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[15] at the end of the Year

From Hogg's Instructor. LUCY MORRISON.

"Lucy, my dear," said old Mrs. Morrison to the sedate and beautiful girl, who plied her needle busily beside her, "I am becoming old."

"Yes, dear mother you are," said Lucy, looking kindly and anxiously up.

"You are a grown woman now, Lucy."

"That's true enough, too, mother; what very obvious conclusions you come to tonight!"

"As I am getting old, Lucy, and full of infirmities, and so may not be long spared to be with you," said Mrs. Morrison, unheeding the railway, "and as you are no longer a child but full of understanding, as you are replete with goodness, I must no longer withhold from you a secret deeply concerning you, which has hitherto been shut up in this lone old bosom."

"Dearest mother," cried Lucy, laying aside her work, and tenderly embracing her companion, "What can you mean?"

"Sit down my dear child, and you shall presently learn. One winter night a poor woman came, a-begging to our door—to my poor husband's door and mine—when we lived in that sweet little cottage, five hundred miles from this place, and asked us, as was usual with mendicants in that thinly peopled country, for a night's lodging in an outhouse. We had been much annoyed with the visits of vagrants, who often contrived to relieve us of something besides their own presence which they left us; sometimes they stole poultry from our yard, and sometimes they decamped with our clothes from our little leaching green."

Now, on account of such depredations, my husband had determined to turn a deaf ear to future petitioners for lodgings. When, on a cold November the poor woman arrived. So, that in accordance with his resolutions, he was no sooner informed that a beggar was at the gate than he began to screw up his hardness of heart, as it were to the highest pitch of intensity—for hardness of heart was far from natural to him—to give the poor creature a denial of the hospitality she craved for. But the piteous expressions of the woman's countenance, her worn out air, her exhausted energies and emaciated frame, overcame him. There was the child too, hanging about her asleep, poor innocent, and unconscious of her distress. It would have melted a hard heart, Lucy."

"It would indeed, dear mother; go on."

"Well, my poor husband, though he began with that rough affected tone, ended, you can believe, with the softest accents; and instead of granting her permission to make a couch of the straw in the corner of the outhouse, which was generally called the 'beggar's bed,' he set her down at our supper-board, caused me to make for her some hot wine, and to supply both her and her baby, which might be above a year old, with food suitable to their cause, and lodged them in the house."

"Oh! my good, my dear father!" exclaimed Lucy.

"Well, my child, when I went in the morning to look after our guest, it appeared to me, as I entered their chamber, that the mother's wearied senses were still locked in sleep. The little child played about in the sun-light on the bed, and prattled to its mother, who seemed not to hear it. It sat down on her bosom, and lisped out 'Mummy, wake, dear mummy,' while it pushed up her eyelids with its little thumbs. I approached the bed-side, and—the poor woman was dead!—The child, Lucy, was yourself!—My husband, by and by, 'died when you were five years old. Before his death we had both grown as much attached to you as if you had been our own child—our own only child—for Providence never sent us any other but yourself. The people of the neighbourhood knew your history of course, yet they called you our own child, and regarded you as such. Lucy Morrison was the only name you ever knew, or were ever known by; for we never discovered who your mother was. All that we could find out concerning her, poor desolate creature, was that she came out of the 'West country.' She could have told us, no doubt, much that was mournful of a history that was probably a chequered one, had she not been so suddenly called away from all her worldly miseries. I liked not the place at all when my husband was taken from me. Though we had thriven and though I was left with comfortable and increasing means, I stayed not to reap the fruit of our anxieties and labours. Every scene that I had looked upon with him but fed my melancholy without him. So I took a woman's resolve, gathered up my little earnings, and returned to my native place."

"I say a woman's resolve, Lucy, for a woman often makes sacrifices to the indulgence of a cherished sentiment that a man would not make. You know how much I regret now that I did not stay—more for your sake, my dearest, than for my own. Now, I think that to dwell where I lived with him would be a solace in my old days. His grave there too, and to lie in that. You would not in all likelihood have been rich, now, how poor you are you well know; since we have both

to work for our bread with our hands. Ah! I must not blame myself too much for having not lost the little fortune I brought here, by intrusting it to the hands of one we had reason to think so safe, my mind might not have been filled with these vain regrets. But my sweet child, to leave you alone and penniless—

"I will not allow it," said Lucy, throwing her arms round Mrs. Morrison's neck; "I will not allow you to cry. We shall work a long time together yet, my mother, and if I am left behind you, you will bequeath to me what you say my father used to call his motto, 'Honesty, and a good purpose.'"

"Mrs. Morrison had brought Lucy home to her native village as her daughter. So Lucy was the first within a radius of five hundred miles to be deceived on the subject of her birth. The strange conflict of feelings, created by her mother's communications in the bosom of the poor girl, may be imagined; but what was the perplexity which ever arose above others in her mind? It was how this new knowledge would affect the tender relationship in which she felt herself placed toward Amrose Logan, though no vows had passed between them."

"Amrose was the son of a man of ability in his calling, which was that of a builder, and with fair natural parts, a tolerable education, and the opportunities afforded him in his father's business, he had already developed a considerable talent for a theoretical as well as a practical knowledge of mechanics. Urged by a generous love of that department of science, he burned for a wider sphere of practical observation, for a larger scope for his talents than could be presented to him in his employment under his father."

A tender tie, however, restrained him when ambition would wing him away from his native village. A centrifugal force compensated it. But at length determined, with manly earnestness, to compass both his ends, to go in search of employment, knowledge, and reputation, and to return happy in success, to claim his bride."

"And you will not promise, Lucy?"

No, Amrose; I wish you success and much happiness, oh, how much! and shall always think of you as a dear friend in whom I have the greatest—the very greatest—interest, but do not think of loving me.—Go into the world and forget me.—Pursue your noble objects, and may every good attend you!"

"Do not mock me, Lucy; you tell me to go, and yet withhold from me the only condition on which I can depart. You wish my happiness, and refuse me the chief, the sole means of being happy. Do promise me."

Amrose, said Lucy, seriously; I may not promise."

You love another, then? replied he with a frantic gesture."

No, said the mild maiden, kindly and sincerely, I do not, Amrose; yet I may not promise you—must ask you to forget me."

What riddle is this, Lucy?"

I have a reason, which I wish to retain to myself, Amrose; but not at all such a one as your suspicion pointed at just now. Let me be ever friends, and may God speed you as much as Lucy would desire. She saw that her quietly firm manner wounded the youth who loved her, and whom she loved, and rallying herself from the serious into the half-sportive mood, she could not help adding, 'Silly man, does it not seem to you that the bargain is all on one side? She sent him, unshackled, into the world, to keep or to fling away his love, advantage it would never do for damsels to yield to swains in a general way, while she remains here the same Lucy Morrison to him; for if she love not him, she promises to love no other."

May I write?"

Might not that be construed into a distinct understanding?"

Farewell, Lucy; I shall return."

Such was the parting colloquy of the young pair. Lucy loved; but a maiden's coyness, and the difficulty of her position, which she exaggerated to herself, confused her, and imparted to her part of a dialogue a degree of inconsistency and unintelligibility. Many a time did she recall every word that had been uttered on this parting occasion, and every time but to distress herself over this word and that expression. Did she really wish Amrose to forget her?"

Ah, poor Lucy! her mother died, and then she was left alone in their cottage. Her wants were primitive, however, and the work of her hands enabled her to pay her rent and to support herself, though that was the utmost she could do by constant confinement and diligent work from morning till night. She sat over by that little cottage window, behind the shade of the pet flowers, at her seam, now thinking of her mother who was dead, and then of Amrose who was far away and perhaps had forgotten her. Her relations were, a brother and a sister of her mother's. The sister was the companion and the housekeeper of the former, she never having been married. The brother followed Mrs. Morrison to the grave about a year after he had laid her head in it. He had been of pious habits, and had saved money. To Lucy, on whom he had never bestowed

the slightest present during his life, he left five hundred pounds at his death. The residue of his property he left to the sister who lived with him. Nevertheless, this worthy woman was far from being satisfied, though her means were far more than commensurate with her necessities. She had inherited the miserly spirit of her brother, and sorely did she grudge the rendering up the niece's small portion, though it was needed so very much. Poor Lucy, on her side, was thrown into great perplexity by the words of the will—His sister's child—five hundred pounds to his late sister Sarah's child. After a sleepless night, the distressed young woman, having taken council with herself, appeared in her aunt's house."

You have come for your money, I suppose, said the aunt. It is not due for a year."

No, aunt, said Lucy; I am come to say that I do not think I can conscientiously take it when it is due."

Lucy then disclosed the secret of her birth. Her aunt applauded her scruples; called her an honest girl; affected to offer her the money, and the same; but was thankful in her heart that the girl took her not at her word. Poor miserable old woman, her love for Lucy did not equal her brother's after all, but then she had less sympathy for her kind."

To work Lucy went again, to sad thoughts of her mother and to anxious ones concerning Amrose. She wondered if he would after all forget her. She tried to wish he might, but she could not. Her cottage continued to present the same neat appearance to the passer's eye. Her window flowers bloomed as beautifully as ever. She rose early with the summer sun, and sat late by the winter lamp, and sewed these weary rows of embroidery. What a number of stitches, what a dreary number for a few pence!"

Amrose Logan had found employment in the yards of an eminent engineer. When he had been away two years, he was selected as one of a number of young men, of engineering capabilities, who were to accompany the conductors of an explorative expedition to the Euphrates, with a view to an examination of its fitness for steam navigation. And as a scorching sun, he thought of the cool and grateful breezes of his home land; the glare of the arid waste recalled the green beauty of his own temperate climate. But when he thought of cool winds, and landscapes refreshing to the eye, he perhaps indulged their pleasures and beguities through means of something, or rather some one, associated with their remembrances in his heart."

As he sat on the ruins of Babylon, and tried to conjure up its motley crowds and the hum of its ancient populousness, his mind wandered back to a sequestered northern village, and a girl sewing quietly at a cottage window was daguerretyped in his mind's eye. He had heard of her constancy through the letters of his friends and acquaintance. And Lucy, she was never long in ascertaining the nature of his communications from the east, somehow or other, though they were no business of hers. But the whole village was cognizant of his travels, and used to wonder in its simple mind, that young Amrose Logan, should see cities and places, with his own eyes, which it had but read of as existing before the commencement of the Christian era, and which was placed so far off on the world's surface. At length the post failed to bring further communications. His friends became anxious. Newspapers were sought after and scrutinised. The members of the Euphrates expedition were reported to be fast perishing under a disastrous fever. The anxiety of the village grew. A list of sufferers were published, and Amrose Logan's name was on the list. A courageous hope sunk into a sick certainty, and poor Amrose was lamented in proportion as his character had been esteemed."

And poor Lucy, now she worked and wept. She still worked. But illness grew upon her. She has taken cold, said one. The smell of flowers is unwholesome, said another. The doctor said something of malaria. The secret spring to unlock the cabinet of her distress was unknown. Alone and friendless, fatherless, motherless, loveless, hers was a fever of the spirit. Her disorganised reached delirium, and her real griefs were forgotten in the fantastic horrors in which she was engulfed. But cheer up kind and compassionate reader. The forces of her constitution began to survive at last. After her stormy voyage, in perilous seas, it was seen, as the poor girl sat up and placed her hand in her emaciated, but cooled hand, that a haven had been reached. She increased in beauty and in strength, till she could even take a tranquil retrospect of her trials; and to think how busy she must be, to make up for the time lost during her illness. Lost in reverie, one autumn evening, Lucy sat by her window as before. A thread remained half pulled through, and a tear had filled the eye of the desolate girl, when she saw a figure arise as it were out of her musings, as one view develops itself boldly from the fragmentary confusion of another dissolving away by the simple trick of the exhibitor."

"Metinks I see him! was her thought. But oh how real! In my fevered dreams I never conjured him up so truly before. It speaks I hear. He lives."

Logan advanced in person, he entered, and caught the swooning girl in his arms. He kissed her brow and she revived. Lucy, said he, I am come again."

She pressed the hand which held hers, and looked in his face with wonder and thankfulness."

And when he could speak and she could hear, he recited the story of his adventures. He had indeed been seized with the fever of which the most of his comrades had died; but he did not know till his arrival in his own country, that he had been among the number reported dead. He did not, however, wonder, much at the report, as he had not been expected to live for many days, and had been understood to be dead by a part of the explorers who were stationed at a distance from his own detachment. As his consciousness advanced, the objects of the expedition were, though not very satisfactorily by any means, fulfilled, and he recovered in time to return with the remnant of his companions to Britain. When he left the country his salary had been fixed at a handsome sum. It was, generously increased, by the conductors of the undertaking when its perils and disasters had become evident, so that Amrose had saved money. He had now the means of constant employment, and that of a superior kind. What wonder then if it was with the assurance of a self supporting citizen and the affectedly jaunty and off handed manner of a traveller, that he now asked Lucy to consent to be his wife."

The old difficulty still remains Amrose, said she, looking kindly, even affectionately into his face."

And what is it Lucy?"

Her I called my mother, replied she frankly and promptly, out of the generous fullness of her heart, but painfully, and with eyes looking bashfully down, as if she had been guilty of deception, who was my dear mother was not my real mother. I was a poor beggar woman's child, who died and left me without a single clue to her history."

And this is your insurmountable difficulty, you silly girl! said Amrose clasping her in his arms. Poor child, continued he playfully, patting her cheek, it vexed its little heart, did it without any reason; is it still going to be stupid?"

Lucy looked up with a grateful smile, which Amrose considered a satisfactory answer to his petty badinage, but which brings our little story very near its conclusion. Near but not quite to the conclusion; for the reader is anxious to know something of the sequel. Let him take a peep then at Mr and Mrs Logan, tete-a-tete, a few years after their marriage, and on a Saturday evening, when the former—ruminated—at home after the toil of a week's business."

I wish you had kept that five hundred pounds, Lucy, said Logan."

But Amrose, would it have been quite right?"

It was wrong in the old hag to take it from you. And if she deprived you of what her brother left you, I suppose we can expect nothing from her herself. She was a relation."

Very distant ones, I believe, whom she has never seen."

I suppose she took good care to keep your secret to her own old wizened bosom."

I believe she did."

She feared the verdict of the public, I wonder if her own conscience ever troubled her."

Why, what has set your mind running on money, my dear Amrose?"

If I had a thousand pounds or two, Lucy, I feel myself in a condition to make a small beginning on my own account, which might lead to a large ending. Is it not a pardonable weakness to wish to see one's wife a fine lady?"

Oh there is a letter for you. It arrived today. An official looking seal upon it too. Perhaps it may be an answer to some of your wishes."

Lucy reached him the letter, but as to thinking it a reply to his wishes, or to her own, she entertained no such idea. She had uttered words in jest. The communication however from an old school fellow of Logan's, now the sole legal practitioner in their native town. The letter stated that Mrs. Rebecca Logan, (Lucy's aunt so called) had died, and that after leaving one hundred pounds to be spent according to her own particular directions, in the paraphernalia of her interment, and four hundred pounds to the poor of the parish (first donation), she had bequeathed the remainder of her fortune, amounting to three thousand five hundred pounds, to Lucy, wife of Amrose Logan. The epistle concluded with a congratulatory paragraph from Logan's old school companion."

I must recant, said Amrose. "I am not sorry now, that you refused that five hundred pounds. I have produced good interest. — Come I suppose I must not consider her a bad woman after all."

She was my dear mother's sister."

"Well, Lucy I am sorry for speaking unkindly of her, if it were but on that account. You show in yourself, dear Amrose, what weak creatures we are—what partial judges. — You are inclined to her now because she has benefited you. But you were too much biased against her before; you condemned her totally on account of one dominant weakness."

Corollary—be tolerant to one another. Well, Lucy we shall go to her funeral to show her memory respect, as we had not opportunities of bestowing affection upon her during her life; and you, yourself—I do not think that your grief will be so very redundant or to prevent you having the pleasure in exhibiting these children, that you are so proud of to your old friends. We must profit by the experience of Gill Blass, and endeavour to make the old woman's obsequies as simple as may be on a hundred pounds, so that the same ridicule may not be heaped upon her memory that was cast upon him at his parent's funeral."

Lucy became not only a 'fine lady,' but continued to be a good one. The gentle reader expected perhaps that she was discovered to be of noble parentage, and to ride in a coach and six. We must stick to facts. She never knew more of her origin than we have communicated; but we are satisfied that reward for her constancy and honesty flowed in upon her through natural channels."

HOW TO LEAD MANKIND.

If masters fully understood the influence which even the slightest personal attention produces on the minds of their workmen, they would be more lavish than they are of a simple act of justice which can cost them so little, and would profit them so much. It is the severest trial an acute mind can undergo, to be compelled to hear the upbraidings and revealing of his fellow man, without the privilege to answer—to hear the scorner, yet dare not to reply—to submit to the arrogance and presumption of, perhaps, a meaner intellect, and be denied the opportunity to wither him into his nothingness—to see before him, while his blood is boiling with a volcanic swell, the assistant superior in his haughtiest mood, and to hear from his supercilious lip the unfair or false deductions of his conduct, and yet to have no power of speech, but only stand like a guilty—creeping thing, because his children's bread depends upon his silence. This is indeed, the cruellest trial the progressing intellect can suffer; and yet how often is it inflicted merely because it hurts and offends the most (yet wretched as the sufferer, is, low as he falls to his own estimation of his fellows, there is a lower and meaner being than him—the man who, without cause, inflicts the injury on him. Treat a man like a friend, and you soon make him one; treat him like a rogue, and his honesty must be much greater than your wisdom, if he do not seem to justify your suspicions. In no way are men so easily led—often, it is true, so blindly led—as through the affections. Every man comes into the world surrounded by objects of affection. The infant and parental tie is one which binds rich and poor alike; and is often the strongest in the poor, because it is almost the only domestic blessing which they can truly call their own. Hence it is, that men who are quite inaccessible to reason are easily led by the affections; and no wise man will neglect to use, especially when it is for the mutual benefit of all, this powerful and universal, prevailing instrument. The next tie to that of parent and child, in the progress of society is that of master and servant; and it is for the interest of both to carry into their relations with each other as much as possible of the kindly feeling which has been nursed in the bosom, in the childhood, by the domestic fireside."

THE GOOD CHILDREN.

A mother, who was in the habit of asking her children, before they retired at night, what they had done through the day, to make others happy, found her young twin-daughters silent. The elder one spoke modestly of deeds and dispositions, founded on the golden rule. Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you! Still these little bright faces were bowed down in serious silence. The question was repeated. I can remember nothing good all this day, dear mother—only one of my schoolmates was happy because she had gained the lead of the class, and I smiled on her, and ran to kiss her, so she said I was good. This all, dear mother. The other spoke still more timidly: A little girl who sat by me, on the bench at school, and lost a little leather. I saw that while she studied her lesson, she hid her face in the book and wept. I felt sorry, and laid my face on the same book and wept with her. Then she looked up and was comforted, and put her arms round my neck. But I do not know why she said that I had done her good. Come to my arms, beloved ones, said the mother.—[Moral and Religious Anecdotes.]

BREAD TO THE SEA.

The late Captain O'Byrne, of gunnery memory, having made a bet on the subject of Admiral Layard, wrote the following note to him:—

"Dear Payne, pray, were you bread to the sea?"

To which the following answer was returned:—

"Dear O'Byrne, no, but the sea was bread to me."

ALDBOROUGH

BY

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