

THE LENOIR TOPIC.

DEVOTED TO THE GENERAL INTERESTS OF CALDWELL, WATAUGA, ASHE AND ADJACENT COUNTIES.

VOL. II.

LENOIR, N. C., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1877.

NO. 21.

MEMORIES.

BY EDWIN K. CORRIAN.

The autumn leaves are fallen
All withered to the ground,
The summer's golden light is past,
And all seems dark around;
Yet though the sunshine's faded,
And seasons quickly pass—
I'll not forget the smile of her
Who's all the world to me!
Or like a lovely poem
We long to hear once more,
The sound of music's voice,
Breathing on the shore,
Though past and gone those happy hours
We never hope to see,
And many a still recalls her voice
Who's all the world to me!

The Eden of Wildwood.

Paul Renford was thunderstruck. Once in his life he was aroused to think like a philosopher of a sub-

ject that the age of eighteen he had been left an orphan, and heir to an estate worth a million dollars. His mother's brother, had been appointed his guardian. This uncle was Anson Betterman, an enterprising merchant and a true-hearted man. After Paul came of age, and became master of his property, through the advice of his uncle he employed a lawyer named Lovett to act as agent—to look after rents, and so on—and gradually this Lovett, who proved to be an apt and ready man of business had gained into his hands the entire control of the whole property; and so implicitly had Paul trusted him that he had not even demanded vouchers for his bank transactions.

In fact, Paul Renford had generated into a listless, aimless being. His natural abilities, of the very highest order had been prostituted to the most useless of all pursuits—the mere seeking of pleasure for the purpose of killing time. At first he had lived moderately, his youthful vigor had held him aloof from the need of stimulants; but of late a long continued round of dissipation—parties, balls, clubs and billiards, in which night was appropriated to wakefulness and the day to sleep—had so reduced his physical vigor that without stimulants he found no comfort.

And now Anson Betterman had come to inform him that Porter Lovett had left the country with every available scrap of his property.

"Do you mean," gasped Paul, when he could breathe, "that he has taken all?"

"Yes—everything. You had allowed him such unlimited sway that he found no difficulty in getting every dollar into his hands."

"You know best whether you had any of your property invested in business or not."

"Not a penny."

"Then I fear that you have little at hand which you can call your own."

"In heaven's name, Uncle Anson, what shall I do?"

"Really, Paul, I see but two ways open to you. You can lie down and wither and die under the stroke; or you can do as thousands of others have done in misfortune—arouse yourself, put on the harness of true manhood and fight the battle bravely."

"I must earn my own living!"

"It would seem so."

"And how?"

"I can give you a place in my store."

"No, no. I cannot commence battle here or here in the city, where I have led the way of folly and dissipation. Let me have time to think."

"All right, my boy, and meantime I will be thinking too."

On the following day Mr. Betterman called; but Paul had not thought what he would do.

"What have you thought uncle?"

"I'll tell you what I have thought my boy. Back in the country—and yet, not very far from the city, are the mills owned by my friend Sargent. They are in a quiet secluded village, the inhabitants of which are mostly his own operatives. Mr. Sargent will give you a berth there, and the pay will amply cover your support."

ferred situation. He returned to the city on the evening of Mrs. Splinter's grand party. He wondered if he had better go when he learned from the servant of the house that no invitation had been sent him. On that very afternoon he met the Misses Splinter on the avenue, and they did not acknowledge his salutations.

"So, so," he muttered, "and that is all I am worth to them!"

"For a little time his heart sank; but he rallied.

"Come, come, my boy," he exclaimed smiling himself upon the breast "there may be something in life yet. Be brave!"

And on the very next day he accepted the clerkship at the Wildwood mill, and entered upon his duties. For a time he found it dull, hard work; but gradually his health improved, and the vigor of youth came back to him, and under simple living his muscles grew and strengthened, and his whole frame came into the perfection of manly beauty and elasticity. And now his duties became light and cheering, and he sang and whistled at his work.

The overseer of the mill was Mr. Grayson, and with him Paul found a home.

Mr. Grayson's daughter Della was a beautiful, light-hearted, true-spirited girl of nineteen. She was one of those blonde beauties whose whole presence was sunshine; and her merry laugh rippled like the music of dancing waters in the pebbly brooklet. The student of human nature who heard that laugh would unhesitatingly declare that only a heart of riven purity and gentleness could underlie it.

At first Della Grayson, when she saw that Paul Renford was weak and dejected, sought to cheer and entertain him. She had heard the story of his great loss and she pitied him. She played for him upon the harp and piano, and she sang to him and talked with him. But by and by when he had grown strong and vigorous, and when his innate manhood had manifested himself, she grew shy and tactful and finally sought to avoid him.

And then for the first time in his life Paul knew what true love was. For the first time he experienced that sense of devotion which leads the heart to offer itself upon the altar of faith in the woman loved. He asked Mr. Grayson if he might seek his daughter's love. The overseer did not object.

And Della? Had Paul been so well versed in reading the human heart in its native truth as he was in translating the siren song of flattery he might have known that the love of the beautiful girl was all his own.

So, when Paul Renford had been a year at Wildwood, Della became his wife, and he was happy—happier far than he had ever been. And he was advanced by the mills from a clerkship to a responsible agency, and thus he had frequent occasion to visit the city; but there was nothing in its din and glare attractive to him, and he always came home with a deeper and more abiding love for his own fond hearthstone at Wildwood.

During the first year of Paul's marriage a branch railroad was opened to Wildwood, and thus they were within an hour of the city; and the mill property was greatly enhanced in value.

"Ah," said the young man one day, as he stood upon the piazza of his cottage, and looked off upon the rolling landscape of hill and dale that stretched away beyond the river, "if I only owned that sweep of land!"

"It is certainly a fine prospect," said his Uncle Betterman, who had come up to pay him a visit.

"Aye," added Paul, and how it would increase in value now that the railroad has opened this way."

There are some old churches in England which have clocks showing the time with only one hand—the hour hand. I dare say that it will seem very strange to active and busy minds in America that such clocks as these should still continue in existence.

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"A shadow passed over the old man's face, after which there came a shining light. He reached out and took his nephew's hand."

"Paul, the capital is yours—the land is yours."

"I heard you express an earnest wish for the land and I secured it for you," continued Betterman.

"Uncle, this is a serious jest."

"It is no jest, Paul. In one word—Porter Lovett has returned."

"Lovett—returned?"

"Yes; and your fortune is safe."

Paul Renford was not sure that he was in his waking senses. His uncle was not the man to utter such language jestingly.

"It is true, my boy. Lovett has returned, and every dollar that he ever held of yours is not only safe, but the amount is well nigh doubled."

"Uncle Anson, what is this?"

"Do you not guess?"

"I dare not. Tell me."

Again the old man took his nephew's hand, and after a brief pause he answered:

"Paul, you may blame me if you please; you may heap wrath upon my head if you like, but you must know that Lovett has only acted as my bidding. I sent him away and he stayed away until I called him back. I saw you falling and stinking, my boy; I saw my sister's son wasting and dying of a disease which could not be cured, except he could be lifted from the pit into which he had fallen. I saw this young manhood, so full of native power and goodness, bowed and—"

"Stop! stop!" said Paul, raising his other hand, "I see it all."

"And do you blame me?"

"Blame you? Uncle! Shall I blame you for my salvation? Shall I blame you for my manhood's health and strength and vigor? Shall I blame you for this?"

And he let go his uncle's hand, and drew his wondering wife to his side. "I only pray God that the curse of the lost wealth may not cause my wife to love me less. It can never overshadow with its bulk these other joys which have grown up from the better life."

It was all as Uncle Betterman had said. Lovett had gone away at his order, having secured the property so that no harm could befall it, and it had all been done that Paul might be thrown upon his own resources and thus saved from the path that was eating away his young life. And it worked well.

And when Paul Renford had received back his great fortune he was true to the promise he had made concerning the beautiful tract of land beyond the river. And this is the true story of how the toilers of the city came to be blessed with those pleasant healthful homes in the Eden of Wildwood.

The New Proverbial Philosophy.

A woman her age. Never joke with a policeman. Do not play at chess with a widow. Never contradict a man who stutters. Be civil to rich men and humble. Keep out of debt of course, for an evening party. Always sit next the carrier, if you can, at dinner. Keep your own secrets. Talk no human being you do not understand. Wind up your conduct like your watch, once every day. Whittily examining whether you are fast or slow. Make friends with the steward on board a steamer. There's no knowing how soon you may be his power.

A single sigh breathed from the bottom of a burdened heart is a loud cry in the ear of God.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

An indiscreet person is like an unsealed letter, which is seldom worth reading.

Stumbling proves our tendency to fall but it proves also our capacity to stand erect.

To a man of brave sentiments midnight is as bright a noonday; for the illumination is within.

One of the happiest and most independent of human occupations is that of an intelligent farmer, whose land is paid for and who keeps out of debt.

One beautiful trait in a woman's character is her invariable readiness to smooth her husband's temperament, even if she has to do it with a stinging heart.

There is a philosophy in ladies' hair. Their motto was "rule or ruin," and while they did not always succeed in ruling, they never failed in ruining.

Since 1430 the race has made some progress in the right direction. The thirty years' war of the German Reformation, and the wars of Napoleon Bonaparte from 1793 to 1815 were certainly long enough. But since then we recall no great war between so-called Christian nations which has continued longer than three or four years. The world does move in the right direction, but even nominal Christian countries are far enough yet from being fully Christianized. When they are:

"The drums shall thrum no longer and the little flag in the pocket of man, the Federation of the world."

The Charm of Reserve.

Do not be so anxious to give away yourself, to wear your heart upon your sleeve. It is not only unwise, it is wrong to make your secret soul common property. For you bring the delicate things of the heart into contempt by exposing them to those who cannot understand them. If you throw pearls before swine, they will turn again and rend you. Nor, again, should you claim too much openness, as a duty due to you, from your child, your friend, your wife or your husband. Much of the charm of life is ruined by exacting demands of confidence. Respect the natural modesty of the soul; its more delicate flowers of feeling, close their petals when they are touched too rudely. Wait with curious love—with eager interest—for the time when all being harmonious, the revelation will come of its own accord, un demanded. The expectation has its charm, for as long as life has something to learn, life is interesting; as long as a friend has something to give, friendship is delightful. Those who wish to destroy all mystery in those they love, to have everything revealed, are unconsciously killing their own happiness. It is much to be with those who have many things to say to us which we can not bear now. It is much to live with those who sometimes speak to us in parables—if we love them. Love needs some indefiniteness in order to keep its charm. Reserve, which saves love from the familiarity which degrades it, is kept vivid when we feel that there is a mystery in those we love which comes of depth of character. Remember that in violating your own reserve, or that of another, you destroy that sensitiveness of character; and beauty of character is not so common as net to make it a cruel thing to spoil it.

An Elephant's Nerve.

A large elephant showed by constant flagellation of his body, that he was much annoyed by his tiny persecutors, the mosquitoes, and just at that time the keeper brought a little naked black thing, as round as a ball, and which in India I believe they call a child, laid it down before the animal with two words in Hindoostanee, "Watch it," and then walked away into town. The elephant immediately broke off the larger part of the bough so as to make a smaller and more convenient stick, and directed his whole attention to the child, gently fanning the little hump of India-ink, and driving away every mosquito which came near it; this he continued for upwards of two hours, regardless of himself, until the keeper returned.

Brian's Wisdom.

Here is an anecdote with a sharp moral that comes to us all the way from Australia: Sixty years ago, when I was a teacher in Kilmacur parish, says John Fraser, I was using whisky bitters for a stomachic. One day I dipped a piece of cake into it and gave it to the dog. He grudgingly ate it, curling up his lip to avoid the taste. Ere long he became tipsy—he howled most piteously, and unaccountably looked up in my face as if for help. He began to stagger and fall like a drunken man. The appearance of his face and eyes was extraordinary. He lay on the floor and howled until the effects of the drink wore off. The dog never forgot the trick. Whenever afterward I went to the dresser for the bottle he hastened to the outside of the house. One day, the dog being shut, he sprang with one bolt through a pane of glass to get outside. So much for the wisdom of the dog—infinity surpassing that of foolish drinking men.