

A COTTAGE SCENE.

We sat by our cottage fireside,
Mother, Sister, and I,
Reading of dreadful battles
With many a heaving sigh.

Our mother was pale and feeble,
And all our hearts were sore,
For her son, our only brother,
Had been for months in the war.

We feared for our failing mother,
Watching her closely the while,
We wondered to see her sad, pale face,
Light up with a dreamy smile.

'Is it strange,' she said, 'that I'm smiling?
Ah, you see not what I see!
My boy's coming home from battle—
My son's coming home to me!

'I see the smile of his childhood,
The light in his laughing eye;
My boy's coming home to mother,
If he only comes to die.'

Hark! the sound of wheels and of horses!
They halt at our garden gate;
God grant it is our brother,
That he comes ere it is too late.

Up rose our trembling mother,
The coming steps to greet,
Four men walk in with their burden,
And laid it at her feet.

'I knew you were coming, darling,
We will never be parted more!
And Mother and Son together
Lay dead on our cottage floor.

TORONTO.

A SKETCH BY BELLWA.

[THIS cursory glimpse of some passing clouds on the fair moral skies of the Queen City is inserted as the writer penned it. But the good in communities as in individual persons far exceeds the evil, or the very bad. Let writers who essay to sketch social and moral pictures give us the compensating phases of goodness and loveliness:—En. C. I. N.]

Saturday, the second of May, is drawing to a close, and with it concludes also the fourth week of the eventful year. I say eventful year; for since Good Friday night—perchance memorable to many, but to none more so than to the actors in the 'Gerard Street shooting affair'—has this city presented a series of unceasing topics of excitement. And so quickly have they followed each other upon the stage of events—that unless to a critic—the scenes must have appeared to mingle, rendering the different actors partially undistinguishable, as the succeeding crowded the preceding from the boards.

Formerly, we cool Canadians gave to romance writers the praise of fabricating a tale to please, although, even at times admitting that such scenes as they delight to portray might occur on occasions when the passionate and revengeful Spaniard threw down the gauntlet to the not less reckless and daring son of the South. But that the usually quiet city of Toronto should have enacted within her boundaries the reality of what Bulwer's imagination would have pictured as the grand culminating scene; over which, in many cases, the shadowy attendants of the grave drew the gloomy pall—shrouding on that real tableaux—Death, is hideous.

Well has Toronto lately proved that assertion, often disputed, 'That there is more romance in the affairs of real life, than ever could be racked from the glowing furnace of the imagination.' The Canadian novelist need no longer sigh for acts of chivalry, or deeds of blood; we have all the desired requisites now at hand—the annals of our courts record them. Yes; even in the past few weeks we have an overplus of material for any number of stories founded on facts.

First in number, and first in importance, (as two of the parties at one time moved in the highest circles of America,) comes the 'almost a tragedy of Gerard street,' in which 'love and revenge' are powerfully delineated—the rude hand of the law tearing off the veil which hid the secret workings of a trio of peculiarly dispositioned hearts.

But all is not told, and a growing mystery still attaches to its every feature—every succeeding circumstance instead of lessening the obscurity of doubt—increases it.

The trial proved three things—what took place on that night, the wild strength of woman's love, and the mystic power of woman's beauty. Ladies, cultivate the latter by some means or other, it might prove serviceable—and any of you who are am-

bitious, may yet say as Missouri Ann Dame can—that her great personal charms, and her knowing how to use them, saved her from incarceration in the Penitentiary.

Strange fatality! who, on looking on the Judge and the adjudged, on the morning of the sixteenth of April, thought their positions would so soon be changed, that he who graced the bench by his feeling and chivalrous sympathy should so soon become the prisoner—the prisoner to the most dreaded jailor of mankind—Death. While, she who had good reason to fear the verdict, now thinks of it as a terrible moment past, and lives gaily, happily on—he who sanctioned it, was to-day followed sadly and mournfully by the legal profession and his numerous friends, to his last resting-place—that hour from whence no traveler returns.

Then follows the 'Sayer Street Tragedy,' with all its revolting details, uncovering the hidden cavity of crimes—showing that many of the blackest, darkest die have been perpetrated—and in such a cool, systematic manner have they been accomplished, and with such indifferent unconcern does Greenwood witness the proceedings, that feelings of wonder and indignation drive those of pity from the breasts of the spectators. Yet day by day the chain of evidence tightens around him; link by link lengthens it, yet draws him nearer to the gallows, and the fear that with all the circumstantial evidence against him he would escape, now appears groundless.

The trial of Coulter, for a crime committed some time ago, has also been re-dished up for us Torontonians, who will soon learn to gormandise on tales of Love and Revenge, with three dread finales, where the lowest minion of the law takes that which a thousand worlds could not give.

As for the Western Capital herself, she looks 'gay and happy,' especially King street, between three and six P. M., as at the former hour the principal offices close and the 'young gentlemen clerks,' after arranging their toilets, getting their hats and canes in shape, show their 'good close' to the best conceivable advantage; exchanging glance for glance and smile for smile—putting on style generally.

Skating is over, and the 'Queen's Park' has not received its grand opening for the summer of 1863, therefore it is comparatively a quietus for the possessors of charms, that stole their softest tints from the loveliest of flowers. I fancy how they pass the time—musing on their late conquests, and waiting impatiently for that changing and uncertain future, which looks, at times, all gorgeous, all beautiful, all as they wish it; but a change comes o'er the spirit of their dreams, as the pouting lip and thoughtful eye, doubts if he will come so shortly. I wonder what they would give for a peep through a rip in the curtain of futurity, to see who would kneel most humbly as their devoted slaves, three months hence? Some improvement in the way of prospective views might take, perhaps by both parties.

WIDOW STONE'S SURPRISE.

'Now, mark what I say to you, Susy Barton. I can't have no more of this nonsense about Henry Grayworth. Nobody ever heard of him until he came hanging round last summer, calling himself an artist, and sketching every old pile o' stuns he come across! Abel Powers is worth a dozen on him; and I expect, when he comes to-night, you'll tell him you're very much obliged for his kind offer, and you'll try to make him a good wife. Either you promise Abel Powers this very night to marry him, and give up all this ridiculous nonsense about that other feller, or you will have to leave my house.'

The Widow Stone's eyes sparkled, and the snuff-colored ribbon on her cap quivered ominously. Susy rose without a word, her cheek glowing, and deliberately walked out of the house, scarcely staying to tie her little bonnet under her chin.

'True as I live and breathe, she's gone!' exclaimed the widow, half-relucting. 'I didn't calculate she'd fire up so quick! I ut let her go—I don't care. She'll be back agin, soon enough.'

A short time afterwards, Susy Barton sat on a fallen log in the woods, the bonnet pushed back from her glossy auburn hair, her tiny feet stirring the withered fern-plumes below, and her blue, trusting eyes turned upon the face of a tall, slender young man, who stood beside her, his dark hair blown about by the sunset wind.

'This Abel Powers is a rich farmer, dearest, is he not?' asked the stranger.

Susy nodded, wonderingly.

'Then,' he pursued, 'I scarcely know why you chose, in preference, one like me, who only offers you his loving heart.'

'Because,' replied Susy, innocently, 'I love you?'

'And are you willing to share my lot, hard and comfortless as it may be—I do not say will be?'

'I would go with you to the world's end,' said Susy, earnestly putting both her palms in Henry Grayworth's outstretched hands. And so she placed the seal upon her fate, 'for richer for poorer, for better for worse!'

It was the evening before Christmas—cold and clear, with snow on the hills, and the woods all snapping and crackling in a sheath of ice. The Widow Stone, trudging along the road that led to Ellerton Hall, began to speculate rather uneasily as to whether she should reach her destination before dark.—For she was carrying a famous recipe for Christmas pies to the house-keeper at Ellerton Hall.

'It's a fine place,' soliloquized the Widow Stone, as she sat down to rest herself on a great boulder by the way-side, 'and only to think that Mr. Ellerton has lived away from it all his life. I don't see what folks finds so drefful nice in travelin' about, I must say. However, Mrs. Peckham—a clever old lady she is, and wears real handsome caps—she says he's comin' home to-morrow with his young wife. It's a great thing to be born rich! I'd like to get a peep at Mrs. Ellerton—I wonder if she'll be at church on Sunday. I do s'pose she wears a silk gown every day of her life, and white embroidered skirts! Mrs. Peckham says they've been fittin' up the house wonderful fine for her.'

The widow was plodding on once more, when there was a roll of carriage wheels in the road behind, and two fiery horses were checked close to her. A sweet face, set in a frame-work of auburn curls, leaned out of the window, and two eager hands were extended.

'Aunt?'

'Law sakes alive!' ejaculated the widow; 'it's Susy Barton. Child, where have you been all this time, and where are you going now?'

'Jump in, aunt; I'm going to the hall, and I've just come from your house, where the door was most inhospitably locked.'

The widow had intended to play the role of relentless guardian, but she could not resist the infection of Susy's kiss and hug.

'Going to the hall, eh? Oh, you've got a situation there—I s'pose you're Mrs. Ellerton's lady's maid?'

'Why, yes,' laughed Susy. 'I do some times wait on Mrs. Ellerton.'

'Well, I'm glad you've got a tolerably respectable place, though you'd better have married Abel Powers—and why haven't you let me see you afore?'

'How could I, aunt? We only arrived at the hall this morning, and I started for your house the first minute I could slip away.'

'Got a pretty good situation?'

'Very,' said Susy.

'You'll find the house-keeper a dreadful nice lady,' said the widow, patronizingly.—'I'll speak a good word for you to her, if you like.'

'Thank you!' said Susy, veiling her eyes beneath their long lashes.

'What sort of a person is Mrs. Ellerton?' pursued the widow. 'She must be easy-tempered, if she lets you go cuttin' round in this velvet-cushioned carriage, with a feller in a gold-banded hat to drive you!'

'Oh, she's very kind to me,' returned Susy.

'Is she pretty?'

'Well—I don't know—I can't say exactly,' hesitated Susy, slightly embarrassed.

The old lady was just turning round to demand an explanation, when the carriage dashed up in front of the broad flight of marble steps that led to the portico of Ellerton Hall, and they descended.

Susy led the way through the arched vestibule into an elegant drawing-room. The chandelier was already lighted, and the gold and amethystine tints of the frescoed ceiling seemed like a canopy of precious jewels to Widow Stone's unaccustomed eyes.

'This ain't the house-keeper's room,' whispered the old lady, twitching her niece's dress in dismay. 'S'pose Mrs. Ellerton should come in?'

The door beyond opened, and a tall, slender gentleman entered the room, with a bright, welcoming glance to Susy.

'Let me introduce my husband, aunt.'

'Why, bless me, it's Henry Grayworth!' ejaculated the amazed Widow Stone, doubting the transmissive accuracy of the silver spectacles she had confided in for ten years.

'You have the first two names right, Mrs. Stone,' said the gentleman, laughing; 'but my name happens to be Henry Grayworth Ellerton.'

'Are you Mrs. Ellerton?' exclaimed the widow, wheeling round so as to face her niece once more.

'She is Mrs. Ellerton,' returned her husband, smiling. 'I wished to marry one who would love me for myself alone, not for my wealth or station; and so I came to the village as a poor young artist, under the name of Grayworth, and wooed and won this precious wife of mine. She never knew my real name until we stood side by side at the altar.'

He passed his arm around Susy's waist, and looked down upon her with an affectionate pride, answered by the living light in her own eyes.

The widow sat down and rubbed her spectacles vehemently.

'It's jest like the books I used to read when I was a gal!' she exclaimed at last. 'The widow did not know that truth is sometimes stranger than fiction.'

THE HUMAN FACE.—It is wonderful what volumes of meaning are contained in the few square inches of the human face! A man finds room there for traits of all his ancestors—for the expression of all his history and all his wants. Sculpture, and Winklemann, and Lavater, will tell you how significant a feature is the nose; how its form expresses strength or weakness, will and evidence of determination. What refinements and what limitations the teeth betray. The late French romancer Balzac left a whole chapter on the walk 'de la Demarche,' in which he says the look, the voice, the respiration, and the attitude or walk are identical; but as it has not been given to man the power to stand guard over these four different simultaneous expressions of thought, watch that which speaks out the truth, and you will know the whole man.

God has written on the flowers, that sweeten the air—on the breeze that rocks the flowers upon the stem—upon the rain-drop that refreshes the sprig of moss that lifts its head in the desert—upon its deep chambers, upon every penciled sheet that sleeps in the cavern of the deep no less than upon the mighty sun that warms and cheers millions of creatures which live in its light—upon all His works he has written—'None liveth for himself.'

ON LIBERTY.

BY JOHN STUART MILL.

This book treats of the liberty of thought and discussion, of individuality, as one of the elements of well-being, and of the limits to the authority of society over the individual. Mill is a sound reasoner, and that large-meaning word, 'Liberty,' is ably discussed. Of the liberty of the press, he says: 'The time, it is to be hoped, is gone by, when any defence would be necessary of the "liberty of the press," as one of the securities against corrupt or tyrannical government.' He continues:

'Though the law of England, on the subject of the press, is as servile to this day as it was in the time of the Tudors, there is little danger of its being actually put in force against political discussion, except during some temporary panic, when fear of insurrection drives ministers and judges from their propriety; and, speaking generally, it is not, in constitutional countries, to be apprehended, that the government, whether completely responsible to the people or not, will often attempt to control the expression of opinion, except when in doing so it makes itself the organ of the general intolerance of the public.'

Mr. Mill discusses 'Liberty' as understood in other countries as well as in England.—'The American people are thus treated of:

'What the French are in military affairs, the Americans are in every kind of civil business; let them be left without a government, every body of Americans is able to improvise one, and to carry on that or any other public business with a sufficient amount of intelligence, order and decision. This is what every free people ought to be, and a people capable of this is certain to be free; it will never let itself be enslaved by any man or body of men, because these are able to seize and pull the reins of the central administration.'

The book abounds in sensible logic, and some parts of it have a peculiar interest both for Canada and America at the present time. Although a serious subject, the volume is by no means dull reading. Mr. Mill handles it very pleasantly.