

THE LITTLE BLACK SHEEP.

BY ONE OF 'EM.

I.

We were a happy household flock,
On the pleasant Pentland hills;
And still when I think upon those days
My heart to the memory thrills.
O for the trout in the mountain beck!
The bees in the heather bells!
And the cushat's call in the summer woods,
And the silent, lonely fells!

II.

I was earliest up, and latest out,
And always in some disgrace;
'Twas a jacket torn, an unlearned task,
Bare feet, or a dirty face.
Off to the woods at dawn of day,
And lost on the hills at night,
The little black sheep of the household fold,
And always in some sad plight.

III.

I had stripes to take on every hand;
I had lessons in every look,
But nothing troubled me half so much
As my mother's sorrowful look.
And oft when the house was dark and still,
Angry and wretched in bed,
I have felt her kiss on my hot, dry lips,
And her hand upon my head.

IV.

And heard her say: "Is Jack awake?"
Then what could I do but sigh,
Fling little brown arms about her neck,
And whisper: "I'll try! I'll try!"
I'll try to learn, I'll try to be good,
Oh, mother, for your dear sake!"
And when I failed, I was sure to hear
In the night: "Is Jack awake?"

V.

Honor and gold to-day are mine;
Yet many my memory keep,
And wonder and doubt how I have won,
I, such a little black sheep.
I could not stray from my mother's arms,
Was true for her love's sweet sake,
And if I failed, or failed, I knew
She would ask—"Is Jack awake?"

VI.

Now I have boys of my own to guide,
And one is idle and wild;
Do you think I forget the Pentland hills
The day when I was a child?
Ah no! Ah no! my little black sheep
More close to my heart I take;
And when he strays, in the solemn night
I whisper, "Is Jack awake?"
And very soon his little hot hand
Seeks mine with penitent sigh,
He softly says—"I want to be good,
To-morrow, I'll try! I'll try!"

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

HOW HE CONSTRUCTED NOVELS.

Under the title of "A Walk in a Wood," the late Anthony Trollope thus describes his methods of plot-making and the difficulty the novelist experiences in making the "tricky Ariel" of the imagination do his bidding:

I have to confess that my incidents are fabricated to fit my story as it goes on, and not my story to fit my incidents. I wrote a novel once in which a lady forged a will; but I had not myself decided that she had forged it till the chapter before that in which she confesses her guilt. In another a lady is made to steal her own diamonds—a grand tour de force, as I thought; but the brilliant idea only struck me when I was writing the page in which the theft is described. I once heard an unknown critic abuse my workmanship because a certain lady had been made to appear too frequently in my pages. I went home and killed her immediately. I say this to show that the process of thinking to which I am alluding has not generally been applied to any great effort of construction. It has expended itself on the minute ramifications of tale-telling: how this young lady should be made to behave herself with that young gentleman; how this mother or that father would be affected by the ill conduct or the good of a son or a daughter; how these words or those other would be most appropriate or true to Nature if used on some special occasion. Such plottings as these, with a fabricator of fiction, are infinite in number. But not one of them can be done fitly without thinking. My little effort will miss its wished-for result, unless I be true to nature; and to be true to nature I must think what nature would produce. Where shall I go to find my thoughts with the greatest ease and most perfect freedom?

I have found that I can best command my thoughts on foot, and can do so with the most perfect mastery when wandering through a wood. To be alone is of course essential. Companion-ship requires conversation, for which indeed the spot is most fit; but conversation is not now the object in view. I have found it best even to reject the society of a dog, who, if he be a dog of manners, will make some attempt at talking. And though he should be silent the sight of him provokes words and caresses and sport. It is best to be away from cottages, away from children, away as far as may be from other chance wanderers. So much easier is it to speak than to think that any slightest temptation suffices to carry away the idler from the harder to the lighter work. An old woman with a bundle of sticks becomes an agreeable companion, or a little girl picking wild fruit. Even when quite alone, when all the surroundings seem to be fitted for thought, the thinker will still find a difficulty in thinking. It is not that the mind is inactive, but that it will run exactly

whither it is not bidden to go. With subtle ingenuity it will find for itself little easy tasks instead of settling itself down on that which it is its duty to do at once. With me, I own, it is so weak as to fly back to things already done, which require no more thinking, which are perhaps unworthy of a place even in the memory, and to revel in the ease of contemplating that which has been accomplished rather than to struggle for further performance. My eyes, which should become moist with the troubles of the embryo heroine, shed tears as they call to mind the early sorrow of Mr. —, who was married and made happy many years ago. Then, when it comes to this, a great effort becomes necessary, or that day will for him have no results. It is so easy to lose an hour in maudering over the past, and to waste the good things which have been provided in remembering instead of creating!

But a word about the nature of the wood! It is not always easy to find a wood, and sometimes when you have got it, it is but a muddy, plashy, rough-hewn congregation of ill-grown trees—a thicket rather than a wood—in which even contemplation is difficult, and thinking is out of the question. He who has devoted himself to wandering in woods will know at the first glance whether the place will suit his purpose. A crowded undergrowth of hazel, thorn, birch, and alder, with merely a track through it, will by no means serve the occasion. The trees around you should be big and noble. There should be grass at your feet. There should be space for the felled or fallen princes of the forest. A roadway, with the sign of wheels that have passed long since, will be an advantage, so long as the branches above head shall meet or seem to meet each other. I will not say that the ground should not be level, lest by creating difficulties I shall seem to show that the fitting spot may be too difficult to be found; but, no doubt, it will be an assistance in the work to be done if occasionally you can look down on the tops of the trees as you descend, and again look up to them as with increasing height they rise high above your head. And it should be a wood—perhaps a forest—rather than a skirting of timber. You should feel that, if not lost, you are lovable. To have trees around you is not enough, unless you have many. You must have a feeling as of Adam in the garden. There must be a confirmed assurance in your mind that you have got out of the conventional into the natural—which will not establish itself unless there be a consciousness of distance between you and the next ploughed field. If possible, you should not know the east from the west, or, if so, only by the setting of the sun. You should recognize the direction in which you must return simply by the fall of water.

But where shall the wood be found? Such woodlands there are still in England, though, alas, they are becoming rarer every year. Profit from the timber-merchant or dealer in firewood is looked to, or else, as is more probable, drives are cut broad and straight, like spokes of a wheel radiating to a nave or centre, good only for the purposes of the slayer of multitudinous pheasants. I will not say that a wood prepared, not as the home, but the slaughter-ground of game, is altogether inefficient for our purpose. I have used such even when the sound of the guns have been near enough to warn me to turn my steps to the right or to the left. The scents are pleasant even in winter, the trees are there, and sometimes even yet the delightful feeling may be encountered that the track on which you are walking leads to some far-off vague destination, in reaching which there may be much of delight, because it will be new—something also of peril, because it will be distant. But the wood, if possible, should seem to be purposeless. It should have no evident consciousness of being there either for game or fagots. The felled trunk on which you sit should seem to have been selected for some accidental purpose of house-building, as though a neighbor had searched for what was wanting and had found it. No idea should be engendered that it was let out at so much an acre to a contractor who would cut the trees in order and sell them in the next market. The mind should conceive that this wood never had been planted by hands, but had come there from the direct beneficence of the Creator—as the first woods did come—before man had been taught to recreate them systematically, and as some still remain to us, so much more lovely in their wildness than when reduced to rows and quincunxes, and made to accommodate themselves to laws of economy and order.

They will not come at once, those thoughts which are so anxiously expected; and in the process of coming they apt to be troublesome, full of tricks and almost traitorous. They must be imprisoned, or bound with thongs, when they come, as was Proteus when Ulysses caught him amidst his sea-calves—as was done with some of the fairies of old, who would, indeed, do their beneficent work, but only under compulsion. It may be that your spirit should on an occasion be as obedient as Ariel, but that will not be often. He will run backward—as it were downhill—because it is so easy, instead of upward and onward. He will turn to the right and to the left, making a show of doing fine work, only not the work that is demanded of him that day. He will skip hither and thither, with pleasant bright gambols, but will not put his shoulder to the wheel, his neck to the collar, his hand to the plough. Has my reader ever driven a pig to market? The pig will travel on freely, but will always take the wrong turning, and then when stopped for the tenth time will head backward, and try to run between your legs.

So it is with the tricky Ariel—that Ariel which every man owns, though so many of us fail to use him for much purpose, which but few of us have subjected to such discipline as Prospero had used before he had brought his servant to do his bidding at the slightest word.

But at last I feel that I have him—perhaps by the tail, as the Irishman drives his pig. When I have got him I have to be careful that he shall not escape me till that job of work be done. Gradually as I walk or stop, as I seat myself on a bank or lean against a tree, perhaps as I hurry on waving my stick above my head till, with my quick motion, the sweat-drops come out upon my brow, the scene forms itself for me. I see, or fancy that I see, what will be fitting, what will be true, how far virtue may be made to go without breaking the link which binds it to humanity, how low ignorance may grovel, how high knowledge may soar, what the writer may teach without repelling by severity, how he may amuse without descending to buffoonery; and then the limits of pathos are searched, and words are weighed which shall suit, but do no more than suit, the greatness or the smallness of the occasion. We, who are slight, may not attempt lofty things, or make ridiculous with our little fables the doings of the gods. But for that which we do there are appropriate terms and boundaries which may be reached but not surpassed. All this has to be thought of and decided upon in reference to those little plottings of which I have spoken, each of which has to be made the receptacle of pathos or of humor, of honor or of truth, as far as the thinker may be able to furnish them. He has to see, above all things, that in his attempts he shall not sin against nature; that, in striving to touch the feelings, he shall not excite ridicule; that, in seeking for humor, he does miss his point; that, in quest of honor and truth, he does not become bombastic and strait-laced. A clergyman in his pulpit may advocate an altitude of virtue fitted to a millennium here or to a heaven hereafter; nay from the nature of his profession, he must do so. The poet, too, may soar as high as he will, and if words suffice to him, need never fear to fail because his ideas are too lofty. But he who tells tales in prose can hardly hope to be effective as a teacher unless he binds himself by the circumstances of the world which he finds around him. Honor and truth there should be, and pathos and humor; but he should so constrain them that they shall not seem to mount into nature beyond the ordinary habitations of men and women.

Such rules as to construction have probably been long known to him. It is not for them he is seeking as he is roaming listlessly or walking rapidly through the trees. They have come to him from much observation, from the writings of others, from that which we call study, in which imagination has but little immediate concern. It is the fitting of the rules to the characters which he has created, the filling in with living touches and true colors those daubs and blotches on his canvas which have been easily scribbled with a rough hand, that the true work consists. It is here that he requires that his fancy should be undisturbed; that the trees should overshadow him, that the birds should comfort him, that the green and yellow mosses should be in unison with him, that the very air should be good to him. The rules are there fixed—fixed as far as his judgment can fix them—and are no longer a difficulty to him. The first coarse outlines of his story he has found to be a matter almost indifferent to him. It is with these little plottings that he has to contend. It is for them that he must catch his Ariel, and bind him fast; but yet so bind him that not a thread shall touch the easy action of his wings. Every little scene must be arranged so that—if it may be possible—the proper words may be spoken and the fitting effect produced.

Alas, with all these struggles, when the wood has been found, when all external things are propitious, when the very heavens have lent their aid, it is so often that it is impossible! It is not only that your Ariel is untrained, but that the special Ariel which you may chance to own is no better than a rustic hobgoblin, or a pease-blossom, or mustard seed at the best. You cannot get the pace of the race-horse from a farm-yard colt, train him as you will. How often is one prompted to fling one's self down in despair, and weeping between the branches, to declare that it is not that the thoughts will wander, it is not that the mind is treacherous! That which it can do it will do; but the pace required from it should be fitted only for the farm-yard.

VARIETIES.

WHILE we are enjoying the benefits of reduced postage, let us not forget that our esteemed citizen, Hon. Thomas L. James, helped to bring about the much-desired result at this early date while he occupied the position of Postmaster-General. "Honor to whom," etc.

THE excavations in the island of Delos, in charge of the *Ecole Française* of Athens, have been suspended for the present, owing to the establishment of a lazaretto in the immediate neighborhood. Important discoveries have been made in the short time during which these researches have been carried on. The ruins of a private house of the time of Alexander, which were uncovered near the *Théâtre d'Apollon*, included the pavement of a court in mosaics representing flowers and fish.

THE statue of Alexandre Dumas by the late Gustave Doré will be unveiled in Paris at the end of October. It is ready to be placed upon its pedestal, and nothing remains to be done now but to prepare the ground around the monument. This statue is said to be a remarkable work, marked alike by the faults and the genius of Doré. It represents the great romancer seated, in his working costume; he is writing, and the pen seems to be running in his fingers as it ran in life. On the front part of the pedestal is a group of readers; a young girl is reading a passage to a student and a workman, who are listening with rapt attention. The rear of the pedestal is occupied by a figure of Artagnan. There is an interesting series of descriptions on the work.

LAPENBERG, the summer home of the crowned heads of Austria, Rudolph and Stephanie, is a beautiful spot. It was put in its present form by the grandfather of Francis Joseph, who exhibited his taste for the picturesque by building on an island in the lake of the castle of Franzensburg, an exact counterpart of the most ancient home of the Hapsburgs in the Tyrol. To furnish the interior he almost pillaged every existing old family mansion or convent, taking from one a beautifully-carved wooden roof, or a whole chapel with marble pillars, statues, altars, etc.; from another a beautiful fire-place or a brilliant stained-glass window. The whole building was filled with old chests, wardrobes, gilt beds, etc.; so that it is now really an interesting museum, where the art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries can be advantageously studied.

THE Canada Atlantic Railroad claims to run the fastest trains in America, from Coteau to Ottawa, seventy-eight and four-tenths miles, in one hour and thirty-four minutes, or about fifty miles an hour, making three stops. The "Flying Dutchman," running from London to Bristol, averages fifty-nine and one-eighth miles an hour for one hundred and eighteen and one-quarter miles; another Great Western train, from Paddington to Swindon, makes fifty-three and one-quarter miles an hour for seventy-seven and one-quarter miles; a German train goes one hundred and fifty-two and one-half miles, from Berlin to Hanover, at the rate of fifty-one and seven-tenths miles an hour; the Great Western's London and Peterboro train averages fifty-one and one-half miles an hour, the Northampton train fifty-one and one-half miles an hour, the Pennsylvania's fast train from Jersey City to Philadelphia forty-eight and three-tenths miles an hour, and the Reading's Bound Brook fast train forty-four and seven-tenths miles an hour.

MR. D. W. Judd, in notes of travel in the far Western States and Territories published in the *American Agriculturist*, says: "The cheap lands are rapidly being taken. There will be none left at the end of five years' time, if they are absorbed as rapidly as they have been during the past five years. You must move quickly if you secure any more farm lands on Government grants, or at three, four and five dollars an acre from the railroads. First go out and explore the country before purchasing and taking your family with you. Explorers' tickets are still furnished by most of the railroads which have lands to sell. Take little baggage and few heirlooms with you. It costs money to transport them to the far West. Be sure and locate in a healthful locality. One after another, individual cattle ranches of Colorado, Dakota and Wyoming are being absorbed by large companies. Vast sums have been invested by Englishmen in these companies. An acquaintance who during two trips rode with us through Wyoming not long ago sold his cattle and his rancho on the Sweet Water to an English party for one hundred thousand dollars cash. The acquaintance, Tim Foley by name, has since invested this one hundred thousand dollars in and around Leadville, Colorado, and is now worth five hundred thousand dollars."

DID SHE DIE?

"No!"
"She lingered and suffered along, pining away all the time for years."
"The doctors doing her no good."
"And at last was cured by this Hop Bitters the papers say so much about."
"Indeed! Indeed!"
"How thankful we should be for that medicine."

A DAUGHTER'S MISERY.

"Eleven years our daughter suffered on a bed of misery
"From a complication of kidney, liver, rheumatic trouble and Nervous debility,
"Under the care of the best physicians.
"Who gave her disease various names,
"But no relief.
"And now she is restored to us in good health by as simple a remedy as Hop Bitters, that we had shunned for years before using it."—THE PARENTS.

FATHER IS GETTING WELL.

"My daughters say:
"How much better father is since he used Hop Bitters."
"He is getting well after his long suffering from a disease declared incurable."
"And we are so glad that he used your Bitters." A Lady of Utica, N.Y.