

LITERATURE, &c.

The British Magazines.

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

THE PEDLAR.

BY MRS NEWTON CROSLAND.

A PEDLAR hawked his wares for sale,
Through crowded streets, o'er hill and dale,
And modestly, with gentle voice,
Arrayed them for the people's choice;
And said, 'A loaf is all I ask,
And by the winter's fire to bask,
A roof above, and garments plain,
Express my greediest thirst for gain.'

The People turned his wares about,
And shook their heads in solemn doubt;
With tinsel goods made his compete,
Yet called his Gold a 'copper cheat.'
Then with a smile, and yet a sigh,
He said—'though you refuse to buy,
My wares away I will not take,
I give them—for the children's sake!'

The little children grew in time,
To life's most eager, early prime;
And seeking here, and seeking there,
For wealth deserving of their care,
The youths and maidens, fair and brave,
Have found the wares the pedlar gave.
And loud their voices now are heard,
By generous indignation stirred—

'Oh shameful sires—to thus despise
The Poor's priceless melodies!
To tread beneath a scornful sneer
The source of our exalted weal—
Celestial truths which seem to rush
O'er heart and soul, like morning's flush
In southern climes, that quick up springs,
And charms aside night's clouding wings!'

And then among themselves they spoke,
And soon one grateful feeling broke;
'They cried, 'Oh, let us journey forth
From east to west, from south to north,
And take no rest until we find
The unowned Monarch of our Mind;
He must be old, and may be poor
Who left these treasures at our door!'

'A palace home we'll build for him,
And gold shall all his coffers brim;
Ambrosial food shall deck his board,
And nectar drinks be freely poured,
Such as like melted jewels flash;
A thousand looms shall creak and crash
To weave him raiments, fine and meet,
For winter's cold, or summer's heat!'

From north to south, from east to west
They journey along, and take no rest;
Foot sore with stony roads they've passed,
They come upon a grave at last!
A humble grave, but yet they know
The Poor's dust is laid below.
Too late—too late the wreath they've
wove

To crown the monarch of their love!

Yet as they bend with reverent mien,
And pluck for relics grasses green,
A haunting voice floats through the air,
And softly cries, 'Beware—beware!
The Poet takes, to common eyes,
In every age a different guise;
Beware lest ye such Pedlar meet,
And call his Gold a 'copper cheat!'

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

A PLOUGHMAN'S FORTUNES.

"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them," says Malvolio. The hero of the following sketch, by a union of energy and good fortune, fulfilled literally the two last clauses of this sentence. In the church at Bunbury, the tourist is attracted by an exceedingly beautiful monument and effigy, both of the purest white marble; remarkable also for the exquisite neatness and care with which they have been preserved—"Owing," the sexton will tell you, "to the generosity of Dame Mary Calvely of Lea, who, in 1705, left the interest of a hundred pounds to be distributed annually among the old women of the parish, on condition that they attended Divine service while they were able, swept the chancel, and cleaned the monument." He who sleeps beneath this magnificent tomb was born of free, but poor parents, in the neighboring hamlet of Calvely. I say free, because his birth occurred at a period when England was still a feudal country—that is, in the reign of our third Edward (the precise date is unknown)—and he might have chanced to be a serf; as it was, he was not bound by other ties than those of habit and poverty to his native place; and the spirit of adventure soon caused him to break these in order to "seek his fortune," like the heroes of those romances and legends which the wandering minstrels had made popular throughout the land. It would take some effort of the imagination in these days of locomotion to conceive the difficulty with which the boy Hugh effected a journey from Calvely to London. He walked, and worked, doing every now and then a day's labor for the refilling of his wallet; occasionally receiving hospitality from the female peasantry, who were touched by his youth and good looks, and amazed at the marvellous daring which was leading him to distant London; or accepting thankfully, and without shame—because the church gave it—his dole of food daily distributed at the gates of the monastic buildings he passed. At last the bells that proved of such good augury to Whittington greeted his ear. He had

arrived at the great city of which such marvellous accounts had reached him in his distant birthplace.

The ploughman's imagination had perhaps conjured up a vision of greater splendour and beauty than London in the olden time presented; still, there was much in the scene around him to awake his rustic wonder. The noths, far exceeding those of Bunbury fair; the number of people moving about; the stately procession of monks bearing the host, that glided past, followed shortly after by a knight and his attendant lances, excited to the full his boyish admiration. He wandered for three days about the capital—getting a meal daily at the gates of the monasteries—with still unsatisfied curiosity, but with hourly-decreasing hopes of making his fortune in a place where he was totally unknown, and where his rural skill could be of no avail to procure him employment. On the fourth morning he found himself in Southwark, before an inn bearing the sign of the Tabard. A band of pilgrims, bound for the shrine of Thomas a Becket, was in the act of issuing from its court-yard—we may fancy it the very same of which Chaucer has left us such an animated picture; but if so, one person was omitted by the poet—we mean a tall, stalwart man in armour, well mounted and armed, who rides last in the procession; not a reflection of the "courteous knight" in advance, but a grim soldier with a scathed brow, and the look of one accustomed rather to the camp than the court. This worthy is struck, as he passes him, by the powerful figure and juvenile countenance of the young spectator of their departure; he pauses, asks him in a brief, quick tone of command some few questions, and on learning from the simple lad that he had come to London to "seek his fortune," laughs aloud and heartily. Hugh looks not only confused, but angry; and the soldier, becoming suddenly grave, assures him that it is in another land men of mettle win their way to wealth and power. In short, he offers the ploughboy a place in his own bold company of "Tard, Venus or Milendrins," a species of banditti then existing on the continent, formed of the disbanded soldiers of different nations. He was, he said, on his way to fulfil a vow at the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury, from thence he should proceed to Dover, and thence to France; if Hugh liked, he might accompany him. The proposal chimed in with every wish and fancy of the wanderer, and was eagerly and gratefully accepted. Thus our hero became a Free Companion, and speedily added to the skill he already possessed in wrestling, quarterstaff and archery—horsemanship, and the perfect use of the weapons of the age. Old Fuller speaking of him, says, "It was as impossible for such a spirit not to be, as not to be active," and accordingly we find that he was soon distinguished above his companions. The Free Companies of English, though living by plunder, preserved in a remarkable manner their love of their native land, and their allegiance to their sovereign; they were always ready to espouse the national cause against France, and at Poitiers served under the banner of England, and did good service; amounting in number then to 40,000 veteran troops.

The extraordinary military skill and prowess exhibited by Hugh of Calvely in this battle procured him his knightly spurs, and the command of a large company of Free Lances. We next find him at Auray under the Lord Chandos, turning, by his individual valour, the fortune of the day, in which the great Du Guesclin was taken prisoner. The captivity of the French leader led to an intimacy between him and Sir Hugh; and after Du Guesclin's liberation, his influence induced the English knight to join him in his expedition into Spain, to dethrone the tyrant Peter the Cruel, and place his brother Henry in his stead. The enterprise was successful, and the favor of the new monarch promised to assure the fortunes of the adventurer; but our hero's high sense of loyal obedience appears to have always outweighed that of his own interests, and on receiving through Lord Chandos a positive command from Edward III. to forbear hostilities against Peter of Castile, he deserted the quarrel he had espoused, and joined the Black Prince as soon as he appeared in Spain. The battle of Najasa followed, and the valour of Sir Hugh de Calvely is said to have greatly contributed to the victory obtained by the English, which replaced Peter on the throne of Castile. On the recall of the Black Prince by his father in 1367, Sir Hugh was consequently left in command of all the Free Companies. Thus far he had "achieved greatness," now he was to have "greatness thrust upon him," and in the very manner of which Malvolio dreamt.

There dwelt not far from the head-quarters of the Free Companies in Spain a royal widow, Donna Leonora of Arragon. This lady had heard much of the courtesy and valor of the English commander, and honoring the qualities then held in the highest esteem, invited Sir Hugh to her castle. He went, and probably for the first time in his adventurous life mixed in the society of ladies. It was no marvel that Leonora of Arragon, though many years his senior, engaged the fancy of Sir Hugh de Calvely, especially as her avowed partiality for himself flattered his vanity. Her exalted rank placed but a slight barrier between them, for it was the period when

—A squire of low degree
Marrying the king's daughter of Hungary.

was no impossible occurrence. So Sir Hugh de Calvely took heart of grace, and wooed and won the Queen Dowager of Arragon, obtaining thus a royal bride of mature years, and an immense fortune. From this period he ceased to lead the Free Companions, but

dwelt in all honor with Donna Leonora at her Spanish castle, till her death, which took place some few years afterwards. In the last year of Edward III. he returned, a wealthy and honored knight, to his native land, and was appointed governor of Calais. Two years afterwards, he plundered and burnt Le Bas Bretagne, and destroyed several vessels that lay in its harbour; he also retook the Castle of St. Mark, which had been lost by neglect.

In 1379 he resigned the government of Calais to the Earl of Salisbury, and was appointed by Richard II. *admiral of the fleet!* Surely the wildest fiction never invented a tissue of more wonderful changes of fortune than those which marked the real existence of Hugh of Calvely.

During this period of active service to his country he found time again to woo and win a bride. This lady was young, fair, and beautiful, the daughter and heiress of Lord Mottram of Mottram. "By her his line was continued." In 1382 we find him governor of Guernsey and the adjacent isles, from whence, at the end of his appointed period of lordship, our adventurer returned to dwell in the neighborhood of his former home, towards which, doubtless, during all the vicissitudes of his wonderful life, his heart had often yearned. How years must have changed that quiet hamlet since he had left it! There was the same armourer's forge, the same village green and maypole, the same mill, and trees, and fields, and styles, as of yore, but the old people were all gone—the middle-aged grown hoary—the children become men and women, as busy and as self-important as the generation gone by. We cannot, however, suppose that the leader of the Free Companions was a man given to sentimental regrets. He doubtless thought with gratitude of the good Providence which had actually granted him the fortune he idly sought, and with some pride of the exertions and energy which had (humanly speaking) secured it. We know he built a lordly home near his humbler one, and proved a kind lord to his dependants, and a good father to his children, to whose filial piety he owed after his death the beautiful monument in Bunbury church. He lived to extreme old age, even into the reign of Henry IV., for Rymer mentions his name in a suit at law then to be determined, but observes that he was "weak of body," after which history and tradition are silent respecting this favorite of fortune. The marble tomb tells us the rest.

AN AYRSHIRE STORY.

A LONG time ago there lived in a little thatched cottage in the vicinity of the town of Ayr a poor but respectable widow of the name of MacRae. She had two sons, young boys; and the eldest was of a sociable and kindly disposition, and having a taste for music, turned his attention to the study of that art, and in due time became a fiddler by profession, and was much taken out to play at weddings, harvest homes, and rockings, the last species of merry-making peculiar to Ayrshire, at which the services of the country musicians are much appreciated. But poor widow MacRae's youngest son was a disobedient scape grace, and so early in life as at nine years of age, he disappeared, no one knew where; and although his mother made many efforts to discover where her erring boy had gone, they all proved fruitless, and she became old and died without finding any trace of his retreat.

A period of forty years had elapsed from the time of the disappearance of the little boy, when a lawyer in Ayr and his wife were sitting together one day after dinner conversing, he asked her if she knew any person in the town of the name of MacRae; she replied that the only person of that name she knew was old Willie MacRae, the fiddler. My reason for asking, said he, is on account of having read to day an advertisement in the papers, saying that if there were any of the descendants of a widow MacRae (who lived in such a part of the town of Ayr, at such a time) yet in existence, that by making due application to a certain office in London, they will hear of something to their advantage. The lady suggested that by sending for Willie he might be able to throw some light upon the subject; so a servant was sent to tell the fiddler that her master wished to speak to him. Willie came immediately, and after being questioned as to his pedigree, was found to be the son of the widow, and said that he had a 'ne'er-do-weel laddie o' a brither that ran awa' lang syne, and was ne'er heard o' since; that many a sair day mither had, wondering if he had come to an untimely end. As to Willie's own situation, he said that 'he was married, and had twa wee dochters.' The lawyer then said that he would write to London, and make the necessary statements, and would let him know the result. Willie was agreeable to this proposal, but appeared neither sanguine in expectation, nor elated with prospects of better circumstances—being perfectly happy as he was. However, no time was lost in making application as directed; and an answer was promptly returned, giving the lawyer instructions to come to London, and to bring William MacRae and his two daughters with him.

So, dressed in their best, the four set off for the great metropolis; and, although the journey in those days could not be performed with the degree of speed that it is done in now, yet the party arrived at last and went direct to the agent with whom they had corresponded, and he conducted them forthwith to a splendid establishment in one of the genteel streets in London. But what was poor Willie's astonishment when he was ushered into the presence of the Governor General of

Madras, as one and the same with the little barefoot run-away—even his long lost brother (the same who had at this time presented the city of Glasgow with the beautiful equestrian statue of King William the Third, which now stands in front of the Tontine). There was indeed a contrast of quality between the two brothers—the one polished and polite, the other bashful and awkward. Willie gazed incredulously, while the two girls clung to him, and timidly took an occasional glance at their great uncle; but mutual confidence was soon established. He received them kindly; and while they stayed with him, he suited his manner so as to make them easy and at home.

It would have been gratifying had we been able to trace the Governor's history from his ninth year till the time that he made himself known to his brother; but although we have no account of it, we may conclude, that before he arrived at distinction he must have had much up-hill work, and that he must indeed have been an enterprising boy.

But, my young friends, let us here pause, and extract our lesson from this little story, which is not a fiction. Although we are willing to give credit to Mr MacRae for his abilities, which were of a superior order, Oh, how we must lament his want of natural affection, particularly for his mother. He set parental authority at naught, by going away without her knowledge and liberty; his youth in some degree apologises for this step; he was not then aware of the extent of his fault; but when his mind developed, and was capable of reflection, did he never think of the many bitter tears that she must have shed in secret for the loss of her youngest child? Did he think that if he made himself known she would expect support from him? Could he have used a portion of the money with which providence had blessed him to better purpose than aiding his widowed parent with it? or was it cowardice, was he ashamed to own that his was a poor and plebeian mother? Why, she was well doing, and his mother. This was enough. The Creator has appointed to each individual their position in the world; that there must be the rich and the poor to constitute the frame work of society is indisputable. Yet, as a sense of poverty renders the feelings acute, and is a principal cause of its being felt a burthen; never then, add to it the sting of neglect; be bland and compassionate to your poorer fellow mortals, and if they are discreet, they will not impose upon you for being so. But it is pleasing to think that before it was too late he felt the ardent desire to repair, in some measure, the errors of his youth, by improving the condition of his mother's descendants—for this purpose he returned to his native land, for he was childless.

Governor General MacRae then made a handsome settlement upon Mr William MacRae, Professor of Music, for we like to give a respectful turn to things; but such was his simplicity that notwithstanding his changed condition, he made the proviso with his brother, that he might still be allowed to go to the weddings and harvest homes in Ayrshire, and to dissent would have been to rob him of one of the greatest enjoyments of his life; so when he went home he continued his vocation, but at these entertainments he was now quite the king of the company.

The two little girls were placed by their uncle in a fashionable boarding school, to be brought up and educated as gentlewomen. These and business arrangements completed, the Governor sailed for India again, to attend his charge; but he had not been there above ten or twelve years, when information of his death was received by his law agent in London, stating at the same time that the bulk of his fortune, which was immense, was bequeathed to his two nieces, daughters of his late brother William; for William was now lying side by side with his mother, and the grass had grown long and rank over their narrow beds in the old churchyard. The Misses MacRae were now grown up, and fashionable young ladies; and after becoming heiresses were invited to visit a genteel family in Ayrshire.

One day at this time, Lord Glencairn and the Lawyer of whom I have already spoken, were engaged in earnest and private conversation in his Lordship's library. The estates were already considerably burdened with debt. His Lordship being no adept at husbanding money, was now seeking legal advice as to the safest means of raising more. The Lawyer said that if His Lordship would excuse the liberty of his making a suggestion of a peculiar nature, it was one that, should it meet his approbation, would not only clear the estates, but leave a considerable sum over. He desired him to be perfectly explicit. He then said, 'Why my Lord, marry an heiress who is at present resident in this country.' The proposal was met with a smile, and a demand of pray, sir, who is the lady? The reply was 'Miss MacRae, niece of the late Governor General of Madras, and an elegant woman.' This was a brilliant description. His Lordship was now in love; if not yet with the lady, at least with her fortune; but not a word of a fiddle; no, no, let his Lordship's musical information break upon him by degrees; time enough for that branch; it is not an essential one. Independent of any sinister motives, the knowing lawyer was cautious what mode of speech he made use of, for he was now about to emancipate his noble client from the thralldom of debt, and also to give his heiress client a title—the prospects of which is at all times a honied morsel to a young and ambitious girl; but in some cases is not possessed a year till she discovers that it is only a sound, as hollow as the decayed trunk of a stunted oak; but who can stem the current of life's events and vicissitudes!