

Literature, &c.

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FOR SEPTEMBER AND AUGUST.

From Hogg's Instructor.

THE STATUE IN THE SNOW.

BY J. B. TAYLOR.

Numb and chill the Savoyard wander'd
By the banks of frozen Seine,
O, to cheer his sinking spirit,
Singing low some mountain strain.

But, beside the wintry river,
Rose the songs of green Savoy,
Sadder than 'mid Alpine valleys,
Sung by many a shepherd boy.

From the bleak and distant Vosges
Swept the snowy whirlwind down,
Flinging wide its shifting mantle
Over slope and meadow brown.

Like a corpse, the silent landscape
Lay all stark and icy there,
And a chill and ghostly terror
Seem'd to load the leaden air.

Still that shiv'ring boy went forward,
Though his heart within him died,
When the dreary night was closing,
Dull around the desert wide.

Sobbing wild in lonely sorrow,
On his numb cheek froze the tear,
And his footstep, faint and weary,
Heeded not the gath'ring fear!

Through the desolate northern twilight,
To his home-sick pining, rose
Visions of the flashing glaciers,
Lifted in sublime repose.

Horns of Alp-herds rang in welcome,
And his mother kiss'd her boy!—
Back his bounding heart was hurried
From the vales of dear Savoy!

For, amid the sinking darkness,
Colder, chillier, o'er the snows,
Till but faint and moaning whispers
From his stiff'ning lips arose.

Then beside the pathway kneeling,
Folded he his freezing hands,
While the blinding snows were drifted
Like the desert's lifted sands.

As in many an old cathedral,
Curtain'd round with solemn gloom,
One may see a marble cherub
Kneeling on a marble tomb.

With his face to heaven upturning,
For the dead he seems to pray,
While the organ o'er him thunders,
And the incense curls away—

Thus knelt, all pale and icy,
When the storm at midnight pass'd,
And the silver lamps of heaven
Burn'd above the pausing blast.

In that starry-roof'd cathedral
Kneelt the cherub form in prayer,
While the smoke from snowy censers
Drifted upward through the air.

Though no organ's grand vibration
Shook the winds that linger'd near,
Think ye not the hymns of angels
Trembled on his dying ear!

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LUCY MORRISON.

'Lucy, my dear,' said old Mrs. Morrison to the sedate and beautiful girl, who plied her needle busily beside her, 'I am becoming old.'

'Yes, dear mother you are,' said Lucy, looking kindly and curiously up.

'You are a grown woman now, Lucy.'

'That's true enough, too, mother; what very obvious conclusion you come to at night.'

'As I am getting old Lucy, and full of infirmities, and so may not be long spared to be with you,' said Mrs. Morrison, unheeding the rallery, 'and as you are no longer a child, but full of understanding, as you are replete with goodness, I must no longer withhold from you a secret deeply concerning you, which has hitherto been shut up in this lone old bosom.'

'Dearest mother,' cried Lucy, laying aside her work, and tenderly embracing her companion, 'What can you mean?'

'Sit down my dear child, and you shall presently learn. One winter night a poor woman came, a-begging to our door—to my poor husband's door and mine—when we lived in that sweet little cottage, five hundred miles from this place, and asked us, as was usual with mendicants in that thinly peopled country, for a night's lodging in an outhouse. We had been much annoyed with the visits of vagrants, who often contrived to relieve us of something besides their own presence which they left us; sometimes they stole poultry

from our yard, and sometimes they decamped with clothes from our little bleaching green. Now, on account of such deprivations, my husband had determined to turn a deaf ear to future petitioners for lodgings, when, on a cold November night the poor woman arrived. So, that in accordance with his resolution, he was no sooner informed that a beggar was at the gate than he began to screw up his hardness of heart, as it were to the highest pitch of intensity—for hardness of heart was far from natural to him—to give the poor creature a denial of the hospitality she craved for. But the piteous expressions of the woman's countenance, her worn out air, her exhausted energies and emaciated frame, overcame him. There was the child too, hanging about her asleep, poor innocent, and unconscious of her distress. It would have melted a hard heart, Lucy.'

'It would indeed, dear mother; go on.'

'Well, my poor, husband, though he began with that rough affected tone, ended, you can well believe, with the softest accents; and instead of granting her permission to make a couch of the straw in the corner of the cow-house, which was generally called the 'beggar's bed,' he set her down at our supper-board, caused me to make for her some hot elder wine, and to supply both her and her baby, which might be above a year old, with food suitable to their cases, and lodged them in the house.'

'Oh! my good, my dear father!' exclaimed Lucy.

'Well, my child, when I went in the morning to look after our guests, it appeared to me, as I entered their chamber, that the mother's wearied senses were still locked in sleep. The little child played about in the sun-light on the bed, and prattled to its mother, who seemed not to hear it. It sat down on her bosom, and lisped out 'Mammy, wake, dear mammy,' while it pushed up her eyelids with its little thumbs. I approached the bedside, and—the poor woman was dead!—The child, Lucy, was yourself!—My husband, as you know,' continued Mrs. Morrison, by and by, 'died when you were five years old. Before his death we had both grown as much attached to you as if you had been our own child—our own only child—for Providence never sent us any other but yourself. The people of the neighbourhood knew your history of course, yet they called you our child, and regarded you as such. Lucy Morrison was the only name you ever knew, or were ever known by; for we never discovered who your mother was. All that we could find out concerning her, poor desolate creature, was that she came out of the 'west country.' She could have told us, no doubt, much that was mournful of a history that was probably a chequered one, had she not been so suddenly called away from all her worldly miseries. I liked not the place at all when my husband was taken from me. Though we had thriven, and though I was left with comfortable and increasing means, I stayed not to reap the fruit of our anxieties and labours. Every scene that I had looked upon with him but fed my melancholy without him. So I took a woman's resolve, gathered up our little earnings, and returned to my native place. I say a woman's resolve, Lucy, for a woman often makes sacrifices to the indulgence of a cherished sentiment that a man would not make. You know how much I regret now that I did not stay—more for your sake, my dearest, than for my own. Now, I think that to dwell where I lived with him would be a solace in my old days. His grave there too, and to lie in that. You would then in all likelihood have been rich, now, how poor you are you well know, since we have both to work for our bread with our hands. Ah! I must not blame myself too much; for had we not lost the little fortune I brought here, by intrusting it to the hands of one we had reason to think so safe, my mind might not have been filled with these vain regrets. But, my sweet child, to leave you alone and penniless!'

'I will not allow it,' said Lucy, throwing her arms round Mrs. Morrison's neck; 'I will not allow you to cry. We shall work a long time together yet, my mother, and if I am left behind you, you will bequeath to me what you say my father used to call his motto, 'Honesty, and a good purpose.'

Mrs. Morrison had brought Lucy home to her native village as her daughter. So Lucy was the first within a radius of five hundred miles to be undeceived on the subject of her birth. The strange conflict of feelings, created by her mother's communications in the bosom of the poor girl, may be imagined; but what was the perplexity which ever arose above others in her mind? It was how this new knowledge would affect the tender relationship in which she felt herself placed toward Ambrose Logan, though no vows had passed between them.

Ambrose was the son of a man of ability in his calling, which was that of a builder, and, with fair natural parts, a tolerable education, and the opportunities afforded him in his father's business, he had already developed a considerable talent for a theoretical as well as a practical knowledge of mechanics. Urged by a generous love of that department of science, he burned for a wider sphere of practical observation, for ample scope for his talents than could be presented to him in his employment under his father.

A tender tie, however, restrained him when ambition would wing him away from his native village. A centripetal force compensated his centrifugal. The reader has guessed it. But at length determined, with manful earnest-

ness, to compass both his ends, to go in search of employment, knowledge, and reputation, and to return happy in success, to claim his bride.

'And you will not promise, Lucy?'

'No, Ambrose; I wish you success and much happiness, oh, how much! and shall always think of you as a dear friend in whom I have the greatest—the very greatest—interest, but do not think of loving me.—Go into the world and forget me. Pursue your noble objects, and may every good attend you!'

'Do not mock me, Lucy; you tell me to go, and yet withhold from me the only condition on which I can depart. You wish me happiness, and refuse me the chief, the sole means of being happy. Do promise me.'

'Ambrose,' said Lucy, seriously; 'I may not promise.'

'You love another, then!' replied he with a frantic gesture.

'No,' said the mild maiden, kindly and sincerely, 'I do not, Ambrose; yet I may not promise you—must ask you to forget me.'

'What riddle is this, Lucy?'

'I have a reason, which I wish to retain to myself, Ambrose; but not at all such a one as your suspicion pointed at just now. Let us be ever friends, and may God speed you as much as Lucy would desire.' She saw that her quietly firm manner wounded the youth who loved her, and whom she loved, and rallying herself from the serious into the half-sportive mood, she could not help adding, 'Silly man, does it not see that the bargain is all on one side? She sends him, unshackled, into the world, to keep or to fling away his love, advantage it would never do for damsels to yield to swains in a general way, while she remains here the same Lucy Morrison to him; for if she love not him, she promises to love no other.'

'May I write?'

'Might not that be construed into a distinct understanding?'

'Farewell, Lucy; I shall return.'

Such was the parting colloquy of the young pair. Lucy loved; but a maiden's coyness, and the difficulty of her position, which she exaggerated to herself, confused her, and imparted to her part of a dialogue a degree of inconsistency and unintelligibility. Many a time did she recall every word that had been uttered on this parting occasion, and every time but to distress herself over this word and that expression. Did she really wish Ambrose to forget her?

Ah, poor Lucy! her mother died, and then she was left alone in their cottage. Her wants were primitive, however, and the work of her hands enabled her to pay her rent and to support herself, though that was the utmost she could do by constant confinement and diligent work from morning till night. She sat ever by the little cottage window, behind the shade of the pet flowers, at her seam, now thinking of her mother who was dead, and then of Ambrose who was far away and perhaps had forgotten her. Her relations were a brother and a sister of her mother's. The sister was the companion and the housekeeper of the former, he never having been married. The brother followed Mrs. Morrison to the grave about a year after he had laid her head in it. He had been of parsimonious habits, and had saved money. To Lucy, on whom he had never bestowed the slightest present during his life, he left five hundred pounds at his death. The residue of his poverty he left to the sister who lived with him. Nevertheless, this worthy woman was far from being satisfied, though her means were far more than commensurate with her necessities. She had imbibed the miserly spirit of her brother, and sorely did she grudge the rendering up the niece's small portion, though it was needed so very much. Poor Lucy, on her side, was thrown into great perplexity by the words of the will—'His sister's child—five hundred pounds to his late sister Sarah's child.' After a sleepless night, the distressed young woman, having taken counsel with herself, appeared in her aunt's house.

'You have come for your money, I suppose,' said the aunt. 'It is not due for a year.'

'No, aunt,' said Lucy; 'I am come to say that I do not think I can conscientiously take it when it is due.'

Lucy then disclosed the secret of her birth. Her aunt applauded her scruples; called her an honest girl; affected to offer her the money 'all the same'; but was thankful in her heart that the girl took her not at her word. Poor miserable old woman, her love for lucre did not equal her brother's after all, but then she had less sympathy for her kind.

To work Lucy went again, to sad thoughts of her mother and to anxious ones concerning Ambrose. She wondered if he would after all forget her. She tried to wish he might, but she could not. Her cottage continued to present 'the same neat appearance to the passer's eye. Her window flowers bloomed as beautifully as ever. She rose early with the summer sun, and sat late by the winter lamp, and sewed these weary rows of embroidery. What a number of stitches, what a dreary number for a few pence!

Ambrose Logan had found employment in the yards of an eminent engineer. When he had been away two years, he was selected as one of a number of young men, of engineering capabilities, who were to accompany the conductors of an explorative expedition to the Euphrates, with a view to an examination of its fitness for steam navigation. And as he slaked his midday thirst under the rays of a scorching sun, he thought of the cool and grateful breezes of his home-land; the glare of

the arid waste recalled the green beauty of his own temperate climate. But when he thought of cool winds, and landscapes refreshing to the eye, he perhaps enhanced their pleasures and beauties through means of something, or rather some one, associated with their remembrances in his heart.

As he sat on the ruins of Babylon, and tried to conjure up its motley crowds and the hum of its ancient populousness, his mind wandered back to a sequestered northern village, and a girl sewing quietly at a cottage window was daguerreotyped in his mind's eye. He had heard of her constancy through the letters of his friends and acquaintance. And Lucy, she was never long in ascertaining the nature of his communications from the east, somehow or other, though they were no business of hers. But the whole village was cognizant of his travels, and used to wonder in its simple mind, that young Ambrose Logan should see cities and places, with his mortal eyes which it had but read of as existing before the commencement of the Christian era, and which was placed so far off on the world's surface. At length the post failed to bring farther communications. His friends became anxious. News-papers were sought after and scrutinised. The members of the Euphrates expedition were reported to be fast perishing under a disastrous fever. The anxiety of the village grew. A list of sufferers were published, and Ambrose Logan's name was on the list. Courageous hope sank into a sick certainty, and poor Ambrose was lamented in proportion as his character had been esteemed.

And poor Lucy! now she worked and wept! She still worked. But illness grew upon her. 'She has taken cold,' said one. 'The smell of flowers is unwholesome,' said another. The doctor said something of malaria. The secret spring to unlock the cabinet of her distress was unknown. Alone and friendless, fatherless, motherless, loverless, hers was a fever of the spirit. Her disorder reached delirium, and her real griefs were forgotten in the fantastic horrors in which she was engulfed. But cheer up kind and compassionate reader. The forces of her constitution began to survive at last. After her stormy voyage in perilous seas, it was seen, as the poor girl sat up and placed her head in her emaciated but cooled hand, that a haven had been reached. She increased in beauty and in strength, till she could even take a tranquil retrospect of her trials; and was at length able to resume her work, and to think how busy she must be, to make up for the time lost during her illness. Lost in reverie, one autumn evening, Lucy sat by her window as before. A thread remained half pulled through, and a tear half filled the eye of the desolate girl, when she saw a figure arise as it were out of her musings, as one view develops itself boldly from out the fragmentary confusion of another dissolving away by the simple trick of the exhibitor.

'Methinks I see him!' was her thought. 'But oh how real! In my fevered dreams I never conjured him up so truly before. It speaks I hear. He lives!'

Logan advanced in person, he entered, and caught the swooning girl in his arms. He kissed her brow and she revived. 'Lucy,' said he, 'I am come again.'

She pressed the hand which held hers, and looked in his face with wonder and thankfulness.

And when he could speak and she could hear, he recited the story of his adventures. He had indeed been seized with the fever of which the most of his comrades had died; but he did not know till his arrival in his own country, that he had been among the number reported dead. He did not, however, wonder much at the report, as he had not been expected to live for many days, and had been understood to be dead by a part of the explorers who were stationed at a distance from his own detachment. As his convalescence advanced, the objects of the expedition were, though not very satisfactorily by any means, fulfilled, and he recovered in time to return with the remnant of his companions to Britain. When he left the country his salary had been fixed at a handsome sum. It was generously increased, by the conductors of the undertaking when its perils and disasters had become evident, so that Ambrose had saved money. He had now the means of constant employment, and that of a superior kind. What wonder then if it was with the assurance of a self-supporting citizen, and the affectedly jaunty and off-handed manner of a traveller, that he now asked Lucy to consent to be his wife.

'The old difficulty still repairs, Ambrose,' said she, looking kindly, even affectionately into his face.

'And what is it Lucy?'

'Her I called my mother,' replied she frankly and promptly, out of the generous fullness of her heart, but painfully, and with eyes looking bashfully down, as if she had been guilty of deception, 'who was my dear mother was not my real mother. I was a poor beggar woman's child, who died and left me without a single clue to her history.'

'And this is your insurmountable difficulty, you silly girl?' said Ambrose clasping her in his arms. 'Poor child,' continued he playfully patting her cheek, 'it vexed its little heart, did it without any reason; is it still going to be stupid?'

Lucy looked up with a grateful smile, which Ambrose considered a satisfactory answer to his petty badinage, but which brings our little story very near its conclusion. Near, but not quite to the conclusion; for the reader is anxious to know something of the sequel. Let him take a peep then at Mr and Mrs Logan, tete-a-tete, a few years after their marriage.

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