

POETRY.

THE EMIGRANT LASSIE.

BY JOHN STEWART BLACKIE.

[The following lines contain the simple, unadorned statement of a fact in the experience of a friend, who is fond of wandering in the Highland glens.]

A lone wanderer down Glen Spear,
Where the braes are green and gray,
With my light step I overtook
A weary-footed lassie.

She had one bundle on her back,
Another in her hand,
And she walked as one who was full loath
To travel from the land.

Quoth I, "My bonnie lass"—"For she
Had hair of flowing gold,
And dark brown eyes and dainty limbs,
Right pleasing to behold—

"My bonnie lass, what little thee
Thou hast this summer day,
To be so far from home and friends,
Upon the lonely way?

"I'm fresh and strong, and stoutly soot,
And thou art hale and hearty too,
March lightly now, and let me hear
The bonnie lassie's story.

"So, no," she said, "that may not be,
What's mine is mine to me;
Of good or ill, as God may will,
I take my portioned share."

"But you have two, and I have none:
One burden goes to me;
I'll take that bundle from the back
That heavier seems to be."

"No," she said, "that may not be,
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OUR BOARDER'S STORY.

BY IRON DOMINO.

"How long has your husband been dead, Mrs. Clerris?"

"He is not dead," was the quiet reply, but a quivering of pain mingled with the patient look of her face.

It did not need that mother should shake her head at us, thereby implying that no more questions were to be asked, for we were aware that Mrs. Clerris was a woman of a very different type from the one who had given us the clue to a story that was evidently so sad.

We knew comparatively little of Mrs. Clerris, but she was the friend of acquaintance and through them had desired to share the quiet of our country home as a boarder during the few weeks of her summer vacation from the city.

The patient look did not leave her face all the while she sat at the work done and mother sat alone upon the steps of the porch in the twilight that was fast giving place to darkness.

Mrs. Clerris went out and to bed, and she left her husband in her hands and cried quietly a few moments while her frame trembled and shook violently.

At last mother ventured: "Mrs. Clerris, you must forget Maggie's misfortune."

"I am sorry," she said, "but this morning, I was only more thoughtful and I am very sorry."

"It does not matter," she said, "for I am going to tell you all about it. Perhaps I should have done so before."

"No, you need not," persisted mother. "It is not necessary and, I assure you, there will be no unpleasant conclusions drawn from what we have so inadvertently learned."

But this was the story she told, giving no heed to mother's assurances:

"I was but eighteen when I became the wife of a man who was a very experienced girl who knew little of life and its indulgences and pleasures.

An only child, my father's means had been sufficient to gratify all my little whims and caprices and I had grown up in a life of love and indulgence.

My father had been a very successful contractor, who had at first made mere business visits to our village; and I remember with what unalloyed satisfaction mother and father regarded the marriage preparation.

It was much older than I—being nearly thirty years of age, but mother said I needed some one to 'take care' of me, I was so young, while to me he seemed a very experienced man, and of course, goodness. So with many congratulations and the envy of all my young friends, I started under the most favorable auspices for my new home.

My father had held it for years. There was an air of substantial comfort about it, which only wealth can give, and no wonder my girlish heart thrilled at the prospect of leaving home for the first time and thought that I was about to be my mistress. I soon found, however, that although Miles was the only son and heir I was hardly acknowledged as a nominal mistress.

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coming stars and thinking that to-morrow night my little boy would sleep beneath their faithful guardianship, when I found myself alone in the room which I had then almost too stupored to wonder.

Miles came wearily up one of the gravelled walks and seated himself in seeming despondence upon a rustic bench in the garden. He was dressed in a simple, plain suit, and he looked at me with a sad, thoughtful expression.

"My poor wife!" my heart aches for her. I heard him murmur at last, and then Miles Clayton's voice said to me: "You will, indeed? Ah, Miles Clerris, if she only knew!"

"You will, indeed? Ah, Miles Clerris, if she only knew!" was added in a softer tone. Presently she moved nearer and leaned lovingly against him while her hand rested upon his.

"A curse upon you! I defy you!" and pushing her from him he walked away and stood leaning against the trunk of the old elm. She followed.

"You defy me? You have perhaps forgotten this little document." And she held up something.

"He seemed astonished and almost his eyes were shut tight. 'You have loved to me,'

"You were a fool to think I would ever lose sight of this," was the tantalizing reply.

He grasped for it and seizing her in a little struggle ensued, but she broke from him and ran into the house. Miles, too, soon walked away. Still I stood at the window, enraptured in a maze of dream that had neither purpose nor definite aim about it. Night deepened, the moon rose and the veering outlines of shade crept steadily over the grass, yet I had no inclination to seek my pillow.

As the shadows of the trees slowly crept around the moonlight, I saw directly upon the spot where Miles and Miss Clayton had stood beneath the elm hours before.

Something white upon the grass gleamed distinctly in the moonlight. It recalled the scene I had witnessed and for the first time in days a definiteness of purpose possessed me and I determined to know what it was. Hurrying down into the yard the gleaming white thing was found to be a piece of paper. With almost insouciantly I ran back to my room and bent over the time worn sheet. My curiosity was cruelly repaid for there, drawn up with all the form required by law, I read the following certificate—a bond of union between Miles Clerris and Helen Clayton bearing date ten years previous. The clergyman's name appended—Johannes Newmeyer—was a substantial proof of the genuineness of the article, for I well remembered it and the peculiar chirp of a bird I had seen so often in girlhood.

Dear white haired old man how little he guessed in his gentleness that a deed he was doing was to be so cruelly repaid. Ten years ago! that must have been in Miles' college days. And this woman was his wife while I—I had no legal claim to the rights of a wife, and I was not to be a wife to him. I realized it all quietly, standing there alone in the night. There was nothing to vindicate with such hands as I had to do. I had been purposely and miserably duped—an innocent girl—now a mother, whose mourning for her first-born was being rudely disturbed by the horrid realization that she was not a mother. I was alone in the night, and I was alone in the night. There was nothing to vindicate with such hands as I had to do. I had been purposely and miserably duped—an innocent girl—now a mother, whose mourning for her first-born was being rudely disturbed by the horrid realization that she was not a mother.

I could not upbraid my husband with the discovery I had made, nor proclaim my own infamy. Neither could I ignore it, though for a moment something had whispered: "Keep the certificate and say nothing about it, and the world will always believe, as it does now, that I am a wife. This sort of thing is no proof to the contrary, and the old clergyman is dead." Only the experienced, who know of what bitterness the human heart is capable, can understand this. Presently I realized that the family were asleep and I crept to my bed, not to sleep, but to experience that semi-conscious state that comes at the moment of sleep. I was alone in the night, and I was alone in the night. There was nothing to vindicate with such hands as I had to do. I had been purposely and miserably duped—an innocent girl—now a mother, whose mourning for her first-born was being rudely disturbed by the horrid realization that she was not a mother.

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