

The Leisure Hour.

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"To my Daughter Lily."

BY PHILIP FENDELTON COOK.

"Six changeable years are gone, Lily,
Since you were born to be
A darling to your mother good,
A happiness to me;
A little shivering, feeble thing,
You were to touch and view,
But we could see a promise in
Your baby eyes of blue."
"You fastened on our hearts, Lily,
As day by day you grew,
And beauty grew upon your cheeks
And deepened in your eye,
A year made dimples in your hands
And plumped your little feet,
And you had learned some merry ways,
Which we thought very sweet."
"And when the first sweet word, Lily,
Your wee mouth learned to say,
Your mother kissed it fifty times
And marked the famous day,
I know not even now, my dear,
If it were quite a word,
But your proud mother surely knew
For she the sound had heard."
"When you were four years old, Lily,
You were my little friend,
And we had walks and nightly plays,
And talks without an end,
You little ones are sometimes wise,
For you are undeafened,
A grave grown man will start to hear
The strange words of a child."

"When care pressed on our house, Lily,
Pressed with an iron hand,
I hated mankind for the wrong
Which feasted in the land,
But when I read your young, frank face,
Its meanings sweet and good,
My charities grew clear again,
I felt my brotherhood."

"And sometimes it would be, Lily,
My faith in God grew cold,
For I saw virtue go in rags
And vice in cloth of gold;
But in your innocence, my child,
And in your mother's love,
I learned those lessons of the heart
Which fasten it above."

"At last our cares are gone, Lily,
And peace is back again,
As you have seen the sun shine out
After the gloomy rain;
In the good land where we were born,
We may be happy still,
A life of love will bless our home—
The house upon the hill."

"Thanks to your gentle face, Lily,
Its innocence was strong
To keep me constant to the right
When tempted by the wrong,
The little ones were dear to him,
Who died upon the Road—
I ask his gentle care for you,
And for your mother good."

From an English Paper.

An Incident in our Honeymoon.

I do not know if any one else will think the story I am going to try to write down as interesting as we—John and I—did. I will try to tell it in the simple words in which it was told to us. But, first, I must say that we heard it during our honeymoon, which we were spending at a cottage in the beautiful park of Lord — I shall tell him Dimdale. The cottage was situated in a wild and lonely part of it; and the deed used to come up close to the door, and lie under the fine old oaks, through whose branches the sun glimmered on the soft warm turf and clumps of young fern. And how the birds sang! for it was the beginning of May, and fine hot weather. But to come at once to the story.

In one of our walks, we had made acquaintance with the clergyman, Mr. Morton, an old man, with a placid sweet smile, and long snow-white hair, who somehow gave one the idea of perfect happiness and peace. He asked us to drink tea with him in his vicarage, to which we gladly agreed; and he led us through paths in the forest, all bordered with primroses and bluebells, to a small house covered with creepers and in front having a garden as neat as you can imagine a garden to be, and full of old-fashioned flowers, such as crown imperials, starch hyacinths, and polyanthus, and sweet with southernwood, etc. On entering the house, I perceived that the parlor was full of children's toys and work-baskets, and I expected every moment that a whole flock of grand children would come rushing in; but none appeared.

I suppose Mr. Morton observed my surprise, for while we were at tea, before the open window, he said: "Mrs. Fairfield, I see you looking at those toys, and wondering what little children come here to enliven an old man's loneliness; but no child comes here. The little girl whose busy fingers last dressed that wood-nibby, would have been an old woman now, and the merry boys who laughed and shouted at play with those horses, would have been elderly, care-worn men. Yes, they were mine; and in one week they all left me."

I uttered some exclamation of pity, and he went on in a dreamy voice, as if more to himself than to us, looking from the window all the time:

"Yes, thank you, my dear young lady. In one week, wife and children were taken, and I became the solitary man I have been ever since. It was in a fever,"

he continued, after a pause—"a fever brought here by some wanderers, who came one night to a barn near the village, where one died, and from whom the infection spread. The weather was very bad for it—burning hot and very dry; there was no rain or dew, so that the flowers drooped and the leaves withered with the summer sun beating down all day long. There were deaths around me every day, and the bell was always tolling for the passing of a soul or a funeral. They brought the coffins that way, and he pointed to a green path out of the forest, and the attendants against the dark green foliage in the dusk.

"I went to the sick as much as possible; but I took every possible precaution against infection to my wife and children. We would have sent our darlings away, but we had no one to send them to, and we were a mile and a half away from any infected house. We had three children: Ellen, about eight years old, a thoughtful, quiet, loving little thing, older than her years. How she used to trot about the house after her mother, trying to help her, and looking up at her, with calm deep blue eyes. Then there were Hugh and Harry, rosy boisterous boys, and their mother—Ellen, Ellen. All that your bride can be to you, Mr. Fairfield, my wife was to me."

He was silent, and looked from the lattice window into the sweet spring evening at the swallows darting about in the sunshine, the young green leaves and the flowers, which sweet floated through the open window, thinking of the dear companion who had once walked by his side in that sunshine, and tended those flowers with him.

"One evening," he went on, "I was at liberty, and we took the children out, letting the breeze, what there was of it, blow from us to the village. We went to a hill, from whence we could see the silent village afar off. The boys ran about and shouted in their glee, but little Ellen came and laid her golden head on my knee, and looked in my face, with her deep sweet eyes. She said: 'Papa, there must be a great many people sorrowful down there in the village. I would like to help them. I wish we could comfort them. I should like so much, I told her how we could help them, by asking Him who sends us all our troubles to help us to bear them patiently, knowing that they are sent in love and pity. Then we walked home, for the sun was setting like a red ball of fire. The children gathered great nose-gays of roses and honeysuckles, which they put in water when we got home. The smell of a honeysuckle always brings that evening again before me."

"My darling laid her doll to sleep just as it lies now, and wished it and myself good-night; the boys arranged all their playthings, and then their mother took them to bed, and I sat here, where I am now, looking into the darkening night. I heard them sing the evening hymn—'Ellen and her mother, softly and clearly—the boys with loud, eager, joyous voices—and my heart was very thankful for the many blessings vouchsafed to me."

"That night there was a great cry in our house, as in Egypt of old, for our first-born was to die. The fever had begun. Our frightened servants ran from the house at midnight, and we were left alone with our stricken child. The morning dawned. The boys awoke, and we bid them 'ress themselves, and go and play in the forest. Meanwhile I went to Marston, the nearest town, for the doctor and a nurse, resolved on their arrival, that I would take the boys away to the woodman's wife, Annice; I knew she would take care of them. But neither nurse nor doctor could be spared from Marston; and all that burning July day we watched by our darling's bed, listening to the distant sound of the boys at play in the forest, commingling with her ravings. Hardly ravings either for there was nothing frightful; all was happiness and peace, as her young life had been. She talked of Harry and Hugh, of her birds and flowers, and of appearing in the presence of her dear Saviour."

"At last the long, dreadful day was wearing away. The sun was lowering, and we saw the struggle was nearly over. Those who had that fever rarely lived more than twenty-four hours, even the strong, much less one like our darling. About sunset I heard a voice under the window. It was Annice, who had heard of our trouble and had come to help us. I went down to speak to her, and she told me we were to part with our merry healthy boys. I had not dared to go near them all day; but we had heard their voices within an hour. But Annice had found them, and recognized the ghastly signs too well. I knew, too, as soon as I saw them. I went back to tell their mother, and we sent Annice to be with them, and staid with the one from whom we were first to part."

"It was dark now, and the stars came out, and a red glow on the horizon showed where the moon was to rise by and by. Ellen was talking of walking as we had done last night. 'Papa, I am very tired; do carry me home; we are coming very near home now, aren't we, very near home?' Then we were in church. You have seen how the sunset light shines on the monument to the Lady Dimdale, lighting

up the sweet pure face that is raised to heaven? She thought she saw it. 'It is growing dark; I want to see the glory on the monument. Ah! there it is; the head is all bright and shining. It is looking at me. I am coming. Such a glory is all around. I am coming. Wait till the hymn is sung, or papa and mamma will be vexed. And she raised herself, and stretched out her arms; and, as loud and sweet as last night she had sung in health and reason, she now sung the evening hymn:

'Glory to thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light;
Keep me, oh! keep me—'

And so singing, the angel of Death, that had come so gently to her, took her home. We stood by her grave that night under the solemn stars, and, grief-stricken, thanked the chastening Father for the child he had given and taken away:

"But a great horror fell on me when we went back to our remaining dear ones. It was in bitter anguish that our little Harry left us. He was so strong and so healthy, that he struggled hard to live. He wanted to be out in the forest at play, he said, to feel the fresh air, and to cool his burning hands in the sparkling brook. No vision of glory calmed his last hour, and we were thankful when the end had come."

"Then Hugh woke up from the deadly stupor in which he had lain. He saw his brother lie still and quiet in his little crib; and when his mother took him on her lap, he said in his own sweet lisping voice: 'Harry is better now; I'll be better soon, mamma.'

"His mother told him Harry would never be ill any more, and never sorry; but, taken to his Saviour, would rest and be happy for evermore."

"I'll rest, too, till morning, mamma; and so, clasping his little hands round her neck, he went to his eternal rest; and we were child-less!"

"After the little coffins had been laid by the first we had followed there, Ellen, my only Ellen, and I sat together on that seat in the twilight. Well do I remember the night. The air was heavy with the scent of hay and flowering bean-fields; bats wheeled round our heads; and great white moths and cockchafers flitted past us. We talked of our darlings, and how perhaps even then their angel spirits were near us; and we felt that it was well. We had laid them in the dark bosom of the earth for a time; but it would soon pass away—oh! very, very soon, and then how light the present bitterness!

"And, dear heart, I said to my beloved one, 'we have still each other; we will not be desolate.' And we felt peace in our hearts, even the peace of God, that the world can not give. But the pestilence that walketh in darkness had not yet done its mission."

"My dearest, my wife said to me one day, 'I am going to leave you too; you will then be alone, but do not let your heart break. A little while—a few years—and then we shall all meet together before the throne of the Lamb!'

"I watched one day by my wife's dying-bed, with Annice, and I remember no more. A long frightful dream, a deep stupor succeeded. When I awoke it was evening, and the golden sunshine was in my room. From the window I could see into the forest; I saw that rain had fallen, and the grass and leaves were green again. The lurid mist had cleared away, and the sky was soft and blue. All looked joyous and glad; but I knew there was no more earthly gladness for me; the blessed rain had fallen on the graves of all I loved, and the grass grew green upon them."

"I need not tell of all I suffered; it has long gone by. When I first came down here from my chamber, all was as I had left it the night that sorrow first fell upon us. The very flowers, gathered by the little hands that were stilled forever, were there, but dry and dead. I would not let any thing be moved. So they have been for fifty years, and so they will be till I join those who left them there. And in the quiet evening I can see them unaltered before me. Ellen, my wife, with her quiet eyes and smile, in the wicker-work chair; and little Ellen dactly working by her side, with a sedate womanly look on her sweet face; and the boys at noisy play around them. And then I feel that I am alone. But He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, has helped me through all my lonely days."

"And now all I have to tell is told. Perhaps you wonder at my telling it. I could not have done it twenty, nor even ten years ago; but I am now an old man, eighty-five years of age; and it can not be long ere the changes and chances of this mortal life are over for me. A long life have I had, and rest will be sweet after the burden and heat of the day. I never see the sunset light on the Lady Dimdale's sweet face, without thinking of the shining glory round that angelic head, that seemed to call my little Ellen home, and longing for the time when I too shall go home to her, and her gentle mother, and her two happy brothers."

"And when Mr. Morton was silent, we rose up gently, and bade him good-night, and walked home through the quiet forest. The influence

of his calm resigned spirit seemed to us to pervade all things; and I earnestly prayed that when our day, dark or sunshiny as it may be, is over, and the golden evening falls, that the wondrous peace which is his, may be ours also. John and I, as we walked along, talked seriously of our future life, and of the vast importance of possessing that faith in God, and trust in the Saviour, which alone would fit us to endure with calmness the shocks of earthly sorrow and trial. And the twilight fell gently around us as we came to the cottage-door."

For the Leisure Hour.

Reflections on the History of the Middle Ages.

There is a period in the history of the world characterized as the "dark ages." It extends from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Reformation. The poetic fiction of an "iron age" seems to have its realization in this period. Civilization and barbarism met, struggled, mingled, and formed a new epoch in man's history.

The lamented Hugh Miller found the "Footprints of the Creator" in the formations which compose the crust of the earth. The foot-prints of the Controller are no less evident in the history of the human race. Erase these—deny a God in history, and it is emphatically "a tale full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." The recognition of this fact will aid us in assigning the reasons as well as the causes of events. These may often be hidden in the depths of man's being—in the counsels of eternity; but they are essential elements in the philosophy of history. They are the thread of Ariadne which guides the philosopher through the intricate mazes of human actions. They give a meaning to the law, growth and decay, a law which applies to nations as well as to individuals.

"What reflection is to the individual, history is to the human race." Each moves onward to a definite goal, in the unity of one grand, harmonious design." Knowing this, the death of nations sound no mournful in our ears: the "Decline and Fall" is not the solemn sneer on religion and humanity that Gibbon would make it. We see the hand of Providence in this great and awful scene; and the scene itself dwindles into insignificance as it passes before us on the great stage of human events. We are transported from the ruins of the Capitol, and find ourselves gazing on the rise and fall of other and greater empires, until—

"The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yes, all which inherit shall dissolve."

The genius of desolation encounters in Gibbon a stern rebuker, guilty Rome finds a generous friend to mourn her greatness, and expiring Paganism a master spirit to sing her funeral dirge. But we pity the spirit that could sit among the ruins, and coldly moralize "on the vicissitudes of fortune, which spares neither man nor the proudest of his works, and which buries empires and cities in a common grave." Surely the decay of one empire implies more than the decay of succeeding ones, and history is not a solemn farce, and we are not created to be deceived.

The immediate result of the tremendous collision between the civilized and uncivilized portion of mankind was the dark ages. "Could we (says an able writer) suppose a philosopher to have lived at this period of the world, elevated by benevolence and enlightened by learning and reflection, concerned for the happiness of mankind and capable of comprehending it, we can conceive nothing more interesting than would to him have appeared the situation and fortunes of the human race. With what eagerness would he have wished to penetrate into futurity. How would he have sighed to lift up that awful veil which no hand can remove. With what intensity of curiosity would he have longed to gaze upon the scenes which were in reality to appear! And could such an anticipation of the subsequent history of the world have been indeed allowed him, with what variety of emotions would he have surveyed the strange and shifting drama that was afterwards exhibited by the conflicting reasons and passions of mankind—the licentious warrior, the gloomy monks, the military prophet, the priestly despot, the shuddering devotee, the iron baron, the ready vassal, the courteous knight, the princely merchant, the fearless navigator, the patient scholar, the munificent patron, the bold reformer, the relentless bigot, the consuming martyr, the poet, the artist, and the philosopher, the legislator, the statesman and the sage—all that were by their united virtues and labors to assist the progress of the human race, all that were at last to advance society to the state which, during the last century it so happily had reached, the state of balanced power, of diffused humanity and knowledge, of political dignity, of private and public happiness!"

The first century after the overthrow of the "Western Empire" may be justly described in the words of the Roman poet:

—Prodit bellum—
Sanguineque manu crepitantia concutit arma.
The majesty of Rome perished beneath the bloody hands of the barbarians, and on the ruins

of the empire new systems and governments arose. The Saxons appear in England, the Franks and Visigoths in Gaul and Spain, the Goths and Lombards in Italy and the adjacent provinces. It is to be remembered that at the period of this eruption the christian religion was diffused throughout the Roman Empire.—It had already achieved a glorious victory over the learned and luxurious citizens of the empire, and it alone withstood the shock of barbarian conquest, and finally triumphed over their fierce superstitution.

A century and a half of repose succeeds this collision; but darkness envelopes its history. The light breaks upon from an unexpected source. From the parched and sterile plains of Arabia the "wild man of the desert" goes forth conquering and to conquer. "There is but one God and Mahomet is his prophet" was his creed. His warlike disposition, his belief in absolute predestination, his hope of a blissful immortality as the reward of a faithful adherence to the doctrines of the prophet, rendered him invincible. Persia, Egypt, Africa and Spain acknowledged his sway. But (in the words of the historian) his sovereignty was lost by the rapidity and extent of conquest. His blood was mingled with the blood of his converts and captives. His country was ruled by the rod of stranger, and the Bedouean of the desert, awaking from his dream of dominion, resumed his old and solitary independence. On the plain of Poitiers he received the blow which shattered his power.

In the person of Charlemagne we see the empire of the west temporarily restored. This is the beginning of a new era in the history of Europe. France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Hungary were united under his sceptre. He passes before, and eyes illumining the darkness for a brief season, and awakening hope for decaying Rome; but the disgraces and miseries which followed his reign obliterate bright illusions and leave us again in darkness. On the ruins of his empire arose the separate Kingdoms of France, Germany and Italy.

The face of Europe is again darkened by swarms of savages from the north, from the east, and the northeast. Northmen, Hungarians and Danes—

—"disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fears of change
Perplexes monarchs—"

Anarchy and confusion mark their progress until they came to England. There Alfred checked and drove back the tide of barbarian conquest, laid the foundation of the English monarchy, encouraged learning, introduced manufactures of all kinds, planted the seeds of maritime power, and won for himself the title of "Alfred the Great."

And now we behold empires and kingdoms crumbled to pieces, and almost universal anarchy prevailing. This state of things afforded the feudal system the opportunity of developing itself; a system which threatened to crush the energies of the human mind and bury literature in ignorance and superstition. Chivalry arose to battle against this monster of oppression, and to vindicate the noblest principles of human nature. The crusade followed, "the most durable monument of human folly," but the harbinger of better things. They introduced favorable changes in government, opened the way for commerce; destroyed the tall and barren trees of the forest, and gave aid and scope to the vegetation of the smaller and nutritious plants of the soil."

It may readily be imagined that religion suffered severely during this turmoil. Its genius was changed into the demon of popery, and it became the unwilling instrument of untold calamities. But under the rubbish of popery and superstition a spark was found which kindled a flame in the breast of Luther: that flame spread with wonderful rapidity, and the Reformation was the result.

A cursory perusal of the history of the middle ages will convince us that civil liberty and the natural liberty of barbarians are different, and that religion cannot exist with uncivilized ignorance. We also learn that this period of darkness was a period of intense suffering, and thus we learn that knowledge and religion are the best safeguards of liberty and happiness. We should also remember that the passions and prejudices which were active at that period still exist; that human nature was then the same that it is now, and that we may learn much that is generous and noble from our savage ancestors. It is not likely that such scenes will ever be acted again. The arm of civilization is strong; distant nations are brought near to each other by commerce, science and religion; thought flies on the wings of the lightning, and enlightens millions almost simultaneously. Individual suffering there will be so long as "man has the will and power to make his fellow-mourn." The proud and heartless and main-mongering crew will for ever be the blood-hounds of happiness, and many a sensitive spirit will suffer at their hands more ingenious torture than ever priest or savage devised. Let us hope that the problem of human suffering will one day be solved, and let us acquire in the pleasing conclusion of the historian—that every age of the world has increased,

and still increases the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue of the human race.

Carlyle on Walter Scott.

Yet on the other hand, the surliest critic must allow that Scott was a genuine man, which itself is a great matter. No affectation, fantasticality, or distortion, dwelt in him; no shadow of cant. Nay, withal, was he a right brave and strong man, according to his kind! What a load of toil, what a measure of felicity, he quietly bore along with him; with what quiet strength he both worked on this earth, and enjoyed it; invincible to evil fortune and to good! A most composed and invincible man; in difficulty and distress, knowing no discouragement, Samson-like, carrying off on his strong Samson-shoulders the gates that would imprison him; in danger and menace, laughing at the whisper of fear. And then, with such a sunny current of true humor and humanity, a free joyful sympathy with so many things; what of fire he had, all lying so beautifully latent, as radical latent heat, as fruitful internal warmth of life; a most robust, healthy man! The truth is, our best definition of Scott were perhaps even this, that he was, if no great man, then something much pleasanter to be a robust, thoroughly healthy man. An eminently well-conditioned man, healthy in body, healthy in soul; we will call him one of the healthiest of men. Neither is this a small matter; health is a great matter, both to the possessor of it and to others. On the whole, that humorist in the Moral Essay was not so far out, who determined on honoring health only; and so instead of humbling himself to the highborn, to the rich and well-dressed, insisted on doffing his hat to the healthy; coronetted carriages with pale faces in them passed by as failures miserable and lamentable; trucks with ruddy-checked strength dragging at them were greeted as successful and venerable. For does not that health mean harmony, the synonym of all that is true, justly ordered good; it is not, in some sense, the net-total, as shown by experiment, of whatever worth is in us? The healthy man is a most meritorious product of nature, so far as he goes. A healthy body is good; but a soul in right health,—it is the thing beyond all others to be prayed for; the blessed thing this earth receives of Heaven. Without artificial medication of philosophy, or tight-lacing of creeds, (always very questionable,) the healthy soul discerns what is good, and adheres to it, and retains it; discerns what is bad, and spontaneously casts it off. An instinct from nature herself, like that which guides the wild animals of the forest to their food, shows him what he shall do, what he shall abstain from. The false and foreign will not adhere to him; cant and all fantastic, diseased imagination are impossible—as Walker the Original, in such eminence of health was he for his part, could not by much abstain from soap and water, attain to a dirty face! This thing thou canst work with and profit by; this thing is substantial and worthy; that other thing thou canst not work with, it is trivial and inept; so speaks unerringly the inward motion of the man's nature. No need of logic to prove the most argumentative absurdity absurd; as Gothe says of himself, "all this ran down from me like water from a man in wax-cloth dress." Blessed is the healthy nature; it is the coherent, sweetly co-operative, not incoherent, self-distracting, self-destructive one! In the harmonious adjustment and play of all the faculties, the just balance of oneself gives a just feeling towards all men and all things. Glad light from within radiates outwards, and enlightens and embellishes.

Now all this can be predicted of Walter Scott, and of the British literary man that we remember in these days, to any such extent—if it be not perhaps of one, the most opposite imaginable to Scott, but his equal in this quality and what holds of it: William Cobbett! Nay, there are other similarities, widely different, as they too look; nor be the comparison disparaging to Scott; for Cobbett also, as the pattern John Bull of his century, strong as the rhinoceros, and with singular humanities and genialities shining through his thick skin, is a most brave phenomenon. So tenuous was Nature to us! in the sickliest of recorded ages, when British literature lay all pinking and sprawling in Weterism, Byronism, and other sentimentalisms; fearful or spasmodic, (fruit of internal wind,) Nature was kind enough to send us two healthy men, of whom she might still say, not without pride, "These also were made in England; such limbs I will also make there!" It is one of the cheerfulest sights, let the question of its greatness be settled as you will. A healthy nature may or may not be great: but there is no great nature that is not healthy. Or, on the whole, might we not say, Scott, in the new venture of the nineteenth century, was intrinsically very much the old fighting Bards of prior centuries; the kind of man Nature did of old make in that birth-land of his! In the saddle, with forty spear, he would have acquitted himself as he did at the desk with his pen. One fancies how in stout Beattie's Hardey's time he could have played Beattie's