

Literature

THE HEROES OF INDUSTRY.

Let others write of those who fought
On many a bloody field—
Of those whose daring deeds were wrought
With sword, and spear, and shield;
But I will write of heroes bold,
The bravest of the brave,
Who fought for neither fame nor gold,
Who fill an unmarked grave.

Heroes who conquered many a field
Of hard and sterile soil;
Who made the sturdy forest yield
To unrelenting toil;
Heroes who did not idly stand,
But dealt such fearful blows
That acres, broad, of worthless land
Now blossom like the rose;

The heroes of the plough and loom,
The anvil and the forge;
The delvers down among the gloom
Of yonder rocky gorge;
Heroes who built yon lofty tower,
And forged its heavy beam,
Which faithfully proclaims the hour,
And marks its flight so well;

Heroes who brought from every clime
Rich argosies of wealth;
Heroes of thought and deeds sublime,
Who spurned what came by stealth;
Who won a guerdon fair and bright,
And left no bloody stain—
No heath profane, no deadly blight—
Upon God's wide domain.

THE FAMILY AT PENHOUSE.

I was to be a governess; but I could not obtain a situation. My poor mother had been insane for many years before her death; one of my brothers was deaf and dumb, another was deformed, while none of us showed either health or vigor. In a word, there was no escaping the fact we had the seeds of some terrible disease sown thickly among us, and that, as a family, we were unhealthy and unsafe. I was the eldest and strongest, both in mind and body, but that was not saying much. I was always what I am now, tall and gaunt, with the spasmodic affection which you see in my face, as nervous as I am now and nearly as thin, short-sighted, which made my manners doubly awkward from my nervousness and ungainly figure; and with an unnatural acute hearing, often followed by attacks of unconsciousness, which sometimes lasted many hours, and rendered me, for time, dead to all outward life.

Unpromising as our family condition was, when my father died and left us destitute, it was absolutely necessary that those of us at all capable should get something to do, and that that rest should be cared for by charity. The last we found more easy to be accomplished than the first. Many kind hands were stretched forward to help the helpless of us, but few to strengthen the weak. However, after a time, they were all settled in some way or other, and were at last secured from starvation, while I, who had been considered the most hopeful, was still unprovided for, looking vainly for a situation either as governess or companion. Both were equally difficult to procure. On the one side my manners and appearance were against me, on the other my family history. As I could not deny my inheritance of disease and insanity, mothers, naturally enough, would not trust me with their children, and I was not sufficiently attractive for a companion. People who can afford companions want something pliant, bright, animated, pleasant. No one would look at my unlovely face, or hear the harsh tones of my voice—I know how harsh they are—and pay me to be an ornament of pleasure to their lives. So, as I tell you, I was refused by every one, until I began to despair of without blaming any to understand that the world was too hard for me, and that I had no portion in it.

As my last venture, I answered an advertisement in the Times for a companion to a lady in delicate health, living in the country. My letter was replied to in a bold manly hand, and a meeting arranged. I was to go down the next day by train to a place about twenty miles from London, and find my way from a certain railway station named, two miles across the country—conveyances not to be had—to a village called Penhouse-green. A mile farther would bring me to Penhouse itself, the seat of Mr. and Mrs. Brand. The note was couched in a curiously sharp, peremptory style, and pompously worded. I remember, too, that it was written on a broad sheet of coarse letter paper, and sealed with what looked at first sight to be a large coat of arms, but which, when examined, proved to be only a make-believe. With my habit of making up histories out of every incident that came before me, I decided that the writer was a military man, wealthy, and high-born; and that about to leave on foreign service, he wished to place his young and beautiful wife in careful hands so as to ensure her pleasant companionship during his absence. I made quite a romance out of that peremptory letter, with its broad margin and imposing seal.

"They will never take me when they have seen me!" I sighed, as I settled myself in the third class carriage, which I shared with three soldiers' wives and a couple of Irish laborers, and I wished that I could have exchanged my fate and person with the meanest among them. Though they were poor, they were not under a curse, as I was; though man had not uplifted them, fortune had crushed them as she had crushed me. I was weeping bitterly behind my veil, overpowered with my

own sadness and despair, and almost decided on not going farther to meet only with fresh disappointment, when the train stopped at my station, and I left myself drift down the tide of circumstance, and once more dared my chance.

Asking my way to Penhouse-green, much to the astonishment, apparently, of the solitary station-master, I struck into a rugged by-road, which he said would take me there. The two miles' walk seemed as if it could never end. The road was lonely, and the country desolate, ugly, and monotonous; nothing but a broad, rugged waste without a tree or an autumn flower to break the dreariness of the scene. I did not meet a living creature until I came to an unwholesome-looking collection of cottages, covered with foul eruptions of fungi and mildew starting out like a leprosy upon the walls. Where the village-green should have been, was a swamp, matted with conferva. It was a place to remember in one's dreams from the neglect and desolation, the hopeless poverty and feverish squalor of all about.

If this was the village of which the writer had spoken so pompously as his property, and of which I had imagined all that was charming and picturesque, it did not argue much for what had to come; and I began to feel that I had painted too brightly, and perhaps, had ranked my chance too low. The place frightened me. I went through, glad to escape the stupid wonder of the pallid women and children who came crowding to the doors, as though a stranger was a rare and not too welcome sight among them. Indeed, some seemed to have a kind of warning terror in their looks when they pointed in the direction of the House; as they called it; and one old wretch, lifting her stick, cried, "Surely! surely, not there, believe me! In a tone which froze my blood. However, it was too late now to recede—so full of an indescribable terror, I went on my way, until I arrived at Penhouse, where my future was to lie.

It was a lonely house standing back from the road, completely shut in, in front, by a tangled shrubbery, while at the rear stretched a cross dark wood with a trailing undergrowth of briars and thorns. The gate hung broken, supported by one ling only; the garden was a mass of weeds and rubbish; the flower-beds overgrown with grass and nettles; and what had once been rose-trees and flowering shrubs, left to wither and die, stifled by bindweed, and coarser growths. The house was of moderate size, two storied; and roomy; but so neglected and uncared for, that it looked more bleakly desolate than anything I had ever seen before. My dream of the young and beautiful wife had vanished, and I felt as if about to be ushered into the presence of some fantastic horror or deadly crime. The wet leaves plashed beneath my feet, and sent up their clouds of autumn odour—the odour of death; unsightly insects and loathsome reptiles glided before me with strange familiarity, which rendered them yet more loathful; not a bird twittered through the naked branches of the trees. The whole place had a wild, weird, haunted look; and shivering with dread at I knew not what, I rang the rusty bell, hanging lonely out of the chipped and broken socket. The peal startled me, and brought out a small terrier, which came running round me, barking furiously and shrilly. The door was opened by a ragged, slipshod servant girl, and I was shown into a poorly furnished room, which seemed to be a kind of library; to judge at least by the open book case, thinly stocked with shabby books. The room was close and musty; the fire in the grate was heaped up carefully towards the middle, and the sides blocked in with bricks. It was a mean fire; a shabby fire.

After waiting some time, a gentleman and lady came in. She was a pale, weak, hopeless-looking woman, very tall, fair, and slender, with a narrow forehead, lustreless light blue eyes with no eye-lashes, scanty hair, straw-colored; ill-defined, eye-brows and very thin pale lips. She was slightly deformed and carried her arms thrust far back from the elbow, the hands left to dangle nervelessly from the wrists. She stopped and was dressed in a limp, faded cotton gown, every way too scanty and too cold for the season. When she came in, her eyes were bent towards the soiled gray carpet, and she never raised them, or made the least kind of salutation, but sat down on a chair near the window, and began to unravel a strip of muslin. The gentleman was short and thick-set, very active and determined looking, with dark hair turning to gray, a thick but evenly-cut moustache joining his bushy whiskers, the large square heavy chin left bare; overhanging eyebrows, with small restless, passionate eyes beneath; in his whole face and bearing an expression of temper amounting to ferocity.

He spoke to me peremptorily and haughtily; asked me my name, age, family condition, previous history, as if he had been examining me on oath, scarcely waiting for my answer, and all the while fixing me with those small angry eyes till I felt dazzled and restlessly, as creatures under torture. Then he said, abruptly:

"You have a strange look—a sacred look. I may call it. How have you come by it?"
"I am of a nervous temperament, sir," I answered, pulling at the ends of my gloves.
"Nothing else?" Nothing hereditary?"
"Yes, sir," said I, as steadily as I could; "there is hereditary misfortune among us."
"Father or mother?"
"Mother."

"Ah! said the man, raising his moustache, and looking at me with eyes all a flame; so much the nearer and more dangerous."

"I am not dangerous," I said, a little too humbly, perhaps; but that man was completely subdued by me. "I am nervous, but I have no worse tendency."

He laughed.
"Perhaps not," he said with a sneer that made my blood curdle; "no one ever has. Don't you know that all maniacs are philosophers, when they are not kings and queens? Shall I take you on trust, then, according to your own estimate of yourself, or discharge you at once, according to mine?"

"I think I may be trusted, sir," I answered, looking every where but into his face.

"What do you think, Mrs. Brand?" he said, turning to the pale woman unraveling her strip of muslin, and who had not as I thought, looked at me once yet.

"She is ugly," said she, in a dull monotonous voice; "I don't like ugly people."

Mr. Brand laughed again.

"Never mind that, Mrs. Brand; goodness don't go by looks, does it Miss—Miss what. Are you a name or a number?"

"Miss Erfurt."

"Oh yes! I forgot—Jane Erfurt—I remember now, and a queer name it is, too. Does it Miss Jane Erfurt?"

"Not always sir," I said, moving restlessly.

"Well, Mrs. Brand, what do you say?"

"She is ugly, and George will not like her," said the lady, in the same half-alive manner.

"Who the deuce cares?" shouted Mr. Brand, flaming with passion on the instant. "Let him like or not, who cares for the stupid fool, or for what he thinks? That, for his liking!" snapping his fingers insolently.

The lady's face grew a shade paler; but beyond a furtive, terrified glance at her husband, she took no notice of his words. He then turned abruptly to me, and told me that I was to hold myself engaged to perform the duties of companion to Mrs. Brand, and that I was to enter on these duties early next week.

"But without the lady's consent?" said I, too weak to resist, and too nervous to accept.

She put away her muslin and rose, and Mr. Brand's master here," she said, "do what he tells you; it saves trouble."

The week after I went to Penhouse, as the companion of Mrs. Brand.

The first day's dinner was a strange affair. After we had seated ourselves, a youth was a very scanty supply, there lounged in a youth of about seventeen; a heavy, full-blooded, lumpish being, with a face devoid of intelligence, but more animal than imbecile; not specially good tempered, but not vicious, a mere idle, eating, and drinking clown, scarcely raised above the level of a dog or a horse, and without even their instinctive emotions. What an unwholesome, unnatural circle we made! I longed for a little healthy life among us, and turned with a feeling of envy and relief to the common-place servant maid; who, if not intellectual, was at the least more in accordance with pure ordinary life than we.

There was ill blood between Mr. Brand and Master George, as the boy was called; and I soon understood why. His mother's only son by a former marriage, and heir of the neglected lands lying around Penhouse, he stood in the wife was supreme; and who, but for the boy, would have absolute possession of everything. He had married for money, and had been balked of half his prize. I used often to wonder that the two were not afraid to trust themselves in the hands of one so passionate and unscrupulous; but though Mrs. Brand was undisputedly afraid of her husband, and the boy was not too stupid to understand that he was hated, and why neither seemed to look forward to evil days, I do not think they had mind enough to look to the future in hope or dread. Mother and son loved with the mute instinctive love of dumb animals—a love in which both would be helpless to save their lives. They were not much together, and they seldom spoke when they met; but they sat close to each other, always in the same place and in the same chairs, and Mrs. Brand unravelled her eternal slips of muslin, while her son gathered up the threads and put them into a canvas bag.

I had been there a fortnight, and I never saw either of them employed in anything else; and I never heard half a dozen words pass between them. It was a silent house at all times; and more than this, it was a house full of hate. Save this dumb animal kind of love between the two, not a ray of even kindly feeling existed among any of us. The servant was the mark for every one's ill temper, while I stood out as a parish among them all, not even dignified by active dislike. I was shunned, and could not understand why I was there at all. The lady never spoke to me, not even to say good morning; she never gave me no duties, but she forbade me employment. I was free to do what I liked, provided I did not make my existence too manifest to her, and did not speak to her husband or Master George. If by chance anything like a conversation began—for Mr. Brand had his talkative moods in a violent kind of a way—she used to order me out of the room, in just the same tone as she used to speak to the dog. If I remonstrated, which I did once, her only answer was, "You can go if you like; I did not hire you."

One thing especially troubled me. It troubled me because, like all morbidly imaginative people anything of a mystery terrified me more, than an open danger; and this of which I am going

to speak was a mystery. The boy took no notice of me at the first. He never spoke to me when he came into the room; he passed me in the fields as if he did not see me; indeed, he had always that manner to me—he did not see me—he did not exist for him. I was well content that this should be; but, after I had been there a short time, Mr. Brand began to make distinct mischief between us. When he met me in the lanes and fields he made mouths at me, at table he would kick me silently, and whenever I caught his eye he made hideous grimaces, muttering in his broad, provincial accent, "Mad dog! mad dog! We hang mad dogs hereaway!" His insolence and brutality increased daily, and Brand encouraged him. This was the mystery. Why should he wish this to hate me?

There was a plot underneath it all which I torment myself to discover. Day and night the thought-haunted me, till I felt growing crazed with dread and terror. I could not conceal my abhorrence of the youth—I was too nervous for that—nor hide the fear with which that wicked man inspired me. I was as helpless as the poor pale woman there, and as thoroughly the victim of a stronger fate.

One night Master George had been more than usually intolerable to me. He had struck me openly both before father and mother, had insulted my misfortunes, and spoken with brutal disrespect of my family. It was a wild winter's night, and the howling wind shook the windows and dashed the trailing ivy leaves sharply against the panes; a fearful night, making all visions of freedom and escape impossible; a night which necessitated one to be content with one's own fireside, and forbade the idea of wandering farther. Yet it was something worse than death to me to be shut up in that mean room, with its squalid furniture and scanty fire, with such companions, and to feel that I could not escape from them—that they might ill treat me, mock me, persecute me as they would, and I was bound to bear all without protection or means of escape. The stormy night had excited me, and I felt less than ever able to bear all the insolence and brutality heaped upon me. When Master George struck me again, and called me "mad dog," something seemed to take possession of me. My timidity and nervousness vanished, and I felt as if swept away in a very tumult of passion. I do not know now what it was that I said or did, but I remember rising passionately from my place, and pouring out a torrent of bitterness and reproach. I was almost unconscious of what I was doing, for I was literally for the moment insane, but I remember the words "You shall die! you shall die!" rising like a scream through the room. I have not the slightest recollection of how I left the parlor, nor how I got to my own chamber, but it was past midnight when I awoke from what must have been a kind of swoon, and found myself lying on the floor.

The wind was still raging, howling through the trees, outside, tearing down branches, and scattering the dead leaves like flakes of frozen snow upon the ground. Every door and window shook throughout the old house, and the wind moaning in the chimneys came startling like the cries of tortured beings. Confused and giddy, I rose out of my trance, stiff with cold, and scarcely conscious. But as my brain grew clearer it grew also feverish, and I knew there was unrest for me to-night. My hearing began to be distressingly acute, and every painful touch and circumstance of my life to rise up before me with the force and vividness of living scenes actually present to my senses. I paced my room for some time in a state of despair, wringing my hands and sobbing violently, but without tears. By degrees a little calmness came to me. I determined to go down stairs for a book. I would get some quiet, calm, religious book, which would soothe me like a spiritual opiate, and take me out of the abyss of misery into which I had sunk. What friend, indeed, had I in the world, save the Great Father above us?

As I opened the door I fancied I heard a stealthy step along the passage. I held my breath to listen, shading the candle with my hand. I was not deceived; there was a step passing furtively over the creaking boards in the direction of Master George's room. I shrank back into the door-way. Yet there was nothing to alarm me. A quiet footfall at midnight might be easily accounted for; why should it affect me with distrust and dread? and why should I feel this overpowering impulse to go toward the sound? I scarcely knew what I expected to find; but something stronger than myself seemed to impel me to the discovery of something horrible; and placing the candle on the floor, I crept noiselessly along the passage, every nerve strung to its utmost tension.

Master George slept in a room at the end of the back stairs gallery, which ran at right angles in the passage in which my room was situated. My door faced Mr. and Mrs. Brand's. Master George's faced the kitchen stairs, and was provided to a small closet near me. Mr. Brand not approving of her holding so large a chamber for herself, neither willing to allow the boy anything of a better class. When I stood by my door I could see Mr. and Mrs. Brand's room; but it was only by going the whole length of the back stair gallery that I could get to Master George's. I could see now, however, along the staircase wall, and I could hear his heavy snoring breath. And I heard another sound. I heard a mad step in the room; I heard the boards creak and the bed-clothes softly rustle; I heard an in-

patient kind of moan as in his sleep, and then a groan, a man's deep, quick, sharp drip of blood from the floor. Dumb from terror, way of the boy's room, less on the bed lay the carelessly flung about sleep, and his face as of dreaming. The sheets were red—the light of the candle, small red stream that flowed on the floor beneath stood Mr. Brand, wiping chief. He turned and came up to me with an oath, and drew his knife across his forehead, and I awoke and found myself in the room round my bed.

Curious eyes stared at me, and I heard myself branded name of Murderer. The woman's naked feet—made the boy's room to mine printed on the bare unclean a woman's feet, and of no explaining away these guilt. Who would believe stranger with such a fearful and according to popular liable to make a murderously offending. Had not this evening, openly defied? Escape was impossible. Heaped up against me was using, I had but an unsympathetic would be set down as mad, deepen the case against me.

All day I lay there; winter's day; and when fastened me with cords, alone. I was so well secured, and trebly bound—I needed to watch me; much excited and over-worked the night with a lunatic called. So they went, the door saying, as he told have no more such danger Miss Erfurt!" with a sneer.

I was too hopeless; any plan of escape, feasting had set in, and I was quiet, and to feel that I ever. It had not offered I should grieve to leave I who cares for shame in content to have done with upon me so long and hear mourn for me, no one to heart and sorrowing faith and might die out at once in my murdered grave. py, thinking all these, brain was slightly paralyzed. However, it might moment of calm.

It was nearly three o'clock hand upon the door, softly in the lock, and, peering ghost, the poor into the room. She came silently unfastened the comforting word, she gave pitying human touch, but was way, she unbound and was free.

"Go," she then said, not looking at me. "I did not; but I know that I do not want your blood to come next, but I do go. Go at once; that I made it come for you."

Without another word, room, leaving the door open, bade me. Without even quietly dressed myself, at forth into the darkness and cause I had been bitten to a greater peril. I wandered aimlessly, nerveless course for any goal, but to whatever chance might woman gave me some relief, once beneath a lying down there, and finding after many hours. In the how or when, nor how long, fields, but it was evening. —I was in London, reading self posted up against the described as a murderer's reward offered for my manners, appearance, minutely noted, as to red; seized with terror. I fled; hunted and pursued, and since.

DUS
From whence does it sweep your room twice find that a cloud arises and the floor make a dust every article of every picture; you book-shelves and the floor and yet, after all your labor, dust flying in the air;