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ORIGINAL POETRY.

[For the Literary Transcript.]

SOMETHING ROMANTIC.

She leant within his circling arms,
And hooded into his face;
He stooped to kiss her genic brow,
And gave a last embrace.

To him the morn's sun would bring
A long and last farewell;
To her, the mute unspoken grief
The eye alone can tell.

She leant within his circling arms,
Close folded to his breast;
But for the time of parting near,
She had been fully blest.

And yet perchance the very thought
That they so soon must part,
Fanned floods of deeper tenderness
Around that trembling heart.

Agile he kissed a last adieu,—
She rose—and both were gone;
The roof and eadest cottage door
The moon was smiling on.

The sun that rose the morn'g moon
Behold him far away,
And ere a little moon was gone,
He sailed where all was gay.

But of his wandering thought would steal
From joy's and passion's whirl,
To dream of pure and happy hours
With that young cottage girl.

A. G. L.

SUSAN'S DOWRY.

At one end of the cluster of cottages, and cottage-like houses, which formed the little street of Hilton Cross, was a pretty but secluded village, in the north of Hampshire,—stood the shop of Judith Kent, widow, "henceforth" as the legend imported, "to vend tea, coffee, tobacco, and snuff." Tea, coffee, tobacco, and snuff, formed, however, but a small part of the multitudinous merchandise of Mrs. Kent, whose shop, the only repository of the hamlet, might have seemed an epitome of the wants and luxuries of humble life. In her window,—candies, bacon, sugar, mustard, and soap, flourished amidst calicoes, oranges, dolls, ribbons, and gin-sneakers. Crochery-ware was piled on one side of her door-way; Dutch cheese and Irish butter encumbered the other; brooms and brushes rested against the wall; and ropes of onions and bunches of red herrings hung from the ceiling. She sold bread, butcher's meat, and garden-stuff, on commission; and engraves, at a word, the whole trade of Hilton Cross.

Notwithstanding this multiplicity, the world went ill with poor Judith. She was a mild, pleasant-looking, middle-aged woman, with a heart too soft for her calling. She could not say "No" to the poor creatures who came to her on a Saturday night, to seek bread for their children, however deep they might already be in her debt, or however certain it was that their husbands were, at that moment sending at the Chequers, of the Four Horse Shoes, the money that should have supported their wives and families; for, in this village, as in others, there were two flourishing ale-houses, although but one ill-accommodated shop,—but one halpenny ay-worth of bread in this intolerable deal of sick! She could not say "No," as a prudent woman might have said; and, accordingly, half the poor people in the parish might be found on her books, whilst she herself was gradually getting in arrears with her baker, her grocer, and her landlord.

Her family consisted of two children,—Mary, a pretty, fair-haired, smiling lass, of twelve or thirteen, and Robert, a fine youth, nearly ten years older, who worked in the gardens of a neighbouring gentleman. Robert, conscious that his mother's was no gainful trade, often pressed her to give up business, sell off her stock, relinquish her house, and depend on his labour for her support; but of this she would not hear. Many motives mingled in her determination: a generous reluctance to burden her dutiful son with her maintenance,—a natural fear of losing care

among her neighbours,—a strong love of the house which, for five and twenty years, had been her home,—a vague hope that times would mend, and all come right again (wiser persons than Mrs. Kent have lured reason to sleep with such an opiate!)—and, above all, a want of courage to look her difficulties fairly in the face. Besides, she liked her occupation,—its petty consequence, its bustle, and its gossip; and she had a sense of gain in the small peddling bargains,—the penny-worths of needles, and balls of cotton, and rows of pins, and yards of tape, which she was accustomed to vend for ready money,—that overbalanced, for the moment, her losses and her debts; so that, in spite of her son's presages and warnings, the shop continued in full activity.

In addition to his forebodings respecting his mother, Robert had another misfortune:—the poor youth was in love. About a quarter of a mile down the shady lane, which ran by one side of Mrs. Kent's dwelling, was the pretty farm-house, orchard, and homestead of Farmer Bell, whose eldest daughter Susan, the beauty of the parish,—was the object of a passion, almost amounting to idolatry. And in good sooth, Susan Bell was well fitted to inspire such a passion. Besides a light graceful figure, moulded with the exactest symmetry, she had a smiling, innocent countenance, a complexion coloured like the brilliant blossoms of the balsam, and hair of a shining, golden brown, like the fruit of the horse-chestnut. Her speech was at once modest and playful, her temper sweet, and her heart tender. She loved Robert dearly, although he often gave her cause to wish that she loved him not; for Robert was subject to the intermitting fit of jealous jealousy,—causlessly,—as he himself would declare, when a remission of the disease gave room for his natural sense to act,—causlessly and penitently, but still pertinaciously jealous. I have said that he was a fine young man, tall, dark and slender; I would add, that he was a good son, a kind brother, a patron of sobriety and industry, and possessed of talents and acquirements far beyond his station. But there was about him an ardour, a vigour, a fiery restlessness, commonly held proper to the natives of the south of Europe, but which may, sometimes, be found amidst our own population. All his pursuits, whether of sport or labour, took the form of passion. At ten years old, he had gone far beyond all his fellow pupils at the Foundation School, to which through the kindness of the "square of the Parish," his mother had been enabled to send him; and had even passed the master himself; at eighteen, he was the best cricketer, the best flute player, the best bell-ringer, and the best gardener in the country;—and some old volumes of Shakespeare having come into his possession, there was some danger, at twenty, of his turning out a dramatic poet, had not the kind discouragement of his master, to whom some of his early scenes were shown by his patron and admirer, the head gardener, acted as a salutary check. Indeed, so strong, at such a time, was the poetical fever, that one catastrophe, as an entire play might, probably, have ensued, notwithstanding Mr. Lescomb's judicious warnings, had not love, the master passion, fallen, at that time in poor Robert's way, and engrossed all the ardour of his ardent temperament.

The beauty and playfulness of his mistress, whilst they enchanted his fancy, kept the jealous irritability of his nature in perpetual alarm. He suspected a lover in every man who approached her; and the firm refusal of her father to sanction their union, till her impatient wooer were a little more forward in the world, completed his disgust.

Affairs were in this posture, when a new personage arrived at Hilton Cross.

In addition to her other ways and means, Mrs. Kent tried to lessen her rent, by letting lodgings; and the neat, quiet, elderly gentleman, the widow of a long deceased rector, who had occupied her rooms ever since Robert was born, being at last gathered to her fathers, an advertisement of "pleasant apartments to let, in the airy village of Hilton

Cross," appeared in the county paper. This announcement was as true as if it had not formed an advertisement in a county paper. Very airy was the pretty village of Hilton Cross,—with its breezy uplands, and its open common, dotted, as it were, with cottages and clumps of trees; and very pleasant were Mrs. Kent's apartments, for those who had sufficient taste to appreciate their rustic simplicity, and sufficient humility to overlook their smallness. The little chamber, glittering with whiteness; its snowy dimity bed, and "fresh sheets smelling of lavender;" the sitting room, a thought larger, carpeted with India matting; its shining cane chairs and bright casement, wreathed on the one side by a luxuriant jessamine, on the other by the tall cluster musk-rose (that rose of which Titania talks), sending its bunches of odorous blossoms into the very window; the little flower-court underneath, full of hollyhogs, cloves, and dabbies; and the large sloping meadows beyond, leading up to Farmer Bell's tall, irregular house, half covered with a flourishing vine; its barns, and ricks, and orchard,—all this formed an apartment too tempting to remain long untenanted, in the bright month of August. Accordingly, it was almost immediately engaged, by a gentleman in black, who walked over one fair morning, paid ten pounds as a deposit, sent for his trunk from the next town, and took possession on the instant.

Her new inmate, who, without positively declining to give his name, had yet contrived to evade all the questions which Mr. Kent's "simple cunning" could devise, proved a perpetual source of astonishment, both to herself and her neighbours. He was a well-made little man, near upon forty; with considerable tenacity of feature; a forehead of great power, whose effect was increased by a slight baldness on the top of the head, and an eye like a falcon. Such an eye! It seemed to go through you,—to strike all that it looked upon, like a *coup-de-sabre*. Luckily, the stranger was so merciful as, generally, to wear spectacles; under cover of which, those terrible eyes might see, and be seen, without danger. His habits were as peculiar as his fanciful, in his diet; drank nothing but water, or strong coffee; made, as Mrs. Kent observed, very wastefully; and had, as she also remarked, a great number of heathenish-looking books scattered about his apartment; Lord Bernal's Proseist, for instance—Sir Thomas Brown's *Vin Privat*—Isaac Walton's *Complete Angler*—the *Baskerville Aristote*—Gottschalk's *Faust*—a Spanish *Don Quixote*—and an interleaved Philologist, full of outline drawings. The greater part of his time was spent out of doors. He would even ramble away for three or four days together, with no other companion than a fcy, hired in the village, to carry what Mrs. Kent denominated his odds and ends; which odds and ends consisted, for the most part, of an angling rod, and a sketching apparatus,—our incognito being, as my readers have, by this time, probably discovered, no other than an artist, on his summer progress.

Robert speedily understood the stranger, and was delighted with the opportunity of approaching so gifted a person; although he contemplated, with a degree of generous envy, which a king's realm would have failed to excite in his bosom, those *chef-d'œuvres* of all nations, which were to him as "sealed books" and the pencils, whose power appeared no thing less than creative. He redoubled his industry in the garden, that he might, conscientiously, devote hours, and half hours, to pointing out the deep pools and shallow eddies of their romantic stream, where he knew from experience (for Robert amongst his other accomplishments, was no mean "brother of the angle") that fish were likely to be found; and better still, he loved to lead to the haunts of his childhood, the wild bushy dell, and the sunny ends of lanes, where a sudden turn in the track, an overhanging tree, an old gate, a cottage chimney, and a group of cattle or children, had sometimes formed a picture, on which his fancy had fed for hours. It was

Robert's chief pleasure to entice his lodger to scenes such as these, and to see his own visions growing into reality, under the glowing pencil of the artist; and he, in his turn, would admire and marvel at, the natural feeling of the beautiful, which could lead an uneducated country youth, instinctively, to the very elements of the picturesque. A general agreement of taste had brought about a degree of association, unusual between persons so different in rank;—a particular instance of this accordance, dissolved the intimacy.

Robert had been, for above a fortnight, more than commonly busy in Mr. Lescomb's garden and hothouses,—so busy, on the other hand, had been, during the same period, shut up, painting, in the little parlour. At last they met; and the artist invited his young friend to look at the picture which had engaged him during his absence. On walking into the room, he saw, on the easel, a picture in oils, almost finished. The style was of that delightful kind which combines figure with landscape; the subject was Hay-carrying; and the scene, that very sloping meadow—crowned by Farmer Bell's tall, angular, house, its vine-wreathed porch and chimneys, the great walnut-tree before the door, the orchard, and the homestead,—which formed the actual prospect from the windows before them.

In the fore-ground was a wagon, piled with hay, surrounded by the farmer and his fine family—some pitching, some loading, some raking after—all intent on their pleasant business. The only disengaged persons in the field were young Mary Kent and Harry Bell, an orphan of four years old, who rode on her knee on the top of the wagon, crowned and wreathed with garlands of vine-leaves and bind-weed and poppies and corn flowers. In the front, looking up at Mary Kent and her little brother, and playfully teasing to them the look of hay which she had gathered on her rake, stood Susan Bell—her head thrown back, her bonnet half off, her light and lively figure shown, in all its grace, by the pretty attitude and the short cool dress; while her sweet face, glowing with youth and beauty, had a smile playing over it like a sunbeam. The boy was nodding and laughing to her, and seemed longing—as well he might—to escape from his flowery bondage, and jump into her arms. Now, I had just framed a portrait image of rural beauty! Never had painter more felicitously realized his conception!

"Well, Robert!" exclaimed our artist, a little impatient of the confined silence, and missing the expected praise—"Well?" But still Robert spoke not. "Don't you think it a good subject?" continued the man of the easel. "I was sitting at the window, reading Froissart, whilst they were carrying the after-crop, and by good luck, happened to look up, just as they had arranged themselves into this very group, and as the evening sun came shooting, exactly as it does now, across the meadow; so I dashed in the sketch instantly, not Mary I sent to me—and a very pretty nymph-like figure she makes—dressed for the hay harvest, just as she was decked out for the harvest-home,—the scene is really a fit model for a Capital; they are a glorious family;—and you had better know—" at that name, Robert, unable to control himself longer, rushed out of the room, leaving the astonished painter in the full belief that his senses had forsaken him.

The unhappy lover, grieved by jealousy, pursued his way to the Farm. He had hitherto, contented, although without confining his motive, even to himself, to keep his friend and his mistress asunder. He had no fears of her virtue or of his honour; but to Robert's romantic simplicity, it seemed that no one could gaze on Susan without feeling ardent love, and that such a man as the artist could never love in vain. Besides, in the conversations which they had held together, he had dwelt on beauty and simplicity, as the most attractive points of the female character;—Robert had felt, as he spoke, that Susan was the very being whom he described, and he had