

The Standard,

OR FRONTIER GAZETTE.

Volume VIII

No. XXXV

Price 15s.]

SAINT ANDREWS, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 3, 1841.

[7s. 6d. by Mail.]

THE RUSTIC WIFE.

BY MISS S. C. EDGARTON.

(Concluded.)

"My Beloved Husband,—Here have I been rusticated (a necessary operation for me to undergo) for nearly a month, and have utterly neglected to give you a description of the way we do things at aunt Weldon's renowned establishment. O dear! you have no idea how happy we are. Here we live in a little white house, which has four rooms on the floor, and two chambers. Aunt Weldon occupies the kitchen and bed-room; then the dining room is for us all, and the parlour exclusively for Marion Lee and a certain little rustic of your acquaintance. And pray who is Marion Lee? you will ask. Did you not hear me speak of her, shortly before you left, as a very interesting young lady? Let me give you a sketch. She is one year older than your Clara, a venerable maiden of eighteen, and an orphan. She was educated at considerable expense, and from her infancy to womanhood has been accustomed to the luxuries of wealth, and the elegancies of cultivated society. But one of those mysterious dispensations of Providence, such as raised me from poverty and utter ignorance to be the wife of Laurine Seton, Esq., the gifted, elegant, accomplished Laurine Seton, has brought her down to destitution, to toil for her daily bread. I loved her, Laurine, and I felt what a comfort and consolation her society would be to me while you were far away. So, partly to relieve her from want, and partly to be a companion for myself, I prevailed on her to share my hermitage. O, she is a sweet girl,—this dear Marion of mine. She partly realizes my idea of an angel. Her form is slight and graceful, her motions exceedingly animated, her limbs moulded to perfect symmetry, and pervading all, there is a certain spirituality, which makes you feel yourself in holy presence. Her face too, is very beautiful. I cannot describe her classically, but I can tell you that she has very large, clear eyes of a celestial blue, and hair floating about her temples like sunbeams. Her voice, too, is low and soft and she sings like a robin. But all her outward charms are lost in the fascinations of her sweet temper and loving heart. O, Laurine! I know you would love her. Are you not glad I have found so gentle and affectionate a friend?"

"Well, Marion and I have delightful rambles in the woodlands and over the hills; we have formed acquaintance with all the squirrels and woodpeckers that are to be found; and even the flowers seem to recognize us, and to smile at our approach. Sometimes to our own amusement, and do a little kindness to our fellow-creatures, we visit the dwellings of the poor, and the sick, and aid them as they have need. Sometimes, too, Marion and I have a fine frolic with aunt Weldon over the churn.

"You ask me if I write poetry now-days. Poetry, forsooth! now you *didn't* mean to laugh at me, did you? No, Laurine; my foolish rhyming habit is getting cured in your absence, and I am returning to the plain prose of ordinary chat. Marion and I are great chatterboxes; and sometimes I get a little blathered 'land of prose,' when talking to her of you. She is a little fountain of poetry herself; and, if ever she gets in love, she will out-poetize Sappho. Pray, am I not becoming very classic? I fancy, my love, that I see a shade creeping over your brow, and hear you murmur, 'How can Claribel write so gayly while I am away? Dear Laurine! the tears are stealing down my cheeks all the while I am writing to you; but, at the same time, the employment exhilarates my spirits, and makes me wild with joy.

"Do not forget me, dearest, among the many beautiful and accomplished ladies you meet in London. When you return you shall teach me to know what they know, and do as they do. What a sweet little plan we had formed just before you were called away! How much I was going to learn, and how proud you were to be of my accomplishments! Those bright visions have all passed away; but when you are once more at our dear little home, and I am then at your side, will we not renew those pleasant dreams,—will we not love?"

"It is now two months since you left me, in ten more you will return. Dear Laurine you will make those long months happy to me by frequent letters,—will you not? And, if you love me, guard your own peace. I have a thousand fears for you; but I trust in Heaven. Thanks, ten thousand thanks, for the precious faith you taught me. It is my strength and my joy in all trials; and it will sustain me when everything else is gone,—even, Laurine, your own idolized self.

"It is a beautiful evening, dearest; would you were here to walk with me. Marion has just entered the room, and gently entreated me to ramble with her. I cannot deny the dear girl, and so will close this poor letter, with a promise soon to send you a longer and better one. Dearest Laurine, I remain, as ever, your own

CLARIBEL.

Time passed onward, and the young wife progressed rapidly in her studies. Not all

the warnings, and entreaties of Marion could wile her a day from her books; nay, not scarcely an hour. Her cheek grew pale, and her form shadowy; yet every day found her more ardently devoted to literature. Neither did she neglect the lighter accomplishments. Music was an inspiration with her. A very few lessons made her mistress of the piano; and daily practice gave a finish and delicate spirit to her performance, age excelled even by professors.

Poetry was her favourite study. The works of the great masters became familiar to her as household words. Her exceedingly retentive memory enabled her, with very little care to repeat a thousand beautiful passages, even after long intervals; and characters and scenes were embodied in her imagination with a striking individuality and life-like distinctness.

Marion marveled at her powers. Many years of study under the most finished masters had not led her farther into the fields of literature and science, than a few months had sufficed to do with Claribel. But Claribel was gifted by nature with the most acute perceptive faculties, and knowledge came to her almost by inspiration. Like Miranda, she had "a good will to it"; and this made the most intense application easy and pleasant.

When winter came, with his storms and gloom, and laid waste the woodlands and valleys, Claribel grew weary of her unbroken seclusion, and accompanied by Marion, her inseparable friend, removed to New-York. Her principal object, however, was to avail herself of the assistance of instruction Marion was not qualified to give.

About a month after their arrival in the city, a young gentleman called to deliver Claribel a letter from her husband. It contained intelligence of great interest to her. We will look over her shoulder while she reads.

"My Dear Claribel,—The embassy with which I am charged is delivered, but not accepted; and circumstances which I cannot here explain will retard the accomplishment of my business at least six months. But, my love, we must not be thus long separated. I have made arrangements with the bearer of this letter—Willis Farley, an old college friend of mine—and a noble fellow too,—I have made arrangements with him to bring you to me on his return, next April. That will be even better than to come home to you—for now we can see England together. Perhaps you can prevail on your friend Marion to accompany you. At all events, be sure that she is provided with a situation suited to her merits; and when we are once more established in our own dear home, she shall make a flower in our family wreath. Mr. Farley will inform you of the arrangements I have made for you; and I trust, my precious one, that no obstacles will keep you from me. The ladies of my acquaintance in London often ask me concerning my wife. You will admire many of them exceedingly. But Farley waits. I can only say, come, and God bless you!"

LAURINE SETON.

Claribel's joy was greater than we can express. She laughed and wept alternately over the letter, and even forgot her studies in the wilderness of her emotions. But she forgot them not long; for the anticipation of shortly meeting her husband, and being introduced by him into the higher circles of London society, was a new incitement to make herself worthy of her station. Yet never was a secret more sedulously kept than hers. Even Willis Farley, who became a frequent visitor during the winter, knew her only in her character of untutored simplicity. He was pleased with her winning grace, and impressed with her beauty; but sometimes he could not but feel there must be many mortifications in reserve for his friend Seton, in bringing such a little specimen of rusticity into association with the educated and refined, with whom he mingled. He contrasted her with Marion Lee; but was he an impartial judge? Claribel, willing as she ever was to be depreciated, or rather to have those she loved commended above her, would have answered, with a roguish smile, "No."

When Claribel first proposed to Marion to be her companion to England, she acceded to the request with gratitude and pleasure. But, in a few weeks, she began to grow restive when the subject was discussed, and at last made known her determination to remain behind. In vain Claribel besought her reasons. She would only blush, and turn away to hide her tears. But her friend was not quite blind. She determined to consult Mr. Farley. At his next visit, which was not long deferred, when Marion was absent from the room, she introduced the subject.

"So it seems, Mr. Farley, that I am to go to England unattended by my friend?"

Willis started and blushed. "How so, Mrs. Seton?"

"She refuses to accompany me; and my most urgent solicitations avail nothing: I never knew Marion obstinate before."

"Does she assign no reasons?"

"Her only answer is a blush or a tear, and a shake of the head. I wish you would endeavour to change her determination. I should indeed be very grateful. I am sure

you would be successful."

Willis looked at her earnestly. There was an arch smile playing about her mouth; but truth and sincerity were also there. He blushed a little. "I wish I also were sure. Where is Marion? May I go to her?"

"I think you will find her in the library. Yes, go to her; persuade her; I know you can."

"Thank you, my dear Mrs. Seton. I cannot be so sanguine, though you have inspired a hope." He opened the door into the library. Marion sat with her face buried in her hand. Tears were trickling through her small white fingers. Willis hesitated a moment. In another moment he was at her side.

"Marion," he murmured gently, "dear Marion!—She did not speak but trembled like an aspen. Dearest, best beloved! will you not speak to me? The tears streamed more freely down her cheeks, and, sobbing painfully, she hid her face upon his bosom. He asked no more—what lover would!—but clasping his arms about her, breathed in her ear his first, deep, fervent, subduing words of love.

Claribel awaited the termination of the conference with a light heart. She loved her friend's happiness almost as much as her own. Indeed, it made a part of her own.

Marion did not return to the drawing room for nearly an hour after Willis had left her. When she did return, one glance at her tranquil countenance assured Claribel that all was well. It was radiant with joy and gratitude. There was a tremulousness in her voice, too, when she spoke, which revealed the sweet agitation of her heart. Claribel forbore to disturb her silent consciousness by a word or look. Her own experience had taught her how sweet it is to lock some joys entirely within one's own bosom. The following morning, however, when they were standing together in a little alcove filled with plants, Marion suddenly enquired, "What will become of our flowers, Claribel, while we are in England?"

"We?" exclaimed Claribel, laughing, and shaking her head. "Ah, Marion! I fear you are becoming sadly fickle. We in England! No, dear, you are to stay and take care of the plants; I, alone, am to accompany Mr. Farley."

There was a brilliant coterie of wits and geniuses assembled one evening at Lady D's in London. She was one of the most popular ladies in the metropolis, and a great patroness of literature. Her house was the resort of the great and gifted, and on this evening she had given a party with a view to collect them in honour of a favourite friend,—Laurine Seton and his beautiful wife. Many of the most lovely women of the city were there, and the young American bride was expected with no little interest. At length the door was thrown open, and Mr. Seton and Lady, and Mr. Farley and Lady were announced.

Lady D. rose to welcome them. Claribel came forward leaning on her husband's arm, and looking very beautiful. She was dressed with elegant simplicity, and there was a winning and indescribable grace in her mien and manners which was as new as it was enchanting. She returned the salutations of the company with ease and modesty, and surprised her husband by her dignified assurance and self-possession. There was a little fluttering about his heart when he saw the obvious admiration she excited, and a half sigh escaped his lips, when he remembered how little qualified she was to retain anything more than that excited by her native gifts and graces. He would willingly have excused himself from attendance at this soiree, but as it was intended as an express honour to himself and lady, he could find no plausible apology for absence. His heart sunk, when he saw Lady D. draw up a chair and open a conversation with his wife. He removed his seat to her side, in hope to be of assistance. Claribel looked up at him and smiled a little roguishly. He did not comprehend the smile, but he soon found that his presence was not needed as an assistance. He became a silent auditor. Lady D. commenced by asking Claribel questions about American authors,—their characters and habits of life.—Claribel answered satisfactorily, and ventured some very sweet and appropriate remarks upon the trials and discouragements attendant upon authorship in a new country, like America, and of the many temptations and allures which the offices and partisanship of a democratic government were continually offering to wile them from the thankless toils of literature.

From authors, they passed naturally to their productions, with which Claribel discovered herself familiar, and instituted some very original and very striking comparisons between the works of her countrymen and that of British authors. From American literature they gracefully and unwittingly entered the domains of the old world, passing not with Scott, and Byron, and Wordsworth, but crossing the channel to France, and from thence passing into the land of Goethe and Schiller. Whatever subject they touched upon, Claribel expressed herself modestly and gracefully. There was no display, no visible consciousness of success; but her sweet perceptions and peculiar eloquence were appreciated, and silently admired. The gentlemen were not slow to estimate her accomplishments. They gradually joined in the conversation, till Claribel found herself surrounded by many of the most remarkable men of the day. Marion, too, received a share of admiration, though she had less of genius to fascinate. She was less enthusiastic, and less easily excited; but beneath a very quiet exterior, as is usually the case, were buried fountains of deep and fervent feeling.

Claribel was in conversation with M. He made some remark which he attempted to verify by an Italian quotation. Her husband's surprise must be imagined when he heard her relating the sentiment hidden from himself by a language to which he possessed no key.—And, directly afterward, she was quoting Madame de Staël in the original. He understood, now, the little ruse she had been playing, and was deeply affected by this expressive token of her love. He longed to be near her once more, and to whisper his gratitude in her ear.

Toward the last hours of the evening a call was made for music. Claribel had an early invitation from many voices, but, distrusting the composure of her nerves after so much unusual excitement as she had recently experienced, she earnestly declined. But entreaties were renewed, and, after listening a while to a variety of skilful performers, she suffered herself to be led to the piano. The first piece she attempted was by a celebrated composer then present; and when she had finished it, he came to her, with sparkling eyes, and assured her that he felt himself exceedingly indebted; for never before had he heard one of his own productions expressed with so perfect an individuality of melody, so to speak, as that she had honoured by her performance! Other voices, too, applauded, but she heard them not; she heard only a low sigh, breathed by one who stood at her side. She looked up and encountered a flood of tenderness from eyes whose light was the sunshine of her soul. She attempted to resign her seat, but, "One more, one more, Mrs. Seton," from many lips, withheld her. She hesitated a few moments, and then touching the keys very plaintively, she burst into a wild and tender melody that brought tears to every eye. It was exquisitely simple, and new to every ear. No voice broke the silence for more than a minute after she had ceased. The composer at last spoke: "Pray tell us, Mrs. Seton, the author of that sweet, sweet thing?" "And of the words, of the words!" exclaimed a poet of the company. Claribel blushed, and replied, "I cannot tell." "I can," gently interposed Marion. "Could other than the author perform anything so exquisitely?"

Every one looked gratified. Laurine was too happy to speak, but as he led her away from the piano, a silent pressure of the hand told her how deeply he was affected. "Laurine, forgive me," she whispered. "I have intended no triumph, but I am happy if a year's assiduous application has spared you one moment's mortification. I care for no approval, save for your gratification." "Dearest," he replied, "I do not yet half know you. I tremble to find how greatly you now excel all my fondest dreams of what I dared to hope you might be. To think of my little rustic wife becoming the star of London!"

By order of Government, the roads in Prussia are lined on each side with fruit trees.—Noticing that sum of them had a wisp of straw attached to them, I inquired of the coachman what it meant. He replied, that the straw, was intended as a notice to the public not to take fruit from those trees without special permission. "I fear," said I, "that such a notice in my country would but be an invitation to attack them." "Haben sie keinen schinken?" (Have you no schools?) was his significant rejoinder.—Prof. Stowe.

Nature to Death.—The idea of the intense suffering immediately preceding dissolution is, and has been so general, that the term, "agony," has been applied to it by many languages. In its origin the word means nothing more than a contest or strife; but it has been extended so as to embrace the pangs of death and every violent pain. The agony of death, however, physiologically speaking instead of being a state of corporeal turmoil and anguish, is one of insensibility. The hurried and labored breathing, the peculiar sound on inspiration, and the turned up eyeballs, instead of being evidences of suffering, are now admitted to be signs of the brain having lost all, or almost all, sensibility to impressions. An easy death is what all desire, and, fortunately, whatever have been the previous pangs, the closing scene in most ailments in general is of this character. In the beautiful mythology of the ancients, Death was known as the Daughter of Night, and the Sister of Sleep. She was the only divinity to whom no sacrifice was ever made, because it was felt that no human interference could arrest her arm; yet her approach was contemplated without any physical apprehen-

sion. The representation of death, as a skeleton covered merely with skin on the tomb of Canaan, was not the common allegorical picture of the period. It was generally depicted on the tombs as a friendly genius, holding a wreath in his hand, with an inverted torch; as a sleeping child, winged, with an inverted torch resting on his wreath; or as love, with a melancholy torch—the inverted torch being a beautiful emblem of the gradual self-extinguishment of the vital frame.

The disgusting representations of death from the contents of the charnel house, were not common until the austerity of the fourteenth century, and are beginning to be abandoned. In more recent times, death seems to have been portrayed as a beautiful youth; and it is under this form that he is represented by Canova, on the monument which George IV., of England, erected in St. Peter's at Rome, in honor of the Stuarts.—American Journal.

A Bashful Lover.—A Green Mountain boy fell in love with a very pretty girl and determined to court her. To that end he dressed himself in his "Sunday-go-to-meetings," went to her father's house and found her there alone.

"How d'ye do," says Jonathan.

"I'm nicely—take a cheer, Jonathan," says the girl.

Jonathan took a chair, and seated himself in the furthest corner of the room, as though the beauty was a thing to be feared rather than loved.

"Aint you cold—hadn't you better sit up near the fire," said Sally, supposing he would of course, if he was going to make love 'at all, and do so in a proper manner.

"No I thankee, I reckon I'm comfortable returns Jonathan.

"How is your marm," said Sally.

"Well she's complainin' a leetle," said Jonathan.

Here a pause ensued, during which tinte Jonathan amused himself by whittin' a stick.

"There is nothing new up your way, is there?" said Sally, which Jonathan might understand as applying to his present situation, or to his father's domain.

"Haw!—oh—yes, you mean tu hum; well tu—that is yes—our spotted cow's got a calf!" said Jonathan.

Sally would undoubtedly have laughed at this queer piece of information, only she was too much vexed at the bashfulness of the speaker. At length, after another protracted silence, Sally got up, after a edition of a scream and in a loud voice exclaimed, "Let me alone!"

"Why," says Jonathan, dropping his knife and stick in astonishment, whyp I aint touchin' on ye.

"Well," says Sally, in a voice which might be indicative of fear, but sounded very much like a request. "Well, aint you tu?"

Jonathan thought a moment of this equivocal reply, and then, after placing his knife in his pocket, and blowing his nose, he drew his chair by the side of pretty Sally, gently encircled her waist, and—the next week they were married.

An Arab Retort.—"Why do you not thank God," said Mansur to an Arab. "that since I have been your ruler you have never been afflicted with the plague?" "God is too just to send two scourges upon us at once," was the reply, but it cost the bold speaker his life.

Mammoth Skeleton.—Almost every day brings to light some new evidence of the antediluvian world. Two hundred miles above St. Louis, the remains of a mammoth animal have just been discovered. They are described as 16 feet high and 32 long, with enormous tusks. The monster appears to have been well-footed, having no hoofs, but toes. By comparing the size of his frame with a large ox, he is estimated to have weighed 100,000 pounds, or 50 tons!—It is not even suggested the amount of food he would have required for his breakfast; but for dinner, provided he was an anti-Grahamite, he would have been satisfied with nothing short of half a dozen buffaloes, with fifty bushels of potatoes, to produce anything like a surfeit at his meals. The remains will soon be exhibited in all the Atlantic cities.

A Sufficient Excuse.—The New-York Express states that the name of Mr. Lawrence Van Buskirk, of No. 274 Seventeenth-street, having been drawn on the Court of Sessions, the Sheriff on going to summon him, was informed that Mr. Van Buskirk was over 100 years old, and had served on juries nearly four score years ago. The excuse of the aged veteran being a lawful one, was deemed amply sufficient, and his attendance at the Court of Sessions was very properly dispensed with.

Jeffries, the celebrated British reviewer, once remarked that it was his firm belief that if a promissory of a thousand dollars were offered for the best translation of the Greek Bible, it would be taken by a Yankee, who till the offer was made, had never seen a word in his life—that he would commence learning the language immediately, to qualify himself for the great undertaking, and would finish the whole work quicker than any other person, and bear off the premium.

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