

## Choice Literature.

JANET.

A SEPTEMBER DAY.

BY MRS. L. B. WALFORD.

Leaning out and drinking in the solemn scene—the motionless vessels, the weird buildings, the deep, still waters shrouded by the still more deeply shadowed heights—poor Janet's eyes burned.

How she did love this spot! How she loved the beautiful Hebrides! How she loved—A leap of the veins, a catch of the breath, a hot blush, and no syllable framed even in the maiden's heart of hearts.

But what a night it was! And what a day it was going to be!

Already the pale light was spreading over the eastern horizon, when for the last time the watcher sought her fevered couch and tried to think no more.

She could not sleep—of course she could not sleep; but she would lie still—and now, what is this? She is on board the gayly-crowded boat. She is on her way to the famed islets of the west; the ropes of the vessel are loosened, the paddle-wheels have begun to turn when a shout is raised. A name is being called—yelled—shrieked—passed from one to another. Whose name? Her own. Everyone is calling "Janet!" the air is full of "Janet—Janet!"

Janet is found, and oh, despair! Janet is found too soon. She is not to go, after all, with the departing travellers; she has been sent for to return to land; she is being hurried off the boat, when her foot slips; the gangway has no protecting arms; she falls down—down; Stronachan seizes her—falls after her—they both plunge into the abyss—

"Good gracious, Janet! What a noise you are making! Florence and I could not think what it was! We heard such a scream. I suppose you had the nightmare; but I never heard any one make such a din. Are you awake now? Will you promise not to drop off to sleep on your back again? That is what is at the bottom of it. You are lying on your back. You should never do that!"

"Oh, do be quiet!" groaned Janet.

"Well, shut your eyes and go to sleep quietly then. We are off; but there is no need for you to rise yet. It is six o'clock, and the boat starts in half an hour. Such a glorious morning! Good-by!" and the door closed.

At first the speaker might have fancied that her advice was to be followed, and that the curly head which pressed the pillow would soon be again wrapped in slumber; but had Isabella waited a few minutes more she would have heard sounds and seen a sight which would have altered her opinion.

Janet was sitting up in bed—her eyes were dry now—dry and hot as live coals. It seemed to her that even in her sleep she had never lost sight of the dreadful sentence under which she lay, and that the dream from which she had awakened screaming, had been but little worse than the sorrowful reality. Through her open casement she could behold the bright fruition of the dawn's early promise.

It was a day of days.

Not a cloud the size of a man's hand flecked the pale blue sky. Not a ripple broke the glistening sheet of glassy sea beneath. A pearly mist just hung over the distance.

In the bay itself every spar and sheet of the innumerable craft collected there was mirrored with a reflection so truthful as to make it uncertain at what point bow and stern touched the water.

In the midst of nature's stillness, however, every other kind of world was on the full swing of activity.

The deck of every steamer, yacht, launch, herring-scow was alive; the thud of oars in their rowlocks sounded from plying open boats; the clang of sharp, brisk, inspiring bells announced the speedy departure of one excursion boat and another on their various routes. Passengers were crowding their gangways. Vehicles were every moment arriving on the pier, and discharging their hurrying freights. It appeared as if every one had suddenly started up with the conviction that it would be a crime to waste such a day on any ordinary occupation, and that there had been a simultaneous awakening to a resolve to cast all else aside and sail away hither and thither over the gleaming water.

Fuller of all and gayest with bunting was the Staffa boats.

None was so great a favourite. A continued stream poured in upon her deck, as her bell again and again sharply sounded, warning of departure. It was past the stated time: ten minutes, quarter of an hour past. There seemed scarce any cessation in the arrivals.

Five minutes to seven o'clock.

"Oh, why does she not go?" cried poor Janet at last, in an agony, and threw herself back upon her pillow, with sobs and tears breaking out afresh.

She only raised herself once again for a long time after that.

This was when the bells ceased, and, holding her breath to listen, she could catch the sound of paddle-wheels, and knew that the boat was loosed from her moorings, and was slowly getting up her steam as she wheeled round into the centre of the harbour, in order to obtain a clearer passage through the crowd of vessels at anchor.

Then Janet looked.

In another second, or two full into view came the jauntily decorated prow, and the fullest Staffa boat of the year, teeming from stem to stern with a rainbow-like assemblage of joyous sightseers, fluttering with parasols and bristling with telescopes, with crowds overhanging every rail and ledge, and swarming over gangways and paddle-boxes, cut her way through the glassy water and made for the entrance of the bay.

And they were all there!

And up to the very last she had—yes, now, she knew she had—hoped against hope that something, something, would happen to let her, even her, be there too.

Her father had looked uneasy—had that meant anything? her mother made an enquiry or two—did they refer to this point? Last of all, her Aunt Susan had privately interrogated herself as to the real reason of her remaining behind?

Janet had responded breathlessly with what she believed to be the truth

It was, she had said, an expensive day's pleasure, and she fancied her father thought he had spent a good deal already. Then her lips had parted in her eagerness, and she had fixed a pair of hungry eyes upon her aunt, the while her heart had beat in an ecstasy of anticipation.

Mrs. Greythorpe had said nothing.

"Perhaps she will go quietly to papa," Janet had whispered to herself. "Papa would not mind if she did offer to pay for me. She is better off than we are; and she is such a near relation that he could not be affronted."

And almost immediately afterward her father had come in, and with simple will the poor child had offered him her seat in the window beside her aunt, and had stolen out of sight and hearing, not to be any hindrance in case of a private word being desired. This had happened late in the evening of the night before.

It had been a second blow, but little inferior to the first, when bed-time had come and there had not been a word said to reverse the stern decree of fate.

All was now over; hopes and fears were alike at an end; and for more than an hour after the thin smoke of the departing steamer had disappeared, the forlorn Janet lay like one stunned, staring with wide-open eyes into vacancy. She felt so sorry for herself. She had a kind of strange pity for her poor self. Nothing could ever give her back this butterfly day that was to have been. No after joys could make up for this loss.

Somehow she knew that through all years to come she would grieve for this poor girl who was lying here, and whom no one else seemed to compassionate at all. She would know what this poor girl had suffered. She would never think of it as nothing, as a mere trifle which would soon pass out of memory. She would remember how the poor little heart had been wrung, and how the eyes had poured forth, and how the hot cheeks had been glazed with tears. Would it not seem wonderful that no other soul had cared whether Janet cried or not?

At length Janet rose.

The sun was shining more and more brightly, and so full of stir and bustle was the merry world below that there would have been no chance of further repose even had such been desired.

"I will go out of doors and sit on one of the garden seats," murmured Janet to herself. "Aunt Susan never comes down till half-past nine, but I cannot stay another whole hour in bed. It is only eight o'clock now. Eight o'clock, and they have been gone more than an hour! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

But in spite of sighs and sadness, she rose and dressed herself. Some fancy induced her to put on the tweed dress—Stronachan's dress. Afterward she often wondered what had ever made her think of doing so. The tweed was too hot for so warm a day on shore, and only the inevitable ocean breeze would have made it acceptable on board a steamer.

But the frock became Janet, and she took it down from its peg in the wardrobe and then donned the hat to match. Also she laced on the boots that should have trod the Staffa shore, and smiled a little melancholy smile to herself as she did so "I will carry out the make-believe all through," she said.

When fully equipped it was a relief to leave behind the small bare chamber with its plaintive associations, and step down-stairs to see what others were doing. Not that she cared what others were doing—there were no "others" there whose doings were worth the thinking about; but still she found herself noting this and that.

She noted that the hotel seemed very empty, while the bay, on the other hand, appeared to be unusually full. She noted that the large, beautifully-appointed steam yacht which had come to anchor late the previous night, had sent out a trim gig, which was just approaching the shore; and she noticed that in it was a kilted Highlander, at sight of whom her heart gave a throb, for he reminded her of her cousin Stronachan.

Then she turned away, and found a seat under the shade of one of the few trees; where, looking out in the other direction, she fell to thinking and musing once more.

A voice broke in upon her reverie.

A voice! Whose voice? Who hailed her in familiar tones as "Janet"? Whose step approached from behind? And whose hand caught her as a swift torrent of words fell upon her ear?

A few moments before she had been reminded of her cousin—was it then, could it have been, Stronachan himself whom she had seen, and—and—

"I say, Janet, what luck that you did not go in that boat! I—hum—ha—missed it myself somehow. But there was a beastly crowd, and we should not have enjoyed it at all. And now, what do you think? (eagerly.) Such fun! My Uncle Stewart's yacht—that one over there—came in late last night, and I have just been on board her; and she is off to Staffa in half an hour, and he wants us both to go. Your aunt can give you leave—or, better still, I dare say she will go with us. I am commissioned to invite you both."

"But—how did you know I had not gone with the rest?"

"Oh, I—well, fact is, I was down at the boat," allowed Stronachan, somewhat shamefacedly. "I thought if you were all going, I would not break faith with you; but as soon as I found you were not there—"

Janet turned away her head.

"I did not seem to care," added the speaker.

There was an awkward pause.

"We must not wait now," cried he, however, in another minute. "I promised my uncle to be back in half an hour."

"Oh, if she will go. I could just run back and explain. He is with the gig now. I am sure he would wait for your aunt. Of course half an hour was a figure of speech. But do you think she could be ready in an hour? We should breakfast on board, you know."

"Oh, yes," cried Janet, starting to her feet.

"And do you think she will go?"

"I really think she will. She almost went with the rest. It was only the crowds, and the fear of its being a bad day which prevented her. Now that she sees what a day it is—"

"Yes, a dead calm. She need not be afraid even of a swell."

"And in a yacht?"

"And such a jolly yacht, Janet! Everything is splendid from top to stern; and only a few old fogies on board—my Aunt Stewart, who is a benevolent old soul, and some elderly Glasgow man, rather vulgar, but quite inoffensive—oh, it will

be first-rate! Do run and hurry your aunt. Tell her I'll be back here in exactly an hour."

"But are you sure they can wait?"

"I am sure they will wait. They will be rather pleased, don't you know. Mrs. Greythorpe is a fine lady, and my uncle will be awfully flattered if she goes in his yacht when she would not trust herself to the Staffa boat."

"Yes—yes."

"Fly, then!" But still he detained her. "I say, Janet, were you—weren't you—it was not your doing, was it, that you did not go with the rest?"

"Oh, Stronachan!" Open-eyed, reproachful amazement.

"All right," said he, cheerfully. "I thought not; but I wanted to be quite sure. Nobody said anything, you know."

"And—and—what did you say to them?" She was longing to hear this; and as the two were now on the move toward the house, time was not being wasted over the enquiry.

"That was easy enough," replied he. "I showed them my uncle's yacht just come in, and said he would probably expect me on board; and as I did not know how long he might propose remaining at anchorage here—but we'll make him remain, Janet," laughing joyously. "He shall remain for our sakes now that he is come. He shall take us for some other sails as well as to-day's one. We'll go up to Fort William—it is a glorious sail, that, and down to the Juras, and—all right," as he saw her quivering to be off, "We'll have all day to talk in. Hurry now. I'll be back in less than an hour, and meet you here at the front. Bring a big cloak or two," he shouted back, as he turned away at last.

(To be Continued.)

SEPTEMBER.

Most changeful of the months—September—thou seemest at times the fairest of the train,  
Yet cheating us so oft with promise vain,  
Thou dost out-April April—dreamy now  
With summer sunshine on thy pensive brow—  
Then changing swift, thou dost unloose, amain  
Wild, wailing winds and gusts of sobbing rain  
That tear the bright leaves from the bronzing bough!

Is it a symbol of thine own regret  
For swiftly closing days and fading flowers?  
Well might it seem thine eyes with tears are wet  
For all the lost delights of summer bowers  
That now we vainly seek—and yet—and yet  
Our hearts can onward look to April hours!

—Fidelis, in *The Week*.

TREASURES UNDER THE SEA.

The close of the last century seems to have been very prolific in wrecks. The British frigate *De Broek*, lost in a storm off Lewes, in the United States, in 1798, is stated to have had on board no less than 52,000,000 dollars' worth of specie and jewels, taken from an intercepted Spanish fleet while on her voyage to Halifax, and with it were also taken 200 prisoners. The latter were in irons on the lower decks when the vessel foundered, and all were lost. Many years afterwards, in 1881, search was being actively prosecuted by a Diving Company for the purpose of recovering this specie, the result of which has not yet been chronicled. It would scarcely be believed that valuables have been recovered nearly 250 years from the date of the wreck, but nevertheless it is recorded that the good ship *Harleem*, which was driven ashore in Table Bay, in May, 1648, and became a total wreck, had on board many cases full of curiosities and antiquities for sale to European museums. These cases contained idols, rare china, glass, silver, etc. As lately as 1883 salvaging operations were rewarded by the recovery of several of these articles. The china was not at all injured by having been 235 years under the sea, but the silver articles had suffered considerably. Another very notable case—not only for the amount of treasure on board, but also for the big "windfall" for the salvors—is that of the *Thetis*, a British frigate, wrecked off the coast of Brazil in 1830, with £162,000 in bullion on board. The hull went to pieces, leaving the treasure at the bottom in five or six fathoms of water. The admiral of the Brazil Station and the captains and crews of four sloops-of-war were engaged for eighteen months in recovering the treasure. The service was attended with great skill, labour and danger, and four lives were lost. A good deal of litigation was the result, as disputes arose between the parties as to the amount of reward for the salvors. The Court of Admiralty awarded £17,000; the Privy Council £29,000; and £25,800 for expenses. In the reign of James II., a very successful salvaging expedition took place. A rich Spanish vessel which had been lost on the coast of South America, rewarded her salvors with no less than £300,000, stated to have been forty-four years at the bottom of the sea. A medal was struck in honour of this event in 1687. One of the most recent cases of successful salvaging operations is that of the Spanish mail steamer *Alphonso XII.*, bound from Cadiz to Havana, in February, 1885, and sunk off Point Gando, Grand Canary, in twenty-five fathoms of water. She had on board treasure valued at £100,000. The underwriters who had insured the vessel organized a salvaging expedition which was despatched to the scene of the wreck in the following May. It is reported that a few months later most of the specie was recovered. —*Cassell's Family Magazine*.

I am ignorant of any one quality that is amiable in man which is not equally so in a woman. I do not except even modesty and gentleness of nature. Nor do I know one evil or folly which is not equally distasteful in both. —*Swift*.