

Poet's Poem.

THE HILLS OF MY COUNTRY.

BY FRANCES BROWN. THE BLIND POETESS OF DONEGAL.

I came to my country, but not with the hope
That brightened my youth, like the cloud lighting brow;
For the vigor of soul that was mighty to cope
With time and with fortune hath fled from me now.
And love that illumined my wanderings of yore,
Hath perished, and left but a weary regret
For the star that can rise on my midnight no more—
But the hills of my country, they welcome me yet.

The hue of their verdure was fresh with me still
When my path was afar by the Tanais' lone track;
From the wide spreading deserts and ruins that fill
The lands of old story, they welcome me back.
They rose on my dreams through the shades of the West;
They breathed upon sands which the dew never wet;
The echoes were hushed in the home I loved best—
But I knew that the mountains would welcome me yet.

The dust of my kindred is scattered afar;
They lie in the desert, the wild and the wave;
For serving the strangers through wandering and war,
The isle of their memory could grant them no grave.
And I, I return with the memory of years
Whose hope rose so high though in sorrow it set;
They have left on my soul but the trace of their tears;
But our mountains remember their promises yet!

O where are the brave hearts that bounded of old?
And where are the faces my childhood hath seen?
For fair brows are furrowed, and hearts have grown cold;
But our streams are still bright and our hills are still green;
Ay, green as they rose to the eyes of my youth,
When, brothers in heart, in their shadows we met;
And the hills have no memory of sorrow or ruth,
For their summits are sacred to liberty yet.

HAWTHORNDEN.

CHAPTER XXII.

HORATIO LEIGHTON TAKES A STEP FORWARD

MARION was silent; here was a view of the case she was hardly prepared to receive, though in her heart she intended, if every thing prospered as she hoped it would, to marry Horatio eventually. She had no wish to be positively bound for the present, she liked playing the game of fast-and-loose too well for that; and besides, she would prefer a loophole of retreat in case any thing should dis-appoint her in her ambitious hopes concerning Leighton; and yet she loved him as well as half those who wed, love the partners to whom they have promised to cling till death do part, but she loved her own will and her own advancement first. She had hoped her father would make some little objection, something that would give her an opportunity to leave matters as they had been for the last few weeks; to feel that she was bound to consult Leighton's feelings in her daily conduct, especially in her intercourse with Dr. Nelson to yield her will to his sometimes—she did not relish these thoughts. Her father knew her well; in the deep recesses of his own spirit he read her character in the record of his early and later life; he saw her probable course if she were left unchecked; he read her ambition, her love of power, her delight in triumph. After a silence of some moments he took from the book-shelf a well worn manual of devotion, and turning to the service for the sacrament of matrimony, he said, speaking a little sadly, "My child, here is your guide; if you can from your heart respond to these vows and promises, and feel that you are desirous at some future day to enter into them with Horatio Leighton, remembering always that matrimony is a sacrament, representing the union of Christ and his Church, not a tie to be put off and on at pleasure, then you have a right to engage yourself, otherwise you have not. Your acquaintance with gentlemen is quite limited, but it seems to me there must be in the heart of the woman who really loves, a distinctive preference to all the world known or unknown. Confide in me, my daughter," he added, drawing her to his arms, "you shall not find me severe."

She rested her head upon his neck. "How can I promise to leave you and mamma?" she whispered through her tears.

"This is not to be considered, my child; it is the course of nature that children go out from their parents in this way, it is right they should do so; you are the only home-daughter I have. I cannot tell you what it would be to part with you, but that must not influence your decision in the least. The only question is, do you love Mr. Leighton with a love that will bear all the trials of life? Could you bear with him poverty and disgrace?" he added in a low voice, pressing her hand. "Could you bear for Horatio what your mother has borne for me?"

Marion was quite overcome, disgrace was something she could not connect with the name of her lover; poverty! the very thought of it made her shudder. Horatio could and must be rich, she would help him, strive with him, but this must be accomplished; and this love satisfied her slumbering conscience.

"I don't know," she said when she had recovered from her emotion, "that I could bear poverty well with any one, if I loved them ever so dearly. I have a morbid dread of poverty," she continued, blushing and turning away from his earnest gaze. "I feel that I am willing to help Horatio with all my powers to be what he can be, a wealthy man, honored and respected. His present

position is elevated as well as lucrative, and in time he may rise still higher."

"Ambition! My beloved daughter, let it not be your bane as it has been mine. God grant you may not meet with some dreadful blow before you learn that all this world can give the most aspiring, is hollow and unsatisfying in itself."

"But, father dear," she replied, kissing the cheek against which she rested, and speaking in the coaxing manner of her childhood, "it is right for a man to be honored, respected, and rich, if he can be honestly. Isn't it?"

"If he sacrifice no principle in the pursuit of these, he may prosper," replied her father; "but Marion, your nature is ambitious, and Leighton is too much like you in this respect; in our country a man of his abilities and character has nothing to hinder him from taking his seat among the most aspiring? But will this bread satisfy?"

His daughter did not reply, a glow of satisfaction filled her heart at this confirmation of her opinion of what must be; she knew her father to be a man of superior judgment, clear-headed, and well posted in the ways of the world; and his words helped her to a decision, for she saw that there must be a decisive reply to the great question now pending. The difference in faith did not weigh with her, she crushed all misgivings on this point by the thought that mixed marriages are not forbidden by the Catholic Church, though she knew well that she refuses to sanction them by the nuptial benediction, which she gives her more faithful children. In less than two weeks the engagement was known through the region of Athlaca, bringing from "Old Cap" the remark that "he allowed these things would feller that night on the prairie; a young chap's hands don't shake like Leighton's did for nothin'."

Doctor Nelson bore his disappointment like a man, although he withdrew himself at once from his intimacy at Inglewood, to the grief of Mr. Benton and his wife, for they had become warmly attached to the young man; nevertheless the friendship remained unbroken, and the Doctor's lonely log-cabin was often brightened by visits from these, his two best friends; he called nowhere himself, except in the way of his profession, and at the study of his pastor.

The poor child of suffering, Alice Leighton, during the autumn following Marion's engagement, without any apparent cause, from what appeared to be almost an entire restoration to health under Doctor Nelson's treatment, sunk into the old sedentary ways, and made no effort to arouse herself from the lethargy which crept over her. Her mother in vain sought the cause of this change; the Doctor too was at fault; even Mrs. Benton wondered, as she saw her from day to day grow more reserved to herself, whom she had chosen for her confidant. She had for a long time been studying the ground of her faith, and was approaching that point where the whole cry of the soul is, "Lord, give me light." Doctor Nelson having been well-grounded in his faith from childhood, afforded her much help; but all at once she left consulting any person either physically or spiritually, and shut herself up as it were to her own thoughts.

Mrs. Benson and the physician had many times consulted together with regard to this change and were making various efforts to bring back the pleasant smile and the warm interest in matters about her, when suddenly Mrs. Benton was summoned to her bedside.

The physician was there before her, and with her mother had succeeded in bringing her out of a protracted attack of fainting. She opened her blue eyes and put out her hand eagerly to Mrs. Benton, as if she would be once more taken to her heart; then, with a motion of her right hand, expressed a wish to be alone with her friend.

"I must tell you," she whispered, as Mrs. Benton stooped to her pillow, after all had retired, "I must tell you, I am going to die. I have felt the chill of death creeping over me for many weeks. I must see Father Sheridan. I have a great deal to do; I have put it off, not because I was undecided; my decision was months since, but—," she hesitated, "I may tell you, I was afraid my motives for baptism, which he urged so solemnly upon me, might be mingled with earthly love." Her thin white hands covered her face as she continued: "You may tell him when I am gone, why I did not sooner listen to his earnest words for my soul's good." As she spoke, the tears came slowly dropping from her closed eyelids. "It was because I could not help it, indeed I could not, I may say it to you, my more than mother," she added pressing to her lips the dear hand that now held hers; "he was so kind to me, taught me so sweetly, led me along so gently—indeed I could not help loving him—and it will do no harm now."

"My poor, dear child!" said Mrs. Benton, kissing her fondly, and parting her disordered locks. By the instinct which God has given the tender-hearted, she read the tale of unrequited love through these broken sentences; read the fact that Dr. Nelson had unwittingly won the young girl's affections, and her fond heart ached for the sufferer. The countenance of the girl brightened as she felt that her secret was known to her companion. "You see, my own friend," she added, "thoughts of life and love must not press in and mingle with my dying hour; your presence alone will be necessary when I take the vows of a Christian. I feel that I can live but a few days, and O, let me do what I have to do, quickly and peacefully." Her look was sadly imploring.

"It shall be as you wish, Alice," replied Mrs. Benton; "calm your spirit by trust in your dear Lord, who never faileth those who cast their care upon Him. I will send for Father Sheridan at once, and for the rest, you shall not be disturbed."

"And you will tell him when I am gone," urged the invalid, the faint pink tinge passing over her cheek; "he might otherwise feel hurt, that I refused his presence at such a time, when he has been so interested in bringing me to this sacrament."

"All shall be as you wish, dear," replied her friend, kissing the pallid brow. Mrs. Benton's errand was in part a difficult one,