract of country deprived even of these solitary specks, where the grass grows as high as your knee, and where no man dare take his flocks and herds for lack