

CARO NOME.

BY KATE HILLARD.

Hold the sea-shell to thine ear,  
And the murmur of the wave  
From its rosy depths mayst hear,  
Like a voice from out the grave  
Calling thro' the night to thee!

Low and soft and far-away,  
From a silent, distant shore,  
Where is neither night nor day,  
Nor the sound of plying oar;  
For all sleep beside that sea!

Low and soft, but constant still,  
For it murmurs evermore  
With a steady, pulsing thrill,  
Of the waves upon the shore,  
And it tells nought else to thee.

Hold my heart up to thine ear,  
And the one beloved name  
Singing thro' its depths mayst hear,  
And the song is still the same,—  
'Tis a murmur from the sea:

From the great sea of my love,  
Far-reaching, calm and wide,  
Where nor storms nor tempests move,  
Nor ebbs the constant tide,  
And the waves still sing of thee!  
—Scribner's for September.

[Registered according to the Copyright Act of 1868.]

PUBLICANS and SINNERS

A LIFE PICTURE.

BY MISS. M. E. BRADDON.

Author of "Lady Audley's Secret," "To The Bitter End," "The Outcasts," &c., &c.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER X.

A DAUGHTER'S LOVE, AND A LOVER'S HOPE.

Lucius Davoren's life had taken a new color since that letter which opened the doors of the dismal old house in the Shadrack-road. His existence had now an object nearer to his human heart than even professional success. Dearly as he loved his profession, it is just possible that he loved himself a little better, and this new object, this new hope concerned himself alone. Yet did it not in any manner distract him from his patient labors, from his indefatigable studies, but rather gave him a new incentive to industry. How better could he serve the interests of her whom he loved than by toiling steadily on upon the road which he believed must ultimately lead him to success, and even to fame—that far brighter reward than mere material prosperity?

Mr. Sivewright's condition had in no wise improved. That gradual decay had gone on a long time before the sturdy old man had cared to make his pains and languors known to any human being, much less to a member of that fraternity he affected to despise—the medical profession. All Lucius Davoren's care failed to bring back the vigour that had been wasted. He kept the feeble lamp of life burning, somewhat faintly, and that was all he could do.

For some little time after the surgeon's admission to the house, Mr. Sivewright spent his evenings by the fireside in the parlor downstairs. At Lucius's earnest request he had consented to the purchase of a more luxurious chair than the straight-backed instrument of torture in which he had been accustomed to sit. Here, by the hearth, where a better fire burned than of old—for Lucius insisted that mistaken economy meant death—the *bric-à-brac* dealer sat and talked; talked of his youth, his bargains, his petty triumphs over rival traders, but of that lost wanderer, his son, never.

"There must be something hard in a man's nature when even the approach of death does not soften his heart towards his own flesh and blood," thought Lucius.

There came a time when the old man felt himself altogether too weak to leave his room. The broad shallow steps of the solid old staircase—so easy to the tread of youth and strength—became for him too painful a journey. He only left his bed to sit by the little bit of fire in his own room, or on warmer days by the open window.

This was some time after Lucius Davoren's visit to Stillington, when spring had been succeeded by summer, which in the Shadrack-road district was distinguishable from the other seasons chiefly by an Egyptian plague of flies and an all-pervading atmosphere of dust; also by the shrill cries of costermongers vending cheap lots of gooseberries or periwinkles, and by an adoption of somewhat oriental or *al-fresco* habits among the population, who lounged at their doors, and stood about the streets a good deal in the long warm evenings, while respectable matrons did their domestic needlework seated on their doorsteps, whence they might watch their young barbarians at play in the adjacent gutter.

From this somewhat shabby and ragged out-of-door life on the king's highway, it was a relief for Lucius to enter the calm seclusion of the shadowy old house, where the June sunshine was tempered at midday by half-closed oaken shutters, and where it seemed to the surgeon there was ever a peculiar coolness and freshness, and faint perfume of some simple garden flower unknown elsewhere. In this sultry weather, when the outer world was as one vast oven, that sparsely-furnished parlour with its dark wainscot walls was a place to dream in; the dim old hall with its chaotic treasures saved from the wreck of time, a delicious retreat from the clamor and toil of life. Here Lucius loved to come, and here he was sure of a sweet welcome from her whom he had loved at first sight, and whom familiarly had made daily dearer to him.

Yes, he confessed now that the interest he had felt in Lucille Sivewright from the very first had its root in a deeper feeling than compassion. He was no longer ashamed to own that it was love, and love only, that had made yonder rusty iron gate, by which he had so

He had spoken earnestly, and had pleaded well, but had been unable to read any answer in those truthful eyes, whose every expression he fancied he knew. Those had been persistently averted from him.

"Lucille, why do you turn from me? My dearest, why this discouraging silence? Do my words pain you? I had dared to hope they would not be unwelcome, that you must have guessed that they would come Lucille!" he exclaimed, with passionate entreaty, "you must have known that I loved you, ever so long ago, for I have loved you from the very first."

"You have been very good to me," she said, in a low broken voice.

"Good to you!" he echoed scornfully. "So good that I have sometimes thought you—liked me a little." (A woman's periphrasis; feminine lips hardly dare utter that mighty word "love.") "But if it is really so—which seems almost too much for me to believe" (if he could but have seen the proud happy look in her eyes as she said that!)—"I can only beg you never to say any more about it—until—"

"Until what, Lucille?" impatiently. He had



"OUR FATHER."

often lingered, longing and sad, seem to him as the door of paradise.

One evening, after the old man had taken to his room up-stairs, and Lucille had been sorrowful and anxious, and had seemed in peculiar need of consolation, the old, old story was told once more under the pale stars of evening, as these two wandered about that patch of dusty sward above which the old cedars stretched their shrunken branches, and cast their grim shadows on the shadowy grass. The wharf with its black barges lay before them; beyond, a forest of roofs, and attic windows, and tall factory chimneys, and distant spars of mighty merchantmen faintly visible against the pale-gray sky. Not a romantic spot, or a scene calculated to inspire the souls of lovers, by any means. Yet Lucius was every whit as eloquent as he would have been had they wandered on the shores of Leman, or watched the sun go down from the orange groves of Cintra.

The girl heard him in profound silence. They had come to a pause in their desultory wanderings by the decaying ruin of an ancient summer-house, at an angle of the wall close to the wharf—a spot which to the simpler tastes of untravelled citizens in the last century may have seemed eminently picturesque. Lucille sat on the broken bench in a somewhat dejected attitude, her arms resting on a battered old table, her face turned away from Lucius towards the dingy hulls that lay moored upon those muddy waters, unbeautiful as that dark ferry-boat which Dante saw advancing shadowy athwart the "woeful tide of Acheron."

not expected to find hindrance or stumbling block in the way of his happiness here. From the old man there would no doubt be opposition, but surely not here. Had he so grossly deceived himself when he believed his love returned?

"Until my life is changed from what it is now, such a broken life, the merest fragment of a life. How can I think of returning the affection you speak of—you so worthy to be loved—while I am in this miserable state of uncertainty about my father—not knowing if he is living or dead, fortunate or unhappy? I can never give my heart to any one, however noble"—with a lingering tenderness which might have told him he was beloved—"until all doubts are cleared upon that one subject. Until then, I belong to my father. At any moment he might appear to claim me; and I am his"—with a passionate emphasis—"his, by the memory of that childhood, when I loved him so dearly. Let him order me to follow him to the other end of the world, and I should go—without one fear, without one regret."

Lucius was silent for some moments, stung to the quick. Was a mere memory, the very shadow of her childhood's affection, so much nearer to her than his deep unselfish love—his love, which might brighten her dull life in the present, and open a fair vista of future happiness—that hopeful active love, which was to make a home for her, and win fame for him in the days to come, always for her sake?

"What, Lucille," he said reproachfully, "you hold my love so lightly that it can count for nothing when weighed against the memory of

a father who deserted you—who has let all the years of your girlhood go by without making the faintest attempt to claim you, or even to see you?"

"How do I know what may have prevented him?" she asked—"what barrier may have stood between him and me? Death perhaps. He did not desert me."

"Was not his sudden departure from your grandfather's house desertion of you?"

"No. He was driven away. I am very sure of that. My grandfather was hard and cruel to him."

"Perhaps. But whatever quarrel may have parted those two, your claim on your father remained. You had not been hard or cruel; yet he left you—tacitly renounced all claim upon you when he left his father's house. I don't want to blame him, Lucille; I don't want to spoil that idealised image which you carry in your heart; but surely it is not for you to sacrifice a very real affection in the present for a vague memory of the past."

"It is not vague. My memory of those days is as vivid as my memory of yesterday—more vivid even. I have but to close my eyes—now, at this very moment while you are talking to me—and I can see my father's face; it is not your voice I hear, but his."

"Infatuation, Lucille," exclaimed the surgeon sadly. "Had you known your father a few years longer, you might have discovered that he was quite unworthy of your love—that fond confiding love of a child's guileless heart, prone to make for itself an idol."

"If I had found him unworthy, I do not believe my love would have altered; I should only have been so much the more sorry for him. Remember, I am used to hear him badly spoken of. My grandfather's bitterest words have never lessened my love for him."

"Granted that your love for him is indestructible, why should it stand between you and me—if I am not quite indifferent to you? Answer me that question first, Lucille; I am too much in earnest to be satisfied with half knowledge. Do you care for me, ever so little?"

She looked round at him for the first time, smiling, yet with tearful eyes—an expression that was half mournful, half arch.

"Ever so little," she repeated. "I might own to that. It does not commit me to much."

"More than a little, then? O, be frank, Lucille! I have shown you all the weakness—or the strength—of my heart."

"I love you very dearly," she said shyly. She was clasped to his breast before the words were half spoken, the kiss of betrothal pressed upon her trembling lips. She withdrew herself hastily from that first fond embrace.

"You have not heard half that I have to say, Mr. Davoren."

"I will never consent to be Mr. Davoren again."

"I will call you Lucius, then; only you must hear what I have to say. I do love you, very truly," with a warning gesture that stopped any farther demonstration on his part; "I do think you good and brave and noble. I am very proud to know that you care for me. But I can bind myself by no new tie until the mystery of my father's fate has been solved, until I am very sure that he will never claim my love and my obedience."

"If I were to solve that mystery, Lucille—or at least attempt to solve it," said Lucius thoughtfully.

"Ah, if! But you would never think of that! You could not spare time and thought for that; you have your profession."

"Yes, and all my hopes of winning a position which might make you proud of being my wife by and by. It would be a hard thing to forego all those, Lucille—to devote my mind and my life to a perhaps hopeless endeavor. Fondly as I love you, I am not chivalrous enough to say I will shut up my surgery to-morrow and start on the first stage to the Antipodes, or the Japan Islands, or Heaven knows where, in quest of your father. Yet I might do something. If I had but the slightest foundation to work upon I should hardly be afraid of success. I would willingly do anything, anything less than the entire sacrifice of my prospects—which must be your prospects, too, Lucille—to prove how dear you are to me."

"You really would? Ah, if you could find him—if you could reunite us, I should love you so dearly—at least, no," with a little gush of tenderness, "I could not love you better than I do now. But you would make me so happy."

"Then I will try, dearest, try honestly. But if I fail—after earnest endeavor, and at the end of a reasonable period—if I fail in bringing your father to you living, or discovering when and how he died, you will not punish me for my failure. You will be my wife two or three years hence, come what may, Lucille. Give me that hope, sweet one. It will make me strong enough to face all difficulties."

"I love you," she said, in her low, serious voice, putting her little hand into his; and that simple admission he accepted as a promise.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A SCOUNDREL.

The weakness and the languor that kept Homer Sivewright a prisoner in his bedroom were not the tokens of a mortal illness. Death kept as yet at a respectful distance. The patient might linger for a year, two years, three years, or longer. There was organic disease, but of a mild type. Lucius was not without hopes of a rally—that a period of perfect repose and quiet might, in some measure, restore the enfeebled