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POETRY.

MY SISTER'S GRAVE.

Vale, vale!—nos te, ordine quo natura permittit, sequamur!

THE noon-day sun is riding high,
Along the calm and cloudless sky!
The mantle of his gorgeous glow
Floats sleepily o'er all below;
And heaven and earth are brightly gay
Beneath the universal ray!
But not a wandering zephyr falls
Within these high and hallow'd walls,
Which echo back my lonely tread,
Like solemn answers from the dead!
—The murmurs steal along the nave,
'Tis evening—still I linger here,
Yet sorrow speaks not in a tear!
The silence is so sadly deep,
The place so pure,—I dare not weep!
I sit as in a stupor dream,
Where all is changing, save its theme,
And, if a sigh will sometimes heave,
It heaves as though,—but may not grieve,
A heart that loves,—the spirit round
Sits back reproachfully the sound!
And then I start,—and think I have
A cliding from my sister's grave!

The feeling is a nameless one,
With which I sit upon thy stone,
And read the tale I dare not breathe
Of brighted hope that sleeps beneath!
A simple tablet bears above
Brief record of a father's love,
And hints, in language yet more brief,
The story of a father's grief!
—Around, the night-breeze sadly plays
With scutechons of the elder days,
And faded banners dimly wave,
On high,—right o'er my sister's grave!
I sit spirit—thine was my breast
To struggle vainly after rest!

Thou wert not made to bear the strife,
Nor labour through the storms of life!
Thy heart was in too warm a mould
To mingle with the dull and cold,
And every thought that wrought thy truth
Fell like a blight upon thy youth!
—Thou shouldst have been, for thy distress,
Less pure,—and oh, more passionate!
For sorrow's wasting midday gave
Thy tenant to my sister's grave!
But all thy griefs, my gun, are o'er!
Thy fair blue eyes shall weep no more!
—To sweet to know thy fragile form
Lies safe from every future storm!
—Oh, as I haunt the dreary gloom,
That gathers round thy peaceful tomb,
I love to see the lightning stream
Along thy stone, with fulfil gleam,
To fancy in each flash are given
Thy spirit's visitings from heaven,
—And smile,—to hear the tempest rave
Above my sister's quiet grave!

THE SIMPLE MAN IS THE BEGGAR'S BROTHER.

(Concluded.)

"O Nancy! Nancy!" cried I, "ye would kin the wind! Just take yourself away if ye please, for really ye're tormenting me,—making a perfect gowk o' me for neither end nor purpose."

"O, if that be the way," said she, "I can leave ye,—but I have seen the day when ye thought otherwise o' my company. Yet, the more I see o' your r'ansactions Nicholas, the more am I convinced in the truth o' the saying, that the simple man is the beggar's brother."

"Sorrow take ye wife!" cried I, "will ye really come ower these words again. Are ye not aware that I detest and abhor them? I have I not said that to ye again and again, and yet ye will repeat them in my hearing. Do ye wish to drive me mad?"

"I would wish to see ye act," answered she, "so that I would never need to use them again." And on saying that she went out o' the room, which to me was a great deliverance.

I got the bill cashed, and to tell ye the plain truth, I also had to pay. This was a dreadful loss to me; and I found there was

nothing left for me but to sit down, (if ye understand what that means,) as many good men has been compelled to do. However I paid every penny seventeen shillings and sixpence half-penny in the pound. Some of my ceditors said it was owrie meikle, that I had been simple and wronged myself.

"I would wish to the utmost o' my power to be honest," said I, "and if I have wronged myself, I have saved my conscience. If there be nothing else left for me now, as Burns says—

"Heaven be thankit! I can beg!"

My business, however, had been entirely at a stand for the space o' six weeks. I had neither journeyman nor apprentice left. My looms, and the whole apparatus connected wi' the concern, had been sold off, and I had nothing in the world out a few articles o' furniture, which a friend bought back for me at the sale. I got the loan o' a loon, and in order to support my wife and family, I had to sit down to drive the shuttle again. I had wrought none to speak o' for ten years before, and my hands were quite out o' use. I made but a poor job o' it. The first week I didna make aboon half-a-crown; and that was but a small sum for the support o' a wife and half a dozen lilying bairns. However, I was still as simple as ever, and there wasna a wife in the countryside that was a bad payer, but brought her web to Nicholas Middlemiss. I wrought late and early, but though I did my utmost, I couldna keep my bairns' teeth gann. Many a time it has wrung my heart, when I heard them crying to their mother, clinging round her, and pulling at her apron, saying—

"Mother gie's a piece!—O just a wee bit more!"

"O my darlings," she used to say to them, "dinna ask me for bread the now. I havena a morsel in the house, and have no siller to buy meal. But your father is about finished wi' the web, and ye shall have plenty the night."

Then the bits o' dear creatures would have come rannin' ben to me and asked—Faither, when will the web be ready?"

"Sona I soon hinnies!" said I, half-choked wi' grief and blind wi' tears, "hand away out and buy yourself!"

For I couldna stand to see them yearning before me, and to behold want, like a gnawing worm, eating the flesh from their love'y cheeks. Then when I had went out wi' the web, Nancy would say to me—"Now Nicholas, remember the situation we are in. There is neither food o' our description nor another in the house, and ye see the last o' our coals upon the fire. Therefore before ye leave the web, see that ye get the money for the working o' it."

Ye see o' 's times, even after such admonitions, I have been home without a penny in my pocket. They put me off with an excuse, and another. Some were to call and pay me on Saturday, and others when they killed their pig. But those Saturdays seldom came, and in my belief the pigstae living yet. It used to put me in terror to meet my poor starving family. The consequence generally was, that Nancy had to go to where I had come from and request payment herself; and at last she wouldna trust me wi' the taking home o' the webs.

We suffered more than I am willing to tell about, at the period I ment on, and all arose o' my simplicity. But I was confined to my bed for ten weeks, wi' a dreadful attack o' rheumatism,—it was what was ca'd a rheumatic fever,—it reduced me to a perfect anarchy. I was as feckless as a half-burned thread. Through fatigue, anxiety, and want o' support together, Nancy also took very ill, and there did we be to all appearance hastening to the grave. What we suffered, and what our family suffered upon this occasion, and what our christian country could believe. But for the kindness o' the minister, and some o' our neighbours, we must all have perished. As a matter of course we fell sadly back, and when the house-rent became due, we had not wherewith to pay it. The landlord distrained us for it.

A second time the few things I had left were put under the hammer o' the auctioneer. "O!"

surely misery and I were born together!" For we had two daughters, the eldest only gaun six, both lying ill o' the scarlet fever in the same bed, so d out from under them. It was more than human nature could endure. The poor, dear lammys cried—"faither! mother! dinna let them touch us!" I took the eldest up in my arms, and begged that I might be allowed a blanket to row her in; Nancy took up the youngest one, and while the sale went on, with our dying bairns in our arms, we sat down in the street before the door, as two beggars—but we were not begging.

Our case excited universal commiseration. A number o' respectable people began to take an interest in our welfare, and business came so thick upon me, that I had to get two other looms, and found constant employment not only for my eldest laddie, whom I was bringing up to the business, but also for a journeyman.

Just as I was beginning to prosper, however, and to get my head above the water, there was one o' my auld creditors to whom I had paid the composition of seventeen and sixpence halfpenny in the pound, who was a hard-hearted, avaricious sort of man, and to whom I had promised, and not only promised, but given a written pledge, to pay him the remaining two and fivepence halfpenny in the pound, together with interest, in the course o' six years. The time was just expiring, when he came to me, and presenting the bit paper, which was in my own handwriting, demanded payment.

"Really sir," said I, "I ackn'owledge that I must pay ye, though every body said at the time that I was a very simple man for entering into any such agreement wi' ye; but it is not in my power to pay ye just now. In the course o' a twalmonth I hope to be able to do it."

"Mr. Middlemiss," said he, as slowly as if he were spelling my name, "my money I want, and my money I will have; and have it immediately too."

"Sir," said I, "the thing is impossible, I canna give ye what I havena got."

"I dinna care for that," said he, "if I dinna get it, I shall get you."

He had the cruelty to throw me into jail, just as I was beginning to gather my feet. It knocked all my prospects in the head again. I began to say it was o' no use for me to strive, for the stream o' fate was against me."

"Dinna say so Nicholas," said Nancy, who came on foot twice every week, a' the way from Langholm, to see me, "dinna say so. Your own simplicity is against ye—nothing else."

Weel, the debt was paid, and I got my liberty. But come weel come woe, I was still simple Nichol Middlemiss. Never have I been able to get the better o' my easy disposition. It has made me acquainted wi' misery,—it has kept me constantly in the company o' poverty,—and when I am dead, if my body erect a gravestone for me, they may inscribe over it—

"THE SIMPLE MAN IS THE BEGGAR'S BROTHER."

THE STAR IN THE EAST.

In one of those quiet valleys of the Alps, near the lake's wild margin, embosomed by snow-crowned mountains, lay the little village of Geneva. In its midst stood the moss-covered cottage of Belien. The departing rays of a summer's sun played among the leaves of the flowers, and the mountains and tall trees were inverted in the pure waters now still beneath the deep blue sky of heaven. The windows of Belien's cottage were thro' open, the curtains drawn aside, and there watched the wife of the faithful pastor over her dying child. Now she parted the damp curls from his brow, and then pressed her lips on his little cold fingers, which she held in her hand. Feverently the silent prayer ascended, that the night of sorrow might pass, and the storm of agony be stilled in her bosom; then the babe turned restlessly in her lap, in a low tone she sang,

Sleep, baby, sleep,
Once more upon my breast,
Thy we aching head shall rest,
In quiet sleep.

Sleep, baby sleep,
Sweetly thine eye is closing,
Calmy thou'rt now reposing,
In slumber deep.

Sleep, angel, baby, sleep,
Not in thy cradle bed,
Shalt rest thy little head,
But with the quiet dead,
In dream's deep sleep.

As the mother looked on her boy, she saw that his little limbs were stiff with the icy chill of death. A smile was on his cherub face, and the long lashes were closed over the blue eyes. Sweet Babe! no wonder that thy mother's heart is broken when she looks on her only child,—dead! The kind-hearted villagers made a little grave among the trees,—and on the third day, when the morning sun shone upon the Alpine mountains, they took from the mother's bosom her little one, and laid it in the ground; and then they looked along the narrow and wild defiles of the mountain for their paritor, who had been for some days absent.

At evening the wife of Belien sat alone in her cottage. She looked upon the lake. A beautiful light was on its waters. She raised her head. It was the star in the east; and it came up and stood over the place where the young child was. Upon her darkened soul it rose as the star of hope—the dawning of that light, which had been for a while withdrawn.

I shall rejoice in him who was born King of the Jews—for he hath gathered the sheep in his arms, and he carries the lambs in his bosom," she exclaimed—and her feelings were calmed—her broken spirit found repose.

That night the villagers welcomed their beloved paritor. No one dared to tell him his only son rested beneath the sods of the valley. As he passed from among them into his own cottage, from which the light was faintly gleaming, they uttered the heartfelt benediction, "Peace be within his dwelling." The embrace of the pastor and his wife was close and affectionate, and then the eye of the father glanced on the cradle, which stood in its accustomed place. "The babe sleeps," he said. "Blessed be God who has preserved you both!"

The mother turned to wipe the tears from her eyes, as she replied, "Yes, the babe sleeps, you cannot wake him! The fearful truth did not enter the mind of Belien, and he treated himself to partake of some simple refreshment which was set before him. "Your countenance is sad," he exclaimed, as he looked upon the face of his wife. "Methinks you ought to be full of joy. What shall we render to the Lord for all his goodness? The struggle in the countenance of the afflicted mother was too agonizing to escape the notice of Belien, and as he took her hand in his, he exclaimed, "Tell me, I beseech you, what has happened. Christianity I know is not secure, even among the Alpine valleys. It may be, that we are yet to cross the mountains of ice and snow, and seek shelter from those who persecute us for righteousness' sake. Tell me what has befallen us that you weep thus? The eye of the heart-stricken mother glanced towards the cradle of her babe, and there needed no comment. The pastor fell on his knees and uttered, "Our child is dead!"—they buried his face in his hands and wept aloud.

An hour passed, and the pastor and his wife mingled their tears at the grave of their child. Sweetly did the star in the east shine on that little mound. As Belien uncovered his head and gazed upward, he fervently exclaimed, "The Star of Bethlehem shall be our guide to that land which needeth no star to shine upon it! for the glory of God shall lighten it; and the Lamb is the light thereof!"

WHO SHALL HAVE THE PRIZE?—There was once to be a meeting of the flowers, and the judge was to award a prize to the one pronounced the most beautiful.—"Who shall have the prize?" said the rose, stalking forward in all the consciousness of beauty.—"Who shall have the prize?" said the other