

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

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TWO MOTHERS?

BY MRS. S. F. JENNINGS.

A LITTLE dirty ragged boy, in the streets of New York, selling penny songs, is asked by a gentleman if he has a mother. 'Neow don't—where's yourn?' Does she know you're out?' he says, with that impudent nonchalance which is more pitiful because so common among that class. But the gentleman buys some of his songs, and that act is the sesame to his heart. Upon a second putting of the question, he is ready, though with the same reckless air, to answer, 'No: folks don't have two mothers, do they? and mine's dead's long ago's, I can remember:

Two mothers? Never, little one;

No merit brings such need;

God gave the one—if she has gone

God help thee feel thy need!

For a dangerous way, stormy and wild,
Thou goest, without thy mother child.The throbbing heart of this mighty town,
How beats its pulse for thee?The tide of life swells up and down
The paths of this restless sea.Will they dash thy bark on the surf away,
Like a straw or leaf on the ocean spray?

Poor boy! for thee how ruthless time

All tender ties hath riven!

Thy Father's love—all sear'd with crime;

Thy mother—gone to Heaven,

No brother, sister, guards the shrine,
When God hath set his seal divine.

Thy mother dead? long, long ago

No soft eye beams on thee?

No kindly voice says firmly 'No,'

To bid thy temper flee?

And snares are thick, and pitfalls deep,

And the upward way is rough and steep.

And thou heedest not, in thy soul's deep night,

That God hath so bereft thee;

And thou carest not for the trembling light

Dim in thy memory left thee.

God save thee from the world's sure blight!

God save thee from an endless night!

From Godey's Lady's Book.

THE MOTHER'S LESSON.

A STORY FROM A GERMAN BALLAD.

By Elma South.

'Twas night, the star-gemmed and glittering, when a bereaved mother lay tossing on her bed in all the feverish restlessness of unsanctified sorrow. Sleep had fled far from her weary eye-lids; and her grief-burdened heart refused to send up from its troubled fountains the refreshing stream of prayer.

The deep stillness that rested on the hushed earth was broken by those saddest of all sounds, the bitter wailings of a mother weeping for her children, and 'refusing to be comforted because they are not.'

'Oh, woe, woe is me!' was the piteous cry of that breaking heart, and the piercing sound went up to the still heavens; but they looked calmly down in their starry beauty and seemed to hear it not.

And thus slowly passed the long, weary hours of the night, and naught was heard save the solemn chiming of the clock, telling, with iron tongue, that man was drawing hourly nearer to the quiet grave.

And as the mourner lay listening to Time's slow, measured strokes, Memory was busy with the images of the loved and lost. Again they were before her in all their youthful beauty; she heard their gleeful voices and felt their fond caresses. The night wind swept coolingly into the casement, and, as it touched her throbbing brow, it seemed like the soft kisses of her loving children.

Poor mourner! Could earth furnish no magic mirror in which thou couldst always thus see the dead living? Oh, no! for as melts the fleecy cloud into the blue depths of heaven, so passed away the blessed vision; and seeing but the coffin and the shroud, again arose on the silent air those tones of despairing anguish: 'Woe is me! my sons are dead.'

Then softly and sweetly sounded forth the matin chimes, blending their holy music with the anguished cries of the bereaved mother. In the midst of her sorrow, she heard the bells' sweet harmony, and, leaving her sleepless couch, walked forth into the refreshing air. Morning was breaking cold and gray over the earth, and the stars were growing pale at the approaching step of the monarch of the day.

Slowly walks the mourner through the yet sleeping woods, whose flowers are folded in silence, and whose birds give forth no carols. She reaches the antique church and enters the sacred doors. A mysterious light—light that is almost shade—is brooding over the holy aisles, clothing in shadowy garments the pale images of departed saints; wrapping in

mantle of dimness the carved sepulchres; throwing strange gleams over the tall white columns; and embracing, with pale arms, cross and picture, and antique shrine. In the midst of this mysterious light kneel a silent company; each head is bowed on the clasped hands, and no sound is heard save a deep, far distant murmuring, like the voice of the mighty wind when it passes through the leaves of the dark, old pines, dwelling in some dim, solemn woods.

Suddenly every head is lifted, and the mourner sees in that vast company friends who had been sleeping long ages in the silent tomb. All were there again; the friend of her cloudless childhood, who went down to death's cold chambers in all her stainless beauty, sinking into the grave as pure as the snow-flake that falls to the earth. And there was the sister of her home and heart, the tried friend of sorrow's shaded hours, who, in dying, left a mighty void that time could never fill. And there were the 'mighty dead,' they whose footsteps, when living, tracked the world with light—light that now shed a halo over their graves. And there were the meek, patient ones of earth, pale martyrs to sorrow, who struggled hopefully through the dim vapours that surround the world, and met as a reward the ineffable brightness heaven. They were all here, all who had passed from earth amidst a fond tribute of tears and regrets.

All were here save two, those two the most dearly loved among the precious company of the dead; and wildly scanning the pale group, the mother called aloud as she missed her children: 'Oh, my sons! my sons! would that I could see them but once again!'

Then arose a loud voice, and it said:—'Look to the east;' and the weeping mother looked.

Oh! dreadful sight! there, by the sacred altar, rested a block and a fearful wheel.—Stretched on these dreadful instruments of doom, in the coarse garb of the prison, wrestling fiercely with death in its most awful form, were two poor youths; and in their wan countenances, where crime and grief had traced their fearful march, the mother recognized her lost sons.

Dismayed, heart-sick, despairing, the motionless stands; and the deep silence is again broken by a voice speaking these words:—

'Mourner, whose every tone is a murmur at Heaven's will, whose every expression is a doubt of God's love, let this teach thee a mighty truth. See the dark path of crime they might have trod; see the agony, the shame, the maternal anguish that might have swept like a desolating tempest over thy heart; then thank thy God, in a burst of fervent praise, that he took them in unsullied youth from a world of sin to a place of safe refuge.'

The voice ceased, and darkness fell like a pall on the marble floor; but through the arched windows came streaming the pale moonlight, and beneath its holy rays, the mother knelt and prayed.

There fell on her heart a blessed calm, as a voice whispered to the troubled waves of sorrow, 'peace, be still.'

And the angel of death stole softly in, and sealed her pale lips forever, whilst repentance and resignation were breathing from them in the music of prayer.

Oh, weeping mother! who art hanging garlands of sorrow ever fresh over thy children's tombs, take to thy bereaved heart, and ponder well, this 'Mother's Lesson!'

CAPTAIN M'CLURE,

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE.

The nineteenth century opened with universal war, men had other work than maritime discovery; but after the peace of 1818, a new expedition was fitted out, consisting of four vessels. The Isabella and Alexander, commanded by Captain Ross and Lieutenant Parry, sailed westward to search Baffin's Bay; the Trent and Dorothea, with Captain Buchan, Commander Franklin, and Lieutenant Beechy, eastward, to try the passage of Spitzbergen, and the direct north.

The map at that time from Baffin's Bay to Behring's Straits was a complete blank. Even the Bay had remained unexplored since Baffin had swept round it, two hundred years before. But during this expedition Sir John Ross completed its circumnavigation; made acquaintance with the simple Esquimaux tribes, who till then believed themselves the only people in the world, and that all beyond was ice; beheld, for the first time, the beautiful red snow, whose origin was then unknown, extending for eight miles over cliffs six hundred feet high thence named by him 'The Crimson Cliff'; entered the magnificent mountain portals of Lancaster Sound, lifting their dark masses of granite and basalt from two to four thousand feet into the blue air; but unconscious that thro' that portal lay the path to the Pacific; he turned back, and so home to England, without wintering.

Captain Buchan, meanwhile, with Franklin and Beechy, had turned to the gloomy shores of Spitzbergen—the spiked Mountains

—and worked their way through ice fields and labyrinths of frozen masses, till they reached the great ice barrier none had ever passed. Into this pack the ships were helplessly driven by a tempest, and warred with their terrible opponents for three whole weeks, when some special providence released them; but the ships were too much damaged for further progress, so they too steered back for England.

But the year after, 1819, records one of the most remarkable voyages ever accomplished, in which Parry was Commander.

Lancaster Sound had never been explored; Sir John Ross imagined it a bay. Parry resolved to clear the mystery, and set sail with the Hecla and Griper, provisioned for two years.

The voyage was eminently successful.—Amid the excitement and cheers of the crews, he passed up the grand opening of Lancaster Sound, forty five miles in breadth; still onward by the bold coast and magnificent rocky walls of Barrow's Straits, where a British ship had never been; onward still by the lofty islands rising perpendicularly from the sea to the height of two or three hundred feet, till he attained the 110th western meridian, having never let go an anchor since leaving England; and there, summoning his crew on deck, he announced they had gained the reward of five thousand pound, promised by act of Parliament to the first ship which reached that meridian beyond the Arctic circle.

Winter was passed on Melville Island, in a place since ever memorable as Wintry Harbour—the first winter ever passed by British seamen in such northern latitudes. When summer came, the crew would gladly have pushed on westward to the 130th degree, where a further reward could have been claimed, but the stern ice refused a passage. Land too was seen, sixty miles to the southwest, but they could not reach it. Let us remember this land, for we hear tidings of it again.

So Parry returned homewards from the scene of his splendid efforts, having justly achieved a reputation as first navigator of the age, and the most adored of Commanders. And from that year, 1820, till 1851, no ship was ever able to reach the point Parry had attained, or touch that western ice, till McClure ploughed a furrow there.

Contemporaneous with this voyage of Parry's was a land expedition, conducted by Sir John Franklin, full of the strangest horrors upon record. The present Sir John Richardson, Sir George Back, and Mr Hood, along with guides and Canadians, accompanied him. They set out early in summer from Coppermine river in canoes, to search the coast line of America, supplied as they thought, with ample provisions and materials for hunting. But in a month provisions began to fail, and by September they were all exhausted. The parties left the canoes for land travelling, and subsisted merely on what they could gather of *tripe de Roche*, or rock moss. Sometimes they came upon a skeleton carcass left by the wild animals, and lived upon the putrid marrow and the pounded bones. Then the canoes were flung away, for the bearers had no strength to carry them so that when they reached the river again they had no means of crossing. Three days, six days pass, and they have only the rock moss and the remains of a putrid ox left by the wolves. At length a raft is constructed, and they get across.

Then began the journey to the hut, Fort Enterprise, where provisions had been promised. This hope kept them alive. Herds of reindeer came in sight, but they had no strength to lift a gun. So days passed, and they travelled on. Their Buffalo cloaks, the sledge covers, their old shoes, the bones left by the wolves—on these they lived. Some dropped by the way, and others had not strength to help them on.

At length Richardson, Hepburn, and Mr Hood, offered to remain at any spot where rock moss could be had, while Franklin and his party proceeded to the fort, and sent them back provisions. Michel, an Iroquois guide, and the Canadians went with Franklin.

Next day, three of the Canadians, too weak to travel, said they would returned to Richardson. Michel volunteered to accompany them. Of this party none were ever seen after but Michel, who arrived at Richardson's hut alone. The others he said, had left him, and one had died.

Franklin and the rest went on. They reached the fort—it was deserted. Not a trace of food or help, or human being near. They sank to the ground in hopeless despair, but the old bones and skins they had left five months before were still there, and welcomed with rapture. Daily they watched and hoped for help, for Back had gone another route in search of Indians who might aid them. Thirty-one days passed, and no help came. Two fell dead, and the others had no strength to bury them. They sat in the hut with dead men.

And Richardson meanwhile, with his two friends, was awaiting the provisions that never came. Each day they picked their scanty meal of rock moss; and on this they

were dying, not living. But Michel, the Iroquois, grew fat and strong; yet, though he absented himself frequently on pretence of hunting, he never brought in game.

Hood lent him his gun; he shared his Buffalo cloak with him at night, for the Indian was strong and able to hunt, and they looked to him for preservation. Still, the missing Canadians never appeared. Michel said they must have died.

One day he brought them in what he said was part of the flesh of a wolf, and bade them eat. Then their suspicions were aroused, and they watched for evidence, till the whole horrible truth was revealed—the murders, and the cannibal. Their own fate seemed now before them. Michel's manner became strange and fierce; and his glaring eyes seemed constantly fixed on them. Hood was not able to leave the hut from weakness. One day, Hepburn and Richardson were outside cutting wood, when a gun was fired.—They turned: Michel had just shot the young man through the head. The two friends knew they were too weak for an open struggle with the murderer; but they took counsel together, and watched for their opportunity. A few days after, they observed Michel cleansing his gun assiduously; then he advanced to them, with what object they knew well by his expression; but just as he came up quite close, Richardson boldly placed his pistol at the head of the savage, and shot him dead.

The two friends travelled on alone to come up with Franklin. Six days thus onward, with nothing to subsist on but the remnants of poor Hood's Buffalo cloak. They arrive. Franklin is seated in the desolate hut with the unburied dead; but the faces of the living are as ghastly, and each recoils in horror at the aspect of the other. At last deliverance comes. The Indians sent by Back arrive with food and help, and they are saved after a six months' agony. Amid such terrible scenes did Sir John Franklin become disciplined to Arctic horrors.

Parry had scarcely returned from his brilliant expedition, when he set forth again to search Hudson's Straits, in hopes of finding a less hazardous passage. Every step of Parry is in advance. In this voyage he was the first to sail up the frozen strait hitherto shunned by all navigators: then returned, after two winters, having to saw through a mile of ice to effect an exit for his ship. That was in 1822. In 1824 he was again leading an expedition of greater magnitude than any yet undertaken. With the Hecla and Fury he was to search Regent's Inlet for a passage westward; while the heroic Franklin, with his tried friends, went again landward, in a parallel direction along the American coast; and Captain Beechy, in the Blossom, sailed round by Cape Horn to Behring's Straits, the hoped-for rendezvous of all parties. But none were destined to meet there. The Fury was wrecked in Regent's Inlet, and had to be abandoned, while all her stores were buried, though eighty years after, these buried stores saved the lives of Sir John Ross and his famished crew. Franklin's expedition proceeded successfully along the coast to within one hundred and fifty miles of Icy Cape, where the ice and dense fogs made them turn back at the point named 'Return Reef'; while Richardson examined and named all the coast eastward from Cape Bathurst to Wollaston Land. Captain Beechy, likewise, passed Behring's Straits successfully, and reached Icy Cape, but could get his ship no farther. He buried provisions at the straits, which, twenty-six years after, were dug up by the Plover, and found excellent. So the three expeditions returned to England without having ever met.

Sir Edward Parry never afterwards tried a north-west passage; but in his eloquent narrative of the expedition, he expresses full confidence that the undertaking will one day be accomplished. One is interested to hear the speculations of so great a man, uttered nearly thirty years ago, when they have just been realised by one who needs no higher praise than to be compared to Parry in courage and fortitude. He says: 'I believe a north-west passage an enterprise within the reasonable limits of practicability. It may be tried often, and often fail, for several favourable and fortunate circumstances must be combined for its accomplishment; but I believe nevertheless, it will ultimately be accomplished. That it is not to be undertaken lightly is shown by our recent failures under such advantages of equipment as no other expedition of any age or country ever before united. I am much mistaken, indeed, if the north-west passage ever becomes the business of a single summer; nay, I believe that nothing but a concurrence of very favourable circumstances is likely even to make a single winter in the ice sufficient for its accomplishment; but this is no argument against final success. For we now know that a winter in the ice may be passed not only in safety, but in health and comfort. Happy as I should have considered myself in solving this interesting question, happy shall I also be if any labors of mine, in the humble but necessary office of pioneer, should ultimately contribute to the success of some more fortunate