

Washington Irving and His "House of Dreams".

(By THORNTON HALL, in John O'London's Weekly.)

"She died in the beauty of her youth, and in my memory she will ever be young and beautiful." In these words, written by Washington Irving, in a note-book kept for his own eyes alone, thirteen years after his great sorrow left his heart empty and his life desolate, is enshrined one of the most beautiful and the saddest romances in human history.

It was as a clerk in the office of Josiah Hoffman that the future author of "The Sketch Book" and "Racine Hall" first met and learned to love his principal's daughter, Matilda, then a child of twelve, whose budding loveliness and sweetness of disposition made a powerful appeal to the young student.

A Cherry Captain.

It was not long, however, before the menace of consumption made it necessary for him to leave his law-books and Matilda's sweet companionship to fare across the seas in search of health, a journey from which he never expected to return. So ill, in fact, was he, that when he stepped on the deck of the vessel that was to carry him to Europe, the captain eyed him with a foreboding glance and said to himself, "There's a chap who will go overboard before we get across." Happily, however, the boy carried a brave heart with him. He determined to make a gallant struggle for life for the sake of the child he had left behind; with the result that, after two years of roaming, he returned full of strength and happiness to find that Matilda had grown into radiant young womanhood, lovely in itself and lovely in its promise of a splendid maturity.

Then followed golden days for the lovers, each of which strengthened the bond that united their young lives. "We saw each other every day," he wrote in later years to his dearest friend, "and I became excessively attached to her. The more I saw of her, the more I had reason to admire her. Her mind seemed to unfold leaf by leaf, and every time to discover new sweetness. Nobody knew her so well as I, for she was generally timid and silent."

"I Idolized Her."

"Never did I meet with more intuitive rectitude of mind, more native delicacy, more exquisite propriety in word, thought, and action, than in this young creature. I am not exaggerating; what I say was acknowledged by all who knew her. Her brilliant little sister used to say that people began by admiring Matilda, but ended by loving her. For my part, I idolized her. I felt at times rebuked by her superior delicacy and purity, as if I was a coarse, unworthy being in comparison."

Thus a few months passed in a happiness such as Washington Irving had not deemed possible on earth. Heart spoke to heart and soul to soul in soul in sweet and perfect communion. Together they mapped out their future life, which was to be all sunshine, as earthly Paradise. They planned and built in fancy the House of Dreams in which they would live, filling, in delightful anticipation, the days that were to come with all the treasures of love and labour; and while they dreamed of a future that was never to be, a present inexpressibly sweet slipped over their heads in its hurry to become the past. The problem of means never entered their thoughts. Washington was poor, with a great struggle before him; but his heart was as stout as his purse was empty, and he knew that he could command success and its rewards. Meanwhile he was hard at work on his "History of New York" that was to make him famous.

The Tragedy.

Then, when his sky was at its fairest, when his life was flooded with the ecstasy of its sunshine, came the sudden and tragic eclipse of all his dreaming. A cold, which seemed too trivial to awaken any anxiety, developed into consumption; and in two months—months of alternate hope and dread, culminating in the blackness of despair, the girl he loved far more than life was taken from him. To the last he watched over her more tenderly than a mother watches over

a dearly-loved child; and it was with her hand clasped in his and her eyes speaking their last mute, eloquent message of love to him that she passed peacefully "behind the veil."

Dead Sea Fruit.

Then followed for Irving months of abysmal sorrow and gloom through which no ray of light came, before at last he was able to turn a brave face to the long, lonely years to come. Those years brought him fame far beyond all his hopes—honours, social triumphs, the homage and love of high and low; but to him all his success was but as Dead Sea fruit.

To no one, it is said, did he ever mention her name. It was too jealously enshrined in his heart for even his own lips to utter it. Once only did he write it—in that letter from which I have quoted, sent to his most intimate friend on condition that it should be returned to him at once. This letter was found after his death in a box of which he always kept the key, in company with her Bible and Prayer Book, a braid of her beautiful hair, and a miniature of her; and these sacred treasures were always under his pillow when he slept.

Thirty years after her death he was at her father's house when one of her nieces, in taking out a piece of music from a drawer, accidentally drew forth with it a piece of embroidery. "Washington," said Mr. Hoffman, picking up the faded relic, "this is a piece of poor Matilda's workmanship." "The effect," her nephew tells us, "was electric. He had been conversing in the sprightliest mood before, and he sank at once into silence; and in a few moments got up and left the room."

Halifax School for the Blind.

MURDOCK SQUARE, HALIFAX, N.S., 1920.

The Handicapped Boy or Girl.—The boy or girl who is handicapped by blindness or imperfect sight has a right to be trained for the active work of life. This training is given at the Halifax School for the Blind.

Eligible for Training.—Boys or girls between the ages of six and twenty-one from the Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland who are totally blind, or who have not sufficient sight to study in the public schools are eligible as pupils.

AIMS OF THE SCHOOL.

First.—To give such a broad training as will enable the boy or girl to appreciate and enjoy the things in life that are most worth while.

Second.—To fit the boy or girl to live independently of the assistance of others.

Health.—Every care is taken to promote the health of the pupils. A trained nurse is always in residence and the services of city physicians are available when required. Physical training classes for both boys and girls are conducted throughout the school year.

Religious Training.—The religious creed of parents, Catholic or Protestant, is strictly respected, and no religious training is given or permitted in the school except by outside volunteer workers of the child's own church. Pupils are required to attend the churches of their own denominations.

Expense.—Board and lodging, medical attention, and tuition are absolutely free. Parents are required to pay travelling expenses to and from the school, and to keep their children comfortably clothed while in attendance.

School Term.—The school opens in September and closes early in June, the pupils returning to their homes for the summer vacation.

How to Enter.—When a parent or guardian wishes a boy or girl to enter the school, the Superintendent should be written to and he will at once send the necessary admission papers and supply any further particulars that may be required.

NOTE:

First.—Any person knowing of a

boy or girl totally or partially blind will help forward the work of this institution by sending the name, age, and address of the parent or guardian to the Superintendent of the School. Second—Every effort is being made to make the coming Jubilee year the biggest and best in the history of the school.

C. F. FRASER,
Superintendent.



UNLUCKY BILLY GREEN.

I used to think that Billy Green was luckier than me. He hasn't any mother watchin' over him to see

If his neck an' ears are dirty, an' there's no one seems to care. If his shoes are nice an' shiny or he ever combs his hair. He's an orphan, so they tell me, an' with all I have to do I used to think that maybe I should like to be one, too.

He wears the same old shirt-waist an' his shoes are full of holes. An' they're bigger than they should be an' they haven't any soles, an' his underwear's not fuzzy, like the kind I have to wear. He's got safety pins for buttons, an' when he goes anywhere No one calls him in to wash him, Oh, I've often wished to be An' orphan just like Billy with no one to pester me.

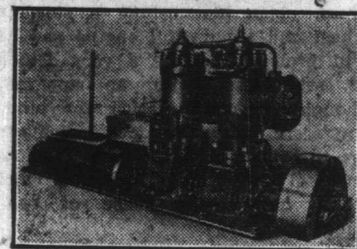
But I'm glad I'm not an orphan, an' I found it out to-day. When Billy's leg got twisted in a game we fellows play, An' it hurt him something awful, an' nobody came to see, An' he didn't have a mother who would take him on her knee. So I took him in to mine An' he said: "Oh, Bud, you're lucky! Ain't your mother just divine?"

Now I'm never goin' to whisper when my mother scrubs my neck. An' she'll scold me just a little cox my clothing is a wreck. I'll do just as she tells me, an' I'll stand 'for being clean. I don't want to be an orphan any more like Billy Green. Cos although nobody scolds him when his face is smeared with dirt. He hasn't any mother he can go to when he's hurt.

Self-trills and cashes are attractive on organdie frocks. The square neck is shown in the newest slip-on sweaters. A graduated pleating sometimes finishes the short sleeve. Ten inches from the ground is the popular skirt length.

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