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ELLEN; OR, THE ORCHARD-MAN'S DAUGHTER.

(From the Lamp.)

CHAPTER XIII.

One Saturday evening, when the machinery of the week was wound up, and only the elders of the family present, Hannah's cousin said,—"What a good joke it was, to take that sharp fellow in, that Hannah may thank him for giving him the hint that he did,—that she had a nice smart fortune." Hannah was indignant, and did not think it was any joke at all. She did not sleep much that night, fearing that Edward Martin's preference had been really stimulated by the unworthy deceit; at all events, though now very partial to him, she resolved the first opportunity that she could with propriety, that she would plainly tell what fortune she thought her mother could give her. She knew it was comparatively as none to what he no doubt was looking for. The next day, as they walked home together from chapel, the opportunity occurred.—Edward Martin, with a very quivering, uncertain voice, asked Hannah, as they came to the village ale-house, to come in and allow him to treat her. Hannah's really offended look and decided refusal seemed anything but a disappointment to her companion. He brightened up, and without further pressing, asked her why she refused. "Because," said Hannah, "I was never in such a place in my life; and my mother would sooner see me and Sally dead than see us go in there to take anything. She would not let us go there of a message even."

Edward Martin thought he would like to thank Hannah's mother, and it was not long before Hannah had the opportunity she desired.—Ere they reached her cousin's he proposed for her. He laughed at her anxiety to impress so plainly on him what her fortune really was; and when he told her that he knew it all very well, and that her cousin gave him more than one hint that her mother could give her very little, if any fortune, then Hannah discovered that her cousin, who was a really honest, blunt fellow, was only quizzing her. Young Martin told her how delighted he was to see her so affronted at the treat, and how he had promised his mother when she was dying, that he would never have anything to say to a girl who had so little respect for herself as to drink in a public house, how he had made it always his test of any girl that he thought of, and how their accepting his invitation had turned him against several girls. And good reason young Martin had of being cautious, not only for his mother's injunction, but from sad experience. After his mother's death, his father married a young woman of respectable connections. Shortly after their union, her unfortunate habit of intemperance betrayed itself, and her waste of his substance, and the slatternly discomfort of his home, together with the shame it was to have his wife the scandal of his neighbors, soon laid the poor man in his grave. His widow continuing her evil career, was turned out of her farm in a few years, and had to emigrate, taking with her her two unhappy little children. Edward had luckily been provided for before his father's second marriage, but, being an affectionate son, he took his poor father's suffering much to heart, and had as great a horror as Mrs. Noonan of an intemperate woman. As may be supposed, she gave her consent gladly to Hannah's union with the young farmer; his well-stocked land would have had little chance of obtaining it if he had not been sober and well contented. And so Hannah's fairy tale was realized; and there are sometimes such fairy tales in this woe-stricken world; worth does sometimes win the face from gold, and the good and the good are united.

Hannah's bridal was quiet and simple, but very cheerful. Her sister Sally and Ellen Mannix were the bridesmaids, and, as the wedding was in the last week of April, Mrs. Noonan and her family and Ellen Mannix had an invitation to spend the coming May Sunday at Hannah's new home, where they duly arrived, and had a very pleasant Maying.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was some time after Hannah's marriage, and when Ellen Mannix was some nineteen or twenty years old, that as she was sitting one evening at Mrs. Noonan's, helping Sally to sew, a visitor, an old acquaintance, dropped in. This person had been several years out of the neighborhood, and Ellen had grown quite out of his memory. Ellen had learned from Mrs. Noonan and the example of her daughter never to wear any frizzly finery. She was always neatly and suitably dressed, and now, as she sat at work in a brown stuff wrapper, and thin muslin neckerchief, and her hair in nice smooth bands, she looked so pretty and interesting, she could not fail to be noticed by the stranger. On inquiring who she was, and having been told, he shook his head with a sad meaning. He had been inquiring about the old neighbors on his return, and had learned what a sad drunkard Mrs. Mannix had become. Ellen did not notice his silent

comment when her mother's name was mentioned, if she had, her quick sensibility would have given it ready interpretation. Shortly after his coming Ellen went home, escorted as usual by Sally and William. On their return Ellen and her mother were the subject of conversation.—The stranger said:—"It was a great pity such a nice-looking creature as Ellen should not have been brought up by a good mother."

Mrs. Noonan praised Ellen, and said that no one could find fault with her behaviour, notwithstanding her disadvantages at home.

Her guest said it was a miracle indeed, if she was all that a good mother's child should be;—"and who is it so natural for a child to take after as her own mother?" said he. "I remember when Mrs. Mannix was as nice a young woman to look at as her daughter. You may remember it, too, Mrs. Noonan; and see what she is now?"

"Yes, I remember, she was a very fine young woman," said Mrs. Noonan, "and handsomer than Ellen, too, but she never had her tender-like look, and her nice ways, poor child; and there is no fear, at all events, that she'll drink—she has a great horror of it."

"Well, I hope so," said the visitor; "but I'd have great fear of her mother's daughter. I never heard of Mrs. Mannix drinking when she was a girl."

William heard this conversation with much discomfort. He felt displeased with their guest for the distrustful way he talked of Ellen's future; but he took no share in the conversation; and as his mother took her part he thought it was better to be silent, as he might speak with too much warmth, and betray his feelings. Nevertheless the stranger's remarks sank deep into his soul; they were so just and natural, they made an impression that he would have shaken off if he could; and often afterwards, when on the point of declaring his love for Ellen, and asking her to be his wife, the visitor's words, "Who is it so natural for a girl to take after as her own mother?" would come to him like a warning, and chill his heart and seal his lips.—Ellen half suspected her lover's feelings; tho' he never alluded to her mother's misconduct, she knew in what light he held it, and she felt almost sure at times that there was a struggle between his love and his fear to unite himself to the daughter of such a mother as hers. In her reasoning moments she could not blame him, but her pride was hurt, and she was sometimes cool to William, but it did not lessen his attachment, which was all the stronger, he felt she was so much to be pitied.

Thus matters went on for two or three years, Ellen's happy intimacy continuing with the Noonan's, and William caring for her with affectionate interest, yet without making any profession of his feelings. Little eventful occurred in the families during this period, with the exception of a bad fever with which Mrs. Noonan was attacked, and in which Ellen joined Sally in nursing her with all the devotedness of the fondest daughter. William was too good a son not to be touched by this proof of Ellen's goodness and gratitude to his mother; and shortly after her recovery he resolved to propose for her, and a circumstance which occurred at the time likewise influenced his intention. Through the gentleman to whose gardener William had been apprenticed, and who took a very warm interest in him, from his attention and good conduct, he was made the offer of an excellent situation as head-gardener to a nobleman in the north of Ireland. Though unwilling to separate from his family, the proposal was too advantageous to be declined; he decided on accepting it—on engaging Ellen to be his wife, at no distant time returning to marry her; and made arrangements to settle his mother and sister near them, in the North. Such were his plans, poor fellow! which he confided to his mother, and asked her advice. Now Mrs. Noonan was very partial to Ellen; if she had a different mother, she would with delight have seen her son married to her. She had no fault whatever to find with her conduct, yet she felt uneasy when he told her what he was about to do; however, she made no objection; she felt it might not be right to allow a mother's perhaps over-anxious fears to interfere with her son's happiness.

"God direct you, my child," said she, as William took his way to the orchard cottage to see Ellen.

Ellen had not been to Mrs. Noonan's for two or three days, the longest period that she could remember to have been without seeing them.—She knew, of course, of William's intended departure, and that some explanation of his feelings may result, and she shrank with the instinctive delicacy of her nature from seeming to put herself in his way.

She sat on the little bench without the door, sewing, as William came up; and when the quick blush that his coming caused faded, he noticed that she looked very pale.

"'Tis a cold morning for you, Ellen, to be sitting outside at work," said William.

It was in March, and the evening was chilly, but that was not all the cause of Ellen's paleness.

"You had better come in, there's a nice fire within," said she, showing the way.

Her father sat at the hearth, smoking, and the room had an air of quiet and comfort that William scarcely expected. Richard Mannix was always glad to see William, which was rarely, indeed, in his own house. He laid by his pipe, no small compliment to his guest, and chatted with him; but William was very poor company this evening; his replies were few, and his attention forced. Still Richard Mannix talked on perseveringly, one would almost think perversely; but it was not so; he did not dream of what William came about that evening. Ellen was young, and somehow he had never thought of marriage for her; probably his own wretchedness in the state made him reluctant to see his only child enter it; or it may be that, as she was his only comfort at home, that the selfishness of human nature which sometimes even extends to a parent's heart, made him loth to have her taken from him, even to be made happy. With all Ellen's intimacy with the Noonans, he never thought of William as a husband for her. If the neighbors talked of it, it was not to him; few indeed cared to speak to him at all, he was so gloomy and sullen; and so even any rumor on the subject did not reach him; and if it had, as he could give her a good fortune, possibly he may have thought that as graceful as William was, he would be looking higher for his daughter.

XIV.

An hour, a weary hour to William, elapsed, and Richard Mannix still sat *vis-a-vis*, and there he would have remained till William took leave, had he not been called out on some business. And then William drew near Ellen, and was going to speak, when an unnatural yelling sigh was heard at the cottage door. Ellen started from her chair, but ere she had gone two feet, her mother reeled into the middle of the room. William did not stir, and Ellen placed herself between where he sat and her mother.—She had hoped that she would go quietly with her to her room, and lie down, as was generally the case; but to-night she was not stupidly intoxicated; she was in a state of frantic excitement.

"Mother," said Ellen, entreatingly, and laying her hand firmly, but gently, on her mother's, "come with me to your room."

"No, I will not, girl," said she, pushing her with violence from her across the floor. Ellen would have fallen, but that William caught her. "Ha! who have we here?" said Mrs. Mannix, raising a maniacal shout, and uttering an awful blasphemy. "So you were hiding him," said she; and her language became dreadful to hear.

It would be difficult to decide which was, Ellen or William, the paler or more horror-stricken. The latter had never witnessed such a scene; poor Ellen had encountered many, the additional poignancy in this being William's presence, and his being with herself the object of attack. She called him a beggar, and accused him of trying to steal her daughter that he might get at her father's money.

William uttered not a word; he was quite bewildered in such a scene. He looked at Ellen, and her look was pitiful to see. "Can I do anything for you?" he whispered.

"No, William, only to go," said Ellen.

"Good bye, God bless you," he cried, as he wrung her cold hand, and sped from that unfortunate roof. As he neared the orchard gate, there was a little grassy bench on which people were used to sit in the summer time, when they came to eat fruit. William threw himself on it, to breathe and to think. For a long time he struggled with his feelings; his heart sank within him to think that he was going, and for twelve long months would not see Ellen;—going, too, without making sure of her being his, or even telling her how dearly he loved her. That he did so he thought she could hardly doubt, and that she returned his love he almost felt sure of. He thought of her sweet gentle face as he had so lately seen it in the cheerful, and how pale and patient she looked in that terrible scene; and he thought he would return, and watch until her mother's voice was still, and ask Ellen to be his wife, and take her from such a sad home. But, then, as he recalled that fearful picture of sin and woman's degradation, the words of the visitor came to his recollection like a warning. Who is it more natural for a girl to take after than her own mother?

"Oh, impossible! Ellen can never be like her mother," thought William; and then he remembered the man's further remark. Mrs. Mannix was blameless at Ellen's age; he shuddered, and the idea impressed him painfully that he was made a witness of that scene to warn him of

what he was going to do, and that, too, at the most critical moment. He sighed heavily, and took his way to his mother's cottage. The table was arranged for the evening meal, and a nice bright fire and a hot cake were awaiting his return, and above all there were peace and grace there. He told his mother the unsatisfactory result of his visit, and the struggle that was going on in his breast. She was shocked, but not much surprised at what she heard. She spoke of the comfort she could, and she never failed to soothe any trouble that William knew. She approved of his going away for the twelve months without engaging himself to Ellen. It would be better to make further trial of her character, for, alas! it was no ordinary risk to marry the daughter of such a mother, unexceptionable as Ellen's conduct had hitherto been.—The decision of going without any explanation with Ellen was very painful, but there was no alternative, for he could not tell her that he wanted to have a better trial of her steadiness and good principles; he hoped Ellen would suspect what he meant to say, when interrupted by her mother, that her affection would still be his, and that the advice of his own good parent, and the society of his sister, would be her shield and support. And so early on the following morning he set out on his journey to the north, bidding his truest love to Ellen, with many a little anxious message to take care of herself. Ere we turn to her, however, we have a few words to say concerning Mrs. Buckley's daughters, as their neighborhood begins now to influence Ellen's fate.

CHAPTER XV.

It may be expected from the slight sketch of Mrs. Buckley and her family previously given, that her daughters grew to womanhood no better than they should be. They had been apprenticed to a milliner, and being good workmen, they got employment in some establishments where the conduct of the girls was less considered than their services. So it was that they were enabled to purchase the finery in which they flaunted on Sundays, being mere slatterns in the week days, as shabby then as they were out of character in their holiday dress. They were thought very lightly of in their neighborhood, being merely within the pale of being known by families not very regardful of their respectability. As for their mother, she went on as usual gossiping and feasting, and permitting card-playing in her house, and allowing the dissipated companions of her sons to frequent it. The father, poor man, had no control there; he was honest, and an excellent tradesman; and if he had been blessed with a good wife, he would in all likelihood have been respectable and independent;—but now his only resource was the ale-house, and he was fast sinking into the grave, an object of contempt or commiseration. It may be supposed that Mrs. Noonan allowed no intercourse whatever between her family and the Buckley's. Ellen, though saved from close companionship with the girls by her intimacy with the Noonans, unfortunately could not shake off their acquaintance altogether. Mrs. Buckley was one of those who countenanced her mother, and afforded her occasional opportunities of indulging her sad propensity at her house.

Frequently of an evening, Ellen, on returning home from the Noonan's, would find Mrs. Buckley's daughters seated before her at the cottage, they giving as a reason for their presence they having conducted her mother thither when she was not able to take care of herself. Ellen, though cold and distant, could not in such circumstances repulse them altogether.

On one or two occasions William came in contact with them. As he was handsome, and an exclusive in his rank, they thought a conquest of him would be a great triumph; besides, it would be capital fun to annoy his stand-off mother. But all their efforts to attract him were vain. He avoided them pertinaciously; and it followed as a consequence that their rejected admiration soon changed into aversion. But to return to Ellen; it was rarely, as we have noticed, that she lost patience with her mother.—The excellent precepts inculcated by her pious instructresses and the counsel of her good friend Mrs. Noonan, strengthened her to bear the trial—the greatest a daughter can experience—seeing a mother addicted to such a degrading vice. On the evening of William's leave-taking, however, Ellen's shame and vexation were so great, that she could not help saying to her, "Why would she disgrace her and expose her so?"

The mother, in no state to bear reasoning, much less reproof, grew violent, and broke every thing breakable within her reach. Ellen had to leave her to the management of the servant, and retired to her own little room. She spent a sleepless, excited night, poor girl. She thought, as William guessed she would, that he was going to speak of their marriage, when her mother's unlucky coming interfered. Still she hoped that he would not go the next day as he intended, and that she would see him again. The first

news she heard from her servant in the morning was, that some man told her that he had gone, and no mistake, for that he had escorted him himself some miles of the road. This was a great shock to Ellen. Naturally weak and delicate, she became very ill. She felt sure that William, disgusted by the scene he witnessed, had given her up for ever.

Mrs. Mannix, whose maternal feelings were not wholly destroyed, felt some remorse when the maid told her how ill Ellen was, and how frightfully she looked. She made some tea, and took it to her herself; and poor Ellen received her dutifully, and did not say an upbraiding word. Mrs. Mannix remained at home that day, and Mrs. Buckley did not fail to make her make her a gossiping visit. She made the weak, foolish woman go to Ellen, and find out from her if William had proposed for her. Ellen, quite unsuspecting of who prompted the question, told her he had not, and that she supposed he never would. The mother made no remark at the time, but returned to her visitor, and when Mrs. Buckley left she came back to Ellen.

"Well, Ellen; and so that fellow went off without asking you to marry him," said she.

"And could you expect anything else, when you called him a beggar, and spoke as you did to him last night?" said Ellen.

"Oh, that's fine talk, Ellen; but if he intended it, what I said would not have prevented him.—But I can tell you, if he was ever so well inclined himself, his mother, your paragon, Ellen, wouldn't let him; so she wouldn't."

"Who said that, mother?" said Ellen, sitting up erect in his bed.

"One that heard it from Mrs. Cremin, one of Mrs. Noonan's cronies. Poor Sophy Buckley should be match-making, and she said one day to her, 'Wouldn't Ellen Mannix and William Noonan make a nice couple,' and Mrs. Cremin up and said she heard Mrs. Noonan say, that she'd be long sorry to give her consent to it, and that it was a different wife entirely that she'd take care to get for him. There's now for you, Ellen."

"I wish Mrs. Buckley would let me alone, that she wouldn't be talking at all about me. I don't like that woman at all," said Ellen.

"Well, then, that's ungrateful of you, Ellen. Sophy is a good poor soul, and she was crying down her eyes a while ago about you, to think that Mrs. Noonan would let her son treat you so;—courting you all these years, and then go off with himself without marrying you. It is the talk of the place, I can tell you; but, as Sophy said, you ought not to be giving yourself up to fretting and pining, but dress yourself smart, and gad about. A pretty girl like you would get a much better match any day; and it is few nice girls would be bothered with the like of him, that never wore a genteel coat or hat in his life."

"Oh, I wish Mrs. Buckley would just not mind what I am, or what is said of me," said Ellen, bursting into tears.

CHAPTER XVI.

Such was the injudicious advice which Mrs. Mannix gave her child; her greatest enemy could give her no worse. It was the effect of Sophy Buckley's malicious gossiping. She had no wish to deceive her child, or plot against her happiness; but, weak-minded and wicked in the indulgence of her passions, she believed what she heard, and her prejudice to Mrs. Noonan made her the more willing to do so.

Neither had Mrs. Buckley any deliberate intention of injuring Ellen or destroying her peace. She only indulged her usual habit of idle talk, and a mischievous desire to annoy Mrs. Noonan, by estranging Ellen from her, if she could. A simple remark from Mrs. Cremin, that she suspected Mrs. Noonan would not fancy such a mother-in-law as Mrs. Mannix for her son, was the only authority Sophy Buckley had for what she said. When she heard William was gone without marrying Ellen, she set her wits to work to find out how matters stood; and when she learned from Mrs. Mannix that he had not even proposed for her, she shook her head sagaciously, and said she knew it would be so all through;—she did not blame the young man much, only for being such a fool as to be said by his mother, that it was all her doing, and that she surpassed her entirely. It would be unnecessary to follow Sophy Buckley through all she said and surmised, and at any other time it would have had little weight with Ellen, but she was now in no frame of mind for rational reflection; unfortunately, the bad advice came before her true friends could prepare the antidote.

It is said that their example should so soon have lost its weight. Ellen was not blameless, for it was certain that our Heavenly Father does not send us a temptation, without giving us the power to resist it, if we do not impede His grace by some fault of our own. It is true, that the child of a bad parent claims more our pity than censure; but the child of such should ever bear in mind the awful denunciation in holy