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"Be true to God, to your Country, and to your Duty."

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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

TERMS:

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Poetry.



The One Mystery.

BY JAMES CLARENCE MATSON.

'Tis idle we rehearse and squander
The glowing moments of our life in vain;
All that we have is but a shadow,
Beyond our grasp, and soon to pass away.

Erude the ancient and the poet,
Will none discern the star that glows in vain;
Or must the flow from first to last
Unceasingly flow, and never to return?

Suppose that thou the wonderful power
To high imagination given,
Remission of what shall not be ours,
When earth is heaven?

And shall the sacred pulse thrill
Thou dost again to glory's name!
And shall the conquering love that ruled
All hearts in yore, be now so tame?

Reverence its reign in yore, in night,
A soul in yore, in night, in night,
O death, what dost thou do?
O death, what dost thou do?

Be sure, no one—no one—no one,
A restless heart, and burning brain,
We seek the When, the Where, the How,
And ask in vain.

And all philosophy, all faith,
An earthly—oh, celestial love,
Have but one end, which only death—
Escape—can give!

Miscellaneous.

THE

MITHERLESS BARN.

BY VIRGINIA DE FOREST.

In a small cottage on the estate of Lord Grahame, in a room destitute of all furniture, save the bed and one low chest, lay a young man. Suffering, poverty, and despair had stamped each its rigid impress on his face. He had been one of those round, blooming faces, whose beauty consisted in the fair complexion, rosy cheeks, dancing eyes, and curling hair, more than in regular features. Taking away these, and the merry and expression, it was almost hidden in the thin outline. She was alone, her eyes were fixed upon the door with an eager, longing look, which plainly showed she expected some one; and, while she still looked for her visitor, I will draw a sketch of her history.

Ada Leslie was the only child of Lord Grahame, the pet darling of his house—her mother having died at an early age, she became her father's idol; and no indulgence of advantage that money could provide was denied her. She was literally a spoiled child, vain, wilful, impulsive, but generous, frank, and talented. At an early age, she was betrothed to Charles Leslie, a young artist of talent and standing, handsome, wealthy, and accomplished. She loved him fervently and fondly; and great was the shock to her heart when her father one day informed her that her lover—her idol, her almost said—was to be married to another girl. She was so shocked, and so distressed, that she fled from her father's house, and hid herself in a remote part of the estate. She was there for some time, when she was discovered by her father's men, and brought back to her father's house. She was then married to Charles Leslie, and they lived happily together for some time. But Charles was not content with his life as a painter; he wanted to be a statesman, and he left his wife and child to go to London. He was there for some time, when he was discovered by his father's men, and brought back to his father's house. He was then married to another girl, and they lived happily together for some time. But Charles was not content with his life as a painter; he wanted to be a statesman, and he left his wife and child to go to London. He was there for some time, when he was discovered by his father's men, and brought back to his father's house. He was then married to another girl, and they lived happily together for some time.

his one vice for her sake. Had he not said so? Remonstrances, even threats, were vain to turn her from her resolution; and finally, in anger, her father told her to decide between himself and Charles; for, surely as she married a drunkard, he would cast her off forever. She did decide and became Charles Leslie's wife. Four years after her marriage, her husband died, a poor drunkard. For two years after that, she supported herself and her little boy, pining in vain for forgiveness from her father; and now, after a long illness of ten months, during which time she had lived by charity, she lay dying in the meadow cottage on her father's estate.

The door opened, and a woman came in, leading by the hand a little boy. The invalid's breath came short and quick, and she feebly raised her head, lifting her eyes, with a mournful inquiring look to the woman's face.

'Sure, marm,' said she, with a strong breeze, 'the old girl-man was in the very worst of temper; and I wouldn't like to repeat his message, marm, when I could him ye'd be wiser to see him.'

'Yes, yes, Hannah, tell me! What did my father say?'

'Sure, marm, he said ye had gone to live away from him; and he wouldn't come—and—and—'

'Yes, Hannah, and what?'

'And ye might see without him! Oh, sure, what have I done!' she cried, as Ada fell back senseless on the pillow. 'Sure, he didn't believe ye were so bad. Och, my lady, don't take it so hard! Arrah, what'll I do! It's off on a faint she is!'

A drop, faint—Ada Leslie was dead! She was buried by charity; and her little son Hector, heir-at-law of all these broad lands before him, was turned a beggar on the world. Poor little fellow! Too young to realize the full misery of his condition, he was very sensitive to the loss of his mother's love, and to the pangs of hunger he had often endured. With a bundle containing one little shirt given by some kind but poor neighbor, his mother's wedding ring, marked on the inside with her initials and his father's, and a little book of religious maxims, presented by the clergyman of the parish as a reward for regular attendance at the Sunday school, Hector Leslie left the cottage, where his mother breathed her last, to try to find his way to London.

One afternoon, weary and hungry, he stopped at a farm-house on his way to beg a night's rest in the barn, and a piece of bread for his supper. He timidly entered the kitchen, and, with downcast eyes, and low humble tones, he told his touching story, and craved relief. The party listened in silence. The mother clasped her infant closer to her breast, as she fancied one of her little ones left so destitute. Aunt Martha, a neighbor who had happened in, stood waiting for the occasion to urge his timid request. Roland, the eldest boy, whispered to his mother to give the little boy his Sunday jacket; while George and Elizabeth, near Aunt Martha's knee, with her cherished piece of cake, saved from some children's feast, proffered it to the wanderer; and George, his hands in his pockets, trying to hide his profound sympathy with an assumption of indifference.

'Poor boy!' said Aunt Martha; 'so young to be an orphan! What did you say your name was?'

'Hector Leslie. Father died long ago; mother died only a little while ago. Here's the picture father painted of mother.' And he drew from his bosom a small case containing an exquisite miniature of his mother before she had married her beauty.

'You're not like her,' said Aunt Martha. 'Her eyes were blue, and her hair yellow; your eyes are black, and your hair is brown. Perhaps you are like your father.'

'Mother used to say so. Please, marm, how far is it to London?'

'London! What's such a body as you going to do in London? Have you any to go there?'

'No, marm. I have nobody anywhere, now mother's dead; but I can get some thing to do there, perhaps; at least, Mrs. Jenkins says so.'

'Mrs. Jenkins is a simpleton! What can you do?'

'I can make a fire, marm, and make tea, and put up the pillows, and B. mother in had nicely, and put the sheet over her smooth, and—and—O dear, I've got a mother to do it for me! And, with a deep sob, the little fellow sat down on a low stool, and, laying his head on a chair, wept bitterly. Mother called the children away; and Hector sobbed himself to sleep.

He was still asleep when James Fothergill, the former owner of the house, came in.

pretty, loving wife were thankful for the bounties Heaven had showered upon them, and were no saggards in sharing them with those less fortunate. The children had their mother's warm heart, and their father's free hand. Hector was taken into the hearts of all, and soon filled the place—Frank, intelligent, and affectionate, he strove, by every means in his power, to prove his gratitude for the mercies granted him; and, as time sped on, all forgot he was not born a son of the house. James Fothergill inquired in the place where his mother had died, and found out the boy's high birth. He went to Grahame, and told him of grandson's destitute condition; but the old man refused to see, or in any way aid, his daughter's child; and the farmer returned with the news to Lucy, who, having become attached to Hector, was overjoyed.

The farmer was what is called 'well to do' in the world, that is, his farm yielded enough for him to live comfortably, and send his boys, Hector included, to the first school of the place, where there were first rate teachers and many intelligent scholars. Hector early showed a passionate love for learning, and, in a short time, both George and Roland, though the latter's abilities were by no means to be despised, he was slower than Hector, but retained all that he learned, and was thorough—George was an active, manly boy, whose animal spirits were more prominent than his love for study. There was one study taught at the academy upon which Hector favored with eager delight; this was drawing. At home or at school, a piece of paper and pencil were his perfect pleasure; and he was never tired of sketching the scenery around the farm, and the faces of his benefactors. When Hector was nearly fourteen years old, there came a great grief to the farm-house. Ida, the youngest daughter, was thrown from her pony, and instantly killed.

Mrs. Fothergill was seated in her own room alone, the day after her child's funeral, when Hector entered with a slow, sorrowful step, and sympathy strongly marked on his handsome face.

'Mother,' he said, kneeling beside her, 'I have been months painting this, but it was not finished until last night. Will you accept it? And he placed in her hands a likeness of the lost one. Perfect in outline and coloring, and the size of life, the face seemed smiling hope from the paper to the overcast mother, who, through the building tears looked upon that dear face she had thought hidden forever.

Hector was, if possible, still more warmly cherished than before, after this event. Two more years passed away quickly, to two at the farm-house, Elia and Hector, who loved each other after the most approved manner of heroes and heroines from time immemorial. Hector was now a tall, manly boy, with a good education, fine manners, and great proficiency for one of his age, in languages; but his ruling passion, his love, his life, I had almost said, was for his art, as he fondly termed painting. He had gone in this far beyond his master at the academy, and practiced perseveringly, sighing for opportunities to travel, and study the old masters of whose works he had read so much. Often missing him at meal times, Elia would seek for him, and find him in the fields or barn, his easel before him, working busily at his pet art. Great was his delight when a neighbor, taking what he considered his master piece to London, sold it to an artist for an assortment of colors, brushes, canvases, and other articles for his work, that seemed to Hector almost useless. He was now laboring in secret to finish a group of his benefactor and his family, his first effort in oil colors, over which his hand would so tremble, and his cheek flash with excitement, that he was often obliged to lay aside his pencil to still the beating of his heart.

Elia, the artist's love, as she sometimes whispered to herself, had grown from the child who had offered Hector her easel to a lovely girl of fifteen. She was very beautiful; her dark brown hair, with its profusion of soft curls, was looped back from a face that might well claim the appellation of poet or artist. Oval in form, with large, soft, brown eyes, with that positive expression which sorrow would have made morose; a pure, pale complexion, only on rare occasions tinged with a faint color; regular features, and sweet expression, her face was lovely, whether in repose or animated. Her form was tall and slight, and her movements graceful. She had her mother's loving disposition, but a reluctance in her manners which did not seem to belong to a farm house.

Roland was a tall, rather awkward boy of eighteen, not handsome, very shy and reserved, fond of books, the best mathematician who had ever left the academy, and already assisting his father by transcribing all the *Arithmetica* of the farm, managing the accounts, keeping the bank book, and other business which the farmer was young to transfer to him. George, the youngest boy, had left home at the age of four, to go to sea. He had made one voyage of two years, and had again left home for a longer cruise, just one month previous to the time I am now writing of.

A great change came in Hector's life—One evening, a gentleman stopped at the farm, and requested shelter for the night, as a storm was coming up. He was received with ready hospitality, and taken into the parlor. He had not been there long, before his attention was attracted by the numerous drawings and water color paintings hanging on the walls; and in answer to his questions, Mrs. Fothergill, in

Hector's absence, gave him a sketch of the boy's life, omitting to mention his high birth; for Hector had imprinted them all never to speak of his grandfather's unkindness, because it was his mother's father they would condemn. Mr. Ashton, the traveler, listened with interest to the story, but made no comments. Next morning, he asked permission to stay a short time at the farm to make some sketches of the scenery. Sketches! The word fell on Hector's quick ear, and drew forth his eager questions. Was their visitor an artist? Indeed he was, and no mean one, as the boy soon found out. For a month, he remained on the farm; and during that time Hector was too happy. He praised his pictures. He, the great London artist, praised his pictures, said he was a genius, encouraged his efforts, and prophesied a glorious future, if he persevered in the course he had chosen; he corrected his faults, lent him copies, took him out sketching with him, gave him numerous invaluable hints about his family picture; and, when he left the farm, promised to return in a short time. What a flood of happiness she had opened for our hero! Two weeks after Mr. Ashton left the farm house, there arrived presents from London from him and all the family; and Hector's was in his eyes perfection. Several books on painting, a number of steel plates and lithographs for copies, and a long letter full of encouragement and counsel.

Time sped on Hector was nineteen when Mr. Ashton again visited the farm house. This time he came to bid them farewell; he was going abroad, to Italy, and he offered to take Hector with him as his secretary, and give him the coveted opportunity of studying the old masters. After two days' stay at the farm, he returned to London to prepare for his journey, promising to return, in a month, to take his place, if he was willing to go. Hector's heart and brain were in a whirl of doubt and delight—delight at the enchanting prospect opened before him; doubt as to whether it would be right to leave his friends, even for this. His warm, impulsive heart seemed bursting with love and gratitude as he thought of what they had been to him; and then came the thought of Elia. Could he leave her, his love, his promised wife, whose sorrowful eyes seemed reproaching him for thinking of happiness apart from her!

Fothergill settled his doubts by commanding him to accept the offer.

'We shall miss you sadly, my boy,' said the farmer, kindly; and there was a kindness in his voice as he said, his hand lightly on Hector's curls. 'We shall miss you sadly. My own sons have never been so dutiful and affectionate as the child of my adoption. No father could have loved you more tenderly than I have, of grief, more at parting with you; but it is best. You will learn much, Hector; and, when you return, remember, while I have a roof over my head, there will be a place for you.—Pshaw!' he said, as Hector threw himself, sobbing, into his arms, 'tears are for girls my boy.'

'May God bless you, my more than father!' said Hector, with a broken voice; 'and may he shower mercies on you as you have shown them to me! Years and years of gratitude cannot repay you; but God will surely bless you for your kindness to a poor orphaned boy.'

There were many sore partings. Mrs. Fothergill had not wept more over George's departure than over Hector's. And how can I paint Elia's grief!

'You will forget me,' she said, sadly as they were taking the last walk together.

'Mr. Ashton is rich and childless, and he loves you; he will become a great artist, and I shall be forgotten.'

Hector stood transfixed, looking at her as if he doubted her sanity.

'Forget you, Elia! the angel of my childhood, and now my betrothed! forget you!'

'Nay, Hector, do not look so reproachfully at me. Love me always!—her head fell upon his breast; 'love me always; for your love is my life. Oh, Hector, how can I let you go! It is best; you must go; but I feel as if it were tearing my heart out, my artist love!'

He bent over her with promises of never ceasing love and constancy, and again and again swearing never, never to change, until she grew calmer; and they talked hopefully of the future, when he should return, a great artist, to claim his bride.

It was over. Hector was on his way to Italy; and there was a great gap in the farm house. Never had they realized so fully as now what the loving boy had been to them; they missed him at all times.

Two years more passed on, and again we return to Hector. Seated in a beautiful studio in Florence was a group of five persons: Mr. Ashton; his newly made wife; her daughter Nina, a young, beautiful Italian girl of sixteen; a fine-looking Englishman, Nina Cameron's lover; and Hector, our hero.

'So it is your twenty-first birthday, Hector,' said Ernest Grant, the young Englishman I have mentioned. 'What present have you received?'

'A hair-chain from Nina, a kiss from Mrs. Ashton, and this book from Mr. Ashton. Now, if I could only hear from Elia, and get some answer to the many letters I have written this past year, what a happy birthday this would be! Ah, fairies have heard me!' he cried, as the servant entered, and handed him a letter post-marked in England. 'Hurray! from my friend and your upsurge, Mr. Ashton, who is the only person in England who answers me now. Eh! what!'

'What is the matter?' said Mrs. Ashton, as Hector tore open a letter inclosed in the first one, and after reading it turned deadly pale, and sank into a chair.

'Read them,' said Hector huskily, handing them to Mr. Ashton.

Mr. Ashton read aloud:—

'DEAR HECTOR:—I have but few moments to spare to answer your last; so must condense the important news I send. I made inquiries for your friends, the Fothergills. The old man is dead, the farm sold, and the family scattered. Roland has gone to India as secretary to somebody, I forget whom; George was lost at sea; and the widow and her daughter have left their home, and I can get no clue to them.—Now for my great news. Lord Grahame is dead, and has left a will making you heir to one of the finest estates and largest incomes in England. You were very shy in concealing your relationship; but the lawyers advertised for you; and I went to them, and so learned the great news. I inclose their letter, which except the heartiest congratulations of your sincere friend—GUS. ASHTON.'

The inclosed letter was from the lawyers, verifying the report of his friend, and urging immediate return to England.

'So you must leave us,' said Mr. Ashton, handing back the letter. 'Why, Hector, man, what a face for such glorious tidings!'

'Poor Elia!' said Hector, in a low tone; 'this is why I have never heard from them. My father and George both dead! Oh, Mr. Ashton, I have no heart for good news! Yes,' he added, springing to his feet, 'I must leave you; I must find her.' And he left the room.

'Poor boy!' said Mrs. Ashton; 'I know his heart. His love and gratitude swallow up his sense of this good news. He forgets all his own good fortune in the sorrows of his friends.'

One week after this scene, Hector was on his way to England. When he arrived in London, after settling his business, proving his identity, and being installed in the possession of his inheritance, he took rooms in a fashionable quarter, and commenced his search for Elia. Mr. and Mrs. Ashton returned to England shortly after himself to purchase the trousseau of Nina, and see her in the new home Ernest Grant was preparing for her. Hector was very busy now, helping them, taking the lovely Italian, Mrs. Ashton (for Mr. Ashton had married an Italian widow), to the most stylish London shops, and making his artist's eye useful in the selection of colors and fabrics for the bridal array.

In a small room, in the suburbs of London, sat Mrs. Fothergill. She was dressed in widow's weeds; and the appearance of the room betokened poverty, though not grinding, oppressive want. The furniture was neat and plain; and her own dress, though of coarse material, was well made and very nice. James Fothergill had left his widow poor, for his farm had declined during the last two years of his life, owing partly to Roland's absence in India, and his father's age being in adequate to support the burden then thrown upon him.—He had insisted upon his son's acceptance of a good offer as a secretary to a gentleman going to India, and bitterly felt his loss after he was gone. He died poor; and his widow was now living on what she earned as a seamstress, and Elia's wages as an assistant in a milliner's store. Roland occasionally sent some of money or presents, so that they lived very comfortably with economy. Mrs. Fothergill was reading an advertisement of the return of Lord Grahame to his native land, and a criticism of the paintings he had brought from abroad.—She was going back, in fancy, to the little boy who stood with timid manner petitioning for a night's lodging and a piece of bread. Suddenly, Elia entered, her face flushed, and her form trembling with excitement.

'Mother, I have seen him,' she said, as she threw herself down beside her mother's chair, and then starting up again, began to pace the room hastily. 'He came into the store with two ladies to buy a bonnet for his bride. She was with him; and he rejected the white hat I made this week. My handiwork on his bride! Strange, is it not? She is very beautiful, a brunette, very lovely. Mother! mother! he is great, rich, noble, and he has forgotten me!'

The touching pathos in her voice brought tears to her mother's eyes. Elia sank upon a sofa, and, laying her head upon her arm, moaned. The great excitement was over, the sorrow remained.

'Mother,' she said, in a low, heart-broken voice, as Mrs. Fothergill bent pityingly over her—'mother, he has forgotten me. I have been true. You know that I have refused a wealthy marriage twice for his sake, before,' she said bitterly, 'before I knew of his great fortune. I hoped and longed for his return; and now—! This accounts, too, for his long silence. He never answered the letter I wrote after I left the farm house, when he was in Rome; and I thought it had missed him; but he was false. He loved this Italian then; Nina he called her. Mother! mother! he has forgotten me.'

She did not know that the letter she wrote to Rome missed him because he was in Florence; and his letter, telling her of the change, reached the farm house after she left it.

Hector, meanwhile, was standing in the milliner's, with Nina, admiring the pretty white hat, and acting as interpreter between the shop-woman and his Italian friends.

'Yes, yes,' said the milliner, in reply to some question, 'the maker of that hat is my most tasty apprentice. It was a lucky day I secured the services of that young girl.'

'If you will let her take an order,' said Hector, at a request from Nina, 'the lady would like to give her particular directions about another hat.'

'Certainly, sir. Send Elia Fothergill here, she said to the boy.

Elia Fothergill! Had he heard aright? Hector's heart beat quick and fast as he waited the boy's return.

'Come home in a great hurry with the headache,' said the boy, returning.

Hector got her address from the obliging milliner, promised to call again about the bonnet, and with a few words of explanation, put Mrs. Ashton and Nina into the carriage and followed Elia.

Mrs. Fothergill spoke few words of comfort to her daughter; but Elia would only think and say, 'He has forgotten me!'

'How I loved him, mother! How I lived in the hope of seeing him once more! Hector! Hector! come to me, or my heart will break! He is not false; he has missed my letters; but oh, that bride, Nina! Hector, I trusted you as my life, and you are false!'

Elia said a low, deep voice.

He was there, living before her, with his eyes fixed with a world of tenderness upon her face. Nina was forgotten; and, with a sob of joy, she sprang into his open arms. He had heard her last words as she entered; and he would not release her until he had told her all, and she had sobbed her sorrow for doubting him. They were still in the room in that close, embrace when a man entered. The widow's cry of 'Roland!' explained who this man was; and more embracing and words of welcome followed.

'Mother,' said Roland, taking her hand, 'you have had much joy to night; can you bear more? Listen. I was sitting in my room, seven months ago, when a hawk entered, a sailor, who had been shipwrecked on one of the islands in the Pacific, picked up by a friendly vessel, brought to India, and had found me out.'

'George!' gasped the widow, 'my boy George! he is with you?'

Before Roland could reply, George was in his mother's arms.

And so we will leave them merely adding that, in his prosperity, Hector did not forget the friends of his childhood. After his marriage with Elia, George was placed as Captain on a ship, as was in the merchant service; Roland was placed as professor of mathematics in a flourishing college; while Mrs. Fothergill had a splendid home with her daughter and the 'Mithersless Barn.'

SACRILEGIOUS.—A gentleman who has recently made his escape from Nashville, states that the Yankee Vandal, who now invests that city, have been committing outrageous depredations on property. A few nights since the Catholic Church was tamely entered, and every article of value stolen from the building and carried off.—Among the articles were many precious relics generally held sacred by the most incorrigible, but it seems that there is no too despicable for the Yankee mercenaries who are now invading the South. The community were greatly shocked and incensed at this outrage, and are in formed, and made complaint to the Military Governor of the city, but obtained no redress. It is said that the Catholics in Nashville are adversely Southern in their feelings, and have, without exception, treated the Union soldiers with the most supreme contempt. This, probably, may have excited the ire as well as the thievery of the villains. *Petersburg Express.*

LIQUOR EMPTIED.—The military order of Major Gen. Henry R. Jackson, relative to the sale and disposal of liquor in the county, is being very rigidly enforced.—Saturday forenoon last, a bar room in the vicinity of Franklin (Hessington) Square, was taken in hand; the bar tender was arrested for the offense of selling or giving to soldiers liquor, and the liquor in the bar room and on the premises was emptied in the street. We have heard that other places have also been visited. Major Parer, before whom all offenders are brought for trial, in these a heavy fine is now exacted.—The offending party is not permitted to go to jail and be fed at the public expense, but is sent over to the military authorities, who exact from him one day's hard work for each dollar of the fine.—*Shenandoah Republican, 17th.*

THE EXEMPTION OF PATENTERS.—The Virginia Legislature has very properly passed a bill exempting from military service 'one editor and assistant editor of each daily newspaper, and such employees as the editor or proprietor may certify on honor to be indispensable for the conducting the publication of a daily newspaper.'

A HALLOW IN BURKE COUNTY.—We are informed that a hallow was seen to pass over a portion of Burke County, Georgia, a few days ago. It descended on a plantation, threw out a lot of sand, ascended, and disappeared. We give the report as received.—*Augusta Constitutionalist.*

General Dix informed a Southerner recently that the Yankees would be in Richmond by the 24th or 25th inst.