

THE HOMESTEAD.

A ROMANCE.

BY I. M. L.

Gaudy nasturtiums on a trellis twined,
Gay sunflowers flaunting faithful disks of gold,
Wild sprays of woodbine waving in the wind
O'er thick-stocked beds of colors manifold.

A little cottage garden—unrefined,
The odors breathing from each herb and tree;
Yet many sweet, sad memories have combined
To make this spot an Eden unto me.

'Neath these old trees it was that I first heard
From dearest lips the sound of loving speech,
A sweeter sound than song of the first bird
That Adam's ear in Paradise did reach.

And never bower by Eastern poet sung,
Of roses, 'neath the burning Syrian skies,
With fountains playing the green boughs among,
And flitting birds of rare and gorgeous dyes.

Where dark-eyed hours glide beneath the shade,
Could rival this dear spot, under whose trees
We stood and talked unconsciously, while the maid
Cut the sweet-herbs, or pulled the early peas.

My life had very weary been of late;
The tame monotony of ev'ry day
Lay crushing on my spirit like a weight
From which I had not power to slip away.

I sat upon the seat beneath the tree,
The gnarled old pear-tree, near the garden wall,
The lazy humming of the laden bee
The only sound that on mine ear did fall.

I watched the kitten lying at its ease,
The summer threads that hung upon the spray
Like fairy tent-poles, swung by fairy breeze,
So fine their texture and so slight their sway.

Delicious languor of the sultry noon,
Born of warm sunshine, with sweet odors blent,
Crept through my veins, and overwhelmed me soon
With the mere sense of animal content.

He was my father's friend, and came and went,
With wondrous talk of the great world and books;
I, seemingly on household cares intent,
Would listen on with eager, questioning looks.

I had been wont to lay me down at night,
And gayly rise to greet the summer morn,
With song as merry and with heart as light
As of the birds that spring from out the eorn.

But he had come—and all was changed of late
My voice and step no more were gay and free;
I was no more contented with my fate—
My household duties irksome were to me.

I had been nurtured in the old-world ways,
No foolish love-tales had wrung tears from me,
No mock sorrows had I spent my days,
To no fictitious hero bent the knee.

Therefore my heart was all a virgin heart,
As roses newly opened in the morn
That to the wooing wind their hearts impart,
Though guarded from rude hands by many a thorn.

Now, as I sat this day in listless mood,
And indolently in the sunshine basked,
He stood before me as he humbly sued
For what I had already giv'n unasked—

Worship and love and woman's lifelong faith,
The priceless gifts which men so lightly regard,
That, given once, are ne'er withdrawn till death,
And that so rarely meet their due reward.

But little recked I then what boons I gave;
Mine was the royal love that seeks no fee;
The thirsty lands that cooling vapors crave
Meet no denial from the bounteous sea.

Yet it was sweet to meet a loving gaze
Where careless looks had lit on me erewhile,
To hear the music of unwonted praise,
And know that I could bless but with a smile.

Ah, I remember well that distant day!
Its perfumes, sights and sounds my senses fill,
As though in some fair island far away,
Forgot by Time, its flowers were blooming still.

Say not 'tis of the Past; its sun still shines,
Still rests upon the glorious fresh June leaves—
I see the glitt'ring of the silken lines,
I hear the birds that twitter in the eaves.

Why do my thoughts with such persistence rove?
Why do these scenes so distant seem so near?
Now you are lying dead, my own dear love,
I know the truth, but cannot shed a tear.

Yes, lying cold and dead—deaf to my call—
And I am sitting in the dreadful room,
Watching with vacant eyes the snowflakes fall,
While shadows deepen in the twilight gloom.

I stroke the cold, cold hand, but feel no chill;
I do not moan, nor cry, nor e'en complain;
While blinding tears indifferent eyeballs fill,
Mine feel as though they ne'er should weep again.

I know they call me hard and cold, my own,
And, whisp'ring say, "How well she bears her
grief!"
They know not that I am not yet alone,
That Mem'ry grants me respite and relief.

My 'wildered brain is busy in the Past,
The Present all unreal still doth seem;
The untiring snowflakes falling thick and fast,
Strangely incongruous, mingle with my dream.

Oh, do not rouse me yet, nor stir, nor move—
My cruel waking will but come too soon!
Leave me for yet awhile my living love,
The dear old homestead, and that happy June!

WHIFFS AND WAIFS.

Donald: "How noo, John—ye are in toon
whilst every sensible body is out of it. Have
ye nae been ganging country ways? There's
nae business in London, John, and why are ye
not awa'?"

John: "I may say the same to you, Donald.
What brings you in London when you say there
is no business to be done. Why are you not

roaming over your Scotch Highlands or seeking
rest in your home lowlands?"

Donald: "Ye are no cannie, John. Did you
ever know a Scotchman go back to his home
again? There's mair to be got in England,
and ye ken a Scotchman's notion is to make
money."

John: "Yes, there are too many of you in
England. You are far too cannie, and oftentimes
you take the bread out of an Englishman's
mouth. You're too screwing, too insinuating,
cunning, yes! that's the word, and lead employ-
ers to believe that you are cream, whereas
when you are fathomed you are only skim
milk."

Donald: "Ye are cross, maun; ye are cross
—ye dinna ken what Scotchmen do. They are
always to be relied upon. Their education is
better than that of your ordinary operatives,
and they stick to their work for money's sake,
respect the baubee, and the master respects them
for their diligence."

John: "Then, why don't they stick to Scot-
land? The whole population of the island does
not nearly reach the population of London, yet
we see Scotchmen here, and Scotchmen there,
forcing their way to the best positions over the
heads of better men; simply because they are
obsequious and thereby get the ear of their
masters."

Donald: "This is no true, maun. Scotchmen
enter the field of labour in London with no other
purpose than honesty. The majority of them
are na disposed to midnight brawls or ordinary
sprees, but when they are at their post they do
their duty conscientiously, and hence they advance.
Englishmen may do the same, but they are
na sa prudent."

John: "I am not in a disposition to argue
with you upon this point. No doubt there are
good conscientious Scotchmen, but there are
equally good Englishmen. There are equally
good Frenchmen, and as to the German race,
they appear to me to excel all others in their
advanced ideas of commerce. It is a curious
fact, however, go into what establishment you
may, where perhaps a hundred hands are em-
ployed, you will not find that there will be ten
per cent. of cockneys or London-born men
employed. How do you account for this?"

Donald: "Very easily, maun. Youth is am-
bitious. Those born in the provinces have Lon-
don in view as their great end and aim. They
have read in early youth the story of Whitting-
ton and other celebrities who made for them-
selves a fortune and a name. Those born in
London have an ambition beyond this. Perhaps
it is the idea of independence which prompts
this ambition, or perhaps it is the desire of
seeing the world, but more probably it is the
love of change, but the London-born boy has an
ambition to succeed in Paris, Vienna or other
great capitals of Europe; or else with less re-
fined notions he desires to rough it in the United
States or the British Colonies, where, away from
associations which would probably be a drag
upon them, they can mark out for themselves a
new and clear course of action, and youths and
young men do frequently succeed when thrown
entirely upon their own resources better than
when they have friends to fall back upon. Dinna
ye ken the auld saying, 'A rolling stoue gathers
nae moss'?"

John: "Continous changes, I grant, are ruin-
ous to any young man's reputation, but there are
circumstances which rule every one's fate in life
—and least, I think so. Every one has an op-
portunity once, it may be twice in his life of
climbing up the ladder of prosperity, if not of
fame. Shakespeare correctly says—
'There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to for-
tune.'"

Donald: "There's na tide in the country, I
think, for I have been travelling through War-
wickshire and Shropshire, and had to pass
through several local towns, and seldom could I
see that stationers, for instance, looked to ad-
vancement or sought the favouring tide which
would lead to fortune."

John: "I don't quite catch your ideas. Don't
the local stationers advance as other tradesmen
are doing?"

Donald: "No, they don't. You ask them
for a popular book, and they at once say, Yes,
sir, we'll get it for you by to-morrow's post.
You want articles such as drawing materials,
and they tell you they will procure them for
you. You go and purchase some trilling articles
of stationery, so as to have your package weighed
for Parcels Post delivery. Their scales are not
adapted to this, and they take ever so much
time before they can procure the proper weights.
Now this is just one of the articles of trade
which could be forced at this time. The station-
er, having the exact scales for this purpose, with
the one-pound, two-pound, and four-pound
weights, which are all that are necessary for
calculating the exact postage, what would be
easier for the stationer to say, 'Yes, sir, it's un-
der a pound, three pence—under three pounds,
and under seven pounds as the case may—be at
the price charged under the new system it would
be 3d., 6d., 9d., and 1s.; but why not have
scales of your own? they are only such a price.'
The solicitor, the draper, the grocer, the um-
brella maker, and even the seedsman will here-
after be in such need of scales that each trade
representative would purchase a pair, and thus
a trade may be established."

Donald: "All very fine, but if you get the
local magnates, or the local tradesmen to pur-
chase you'll surprise me. Why, no men are so
chary of their money as your upper class. If

they got the stationer to weigh the article for
them, do you think they'd purchase scales, not
a bit of it."

John: "Well, I think they would. There is
a want of go in the local stationers. They would
do double the trade if they looked a little ahead.
For instance, at the end of the month I want
some of the good magazines, *Cornhill*, *The
World*, *Temple Bar*, *The Whitehall Review*,
Truth, etc. I go to a respectable-looking shop,
and ask for one after another of these period-
icals. No, they have not any, but will send to
London for any I please. 'Bosh,' I reply, and
go down to the railway station, and purchase
from Smith's stall. Now, none of these maga-
zines are expensive. Why could not the sta-
tioner have a couple of each? He would sell
them, and in selling them he would get new
customers."

Donald: "I don't believe ye, maun. The
people in the country call all the works ye talk
about rubbish, and they wad na buy them if
they were only a penny each."

John: "The local stationers want winding
up in every way. When they get a printing job
they use old type, turn it out any way, and take
double the time over it that is needed. The
consequence is that people send their printing
orders to London, because they get it better
and earlier, and then the local tradesman grum-
bles."

Donald: "And why should na they grumble
when the landlord expects the tradesman to pay
his rent, the tax gatherer expects his money,
and poor rates must be paid, whilst the land-
lord who lives upon his rents spends his money
elsewhere than his native town? The shop-
keeper who has for years paid to support his
poorer brethren has not unfequently to ask for
assistance himself."

John: "I don't care what you say. Local
printers are to blame for not going ahead. Taste
and skill are the printer's stock-in-trade, and
the more of each he possesses, the more valuable
his services are, and the more independent he
becomes, providing he is willing to use them
for his own and his customer's best interests.
Business men make use of every device which
can be legitimately used for increasing their
trade and profits. Printers should do the same
thing and the best way for them to do this is
to earnestly and patiently strive to increase
their ability to turn out first class work in a
speedy manner; for by doing so, they make
steady and good paying employment more of a
certainty than would be the case if they were
content to drift with the majority of printers in
their careless, unconcerned way down the stream
of thoughtlessness and neglect."

Donald: "Hould hard, John. If I were the
local printer ye'd do just as they do. No doubt
they have all tried your way and it has not
succeeded."

John: "But don't I show you that their trade
is departing in consequence of country printers
being unable to turn out good jobs?"

At this time the door opened and Cromwell
the Yankee made his appearance. "I guess,"
he said, "you think yourself mighty sharp, Mr.
John, but mind yer sharpness don't burn your
fingers."

John: "We were only talking of English
country stationers," replied John, "and I said
they had so little 'go' in them, and that they
would be snuffled out."

Cromwell: "Perhaps their 'little go' is the
best go. I guess I once heard Edison the elec-
trician say a smart thing. He was giving us a
long series of observations on the ways of man-
kind, and then he gave us this yarn. 'There is
nothing succeeds in this world unless it's awful,
darned practical—so practical that a darned
mule can run it. I remember once going into a
printing office, and seeing a case that had been
carefully distributed by a compositor. Some of
the boxes were heaped up too full, while others
did not seem to have enough in them. I thought
I would equalize the distribution; but I soon
made out what a mess I had made of it, and
that my theory of equalisation was not in accord-
ance with the practical workings of a printing
office; since then I have been very careful to
keep my fingers out of other men's cases."

John: "Well there is some sound reason-
ing in this, but I still think the local stationer too
often gets himself into pie as bad as Edison
turned the case. My idea may be conveyed in
the following lines:—

"Honour and shame from no condition rise,
Buy well your goods and then go advertise."

Donald: "I canna help putting the conun-
dram to you that a printer's manager put to
me the other day, 'Why is a slovenly compos-
itor like a pastry-cook?' and the reply was,
'Because one pies a form, and the other forms
a pie.'"

John: "Well, after that I'll order some whis-
ky for you, Donald."

Donald: "Mind it's Scotch. There's nout
else to do, John, but drink and smoke. Printers
are doing nothing. Publishers are doing nothing.
Paper makers and ink manufacturers seem to be
the only people that are thriving."

John: "And they are not doing over well at
this season of the year. In fact, there is scarcely
any trade stirring. It will soon be better, how-
ever. How is trade in America, Cromwell?"

Cromwell: "A wful had as far as the printing
trade is concerned. There is too much of the
'dog-eat-dog' business. No sooner does a printer
get a good graft, than half a dozen others follow
in his wake and compel him to take starvation
prices for his work. Many of them have got
that darned system of putting boys on piece-

work, during the whole term of their appren-
ticeship. I guess I did rag a printer upon this.
He said it made boys smart. 'Smart,' I re-
joined; 'yes, in slovenliness.' They get the lads
at 6d. per 1,000 ens, and they get the work out
cheap and nasty."

John: "Competition is so great all over the
world, that it is difficult for men to get full
time anywhere; compositors and printers are I
think better off in London than anywhere else.
They may be out sometimes, but when they are
in work they are well paid."

Cromwell: "Printers are cut down worse
than any other trade. Some time ago, I was at
Newcastle, New South Wales. The miners struck
for more wages, and the local paper took the
men's part against the colliery proprietors. The
editor and proprietor were their best friends.
The matter was settled in the men's favor, when
it was determined to print the whole of the pro-
ceedings, extending over many months. The
Miners' Committee applied to the proprietor of
the local paper, who had served them so faith-
fully, for a contract to print. On being told he
would have to cut it fine, he furnished an esti-
mate for two thousand copies that would allow
his compositors ten pence per thousand ens for
setting up, besides a fair price for paper, ink,
and machinery. This was objected to, and the
other ticklers for their own inalienable rights
went to another shop and got the work done at
a price that would only allow the compositors
to receive 6d. per thousand."

Donald: "Another case of man's inhumanity
to man that makes countless thousands mourn."

John: "Yes, but when the inflictors of in-
juries are the loudest to complain of anything
like bad treatment of themselves, such conduct
is bad, selfish, hypocritical, demoniacal, d—"

Donald: "It's time to say good night,
maun."

VARIETIES.

It appears that there is a French law, dating
from 1799, which authorizes the local authorities
to forbid keepers of cafés and other liquor-sellers
from employing women and girls as waiters ex-
cept where they are members of the family. This
law has been enforced at Grenoble, and an ap-
peal to the "Cour de Cassation" has resulted in
the affirmation of a conviction against a publican
who had infringed this law.

A STRANGE MUSEUM, not unlike that private
collection existing at Scotland-yard, is in the
possession of an officer of police at Paris. It
consists of implements used in committing
crimes, such as revolvers, bullets, daggers,
knives, ropes, cudgels, and many articles for
which it would be difficult to imagine the use,
if M. Macé, the exhibitor, did not obligingly
explain when and for what purpose they have
been employed. Among other things there is a
collection of keys, each forming a letter of the
alphabet, which have served a band of burglars
in opening locks of every description. The
museum also contains a number of photographs
of well-known criminals and representations of
scenes of assassination. It ought to be one of
the most popular sights of Paris.

MISS MARY ANDERSON is one of Mr. Irving's
many admirers. In a late interview with a re-
porter she says:—I believe I have gone so far
as to catch the Irving fever. I only hope that
our people will forget a few of his mannerisms
when they see him. The first impression to an
American is not pleasant. His drawl jars, but
he is a great artist, and improves wonderfully
on acquaintance. I have listened to him for
hours, and have always been sorry when the
performance was over. Miss Terry supports him
admirably. Some of the scenes are stirring and
beyond description. I am sure she will please
our people. The Kendals, did you say? They
are splendid, and, together, make a pair that
are without rivals. Booth stands alone. I do
not say this because I am an American. I hon-
estly believe, prejudice aside, that this is the
universal opinion. When I talk critically about
actors I never think of Mr. Booth. He is above
criticism. Mr. Jefferson is another who is in-
comparable. He is the cleverest comedian, no
one disputes that. Miss Anderson gives the fol-
lowing as her views on English theatres and
English audiences. For some things I like the
theatres here very much. They are not as a rule
as bright as ours, nor as convenient in some
respects, but they are wonderfully well managed
and there is a great deal of pains exhibited in
the perfection of small things. I like to see
the ladies with their hats and bonnets off. It
must be a great comfort to the gentlemen. I
like an English audience very much, though it
is colder in some respects than an American.
An English audience is inclined to be hyper-
critical at times, and instead of placing itself en
rapport with the actors and the piece, assumes
the rôle of judge and jury, and the full extent of
the law is meted out without stint, and exten-
uating circumstances are often forgotten.

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