

# THE LITERARY GARLAND,

AND

British North American Magazine.

VOL. VI.

MARCH, 1848.

No. 3.

## JANE REDGRAVE.\*

A VILLAGE STORY.

BY MRS. MOODIE.

"I STARTED from the rude bed upon which I had been reclining for many hours, deep sleep having succeeded the fainting fit of the morning. The darkness of night had gathered over the earth, and a furious tempest raged without. The hurricane roared through the old elms at the back of the cabin, and stripped them of their leaves, in its wrath. The gloomy pines in the plantations that skirted the heath groaned and bent to the heavy gale, and the rain poured down in torrents, finding its way through every hole and crevice in the mouldy roof. The poacher and his wife were crouching over their fire of turf, talking to each other in mysterious whispers. As I rose from the bed the man held up the fore-finger of his right hand, as a caution to his wife to refrain from further converse, and a chilling fear crept over me, for I felt certain that I had been the subject of their discourse.

"Well, pretty one," said the man, "you have had a long, comfortable nap. If I was your husband I would not let you sleep away your wedding day after that fashion. But Redgrave is a queer chap—perhaps you will never set eyes upon him again."

"His words awoke a terrible suspicion in my mind; yet the night was so stormy it was impossible for any one in his senses to brave its fury. I opened the door and endeavored to look into the inky darkness beyond, but the wind and rain beat in my face, and the uproar of the elements was perfectly deafening.

"Good God!" I cried, "what a night!—I hope he has not met with any accident."

"Never fear, my dear," returned the hateful owner of the mansion; "his master will take care

of him. It is not the wind or the rain, or the bursting of them awful thunder claps, that would frighten him from his purpose; if he wishes to be here he will come."

"Alarmed and terrified, I continued to pace the narrow limits of the mud floor with distracted steps; my mind wrought up to a fearful pitch of excitement. Expectation had reached a point beyond hope, and the re-action bordered on despair. Hour after hour passed away. The thunder became more distant, the fierce flashes of lightning less vivid, and the heavy masses of clouds, driven before the furious wind, began to burst, and shew the moon, which was at full, riding in wan lustre behind their envious shroud.

"The man and his wife had both fallen asleep over the fire, and the crowing of the cocks proclaimed the midnight hour, and my agony of impatience had reached a height almost beyond endurance, when the door was suddenly burst open, and, drenched with rain, and pale as a spectre, Armin stood before me. An involuntary cry burst from my lips, and I was about to fling myself into his arms, when, putting me coldly back, he said in a hurried voice:

"Jane, this is no time for trifling. Are you ready?"

"Not to leave the shelter of a roof on such a night as this," I cried, casting a fearful glance abroad.

"The moon was struggling through heavy clouds, and her shrouded beams cast a wandering and indistinct light upon the wild extent of barren moor, and gave a ghastly and spectral appearance to the wind-tossed trees, bowing and groaning beneath the breath of the tempest.

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