

## Literature, &amp;c.

## The American Magazines

FOR SEPTEMBER.

From Hogg's Instructor.

## LITTLE BERTEL.

'Two mermaids, a fame, and a unicorn, that is a good order, Mira,' said Frankon, the carver, as he threw himself into his large wooden chair, and drew his brown bason of brown soup towards him with a smile of satisfaction and pride.

'Ah, we shall grow rich by and by!' said the clean, tidy, little, cheerful wife, as she smilingly placed the dark coloured bread on the table, dished a piece of Amak pork, and, drawing a little chubby girl towards her, sat down to eat with her husband.

'A few such orders as that, every month, would make me the proudest man in Copenhagen,' said Frankon, with energy, even although his mouth was full; 'for I should then have leisure to visit every figure-head in the port, and who knows but I might be able to get a sight of the great works of art in the Royal Museum.'

'Leisure!' cried Mira, with a laugh; 'why Frankon, I doubt you will always be stupid. If you get orders, why you must execute them; and if you execute them you will have no time to waste. A little walk with me, the girls, and Bertel, to the gardens of Amak, in the evening, would be all the time that you could spare, I doubt.'

'Ah, you are right, Mira!' said her husband, with a sigh, as he slowly broke a crust, and placed the smaller fragment in his mouth, with the abstracted air of one who is thinking of something else than eating. 'There is little in prospect for me but toil, and then?'

'Add then what, you coward?' cried Mira, with a merry ringing laugh, as she interrupted her husband's speech; 'why, have not you Mira, and Phoebe, and Bertel, and myself? and yet you despond?'

'Yes, but your kirtle is of coarse serge, and Mira, Phoebe, and Bertel's keels of coarse blue woollen cloth,' said Frankon, still seriously. 'We eat the cod-fish and the haddocks of the Skager Rack more frequently than we even see the beef of Holstein or the vegetables of Amak, and that's what often makes me sad.'

'Ah, Frankon, Frankon!' cried Mira, shaking her little finger in her husband's face, and still speaking to him through infectious laughter; 'all the beef in Copenhagen could not compensate me for the absence of your smile; and all the gardens in Holstein, Amak, and Funen to boot, could never produce flowers so beautiful or fruits so sweet as my little children; better days will come yet, and that you will see.'

'I believe you, Mira!' cried Frankon, jumping up and kissing his wife and children joyously, 'and I am sure that there is not a figure-head on any ship, from the Skaw to Sleswick, so beautiful as thou art.'

'Or so brave!' cried Mira, still smiling in her husband's face; 'they meet the stormy waves of the Belt and the sound without shrinking, but I meet the storms of poverty without fear, for Heaven has given me hope, and a good husband, and fine children.'

'And what a wife I have got!' cried Frankon fondly.

'Wait till Bertel gets a little older,' said Mira archly, 'and you will see how bravely he will help you to your labour, and what an easily wrought old man you'll be.'

'Ah, no, Mira!' said Frankon, seriously, not so; 'let Bertel be a carpenter or a silver horn maker for the nobles, if you wish him to live easily, but do not speak of him carrying figure heads for ships.'

'And why not?' said Mira, who had a high opinion of her husband's calling, merely because it was her husband's, even in opposition to his experience and convictions. 'And why not?' she continued, addressing Frankon in a saucy tone, as if bent upon wringing him in the meshes of an argument.

But a tap at her little door soon discomposed the family circle and abbreviated her discourse, for Frankon hurried to his small workshop, as it ashamed to be caught idle, and the children glided out as their mother opened the door and admitted to her husband's workshop a stranger whose head was covered with a broad black beaver, and whose form was wrapped in a large blue coat-cloak.

Frankon, with his wife and son, were natives of Iceland, who had left the cold and barren region of their nativity to seek for comfort in the capital of Denmark. Hardy, adventurous, patient, ingenious, the Icelanders, whose skill in representing the human and other forms on wood was far from inconsiderable, had persuaded himself that in the maritime city of Copenhagen he would be well employed in cutting out emblems for ships; and accordingly he removed to the wealthy island of Zealand, where, in course of time the most marked additions his household were two little daughters.

'He did not grieve at this,' he said, 'but he would almost as soon have had an order to cut out two little cupids, and he looked rather sorrowful when his children began to increase in strength and power of eating without any improvement taking place upon his trade. But Mira—sunny-hearted, hopeful, handsome little Mira—who would have supposed that she had been born and nurtured in cold gloomy Iceland? Why, her eyes were like the blue pellucid streams of the green Alps, her cheeks like the roses of Cashmere, and her lips like

the cherries of Aost, and her laugh was more musical than the song of the Indian bulbul. She would have made sunshine and summer in Lapland instead of in the home of Frankon, and as she spun at her wheel, baked her brown bread, assisted Frankon to turn his lathe, or sung to the children, there seemed to be a halo of happiness shining around her that brightened everything within her smiling influence. What a brave, indomitable, hearty creature she was, working stoutly from morning till night, and keeping everything in her humble dwelling as clean and bright as her sweet face. There was no querulous complaining with Mira; no despondency, no gloomy ruminations and forebodings. She had faith in God, and faith in human goodness, and although she might be wrong in the latter belief, yet it kept her free from suspicion and always cheerful.

What would Frankon have been without Mira? She was the sun of his delight, the lighthouse of his spirit when it grew dark and troubled; she was a treasure in his poverty, more fruitful of contentment and happiness than all the gold and silver that men have quarrelled over in this world; she was the priestess of his hearth, around whose warm and holy shrine peace, and hope, and gladness smiled each evening. And how the children loved their joyous mother! She was the beacon light of their futurity, for every little manifestation of benignity and kindness in them was a reflex caught from her. It seems wonderful, at first thought, how a mother will picture a bright and glorious futurity for her son and yet it is not when we reflect upon their relation to each other. The boy is a miniature portrait of his father in the mother's eyes, and as all her ideas of power and action are centered in her husband, so in her son she sees the growth and gradual development of those qualities of manhood which in her pride and joy she feels to have emanated from herself. Mira loved her little daughters with all the force of a mother's affection, but, disguise it as she might, in addition to loving him, she was proud of her son Bertel. And Bertel was a boy to be proud of, if quiet, unobtrusive modesty and obedient attention to his parents could be considered cause of pride. They had no fears of Bertel running away to the wharves and tumbling into the canals like the other boys; he loved better to whittle wood at the fireside on the winter evenings, or to romp with and teach his sisters in summer, than to put his parents in mortal dread every day, that they might have the honour of saying to the neighbours 'he was a sprightly boy.'

Bertel was sitting with his sister on the flagstones before his father's door, fashioning a piece of clay into some fantastic form, when the stranger with the broad beaver and blue cloak, who had been ordering a wooden eagle for a fancy aviary, suddenly came upon him.

'Ha, my little man, what is this?' he said, as he bent down and looked closely at the clay figure which the boy was modelling with wonderful dexterity and zeal. 'This is good,' and he lifted the figure from the ground.

Bertel sat confounded, and then he looked up at the stranger timidly, his face suffused with blushes, without daring to utter a word.

'This is good,' he continued, looking at the soft rude little model which the plastic hand of the boy had invested with something even of the grace of the human form; 'thou wilt be a man yet.'

'So my mother says!' cried Phoebe, who was a lively child; 'she is always telling us that our Bertel will yet be something; and she looked archly at her brother, who was ready to cry with bashful vexation.

'Very natural of a mother,' said the stranger, in a kindly tone, as he still examined the piece of wet clay; and then suddenly turning, as if some thought had struck him, he opened Mira's latch, much to that good housewife's discomposure, who was just arranging her cap, and stepped once more into Frankon's workshop, much to the amazement of that laborious workman.

There was something had come of Count Stolberg's conversation with Frankon, for Bertel in a few months afterwards was modelling with much assiduity and attention, a bust in the gallery of the Copenhagen School of Design. Two or three years passed on, and he was still working away as silently and diligently as ever; his ruddy cheeks had grown paler now, but they would still glow with shame when any of his fellow students would either approach or criticise his labour; and although the coarsely clad carver's son soon took sides with the gayest amateur in the academy, and could invest his copies from the antique with more of the life of the original than any student of his age, or even few years beyond it, he was still as retiring and modest as when he was clad in his blue pinafore, and was fondled as little Bertel by his mother at home. He was no longer little Bertel now; he had grown higher by a head within three years, and although that was not very high comparatively, still he was no longer little Bertel but a very promising student in the School of Design, and a prodigy of all that was admirable in the eyes of Mira. Strangers would never have discovered in Bertel's person any indications of the spirit-fire of genius. He was not a Goliath for people to gaze at, but a very unassuming little fellow, whose eyes alone, when he was excited, proclaimed by their sparkling lustre the residence of a burning soul. He felt, however, that there was a strength within him which would yet burst the shackles of his obscurity, and he with the zeal and ardour of an enthusiast,

although superficial onlookers might esteem him to be even dull and slow.

Ah, what a proud day it was for Mira and Frankon when their son bore home a silver medal on his breast from the competition, and held in his hand an order which conferred upon him the power and privilege of studying for three years at Rome. Visions of fame and fortune danced in the fancy of the happy mother, and Frankon, whose circumstances had gradually improved with diligence and time, now felt satisfied that a lad of Bertel's talents would succeed in the world even as a carver.

There were a great many tears shed when Bertel packed up the presents which he had received from his sisters, and began to rope his trunk for the voyage to Rome. Mira had stored him well with stout wollen stockings and other articles of good warm clothing, little dreaming that they would be almost useless in the sunny clime of Italy. She did not know what sort of a place Rome was, but she had an idea that, from being far away, it was assuredly somewhat like Iceland, and so she rendered Bertel's chest quite pellucid with warm garments, and felt an inward satisfaction that he could hardly close the lid. Bertel himself kept bravely up so long as he was on land; but when he had kissed and embraced his parents and sisters, and had thrown himself into the boat that was to bear him from all he loved on earth, the tears burst from his eyes. Ay, when the little boat was moored at the side of the ship, and Bertel stood upon the deck of the gallant bark, with its tall masts and impatient canvass, ready to bound away, the novelty of the spectacle it presented, could not wean his mind from thinking on the kindred that were so dear to him, and of his humble but dear old home. Away she went through the straits of the Sound, she passed the Elsinore, with its dark towers and its wild and stormy steep; on through the waters of the Cattegat and Skager Rack, and out into the blue waters of the German Ocean. She was a strong and gallant ship, and seemed to feel the influence of expansion, for she tore through the waters of the wide sea like a winged halcyon, to the music of her bellowing sails. The vessel had passed through the Straits of Dover, and the passengers had gazed upon the chalk cliffs of England before Bertel grew cheerful; but when they were dancing over the billows of the English channel and the mighty ocean, he was jocund and happy, and even Edgar Olen, the young officer of marine, who was going to spend his leave of absence at Rome during the carnival, could not boast of a more hopeful spirit. On she went, that good ship—on in her untiring and sleepless way; she skirted the fertile shores of pleasing France, and the rocky coast of lovely Spain, and bounding along, with Lusitania on her lee, passed into the mighty Mediterranean. Prosperity seemed to have breathed her swelling white wings full of favouring winds, and to have kept her bounding joyously to her destined haven, and Bertel's father seemed to have infused a charm in the figure of hope and her anchor which he had carved for the recognition of this ship, so hopeful and cheerful were the passengers and crew. But, a lack for the illusions of months and the dark reality of an hour! One of the sudden and dangerous squalls, which are so frequent in this sea, tore the shrouds and sails to pieces, and sent the ship a rudderless wreck upon the southern shore of Corsica.

Poor Bertel! alack for his mother's care and his sister's attention, his chest, with all its home treasures and little keepsakes, was swallowed up by the envious ocean, and his own drenched and exhausted frame was rudely and grudgingly cast upon a barren beach. He had saved nothing except the garments he wore and certificate entitling him to a small pension for three years from the Danish Government, together with his medal. He had ever wore that missive in a little sheepskin case in his bosom, and desolate and sad as he was, after he recovered his senses, he felt his spirits revive when he found that he had not lost this treasure. Even the greatest external calamities are generally insufficient to crush the resiliency of the young and hopeful spirit, and time seems to begin, immediately after the direct actions, to soften the impressions they leave with the brush of a gradual oblivion. Bertel and Edgar Olen were not well warned and fed at the hearth of a good Corsican peasant before the loss of their worldly goods began to seem a matter of small importance, and their desertion by the crew a thing not worth grieving about. The aristocratic officer was happy to find in the young sculptor a witness to the truth of his allegations when he applied to the French authorities in Bastia for assistance. Bertel had his certificate, which he could present as a passport to honour any day, and Edgar Olen would require credit in two ways for some time.

The gray officer and the humble young student arrived in Rome at last, the one forgot his recent misfortunes amongst gay friends and the joy and excitement of the carnival, the other to toil himself into notice and bread through all the obstacles and cloudy depressions of an all but neglected poverty. 'Good by, Bertel,' said Edgar Olen to his fellow-passenger, as he waved his hand with a patronising air, and leaped into his friend Count Lillo's barouche, which stood waiting for him on the Corso; 'good by, and great success to you.' The driver whipped the horses, the carriage rattled away down the Corso, amidst many splendid equipages, towards the mansion of Count Lillo, and the youthful sculptor was left alone. Poor Bertel, he wandered, up and down the streets gazing about him in wonder and amazement and eagerly looking for those remnants of Roman glory which he

had come so far to study, but the statues of old times had gone, and the temples of their residence were crumbling on the banks of the dull sluggish Tiber. Alack for the lovely stream of which Horace and Ovid had sung! Alack for the gardens of Cicero and Cæsar, with their fountains, and statues, and flowers, and luxuriant groves! Bertel wandered amidst dirty dingy dwellings, crumbling ruins, and squalid people, where the lords of the world had strode in their majesty and pride; and wretchedly clad lazzaroni lay unclassically basking amongst the mud of the classic stream where nymphs and graces went to sport of old. One of the most cheering and welcome sights that met the eye of Bertel, however, after his lonely peregrinations, was the signboard of the Danish consul, and presenting himself and certificate to that functionary, with a statement of his disasters and present condition, he had the happiness to find himself referred to the proper quarter for having his claims allowed.

Bertel wrought away with a diligent hand and stout heart for the three years of his probation, and at the end of that time found himself as near to fame as ever, and without the comforts which his small pension had ensured him. Ah dear old Copenhagen, dear mother, father, and sisters, he would never see them again unless fortune smiled on him! His mother's smile was once all in all to him, but now ambition had become a passion, which neglect and poverty had fed and quickened instead of quenching, and fortune's smile became the sunlight of his dreams. His little yard and shed were the world and temple of his artistic devotion; for the privilege of tenantry these he paid a surly stone-mason a scudi per month, and this he often did ten scudis worth of labour for upon the tombstones which Carlo sold to the rich. The little studio of the indefatigable Bertel was situated in the Via Bovis, a lonely enough place now, although once it was the forum where Brutus justified the destruction of Cæsar, and where Coriolanus bearded the fiery Plebs. The remnants of its ancient purpose lie crumbling in its centre, and the triumphal arch of Titus, at its extremity, totteringly tells a tale. The quietly disposed of the Romans, & the strangers who best know and most feel the decadence of Roman energy, often come to this silent lonely place to moralise upon the strange mutations, both in place and human character, which time and circumstances have wrought; for grass is growing where the Ediles were most attentive than none should grow, and cows are lowing where the hoarse swell of the most mighty people's voices, in times long past, gave response to the words of their tribunes.

It was a lovely summer evening, and all the gaiety and beauty of the eternal city seemed to be in motion. The sunbeams were shedding their soft and golden lustre upon the tall spires of the churches and convents, and twinkling like stars as they were refracted from the glittering windows. The vivacious Italians, with their beautiful dark eyes and fine countenances, lighted up by the seducing sunbeams, walked gaily towards the mud puddles where the ancestors had tilled their Campagna gardens; and they chanted their lays of love, in the soft rich tones of their melodious language and voices, amidst the marked dirt and desolation of the city. Everybody seemed to be abroad and happy, despite of the silent witness of want and squalor that everywhere met the eye in the streets. The ragged lazzaroni, as they stumped along on their crutches; laughed and joked as well as the sprucest signor, although their wretched plight might have made a Norseman weep. Secluded from the bustle and hum of the gay world, Bertel stood in his studio, that evening in the attitude and abstracted manner of a wrapt enthusiast. His cheeks had exchanged their ruddy hue now for the pale colour which long and sleepless labours paint upon the face, and his form was spare and fleshless compared to what it once was; but his long dark brown hair curled gracefully on his neck, and his soft blue eyes were brighter than the vesper stars. In his left hand he held his chisel, and the right was half raised, with the mallet as if he were about to strike; his dexter foot was thrown back, and his eyes fixed and rigid, and as he gazed upon the sculptured figure, which was the product of long months of toil, himself as motionless and graceful as the statue on which he gazed. 'I saw thee,' said Bertel, addressing the cold but beautiful statue in a whisper, and looking on its noble face with a proud half timid eye; 'I saw thee in the shapeless block long ago, as beautiful and alluring as thou art now, and I was determined to separate thee from all eyes but mine. Ah, Hope, Hope,' continued the admiring artist, as he timidly drew near the colossal figure, with his eyes fixed upon the noble countenance, whose rigid marble features seemed to be relaxed with a smile, 'I have toiled patiently to lead thee forth in thy majesty and beauty, and now thou art before me. Thou art the embodiment of my waking thoughts and of my restless dreams—thou art the visioned bride of my youth—for, Hope, I have clung tenaciously through a life of buffeting to thee. I have almost forgotten my mother, and my old home, in my undivided devotion to the art which thou hast bound me to, and now I have thee at last.' As he spoke the excited, abstracted man, for Bertel was a man now, sunk upon his knees as if in adoration of the image before him. The sunbeams shed their departing lustre on the pure white brow of the statue and upon the almost equally pale brow of the statue who was kneeling; and they caught the tear from the enthusiast's face and exhaled it to heaven, perhaps to let it fall as dew upon his mother's