

JUVENILE ENTERTAINER.

"Torquet ab obscænis jam nunc sermonibus aurem."

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THE JUVENILE ENTERTAINER

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BIOGRAPHY.

ROBERT POLLOK,

Concluded.

At the south-east end of his father's house stand the trees which he celebrated in his verse,

Much of my native scenery appears,
and please forward to be in my song;
it must not now; for much behind awaits
higher note. Four trees I pass not by,
which o'er our house their evening shadow throw;
one ash, and one of elm: tall trees they were,
and had been old a century
before my day; none living could say aught
about their youth; but they were goodly trees:
and oft I wondered, as I sat and thought
beneath their summer shade, or in the night
winter heard the spirits of the wind
tossing amongst their boughs—how they had grown
so high, in such a rough tempestuous place.
and when a hapless branch torn by the blast
fell down, I mourned as if a friend had fallen."

It is said that many a time, retiring from the bustle of his father's house, he has been seen gazing upon them long and silently, and, at length, turning from them with an air of gladdened pensiveness, indicating exalted feelings which by some mysterious sympathy they had excited.

But while he drew largely from the works of nature, he seems also to have been deeply versed in the ancient classics, and in the works of our best English poets, though he has followed none of them as a model, but it is conjectured that he occasionally plucked a useful flower from them all.

In his intercourse with his friends and familiar acquaintance, he was cheerful and light hearted, and his disposition he retained till disease had altogether organised his nervous system. When he came to bid farewell to his relatives and friends ere he set out on his last journey, he was obliged from weakness to recline in a carriage, and the slightest agitation drew him complaints. So that the act of taking him by the hand however gently, discomposed him. But the most men of studious habits, he wore an air of distance and reserve when in the company of strangers.

In reflecting on his obscure life and early death, it is surprising to be able to state, that the dissolution of a man was in no respect accelerated by neglect or indolence. He was rich in the esteem and affection of his family; and when other friends were required, the world body to which he belonged displayed a liberality which does them great honour.

As we have told, in a few words almost all that we know of the brief history of this eminent poet. The duration of his sojourning on earth was short, and he disappeared from among us without any strong event being

connected with his memory. But he has left behind him a mental fabric, the best evidence of a soul gifted with the noblest powers, and which will prove a lasting monument to perpetuate his fame.

NARRATIVE.

WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

Concluded.

"Never be without a task of some sort, boy," said the Colonel: "let it be useful, if possible; but, at all events, let it be harmless. The mind and body both require exercise. Use them. work them both, boy. They'll both get stronger and make you a man sooner," (this was then a proud inducement,) "and a happier man. Habit is second nature. The habit of thinking and acting for yourself, sir," (the appellation "Sir" always indicated that our uncle was getting up on military ground,) "will produce decision of character, without which a man cannot be fit for any command. There is scarcely any sort of knowledge that may not be useful to a soldier. Perhaps this little work of yours may lead you to look into the nature of the channels of rivers, a matter of no small consequence sometimes in a campaign. But, at all events, one employment or one acquirement always paves the way for another, and enables a man to feel an interest in something or everything that is going on around him. And then he stands a fair chance of promotion and happiness; and there's little risk of his being reduced to the rank of those poor fellows, who saunter about with their hands in their pockets, looking very stupid, blinking and yawning and yawning "What's to be done?"

Between this period and that of our going forth into the world, five years had glided by; and during their progress, we had framed the rustic seat and planted the willow, and studied and read for many an hour beneath its shade; and we had never felt at a loss about "What was to be done?"

The next morning we accompanied our uncle to London; and looked about us, and went into company; and saw such sights, and did such things, as all the people in "the world" have been seeing and doing there ever since, up to the present moment. We then proceeded to the Netherlands, and visited, and minutely inspected, all the fortresses and fields connected with Marlborough's campaigns. The delight and pride which the Colonel evinced in that progress we shall never forget. The days of his youth seemed to have returned upon him: his step was as the tread of a giant; and the hours we spent on horseback and on foot were unconscionable. But we feel the recollection of those days so strong upon us, that we will not trust our pen further—we remember that we are not now writing either his life or our own. Suffice it to say, that our wanderings far and wide upon the Continent occupied the space of three years; and then we once more found ourselves at home.

During our absence, poor Mrs. Smithers had

been gathered to her fathers. Her death was a sore bereavement for the poor Doctor.

The plan of steadily reading Latin and Greek with his son Charles, which the Doctor resolved upon, was necessarily procrastinated from time to time during his mother's illness; and after her death, the worthy widower's mind was certainly, for a considerable period, in a state very unfit for such an undertaking. Another year had thus slipped by, and then the long-talked of course of study was commenced, and the Doctor discovered, with some dismay, that Charles had retrograded sadly in his learning; inasmuch as that they were obliged to retrace, with toil and difficulty, the path which, two years back, had been comparatively easy. Let it not be supposed that this achievement was well performed; no—your "What's to be done?" man cannot long persevere in any one plan; he is ever wearily shifting his ground. The books were continually changed—sometimes a week passed without any reading; and that rousous day, "to morrow," was continually presenting itself as more fit for the surmounting of difficulties than that which was at the moment whunging its way into the past.

Another year had thus gone by, and Charles had imperceptibly stepped into manhood without being even entered at college; and then the question of, "What's to be done?" annoyed the Doctor on a subject that wounded his feelings excessively. He had made a discovery, which at first he was unwilling to acknowledge, though somewhat similar had occurred to many a fair scholar. He found that time in its course, had marvellously rusted his Greek and Latin. He could not discern the beauties of Sophocles; and there was a sad indistinctness in many parts of Herodotus. "What was to be done?" Cicero himself was obscure, though certainly his style appeared as beautiful as ever. Virgil had ever been his favorite, because of the aptitude of that author for quotation, in which the worthy Rector loved to indulge. Consequently he had frequently dived therein, and might be said to be nearly "up" in the *Æneid*. So, for the next six months, they employed themselves re-reading that beautiful poem, with a book or two of the New Testament, by way of variety. The Doctor, however, knew too well how little he was doing for his son, not to feel at times exceedingly uneasy. But he could not decide upon "What was to be done?" Now, as he was by no means what is commonly termed a fool, notwithstanding the apparent folly of his conduct, it is proper here to state, that he had long since discovered that his income was not proportioned to the style of living which he had deemed necessary to adopt when his clerical honors had been conferred on him. His parties were not frequent, nor was there any manifest extravagance in his habits. But there had ever been a lack of system in all his domestic arrangements; and since the death of his wife, matters appeared to be worse managed than before; and there seemed but little chance