

LITERARY.

[For the Herald.]
The Poor Old Man.
Oh! the times are getting worse,
Says the poor old man,
Lighter gets my purse,
Says the poor old man,
And I'm longing for the day,
When in the grave I'll lay,
There's nothing there to pay,
Says the poor old man,
Some neighbours they are good,
Says the poor old man,
They'd help me if they could,
Says the poor old man,
While others by the score,
Would drive me from their door;
Alas! for days of yore,
Says the poor old man,
When plenty had we all,
Says the poor old man,
How smoothly rolled the ball,
Says the poor old man,
No schemes had we then,
We all were honest men,
There was no "upper ten,"
Says the poor old man,
But a Railway round the Bay,
Says the poor old man,
We'll have without delay,
Says the poor old man,
The work may be begun,
But will not be half done,
Before my glass is run,
Says the poor old man,
Let the Doctor be extolled,
Says the poor old man,
While others are appalled,
Says the poor old man,
For patiently he bore,
And fought the battle o'er,
For fifteen years and more,
Says the poor old man,
Some money will be made,
Says the poor old man,
With shovel and with spade,
Says the poor old man,
And gratified you'll be,
When the Iron Horse you'll see,
Then do remember me,
Says the poor old man.

A Life's Experience.
Or Marring a Dead Lover.

Continued.
The afternoon of the next day I spent with Willie in one of our favourite haunts of the sea. There was hardly a breath of air stirring, and the water lapped idly upon the sand. Apropos to something that had been spoken of, he trotted out in a careless voice the commencement of the fine old ballad of "Hunting Tower." Prompted by the same impulse, I took up my part, and my voice rang clear and still upon the still air. What was my astonishment to hear the next verse taken up by the most melodious manly voice I had ever heard. I turned to see from whence the sounds proceeded, and saw coming towards us from behind a rock, a tall, handsome man in black. "Pardon my intrusion," he said, "and believe me it was unintentional. I had no idea you were here until I heard this young lady's charming voice. Have I the honor to address Mr. Calmer's niece?" I bowed, surprised at this knowledge of who I was and he presented his card. "Alfred Lee," I read in astonishment, at seeing the name of one of the most celebrated singers of the day, whose fame had reached even our secluded corner of the kingdom. "The same," he replied. "I have a letter of introduction to your uncle from an old friend of his. May I return with you and present my credentials?" I could not refuse so simple a request, though there was something about the stranger from which I recoiled, and Willie's face grew dark, as we rose to go. Somehow, as we walked home, the day did not seem so fine nor the bird's songs so sweet as when Willie and I started out in the morning; and yet my hand was in his and his voice sounding in my ear just the same. My uncle gave our new acquaintance a cordial welcome, and invited him to dinner. The invitation was as cordially accepted, and many a song our guest gave us, till my uncle was in a perfect ecstasy of delight, and I felt completely carried away by the harmony. Very agreeable he made himself, too; none of us could resist the singular fascination of his manner, though there was something in him, I could not tell what, that awed me. Willie seemed anxious and absorbed in thought, and when we parted for the

night he whispered to me, "Hester, beware of that man." "Beware of him, Willie?" said I. "Yes," said he; "I am sure no good will come to you through your acquaintances with him." "Jealous Willie?" said I, laughing. "No, Hester," he replied gravely. "I could not be jealous of you; I believe you are faith itself, but again I say, beware of him!" I tried to laugh off his fears, but he was grave when Alfred Lee was present, and looked very sad when I told him that the great man had consented to give me lessons. He was rusticiating for two months, he said, and I was to profit by it until he went back on his Winter engagements. It was a long voyage that Willie was going on; two years would most likely elapse before I should see him again and then we were to be married. The day of parting drew near, and in the meantime my singing lessons went on; my master bestowed very little praise on me, and it was hard work. He was a man as old as my uncle, and seemed, as the time went on, harsh and stern, at least to my girl's ideas though there was a strange expression in his black eyes as he looked at me, which frightened me. However I was too full of Willie and his departure to care much about him; at last the terrible day came, and again he warned me. "That man loves you, Hester," he said to me in a low voice. "What nonsense! I replied. "It is true," he said; "you will find it out when I am gone." "It will make no difference to me," I said; "you don't surely fancy I would listen to him?" "No," replied Willie; "but it may harm you, Hester. You will keep faith with me?" "Trust me, Willie," was all I could say. "I know you will; I am sure you will," he exclaimed, seizing me by both hands. "But swear it to me, Hester," said he. I did swear it, kneeling at his feet I vowed to be true to him while he lived to claim me. "If you break your vow, Hester," said he; "if you sell yourself as many women do, I will find it out; and Heaven helping me, I will come to the root of the alter and proclaim your falsehood." I was frightened and distressed at his vehemence, but I had no idea of the terrible presentiment of coming evil that oppressed him, and we part with renewed vows of faith and constancy to each other. My new singing-master departed to urge my uncle to let me go to London for a regular course of study, he having found out that I had a relation there, an elderly lady, a connection of my father's. My uncle, however, would make no promises, and Mr. Lee left with the intention of visiting again the next Autumn. Alas! before that time I was alone in the world; a terrible fever decimated our little town, and my grandmother and uncle both fell victims to it. When their affairs were settled, I found myself mistress of a small fortune and the old house in which my uncle had lived, my guardian being his solicitor. Willie's father offered me a home, but I had a girlish idea of independence, coupled with a desire to see more of the world than I had hitherto done, and I accepted the invitation of my London relation, Mrs. Burton, who had written to me on hearing of my loss; and shutting up the old house, I left for ever, as it seemed, the little town where I had been so happy. Willie was away; my uncle was dead; and I was beginning life afresh under the guardianship of Mrs. Burton. She was the widow of a cousin of my father's, and led a very gay, rakety life while her husband lived, and now, through lack of means, was settled down in somewhat grumbling and extremely shadowy and gentility. To her my arrival was a great boon; I was to pay her handsomely for my board and lodging, and many articles which I took with me set off her poor house to great advantage. My piano especially—a present from Willie's father—was a great ornament to her faded little drawing room. To my betrother I wrote concerning all that had befallen me and my gaze of residence; he was in China, and a long time must elapse before I could hear from him in reply. About three weeks after my arrival in town, the little servant entered the breakfast parlour with the concise and nouncement, "A gentleman miss." "For me?" I asked, in surprise. "Yes, miss. He said 'Miss Burton' I am sure." To be continued.

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