

THE  
LITERARY GARLAND.

VOL. IV.

AUGUST, 1842.

No. 9.

(ORIGINAL.)

THE MISER AND HIS SON.

A TALE.

BY SUSANNA MOODIE.

*Continued from our last number.*

CHAPTER IV.

“Is this the man I loved—to whom I gave  
The deep devotion of my early youth?”

ALGERNON HURDLESTONE, in his forty-seventh, and Algernon Hurdlestone in his twenty-fifth year, were very different men. In mind, person, and manners, the greatest dissimilarity existed between them. The tall, graceful figure, for which he was once so much admired, a life of indolence and the pleasures of the table, had rendered unyielding, and far too corpulent even for manly beauty. His features were still good, and there was a look about him which bespoke the gentleman; but he was no longer handsome or interesting. An expression of careless good humour, in spite of the deep mourning suit he wore for the death of his wife, pervaded his countenance, and he seemed determined to repay fortune for the many ill turns he had received from her in his youth, by enjoying to their full extent the good things which she had latterly showered upon him. He had been a kind, manageable husband, to a woman whom he married more for convenience than affection, and was a fatally indulgent father to the only child which survived a large family, whom he had consigned from time to time to the tomb, during the engaging period of infancy. Godfrey was a beautiful little boy, of two years old, his youngest and his best beloved, on whom he lavished the concentrated affections of a warm and generous heart.

Since his marriage with the rich and beautiful Miss Maitland, he had never given Elinor Wildegrave another thought. He had loved her passionately, as the portionless orphan of Captain Wildegrave; but he could not regard with affection or esteem the wife of the rich Mark Hurdlestone—the man from whom he had received so many injuries. How she could have consented to share his splendid misery, was a question which filled his mind with too many painful and disgusting images, to answer. When he received his brother's message, entreating him to come and make up their old

quarrel before he died, he obeyed the extraordinary summons with his usual kindness of heart, without reflecting on the pain that such a meeting might occasion him, should he behold again the object of his early affections, as the wife of his unnatural brother.

When he again crossed the well known threshold, and his shadow once more darkened his father's hall, those feelings, which had been deadened by long intercourse with the world, resumed their long forgotten sway; and he paused, and looked around the dilapidated mansion, with eyes whose sight was dimmed with regretful tears.

“And it was to become the mistress of such a home as this, that Elinor Wildegrave—my beautiful Elinor—sold herself to such a man as my brother, and forgot her plighted troth, her vows to me!”

So murmured Algernon Hurdlestone, as he followed the parish girl up the broad uncarpeted oak stairs, to his brother's apartment, shocked and astonished at the appearance of misery and decay, which on every side met his sight. He had heard much of Mark's penurious habits, but he had deemed the reports incorrect, or at least greatly exaggerated; he was now fully convinced, by his own ocular demonstrations, that they were but too true. Surprised that Mrs. Hurdlestone did not appear to receive him, he enquired of Ruth if her mistress were at home?”

“At home! why yes, Sir; it's more than her life's worth to leave home. She durst not go to church without measter's leave.”

“Is she well?”

“She be'ant never well,” said the girl; “and the sooner she goes the better it will be for her, depend upon that. She leads a wretched life, the more's the pity; for she's a dear kind lady, a thousand times too good for the like o' him.”

Algernon shuddered, while the girl, delighted to get an opportunity of abusing her tyrannical master, continued:

“My poor mistress has been looking out for you all the day, Sir. But when your coach drove into