

Farmer Berrington, though a man of such calm mood, was a good deal moved by the intelligence, owing to his age and state of health. Blyth did not like to put seeing after what was needful upon the old man alone, by going up the glen himself again like a love-sick swain. Besides, in another hour or so, his message had reached the searchers, and the farm-yard was presently full of a small gaping crowd of the cottagers around whom he had some ado to keep from getting into the apple-room after the prison-warders to stare at the sight; failing this, they began gossiping with the servant-maids and farm-men, till Blyth turned all the intruders out, nock and crop, and locked the road-gate upon every one of them.

One big idler, who did odd jobs at the Barton for the Hawkshaws, tried to resist authority, till Blyth, suddenly catching him by a neat little wrestling trick, laid him low in the swim-trough; after which, the rebels' determination and that of his fellows vanished speedily. Murmurs reached Blyth's ears, that young Berrington was not to be crossed since he had come back from Australia; "that he was stronger than any two men, and for very little would up with his fist and knock any man's two eyes as black as a marmalade coach!"

"Lark or no Lark," responded a matronly female admirer, "he was twice the man his father was, although old George Berrington had been no fool neither in his day."

Whereupon, the tide of opinion turning (especially swelled by the farm-men, who were being sent back to work by their stern young master, after having deserted the day without leave), the latter found himself looked on as a sort of Samson, feared as much as admired; whose late feats of strength were whispered round and much exaggerated.

And thus the hours passed, so that it was fully evening before Blyth could again set forth for the cottage up his ford. He went slowly now for the last half-hour and more had been spent in a difficult and long parley, in which he had to use all his wits and weightiest arguments, both with his old father and the authorities, in order to carry out poor Rachel's wishes respecting the convict's burial. Old Berrington's feeling of sentiment stopped short there, or rather revolved at his own last resting place being contaminated by such an unwished-for neighbor. Only Blyth's private entreaties and the remembrance of Joy had reluctantly prevailed with the old farmer, after all.

It was weary work, but Blyth won the day, he believed, at last. So now it was a well earned rest to go steadily, though not slowly, and feel the sweet evening air blow on his brow as he trudged through the fields. Blyth was meditating what was best to be done, because there was little room for four women in the Cold-home cottage, yet he could not think of leaving Joy alone there with her crazed mother, and Rachel so helpless; therefore must Hannah stay till some better counsel came to his mind, or the farm was freed from the dead presence there.

As Blyth neared the cottage which lay hidden under the shadow of the cliff, a figure came out from the porch, hesitated, looking back as if divided in mind, then ran swiftly towards him. He had recognized Joy, and the very flutter and lines of her gown, he thought, before he could really desert her face or outline; likewise she had guessed who he was.

She came flying up to him light as a wood-pigeon, flushed, but only breathing a little more quickly than usual.

"Oh, Blyth, Blyth, where is my mother? Have you seen her?" was her first query.

"I have never seen her all day. Has she not come home?" Blyth retorted.

"No, no, not yet. Her last words to me were that I was to wait for her with Aunt Rachel till she returned. She was wearied of yesterday's nursing, of staying in the cottage, she said; she must ramble a little, but she would surely come back soon, and she made me promise to stay with my aunt, and take great care of her meanwhile."

"I will go and search for her up the glen to the waterfall," said Blyth, dreading evil in his heart, but speaking cheerily.

An hour later he returned—alone.

Joy met him again, still more anxious. Rachel was so ill and faint, she knew nothing of the anxieties, and the poor girl dared not leave her. Old Hannah had gone searching down the river's bank to the farm and back by the fields—in vain.

Magdalen had not returned.

Blyth Berrington, now thoroughly alarmed, hurried back to the Red house, got all the farm-men together as they were leaving the work for supper, excepting Dick, who had gone to Moortown, and, with liberal promises of reward, raised a search party that dispersed in various directions.

Some hours later he rode up, after mid night, to the cottage.

Before he could call softly, Joy herself slipped out into the porch and looked at him in the summer starlight. Before he could speak or dismount, she came and laid her head against good Brownberry's neck, who whinnied in greeting; then she softly cried.

"Don't get off, Blyth," she said, laying her hand on his knee, as he would have alighted to comfort her, if possible, though not knowing what to say. "I see you have no news. Something tells me we shall have none. If I could only go and search too—oh, it would be easier to bear! But you will try your best still, dear, for my sake, if not hers. It is all you can do for me."

Blyth did search his best that night with his men. He searched till the next day's sun was high, still uselessly.

Magdalen never came back to the cottage.

She had utterly vanished.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"They made a bier of the broken bough,
The laugh and the aspen gray;
And they bore him to the Lady Chapel,
And waked him there all day,

"They dug his grave but a bare foot deep,
By the edge of the Nine-stone Burn,
And they covered him o'er w' the heather-flower,
The moss and the lady fern."—*Scottish Ballad.*

Blyth Berrington had proved true to his word.

The evening sun was sinking, three days later, when a little group stood in a corner of the moorland churchyard round a fresh-made grave, beside the sheltered spot under the lee of the hill where the Berringtons had been laid to sleep for many generations.

How still it was!

The service was over; the earthly body laid in the earth; the grave covered in with the last sods. Yet old Farmer Berrington and his strong son remained standing bare-headed there and motionless in the golden low light. They could hear the sheep cropping on the furzy hill rising steep behind the little lonely church, while the wild bees flew droning past them on a last homeward journey, honey-laden, to their hives.

Down one of the paths leading through the yew-darkened old, old wood—that had long ago hidden the little place of worship safe in its shelter, when the larger churches around were being ruthlessly demolished by Puritan emissaries—a vehicle could be seen driving away. It held the two jail officials come from the great convict prison away up in the heart of the moors.

Down the narrowing perspective of another path a solitary rider was departing. That was the hunting parson, who did hard work riding to this solitary little moor-chapel from his own larger church, some miles away.

"They're all gone safe now, boy. 'Twere no good to have raised gossip before," said old Berrington, quietly, to his son as he stood leaning on his staff, a massive, immovable figure.

Blyth nodded; then, moving a step or two, he looked steadfastly up at the hillside above them, towards which his eyes had several times stolen unseen glances during the late solemn service for the dead.

There was a clump of yellow, waving broom thick on the brae, just where the path sloped most steeply down. Out of this thicket two figures now rose, one short and very stout, the other tall and slender as a young birch-tree. These were Joy and her faithful old nurse. Hand-in-hand, like spirits evoked from the heart of the hill at Blyth's signal, they rose and now stole down together; both dressed in decent black, but yet in no mourning that would attract notice.

Joy, poor child, came and knelt lowly by the fresh-turned earth with her hands clasped in earnest prayer. Whatever her creed might teach, whether it was too late or not for intercession, she never thought, but, following her feelings, prayed for the dead; the others, in reverence for her filial devotions, drew a little away.

A strange mingling of shame yet pity filled the young girl's heart for the dead so

near her knees, yet so far away now. Who knows where? A few feet below this red, broken soil on which her warm tears fell, only hidden by that and a wooden coffin from her gaze, lay the father [whom she could not remember, whose face after death they would not let her see, in spite of her entreaties.

"Best not; I can tell you, dearie, how handsome he once was," Hannah had murmured.

"Oh, the pity of it all!" thought the girl, shuddering. She was so pale and altered in the last few days that the change was startling. She seemed not so much suffering from grief as looking infinitely older by the terrible experiences that had so suddenly assailed her in such a short time, all come like thunderbolts falling from a smiling sky, when her young happiness was at its height!

Her father an escaped convict, his chase, and Magdalen's wild hints of the terrible night in the cottage, that she could not keep from her child; the horror of his death; next, and worst of all, her mother's disappearance—the agony of suspense as to her fate; lastly, that Rachel Eastonia, who was dearest and nearest in heart to her niece of all women-souls she had known, lay still too ill even to guess at the cause of Magdalen's absence!

They had only dared to tell soothing evasions to the sick woman—that her sister had promised to return very shortly; that she wished Joy to do the sick-nursing in her stead. And this last seemed so natural to poor Rachel, in her long habit of unselfish devotion, which asked and expected no return, that she lay dreamily imagining Magdalen at the Red House, well cared for. But she roused herself to bid Joy, in a weak whisper, leave her to attend the funeral of the girl's father. And Hannah must go too; all respect must be paid. (Perhaps the inability to follow Gaspard da Silva to his grave herself seemed the last bitter expiation to the sorrowful woman of her great trial of life, which at times, looking back, seemed so terribly like a sin!)

So Joy covered her face with her hands now, shaken with pity, not so much for herself, but imagining the sorrows of those two women who had so long lived up yonder in the glen. Her mind, with pure daughter's instinct towards all three, as it were, glanced away from the early history of their lives (though guessing something of that troubled tale.) But the later years rose before her; the unhappy madness on one side, the life sacrifice on the other. The fears; the hard, poor manner of living; the loneliness, with so few or no other human souls of cultured mind or kinship in birth near—

It was all true. Yet whatever her sympathy, her own true grief for them, Joy could never equal, or even enter greatly into, the feelings of the two elder women for whom her young heart mourned with such aching pity.

What could she tell, this young, bright girl, of the days when they also had been young, and her father like a strange bright, if baleful, star on their life-horizon? What could she guess, even with help of love's imagination, of their secret pain and sorrow?

So little, it was almost nothing! Each heart truly knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddled not with its joy.

A voice startled Joy. Looking up she saw Blyth standing over her, strong and tall, with the living love in his honest blue eyes that gave her consolation and the sense of support even as her troubled gaze met his.

"My father and Hannah have driven away in the gig, dear. She could not walk back to the cottage. I will stay with you here as long as you like; but—do you not think the living needs you now more than can the dead?"

"You are right, Blyth; you are always right. Yes I will go back to Aunt Rachel now. It was best for Hannah to drive, so I mean to walk back myself over the moor-path."

"I thought you would do that; and so I meant to walk with you."

Silently Joy rose, checking a small smile that half broke on her lips; checking too an embrace that Blyth, suddenly moved by strong pity as he looked down at her bright beauty, so dimmed and downcast, would have bestowed upon her. It was no fit time or place. But she thought forgivingly to herself that after all a man was not expected to know better; so she softly nestled her hand into his large palm, and they went away over the hills together.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep."

Everything has its literature. Around the most prosaic duties of life the factors of civilization, the sports of ancient and modern times, a literature gathers, as crystals gather around a central star. It may be a literature of prophecies or a literature of memories, a literature of solid facts or a literature of airy fancies; no rule of iron can be prescribed. The Bohemians, the Greenlanders, "our brothers in black," primitive man, the man in the moon, war, peace, home, skies and oceans have clustered around them a peculiar literature profound, pathetic, puzzling and peculiar. The literature of children, by which is meant not the diluted reading matter prepared for the little ones, but the literature of their first loves and friendships, and thoughts and moods, conventional ways, is voluminous. Literary men delight to write of their early years, when the trail of the serpent had not yet appeared on their hearts.

Perhaps one of the tenderest recollections any man can have is that of the evening prayer at mother's knee:

"Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

The literature which has gathered around this prayer has its burlesque as well as its paths. The following instance has been ascribed to too many men for us to say positively it was such a one: Two men were conversing, and a freak of mind utterly inexplicable led them to refer to religion. Forthwith one of them began to eulogize the Lord's Prayer as most touching and eloquent in its diction. He concluded by offering to bet ten dollars that his brother could not repeat it. The ten-dollar bill was covered, and the man began: "Now I lay me down to sleep," and repeated that prayer to the end. "I am amazed," the other said; "I really didn't think you could do it. The money is yours." Perhaps the recurrence of the word Lord is what led to this ignorance.

A large number of poems have been written on this prayer—from twelve to twenty lines being taken for each line of the prayer. The shortest and one of the cutest has gone the rounds anonymously. In the anthology before me no name is attached. Here it is:

"Now I lay me—say it darling!"
"Lay me," leaped the tiny lips
Of my daughter kneeling, bending
O'er her folded finger tips.

"Down to sleep?" "To sleep," she murmured,
And the curly head dropped low:
"I pray the Lord," I gently added,
"You can say it all, I know."

"Pray the Lord"—the words came faintly,
Fainter still—"my soul to keep,"
Then the tired head fairly nodded,
And the child was fast asleep.

But the dewy eyes half opened
When I clasped her to my breast,
And a dear voice softly whispered,
"Mamma, God knows all the rest."

The sketches of the life of the Rev. Dr. Nott relate that he sank into second childhood. The last hour of his life was peculiarly impressive. He lay on his bed blind and apparently unconscious. His wife sat by his bedside, and, upon his request, sang the songs of his youth. He was hushed to repose by them, like an infant on its pillow. Watts' cradle hymn, "Hush, My Dear, Lie Still and Slumber," seemed especially soothing. Visions of home floated before him, and the name of his mother was often on his lips. "Let us pray," he said, and all the family and friends present knelt. He clasped his hands and began, "Now I lay me down to sleep." They waited for him to continue. His wife was first to discover that he had fallen into the sleep that knows no waking.

Women are the poetry of the world, in the same sense as the stars are the poetry of heaven. Clear, light-giving, harmonious, they are terrestrial planets that rule the destinies of mankind.

Nothing hinders the constant agreement of people who live together but vanity and selfishness. Let the spirit of humility and benevolence prevail, and discord and disagreement would be banished from the household.