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THE HERMIT OF SAINT MAURICE.

From the *Literary Garland*.

It may be now about a doz'n years since, in the course of a random ramble through Lower Canada, we found ourselves stemming the waters of the St. Maurice, towards the Falls of Shawingang, whither we were led, as well by the renown of their romantic beauty, as by a desire to learn something of a mysterious being, who had come thence, none knew whence, and had gone, none knew whither. His history was unknown, save that he was fed by the charity of the Indian hunters, who off-ly left a share of their sylvan spoil at the door of his cell, and that his wanderings ever began with night, when his maniac shrieks were heard mingling with the hoarse thunder of the whelming waters.

Leaving the canoe at some distance, and following our Indian guide, we soon reached a spot from which the Falls formed the principal feature, but our anxiety became more intense as we neared the hermit's haunt, and we rested not until, desiring our guide to lead on, we followed him to the cave of the recluse.

Evening was approaching, and the summer heat was lightly tempered by the life-giving breeze that sprang up as the sun gradually sank from his burning throne and his departing beam, mingling with the dashing spray, formed it into beautiful and fantastic shapes—the richer only that their reign was brief.

A ravine, formed between two giant rocks, near the centre fall, betrayed a rude path to the hermit's cave. It had originally been a small fissure formed by some shock of nature, and had been fashioned by the industry of the recluse into a habitable shape. In one corner, a heap of ashes told that here his fire had been, and a few rude implements lay beside the hearth, as if they had been used for some culinary purpose—perhaps to broil the venison left at his porch by the Indian hunters, who revered him, while they shrank from all communion with him, even as he had shrank from them.

The cell contained nothing to tell whether its late lonely occupant was alive or dead—a staff, indeed, leaned against the wall, and a cap, of a fashion which had once been military, hung over the entrance, but dust and cobwebs too plainly told that they had been untouched for years. In looking upon these traces that the cell had been, at one time, tenanted by one who must have dwelt among civilized men, we sank into a train of melancholy reflections, from which we were aroused by a cry of surprise from the Indian. He had found a narrow passage from the inner side of the cave, over which a web of moss was suspended, and had penetrated into an inner cell, where an unexpected scene met his gaze, and caused the cry that startled us—we immediately followed, and the whole mystery of the hermit's disappearance was unravelled.

The cell was lighted by a torch kindled by the Indian, and disclosed a fleshless figure lying on the floor, beside what seemed an open grave, dug, it might have been, by his own hands, for it seemed as if he had died in a vain attempt to reach it, that he might there sleep the sleep of death, after a life of misery.

On the cavern floor, lay a half open scroll, towards which the head of the skeleton was turned, as if the last look of the maniac had been fixed upon the sad record of his unhappy fate. We took it up, and leaving the Indian to gather the crumbling remnants into the open grave, we crept with a feeling of terror, to the outer cell.

Here, amid the roar of the cataract, with the traces of the victim before us, we read his melancholy tale—melancholy indeed,—the tale of one, the very playmate of utter wretchedness—the victim of a crime so dreadful, that all unconscious as he was, it shook his reason from its throne, and left remembrance but another name for woe.

There is no doubt, that surrounding circumstances lent an interest to the tale, such as it will not possess, when perused by others, but in the hope that it may meet the eye of some one not altogether unacquainted with the circumstances, we subjoin

THE SCROLL.

"Not was not General thus by nature sent" Byron.

Nameless, and with a dishonoured lineage, a child of lawless passion, I have been, from the cradle, predestined to a life of unrelenting misery—thinned, it may have been, with one brief bright spot—Oh! how my brain whirls when memory again kindles that deceitful ray. Taught from infancy to look upon myself as an outcast one—deserted by a mother, who disinclined to the offspring of her shame, and consigned to the keeping of an unamannered and hireling nurse, my childhood was unblest with the sunshine of woman's smile, or the kindly influence of a mother's love. Nourished amid the jeers of the less miserable children of honest wretchedness, with no monitor save my own uncheck'd passions,—without restraint, save that imposed by a woman's capricious lash, which, while it lacerated my back, left upon my mind traces a thousand times more indelible—could the germ of vice and crime have found a fitter soil! With every stripe, my soul drank deeper of the cup of hate for my kind, and I longed for the strength of manhood, that I might wreak my vengeance upon all who had ever thwarted my slightest wish.

As I emerged from childhood, my limbs attained a vigour beyond my years, and the taunts of my boyish tyrants were hushed, in fear of my revenge. Reckless of all danger, nought could check the fury with which I set at all, who dared oppose my will. I grew in years, and battling on my degraded fate, I learned to hate the Father I had never seen, and to curse the mother whose utter selfishness had left her child to suffer the meed of punishment which was her due. Had either crossed my path, the world had rung with a tale of blood, that would have taught the young to shudder, and the old to bless themselves that they had no son like me.

Yet even I, the wretched and miserable outcast, brooding over the bar that crossed my path blighting all anticipation of an honoured name, had long dreams of a happy world, in which I might ever dwell. Dreams, vain dreams, they were, and I soon learned enough of the world's reality, to know that it was a mart of wickedness, and gladdened with hypocrisy and crime—the wretch looking it over his fellows, rising to power upon the ruin of myrads a hundred times more worthy than himself.

Years crept along with a snail like pace, and I wondered, though I inquired not, wherefore the old crone, who had been my childhood's nurse, kept me in ill-health, while all around were tussling with the daily drudgery which won for them a miserable existence. I asked not of my parents, nor whether they knew aught of me, nor did she ever say that to them she owed the funds applied to her support and mine.

I grew towards manhood, and my unhappiness—my grief with my growth and strengthened with my strength. Pride whispered that even to feed life from the gift of hands so hated, with unextinguishable hate, was degradation unworthy of my nature, and I yearned for self-dependence, and to be discovered from almost the only link that bound me to my kind. I cared not what the means were, which might dishonour me from human intercourse. Though my hand was yet unsteady, my heart was ripe for guilt, no matter, how dark its hue. There were, indeed, times, when the gloom of my soul was less dense, and my wishes turned to a scene where I might rise to power, if it were but to shame the guilty beings, who had left me to the temptation of passions fierce and unmanageable as their own.

Our cottage was situated on the skirt of one of the poorest villages on the sea-coast of England. The country around was generally of a sterile character, with nothing to recommend it to the wanderer in search of scenic beauty.

The village site was in the centre of a low plain, that scarcely rose above the level of the sea, but at a short distance, on the eastern side, a natural forest of considerable magnitude covered the commencement of a chain of rocks which looked towards the ocean. Though

the forest, and turned off towards the village, a narrow but deep brook, found its way to the sea, and a carriage road led under the shade of the trees from the hamlet to a castle of Lorraine—the manor house, as it was more generally termed—a huge pile, that had stood for many years untenanted, save when occasionally visited by a tyranic steward on behalf of a careless lord.

The castle was gradually becoming a pile of ruins, and its solitary and decaying turrets, wore a charm for me, beyond what it could have possessed had it been robed in all its grandeur, when a every tower was manned by the willing seals of its feudal lord. I heard a voice in the rank grass that cinked its pathways, which seemed to say, that like myself it was forgotten and uncare for by all who should have had an interest in its fate. Here, when sleep could not be wooed to my flinty couch, I often wandered whole nights among the ruins of its once splendid arches, and morning often broke, while I yet lingered spirit-like, among the moss-crowned battlements. It was a fit place for one like me, who had no companionship with my kind, and who shrank from all human fellowship, with a disgust so marked, that the villagers were wont to speak of me as the "man of gloom."

Spring, for the twentieth time, since I had inhabited that dreary spot, was robing the earth in her emerald mantles and the desire for change became daily stronger within me. I had for some days forsaken the castle, and wandered far into the forest, brooding over my future destiny, and striving to form some scheme for my guidance, when I became a habitant of the unknown world; but ignorant as I was, of the way of man, I but involved myself in deeper doubt, and the evening of the third day saw me without settled purpose, save that when the sun again set I would be far away from my childhood's haunts.

I had gone with whom I ever held converse, and my resolution was locked in my own breast. Feverish and restless, I could not sleep, and long ere dawn I rose, and sought my way through the forest towards the deserted castle. I had haltered, and morning was breaking when I reached its outer walls. I started to find that it was no longer lonely—carriages drove under the dilapidated archways, and busy sounds were issuing from its precincts in every direction: groves were busy with their master's steeds, preparing them for the road, and the sounds of histerious laughter sickened me as I gazed on the unwatched for change.

I turned away with a disappointed feeling, to find that the solitude of the scene was broken, and a new impetus was given to my determination to leave my home and my country forever. I turned to the river side, and walked towards the village.

And I should look upon these peaceful though unblest scenes no more! Could it be, that for this a sigh came from my heaving breast? Was it possible that man could regret what he never loved. It was indeed so—there is a link that binds even the most miserable to his native land—aye, though his heart may never have felt the vibration of one pleasant or happy string. With such feelings was my breast filled, and I felt less wretched, even in my sadness, than I had done for years, as I sat down on the river's brink, to muse over these newly awakened feelings. Presently, the stillness was broken by the sound of approaching footsteps, and two steeds appeared rushing forward with a wild and furious rapidity. One already had lost its rider, and a lady, clinging to the mane of the other, seemed as if she would be dashed among the shelving rocks at every bound. On, however, they came—horse and rider borne irresistibly onwards—there was naught to check the fury of their heedless career. Terror was written on the beautiful countenance of the rider, and only mechanically she clung to the saddle—for all consciousness seemed to have deserted her. A moment had scarcely passed and the steeds neared the water's edge, and startled at its appearance, the one on which the lady rode, made a sudden pause, and his rider was flung far over his head, into the deep, deep pool. The whole scene had been enacted with a rapidity so

dreadful, that I could only gaze in stunted wonder, to see the empire of silence disturbed by an event so new, and I was aroused from my stupor, only by the death-like shriek of the lady, as she sunk into the opening waters.

I know not wherefore it was that I, who had "so sympathically with breathing flesh"—who was wont to luxuriate in thought of human woe—should have obeyed the spur of a generous impulse. But so it was—a moment after I dashed the wave aside, and my arm circled the form of the sinking maiden. To me the water was as a native element, and I bore her to the beach, as readily and with as much care as a mother nurses her sleeping child. But even there, it seemed as if the effort had been made too late. Breathless and insensible, no sign of animation chased from the fair countenance on which I gazed, with an admiration intense and painful, its death-like pallor. Beautiful being! while looking upon thy prostrate form, my soul drank in its first thought of human purity. He had been indeed a demon, who could have looked at the and thought of sin! Be still, my heart! my hour is not yet come—I would be calm awhile, to think over, with unannounced brain, the thrilling feelings which that form awoke.

Unskilled in the ways of woman, I knew not what would win the struggling spirit back to its beautiful tenement. I shrieked for aid, but there was none near; and I recited for answer only the echoes of my own wild cry. Distractedly I raised her inanimate form from the earth, and wrapping her dripping garments around her, as if endowed with superhuman strength, I rushed towards the village, nor rested till my lovely burthen was laid on a lowly bed in the cottage of my aged guardian—her, when an hour before, I had determined to leave for ever, without a word of kindness or farewell. I besought her, with an eagerness at which she laughed, to save the life of the fragile creature at whose side I knelt. She obeyed my will, and I watched with a throbbing heart, till success began to crown her efforts; and I could have best her when I saw returning life colour the pallid cheek of the stranger maiden.

As consciousness became stronger, her eye wandered over the unfamiliar objects that lay scattered around her, until it met the gaze that mine fixed on her, when a gleam of recollection seemed to pierce the clouds that overcast her memory, and she cried in a voice whose tremour spoke her heart's anxiety.

"Albert, my brother! where, oh! where is he?"

For the first time, a thought of the unmastered steel crossed my memory, and exclaiming "I will seek him," I darted from the cottage, along the line by which I had seen their heedless advance.

My search was not long in vain; I had not proceeded far, when I met a youth covered with blood and mire, dragging himself along the rugged path. He seemed toil-worn and wearied, and with difficulty staggered onwards; but there was an air about him which shewed that he was no villager, and I at once saw that it was the brother for whom she asked. Anticipating the enquiries he would have made, I hastened to inform him that the lady-rider had escaped, with no severe injury than the alarm had caused, and for the present remained in a neighbouring cottage, towards which I instantly supported his tottering steps.

TO BE CONTINUED.

LOVE-LETTERS.

Love-letters—Here's a theme! In the first place let every one beware of counterfeits, for such are abroad. Few genuine ones are to be had for love and none for money. Finely wrought commentaries, an epigrammatic style, or any thing that looks like great care and study, is a sure proof of hives—that rogue is thinking of the girl's money. Raptures and complaints, sprinkled with something stolen from Ovid or Moore, and crow-quilled on the best gilt-edged, are enough to startle any considerate young lady. Flocks cannot be too cautious. There is another sort of love writing, much in vogue in this our philoponic age, down-right profanation, taking upon itself to