

# THE HEARTHSTONE.

## For the "Hearthstone," THE FORSAKEN.

BY AMY SCUDDER.

A maiden sat knitting at closing day,  
Fat knitting and humming a song;  
But she thought not of knitting nor plaintive lay,  
For her thoughts were far and far away  
With her lover gone so long.

Gone far away over hill and dale,  
Gone far away over mountain and vale,  
Beyond the stormy and wintry sea,  
Beyond the measureless prairies free,  
Gone for months and years,  
Taking with him hopes and fears,  
Leaving behind him love and tears,  
And his Saxon maiden true.

The song was ended, the knitting was done,  
The maiden looked out at the setting sun,  
Then rose from her seat with a sigh;  
And folding her work put it softly by;  
And slowly and sadly said,  
"Than wait any longer rather be dead,  
Of his return all hope is fled,  
And time brings nothing new."

So I'll away 'er the morning sun  
Hiss from the ocean wave,  
And find my lover beyond the brine,  
In that sweet sunny and tropical clime,  
To be in peace or grave.

In the purple dawn of the summer morn,  
While the dew slept in the flowers,  
The maiden left her childhood's home,  
And he went of him—-and downers,  
On and on, forever on  
O'er the ocean's briny foam.  
O'er rocky mountains, crest and frown,  
In search of his lover's home.  
For many, and many, and many a day,  
She had had no word from him;  
Still she had trusted, and still she prayed,  
And in hope waiting her vesper hymn.

And now, as she wandered far and wide,  
There came never a thought of chance,  
That might have come in the wanderer's years,  
Thro' this foreign land and strange,  
She believed in truth and honor fair;  
She believed in a risen Lord;  
She believed in the laws of Xeno's laws;  
And in her lover's love;  
And believe that she journeyed, till  
At last one evening mild,  
She sat on a cliff at a cottage gate,  
Where played a mother and child.

The mother was dark as Egyptian night;  
With stars like eyes, and with the setting sun,  
But her hair and dress were of the  
Were those of the Saxon child.  
The maiden gave an anxious look  
Into the child's face,  
What familiar expression those eyes did own,  
And those antique what native grace.

In thro' the door the trio passed,  
Thro' the rooms they went,  
When to on a wall a picture hung—  
"Twas her lover's; the maid saw there;  
She gazed on the picture and then on the child,  
This was the little one  
Her questioning eyes the mother's sought,  
My husband, the mother replied.

Never a start, nor shriek, nor groan,  
Never a sob or sigh,  
But she turned from the threshold and out of the  
gate.  
"Nearth the chilly and dewy sky,  
The river curdled and murmured on  
As it passed the cottage door,  
The bats flew by in the dusky sky,  
And the winds sighed nevermore.

Nevermore for hope was dead;  
Never, nevermore,  
Nevermore for love was fled—  
For ever, evermore  
O'er the misty moorlands,  
A lone with her breaking heart,  
Forsaken and forgotten;  
Her's was a bitter part.

And on thro' the midnight hours,  
She walked a weary road,  
Now in a brambly hollow,  
And now on open ground,  
Till her brain was drifting and dreamy;  
Her feet were weary and sore;  
Fate forced her back to the river,  
And the pines sobbed nevermore—

She sat on the brink of the water,  
With her pale cheek in her hand,  
And watched the red-deer's hoofs  
Strike on the pebbly strand;  
The ironbeams fell on the river,  
And shimmered for aye and  
Like a shimmering silver mantle  
Laid over the ebbing tide.

And on, and on to the ocean,  
The river was rife,  
As if it longed for freedom,  
To be far from the haunts of man,  
And into shapes fantastic,  
The crystal waves  
They seemed to speak of freedom  
From life and all its woes.

They made strange beds of silver,  
That seemed as soft as floss,  
As tho' they rocked an infant,  
They'd gently waken and toss,  
And the maid became enchanted  
With the waters at her feet,  
Till she yielded to their wooing,  
And her form they gladly greet.

And on they bore her gently,  
Until the morning star  
Rode beauteous in the heavens,  
And her bright hair  
And then, the sun's rays  
As tho' justice they had done,  
Laid gently down their burden  
On the shining sand alone.

On the shimmering strand they laid her,  
Scarcely an hundred paces more  
To the rock-land, fragrant portial,  
Of the little lover's door,  
And there, in the morn he found her,  
With her drift of golden hair  
Laid like a veil around her,  
The noble form as I  
By the golden chain he knew her,  
And the lock that she wore,  
With her portrait on her faithful heart  
That would beat for him no more.

## THE HALL-DOOR KEY.

Some years ago, when Ireland was in a more disturbed, though hardly more disintegrated state than it is at present, and murders, agrarian outrages, and other crimes were more common, a Mr. Scott, who resided in the western part of the county of Tipperary, was entertaining a number of friends at dinner.

Amongst the guests was one named Hunt, who had the reputation of being a man of more than ordinary courage, his claims to the character being the fact that he stood six feet two in his stockings, that he always travelled alone, and armed to the teeth, and was loud in speech as to his being ready for all comers.

His host, Scott, was a small but compact man, who was loved by "rich and poor, gentle and simple," as the Irish peasants say; he had always a joke for his acquaintances, "an' the purliest sate on a horse ye ever seed, bless him."

After dinner the conversation turned on the state of the country, and how much worse their own county was than any other. Every one had some story to tell, but Hunt expressed it as his opinion that the second should all be shot down, and that that was the way he would treat any of them that dared even to show a sign of molesting him.

"Come, Hunt," said Scott, "tell us if it be

true that you carry a small armoury in your dining room?"

"Not exactly an armoury, Scott," replied Hunt. "But I do carry a brace or two of pistols in my dog-cart. I think I should be prepared in case of necessity, and should I be attacked, shall use them without the slightest compunction."

"Why, my dear fellow, you don't expect they will attack you?" exclaimed Scott, in pretended astonishment.

"Well, perhaps not; but it is better to be prepared for these fellows. Look at poor Walter's case; they were not satisfied with one there. The ruffians killed the whole family."

"Yes, indeed, that is true," replied Scott. "But, Hunt, though I don't make bets usually, I'll lay you fifty pounds, and Hassett shall hold the stakes, that the first man who attempts to either rob you of your money or your pistols, when you are travelling in this armed-to-the-teeth style, succeeds. What say you, is it a bet?"

"Really, my dear Scott, it is a strange wager," returned Hunt; "but I'll take it."

"The money was deposited in Hassett's hands, whose eyes twinkled with merry humour. "What are you up to?" said he to Scott, as the latter placed his stakes in Hassett's hands. "Bather shin' (never mind), replied Scott.

"The subject then dropped, and the entertainment went on in real Irish style. Shortly afterwards Scott excused himself for a few moments, and had a short consultation with his head groom.

"Saddlo Grapeshot," was his last order before returning to his guests, "and take him down to the fir clump."

"I wonder what the master is up to!" said the groom to a fellow-servant.

"It's more than I know, Shann," replied the other; "but he's up to some of his jokes with Mistor Hunt."

"Arrah! I thin he is now?" said the groom. "Thin it's mesself, that hopes he'll take the consult out of him."

The groom then proceeded to carry out his master's orders.

On rejoining his friends, Scott found that Hunt, who had a long distance to go to reach his home, was preparing for a start, and had ordered his dog-cart.

"Another tumbler of punch," said Scott, who was anxious to gain time. "Another tumbler of punch, Hunt, and then you shall go."

"Very well, Scott," replied his friend. "But you must not forget to wonder if I shall ever have a chance of winning it."

"Never fear, I shall keep it in mind," was the answer.

"Hunt's dog-cart was now reported ready, and after finishing his punch he rose to wish his friend "Good night."

Hunt left the house, and was soon heard outside looking to his pistols and other weapons of his "armoury." This done, he started in his dog-cart and drove down the rather long and dreary lane leading from Scott's house. It was very dark, so that he could not see many yards before him.

Suddenly he noticed a man on horseback riding towards him.

What or who could it be?—Probably the police patrol. He was, however, soon informed.

"Stop!" exclaimed the horseman, in a rich brogue, riding up to Hunt and levelling a pistol at his head. "Stith!" or "I'll put daylight through yer big carcass."

Hunt pulled up all in a flutter, and began feeling for a pistol, his nervousness showing how much use it would be when he found it.

"Hallo," cried out the highwayman, "ave ye don't kape them hands ov yer's off that pistol-case, I'll blow the brains ov ye out this minnit. Come, Mistor Hunt, I want any small silver or gold ye may have, ye may keep the notes. Come, sir, sit down an' hold yer horse's head whilst I takes thin; quick, Mistor Hunt, the parther is 'ill round soon; down will ye go!"

Frantically with fear, he did as he was desired, and gave up his money and his watch to the robber, while he permitted the latter to search his dog-cart for arms.

But what was the unfortunate Hunt's astonishment when he saw the thief deliberately take out the pistols and coolly fire them off, one by one, in quick succession.

Hunt was completely dumfounded at this audacity. The fellow would alarm the neighbourhood, and very likely bring down the constabulary or military, who were at no great distance. Nor was he mistaken, for Scott's guests, hearing the rapid discharge of fire-arms, after calling in vain for their host, seized every imaginable weapon they could find in the hall, and rushed down the avenue, there to behold the rather extraordinary scene formed by Hunt, the robber, and their horses.

Hunt could not understand the robber's quietly remaining to be arrested, and naturally supposed he must have some assistance at hand.

But the mystery was soon solved, as the highwayman bursting into a hearty fit of laughter, exclaimed: "Hassett, my boy, hand over the cash, I've won my bet. See I've cleaned out Hunt with this!"

So saying, Scott, for it was he, held up the key of his hall-door.

The burst of laughter that followed this discovery was only equalled by the chagrin of the unfortunate victim of practical joking. At first he was furious, but his outrageous character had suffered so severely that his anger only caused more merriment.

"Come, come!" said Scott, "you are my prisoner and must return with me. Everything is fair in war or love, and I had a right to take my own means to win my bet."

The others joined their host in making peace, and Hunt was brought back to the house, but his reputation for bravery was gone for ever.

"Arrah! Shann, didn't the master do it nate?" said the indoor servant, joining the groom who was making up Grapeshot after his master had returned from his night's amusement.

"An' yer right, Mick!" replied Shann. "He did it beautiful. But tell me how Hunt looks."

"As cowed as a whipped bound."

"Thin I'm glad of that same, for he's been hecchoring of it long enough. It's always good to put down boasters."

My grandaunt Bergen was a very old lady, with a dusky sort of skin, so mysteriously wrinkled that it was hard to believe that she had not been born so. She wore what his dressers call a firkette, and large caps with much fluffing, fluffing, and other specimens of needle and laundry work upon them. She had a very small life annuity, and lived in a small house of ancient architecture, in which the front door opened into the front parlour, and the bedroom stairs ascended from the dining-room; and with her lived a sort of prodigal son-in-law, who was supposed to have been "very kind to poor Maria," a daughter who had departed this life some forty years before.

He was, at present, a mysterious, sleepy old person, who took a great deal of snuff and shuffled about in slippers. He had a high opinion of the old lady, and frequently remarked that she was "a smart woman." He had never set up for a smart himself, and, as far as we know, had never yet done anything for his own support. Whatever the old lady had to leave, was left to him. It could not have been much.

There was nothing in the house which could have been stolen but six silver ten-pieces and a dented silver tea-pot, as old as Aunt Bergen herself, but the old lady was continually haunted by the fear of burglars, and fully convinced in her own mind that the forest of them were forever watching the door. Peter, the son-in-law, was her only protection, consequently she were not surprised one morning to receive the following mislaid:

"DEAR FRIENDS,—Peter has gone away for a few days, leaving only Brian, who makes the fire and does odd jobs, and Hilda Patty, in the house with me. Send me one of the boys to take care of me. Send Jack; you are always saying that he is so amusing. I like to be amused. Send him immediately, for I would not sleep alone in the house for a kingdom. I don't regard a servant as any protection. He may be connected with burglars.

"Yours truly,  
"A. S. BENOWN."

"P.S.—A desperate looking person is waiting outside; I presume to break in in the night."  
"A. S. B."

"Do go, Jack," said my mother.

"Yes, do go, Jack," said my sisters.

"Of course you'll go, Jack," said my father.

"To protect the ladies is one of our privileges," I can't say that I think she needs any protection," said I. "A burglar has only to take a peep into the hall-door to feel sure that there is nothing here to steal, and I hardly think that the most romantic of them will try to carry Aunt Bergen off, after one glimpse of her awful ruffled night-cap."

"We must all grow old," said my mother.

"And my father used to say she was quite a pretty girl," said my father.

"Go, Jack!" cried my sisters, in chorus, "and do be amusing."

I have always had the reputation of being amusing. I am called "the life of the family." In a large household the different members generally take different roles.

There is the juvenile man in love with a young lady.

There is genteel comedy in the person of the young lady who will flirt with everybody, and is always having such a delightful time; and there is often the heavy villain in the person of some black sheep of an uncle, who has persuaded his confiding brother-in-law to endorse a note for him.

I am the low comedian of the family, so to speak. I fill the suit-collar with sugar, and fill the sugar-basin with salt. I hide my sister's elixir when I know she expects a gentleman caller, and play April-fool tricks as regularly as the first day of the month alluded to comes about.

But I am best, perhaps, at disguises, and have called upon my relatives attired as a cook in search of a place, as a female colporteur, and as a beggar. As for preparing a pocket-handkerchief after the manner of gun-cotton, and giving it to a servant to iron, in which process the cotton vanishes, I don't boast of that, because it is not original. Some celebrated scientific person did it before me; and besides, successful as it was, the trick threw Bridget into fits, and brought me in for a bill of twenty-five dollars. The ungrateful creature left, of course, as soon as she was able, declining to remain where the devil got into the pocket-handkerchiefs."

This long preamble is to explain why I was desired to be amusing during my visit to Grandaunt Bergen, and may be some excuse for the fact that I endeavoured to be so. To be brief, I accepted to the request, and taking my banjo with me, proceeded to Aunt Bergen's house. The old lady opened the door for me herself.

"Come in," she said. "I'm so glad to see you. Brian isn't a bit of comfort to me. Do you see that awful man under the lamp-post? He's watching the door."

I looked over my shoulder, and saw a very tipsy old creature supporting himself against the post in question, but said nothing, knowing that argument would be useless.

"I haven't watchman's rattle and a large bell," said Aunt Bergen, "and I keep them up in my own room at night, and beside me on the table all day; and there's an alarm on the front door, and bars on all the shutters, but I don't feel safe. I feel better now you are here. Come in, my child, and have tea. Oh, I suppose you brought a revolver?"

"Two, and a bowie-knife," I am sorry to say I answered. "I won't show them to you, because they are alarming to ladies, but they are all up my back."

"Oh! said Aunt Bergen. "And what's that fiddle for?"

"It's a banjo, to amuse you, aunt," said I.

"Ah," said Aunt Bergen doubtfully. "Well, I used to like music. I had a beau once who sang 'Cruel Barbara Allen' most beautifully. Your grandaunt Bergen cut him out though. Ho, he!"

After tea—which was that weak beverage beloved by elderly ladies—I sang to Aunt Bergen, but she did not appreciate the performance. She called the comic songs low, and I knew no others. I winned, and she did not guess what I was doing. Offered her condiments, and she went to sleep during their propounding. Finally, on retiring to bed, she stopped at the door, and emphasizing her remarks with nods of her high-capped head, uttered this candid observation:

"They told me you were very amusing. I must say I don't find you vastly so," and vanished.

Aunt Bergen was eighty years old. Her finer senses of course may have been blunted, but that is what she said.

Now a fellow who has made a reputation of any kind doesn't want to lose it. I resolved that I would show her that I could be amusing, before we parted.

At breakfast I did my best, with no result. At dinner I was jocular beyond expression. She did not see it. At tea time I was missing. I was, in fact, in the attic, where I had found a quantity of curled hair, once the contents of an old cushion. On this I had made a beard and wig. An ancient hat and coat, probably the old coat Peter's, completed my disguise. I tucked up my trousers, and hunched my back with more curled hair. Then making a bag of an old pillow ticking, I stealthily descended into the hall, and presenting myself at the door of the dining-room, where Aunt Bergen sat at her solitary tea, cried:

"Old goats for sale? Any old goats?" in my choicest broken German.

On the instant Aunt Bergen turned her head, seized the bell and began to ring it, sprung the muffle, and shrieked at the top of her shrill voice:

"Burglars! Help! Murder! Thieves! Burglars! Help!"

"It is only an old clothes man, ma'am!" I cried, advancing.

"Go away! Murder! Thieves!" screamed Aunt Bergen. And in rushed Dennis the man, Patty the maid, and a cousin of Patty's who had been paying his devours in the front area. They seized upon me. I am not large. The

cousin was. So was Dennis. They held me as in a vice.

"Let me go!" cried I. "It's all a joke. I'm not a clothes man."

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