

DRIFTING.

BY T. BUCHANAN READ.

My spirit to-day
Is far away
Sailing the Vesuvian Bay,
My winged boat,
A bird aloft
Swims round the purple peaks remote.

Round purple peaks
It sails and seeks
Blue inlets and their crystal creeks,
Where high rocks throw,
Through deeps below,
A duplicated golden glow.

Far, vague and dim,
The mountains swim;
While on Vesuvius' misty brim,
With outstretched hands,
The gray smoke stands
O'erlooking the volcanic lands.

Here Ischia smiles;
O'er liquid miles;
And yonder, bluest of the isles,
Calm Capri waits,
Her sapphire gates
Beguiling to her bright estates.

I heed not, if
My rippling skiff
Float swift or slow from cliff to cliff;
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the wall of Paradise.

Under the walls
Where wells and falls
The Bay's deep breast at intervals,
At peace I lie,
Blown softly by,
A cloud upon this liquid sky.

The day, so mild,
Is Heaven's own child,
With Earth and Ocean reconciled;
The airs I feel
Around me steal
Are murmuring to the murmuring keel.

Over the rail
My hand I trail
Within the shadow of the sail,
A joy intense,
The cooling sense
Glides down my drowsy indolence.

With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Where summer sings and never dies—
O'erwreathed with vines,
She glows and shines
Among her future oil and wines.

Her children, hid
The cliffs amid,
Are gamboling with the gamboling kid;
Or down the walls,
With tipsy oars,
A laugh on the rocks like water falls.

The fisher's child,
With tresses wild,
Unto the smooth, bright sand beguiled,
With glowing lips
Sings as she skips,
Or gazes at the far off ships.

You deep bark goes
Where Traffic blows,
From lands of sun to lands of snows;
This happier one,
Its course is run
From lands of snow to lands of sun.

O happy ship,
To rise and dip,
With the blue crystal at your lip!
O happy crew,
My heart with you
Sails and sails, and sings anew!

No more, no more
The worldly shore
Upbraids me with its loud uproar!
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise!

THAT LITTLE CUTTY.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

Author of "The Chronicles of Carlingford."

I:

"Married!" the mother said with a cry of pain and distress.

This was at the end of a moment of such wild and overwhelming joy as had scarcely ever been seen before in the sober house of Brunsfield. Altogether it had been an extraordinary day. That morning Mr. and Mrs. Pillans, after some uneasiness about the want of letters from their daughter, who was absent on a visit, had received from the friends she was supposed to be visiting a letter of inquiry as to why Jeanie had never arrived. The countenances of the parents had grown ghastly as they read. Jeanie had never arrived! It was inconceivable to them, and as they could not believe that she could be at fault, or that her will had anything to do with this, their minds naturally jumped at the most terrible conclusions. She had been spirited away somewhere—she had been robbed—she might have been murdered—"or worse, or worse," her mother said to herself, with lips out of which every vestige of colour was gone. Jeanie was their eldest child—the eldest of two, who were left to them after many bereavements—a slip of a girl, not much over sixteen, as light, and as merry, and as tuneful as any bird that ever sang on a bough. She had made life bright for the sober pair, whose previous existence had known many sorrows, and to spare her even for a visit at Dalruian had been an act of self-sacrifice on their parts. They had counted the days till she should return. But when this fatal message fell upon their hearts like a stone,

carrying them to the depths, they did not know what to think or to say. Seven long days! and, oh heavens, what might have happened in the meantime! Mrs. Pillans put on her big bonnet instantly, and her heavy veil of Spanish lace with large flowers which hung loosely over it; but her husband stopped her as she was rushing out:

"Margaret, my woman, you must stay at home," he said, "you must be here, whatever happens, to receive her, poor bairn—if she is let come home, or if I can find her. Our Jeanie may be coming back in mesery," the good man said, with a quiver in his voice, "and where should she go, but to her mother? Margaret, my woman, night or day, till we get her again, you must not be away."

A groan of that terrible suspense, which is the woman's share of mortal misery, came from the mother's breast. But she agreed, after a moment, that her husband was right. If anything had happened to Jeanie, and she came home and did not find her mother, no doubt she would fly away again, and be seen no more. So Mrs. Pillans went back again to her bedroom, and put away the big, old-fashioned leghorn, with its great yellow feather and costly lace veil. She put them away very carefully, but hurried back to the parlour, one of the windows of which commanded the road. She did not move out of sight of that window all day. She bade the nurse give little William his dinner, and leave her undisturbed, for she had a sore head. This, though it was not a graceful expression, was the Scotch for a headache in those days. Mrs. Pillans had no headache, but she had a heart-ache, and every vein in her was throbbing with excitement and unspeakable pain. The poor woman, wringing her hands with a burst of sudden anguish, asked herself, if the night came on without any news, how could she bear it? But while this was going through her mind, at the very bitterest moment, the door flew open behind her, and Jeanie herself—Jeanie, fresh and fair, out of breath, and with her heart thumping wildly, but as trim, as neat, as smiling as ever, like a fresh flower out of the field—flung herself into her mother's arms.

The exclamation recorded above was the first coherent word Mrs. Pillans said—the joy had taken all her senses, as she said afterward, away from her. She did not ask a question; she did nothing but hold her child in her arms and repeat her name, and satisfy herself that nothing had happened that involved trouble or shame. Had Jeanie come back like a shadow, stealing, silent, and heart-broken, into the shelter of her home, which was what she had feared, she would have gathered up her daughter into her arms with the silence of infinite pity and tenderness. But the light was dancing in Jeanie's eye, her cheek was as fresh and sweet as ever, her frock (and it was her best frock) as pretty and neat. Whatever had happened, harm had not happened. But when the first burst of ecstasy was over, Jeanie had detached herself from her mother's arms. She had gone a step backward, and placed herself by the side of another person, who was standing nervously within the door. A slim young man, not very much taller, or very much older than herself, with a downy moustache upon his upper lip, and a look of appeal and alarm in his eyes. And then it was that Mrs. Pillans dropped down on the nearest chair, and looking at them, with a shade of horror creeping over her joy, cried, "Married!" in a tone that no words could describe.

Jeanie stood against the wainscot of the parlour, which brought out her little figure to perfection, her rosy tints, her bright ribbons, the pattern of her dress, which was made of fine printed linen, gay with scattered rosebuds, with the gloss of the flax upon it, a gown and petticoat of the same, such as girls of her period wore. Triumph was in the little heroine's eyes. She was no more afraid of Mrs. Pillans sitting there with the tears of joy upon her cheeks, but fright and wonder in her countenance, than—our children are afraid of us—and what could I say more!

"Well!" she said, with her little air of audacious self-defence. "You never sent him away. You said we were too young; but I'm not so young now as when you said that, mother, and Edward is older, too. And then there was so much to think of. The regiment might be sent away—you might say we were never to see one another again which you said you would—but you never did it, mother."

"Oh, Jeanie. You little cutty!—When you know it was because I had not the heart!"

"But you never did it," said the little special pleader. "You let him come, and you let me see him; and you never said he was to meet me on the road. Mother, here is poor Edward, too frightened to say a word. What will you do to him? It was not his fault, it was all mine. Could I let him be sent away, not knowing if he would ever see me again? Could I let him break his heart, mother?" said Jeanie, half laughing, half crying. "We have been ill bairns. I deceived you, but I never told a lie. I only said nothing. We've been very ill bairns. But look at us both, Edward and me, come to beg your pardon; and we'll never, never do it again!"

The two culprits should have thrown themselves on their knees when this was said, but the Scotch have a still greater dread of scenes than the English, and they did no such thing. What really took place was that Jeanie, stealing closer and closer, and dragging Edward after her by the hand, finally got once more into her mother's arms, while the young husband, standing behind Mrs. Pillans' chair, made his humble ap-

peal to her, in a very boyish way, by softly patting her shoulder, while the little wife coaxed and pleaded. "Give him a kiss, mother. He was always fond of you—that was what made me like him first—he has no mother of his own; and now he belongs to me, and I belong to him."

"Oh! my Jeanie—my wilful bairn! do you think that's a reason! How can we like the lad that takes you from us?" Mrs. Pillans cried; but she felt the soft appeal of Edward's hand on her shoulder all the same, and her heart melted. It was not a very difficult process to make her heart melt.

"Was that what granny said, mother," said the bold little bride, between two kisses, "when my father came?"

"Oh, you little cutty, you little cutty!" was all the poor mother's reply.

They were so much excited that they did not hear the steady step coming down the little avenue and up the stone steps to the ever open door as it came every day at the same hour. Mr. Pillans had come home heart-broken. He had been unable to hear anything of his child; but he would not be later than his usual hour, that he might, at least, comfort his wife, and be comforted by her. "Two can bear a thing better than one," he said to himself, planning, in his disturbed mind, where he should go after he had taken counsel with his Margaret. But what was this sound of weeping, and talking and kissing! The good man fell a-trembling like a child. He could scarcely open the door; but they were too much occupied to hear, and thus he entered softly, and stood looking on for full a minute before he was perceived. At sight of his daughter the load was lifted from his heart, and it did not want a second look to tell him exactly the state of affairs. He nodded his head to himself after the first shock of joyful surprise. To be sure—to be sure! not desirable, far from desirable—but yet—God in heaven be praised—there was nothing wrong with the bairn. He heard the last saucy speech, while he stood dumb with intense emotion and relief. He did not want to burst out crying like the woman—he stood on his dignity—instead, he broke forth, all at once, into a long, quivering laugh. "Was that what granny said? 'deed was it, and a great deal more."

"Father!" cried Jeanie, suddenly growing pale, and clutching her mother tightly round the neck.

As for young Captain Sinclair, it was now his turn to bestir himself. He gave up those pats which were going through Mrs. Pillans' black silk straight to her heart, and went forward to meet the new comer.

"I have nothing to do, sir, but throw myself upon your mercy," he said, "but do not blame her, for it's me, only me, that am to blame."

"Sir," said the father, "it's fine speaking. You've taken our treasure, and you throw yourself on our mercy. What can we do to you? Am I likely to strike you, do you think, through my bairn?"

"Father!" said Jeanie, again. She was frightened and breathless, but still bold. She went up to him with a kind of timid daring, and put her hand through his arm. Her cheeks were wet with tears, but her eyes shined. She clasped her hands upon his arm, clinging to him. "Was I to let him break his heart?"

"Lads do not break their hearts.—I can say nothing for silly things like you."

"Then let it be like that," said Jeanie. "I am a silly thing. I am like you, father. If he had gone away I would have broken my silly heart; and then when you saw it, and watched me dwining, like poor Mary Scott not so far off, and put me in my deep grave with little Effie and the rest, what would you have said then?"

"You are cruel, Jeanie," said her father. "Heart! there is no heart in you young things. You mind your not er of one bairn she has lost to make her heart soft till she forgives the lad that has stolen another."

"Patrick, Patrick! She dinna mean it!" cried his wife through her tears.

"I dinna mean it, father. I never thought of it. And it's me I am asking you to forgive," said the little cutty, rubbing her soft cheek against his sleeve.

"You!" he laughed again, and held the clasped hands close to his side for a moment. "Well, you've come home. There's grace in that. Forgive you. We're likely folk to make a quarrel with our own bairn. Go away to your mother. I've got something to say to this fool of a lad. You'll follow me, sir, to my room."

"To your room!" cried Jeanie in alarm. To expose her husband unprotected to her father's wrath was a risk she had never contemplated, and it filled her with dismay. She clung with both hands to Mr. Pillans' arm, lifting up her face with the most wistful of looks against his heart. "Let me come, too," she said, her pretty mouth quivering, and all the lines of her face dropping into pathetic, childish apprehension of that most terrible of all calamities, a scolding from her father. How was Edward to encounter that alone? "Let me come, too."

"You will stay with your mother, Jeanie. The lad is less worth than I think him if he is feared to tell his story, on his own side, eye to eye with me."

"Jeanie, stay with your mother," cried the young man. "I am not afraid, sir; it is what I wish. Darling, trust me—and trust him."

Mr. Pillans was a good man, but he was mortal, and her father. He put the girl away from him almost roughly. "It's new to me," he said, "to hear my bairn bidden to trust me. We have to put up with all things; but it is a

novelty. Perhaps he has kindly instructed her to trust you, too, Margaret. You will try your best to console her for the want of him for ten minutes. I must speak to the young man."

Jeanie paid little attention to the sting of wounded feeling in her father's words. Seventeen is so full of its own concerns—and it is so difficult to realize those of others at that inexperienced age—and what in heaven or earth could be so important as the danger of cross or harm to Edward? She followed them to the door, mutely communicating her sympathy to her partner with her eyes and hands, which clasped his as he passed her. Edward, for his part, showed more courage. He held his head high as he went out, turning back to give a smile and nod of encouragement to his little bride.

"Oh, if he's hard on my Edward!" cried Jeanie. "If he says cruel things to him! Oh, if they would have taken me with them! Why should you try to part us and scold us separate? We could bear it better together. Oh, if he's hard on Edward when he gets him all alone!"

"You have very little confidence in your father," said Mrs. Pillans. "Jeanie—Jeanie, when was your father hard upon lad or lass?"

"Oh, mother, how should you know? It's Edward I'm thinking of," cried the girl. "He's not one to stand up for himself. If it was me, he would fight for me like a lion. But for himself—and he canna manage my father, he will not know how to speak to him; he canna manage him like me."

"You little cutty," said her mother; "you manage your father without thinking in the meantime that you have enough ado to beg our pardon for yourself."

"I'm no thinking of myself," was all that Jeanie said.

II.

But the reader does not need to be told that the interview was much less dreadful than Jeanie supposed. The young man told his story with manly simplicity. It was wrong, there was no doubt. But how was he to contemplate the idea of perhaps being parted from his Jeanie, if the parents were to carry out their threat, or if the regiment should get marching orders, which might come any day?

"You think it is a small matter, then, that we should be parted from our Jeanie!" Mr. Pillans said with a grim smile.

"No, I did not mean that. Perhaps we may still stay where we are for a year more; there's no certainty. And besides, sir, said the young man, "it's the course of nature. I suppose you married, too, because you could not live apart, Mrs. Pillans and you?"

This had a better effect. The father was subdued. He gave vent to his feelings in a short cough. "You're a clever lad," he said.

"No, I am not a clever lad. I am very fond of my Jeanie. But tell me yourself, sir, do you think I could help it? If you wanted us to forget each other you should have had no mercy—you should have sent me away."

"I should have taken your advice, that's clear," said Mr. Pillans, once more with an unsteady laugh. "If I had to do it a second time I would know better. It appears I'm but a fool in comparison with your wisdom. It is the young, not the old, that know best."

"Yes, sir," said young Sinclair promptly, "where love's concerned."

"Love! Do you know the meaning of the word, my lad? Ay, ay, your love's a grand passion. It will drag her into trouble before her time—it'll carry her off at the tail of a regiment, and her so young—it will take her away out of her home. There's other love that is not like that—that would take care of her against all its own interests, while ye expose her to all the angry airs?"

"Say what you like to me," said the young man, with the air of a martyr. "I deserve it—I have a right to bear it; but do not be hard upon my Jeanie, for she's young and tender, and that I could not bear."

Once more Mr. Pillans regarded the youth with that bitter amusement which had already passed over his face. "I'm not to be hard upon his Jeanie! Do you know whose Jeanie she was a week ago? Not yours, but mine!"

"No," cried young Sinclair, "she was mine all the time. It's long since we spoke of this. It's been all settled that we were to do it as soon as ever the opportunity came."

Mr. Pillans' countenance changed greatly while this speech was being made. His eyes opened wide, and shone as with a gleam of lightning. Then this stormy expression of his countenance gave way to an unwilling smile. He uttered once more a little sharp, short laugh, which was like a cry, and when he spoke, "The little cutty!" was all he said.

Such conversations have a way of prolonging themselves, but if they had talked till Christmas what more could have been said? The thing was done. These good people could not strike the youth through their daughter, nor could they make Jeanie unhappy, however small was her consideration for them. And after a while things settled down into their new order. Mr. Pillans saw that everything was made secure and legal, settling the little fortune which was one day to be his daughter's as securely as it could be done, with the full consent of the young husband, but to the great indignation of Jeanie; and the east wing of Brunsfield House, which was vacant, was furnished for them, and there the young couple began their life.