

## LITERATURE, &amp;c.

## The British Magazines.

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

## LONG LOWISFORD.

Upon recovering from a severe illness when I was about sixteen years of age, I was sent for change of air to some relatives whom I had never seen, residing in a distant part of England. Placed under the care of a friend travelling the same route, our journey was performed in the mail coach, which passed through the town of M——, within seven miles. Here I was met by a respectable serving man, and immediately transferred with my luggage to an old-fashioned roomy gig. It was a May evening: in the morning I had left a populous city, and now we were passing onwards through woodlands and pastures, as silent and lonely as the untrodden valleys of far west. We skirted the side of a swift river, and I was half-frightened when we forded it; but the song of birds and gay wild flowers of the waysides, and all the sights and sounds that met my eye and ear, conspired to lull me into a sort of dreamy consciousness of new life and happiness to come. On attaining the summit of a hill, the domestic, who had not hitherto spoken, pointing to a spire rising amid the greenery of a valley beneath, cheerfully said, 'We be just at home, miss: yonder is Long Lowisford.'

I had seen but little of the country during my brief career; and when we descended to the straggling village—well deserving its name of 'long'—a narrow gushing streamlet flowing through its length, with broad flagstones across to reach the houses, the setting sun tinting the grey gables, and playing in a thousand prismatic hues on the latticed windows, whose broad sills displayed many brilliant bouquets, a fairy land unexplored seemed opening to my view. We turned up a coppice lane, and came to a watermill with dripping slimy wheels; and the foaming waters in the mill-dam quite awed me. We passed an old solemn church, and drew up at the little wicket gate of the parsonage house, which seemed coeval in age with the church, the porches of both being much alike; that of the sacred edifice being festooned with ivy, and this with roses and chestnuts. I had longed to ask my conductor some questions concerning those with whom I was about to sojourn, but motives of delicacy withheld me from seeking information through this channel. I knew the family consisted of only two members—the Rev Mr Evelyn and his sister, Miss Bridget. I also surmised that they were 'old people,' at least according to my notion of antiquity; and I entertained many doubts and fears that they might be prim and strict; in short, old people who forget that they had once been young themselves.

But now I was in the hall, with its polished floor of dark oak, and in the arms of the prettiest, sweetest creature I had ever looked on; and yet these terms are applied to a lady past threescore years! I instinctively felt as she addressed me that I was in the presence of a superior being, and that I must be gentle and good to win her regard, and forget all my wilful rude ways. There was strange feeling at my heart prompting tears and laughter by turns; and Miss Bridget—for it was she—seeing me weary and emaciated, in a low soft voice spoke tender words of comfort and encouragement. 'Poor dear little creature, she is exhausted with her long journey: let us get her to bed, Folliman. The call for Folliman, was answered by the appearance of a tiny, active old dame, many years Miss Bridget's senior, her *ci-devant* nurse, now house-keeper, or whatever she liked to be designated: but how widely different was the aspect of these two ancient women! Miss Bridget was a tall, slight figure, slight to attenuation, but still bearing the stamp of elegance and refinement. Her complexion was so transparently fair and pure, that I know not how I came to guess her age, for there were no wrinkles to betoken it; habitual heavenly calmness had bid defiance to the marks of time. Her silver hair was parted on her brow; but her clear blue eyes could never have been more intelligent and expressive than now. Scrupulous delicacy and neatness characterised her attire at all times; and her extremely beautiful hands and feet seemed more fit for show than use; indeed Miss Bridget's walks never extended beyond the garden; and her slender fingers brought melody from the curiously-carved spinet, the tunes she invoked being rare antiquarian treasures. Yet let it not be supposed that her days passed in useless employment or amusement—no: she presided over the still-room when assisted by Dame Folliman; decoctions and herbal recipes were judiciously manufactured and dispensed to the poor; the doctor of Long Lowisford—happy place, there was but one!—jocosely affirming that Miss Bridget Evelyn deprived him of half his patients. Then there was not a poor child in the parish that did not give evidence of Miss Bridget's handiwork in the clothes it wore: and all the little creatures were so neatly attired, their garments composed of small pretty patterns, that strangers remarked what good taste and thrift distinguished the appearance of the Long Lowisford children. There was not a baby born into this world of woe in Miss Bridget's parish, whose first robe was not made by her fair hands. This was her sole recreation, except, indeed, the spinet, and those gentle perambulations round the flower garden. She never gathered flowers; and once

I remember offering the dear old lady a rose, but gently she put back my hand, saying, with a half stifled sigh, 'No; thank you, dear girl, I never accept and never present flowers.' There was a sadness in her low tone which set me thinking for many a day.—A very different individual in all respects was dame Folliman from her mistress—a sturdy, wiry, fidgety old soul—here, there and everywhere. Nearly eighty, but with the activity of eighteen, her bead like black eyes retained unwonted lustre; and she scolded the maids, and often kept the parsonage in a ferment when 'cleaning' fits were on her.

As to Miss Bridget, Folliman treated her as a child, chiding her sometimes as a fond nurse does a beloved nursing; still was Miss Bridget beautiful in Folliman's sight, and according to her account, earth contained not another such angel in woman's form. 'I wonder she has never been married,' said I one day to the busy dame: 'it is very strange, so pretty and good as she is.'

'It would have been stranger if she had,' quoth the dame; but not another word could I draw forth.

But there was another individual of whom I have not yet spoken, whose affection for the sweet Bridget, if more silent than nurse's, was as sincere, and far more deep and fervent: This was her brother, Mr Evelyn; and the attachment of this brother and sister had something touching and remarkable in it. He was a year or two younger than she, though he looked older, the lines of thought and care having impressed their marks on his thin, pale face. He was indeed a grave man, and rarely relapsed into a smile; but ever bore about with him the conscious dignity of his high calling. Devout meditation was stamped on his fine brow: he was a profound scholar and a finished gentleman; but though uniformly courteous and benevolent, I never felt at ease in his presence. It seemed as if he could have no sympathies in common with me, and my silly prattle ceased when Mr Evelyn's clear blue eye, so serenely cold, spoke, as I fancied, reproof to all levity. He was a faithful pastor, equally beloved by the poor and rich; to the former he proved a valuable 'friend in need' at all times, while the latter eagerly courted his society and advice.

During that long happy summer I was a continuous source of annoyance and anxiety to Miss Bridget; for as health and strength returned, so did hoyden propensities and outrageous spirits; besides, the novelty of a country life excited my wildest delight, and I rushed about more like a young savage than a young lady. Torn frocks, scrambling for wild flowers, torn hands plucking them, wet shoes and muddied stockings were among the least of my mishaps; and had matters been no worse, and rested here, many months of suffering for myself, and anxiety for my kind friends, had been avoided. But despite admonitions and gentle warnings, received with derisive laughter on my part, and an obstinate determination to persevere in a wrong-headed course. I persisted in entering a meadow where a dangerous white bull grazed, to show my 'superiority to cowardice,' as I said. Once too often I ventured; the infuriated animal tossed me to the other side of the hedge, where I was found bleeding and insensible, one leg broken and a deep gash over my left eyebrow. How tenderly I was nursed by Miss Bridget and Dame Folliman, and how bitterly did I reprove myself. During convalescence I was haunted by a nervous anxiety to hear the worst—to have the lecture over, which I knew was deserved, and I thought was in reservation for me. Repentant and humbled, I earnestly desired to obtain the pardon of Mr Evelyn and Miss Bridget; and one evening, when my heart was full, I told Folliman this, for my restless yearnings were unbearable. They had gone to visit some neighbors, and the dame and I were alone together.

'Oh, Folliman!' I exclaimed, 'what must they think of me, so kind and good as they are?—When they were young did they ever do foolish, silly things?'

'I do not think that Miss Bridget ever did a silly thing in her life, much less a sinful one, bless her dear heart.' Nurse spoke with much warmth, placing an emphasis on the words 'Miss Bridget.'

'But Mr Evelyn,' pursued I; he seems to be above all the weakness of our nature; will he believe my desire to amend, nurse; and that I am heartily ashamed of myself?'

'Set your mind at rest, Miss Anna,' responded Folliman; 'no one can feel for others as master does, because he has known a lifelong repentance for rashness committed in youth. I have had it in my mind to tell you the story when you grew better, because it will be a lesson to you for the remainder of your days: for the memory of your own sickness may pass away with the occasion of it; but when you think of Long Lowisford and dear Miss Bridget, I am sure in future years you will never be violent or headstrong again.' And so saying dame Folliman settled herself in an easy chair preparatory to a long gossip. The substance of her narrative was as follows:—

Forty years ago a large party was assembled at Dalton Park, the seat of Sir Reginald Dalton, in expectation of passing a jovial Christmas in the true old English style. Among the guests were Mr Evelyn and his nephew and niece, orphans tenderly brought up by that excellent man. Bridget was betrothed to Sir Reginald Dalton's eldest son, and the marriage was to be celebrated during the ensuing spring. There was a large family of Daltons, and only one daughter, a young lady about Miss Bridget's age. The boys were school-

fellows and companions of Edward Evelyn, whom his uncle destined for the church, always fondly trusting that he would become steadier and less headstrong as he grew older and wiser.

Of a bold reckless spirit was Edward Evelyn then, pre-eminently handsome and active, and the leader in every mischievous prank attributed to the Daltons and others. Much concern and anxiety he gave his worthy uncle by his wild ways, for he heeded neither reproof nor warning; he liked to do a thing, or he wanted a thing—that was enough—and the selfish impulse must be instantly obeyed. Even his sister Bridget, whom he dearly loved, had no power to check or control his violent spirits; and there was another whose disposition and character was more akin to his own—the darling and only sister of many brothers—the dark-eyed, beautiful Helen Dalton; who, while admiring prowess and superiority in every form, took upon herself to admonish, chide and rebuke her early playfellow, Edward Evelyn; for was she not his senior by two years? And in right of this seniority must he not receive the lectures thankfully and submissively? Whether Helen's mature age or sparkling orbs claimed dominion is not certain; but that Edward frequently bowed to her decisions is so; though not unfrequently these high spirits clashed, when their mutual displeasure lasted long enough to make reconciliation sweet. It seemed not altogether improbable that at some future period the bond between the respective families might be cemented by another union besides that of Reginald and Bridget; the two fair girls, though opposite in many respects, were sisters in affection; and the more so, perhaps, because Reginald was dearer to his sister Helen than any of her other brothers. Nor was this partiality altogether inexcusable, for Reginald Dalton combined all those amiable qualities which in domestic life bind and cement endearing love so closely.

Bridget was ever hopeful as to her brother's future career; for he was a generous, warm-hearted fellow, despite his obstinate temper; his brilliant abilities unfortunately rendering steady application to study of secondary importance to him; he achieved, as if by instinct, what others plodded over at a snail's pace.

This Christmas party at Dalton Park, it may be imagined, was a merry one; though one thing the boys earnestly desired, yet which no human means could procure. This one thing wanting to complete their enjoyment was a frost; for there was a fine sheet of water in the park, and if that were but laid over, what splendid skating they could have! Edward was passionately fond of this pastime; and when a sharp frost did set in, and the earth was covered with snow, and the miniature lake with the much-wished-for ice, his delight knew no bounds.

'No skating to-day, boys,' said the baronet; 'for the water is deep—awfully deep—and I insist that no foot shall venture to cross it. Tomorrow, if the frost continues, we shall see what can be done.'

Sir Reginald Dalton's word was law with his sons; but Edward Evelyn felt chafed and indignant at his peremptory mode of speaking, and he burst into his sister's dressing room, swelling with indignation, exclaiming—'I shall go on the lake to-day; he is no father of mine; and I won't be dictated to by him! Uncle has gone to S——, and there is nobody to forbid me, and I know the ice is strong enough for skating. Come, dear Biddy, you have your bonnet on; come and see me skate. Ah, what beautiful flowers you have here: I saw Reginald gathering them in the hothouse, and I guessed they were for you!'

'They are to place in my hair at the ball this evening, dear Ned,' said Bridget, archly smiling as she added, 'there are plenty more snowy camellias left, and Helen's jetty braids will set them off to advantage. Will you not present her with some, and leave the skating, dear, for the peaceful employment of flower gathering?'

'Helen may gather them for herself, if she likes,' pouted Edward; 'she is as dictatorial as her father. But I am not going to lose my sport for her whims; so come along, Biddy—I'm off!'

'Nay, Edward,' urged the tearful Bridget; 'I am going to walk with Reginald; but I entreat you not to go on the treacherous ice to-day: tomorrow, perhaps, you can all enjoy the pastime together, and we ladies will then come and admire your grace and dexterity.'

'A parcel of cowards Bridget! I wonder you should turn against me too. But go I will were it only to shame them all!'

'Reginald is no coward,' said Bridget coloring; but she added no more, for remonstrance was unavailing when the evil spirit of obstinacy was uppermost with her brother. He darted from the room, scarcely hearing her last words, but shouting, 'Walk by the lake—I shall be there.'

Bridget re-arranged the bouquet which her impetuous brother had displaced; and bending over the perfumed blossoms, she kissed them, half smiling and blushing at her own folly; but they had been gathered by the hand she best loved. She walked with her betrothed to the banks of the lake, in the hope that they might win Edward to leave the dangerous spot; but no; he was on the ice, and cried out exultingly when he saw them. When Reginald found that Edward was determined on disobedience, and would not listen to remonstrance, he moved away with Bridget, feeling as if his prolonged presence tacitly encouraged rebellion to his father's just commands. They left the water and were entering the woodlands, when a

shriek reached their ears—a shriek as of one in extremity. Pausing for an instant only to gaze on Bridget's blanched cheek, Reginald darted back in the direction of the lake, whence the appalling sound proceeded. Bridget followed as quickly as her agitation permitted; she saw an arm and hand appear above the surface of the water; and as Reginald grasped it, her brother struggled for dear life, and regained the solid ice, fainting and helpless. At the same moment the weaker part crashed in with Reginald Dalton's weight who disappeared beneath it. Frantic screams for aid were unavailing; for aid came quickly, though too late—too late! Reginald had saved Edward's life at the expense of his own; and his affianced bride witnessed the sacrifice. She had indeed cast herself into the water, with the impotent hope of saving that precious life: she was with difficulty rescued; but her lover rose no more!

What words can paint Edward Evelyn's agonies and remorse! His bereaved sister tended him during the months of almost hopeless derangement succeeding the awful catastrophe; she never by look or word reproached or reminded him of the dreadful past, and her patient smile first greeted his recovered perceptions. The years following this fatal event were unmarked by recognition or forgiveness on the part of the Daltons; and Bridget intuitively shrank from obtruding her sorrows on their remembrance, for was not she the sister of that brother whose very name brought anguish to the father's heart? How often she thought of the warm-hearted Helen, her dear and early friend; and Bridget yearned to hear her speak words of forgiveness! Then hope might once more dawn for Edward: for now he was sunk in lethargy, his prospects blighted—his heart seemed turning to stone. Bridget Evelyn knew that her brother's sufferings were far more intense than her own; religion taught her resignation and submission when the first tremendous shock was over; and to her arrows the poignancy of self-upbraiding was not added. For her alone did Edward live, or wish to live, and by a life-long repentance and devotion expiate his boyhood's fatal error; and when in the course of time, the same healing balm came also to his aid, and he began to think of entering on the duties of his sacred calling, this beloved sister, whose self-abnegation was so perfect, sustained him in his resolutions, and cheered and comforted him on his heavy pilgrimage.

But yet there was another trial in store; but Edward was better prepared to meet it now. Bridget received a letter from Sir Reginald Dalton, containing the afflicting tidings of Helen's hopeless state, and summoning her to Dalton Park, at the earnest and last request of the dying Helen had continued to droop since Reginald had perished so fearfully: there was a deeper sorrow to combat with than even her beloved brother's loss, for Edward also was lost to her forever. She could not give her hand to him; every feeling of her nature forbade it. But to win her father's forgiveness for him, to accord her own, and to tell him that her affection in death was unchanged—this Helen felt she must accomplish ere she could depart in peace. And she did accomplish it: and she died in Bridget's arms, calling her sister, and charging her to bear the message of consolation, forgiveness, and love to Edward.

Need it be added how faithfully this devoted sister performed the bitter task? But while sorrowing for the early dead—his first and last love—Edward Evelyn felt lightened of a heavy burthen, which as a malediction had oppressed him. He was forgiven by the earthly parent, and would his heavenly one prove unrelenting?

These details, imparted by Dame Folliman, with many tears and discursive comments, coupled with the severe punishment which had befallen myself, afforded a lasting and salutary lesson. It is very rarely that our misdeeds injure only ourselves; and it were well if we early learned to remember how many kinds and degrees of selfishness there are disguised under the names of impulse or rashness. To this day I have a strange feeling when I am offered flowers: my thoughts are carried away instantaneously to that Christmas bouquet of poor Bridget, and my ear thrills again with the sweet tones in which she told me that she never gave and never accepted flowers.

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## STUDIES: HISTORY.

BY ROBERT WILLIAM HANFORD.

Although it may appear supererogatory to assert, that the readings and studies of men should be for some definite purpose—that they should not be pursued in an impulsive and aimless manner—should not be made the mere ephemeral things of the moment,—although this is a position which nearly all concede, yet our everyday experience must teach us that it is a principle far from being practically carried out. We have too much of the desultory method of pursuing what is loftily termed a study. We are satisfied with a smattering—with a mere sip at the perennial fountain. We seldom descend to the investigation of first truths, and rest satisfied, too often, with a mechanical and fact-like knowledge. If we would acquaint ourselves like men—if we would prepare to form the vanguard in those glorious movements effecting the world's progress—if we would enact a true and a brave part upon this earth—would

'Leave our sons a hope—a fame,'

—we must become men—studiers and workers in earnest—must grapple with all questions which come across us, with the iron-hearted