

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

## THE BEST ESTATE.

BY CHARLES SWAIN.

The Heart it has its own estate—  
The Mind it hath its wealth untold;  
It needs not fortune to be great  
While there's a coin surpassing gold.

No matter which way Fortune leans,  
Wealth makes not happiness secure;  
A little mind hath little means—  
A narrow heart is always poor.

Stern Fate the greatest still enthalls,  
And Misery hath its high compeers;  
For Sorrow enters palace halls,  
And queens are not exempt from tears.

The princely robe and beggar's coat.  
The scythe and sword, the plume and  
plough.

Are in the grave of equal note—  
Men live but in the eternal 'Now!'

Still Disappointment tracks the proud,  
The bravest 'neath defeat may fall;  
The high, the rich, the courtly crowd  
Finds there's calamity for all.

'Tis not the house that honour makes—  
True honor is a thing Divine;  
It is the mind precedence takes—  
It is the spirit makes the shrine.

So keep thou yet a generous heart,  
A steadfast and contented mind;  
And not till death consent to part  
With that which friend to friend doth bind.

What's uttered from the life within  
Is heard not by the life without;  
There's always something to begin  
'Twixt life in faith and life in doubt.

But grasp thou Truth, though bleak appears  
The rugged path her steps have trod;  
She'll be thy friend in other spheres—  
Companion in the world of God.

Thus dwelling with the wise and good—  
The rich in thought, the great in soul—  
Man's mission may be understood,  
And part prove equal to the whole.

## From Dickens' Household Words.

## DAISY HOPE.

THERE was a great handsome mansion at Balham Hill, near London, with garden houses and coach-houses, and stables, and enormous iron gates, and rows of great trees, vainly trying to persuade itself by means of these rural appearances, that it stood in a great park in the county of Warwick; and this large domicile, with all its grounds, and shrubberies, and graperies, and gardens, was the residence of an overwhelmingly rich citizen, who daily performed the journey from these agricultural splendors into a little dingy-looking lane in the city and busied himself all day long about what seemed to be eyes of the uninitiated, the paltriest concerns. He toiled from morn till night among bales of merchandise and invoices of cargoes, and sold ship-loads of sugar, or bought warehousefuls of cotton; for nothing came amiss to him; and every thing flourished on which he laid his hands. After many hours of these labors, he stepped into his immensely-decorated carriage at the door of the dirty counting-house, and was driven rapidly through streets and avenues till he reached the suburban elysium at Balham, and was received at the entrance hall by his daughter and his wife. This lasted so long, that it was unanimously believed by the three personages just named, that it would last for ever: it was therefore with a feeling compounded nearly as much of surprise as of grief that the lady and her child perceived that the ordinary course of affairs had suddenly changed—that the carriage came no more to the door at nine o'clock, and returned to London at half-past five; that the dinner was no longer on the table punctually at six; for a certain tremendous cavalcade had departed one morning from the front door, with the principal vehicle, profusely ornamented with black feathers; and a noble piece of sculpture, emblematic of Hope and Resignation, rose gradually over the humbler graves in the Highgate cemetery. How touching is the grief of a widow left sole mistress of a place like Balham Belvidere, with a hundred and fifty thousand pounds in the four per cents! It overflows in square hatchments over the middle window, and black velvet over the seat in the church, and yards of crape in all directions, and window-weeds of preternatural size. So the glories of the Belvidere were eclipsed for many months under a cloud of mourning. The bereaved proprietor devoted himself to the cultivation of her husband's memory and the spoiling of her daughter's disposition. In every room of the house, the image of a red-faced, broad-shouldered, flat-featured man was suspended, who might have been taken for the fancy figure of a blacksmith retired from trade, but was glorified in the eyes of the widow as the likeness of one of the handsomest and most aristocratic-looking of men. The daughter, aged eleven,

was treated with the respect benefitting the representative of such a sire, and the heiress of so much wealth. She was far from beautiful; indeed, if it had not been for her expectations she would have been thought positively ugly—for her hair was of the reddest; her eyes, though blue in color, were not unanimous in their choice of the objects they fixed on; and her figure was bad, and her temper not of the best. But her mother thought by dint of constantly talking of her beauty, that she could induce it last to come—so she spoke of her golden locks and her interesting eyes, and thoughter Delia (such was the young lady's name) the perfection of the human race.

'I've been thinking,' said the minister of Daisyside to his wife, 'of a nice situation for poor Bessy Miller. There's that rich English lady up at the Wallace Arms, that drinks so much mineral water and is so generous to the poor, she wants a Scotch maid, and doesn't care how young. Now Bessy's just a wee past twelve, but she has sense and discretion enough for twenty-five, and I'll awa' up this very day, and see what can be done.'

'Will she be kind to the wee bairn?' inquired the wife, 'for we could manage to find work for her here, and she's no expensive, and reads so well, and is so mindful, she was a perfect treasure, and we has nane o' our ain, ye ken.'

'She'll be very kind,' replied the gentleman. 'Any body would be kind to Bessy Miller; and beside I'm told she has just lost a lass o' her own, about the same age—a most wonderful creature, by all accounts, both for cleverness and for beauty, for she speaks o' little else to all the company at the Wells—and she'll may be, tak' a kindness to Bessy for the dead bairnie's sake.'

The minister started on his benevolent mission, and succeeded as he deserved. The lady agreed to install his parishoner as dressing-maid and reader, and on the following morning the introduction took place. When Bessy timidly entered the room where her future mistress sat, she had many sad thoughts of the time when she first presented herself to the grand old lady in the drawing room at Daisy Hope. She clung to the good minister's hand as if loth to lose the last link of connection between herself and home, and cast shy looks at the occupant of the apartment—a large, stout figure, rendered more striking from the exaggerated appearance of woe with which it was encumbered; a face of vulgar good nature, but with an assumption at the same time of vast superiority and almost disdain. How different was the first impression from that left by the appearance of the stately Mrs Donnington, with her gold-headed cane and her form reclining on the high backed, rich covered chair, with her feet on the splendid fur rug, and her elbow on the velvet table-cover. Scarcely did the lady at the Wells withdraw herself sufficiently from the absorption of her grief to listen to the minister's words; scarcely did take her handkerchief long enough for her countenance to look at the trembling little applicant for her favor; but when she did so, when at last she mastered her emotions sufficiently to look at the shrinking figure, something—a stray expression of face—a faint resemblance in the color of the hair—an indefinable sentiment that struck upon some chord of recollection—made her suddenly rise from her chair, and advanced a step or two towards the pair. 'The likeness,' she said—'I never saw such a resemblance—she is my darling Delia over again; and then losing the expression of dignity and rank altogether, she flung her arms round the astonished Bessy's neck, and kissed her a thousand times.

'The woman is a Christian woman,' said the minister to his wife on his return, 'in spite of her disregard of the proper position of the letter *z*, which seems a sore stumbling block to the English nation, and she'll be a perfect mother to Bessy Miller, for a' her ignorance of grammar and cockney ways of going on. Riches is a snare to the slenderly educated, and she puts a little too much trust in corruptible treasure; but Bessy will be very comfortable, and has promised to write and tell us how she is treated.'

Daisy hope fell into ruins faster and faster. It ceased to be occupied by any one. The proprietor did not like the expense of taking it down, and very wisely thought a few years would save him the trouble. The little road leading up to the front door was overgrown with nettles; the stable-roof began to fall in; the windows were broken by playful boys, or blown in by tempestuous weather; and year after year the grand catastrophe of a total tumble into heaps of stone and lime drew nearer and nearer, and the possibility of repair became more and more problematical. But when things are at the worst they will mend. When eight or nine years had done their utmost to destroy all resemblance in the old mansion to a habitual dwelling; when people began to forget all about its having been lived in; when the minister had long been dead, and the Wallace arms had risen into high reputation, symptoms of reparation were visible. Men with mysterious implements began measuring the ground, and trying the strength of the old walls; and it was currently reported that a great English nobleman had bought the original estate and was going to build a mansion, at least the size of Windsor Castle. But the build-

ing, as it proceeded, gave no token of being designed on so gigantic a scale. The interior seemed to be to renew the old manor-house as closely as possible, and not a bow-window was omitted, not a jutting wall, nor pepper-pot towers at every corner: so it began to look like a dwelling of the sixteenth century suddenly transplanted into the present time, but combining in its interior arrangements the conveniences of modern life with the strength and solidity of the past. And the view of the upper rooms was unequalled in all the land! The winding Forth, the castellated rock, the glowing hills to the north, the rich valley to the eastward, and the hills all round, which assumed every day a more cultivated and civilized look. There was not in all Scotland a finer domain or a more comfortable dwelling than Daisy Hope.

One day in January last year there came a crowd in the inner dock at Southampton, to see the invalids from the Crimes brought to shore. Some were carried out looking so pale and worn that the spectators drew involuntarily back as if in reverence of approaching death; some of the more slightly wounded were received with a suppressed cheer. The Alma and Inkermann were still fresh in people's hearts; and indignation at official neglect boiled over into acts of kindness to the sufferers. The ship had been long expected; the passengers' names had been sent on by telegraph, and parents and sisters and brothers had assembled to welcome their friends home.

A sad and touching, yet an elevating sight, to see the heroic reception afforded by English mothers to their wounded sons! If sorrow was there, it was chastened and ennobled by pride in the achievement that had brought the wound. Carriages were in waiting to convey the sufferers to their lodgings or hotels. Embraces were given and received without a word being said; and holding by the brothers feverish hand, and walking close beside the litter on which he was carried, walked sisters many a one who were afraid to ask the extent of the calamity, but were busy laying plans for their brother's solace if he should turn out to be lame for life. All had nearly gone. Carriages and litters had moved out of the dock, and yet an old lady kept steadily at the end of the landing-board, attended by a younger, who was dressed in the plain apparel commonly adopted by the ladies who devoted themselves at that time to the duties of the hospital; and both kept their eyes intent on the cabin stairs from which the passengers emerged on the deck.—At last there came up slowly and with pain a young man in undress uniform, who supported himself on a crutch, and had his left arm in a sling. The young lady touched the arm of the senior, and drew her veil over her face. The officer looked round but no preparation had been made for his conveyance. No mother was in waiting with easy-hung coach. 'Get a cab there for Major Donnington!' cried a rough voice from the paddle-box; but the old lady said to the almost fainting soldier: 'Deed, Major Donnington ye'll hae no cab, and gang to nae hotel. Ye'll just come to our branch o' the Crimean hospital, and ye'll no want for nurse or any care that a mother can gie ye.'

The wounded man considered that this was a piece of careful sympathy from an active and paternal administration, and submitted to his fate with his resignation. Accordingly he was installed in a carriage standing near the gate, and driven off—and off through streets, and out among trees, till he entered a moderate-sized avenue and pulled up at the door of a pretty looking villa about two miles from the town upon the shore of Southampton Water. There he was soon shown into his apartment by the ladies, who had followed in another conveyance; and as medical assistance was kept in waiting, the extent of his wounds was ascertained and a speedy recovery promised. A bayonet stab in the left shoulder, and a bullet in the knee, where the memorials he carried away of the 'Soldiers Victory.' But a grateful country was ready to pour balm in his wounds. Wasn't he in a charming hospital with a beautiful view from the window, the nicest, cleanest curtains for his bed, the best doctor in the county of Hants to attend to his recovery, and nurses so kind, so obliging, so sweet-toned and tender-handed, that it was a positive gratification to be ill! His servant arrived a short time after him with his luggage; his things were put away in convenient drawers; book-shelves in the neighbouring chamber, to which he was to be removed when well enough to sit up, were filled with pleasant volumes; and in a room beyond, he occasionally, in the absence of the younger nurse, heard a clear, beautiful voice, accompanied by a piano. But in spite of all this care of a watchful government, the young man felt depressed at the thought that he was causing so much trouble to two amiable ladies upon whom, individually, he had no claim. He was anxious to make all manner of inquiries, and was profuse in his acknowledgment for all their care. And at first, notwithstanding the prognostic, their care seemed of no avail. A fever supervened, during which fancy played its usual tricks, and arrayed itself in the lost robes of memory; and in his wandering there was a curious mixture of Indian recollections and the scenes he had had in Scotland with his mother. When he had recovered sufficiently to be read to, the younger attendant sat at the side of his

bed, and it seemed something like a continuance of his feverish aberration when her gentle words fell upon his ear, for the volumes she chose were Orme's History of Hindostan, and the Life of Warren Hastings, and the story of the Black Hole.

'Mrs M'Vicar,' said the soldier, after one of these readings, 'will you answer me a question or two? And first do you think I am perfectly recovered from delirium?'

'Ye'll maybe be the best judge o' that, yersel,' was the cautious answer of the elder nurse.

The young man paused and seemed engaged in a minute inspection of the state of his own brain. 'Who is the young lady who hovers over my bed, and reads in such musical accents, that I sometimes even now doubt whether she isn't altogether an angel?'

'Her name is Miss Preedy—an English sister of charity, and I'm a mither of the same.'

'And does she always wear a veil over the upper part of her face?'

'Oh, no.'

'She doesn't squint, does she?' inquired the Major, as a horrible suspicion crossed his mind that this might be the reason of the concealment of brow and eyes.

'I daursay, ye'll see and judge for yersel in that too,' replied Mrs M'Vicar 'but I suppose you'll soon be thinking of leaving the hospital. You must be anxious to get away home.'

The officer sighed sadly. 'The fact is,' he said, 'I have no home—I lost my mother nine or ten years ago, and have been in India ever since till we were sent out to the Crimea. I have no home.' It seemed so melancholy a confession that they were both silent for a time. 'But I hope to be well again soon,' he added, 'and go out to join my regiment. What does the doctor say now?'

The doctor's report was hopeful. In a week he sat up, in a fortnight he entered the little apartment next his bedroom, and in three weeks he was invited to the drawing-room. It was gratitude, probably, that made him think Miss Preedy so wonderfully beautiful. Light hair and dark blue eyes, a clear complexion and the finest carved features with the sweetest smiling mouth, were enough to justify his admiration; but when he united to this amount of loveliness all her kindness, the care she had bestowed on his comforts, the hours she had devoted in the half-darkened room to his amusement, there is no wonder that his feelings of gratitude took a far warmer shape, and, in short, that he was in love; madly, desperately. Yes, desperately, how would it look in the announcement, that a wounded officer had married the hospital attendant? and would a real sister of charity descend from the poetic dignity of her great and generous work to bestow her hand upon a patient? Besides, there are always plenty of other reasons in the mind of a man with nothing but his commission; for how could he expose so delicate, so refined, so lady-like a being to the discomforts of his narrow means? How wisely people resolve, when the object of their admiration is at a little distance, say a mile or two, or in the neighboring parish, or in another street—or even, as in this case, in a different room! But when he saw Miss Preedy, when he heard her speak, there was no further use of argument. He determined to plead his cause with the utmost ardor, and with that view addressed Mrs M'Vicar when he had an opportunity.

'My dear friend,' he said, 'I have something very important to say to you. Was Miss Preedy ever in Bengal?'

'No.'

'Then I can't imagine where I can have seen her, or some person so amazingly like her, that I am quite confused when I look at her, and listen to her voice. Of course she was never at Balacava.'

'No.'

'Has she father and mother alive?'

'I don't think she has a living relation in all the world.'

'I'm glad to hear it. Nor I. We are quite unencumbered in that respect. Ah! Mrs M'Vicar, I wish I were as rich as Cæsus, whoever that fortunate gentleman may have been; but the truth is I am one of the most ostentatious persons in the Queen's dominions, and wear all the gold I possess upon my shoulders in the shape of epaulettes: but if a true heart—if a devoted love—if years of— She's very poor, I hope,' he said, suddenly interrupting himself, afraid that his intentions might be misunderstood.

'Her father was the last partner of the great house in London of Blogg and Preedy. You've maybe heard of it, in the sugar line, and she was heiress to all the wealth of the firm.'

Major Donnington looked and felt as if another bayonet was entering his shoulder, another bullet lodging in his knee. He did not answer for a long time. At last he said, 'Only one favor, my excellent friend; keep this a secret. It was a delusion—it shall not last. Take my thanks for all you have done; tell her how deeply grateful I am; I will leave this hospital to-day.'

'This is Miss Preedy's villa, and a bonny little mansion it is; but its nae hospital, unless for yersel' that has no home to go to.'