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LITERATURE.

THE GRIM MONARCH.

There is a guest that I detest,
Forever at my side;
He clings to me more fondly
Than a bridegroom to his bride.

I hate him and berate him,
But when I cross his will
He glares at me sardoniously
And clasps me closer still.

He's a beggar and a ranger,
He was present—not a stranger—
At the birth of the Messiah
In the cold Judean manger.

He strolls along the path
Of the tempest in its wrath;
He's found among the ruins
Of the moulder's aftermath.

He's a prince of empty pockets,
Out at elbow and at knee;
He's the King of countless millions,
And his name is Poverty.

A TEST OF LOVE.

It had blown a perfect hurricane all day, and early in the afternoon the snow had commenced to fall, increasing in violence until six o'clock, when Lottie started home. Tottenham court-road and the by-streets were full of drifts, the air was a blinding haze, and the wind fiercer than ever.
'Oh, how pleasant home will look!' she said to herself, pulling her collar up about her ears, and tucking her music roll securely under her arm. How happy I ought to be that I have it to go to, even if it is only a little room all by myself. What do poor girls do who have none, no work, no home—and no Robert?
Then she laughed shyly to herself and blushed—a happy rosy blush down inside the collar, and walked faster than ever. Home was quite a distance; but her fleet steps carried her quickly there, and the hall door had flown open in response to her latch-key, when, from somewhere in the darkness near, a voice came—a tremulous, pleading voice—'Pity, oh, for the love of God pity me!'
'Who are you? Where are you?' asked Lottie, startled and stopping right where the hall light shone in her face and dazzled her eyes.
'Here.' And from the shadow beside the door a woman's figure—a woman that the next moment also stood in the light, showing a wrinkled, aged face and snow-white hair, covered with a tattered bit of shawl. 'I'm freezing, starving and may be dying. If you have any pity, give me some food and some kind of shelter!' she said, with a desperate sort of famished eagerness.
'I will—oh, I will—come in,' cried Lottie, her voice quivering, and her eyes shining with the generous pity that flooded her young heart. I have no place I can take you but my room on the top floor. Can you climb the stairs?
'For warmth and food? Yes, yes,

lead the way,' cried the woman, eagerly looking at the girl with a trembling delight burning in her hollow eyes. 'I can follow anywhere.'

But she was aged and weak, and the four long flights of stairs were slowly accomplished. Lottie assisting her companion as well as the narrow staircase would allow, and going very slowly.

'This is my room,' she exclaimed at last, throwing open a door and leading the panting woman in. 'Sit down here and in two minutes my fire will be lighted. Are you very tired?'

The weary woman could only nod as she sank into the chair Lottie gave, while her young hostess flew about the room. Everything was most exquisitely neat, and the little grate, brushed and polished was already laid for the fire, and, at a touch from Lottie's match, blazed and crackled with amazing brightness. 'Is not that lovely?' she cried, turning to the strange visitor. 'Now, you will soon be warm, and in a few minutes I will give you a cup of tea. Move nearer, won't you?'

Apparently speechless with grateful amazement and delight the woman did as bid, throwing off her wet, tattered shawl, and holding her wrinkled hands over the blaze, while her eager eyes still followed every move Lottie made.

'I am my own housekeeper, you see,' continued the girl, gaily, as if wishing to make her visitor less timid and more at home. Here is my little kitchen,' and with a merry laugh she threw open the door of a large closet showing within neatly-papered shelves of dishes and tins. 'I am just as happy and independent as [an] be. How do you like it?'
'Like it!' echoed the woman. 'Does it not look like heaven to me? But are you all alone?'

'Yes all alone. I have not a relative in the world that I know of,' said Lottie taking off and hanging up her things now that she had all things started. 'I would be very lonesome if I had the time, but I haven't.'

'Then you work—you are poor!' cried the woman, as though the surroundings were to her suggestive of wealth and ease.

'Oh, yes, I am poor, and yet I am rich for I have health and strength and good work,' said Lottie, with a world of thankfulness thrilling her blithe voice. 'In the morning I am up early, and arrange my room and fire, and I have my little breakfast; then I am away all day as nursery governess and music teacher in a great house near South Park. I never have time to be lonesome, and I am very happy.'

The woman turned her eyes to the fire again, and as she steadily and silently watched the dancing flames Lottie seized the opportunity of looking at her closely, when the woman turned, almost sharply 'You were studying me. What do you think?'

'Oh—why—I—I was wondering—if you had always been so poor,' stammered Lottie, honest but embarrassed.

The woman laughed, and not unmusically.

'No,' she said, 'I was not. But you are young and I am old, therefore let us talk of you and not of me. Tell me, do you always intend to live so alone—don't you want to marry?'

A wave of color, like the warm tint to a sea-shell, covered Lottie's sweet face. 'I am going to marry very soon,' she said, after a moment.

'Are you? And do you mind telling me about it—and him?' questioned the woman.

'He is teaching French and Spanish to the children I am nursery governess to and we meet there very often. I know he is good and noble, because—because I do. He shows it in every look and act.'

'And you love him?'

'Ah, yes! Yes indeed!'

Something in the sweet purty and rapt expression of the girl's face made the woman turn suddenly away and wipe her eyes. And then nothing more was said by either until the dainty supper of tea, toast and eggs was cooked by Lottie and placed before the woman on a little tray, covered with a worn but snowy napkin. Then suddenly came the question, 'What are you going to do with me to-night—turn me out?'

'Oh, no, indeed. You shall sleep on my bed, and I can make a pallet here by the fire. My bed is out of sight now,' she added with a laugh, as the woman looked about inquiringly. 'I like to have my room a sitting room; so if anyone comes to see me I fold up my bed into a lounge and put all my toilet things back of that pretty curtain, and that leaves me a little parlor, you see. Isn't it pleasant?'

The old woman's face was a mystery as she looked and listened. The thin lips continually twitched, and the eyes with all their sharpness gone, filled with tears. But she asked no more questions.

Lottie ate her own supper, then went into her closet, took down the tiny dishpan, poured out her water that had been heating while they ate, then quickly cleaned up all signs of supper, working quietly, as she supposed the weary woman was dozing, when on the contrary, she was intently watching every act of the young housekeeper. Work done, apron was removed, clean cuffs were put on, the soft curls brushed, and tastefully tied; then Lottie came to the fire, and seeing her visitor awake, said, with a smile and a pretty blush. 'My Robert is coming this evening, and you will see if he is not good and noble-looking.'

'He is coming here?—this evening?' exclaimed the woman; starting up—'Then I must go at once!'

'Indeed, no! Where would you go? You will stay here,' said Lottie, with decision; and at that very instant steps sounded on the stairs, and through the hall; and she added with a quick smile, 'Here he is now.'

Trembling, and evidently at her wit's end, the woman sank back into her seat; and while Lottie went to the door and greeted her lover in a few low-spoken words, she sat staring into the fire a smile gradually breaking over her face, as though consternation had given way to amusement.

Laying his hat and coat over a chair, Robert Claxton came around to the fire and looked down at the old woman, as she looked up at him; and there was a moment's silence.

'Grandmother!' he exclaimed at last, in a voice of stupefied amazement—'Grandmother, am I dreaming?'

'Well—no—I think not. You don't appear to be,' answered she, as though, after all, it was a great joke.

'But you—what—I—'

'Didn't say I was going to?' asked she, shortly.

'No, you didn't say what; and I never thought—'

'No, I suppose not; but I do. See here, Lottie.'

Like one doubting her senses, Lottie had stood listening to the strange dialogue, and even at this peremptory order she had not the power to move.

'This is my grandmother, Lottie,' began Robert, as if at a loss how to tell his story.

But she interrupted him briskly.

'I'll tell you about it, myself, Lottie,' said she. 'I am his grandmother, and I am not poor; and no more is he, as he has made you believe. On the contrary he is to have all my money; and I had set my heart on his marrying Maude Dawber—yes, the very young lady where you teach—and he set his heart on finding out for himself what she was like. So I humored him, and he left off his last name, Bennett, and went to the family with a glowing letter of recommendation from me. He was engaged; he saw my pretty Maude in her home, and I need not tell you how he found her to be a shiftless, spoiled beauty. He also saw you, and I could never repeat all his love rhapsodies. I was chagrined that my choice had been found at fault, and determined to discover flaws in his, and—well, I've tried, and failed.'

She paused there, and rising suddenly went to amazed and bewildered Lottie, and took her hand.

'Robert, the girl you love is worthy of all you have said and believed of her. She is a pure, true, noble girl, with a heart that you or any man must strive hard to be worthy of. Take her, with the warmest blessing your crusty doubting grandmother can ask or give.'

Tenderly Robert clasped the hands placed in his, and drew her to his breast.

'Lottie, my darling, you forgive us both!'

But from mingled astonishment and joy, Lottie was sobbing and speechless.

'I played the hungry old woman pretty well, I think,' said old Mrs. Bennett, complacently, as she sat down by the fire again. 'I am old and rather pale, and, of course, the child never guessed I was swathed in thick flannels under all these rags. But, oh, Robert, my boy, you have found a little treasure—you have indeed. Be worthy of her.'

'I will try, grandma,' he said, tenderly kissing Lottie's blushing, happy face. 'every hour of my life.'

The outdoor laborer—especially the farmer—who works with heroic energy all day long, unavoidably gathers on the entire surface of his body a complete prisonwall of dust and thickening, gummy perspiration; needs then more than other things not only a wash, but a good, luscious full bath to fit him for a clean bed and a refreshing sleep.

MISCELLANEOUS

MRS. TIMBLETHORPE'S SCHEME

Timothy Timblethorpe awoke the other morning with a determination to be unusually good-natured. He had been very ill-tempered the day before, and was resolved to make amends for his violent demonstrations.

His wife, however, did not respond to his cheerful 'good morning,' but lay apparently as dead as the proverbial log. Even the rise and fall of the bed covering above her gentle bosom was not perceptible, and a sudden suspicion that her spirit had taken flight, where the husband ceases from troubling and the teary are at rest crossed his mind.

With this feeling upon him he rushed towards the matrimonial couch only to discover that two pillows had been placed lengthwise in the bed, so as to resemble the human figure, and on one of them was pinned a note directed in Mrs. Timblethorpe's handwriting. He opened it and read:

'Timothy—I have gone off with a man when I return is immaterial to you. TILDA.'

Timothy dropped into an attitude suggestive of Sardanapalus after his downfall. Could it be possible that Tilda had deserted the children, whose cherry voices were borne upward to his ears from the hammock in the garden? She might have left him, but how could these cherubs get along without a mother's care? Then he thought of what all his intimate friends would say, if she had really eloped and he knew that Brown who never had a kind word for his own wife would say he was a brute.

Mechanically he dressed himself, and as he looked into the closets and wardrobes in a somewhat dazed manner he could not discover that she had made very extensive preparations for flight.

He finally descended to the breakfast-room; where his offsprings were already assembled around the table, and said, with an assumption of indifference:

'Where is your mother?'

'Oh, she's gone out to ride with Uncle Bill,' piped up a little voice.

Just then a noise of carriage wheels was heard at the gate and Mrs. Timblethorpe, with a bunch of field daisies in her bosom, presently took her place before the smoking urn.

When the meal was concluded, Timothy asked, as he lighted his cigar with Mrs. Timblethorpe's missive:

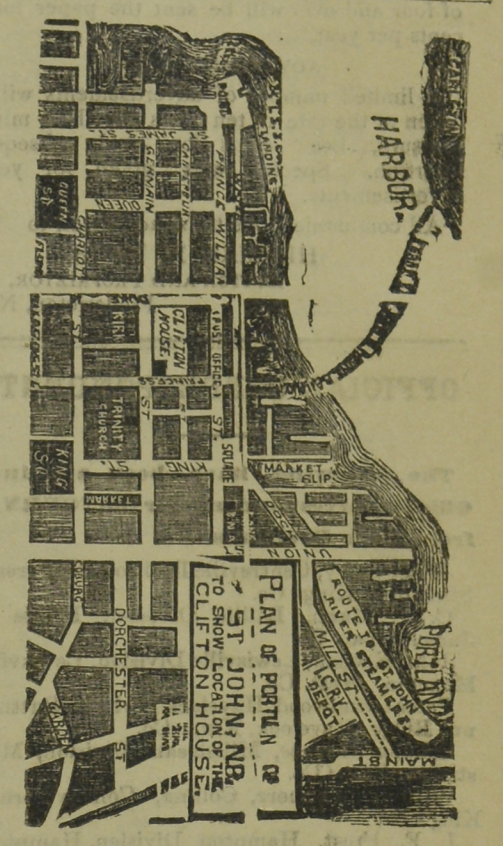
'Did you have a pleasant ride?'

'Very,' said his wife, as sweetly as if a cloud had never drifted across their domestic heaven.

'By the way,' he continued, as he stood with his hand on the door knob, 'it's a fine day, and I guess we had better take the children down to the beach. The barouche will be here at two o'clock.'

This is how Mrs. Timblethorpe got two outings in one day, and Timothy prevented his brother-in-law from getting the better of him.

BALLOON VOYAGES.—M. L. PHoste, the French aeronaut who recently crossed from Cherbourg to London, explained to the Balloon Society that he did not claim any power of steering a balloon, but that his object had been to try and maintain the same altitude (about 45 metres) above the water during his passage across the channel. This was effected by an apparatus dragging in the water called a flatteur, by means of which the water itself was drawn up into the balloon and utilized as ballast, after sunrise, when the expansion of the gas by the heat of the sun's rays would otherwise have caused it to shoot upward. In traveling over land in a balloon, ballast once got rid of cannot be recovered, while in traveling over water, ballasting a balloon by the means adopted by M. PHoste seems to be a simple and easy matter, so that he holds traveling over water to be far easier than traveling over land, as the condensation and reabsorption of the gas can be so readily counteracted. M. PHoste used a small sail, about four metres square, which he described as being useful for causing some slight deviation in the course of the balloon when it was captive by means of the flatteur; but it was not described as being a steering apparatus, and his arrival over London was solely due to the wind currents being favorable for the balloon traveling in that direction.



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