

BETRAYED.

These verses embody the last thoughts recorded in the Journal of a young lady of a village on the banks of the St. Lawrence, who was found dead in her chamber on a bright June morning of 1860, and was supposed to have committed suicide during the night.

Henceforth a wanderer.
Hie thee, my soul,
Over life's frozen waste.
Haste to thy goal.

O never again
Shall the down of sweet rest
Pillow thy weariness.
Spirit unblessed!

No fair land of promise
Thy vision can reach:
No sunshine, no music,
No glory of speech.

Regrets and reproaches
Are idle and weak,
And the insult of pity
Brings shame to the cheek.

Farewell, ruined world!
In the depth of starry spaces
There may be sweet slumber,
And love-beaming faces.

There must be some spot
In this Universe wide
Where a poor wounded dovelet
May haste to and hide.

When day-light is gone,
And the glimmer of stars,
Like a ghost at the casement,
Looks in through the bars.

It is time to disrobe,
And to kneel down and weep.
To forgive and forget.
It is time now to sleep!

The raven has flown
To his perch through the gloom.
And the death-watch is calling
His mate in my room.

The wail of the winds,
And the rapid's fierce roar,
Have a wildness and terror
Ne'er I felt before.

A gray mist has settled
On land and on sea,
And night-dews are falling,
My spirit, on thee!

It is time to disrobe,
And to kneel down and weep.
To forgive and forget.
It is time now to sleep!

Montreal.

G. MARTIN.

JOAN:

A TALE.

BY

RHODA BROUGHTON,

AUTHOR OF

"Cometh up as a Flower," "Red as a Rose is she," etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

"But I can, indeed," cries Joan, eagerly—"nobody better: often and often I have walked round the park at home."

"It will not fatigue you to walk round the park here," says Diana, a little sarcastically, eyeing her shabby domain; "but if you could condescend to a high road—"

"We had better take sun-shades!" says Bell with alacrity: "there is not much shade, and there is a good deal of dust; but when once you get there the shops are really very good; and the morning is not a bad time either: many of the officers' wives cater for themselves, and one is pretty sure to see somebody!"

"Are we going to the town?" with an accent of unconcealable disappointment, while her thoughts revert to the unlovely tract passed last night—the brick-fields, the scaffolding-poles, the hospital. "Must we?"

There is a little silence.

Diana has bent her head over the dogs.

Bell's jaw has lengthened. "It is the only road where one ever has a chance of seeing any one," she says, peevishly.

Diana looks up again. If there was any cloud on her face it is certainly gone again; the blue sky above is not clearer or merrier. "You would like to go to sea?" she says, good-temperedly; "well, well!—the dogs love a game with the sea-gulls, and they always think that they are going to catch them!"

Ten minutes later they set off. Their party, however, is reduced by one. Bell stays at home. It is one thing to brave the sun-shafts and the dust-clouds for the certainty of shops and the hope of officers; but quite another thing to expose one's self to these disagreeables merely for the sake of sand and cockle-shells. But, after all, the sunbeams shine to stroke, not to smite, and they come in for but little dust, as their way lies for the most part across fields—fields where the future harvest is laughing in green infancy; where the riotous sap is racing along the veins of the hedge-row May-bushes; fields where the meadow-grass, forgetting its wintry palsy, is beginning to put on again its strength and sweetness.

Joan's soul has gone out of her body—away from her own tame and meagre lot, and is frolicking in the spring world, when it is suddenly recalled by the voice of Diana, in grave and earnest inquiry:

"Joan, do you like my hat?"

Joan brings back her attention as quickly as

she can, from nature to art, and recalls her eyes from the live lark—the speck of loud music quivering miles above her head—to the dead bird-of-paradise, from whose body a mighty tail has been reft—a tail that rears itself aloft and sweeps away behind—to adorn her cousin's coiffure.

As she does not at once answer (at least in words), Diana resumes in a rather disappointed voice, but still with confidence: "It must be all right, for it came from Paris—Micky brought it to me the other day; people in Helmsley laugh at it a good deal—so I am told; but Helmsley fashions are always a year behind London, and London, they say, is a year behind Paris; and so, no doubt, it will come here in time, and then people will see that I have been right all along."

"I was in Paris not long ago," says Joan, slowly, while her eyes rove with an expression of deep distrust over her cousin's head. "But I do not think that I saw anything very like it. Are you sure that it came from Paris?"

"He said so," replies Diana, in a crestfallen voice: "and I do not think that he would tell an untruth about it."

"Of course not!" answers Joan, reflecting that in Paris, no less than in other cities, you may no doubt find abominable head-gears, if you only go to the right places for them.

A little pause.

"You do not like it, then?" asks Diana, diffidently, with a sound of not distant tears in her voice. "I had rather that you would tell the truth."

"I think it is very—very—very remarkable," answers Joan. "Has Bell one like it?"

"Oh, dear, no!" rejoins the other. "Butler gave her a jacket last winter—a very handsome one—black velvet and sable tails."

"He said very disagreeable things about us after he went," pursues Diana, gravely; "laughing at us, you know, and altogether not kind! When we heard it I wanted her to send him the jacket back again. Would you not have sent it back?"

"I should never have taken it," answers Joan, drawing up her little head, while her cheeks redden, and her breath quickens. Diana opens her large eyes.

They walk on in an uncomfortable silence; the one irritated and galled, the other crest-fallen and humbled. But, before long, the warm shining of the sun, the lark's solo, and the sound of the plash and plunge of the morning waves that they are nearing, smooth the creases out of Miss Dering's temper, and she speaks again; changing, this time, the obnoxious theme, though not getting as far from it as she perhaps imagines.

They have reached the sea; have passed the loose sand-hills, where the dry grass scantily waves, and the blue sea-thistles blow; have lightly sprung over half a dozen runlets racing down to empty their little teacups of fresh, sweet water far into the salt and greedy sea, that takes all presents and says no "thank you" for them.

Now they stand side by side on a stretch of hard sand, on which the foot scarcely leaves a print, and which—were the day sulky and dull—would be called brown, but now is glistening and dazzling with unquestioned gold. Is it not a wealthy day?—a silver sea breaking on golden sands, and both arched by a sapphire sky.

The sea is in its civillest humor. With the meekest air, the blandest, sleepiest, most lulling sound, it comes creaming in; deceitfully stealing round their feet as they stand, and coolly fondling them. To-day it is too gentle even to laugh; only it smiles up to the sun, with unnumbered dimples.

"I see the deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weed strown."

says Joan, half under her breath, stooping to pick up a length of sea-bloom that, drenched and emerald-colored, has just drifted to her feet; then turning with wondering lips and kindling eyes to Diana:—

"And you never come here? you do not like it?"

"I like it well enough," replies Diana, apologetically, shading her eyes with her hand from the sun-and-sea dazzle. "Look!" (pointing to a little puff and a small tail of smoke away on the horizon); "there is a steamer! is not it tantalizing? they never come any nearer than that: it would be so pleasant if they would come quite close, and one could see who was on board!"—"Yes" (resuming the thread of her discourse), "I like it well enough, as I said; but you see it is not only I; there are two of us, you know, and Bell hates it; she does not care to walk anywhere much except on the Helmsley road, and I must own that one does see six carriages there of a day, for one that one sees anywhere else."

Joan shrugs her shoulders, and flings back her green weed, which, limply clinging round her fingers, has lost half its native beauty, into the rippling wave that comes to fetch it, and on which it floats home again with recovered loveliness.

"I like the Helmsley road, too; but I do not dislike the sea. If it were only I, I should most likely come here a good deal oftener; and I am rather fond of sea-things. Once I kept a sea-anemone in my wash-hand-basin for a fortnight, and fed it with raw beef."

Joan laughs a little at this naive instance of love for the wonders of the deep, and then stoops down pensively to pull the ear of Mr. Brown, who, either through having more common sense or being more encumbered with

fat than his brothers, has desisted earlier from the sea-gull chase, and now sits on the hard sand, with his heart beating very fast, and slobbering a good deal as his eyes follow his late quarry with an expression which seems to say that the ways of sea-gulls—luring an honest dog only to delude him—are not according to his ideas of what the manners of an honest bird should be.

CHAPTER VIII.

It is an hour later. They are at home again. "At what time do you dine?" asks Joan, languidly.

"At what hour do we dine?" repeats Diana, reflectively: "well, to tell you the truth, that is a fact at which I have never yet arrived; but if you are hungry, as indeed you have every right to be, let me fetch you a bit of bread: I know that there is bread, for I saw the baker's cart drive away five minutes ago."

But Joan is not hungry. Not even when, by-and-by, seated at the dinner-table, she watches Mrs. Moberley sawing asunder a gigantic fowl, which has evidently spent a long life in walking, so preternaturally are the muscles of his legs developed; a mammoth bird, flanked by the biggest ham that ever scratched itself in life against a post.

"Girls, into Helmsley we must go this afternoon; as I told you last night, we are quite out of soda-water, and the man has not brought the beer," says Mrs. Moberley.

"I must give my curl a turn with the irons, then," says Diana, pulling out her long, trailing lock to its full length, and pensively regarding it: "it was bad enough this morning, but the sea-air has taken out what little remnant of curl was left in it."

It is some time before they are really off, as apart from the matter of the curling irons—an entire change of costume is apparently necessary. At length they are ready; the girls with their curls well pulled down over their knuckles, their necks abundantly hung with lockets, and their hair freshly frizzed.

The house-door has banged behind them; they have passed down the drive, round the corner, out of sight. Joan turns from the window with a half smile on her lips at a last vision of Bell angrily frowning off Mr. Brown from her clean gown with her parasol. Then she takes out her watch, and with eyes on its face makes a calculation. At Mrs. Moberley's rate of walking it will take them quite three-quarters of an hour to reach Helmsley, three-quarters of an hour to return. They will surely not spend less than an hour and a half there: three hours in all. She has therefore three good hours before her. Three hours for what? For reflection? In her present situation three minutes would be too much.

She walks slowly round the room, with her hands loosely folded behind her. Unsparringly she examines each of the details that make up so sordid a whole. Then she returns to the window, and drawing up a chair to it, so as to feel all the honeyed freshness of the air, sits down, and leaning her sleek head against the faded, woolly antimacassar, thinks. In dreary panorama all the incidents of her short stay, that yet seems so long, tread past before her mind's eye.

She closes her eyes, and past, present, and future, walk solemnly by: the first all sunshiny gold, the second all drab, the third all ink. Two tears steal out from under her shut lids, but no sooner does she feel them on her cheeks than she raises herself, and indignantly shakes them away.

"Is this my pluck?" she says, still sneaking aloud, though in a low key: "the pluck of which I boasted even to him! Is this the way in which I had braced myself to meet my troubles? Just because they are not of the kind I expected, are they to find me limp and pulling like this? Just because I expected a stab, and have found pin-pricks instead? Oh! I would rather have been stabbed—stabbed deeply—anything would have been better!" she says, twisting her hands together and writhing at the thought of the daily, hourly, momentarily penance to which every tone of voice, every movement, every mode of thought the Moberley family condemn, and will for ever condemn her. "Well," (rising again, and again beginning to walk about the room), "well! I suppose that none can pick and choose their afflictions. If I had had my choice I should have lived with gentlefolks, and they should have bullied me, they should have had next to no hair on their heads, and should never have mentioned a soldier." She laughs a little, and then, lapsing into deeper gravity, says presently, "God give me pluck to keep up a good heart and bear my pin-pricks!"

It is a real prayer, though, perhaps, not conventionally worded. Occupation of some kind she must have; but what! Her boxes not having yet arrived, none of her own resources are within reach. She looks rather hopelessly round the room—not to criticise this time, but to search. The sight of a work-basket disgorging tangled Berlin wools puts an idea into her head. Why not mend the hole in the dining-room carpet?

Joan has been taught stitching in all its branches, and, what is more, she loves it. She has never before, indeed, been set to mend carpets, but she has mended rents in other things, and, after all, it is only the application to a new purpose of old knowledge. In three

minutes, armed with a darning-needle and a skein of wool, with her gown turned inside out and pinned round her, she is kneeling on the dusty carpet, her whole soul absorbed in the endeavor to make the ragged, straggly edges of the great rent approach each other.

There is something very soothing in work, especially handiwork. As Joan toils the blood runs to her head, it is true, but the bitterness goes out of her heart.

There is still another hour's work before her. As she so thinks, the door-bell ringing clangs upon her ear. It cannot be that her cousins are returned already. It must be some one come to call.

"One of them, perhaps!" she says a little sarcastically: "who knows?—Micky himself! What a bitter disappointment it will be, when they come back and learn what they have lost!"

After a pause, and two more applications to the bell on the part of the visitor, Sarah is heard going to obey the summons. The door opens; there is a parley; it closes again. Sarah returns along the passage. What a heavy foot she has! How ponderously she treads!

Secure in the consciousness of not having a single acquaintance in Helmsley; sure of having neither part nor lot in the visitor, and confident, therefore, of remaining undisturbed, Joan has not taken the trouble to change her position, or lift her head. She is still kneeling, still darning, when a loud and palpably artificial "H'm!" uttered in an unmistakably masculine voice, makes her start violently and look hastily up. Even if Sarah could simulate a manly tread, it would be impossible for her or any other known parlor-maid to counterfeit such a voice.

A perfectly unknown man stands before her—a young man, and, judging by his appearance, an extremely healthy one; a young man, hiding a hat in one hand and a stick in the other, and with a confident smile of extreme friendliness both on his lips and in his eyes.

"Mrs. Moberley is out," said Joan, rising quickly, but without hurry or discomfort, from her lowly posture, and bending her head slightly in polite but grave salutation.

"And are the girls out too?" asks the young man, in a voice that fitly matches in depth and gruffness the sound of his introductory "H'm!" and preparing to deposit his hat and stick in the hall, with an evident intention of staying some time.

"My cousins are out!" answers Joan, with a slight but intentional accent on the first two words, and infusing a little more ice than before into her tone. "I suppose that Sarah must have misled you by the idea that they were at home?"

"No, she did not," replies the young man, nonchalantly; "she told me that they were out—that no one but you was at home; but I thought that—"

How tall she is! He has no idea, as she knelt, how tall she was. It is clear that she can have no idea who he is.

"As there is no one here to introduce us to each other," he says, with rather a nervous laugh, "I suppose we must introduce ourselves. I have no doubt that we have heard each other's name very often."

"I have not yet the pleasure of knowing what your name is," answers Joan, gravely.

He wishes that she would look away. He laughs again more nervously, and also louder.

"If you have heard it half as often as I have heard yours, you have every right to be sick of it."

This remark does not seem to Miss Dering to require an answer, so she makes none.

"My name is Brand," he goes on, sneaking fast and uneasily, while the naturally healthy tint of his cheek perceptibly deepens. "I think you must have heard them mention it."

"Yes."

A little silence. The tom-tit still swings and sways on his cypress twig; the rooks are sailing home toward the Abbey. Wolferstan's rook-sailing homeward through the placid sea of air; the shadows are beginning to grow.

"Do you expect them back soon?" says Mr. Brand presently, shifting restlessly from one foot to the other, and growing ever more and more uneasy under the cold shining of his companion's eyes. "Did they say, when they set off, how long they meant to be away?"

"Most of the afternoon, I think."

"And left you here all alone?"

"I preferred it."

"At all events they have lost no time in setting you to work," he says, with a brusque laugh, glancing at her late occupation, and trying, by a great effort, to resume his gaiety and assurance.

To this observation Miss Dering vouchsafes no reply of any sort.

Another pause. A lamb in the meadow over the road—a lamb that has evidently mislaid its mother—bleats in loud complaint.

"If you really think it worth while to wait for their return," says Joan, presently, with a rather severe intonation, "perhaps you will come into the drawing-room." As she speaks she leads the way across the narrow passage, and ushers in her unwelcome visitor. "I fear that you will find it tedious," she says, formally, "I do not expect them back till six or seven. If you will excuse me, I will return to my work."

So saying, and again bowing slightly, she walks out of the room and shuts the door after her. Then she kneels down again, and resettles to her toil. An amused smile passes over