

HERO'S VISIT TO LEANDER.

One evening, as I sat in my "little attic room" poring deep over the wisdom and lore of a long-forgotten people, a knock came to the door and a moment after Hero entered. After betaking to himself a pipe and having made himself comfortable in my easy chair with his feet on my new fifty dollar set of texts, he opened his mouth, emitted a vast volume of tobacco smoke and spoke as follows:—

"Thou knowest that Leander, my soul's delight, my more than life, dwells in a distant city at the foot of a mountain."

"So!" said I, thus showing my four years' college training in German.

"Yes," replied he, "it is even so." "Thou also knowest," he continued, "my position here though the smallness of its remuneration denies me the privilege of travelling by train to see her, my love, my life, my all."

"Yes," said I.

"Now," he went on, "I intend to go thither on foot, and I came to see you whether you could accompany me and stand on my right hand."

"How far?" I asked, my Scotch descent betraying itself.

"Nigh unto thirteen parasangs," he said. N.B.—He had been plucked in first-year Greek once on a time.

"How far is that?" I said.

"About 300 acres," he went on, of which remark I made a mental note to use in my essay as a proof positive that early associations cannot be eradicated.

"Give us it in United States," said I. "I never was linguistic in any line."

"About forty miles," he replied.

"It is a great length of a distance," said I. "How name the dwellers there the State?"

"Hamilton," said he.

"The satan," said I. "You mean you want me to walk to Hamilton with you?"

"Yes," said he.

"Who's going?" said I.

"If you come," said he, "we will be four."

"Good, I go." For I always go anywhere or do anything rather than study. "When do we start?"

"Saturday, at seven a.m.," said he.

"Rats!" I continued. "Too early, never get up till ten; can't you start in the afternoon?"

"No," said he, "but you must come."

And so it was arranged that we four should start on Saturday, at seven a.m., from "Scholes" to walk to Hamilton.

Well, we started only five minutes late. We started, I repeat, but from different reasons. I, to reduce flesh; Hero, to see Leander; a third to study character, and a fourth to get an appetite. We trudged gaily along, the morning being fine—that is, neither snowing nor raining though threatening both, and the roads in excellent condition—that means, with only one foot of mud on them.

And so we reached Mimico. Here we concluded to send our valise and extra clothing as we were afraid we might get them dirty, so we set out to find the station. Meeting a man we enquired as to the distance to the station, and he politely informed us it was 200 yards, 3 feet, 8 inches. Such he had measured it himself. We went up and got our baggage expressed, but oh! how we would like to meet that man with the muttonchop whiskers again!

Well, we continued on our way over hill and dale till we reached Port Credit without any adventures at all. We expected to get our "wind" at Port Credit, but found the train was late and so it had not arrived, so we went on without it. And now we thought we would like to know exactly the distance we had to go before we should reach Oakville, where we intended to dine. We asked three men we met what the distance was. The first said eleven, the second twelve, and the third thirteen miles. We left them quarrelling amongst themselves and went. We met another man about a half a mile further on and asked him;

he said it was exactly six miles; about 100 yards further we met still another, who assured us definitely it was four and a half miles, and about a mile on still another who said it was only fifteen then. We trudged on and found it to be about eight or nine miles. I thought over these statements as we went along and could not rid my mind of the terrible denunciations of Rev. xxi. 8. O that men heeded these things and paid attention to their words and actions, but still I am glad that Rev. xxi. 8. was written, for it is such a pleasure to know that men cannot deceive you for nought. Hunger now began to assert itself very strongly, but like the Israelites in the wilderness we were miraculously preserved; for as we were, like Christian in Bunyan's parable, ascending the hill that is called Difficult, we lit not upon an "arbor" but upon a Swedish turnip. There was rejoicing in the camp, and with light hearts though with heavy limbs we ascended the hill and happening upon a pile of logs sat us down and proceeded to eat our turnip.

While thus engaged I learned a lesson which has taught me forever to cease judging by appearances. It happened in this wise. While we sat there we espied an aged man whose appearance bespoke either the colporteur of a certain society or a methodist local preacher—presumably the latter—and hastened to seek his company and share our frugal meal. One of our party asked him by way of introduction if there were a hotel on the road where we could get something to eat. He replied, Socrates like, "Wish by the dog there was." We then asked him to share our meal. "What's yez eatin'?" said he. "Swedish turnip," said I. "Think I am a cow?" says he. "More like a growler," said I, and he went on. I am now firmly convinced he was a drunken tramp. We followed his example and arrived without further incident at Oakville, where ample justice was done to the beefsteak and onions of mine host. While here one of our party began to feel unwell and was afraid of cramps in the stomach, in which fear we also participated, having seen him at the table. So he provided himself with the great stomach cure 3 cc. put up by the Oakville doctor, and thus this danger was averted. We now took to the track and found it an improvement on the road. Some little time was lost, however, by a chance acquaintance whom we picked up and the signs along the railway track. Here and there along the line we saw the letter "W" on a board. Our friend insisted that it meant Whiskey, and so we lost time while he was engaged digging for the bottle which he presumed was concealed thereabouts; and it was only when we met a section man that the mystery was explained and we found that it only meant "Whistle." So we whistled off brakes and got along. A similar error was fallen into by one of our party who saw a sign "G. & B." which turned out to mean "Guard & Bridge," not, as he supposed, Gin and Bitters. Other signs were met with, the most noteworthy of which was a sign at a bridge, "*Do not walk over this bridge faster than ten miles per hour.*" From this time till we reached the "Valley Inn" nothing occurred. Hero, fired with the desire to see Leander, kept up a fearful pace, and we dragged our weary limbs on. Finally we arrived at Hamilton and partook there of an oyster supper, after which we lit cigars and hastened down with Hero to the home of Leander. But alas for the dreams of youth.

The hopes of morn so golden turn each evening into dross, said the poet, and Hero found it true. We reached *her* home, but just turning the corner we saw a rig with a "fellow" and a "girl." The girl was singing soft and low, still not so low but that Hero did recognize the sweet voice as it sang:—

When the cat's away
It is then the mice will play,
Ta-ra-ra . . .

But the reader can imagine the rest. As for us we hastened home by the 9.20, but Hero came not with us. Where he is I know not. But we have often read of "Disappointed Love." Let us hope for the best.

MEANDER.