

Poetry.

THE OLD MAN IN THE MODEL CHURCH.

Well wife, I've found the model church: I worshipped there to-day!
It made me think of good old times, before my hairs were gray;
The meetin'-house was fixed up more than they were years ago,
But then I felt when I went in, it wasn't built for show.

The sexton didn't seat me away back by the door;
He knew that I was old and deaf as well as old and poor;
He must have been a Christian, for he led me boldly through
The long aisle of that crowded church to find a pleasant pew.

I wish you heard the singin'; it had the old-time ring,
The preacher said, with trumpet voice, "Let all the people sing;"
The tune was "Coronation," and the music upward rolled,
Till I thought I heard the angels striking all their harps of gold.

My deafness seemed to melt away; my spirit caught the fire:
I joined my feeble, trembling voice with that melodious choir,
And sang as in my youthful days, "Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all."

I tell you, wife, it did me good to sing that hymn once more;
I felt like some wrecked mariner, who gets a glimpse of shore;
I almost wanted to lay down this weather-beaten form,
And anchor in the blessed port forever from the storm.

The preachin'? Well I can't just tell all that the preacher said;
I know it wasn't written; I know it wasn't: He hadn't time to read it, for the lightning of his eye
Went flashing 'long from pew to pew, nor passed a sinner by.

The sermon wasn't flowery; 'twas simple gospel truth;
It fitted poor old men like me; it fitted hopeful youth;
'Twas full of consolation for weary hearts that bled;
'Twas full of invitations to Christ, and not to creed.

The preacher made sin hideous, in Gentiles and in Jews;
He shot the golden sentences down in the finest pews,
And—though I can't see very well—I saw the fallin' tear,
That told me hell was some ways off, and heaven very near.

How swift the golden moments fled, within that holy place!
How brightly beamed the light of heaven from every happy face!
Again I longed for that sweet time, when friend shall meet with friend,
"When congregations ne'er break up, and Sabbath has no end."

I hope to meet that minister—that congregation too—
In the dear home beyond the stars that shine from heaven's blue;
I doubt not I'll remember, beyond life's evening gray,
The happy hour of worship in that model church to-day.

Dear wife, the fight will soon be fought—the victory be won;
The shinin' goal is just ahead; the race is nearly run;
O'er the river we are nearin', they are throngin' in to the shore,
To shout our safe arrival where the weary weep no more.

Tales and Sketches.

BLANCHE DE NOUVILLE.

As the officer turned his head to reply, a deafening volley filled the atmosphere, a wild cry burst from his lips, he leaped madly into the air, and rolled dead at the feet of the marquis. In the same moment, on every side, front, flank and rear, from bush and tree, rank grass and tangled thicket, out from behind rock, mouldering trunk, and mossy hillock, sprang, with whoops and yells, countless troops of maddened savages. The broad savanna literally swarmed with the infuriated Senecas. Even veteran officers were for the moment infected, with the universal panic. The first charge had been fatally effective, and the ranks were confused and broken. Orders were given and countermanded in the same breath, but both were unheeded in the wild uproar. The French troops fled to the forest, and fired at shadows or at each other. Anything like unity of purpose was impossible—a separate tragedy was effected in every group. Here a wily Canadian crept silently towards the lair of a hidden Iroquois, and struck him down just as his greedy eye glinted at sight of his prey. There, hand to

hand, the supple limbs of the trained skill of the brawny savage. De Nouville, in his attempt to restore any order, had plunged, with a small fragment of his battalion, into the thickest of the fight, and contended successfully with the heaving human mass, till, looking about him in the midst of the confused melange, he discovered that he was unsupported by a single soldier of his troops. He, however, brandished his keen Damascus, hoping yet to hew a path through the crowd of yelling savages that surrounded him like so many starved bloodhounds. Never did trusty blade do better service, for every blow had desperation in it. At last the crowd was cleared, the woods were close at hand, and the imminent danger seemed passed.

At this moment a powerful savage bounded forward, brandishing his tomahawk, and instantly the French commander closed with him. Knee pressed against knee, foot against foot, and arm wreathed in arm, they stood, with every nerve distended, and every muscle thrown into a position to maintain its utmost force—the fierce passion working visibly in the naked limbs of the savage, seeming to find an answering passion to oppose it, hidden beneath the garb of the courtly nobleman. Just at this crisis, when the chances of both combatants seemed so equally balanced that a breath would have turned the scale. De Nouville caught a glimpse of glittering steel in the air above him. There was no time even for a prayer. So to die! But the Frenchman breathed again. The uplifted arm had been shattered. The slight distraction had, however, given his adversary an advantage. The marquis, aiming a blow with his liberated hand, struck the air, reeled, slipped on the blood-wet grass and fell, dragging down his enemy with him. For a moment he was stunned, but in the next he was released from the mass of the slain by the strong hand of a youth in the garb of a ranger.

"Fight, if you can, Monsieur le Marquis," said the Canadian, adding to his precept the weight of a goodly example.

"If I can!" exclaimed the nearly-bewildered marquis, raising an arm that showed no sign of flagging; and, without another word, side by side, the twain cut their way through the newly-gathered crowd of Iroquois, and finally gained the covert of the woods.

"I owe you a life, my brave fellow!" exclaimed De Nouville, grasping the hand of the youth with grateful warmth. "Come to the fort as soon as we are at Montreal again, and tell me what I shall do for you."

"To be refused the boon I ask!" answered the Canadian bluntly.

"Nay, my good fellow, your service has been a trifle too important for that. Upon the honor of a soldier and a gentleman, you shall name your own reward. I perceive you know me."

"Ay! who does not know Monsieur le Marquis?" "Then take that," and the marquis drew from his bosom a jewelled crucifix, "and, by all the saints in the calendar, you have but to present it to insure you any boon within my gift."

The Canadian bent his head in acknowledgment, and accepted the pledge with a covert smile; and the marquis hurried away to the combat, muttering between his teeth, "A surly churl! but, nevertheless, he saved my life."

Well did Blanche de Nouville fulfil her determination, and train both heart and lip, till it would have required a keen eye indeed to have discovered the "worm in the bud." Her brow had never been smoother, nor her eye clearer than when she met her father on his return from his disgraceful discomfiture; but he missed the childish caresses, and instead of the warm, earnest delight dimpling the whole face, a smile, that might have been born under the chisel of a sculptor, just curved the beautiful lip, and sent a chill to his heart.

"Forgive me, my Blanche," he said, sorrowfully; "I left thee in anger, and without one parting word; but my earnest benedictions were sent back to thee, my darling. Not a breeze visited thy bright cheek but bore with it a blessing from the lips of thy father. Forgive me, dear one, if I have seemed harsh—the wrong was made greater by love—it was all for thee."

"And it was well, my father; I thank thee for thy care."

The voice of the Lady Blanche was gentle, and winning, and earnest, but the words were measured. It lacked the warm heart gush that had kept dewy the one spot of green in the bosom of the man of the world.

Blanche listened with total indifference to the mortifying details of the battle, seeming to feel no regret at the near demolition of the carefully laid plank that were to strike terror to the heart of the Iroquois nations; but, when told of her father's danger and narrow escape, the ice upon her heart melted, and wreathing her arms about his neck, she was for a few moments the fond child to whose caresses he had looked for the dissipation of the heavy clouds lowering over his fortunes. It was but a moment, however, and then the lip became fixed as before, the moist eye grew cold and clear, and the arm, still resting on his neck, seemed to have lost the magnetic touch which always thrilled to his heart. With a deep-drawn sigh the marquis arose, and carrying his lips to the smooth brow of his child, turned away in anguish of spirit. For a little time he paced up and down the

apartment; then returning, he leaned over her and whispered—"It shall be done, Blanche. It will be flouting the king's favorite—but no matter; I shall incur the indignation of my sovereign—I shall be stripped of my honors—my life may be forfeited; yet it shall be done. Thou shalt have thine own choice. We may go far back into the wilderness, perhaps, where titles and honors were never known, and there we may be happy yet. Give me back my child as she was, and I can do anything; endure anything, sacrifice all the good that a long life has brought me. Oh! it shall be as thou wouldst have it, Blanche."

Was it not enough that the heart of Blanche was bending beneath the weight of her own sorrow, but must it have yet more to bear—the shame attendant upon a consciousness of error? Who was this stranger, Philippe, that he should make her unjust to all others, that he should steal her heart in a few short weeks from one who had made her his idol, the star of his life, who had loved and cherished her in her helplessness, and would have sacrificed his own being but to contribute to her happiness?

"I would have it as it is, my father," was the gentle reply, as Blanche threw herself into the arms that had ever sheltered her. "I have erred, but it was blindly, thoughtlessly—take me back to thy trust, and thou shalt find there is a spirit in thy child which will never shame thee."

It was a moment of unreserved confidence; and Blanche, in hurried, tremulous tones, proceeded to offer her heart to the inspection of the eye of love. She detailed her meeting with the stranger youth on the banks of the little lake by her father's chateau; of their mutual recognition in the forest at Hochelaga and their intercourse afterwards, with careful minuteness; extenuating nothing, and concealing nothing, save, perhaps, what is always concealed, the depth and changelessness of her own affection. She said they had parted on the evening of his seizure voluntarily; and yet (Blanche trembled as the confession passed her lips) she had strangely enough received a token from him since. She did not hesitate to say it was strange and inconsistent—he had counselled her to abide by her duty, and yet what could have influenced him in this but a desire to keep himself still in her memory.

"But he shall be safe, my father! he shall not be endangered by my revelations!" and Blanche left the room; presently she entered holding fast between her palms a tiny parcel. "Ay! he shall be safe." With trembling fingers she undid the silken cord, and unfolded the paper. A crucifix, the very one he had given as a pledge of faith to the ranger, dropped from it into the hands of the marquis. He started, and dashed it down with a surprised and angry flush.

"There is something written on the paper in his own hand. Read it, my father."

The marquis took the scroll and read:—"Present the jewel enclosed to the governor, and ask a boon in my name, whatever thou wilt, dear Blanche. He dare not refuse—it would be at the peril of his soul!"

"It is even so," murmured the marquis, "I dare not refuse."

"It is true, then, true!" exclaimed Blanche, clapping her hands together, joyously; "it was Philippe who saved thee from the knife of the savage."

"It was a half-civilised Canadian!" "It was he! it was he! Thy life and mine! Holy Mother, I thank thee!"

"And now he claims the reward. Oh! it would have been mercy had he left me to die."

"He claims no reward; think what he might have asked—is he not noble, my father?"

"I would he were less ignoble, Blanche; I little thought thou couldst make so low a choice."

"The brave soldier who saved my father's life!"

"And claimed more than life for a reward!"

"Nay, returned the pledge to the hand of one whom he knew never could use her power to darken one day of a parent's life."

"How wilt thou use it, Blanche?"

"Thus! I will not demand of thy justice what I refused from thy love. Take back the pledge, my father."

"He will think me an ingrate," murmured Blanche, as she turned away to conceal the features that were now eloquent with emotion; "an ingrate, enslaved by a foolish ambition; but truth, and filial love, and common justice all require the sacrifice. Oh! if thou couldst know how difficult the struggle, Philippe!"

Great was the sensation occasioned by the arrival of the Chevalier de Croye. Mario and Angeli were on the tip-toe of expectation—flitting here and there with a busy consequence peculiar to ladies' maids—wondering, and doubting, and guessing to each other, and shaking their wise heads and looking very knowing at the other servants of the household. But when at last they really did catch a glimpse of the barge upon the water, with its gay decorations—making it appear for all the world like a floating fairy palace moving to the magical sounds of music—oh such fluttering and chattering! A spectator could not possibly have imagined that there was an individual in the fort so much interested in the expected arrival as these two demoiselles. Certainly not the clear-eyed, proud-lipped lady whose toilet they had just completed.

"Spare thyself, my child, do not attempt

this trial to-day," whispered the marquis, as he was on the point of proceeding to the river-side to welcome his guest.

"Nay, methinks it scarce becoms my father's daughter to practice such discourtesy," returned the lady with a smile; "I shall do thee no discredit. See!" And Blanche raised upon the tip of her taper finger the string of pearls which lay beside the casket upon her dressing-table. "See! they hang as though suspended from an arm of iron. My nerves are firm, there is no faltering in my pulse, no fluttering at my heart. Why should I be exempt from the duties of hospitality?"

There was a strange undefined dread at the heart of the marquis, and he would have striven yet farther to persuade; but that cold calm eye and firm lip prevented, even while they alarmed him. With a foreboding of evil which clouded his brow, even in the moment when he should have been happiest, he turned away.

"There! the boat is fast now!" "That is he—the one in the—" "Mon Dieu! how handsome!" "Now he lands!" "What an air!" "Mons. le Marquis—ah!" "How graceful!" "Magnifique!" "Now they are turning this way!" "They move forward!" "They will be here in a moment!"

Such were a few of the many exclamations which greeted the ears of Blanche from the two watchers in the window, till she must have been the statue she seemed not to have felt her color rising and her heart quickening its pulsations. If there had been no suspense, if she could have passed at once from the quiet of her own chamber into the presence which she had learned to dread, it would have been different; but now the emotions over which she had at first gained such perfect ascendancy, began to swell again in her heart and tamper with the muscles of her face. There was, however, but little time for this kind of dangerous thought. A heavy trampling of feet in the great hall was succeeded by the flinging open of the doors, and Blanche heard the courteous tones of her father, and another voice—could it be a stranger's? Something in it touched a chord which she had hoped would never vibrate again. The rich color receded from her cheek, and trembling, shrinking, almost fainting, she stood, unable to move a finger or raise a lash. She heard her father pronounce her name coupled with another; a manly form bent before her—there was a clasp about her hand—a warm lip pressed it, not with the cold formality of a stranger, and then a voice, which could not be imitated, whispered softly, "Does my maid tremble still?"

A start—a gush of feeling—a long, deep, convulsive sob, and Blanche, all quivering with agitation, nestled on the bosom of Philippe de Croye, and listened to his soothing voice as in days long gone by.

THE END.

FAITHFUL.

A snug little cottage nestling down by the seaside. It stood on the outskirts of a retired village, in the very heart of England; and as we write of days long gone by, rarely indeed was it that a stranger was seen in the sleepy streets; for men did not then wander aimlessly over sea and land, as in these latter times of swift and easy locomotion. But one of these extremely rare visitors it was who now paused before the gate of the dwelling we have referred to, listening with rapt attention to the clear, bird-like tones that floated out from the open window.

"Beautiful! beautiful!" he exclaimed. "Had I but the training of that voice—who knows? I will at least make the attempt."

A few moments later found the manager of the great London Opera Troupe in earnest conversation with the fair singer and her aged father.

"No, no, sir," said the latter, as the visitor rose to depart. "No sir. I thank you for the praise you give my child, but I cannot consent to have her go on the stage, even though, as you say, she would be liberally repaid. I trust she will never need to earn her bread, and her voice suits me as it is."

So the manager departed, leaving his address, in hopes, he said, that he should some day have the pleasure of hearing more favorably from the young prima donna, as he smilingly called the blushing maiden before him.

"Here comes your friend, Philip Morgan," said Mr. Leigh, stealing a sly glance at his daughter. "You had better go out and meet him. I suppose he has come to join you in your evening walk, as usual. Ah, Phil, my boy! Edith is ready. Be off with you, for it is getting late."

Philip Morgan, unlike the girl by whose side he walked, was not the child of a man who could lay claim to being in even moderately "comfortable circumstances." On the contrary, Philip's father was a poor, hard-working farmer, whose sterile tract of land scarce afforded his small family a decent support.

Philip was the only son—the only child, in fact—although there had once been two others; and now that he was approaching manhood, and moreover, had dared to picture in the far-away future a home of his own, in which Edith Leigh, as his mistress, was ever the centre point of his fond dreams, he began to feel the necessity of going to work and carving out a fortune which would enable him to realize his visions.

There was no opening for him in that quiet sleepy village. He must leave it, and seek the crowded haunts of men—the city.

he knew there was always a chance for an honest, industrious man to push his way.

He resolved to go at once to obtain a situation as school teacher. That was all his ambition at present. He would be content to start thus humbly at first. Teachers were not so plentiful then as now, and consequently were more liberally remunerated. Philip was thinking of all this, as he walked silently at Edith's side, wondering how he should tell her, how she would receive the news, and wishing that he had the courage—which he had not—to speak to her of his love, and receive from her in return the precious promise to be his wife.

Although no words of love had ever passed between these two, each had long since read the other's heart, and knew, just as though the lips had spoken it, that they were all in all to each other—that a future apart would be a living death. There was a tacit engagement.

So they parted; and Philip went away to the great city, and still no word had bound them to each other; but the bond—the chain was none the less secure that no lock had been placed upon it.

The months passed on, and three letters, telling of his success, were received by the dear ones whom Philip had left in the little hamlet—letters brought to them by couriers who carried dispatches to a neighboring lord.

Of course Edith wrote to him—at least, until, in his third letter, he requested her to wait until she heard from him again, as he was about to go abroad in company with the boy baronet whose tutor he had become. Ah! had he but known of the weary days and months and years that must pass ere they should meet again.

Scarcely had Philip landed in France, when a terrific tempest arose and swept over the island of Great Britain, from north to south, leaving ruin and desolation in its path. Many were the families left homeless and penniless on the world by this fearful visitation, and among these unfortunates was Edith Leigh's father.

Poor old man! He was with difficulty borne from his life-long home, only to look on and mean, in helpless agony, as the relentless stream wrested it from its foundation, and bore it away on its swift course to the ocean—not his house only, but all his worldly goods, his sheep, his cattle, his horses—the river bore them all away. Prosperous as all his former life had been, fickle Fortune was still unsatisfied with the adversity she had brought upon him—she had not yet filled his cup to the brim, so she added another drop.

It chanced that he had lately incurred a small debt to a man who bore him no love; and now, when he knew the old man would be unable to pay it at once, he made an imperious demand for its settlement. The result was such as he had intended, and ere long Leigh lay languishing in prison, hopeless of release, unless by some miracle the means should arise to satisfy his creditor's claim.

His horror-stricken daughter was received into the kindly home of a friend, (Philip's friends had removed from the village,) but the chief portion of her time was spent in the gloomy prison of the neighboring town. Her busy brain was ever at work to devise some means by which her father's release might be effected; and at length a brilliant idea dawned upon her. Her proud parent at first opposed, but finally consented to her plan—which was no other than to seek the opera manager, whose address she still remembered, and to accept the standing offer he had made her. But one thing the sensitive old man insisted upon, she must not confide her attentions to any one, and she must appear before the public under an assumed name.

When she had obtained the required sum she was to remit it to his creditor, and then he would join her, a free man once more.

And so, in silence and secrecy, Edith Leigh stole away from the village—not without a pang—and after a weary journey, found herself in the presence of the London manager. He was unfeignedly pleased to see her, and at once took her under his own protection, and gave her a home in his own family. More—when she related the events which had led to her accepting his long-time offer, he advanced the full amount of her father's indebtedness, and so she was speedily joined by him to part no more on earth.

All went well with the young singer; with her debut on the stage began her triumph. Wealth poured in upon her, and she might, ere very long, have retired from the scene of her successful labors possessed of an ample independence. Once she would gladly have availed herself of the opportunity; but now the young "prima donna" bore about with her a heart heavy with care and disappointment.

Her father had left their London address with a friend in their native village, that when Philip returned he might follow them. But he had not come, and as the years rolled by, Edith sometimes met the baronet, whose tutor he had been, but still no news of him whose every look and action had once seemed full of love for her.

At length the time drew near when the heavy burden was to be lifted from her heart. She stood before the curtain, one night, gracefully acknowledging the applause which was greeted at the close of the opera, when her heart gave one great leap, for there before her was Philip Morgan—older, graver than when they had parted—watching her with eager, wistful eyes.