

## LITERATURE, &amp;c.

## The British Magazines.

From Hogg's Instructor.

## VALENTINE DUVAL.

VALENTINE DUVAL was the only son of a poor vine-dresser of Champagne, and the vine-dresser was a widower. If Valentine had been caressed by a kind mother, and beloved by tender sisters, nobody would have supposed his fate a hard one, nor his heart a lonely one, but he was an only child as well as an only son; and as the vine-dresser was constrained to cultivate and watch over the tress and fruits, from which great folks obtained their champagne wine, he had not time to devote to the cultivation of his boy. He rose in the morning with the sun, left out some brown bread and milk for the child of his love, started for the vineyard, where he toiled all day, and then came home at night, to press his little boy to his bosom, and to sleep his weariness away with him locked in his paternal arms. Emile Duval was counted one of the best vine-dressers in Champagne; the plants flourished amazingly under his care; and he might have been one of the best trainers of boys, too, but the privilege was denied him. God gave him Valentine to train and teach, but poverty made him forego the highest rights and duties of fatherhood; so that while the vineyard where he labored was full of promising blossoms and healthful branches, little Valentine, the vine of his home-garden, grew up a wild and uncultured immortal.

The hat of the vine-dresser had no beauty in it, and no spirit of beauty repaired the wretchedness of its aspect. Its walls were dim and damp, and destitute of one poor ornament; and woman was not there to irradiate it with love. It was a hut where the father and son pillowed their sleeping heads; it was not a home. A home is a place of smiles, and song, and prayer. There is a hearth bright as a lover's dream in every home. There are bright faces or bright memories there. It is a place to be remembered, as full of the holiest attributes of life; not a place to be tenanted only in sleep. Alas, how many houses in this world are not homes! Valentine Duval, although a neglected boy, was still not a lost one. If he was forced from his native hut daily to find sympathies for his opening soul, he was not forced into the streets that there he might feed it on crime. He sought the woods and wilds, where the great trees stretched their jagged arms up to the blue sky, and where the pigeons built their nests in their branches. He roamed by the banks of the blue, glad streams, where the moss grew into carpets, and the gay flowers adorned them; and he watched the silver trout as they danced in the waters, which rippled round the rocks, and made glad music to them. His long yellow hair fell over his brown shoulders, like the grass of paradise over a Grecian vase. The ripe pippin was not more deep or mellow in its brown tints than his face; and his eyes were like two large dewdrops frozen on the leaves of a moss rose. Over his free, bold form hung a loose blue blouse; and with his bare feet he climbed the fells and roamed the dales where his motions had been schooled to freedom.

Valentine Duval was neglected and alone, but he was alone with nature; and although she could not tell him why he sometimes felt sad and wept, nor of God, nor of Love incarnate, nor of the way to heaven, yet she filled his soul with marvellous questionings, and gave it companion flowers. Valentine saw wonderful things of beauty around him, but he felt that there was something about them which he did not know, and then strange longings would come over him for something else of life than he now comprehended, and he would weep he knew not why. Nature did not satisfy the soul of the boy, but she did not corrupt it. Flowers, and wild birds, and blue waters were not like the neglected little outcasts of Christian cities; they did not teach the vine-dresser's neglected son to lie and steal. Philosophers may not believe it, and social economists may smile at the idea, but it is better for a child to be alone with nature than to dabble in neglect amongst a city crowd.

Wretched as was the fate of little Valentine Duval when his father lived, it is unnecessary to say that it was more wretched when he died. He was alone in the wide world then, and there was no one to give him one morsel of bread. Valentine was only nine years old when his father died, and everybody knows that this is not an age at which man should begin his life of self-dependence. 'I am alone,' said the boy, as he wandered away from the little hut; 'I am now in the wide world alone,' and a sad languid smile, more sorrowful than a thousand tears, passed over his brown face as he said so. At that moment the angels whispered in his soul, and touched his heart, and suddenly added, as he looked hopefully to heaven, 'I am alone, but still I am with God.'

With weary limbs and blistered feet, onward wandered the little pilgrim. He cared not where he went, for there was no place on the face of the great earth that he could now call home. And yet he did not wander forth without a purpose. There was something that impelled him to move onward to some far distant place, but what it was he could not tell. He felt the stirring of a holy motive, that taught his soul to long for something more than bread which perisheth; with that something was futurity must define. At last the wintry wind, far colder than even the charity of the

rough German boors, played on the poor boy's weather-beaten face, and rudely dashed the cold snow-flakes on his bare bosom; and the inexorable frost crept over his bare limbs, until, delirious and exhausted, he one day sunk down upon the straw mat which lay at an Austrian peasant's door.

When Hermann Beethove, the old shepherd, returned home from the wold with a frozen lamb on his shoulders, he found a frozen boy lying across the threshold of his humble home. 'Ah, well-a-day,' said the old man, immediately laying down the beast and lifting up the child;—'Ah, well-a-day! it is a boy; and then spreading aside the long ringlets of Valentine, and laying his own cold cheek to the child's mouth, he stood a moment as if watching with profound attention. 'He breathe,' said the old man. 'Oh thanks be to the breath-giver, he lives,' and Hermann's face grew bright and warm, as he opened his cottage door, and carried the benumbed boy beneath his lowly roof.

Hermann's cottage was a very humble one, as indeed are almost all shepherds' cottages. The few articles of furniture which it contained were of the rudest construction, and the walls and floor were earthen—but still it was a home. On the walls hung some loosely sketched maps, which Hermann's son Fritz had bought at the fair at Vienna. A few rude prints of shepherds, in bright blue tunics and white cloaks, with bright yellow sheep and red dogs, hung beside them, while on a deal shelf lay a few grim monkish-looking books. A great wooden fire roared defiance to the winter wind which howled without, and shook the little windows; and the bright flames sprang up the chimney as if to meet and combat with the surly frost. But brighter, and more beautiful, and sweeter, and warmer far than any other thing of beauty in that home, was a child that slept on old Hermann's hearth. Upon the skin of a sheep, with a white shaggy dog beside her, lay little Agna Beethove, the grandchild of Hermann, and she seemed as if she had been a little Hebe sunning herself in the light of that cheerful hearth. Her long brown hair lay scattered over her glowing cheeks and neck, and a beautifully rounded arm on which her head rested, stole from under the rich luxuriant tresses.

As Hermann threw open his cottage door, the cold wind rushed in with a sweep, and then the flames rushed out from the chimney like some fierce snakes to meet it; and the wolf-dog sprang to its feet with a growl, and the sleeping girl awoke.

'Another poor lamb, grandfather?' she cried as the old man bore the boy into the hut. 'Oh, how cold it must be upon the plain!'

'Yes, Agna, a poor lamb, but not one of Farmer Grinvelt's. It is a lamb of God's flock, whom I found even now at the door.'

'Oh, mother, it is a boy!' cried the girl with astonishment, as she gazed in Valentine's cold blue face; and then she caught his frozen hands in hers, and burst into tears.

Agna Beethove, like the child before her, had no mother, and yet that name of love was the first which her fresh young heart invoked, as she looked upon the helpless Valentine; and then as if inspired by the maternal aspiration which she had breathed, she assisted her grandfather to bathe and chafe his limbs.

Days and nights sped away, and still Valentine Duval lay in the cottage of Hermann Beethove, while delirium danced through the chambers of his brain, and fever rushed like a torrent through his veins. His couch was spread of straw and the skins of sheep, and Agna Beethove sat for long hours beside him, watching the lambs which had also been restored, as they licked his poor wounded feet, or moistening his parched lips as he rocked unceasingly about, or muttered in his own tongue about the woods, and groves, and streams, and vineyards of Champagne. Weeks passed away, and still Valentine Duval was the guest of the good old shepherd; but now he did not fight with death unconscious of the struggle. He sat a pale, thin, but wondering boy by the hearth of Hermann, and listened to Agna as she sung or recited the traditions which her mother had taught her long ago. In his wanderings, Valentine had sat by many hearths, and he had listened to many songs, and he had looked in many maidens' faces, but Hermann's fireside, and Agna's voice and face, seemed to fill up the desires of his heart, and to destroy the old impulse which he so long felt to roam. When he first awoke from his painful fevered dream, Agna's soft blue eyes, and rosy cheeks, and smiling lips met his gaze, and her clear sweet voice, as she chanted a little hymn filled his ears. 'I am in heaven,' thought the boy to himself; and then he muttered, 'What a beautiful angel!' But when Agna clapped her hands, and laughed, and cried to her grandfather to come and see the boy's large blue eyes, he gazed quickly round him, and did not know where he was.

Through the whole winter Valentine shared the brown bread and milk of the shepherd and his grandchild; and they taught him to speak their language and to sing their songs. Agna was three years older than the foundling, and she was quick of wit, from having been precociously called to the duties of womanhood; so that during the day, while he helped her to perform her household labors, she would tell Valentine tales of little orphans that were protected by guardian angels, and of dead mothers, with golden wings that hovered over the pillows of sleeping children; and she would speak of the beautiful land far far away, up above the rainbow and the sun, where Christ, who loved little children so well, now dwelt and looked down upon them with smiles if they were good; and the boy would listen to

her as if her voice were a silver instrument, and her words were holy music, until his soul was filled with love. Agna loved everything that Valentine could speak about. All the forms of beauty that he had become familiar with in his solitude were companions of her love. Her mother had loved flowers, and she had wreathed them round Agna's bosom, and taught her early years to love them. Her grandfather loved the green meadows, and the clear waters and the shady trees, and so did she also for his sake. A new light dawned upon Valentine's soul as he gazed on, and listened to the guileless maiden. The glorious heaven above him, and its glorified spirits, became more real in her presence than they had ever been to him; and the beautiful earth and all its children of nature, seemed full of music since he knew that she loved him. Aye, truly this was one of the latent aspirations of Valentine's nature—the aspiration of love—called into life and consciousness at last.

When the bright sun came back again from his wintry exile, and the plains, and groves, and forests put on their gayest robes to meet him—when the spring birds trilled forth ten thousand welcomes of song, as they bathed their wings in the golden beams of morning, and plumed themselves in translucent dew—when nature woke up like a strong man from healthful slumber, and began her glorious ministrations of production, Valentine Duval went forth with old Hermann Beethove to attend his sheep. Hermann's sphere, according to the general opinion, was but an humble one, and his life of little account; but the old man, although the world did not know it, was monarch of a greater sphere than even this on which he lived. In his earlier years he had been taught by an aged priest to read of lands afar off, and of worlds that rolled over his head, chanting hosannas to the God who made them; and during his pastoral life he had found time to reflect upon his early studies, and to dream of these starry worlds, until knowledge and thought had constituted him a sage. Valentine had often watched the old man as he sat and pored over the maps which hung upon the wall, and over the grim pages of the books which were scattered upon his shelf, and he had wondered what Hermann found in those lines and black marks to interest him.

'These lines tell us about lands far off,' Hermann would say, pointing to the rudely drawn charts. 'See these blue ones, my Valentine, that appear to be like snakes, and which loose themselves in this great blue sea, are rivers on which ships may sail. These little ones are mountains which tower up to heaven; and here are great green plains where sheep and cattle feed. It was on those plains,' continued the old man—and his withered cheek became flushed, and his grey eyes sparkled with the majesty of a teacher's emotions, as Valentine and Agna listened to his words, and followed his movements with breathless earnestness—'it was on those plains that the trees of every blossom, and the birds of every wing, first breathed their incense of perfume, and their voice of song to the great God who made them, and it was there that man uttered his earliest prayer. Children, children, what grand old stories these charts and books do tell, if you could only read them. It was here, by the waters of the Persian Gulf, that the flowers of happy Eden bloomed; and somewhere upon this plain of Mesopotamia did the lambs of murdered Abel bleat. On the top of this great Ararat did the Ark of good old Noah rest; and here, in beautiful Judea was born the lovely Emmanuel. Ah, what tales are told by these lines and little marks, if you could only read them.'

Valentine Duval listened to his aged preceptor in wonderment and awe. There were new elements of thought—a new direction of vision, presented to him in these fragmentary teachings that seemed to answer a question that had ever filled his mind. 'Who knows about all things? Who can tell us what they are?' had again and again occurred to his inquiring soul; and now he seemed to have learned from Hermann that all knowledge was in books. Valentine Duval became a shepherd in order that he might not be a burden to his kind friends, and a gentle shepherd he was; but when he lay beneath a shady tree, instead of dreaming of cups of gold beneath the rainbow's arch, or of spirits in the forest, or gnomes on the mountains, he lay and coned over the realities symbolised by the charts and books of Herman Beethove. 'If I could only know about everything,' was the daring boy's aspiration, 'how I should rejoice. I should teach grandfather Hermann, then, about the nations of old, and about the universe and all that it contains. I should tell him about all that is spoken of in books, and I should make new books for him to read. Oh! what a great thing is knowledge! I shall strive to obtain it.'

As Valentine sat poring over a chart one day, absorbed in the pursuit of his visioned knowledge, a gay cavalcade of merry huntsmen swept past him with sounding horns, and dashed headlong amongst his affrighted sheep, causing them to scamper away over the wold.

'Hillo there, my masters,' cried Valentine recovering from his surprise, and at the same time springing to his feet, with sparkling eyes and cheeks inflamed; 'this will never do. How dare you disturb my sheep for your pleasure?'

'Hillo! sir rustic, what mean you?' cried a gallily dressed horseman, reining up, and laughing at the uncouth aspect of the bold and agile peasant. 'How dare you disturb us in our ride?'

'Ride clear of my flock, and you may ride to Hungary for aught I care,' was the reply of the bold youth; 'but here you shall not ride if I can prevent you.'

'Do you know, sir rustic,' continued the stranger, still smiling, 'that this is a royal forest?'

'Yes I do,' cried Valentine; 'and I know that my master pays right royally for the privilege of grazing his flocks in it. None but the king can hunt here; so, sir stranger, call in those horn-blowing cavaliers, and leave the wool to grow on my sheep's backs.'

'And dost thou know that thou art speaking to our most gracious sovereign, thou insolent lout?' cried an old courtier, unable longer to repress his courtly anger, and at the same time riding forward to chastise the insolent peasant with his own hand.

But Valentine had bowed with the greatest respect to the king, and had gracefully besought his pardon, even before the whip of old count Kissdorf could touch his shoulders; and the King, who was good natured and kind, immediately took an interest in the lad.

'You seem a bold youth, and a witty one to boot,' said the king with a smile; 'it is a pity that you should dream your life away amongst sheep and lambs.'

'I do not dream altogether, if it please your highness,' replied the boy respectfully and earnestly. 'I have a few books and charts that lead me back to antiquity, and over the whole world. I read, think, and labor my life away; and if these are not illustrious modes of disposing of life, they are at least profitable and honorable ones.'

'Hail on our royal word thou speakest like a learned clerk. We will see if thou canst not reason like one, also, by-and-by. Hail here Kissdorf,' continued the king, turning to the old courtier; 'see that this youth is taken care of, and instructed at the university. Our-selves are responsible for his education and maintenance.'

Valentine Duval looked first at the king with amazement, and then he turned to his flocks and to the trees, and the great plain, as if the thought of leaving them was a dream; and then he wondered at the ease with which kings could say kind words and cause them to be executed.

'Farewell, Valentine,' said Agna Beethove, a few days after this interview, as she laid her trembling hands on her young companion's shoulders and looked lovingly into his large blue eyes. 'What a great man you shall be in Vienna!'

'I shall never be so great as to forget thee, Agna,' said Valentine, with a loving smile.

'You shall yet be a professor in the university,' said Hermann, cheerfully; 'and you will perhaps come to see us in your own carriage.'

Valentine felt a choking at the throat as Hermann spoke, and as he turned to conceal his tears he sadly muttered to himself—'He fears that I shall forget him and Agna; he says I perhaps will come and see them.'

Many studious and talented young men listened day by day to the prelections of the Viennese professors, and struggled with their contemporaries in the arena of learning and fame; but the brown-faced shepherd of Lutzia, whose long yellow hair flowed over his broad shoulders, and whose coarse blue blouse hung loosely to his knees, and whom the fashionable young men of the noble class called the king's 'cow-boy-sair,' outstripped them all. The mind of Valentine had come from his solitude hungry for knowledge, and he accepted it with healthful avidity. He had not left the green plains of Lutzia, where his lambs were bleating, and the cottage of Hermann Beethove, where Agna was sighing, in order that he might strut on the boulevards and sing bacchanalian rants with the burschen over his cups. He had left the scenes and objects of his love that he might gain knowledge, and he eagerly grasped it in his capacious mind as if he were always preparing to go back again to Agna and to home. Ere Valentine Duval had been five years at the university of Vienna, the bloom had left his cheek, and the character of rusticity had forsaken its habiliments. His face had grown grave with thought, and his eye beamed out upon the world with lofty knowledge, but Hermann Beethove and his grandchild seemed to be remembered no longer. He had strode over the fields of philology, science and history, like some young Hercules, distancing all his compeers, and now he stood at last by special appointment, Librarian to the University of Vienna.

Valentine Duval, the scholar and teacher, was one day leaning on a table in the midst of the great library, and his blue, intellectual eyes seemed to survey the books that surrounded him, tier upon tier, with glances of dissatisfied awe. 'I have toiled by day and night for this,' he muttered; 'for this I have consumed the health that flushed my cheeks, and have foregone the hours of midnight rest, and yet I am as distant from the goal I sought as when old Hermann taught me first to read. The ambition and vanity of knowledge,' he continued, looking round with a watery eye and quivering lip, and then laying his hand on his heart, 'are, after all, as mean as the ambition of wealth. I have gained some knowledge, but I have lost myself.' As he spoke he opened a letter which lay on a table beside him, and taking from it a little myosotis he gazed intently on it for some moments and then burst into tears. 'Ah, Hermann Beethove!' he exclaimed, 'did I forget thee because I became the protege of a king, and the favorite scholar of learned professors? Agna, did I blush for thy bare feet and rustic gown be-