

Poetry.

A VOICE FROM THE FARM.

You say that my life is a round of toll?"
The stalwart farmer said;
"That I scarce can wrest from the oft-tilled soil.
My gittance of daily bread?
Well, what you tell me in part is true,
I am seldom an idle man,
But I value the blessing of rest as you,
Who have so much of it, never can.

"And, surely, I never have worked in vain,
From the Spring to the golden Fall;
The harvest has brought waving grain,
Enough and to spare for all.

And when in the evening, freed from care,
I see at my farm-house door
My wife and little ones waiting there,
Oh, what has a millionaire more!

"My children may never have hoarded wealth;
Their lives may at times be rough;
But if in their houses they have love and health
They will find these riches enough.

The only land which they will ever own
Is the land that the strong right arm
And the patient, fearless heart alone
Can till to a fertile farm.

"I have nothing beyond my simple wants,
And a little for cloudy days;
But no grim spectre my honest land haunts,
Such as silver and gold might raise.

Around me are eyes that with sparkling mirth,
Or with placid contentment shine
And no wealth-clogged lord upon all the earth
Has a lot more blessed than mine.

"Oh, yes, I am laboring all day long,
With the mind and the muscle, too;
But I thank the Lord, who has made me strong,
And given me work to do.

For what, indeed, is the idle drone
But a vampire on the land,
Reaping a fruit that by others was sown,
And not by his own right hand!"

THE OLD FRONT DOOR.

I remember the time when I used to sit,
A happy and thoughtless boy,

When father came home from his work at last,
And I was tired of my toy—

I remember the time (and more sweet
Shall I know for evermore)

When I sat at eve by my mother's side
On the sill of the old front door.

I remember I'd sit till I fell asleep,
And lie to their loving talk,

While the crickets chirped, and the fireflies bright
Flew over the garden walk;

And often would father tell the tale
Of the time long years before,

When he led his bride to a happy house
O'er the sill of the old front door.

It is many a weary day since then,
And I, too, am old and gray;

But the tears come crowding int' my eyes.

When I think of that long past day;

And I only hope that whatever end

Fate may have for me in store,

I shall walk once more, ere I pass away,

O'er the sill of the old front door.

—Selected.

The Fireside.

THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE.

BY SELINA BUNBURY.

A long time ago we lived in a grand old house on the banks of the famous river Boyne in Ireland.

One day a comrade who had a small sail-boat asked my brother and me to go for a sail on the river. I gladly accepted the invitation, and though only a child about ten years old I got leave to go.

"That," he said, giving it to me, "will cause you to remember the smuggler, who will remember you."

I admired it, and, folding it up, presented it to him again.

"Don't you like it?" he asked.

"I admire it very much but I must not take it."

"Why not?"

"Because they say it is wrong to smuggle goods, and so it must be wrong to take them."

"Right you are; but, child, there are hundreds, ay thousands, who will take the goods and wish no good to the smugglers. Now it comes out strange, but it is a fact just before you came in. I was thinking over my past life and my present life, and somehow wishing my future life—there is not much of it left—might be different. The revenue cruiser is off there; if they catch me to-night, then will be an end of me, but if I get through I will give up this trade, for I am weary and want rest."

To return with wind and tide against their small boat was what neither of them could do. For my part I became insatiable to danger. We were on a fearfully dangerous rock-bound coast, but I had sunk to the bottom of the boat, and lay there without thinking of that or anything else. It is curious that since that day I have never known what are called the horrors of sassinicks, though I have been smitten for after-ages. That horrible malady of the sea overcame me for once and for all, I was unconscious of danger. I heard at last a shout from a strong seaman's voice; I was dimly conscious that our little skiff was grappled in some way by persons who saw it running on the rocks. I lay almost senseless. Yet in that state I was dimly conscious of being carried up an immense headland, and of hearing my brother tell me he would go, as he said, over-land, to find some conveyance to haul us back to the home we had left.

Once laid down I knew nothing more, for I fell into the deepest sleep, and awoke to find myself wrapped in a large mantle, and lying on some rough coats in a great cavern on the rocky headland. I was only at its entrance—indeed, the cavern itself was only the entrance to another more hidden one lower down the rocks, and with access to the sea. I lay some time enjoying the repose of solid earth. I had not been in the place before, but I knew the locality from hearing it often described; and I had been told some stories by an old Irish woman of what she called the smuggler's cave. But these stories were traditional; they did not relate to the present time, for as I afterwards heard, the old dame was indebted for her excellent tea, and various other nice things, to the smuggler's cave. These were not free-trade times, and I believe many a well-filled cellar held casks that the custom-house officers had never interfered with. The trade of the smugglers, however dangerous, was then a prosperous and lucrative one.

All my suffering from the sea had passed away, but intense thirst remained. I looked round for some friendly streamlet trickling down the rock, but instead of the welcome drip, drip I hoped for, I heard a rumbling noise as of things in casks being rolled along in the cavern beneath me. I sat up listening, and heard the hours, half-stifled sound of voices. In a moment I was rushing full speed down the great rocky headland, and though it was oversown by short, stubby, and, perhaps, slippery grass, I neither stumbled nor fell. Fear, they say, lends wings to feet; if it lent them to mine the wings were strong, for I flew down the steep, rough slope without fearing or knowing where I went, ran in at the half-open door of a small stone-built hut, and dashed over all sorts of feet of its floor again, the opposite wall, before I could stop in my flight to be like Rufus or Eva!—*The Fancys.*

At the instant there was a low shrill whistle from the headland at the back of the hut.

"That is my look-out," said the smuggler; "it is the signal that your lads are there with the shad-radar they went to get; you must run, or they will go on to the cave and miss you. Good-by,

if ever do win my way to little sister, we may meet in a better place."

"Come, remember you are told to come," I cried, and ran through the outer compartment of the hut, which looked as if it were meant for a stable or a shelter for the sheep that browsed among the rocks. The door was left with perhaps designed earlessness lying open, while the smuggler within was scaring the children one I had broken open.

"I beg your pardon, sir," I gasped. "It might seem curious to older eyes than mine to see the earlessness sink down, down, down from face and eyes, as the man stared at the small, trembling figure that had so startled him.

"Ha! you are the little one they took from the cockle-shell that was going to split on the rocks. Well, who have you brought with you?"

"No, sir," I said. "Why do you come here?"

"I was so thirsty, and—" "I don't know what it is to want water." He poured me a large draught. "Take it, that is the best drink one can have. Now, was it that only you came here?"

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