

THE GLEANER:

AND NORTHUMBERLAND, KENT, GLOUCESTER AND RESTIGOUCHE
COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL.

Old Series]

NEC ANANEARUM SANE TEXTUS IDEO MELIOR. QUIA EX SE FILA GIGNUNT, NEC NOSTER VILIOR QUIA EX ALIENIS LIBAMUS ET APES.

[Comprised 13 Vols.

NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 1, 1853

VOL. XII.

LITERATURE.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Harper's Monthly Magazine.

THE BALLET-DANCER.

The last scene was played out, and the grim curtain of death fell forever over the tragedy of Neil Preston's life. A bitter tragedy, indeed! Wife, fortune, health—all had gone by turns, until of his former large possessions of happiness only two fair girls were left, as the last frail argosies on his sea of fate: left him were they for to-day, to be themselves wrecked on the morrow, when death should have carried his soul out in to infinity, and trampled his body beneath the church yard sod. And so, with choking sobs and grieving prayers, Neil Preston commenced them to the care of the universal Father, and died as a good man should—loosening hand still clasped in the affections of earth, and one outstretched to the glories of the coming heaven.

The girls were both young; but Nelly was a mere child—a pretty romping little maid, some three years before her teens; while Mabel was already almost a woman at seventeen. The little one's tears were fastest, and her sobs the loudest at the loss of a kind playmate who had been always so glad to see her when she came back from her day school; who used to call her his evening star, and never met her without a smile and a kiss, however grave and silent he might be to others. But the tears soon dried on her rosy face, and her sobs soon changed to the light quick laughter of childhood; and the little heart, which had swelled so large for its first grief soon danced blithely in her breast again, understanding nothing of the bitterness of orphanage. But Mabel, though she did not weep nor sob—at least when others were by—sorrowed as few sorrow even by a father's grave, knowing that she had lost her only earthly friend and protector, and that her way of life must now open upon a dark and thorny path of solitude and distress. Painfully she shrank from the heavy responsibility of her condition, and keenly she felt how frail a barrier she was between her pretty Nell and misery. Her father had told her, and told her with the solemnity of a dying man, that in leaving the little one to her care, he knew he left her to one that would never fail her; and that, whether for shelter from the storms of winter or from the burning sun of summer, for support in times of misery or for protection in times of temptation, his beloved Mabel would be all that he himself could have been to their darling, their star, their idol child. And Mabel, understanding fall well the extent of the confidence reposed in her, was the more anxious to perform her appointed task faithfully, and therefore the more anxious as to the means of its right fulfilment.

Long hours did Mabel sit by that clay-cold figure, planning various schemes of work, from all of which considerations of youth or incompetency turned her aside. Whatever she did, she must gain sufficient for Nelly's fit maintenance and education; and she could think of nothing that would give her enough whereby to live herself, and tenderly to foster her precious charge. She could not be a governess; her own education had been far too meagre and desultory, interrupted, too, so early on account of her mother's long illness: the thing was therefore impossible—she must turn to something else. But to what else? Ah, that blank question rose up like a dim ghost before her, and by its very presence seemed to paralyze her energies. A young girl who cannot be a governess has few other professions left her. Governesses, workmen, shopwomen—these are nearly all the careers open to the middle class, until we come to the stage and its various branches. And from this small supply Mabel must make her choice. Governess she could not be; shopwoman she could not be. Poor Mabel! Before she had done, this little harmless pride was burned out of her. She used to look back on this aristocratic impulse as on a child's feeble fancy, and wonder how she could have been so weak, so wanting to her nobler self, to have cherished it for a moment. Needleworker, then, must be her profession: a badly-paid one enough, but independent, and consequently more endurable—private, and consequently more respectable than many others. For Mabel set great store by the strictest forms of respectability, holding herself and her character in trust for her little one, undertaking bravely and following cordially any profession that would support her own life—which was Nelly's capital—under the condition of perfect blamelessness, according to the world's code.

'Really very well done,' said Miss Priscilla Wentworth.

'A trifle puckered in] the gusset,' said Miss Lilius Wentworth.

'Humph! pretty fair for a girl of the present day,' said old Miss Wentworth, gruffly; 'but half of it is cats' eyes, too! Ah, girls! in my time young ladies could sew; they could not have dared to call such cobblings as this fine work.'

Now, the three Miss Wentworths were kind-hearted, precise, testy old maids; horribly conventional, but really benevolent when you get through the upper crust; ever at war with themselves between educational principles and instinctive impulses; and therefore uncertain in their actions, and capricious in their dealings. They never passed a beggar without giving him something, but they never gave him a half-penny without taking it out in a lecture on political economy. They used to tell him of his sin in begging and not going to the nice comfortable almshouse, and all this in the harshest language and most disagreeable language and the shrillest voices imaginable; they threatened him with the police and hinted big terrors of the lock-up; they told him that he ought to be put in the stocks—a wretch, to leave his wife and children, as the case might be; and then they pointed out their little villa, and told him he would find a dinner there. And all the while they had been anathematizing him and his ways so bitterly, their eyes had been taking cognizance of the holes in his jacket, or the wounds of his shoeless feet, and they grumbled among themselves as to what old clothes they were possessed of and could spare for the poor fellow; and then they would walk away, growing pleasantly, satisfied with the duty they had rendered to the stern requirements of political economy, and vowing the man had such a lecture he would never beg again.

They had known a little of Neil Preston in his better days, when he had burned a great blue and red lamp before his door, and had 'Surgeon,' &c., blazoned in great golden letters thereon; and they were glad to be kind, in their way, to his daughter. They were wise enough to know that money earned is better than alms received; so they gave Mabel work and high wages, so intrinsically a more benevolent thing to do than making her presents: nor that they were behind hand in that either, for many a pretty frock and bonnet the Miss Wentworths gave the orphans, though unfortunately they always forgot their deep mourning, and gave them pink and blue instead of black. Still, the meaning was all the same; and Mabel was just as grateful as if she could have worn and looked smart in their ribbons and flounces instead of being obliged to sell them all, at very small prices, for one black frock for pretty Nelly's dancing lesson day. Miss Wentworths, though kind nives, it is entirely support the sisters, ready to answer deal of plain needle-work to give away among them, certainly; but even the plain needle-work of three precise old maids must come to an end some time; at last, their new sets of collars and cuffs—and those more complicated matters still; which every one wears, and no one names—were made, washed, ironed, and put away; and Mabel's occupation was gone—gone with the last half-dozen long jean pockets—the old fashioned pockets—made for Miss Wentworth, who, as became a partizan of the good old times, disdained all modern inventions, from politics to military. Mabel must, then, look out for employment elsewhere, and after many disappointments, and no small trials both to her dignity and her resolution, she found a slop-selling shop that gave her shirts at six cents, and other articles, in proportion, as much. Compelled by poverty, Mabel entered herself on their list, trying to make the best of her condition, and to bear her evils hopefully, but failing sadly in her attempts at self-deception. She soon found that as much as the most diligent industry and unwearied self-sacrifice could do, was not enough to supply them both with daily bread; not to speak of the more expensive requirements of Nelly's schooling. Her failing health and wasted strength were not sufficient offerings before this great juggernaut car of toil, to gain her the scanty goods for which they were so cheerfully offered up. Still, hitherto she had struggled on. Old savings now came in as grand helps; and being conscientious and diligent, she had not yet been fined for bad work or unpunctuality. She had secured all her earnings at any rate, so far as she had gone, though she knew, by what she saw about her, that her turn would come soon, and that, by some device, she should find herself in the power of the overseer, and on the wrong side of the books. She had seen others mulcted of their wages unjustly—how could she then escape?

'Your work is spoiled,' said the overseer at last, tossing her packet on the

floor. 'I can't receive it. You must take it back.'

It was a white flowered waistcoat he threw down on the dirty floor: an expensive thing to buy, and a cheap thing to sell—as Mabel would be obliged to sell it—to the Jews. 'I am very sorry,' stammered she, the blood rushing to her face, for she remembered now that the candle had guttered last night when she took it up struts to hear Nelly say her prayers, and the waistcoat had been lying on the table—I am very sorry: where is it spoiled?'

The man sprawled a grimy thumb on a minute spot of grease by the armhole—a very small spot, undiscoverable by ordinary eyes, and which would have been hidden in the wearing. His unwashed hands left a broad dark mark, made purposely, as Mabel saw too well.

She gave a little indignant cry, and snatched the waistcoat from him.

'It was not so bad before! You have ruined it on purpose!' she said, looking him straight in the face, and speaking passionately.

He raised his hand to strike her, but a general murmur among the bystanders stopped him. Like all bullies, he was an arrant coward, and the meanest popularity hunters as well.

'You impudent wench!' he said, 'if you give me another word of your sauce, I will turn you off altogether! Coming here with your impudence and fine-lady airs, indeed, as if the earth was not good enough for you, because you were an apothecary's daughter! I have as great a mind as I ever had in my life to turn you out of the place, and never let you set foot in it again. Here, madam, take this waistcoat back, and bring no more of your airs and graces here. A pale-faced chit like you, striking out against laws and masters! What next, indeed! You owe the house three dollars, and that's letting you off easy, after your impudence, too. Take care how you pay it, for, by George, you shall smart for it if you shirk. Will you take the waistcoat, I say?' He seized her by the shoulder roughly, leaving the mark of his strong clench on her flesh. The girl winced, and a faint moan escaped her. There was a general cry, and a hurried movement among the women; and he turned round with an oath, and silenced them. No one knew whose turn would come next; and women, however true in heart, are too weak, in both purpose and strength, to stand by each other long against a superior force. So Mabel had to bear her wrongs undefended.

She received no wages that day, but a large packet of work, with more yet to come, for which not one farthing would be paid until her terrible debt of three dollars was wiped off. And she was threatened brutally, because she exclaimed against the justice of this man's authority.

For the first time since her father's death Mabel's courage sank. She sat down on a door-step in a by-street, and burst into as bitter a flood of tears as ever scalded the eyes of grieving womanhood. In all her trials, she had been preserved from personal insult until now. She had been poor, and therefore she had known moments of anguish; she had been rejected in her search after employment, and therefore she had felt the bitterest pangs of disappointment, dread, and uncertainty; but she had never been respected as a woman. No rude word or familiar look had wounded her proud modesty in all that regarded her condition, she had been treated with no less respect than when in her father's house. But now this last sweet secret boast was gone from her. She had been outraged and insulted, but there was no one to avenge as there had been no one to defend her.

While she sat there, weeping passionately, and for once in her life forgetting duty in feeling some one spoke to her. Something in the sound of the voice—the tender, manly voice that it was—made her look up. A man of middle age, with hair turned slightly gray about his square broad forehead, with a fine cherry look in his deep blue eyes, and a pleasant smile about his handsome mouth—a man of strength and nerve, on the one hand, and of courteous breeding on the other—stood before her, something in a military attitude, and with much of a paternal expression. 'Why, how now, my child, what has happened?' he said, kindly.

'Oh, nothing, nothing!' cried Mabel, hurriedly drying her tears, and gathering up her work.

'Don't be frightened, my poor child, and don't run away from me yet; I may be able to be of use to you. Tell me who you are, or at least what has happened to you.' He laid his hand on her arm, not with any familiarity, as such, but with an indescribable something in his eyes and his touch that Mabel felt she must per-

force confide in. She felt that distrust would have been affectation; the false modesty of the prude, which creates the evil it disclaims.

She told her story, then, simply, and without any expression of sorry or regret. She merely related the facts, and left them to be translated according to her hearer's fancy. The stranger's face showed how that translation went. The flush of indignation, the tender smile of pity, the manly impulse of protection, all spoke by turns on his forehead and round his lips; and when Mabel ended, he drew out his purse, and placed in her hand to half-eagles, asking, at the same time, the address of the slop-shop where she had been so ill-treated. She shrunk back.

'No, no!' she cried; 'I cannot receive alms!' She let her hand drop, and the gold fell on the pavement. Hastily stooping to pick it up, the man stooping at the same moment, their hands met. He took hers in his, in both of his, and pressed it gently.

'You are right, my child,' he said; 'though to accept a gift from me would not be to receive alms. Still, as you do not know me, you can not tell wherein I differ from other men—as I would even advise you to treat them. I will not distress you by offering you unearned money again; but at least let me buy at my own price this unlucky waistcoat, which has brought you into so much trouble.'

Mabel smiled and blushed. She saw through the delicacy of this feint; and, oh! how her poor heart, bruised as it was by the roughness of the late insult, seemed to expand like a flower in the sun beneath the gentleness, and tenderness, and delicacy of these words! She unfolded her bundle, and produced the white-flowered waistcoat; tears in her eyes, smiles on her lips, and the burning blood flushed in her cheeks. The stranger made a pretense of looking at it critically; then forcing on her the two coins, he declared that it was worth much more, and that he would 'keep it for his best.'

'Will you tell me where you live?' he then asked.

Mabel hesitated; she looked troubled.

'You are right,' he said, kindly; 'and I was wrong to ask the question. Still, I should have liked to have seen you again, but you are right, quite right, to refuse it. I don't wish to know where you live: it is better not. God bless you! Be a good girl, and all will come right.'

'Good-by, sir,' said Mabel, simply, looking up into his face.

'How great and handsome he is!' she thought.

'What a lovely face!' said he, half-aloud; 'and what a good expression! Ah she is an honest girl, I am sure.' He shook hands with her, and walked down the street. Mabel watched his manly figure striding in the sunshine, and a sharp swift pang came over her, to think that she had seen him for the last time, perhaps!

'And yet I did right,' she said, turning away. 'What would my poor father have said if I had made friends with a strange man in the street, and brought him home to Nelly?'

(To be continued.)

TOUR TO THE RIVER RESTIGOUCHE.

METIS, Lower Canada, July, 1853.

I have at last reached the shores of the St. Lawrence, which, at this point, is one hundred miles from the Restigouche. Of all my wilderness expeditions this has been by far the most fatiguing, and its anxieties have by no means been alleviated by the companionship of women—albeit my fellow-travellers have borne their trials bravely and with uncommon fortitude. But, before proceeding with my narrative, I must accord what I have picked up respecting the great and out-of-the-way peninsula of Gaspé, and which I have just crossed and partially explored.

Although this district belongs by nature to New Brunswick it is the property, and under the jurisdiction, of the government of Lower Canada. From what circumstance it derives its name I cannot tell, but know that the old French authors called it *Gaspé*, and a tradition is extant to the effect that the original inhabitants, the Gaspesians, were remarkable for their civilization, that they were acquainted with the points of the compass and the position of the stars, and at the same time worshippers of the sun.

As stated above, the distance directly across the peninsula is one hundred miles, while its sea coast, extending from the head of the Bay of Chaleur to this point on the St. Lawrence, is estimated at more than five hundred miles. The interior country is still in a wild and uncultivated condition; but, so far as it is known, the northern shores are generally low, while through the interior and along

its southern shores are two ridges of high mountains, which are beyond all question the most northern spurs of the Alleghany range, whose extremest southern peaks, look down upon the Gulf of Mexico. The district is well wooded, but while the interior is exclusively covered with the pine and kindred tribes, I am informed that the entire district is skirted with a belt from eight to ten miles wide, composed chiefly of maple, elm, birch, and other hard wood trees. Here and there are elevated valleys, where the soil is rich, and, when properly cultivated, yield the common fruits of the earth abundantly, and it is well watered with beautiful lakes and rivers. For about four months in the year the climate is delightful.—The inhabitants are chiefly French Acadians, whose habitation are sparingly scattered all along the southern coast, from the Restigouche to the eastern extremity of the Cape. Though simple in their manners, they always treat strangers with kindness, and are quite content with their lot, provided the cod and herring do not fail to make them an annual visit, and their small fields are not monopolized by the snow more than eight months out of the twelve. At those points where something like a town makes its appearance, especially at a place called Carlisle, the population is composed of a class of Americans and British, more notorious for their bad rather than their good principles and habits. The only road, worthy of the name, runs through the extended settlement already mentioned, and many portions of this lie directly upon the beach; but the great highway of the sea is theirs, and here, in small vessels of their own building, they are quite at home. The oldest, largest, and most picturesque settlement is that of Perce, which derives its name from the rocky islands heretofore mentioned, and which looms out of sea in its vicinity. The hamlet of Perce is entirely supported by the fishery business; and directly in its rear rises a very high granite mountain or cape, which is considered the almost northern limit of the Alleghany mountains. The character of the scenery here is wild and terrific, especially so in the autumn and winter, and associated with some of the cliffs looking down upon the sea are several stories of dreadful shipwrecks, where the more superstitious Acadian fancy they at times hear the wailing of those who have been long drowned. The principal harbour, and one of the best in the world, is that of Gaspé, named after the district itself. It is thinly populated, and, in addition to the more common kinds of fish, its inhabitants do a small but thriving business in way of capturing whales, which are of the hump-back species, yield from three to eight tons of oil, are hunted in schooners, and harpooned after a fashion which the local fishermen obtained from the whalers of Nantucket. So much for the district of Gaspé.

On reaching the Restigouche, and there declaring my attention of crossing over to the St. Lawrence, I was informed that, attended as I was by ladies, the journey was impracticable and even hazardous. The road was represented to me as no better than a forest trail; that the distance could not be accomplished in less than five days; and that there were no accommodations whatsoever. I was also told that nearly parallel with this land route, and touching it at several points, was a water communication by the Matapedia river, and I was advised, if determined to proceed, to travel in canoes. My fondness for this mode of travelling settled the matter in my own mind, and its novelty to my companions made them anxious to try the experiment, and we determined to take the water. Two small birch canoes, manned each by two Micmac Indians, were secured; into one of which was placed our luggage, and into the other, when ready, we embarked ourselves. The men were to receive one dollar per day each for their services and found, and one dollar per day was to be allowed for the two canoes. They were to take us only about sixty miles, to the head of the Matapedia lake, and to accomplish the trip in four days; and as we would have to spend three nights in camp, all the necessary requirements in the way of blankets, extra clothing, and provisions, were kindly furnished for the occasion by the Fergusons. A large party of friends came to see us off, and we pushed from the shore on one of the loveliest of mornings. We ascended the Restigouche about seven miles, alternately by means of the paddle and the pole, and enjoyed to perfection, the islands, the deep black pools, and the mountains on either side of the river. On approaching the Matapedia, we found that it had three mouths of outlets, and entering the principal one of these we were met by several logs and pieces of timber which came booming down on the bosom of a flood, and the paddles gave place to the