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Select Poetry.

LET BYGONES BE BYGONES.

Let bygones be bygones; if bygones were clouded... By aught that occasioned a pang of regret, Oh, let them in darkest oblivion be shrouded; 'Tis wise and 'tis kind to forgive and forget.

The Highwayman Outwitted.

EXCHANGE NO ROBBERY.

DINGLE FARM was such a pretty place. Charmingly situated at the foot of a slope, it commanded an extensive view of a beautiful Kentish valley the ground rising to a ridge of wooded hills in the far distance.

sale the first Wednesday in every month. These journeys were attended with some anxiety and not a little danger from the highwaymen, who still infested the roads, and who did not fail to make use of market day as an available opportunity for plunder.

It was the evening before market day. Supper was just over at the farm, and Mrs. Dale was busy removing it from the large old-fashioned oak table in the kitchen.

"Now mind, Susan, that you be early for market to-morrow," said Mrs. Dale, as she seated herself.

"Never fear, aunt; I'll be off betimes. Thomas must start first with the two cows and the heifer, and I'll follow when they're well on their way. Don't you disturb yourself in the morning aunt, dear."

"Bless the child; as if I shouldn't be up and about against your starting! I shall see to your breakfast, of course."

"I wish you'd let me go too, mother," said Ben, the boy before mentioned, who was whittling a stick at the open door.

"No, no, no, my dear; you're too young," replied his mother, while the old man, removing his pipe, said, coaxingly:

"All in good time, my lad; all in good time. Let things come by degrees. Mind your schooling now, and you'll be all the better farmer for a little book-learning."

"But suppose Susy should meet a highwayman, grandfather. Then I should be of use. Wouldn't I tackle him just! It would be fun."

"Eh, lad, eh! Young folks talk a deal o' nonsense," laughed the old man. "Those gentry you speak of are not so easy to tackle, I can tell you."

"Did you ever meet one, grandfather?" asked the boy.

"Ay, ay, and I rode home as hard as I could with him at my heels. But it's no use o' frightening Susan, when she's going to-morrow."

"I'm not frightened, grandad," said Susan, going up and kissing the old man.

Ben here ran across, and, coming up unperceived, pulled one of Susan's curls, which had tumbled from underneath her cap.

"Don't Ben, you plague!" cried Susan; and she tried to catch him as he ducked away from her hand and jumped over a settle, where he sat on the floor in the attitude of a frog, ready to leap if she chose to follow him. But, seeing that she took no heed, he crawled up to her, and said:

"What would you do, Susy, if a foot-pad came up and asked for your money or your life? I wonder whether you'd call me a plague then? Ha, ha!"

"I shouldn't want you," laughed Susan; "for I should tell him to go about his business, and ask what he'd do with my life when he'd got it."

The next morning Susan rose at five, and dressed herself with much care and neatness. Ben met her as she came to the kitchen door; and Mrs. Dale, who was already down, began to cut large slices of bread-and-butter, and told him to be quiet and get his breakfast.

Susan went to see that her basket of poultry, eggs and butter was ready packed.

"There's no hurry, my dear," said Mrs. Dale, as she stirred her porridge; "but you can go and see if Jerry's all ready, and bring him round."

Jerry was the horse, of respectable and ancient appearance, and somewhat clumsy build, on which Susan usually made her journeys to market. She was a good horse-woman, having been accustomed to ride about the farm with her grandfather since she was quite a child, and she was rather impatient of Jerry's slow paces, though she knew them to be a necessity on market-day.

Jerry was led to the mounting-stone which stood in the yard, Susan was duly settled on her saddle, the baskets adjusted, and the horse ambled away up the wooded lane.

"Think of me when you meet the robbers, Susy," squealed Ben after her,

as he pretended to be overcome with grief at her departure.

Susan rode along, enjoying the fresh morning and the song of the birds. The dew twinkled on the grass and herbage, and the sun glistened through the trees overhead; while the scent of the hay, now being made into ricks, filled the air with its delicious fragrance.

When Susan turned into the high-road, she found it full of carts, horsemen and farmers, all bent on the same errand as herself.

It was of no moment whether she arrived at Hazleton sooner than her neighbors, so she took no pains to urge on the steady-going horse, and she was soon left alone at the foot of a steep ascent.

Before many minutes had elapsed, a gentleman on a fine bay horse overtook her, and, reining him in with difficulty, asked if he were right for Hazleton, and if it were market day there.

Susan looked round at him, and was struck with the handsome aquiline face and piercing dark eyes which seemed to read her through. Dressed in the best fashion of the time, his horse carefully groomed till its glossy coat shone brightly in the sunlight, he made a marked contrast to Susan on her thick-made clumsy animal.

"You are bound for the market, too, little maid?" inquired the gentleman, raising his hat as he spoke.

"Yes, sir. All the folks are going there, a'most, this morning, I think," answered Susan, shyly.

"And what have you there? Chickens and butter?" her interlocutor went on to say. "Do you like the business of buying and selling?"

"It depends on the prices I get for them," returned Susan, quickly.

The gentleman laughed, and stopped for a moment to arrange the leather of his stirrup more to his liking; while Susan rode on, wondering what a well-bred man, on a thorough-bred horse, could want at Hazleton on a market-day.

While she mused on these points, he again overtook her.

"May I ask your name?" he said.

"My name is Susan Stidolph," she answered simply; and though she would have given much to ask him the same question, she refrained from innate feelings of courtesy.

As if he divined her thoughts, he said: "My name is Hamilton St. John. Do you like it?"

"Very much; and what do you call your horse, sir?"

"Wildfire; and a famous stepper he is! Good-bye, Susan; I hope you'll get good prices for your fowls and ducks." And away he sped at a tremendous pace.

The market was becoming very full when Susan reached Hazleton, and many sounds of life resounded on all sides.

Susan having met Thomas, and given Jerry into his charge, entered the market, and did her best to effect the sale of her poultry; while the farming-man undertook the vending of cows, submitting his bargains to Susan's judgment before concluding them.

The day soon came to a close; all their marketings were attended with good success, and Susan having made her purchases at the draper's—an old friend of her aunt's, at whose house she usually dined on these occasions—concealed her money, to the amount of thirty pounds in gold and notes, in the secret pockets of her stays, purposely made to stow away these treasures, and mounted Jerry for her ride homewards. Very blithe was Susan at the result of her day's work. The cows had fetched a capital price, and the heifer alone remained unpurchased. Her poultry was all sold, and not a pot of butter remained in her basket.

Susan determined to return by a lane which wound circuitously from the town of Hazleton to the borders of Dingle Farm. By this she would avoid the unpleasant society of several half-tipsy farmers and rough horsemen, whose proximity was very undesirable. Jerry stepped out as was his wont when he scented his stable in the far distance; and Susan hummed to herself as she looked on the beauty of the evening and the scenery around.

Susan had not proceeded two miles when the sound of a horse's hoofs struck on her ear; and as she turned to look up the lane to see who it might be, her well-dressed acquaintance of the

morning rode up to her side and greeted her with a polite bow.

"Well met, Susan! Why, you're late from market. I hope you've been successful."

"Pretty well," curtly replied the girl, who was inclined usually to be reserved to strangers.

"Why, you've an empty basket I perceive. Do you know I was not so far off as you might think? I saw you while you were making your bargains," said the gentleman, looking straight at Susan with a knowing look.

"Well," returned she, raising her eyebrows. "I had a notion that I caught sight of your face once; but seeing it belonged to a man in a smock-frock, of course I took no heed."

The stranger laughed, and there was something in his manner which made Susan feel uncomfortable. He soon remarked on her taciturnity, and asked her why she was so silent.

"I don't care to talk much to strangers," she replied.

"But I have told you my name, and you may judge when you see a gentleman," said he.

"How do I know that you are a gentleman?" asked Susan, bluntly. "I think it's very bad manners to ask so many questions. At all events, it's not the way simple folks are taught."

"Who do you think I can be, then, Susan, my dear?" inquired the horseman smilingly.

"You may be a highwayman, for aught I know," courageously exclaimed the girl.

"What a good guesser you are, my dear!" cried the horseman. "Suppose I take you at your word, and ask you, after the fashion of real highwaymen, to let me look at your purse?"

"I don't carry a purse," replied the girl now somewhat alarmed, and believing that her suspicions as to his strange behavior were not without foundation.

"Do you see this?" said the man, in a jeering tone, drawing a small pistol from his breast-pocket. "It's a little instrument I carry to induce people to tell the truth. Perhaps it will make you do so. Come, out with your money," he added, in a rough voice, catching hold of Jerry's bridle at the same moment.

Susan was a spirited girl, but she turned pale. They had arrived at a part of the road where it sank between high hedges, and a rising ground on either side hid it entirely from view.

It was becoming dark, and as Susan looked right and left she heard nothing but the faint breeze among the trees, and the chirp of the grasshopper in the long reeds at the roadside, and all idea of assistance from a casual passenger she knew to be almost hopeless. Though quite faint with terror, she rallied all her courage, and determined to brave out the attempt of the man to rob her of money.

For one moment hope revived. The stranger dismounted, and passed his bridle over the low overhanging bough of an alder-tree, and Susan took the opportunity to whip Jerry into something like a trot; but she had not proceeded many yards when the man came running after, easily overtook her, and laughing derisively, led her horse back to the same spot, where he again asked her to deliver up her purse to his care.

"Better do it quietly, Susan my dear," he urged. "I shall take it by hook or by crook."

Susan still stoutly refused, declaring with many assertions that she carried no purse.

"Well, then, we must try what can be done by searching. It's a tiresome process, but I'm very patient, and not pressed for time to-night."

He lifted Susan out of her saddle as easily as if she had been a baby, unsaddled Jerry, turning him loose to graze as he pleased, and commenced searching her baskets. Finding nothing but a few parcels of tea, calico, and ribbon, which he carelessly threw down in the road, he next begged the terrified girl to remove her hat and cloak, and coming close to her, began feeling for her pockets.

Susan's indignation knew no bounds; but the robber only laughed, and told her he should take every means to extract the gold from her, and taking out a large clasp knife, he said, "It's such a pity to cut this pretty bodice asunder; but I must, if you are so obstinate. Bless you, do you think I've been years

on the road, and don't know the ways of you pretty little maids? The money that was paid for the cows is somewhere about, and I am pretty certain it's in a particular pocket of your corset. I shall cut your laces, if you try my patience too long;" and he began to insert the knife into the lace of her bodice.

Susan, trembling lest she should lose her senses, now made up her mind to part with her money, and assured him that if he would retire out of sight for a few minutes, she would get her pocket, and give it into his hands.

The robber declared that he could not do that, but that he had no objection to turn his back. "I don't want to distress you, my dear," he said; but he pulled out his pistol at the same time, and stood waiting.

The poor girl proceeded to take off her dress, and after some difficulty removed her stays, and donning her cloak hastily threw them down before the highwayman.

He seized upon them, and discovering the pocket, soon rifled it of its contents, and then picked up her dress, and began to feel about the linings, to find if possible more bank-notes which might be sewn up in them. As Susan stood shaking and irresolute a sudden thought seized her. Catching up Jerry's saddle, which lay on the ground at her side, she threw it over the hedge, exclaiming, "You shan't have it all at any rate."

The thief, off his guard for the moment, and thinking that the saddle might contain the greater part of the spoil, threw down the dress with an oath; and cursing frightfully, clambered into and over the hedge to recover the saddle. One of his pistols fell from his coat to the ground; Susan threw it over the opposite hedge, and releasing the bridle of the robber's horse, climbed nimbly by the aid of the stirrup on to his back, passed her right knee over the large pistol holster, and giving the animal the reins, galloped up the lane at a tremendous pace.

A loud curse, and the crack of a pistol, which only caused the horse to increase its speed, followed; but the bullet missed its aim. Susan heard it whiz past in dangerous proximity to her ear, and then lodged harmlessly in the trunk of an old oak by the wayside.

Away flew Wildfire like the wind, with Susan on his back, and her courage rose every moment, as she remembered that old Jerry had wandered grazing up the lane, and that it would be impossible for the thief to overtake her on the well bred animal she rode, even if he attempted pursuit. For an instant a clattering of hoofs made her look hastily back; but the noise was only a lumbering attempt on the part of old Jerry to follow, and keep up with her. Susan's hurried ride off and the shot of the pistol had disturbed his calm grazings, and he turned with a clumsy start before the robber could lay hold on him, and unencumbered by Susan, baskets, or saddle, trotted off at a novel and excited pace after her. Certain now of safety, she urged the beautiful animal she sat on to its utmost speed, and dashed desperately homewards.

"Why, here's a go, mother!" cried Ben, rushing into the farm kitchen full tilt. "Here's Susy tearing down the lane like mad! I never thought Jerry could go so fast. I was on the hayrick, and saw her coming. She's something white on."

"Susan in white! It must have been her ghost," said poor superstitious Mrs. Dale, putting down her dishes and turning pale with apprehension.

A great clattering of hoofs over the stones of the yard soon divested her mind of this absurd notion; for rattling up to the entrance, hardly reined in at the house door, came the dark-bay horse flecked with foam, having galloped for at least five miles at the top of his speed, with the excited half-clad girl upon his back.

It was the work of a moment for Ben to seize the bridle and hold the animal's head, while Susan dropped, rather than dismounted, into her aunt's outstretched arms, and, overcome by her previous emotions, burst into tears.

"Goodness gracious!" cried the good woman, altogether scared, "what ever does it all mean!"

"I've been robbed, aunt! Oh, dear! all the money's gone!" and she sobbed still more.

"Poor girl!" said Ben, affectionately,