

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

THE BAREFOOTED BOY.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

BLESSINGS on thee, little man!
Barefooted boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes—
With thy red lip redder still,
Kissed by strawberries on the hill—
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunting grace;
From my heart I give thee joy
I was once a barefooted boy!
Prince thou art—the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollar ride—
Barefooted, judging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy,
In the reach of ear and eye—
Outward sunshine, inward joy;
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

Oh! for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day;
Health that mocks the doctor's rules;
Knowledge, never learned of schools;
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild flower's time and place,
Flight of fowls and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood,
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lillies blow
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grapes' clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of grey hornet artisans!—
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy—
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

Oh! for Boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming birds and honey bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade:
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine the bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too,
All the world I saw and knew,
Seemed a complex chinese toy;
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

Oh! for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread,—
Pewter spoons and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone grey and rude!
O'er me like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed the sunset bent,
Purpled curtained, fringed with gold
Looped in many a wind-swung fold;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch; pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh as boyhood can!
Though the flinty hopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool winds kiss the heat;
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride—
Lost the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work besod,
Made to tread the mill's of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil—
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground—
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know the joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

From Hogg's Edinburgh Instructor.

A WIFE'S LESSON:

OR, MANAGING A HUSBAND.

'Good evening dear Mary. Am I not in good time to-night? I did not even stay for my cigar, but here I am, according to promise.'

George Oswald's young wife returned her husband's greeting with a smile.

'How glad I am, dear George, that you have done without that abominable cigar for once!—You feel just as comfortable now, do you not?'

'No, Mary, I cannot say that I do. It is a habit not so easily broken. To tell you the truth, I hoped that you would not object to my smoking a cheroot during our walk.'

'Ah! well, I might have known as much,' returned the lady, with a very sour expression of countenance. 'Your wife's company could not be expected to interest you without a cigar, in your mouth. Take your cheroot and enjoy your walk, I beg. Much as I hate the smell of tobacco, I know that to insure your presence I must endure it.'

And Mrs Oswald flung out of the room to put on her bonnet, while her husband seated herself in his easy-chair, and took up the newspaper.

The lady soon returned, shawled and bonneted, but there was still a slight frown upon her brow as she took her husband's arm, and sallied forth to enjoy the evening air. At length he spoke, after a silence awkwardly long in its duration.

'Mary, my dear, though I much wished for a pleasant walk, I can no longer defer telling you something which has caused me considerable vexation this morning. You know that I gave you a cheque last Christmas for those bills at Hunt's and other places, although they ought to have been paid out of your ample allowance for housekeeping. Now these very bills came to my office this morning, with a request that they may be settled at once. What on earth you could do with the £50 to which I allude is a mystery which, I trust, you will be able to solve to my satisfaction; though I shall always say that you have not behaved well in not devoting the money to the purpose for which it was given you.'

'Really, George, I thought it would matter very little whom I paid with it. And as Madame Bruyere was anxious for her money, I paid her instead of Hunt, knowing that they would wait till next quarter. But you are so ready to find fault with your wife, that I do not wonder at you making this complaint.'

'I am sorry to find fault with you, Mary; but, to be plain, my business will not stand this continual run upon my resources. We have lived considerably beyond our income ever since we married, and we must either retrench, or be ruined.'

'Lay down your plan of retrenchment, George, and I will endeavour to impress it upon the minds of the servants. What more I can do I know not, unless you wish me to discharge them all, and turn cook, housemaid, and nurse, myself.'

'I wish to goodness you were capable of performing any of those useful duties at which you sneer, Mary. It would have been better for us both if that essential part of a woman's education, domestic economy, had not been deemed beneath your notice. In your present temper I shall say no more on this subject. Only let me beg of you to remember, that we must economise, if you wish to save my credit.'

'How much do you pay for your cigars a quarter, George? I cannot help thinking it rather hard that you should thus attack me on my fancied extravagance, when you indulge in such an expensive habit yourself. But your wife may slave and save, while you spend and smoke. That is evidently what you wish.'

Mr Oswald reddened with anger, but with a violent effort he conquered himself, and returned no answer to his wife's speech, which she evidently considered to be unanswerable.

'You cannot deny it,' she triumphantly continued. 'Where can you find one of my whims as you call them, half so expensive as this?'

'Mary, I desire you not so speak to me again on this threadbare subject. I shall not give up my cigar entirely, now, not another word, or I leave you to walk home alone, and go to my friend Wilson's for the rest of the evening.'

His threat was not without the desired effect for Mrs Oswald had too great a dread of Mr Wilson's influence upon her husband, to run any risk of driving the latter into the gay bachelor's society. So for once she contrived to preserve a degree of silence on the contested point until they reached home, and sat down to a comfortable tea in the drawing-room. Here the battery was again opened, and kept up with spirit on both sides until bed-time.

One of Mrs Oswald's weaknesses was an absorbing love of fancy-work. Not a new pattern of chair or slipper, not an ottoman or couvrette appeared in the drawing-rooms of her numerous acquaintance, but she must begin one like it.—Nobody, however, could charge Mrs Oswald with having finished many of these beginnings. It usually happened that something still prettier came in her way before this could be accomplished; so that her work-baskets and embroidery-frames furnished an amusing, or rather painful—to a reflective observer—assortment

of work in various stages of progression. A melancholy index such a sight as this to the state of mind of the possessor.

A few weeks after the conversation above related, Mr Oswald's return to dinner was greeted with an unusual welcome on the part of his wife, who hastened to place a printed circular in his hand.

'Look here, George, I have had this circular sent, and Mr Mordaunt had called himself, to ask me to do all I can for the bazaar. The proceedings are to be devoted to the building of a new church. But you will see it all here. It is a good cause, and I am sure you will not object to my doing something.'

Mr Oswald read the circular:

'New Church—Bazaar in the Assembly Rooms—Charitable Exertions of the Ladies of H— and its neighbourhood!'

'What do you propose to do, Mary?' he said, laying down the paper with an empathetic and questionable 'Humph!' 'I should decidedly object to your taking any part in this affair, especially just now. The name of a bazaar is quite enough to frighten a man; but I suppose you must attend it, and buy some trifle out of compliment to Mr Mordaunt. I have given my subscription to the church, so no more in that way need be expected. I cannot afford it.'

'Indeed! you never told me of that. Still, it must not prevent my doing a little. What I propose is, to finish some large pieces of work that have been some time in hand, get them made up by Manton at a reasonable rate, and sent to the bazaar. I know that the committee wish me to take a table, and were it not for your strange, and I think unfounded objection to bazaars, I should at once have agreed to do so. I really consider myself bound to help forward a cause like this.'

'So do I, Mary; I only object to the means employed to help it forward, and to our spending money in any way just now. I must, in common justice to myself, beg that you will not be led into any useless expenditure. My affairs are getting worse; and I am expecting to hear of another heavy loss daily. If it get to be known among my creditors that you are spending money in a bazaar, I will not answer for the consequences. Finish the work you mention, but on no account run up another bill at Manton's; I have the fear of the last before my eyes.'

Mrs Oswald was not satisfied, but she had been too much frightened by her husband's recent losses not to see the policy of at least appearing to acquiesce in his wishes. Dinner was now announced, and the subject of the bazaar was not again mentioned that evening.

The next morning the young wife's dressing room presented no very orderly appearance:—Patterns, Frames, Berlin Wool, and Delicate Silks were strewn in gay confusion around, while Mrs Oswald herself, and a couple of young friends whom she had pressed into the service, were sorting, arranging, and consulting in the most serious manner possible. In another week the whole household seemed to have been enlisted in the service. The nursery table was strewn with small garments. Braided frocks and pinafores, destined to form part of the articles at Mrs Oswald's 'stall,' now usurped the time and attention of the nursemaids from their usual charge. The sewing in of strings and buttons, and darning of tiny socks, were all put off till after the bazaar. Early and late, with an energy worthy of a better cause, did Mrs Oswald, her friends and domestics, toil on with busy needles in its behalf. Glad to insure a little peace, Mr Oswald was quite ready to take his wife's word that all these preparations would literally cost 'nothing' except time; though he was often tempted to ask whether the numerous parcels of wool and other materials were also bestowed for 'nothing.' But the knowledge that such a question would only provoke a retaliation touching his cigar-case, kept him silent; and contenting himself with a gentle warning, he resumed his newspaper, and left Mary to her embroidery.

'Whom do you suppose I have seen to-day, Mary?' asked Mr Oswald one evening, as he entered the room where his wife was seated at work, for once without her attendant nymphs.

'I really can't guess, George; you see so many people, that it is a puzzling question to ask.'

'Well, then, I must tell you at once. It was Mr Ayton and your good Aunt; they came on business, and will be here to a late tea and bed.'

'How very annoying! Of course they must have the best room, and I have just been arranging my work on the bed, and the wardrobe and couch are both full. My aunt has such an horror of bazaars, too. Never was anything so provoking.'

'Well, well, Mary, there is nothing like making the best of these things; you must put your work out of the way. This will easily be done, I should think, as you say that you have so little. It is now only six, and they will not be here till half-past eight.'

Far from pleased at the interruption, Mrs Oswald proceeded to put away her fancy-work, and to huddle the smart exhibition of finished articles from the best bedroom into an adjoining smaller chamber, where they would be safe from the scrutinizing eyes of Mrs Ayton; then taking down some plain sewing from the

nursery, she seated herself in readiness for the arrival of her relative.

Punctually at half-past eight a ring at the hall door announced Mr and Mrs Ayton, and Mary and her husband hastened to welcome them.

'Mary,' said her aunt, on coming down from her bedroom the next morning, 'my forgetfulness of the different doors and passages in your house has procured me an unexpected pleasure, for upon turning the handle of the French bedroom door, I found myself in the midst of such an assortment of beautiful work and knick-knackeries as I have seldom seen before. You have been levying contributions on behalf of this bazaar, I suppose, and I must say that your friends have been uncommonly liberal.'

Mrs Oswald coloured as she met her aunt's penetrating glance.

'I have been tolerably successful, aunt,' she replied. 'My friends are all anxious to help, and I had a good many large pieces of work half-finished, which I have now completed as my mite. The cost has been next to nothing, for George cannot afford to let me do just as I would wish.'

'You do well to avoid all unnecessary expense, my dear, till your husband's affairs are set right. Nothing would injure his reputation as a man of business so much as having it said, that he could allow his wife to make a show of expensive articles at a bazaar, while his just and reasonable debts remain unpaid.'

Mrs Ayton said no more, but she saw enough during the couple of days spent with her niece, to convince her that Mary was deceiving herself as well as her husband as to the cost of her contributions to the fancy sale; and when she left, it was not without a few words of kind but serious warning.

Time passed on and the first day of the sale arrived. Mrs Oswald's stall was conspicuous for the taste and beauty of its articles; and Mrs Oswald herself, in her holiday temper, was all smiles and courtesy. 'Everything,' to use her own words, 'passed admirably;' and though at the end of the third and last day of the bazaar many of her most expensive articles still remained unsold, she professed herself perfectly satisfied with the result. One thing, alone, had annoyed her; her husband had not sanctioned her by his presence; and she returned home with the intention—unwarned by former quarrels—of again attacking him on the subject of his preferring a 'filthy cigar' to the society of his wife and her gay companions.—Mr Oswald's manner, however, as he met her at the door, and assisting her from the carriage, led her in silence to the drawing-room, completely disarmed her.

'Mary,' he said as soon as the door had closed behind them, 'this is a sad finish to your three days of gaiety. You come home to find your husband ruined. This house and all our effects are now in the hands of the law, and we have nothing to look to but your small annuity. I will not reproach you, Mary; but you have cruelly deceived me as to this bazaar. The beauty of the articles on your stall have been generally noticed, and their cost criticised; and now nothing remains for us but to make the best of our altered circumstances.'

'Let us write to papa and Aunt Ayton, George. Something must be done for us.—They will not allow us to be turned out of house and home.'

'They cannot help us adequately, Mary; and, besides, I fear Mr and Mrs Ayton took away with them no very favourable impression of the economy of our domestic arrangements. No, we must bear this calamity, for it has been in a great measure of our own seeking.'

Another month saw the gay and extravagant Mrs Oswald the mistress of a small house in the outskirts of the town. One attached servant alone accompanied them, and Mary had to attend to her three children herself. The change from affluence to comparative poverty had been so sudden, that it seemed to deprive her of the power of complaining. As soon, however, as she was settled in her new home, she gave way to the innate fretfulness of her nature; till her husband, in despair, was glad to leave his miserable fireside for the more congenial society of a neighbouring tap-room, where, with his pipe and glass of ale, he endeavoured to efface the remembrance of the cheroots and old port of other times.

'Indeed, aunt, I consider our pecuniary troubles nothing in comparison with this. Fancy how my husband is changed. I seldom see him after tea. He cannot give up his habit of smoking; and because he knows I will not allow it in the house, he must go to the Angel to indulge in it. Surely this is very hard to be borne, particularly in our present circumstances.'

'It is, indeed, Mary, very hard to witness anything like a falling off in the affections of those whom we love. But are you sure that you have nothing to reproach yourself with? Did you ever try to induce George to stay at home? Though I cannot say that I like the smell of Tobacco, though I condemn it is a wasteful and even injurious habit, yet, rather than alienate my husband as you are doing I would have allowed him to smoke his pipe here every night, trusting to the power of affliction and the substitution of more refined