THE BONDAGER.

A NORTHUMBERLAND SKETCH OF THIRTY YEARS AGO.

"My bairn, I feel kind o'troubled like, for the preacher body he kept tellin' us as maun gan' into wor closets to pray, and wors is that small and that full o' taties naebody could manage it ony gait," and Betty Best sighed as she stretched her poor old feet in front of the fire that Sunday afternoon, and looked wistfully towards her gaunt middle-aged daughter, appealing for a little light on her problem.

The latter was standing at the palin deal table, putting paper covers on some half-dozen jam-pots, and did not answer immediately, for Jane's fingers were coarsened by field-work, and her task was in her eyes a delicate one.

Poor as they were, she had managed to make "a boilin" of that delicious apple jelly which can alone be made from the wild crab, or "scrab" as it is locally called, and proud she was of its garnet-like clearness.

As she pressed down the last cover, however, she spoke: "I dinet ken aught about closets, though maybe's the Lord will hear us; whether or no, I mind I did ask him to send us a good crop when I was plantin' them taties, and sure enough never had we the likes on't; but I dee like to see yon man get into the pulpit; he always has that nice an' white shirt breast, and his coat is that fine and black and shiny, it looks gae fittin,' and eh, but ne does thump the good book fair wonderful," and with this exposition of her views of preaching Jane returned to her task.

Sunday afternoon though it was, she felt no burden on her conscience by reason of its mundane character—rather, indeed, unconsciously prided herself because it was a "nice tidy job, and she could do it in a clean white apron." The function had almost a sort of sanctity about it and partook of a religious character.

Sunday was principally marked to Jane by the fact that she could wear a white apron all day, instead of the coarse sacking wrapper proper to field-work.

Jane wrought the "Bondage" on the farm where her brother was "hind," and worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p. m., for the handsome sum of fifteen-pence, and when the weather wasn't too rough, Jane was wonderfully contented too, and no more thought of questioning the rigntness of it than she did that of the hours of rising and the setting of the sun itself.

Jane could neither read nor write, and was not clever enough to have found out for herself that if everybody left off working twelve hours and only worked eight, poverty would be no more, and the pure stream of national prosperity would forthwith run whereever directed, even uphill if the pipes were laid on proper Socialistic principles!

Ah! well, the world moves and we with it, and if Contentment must needs die to give birth to Progress, so let it be. Perhaps no human being has a right to be contented with so little as poor Jane possessed.

Her life had known no great joy, not even the blossoming time of youthful love, for "virtue" is too often a very stern and almost sordid thing below a certain level of intellectual culture—either it means a prudent and too often loveless marriage, or a life of old maidenhood unsoftened and unsweetened by any recollection of the happy pairing time which ought by rights to come to all.

Love in its higher aspects is a plant that needs culture for its development, needs something of leisure, something of freedom from lower cares, if a man or woman hasn't bread and cheese, he or she thinks of bread and cheese first and companionship second,— needs, too, a touch of self-consciousness and a sense of individuality—"I must be I"—before there comes any wish for mental union. In fact, mind must exisct before it can unite itself to mind.

"Love" to Jane meant ruin and shame, as she had seen it in some of her girl companions, while her view of marrfage was expressed naively enough when speaking of that of a comparatively wealthy woman: "What call had she to marry? She'd plenty to keep herself!" and apparently folly could no farther go in Jane's maiden mind.

But though joy had been unborn, her life had held one great passion; a love deep as that of sex, tender and self-denying as that of motherhood itself.

Ever since the day when, a girl of eight, her baby brother had been given her to hold and to nurse, "Wor Dan" had meant all the world to Jane.

And a bonny child he had been—sturdy and strong, and "wilful as a lad bairn should be," and a heavy weight for poor underfed Jane to carry in his petticoat days, when, their mother working in the firlds, the little girl had to be nurse and housekeeper and cook, and carry dinners to the field-workers, with the chubby youngster astride her back, or slung in a shawl so as to leave he rhands free for basin and for basket.

How proud she was of him, too, so proud she forgot his weight, forgot even that he hurt her when his hard little fists beat her shoulders or tugged at her hair, as he cried, "Jenny do faster—Dan 'ants to twot," and the tired, willing steed tried to trot forthwith.

Dan was a man now, and a strong, good-looking chap, too; and though he had not been in a hurry about it, he was doing a bit of courting on his own account at last, and Jane had his supper to keep waiting while the milk-maid at the farm took longer to fill her cans in the byre than she was wont to do, and the old mother by the ingle muttered to herself that "Dan should hae more sense than let his hasty-puddin' spoil for all the lasses that ever were made," and that "no sky would come o' such a fly-by-the-Sally was like to be.

Autumn wore on and winter came, and a terribly severe one it was. Snow fell heavily very early, and lay for weeks on the outlying farms where food grew scarce for man and beast, and it was difficult to get fresh supplies in the blocked condition of the roads.

There was no field work proper, but Jane had to help in foddering the cattle and herding the sheep, and many a weary plunge she had with back-loads of hay or aprons full of cut turnips, while her limbs ached and her fingers grew benumbed.

But the worst was yet to come. Dan the stalwart, Dan the beautiful, Dan "the man-body," took cold. How, no one knew, and soon he lay gasping for breath and groaning as the sharp cutting pain of pleurisy darted through his body.

There was much of the baby still in the big, strong man, and he was all unused to suffering, and as night fell the pain grew worse.

The nearest medical man lived seven miles away, and the roads were barely passable, while telegraph-wires were things as far removed. They kept early hours at the farm, and the lights were all out, and Dan, "Bonny Dan," might die before the morning.

Meanwhile they did what they could, and if the remedies were not of the best, they were, at all events, numerous enough, beginning with "peppermint waters," and ending with a dinner-plate heated in the oven and laid where the pain was worst.

Still no relief came, and the strong young fellow turned his cheek to the pillow and wept like a child.

"Eh, my man, my bonny man, dinna, now dinna. I'll gan to Horton mysel, but ye shall hae a bottle frae the doctor," and Jane took her thin, old shawl and her woollen bonnet from the peg behind the door and stepped out into the night.

Dare she waken them at the farm and ask the master to send? But there was nobody to go, for Dan and she were the only workpeople that lived near, for Jim the plough-boy had gone to his mother's "buryin'," and the farmer was getting an old man himself, and not too kindly either, it must be confessed. "Sally?" No. Sally might like a good-looking chap like Dan well enough to fetch and carry for her, but catch her turning out of her warm bed to do aught for him," thought Jane, comforting herself amid her suffering with the thought that no one could love Dan as she did, and maybe she wasn't far wrong. Anyhow, she needed all her love before the night was over.

The woman was very tired to start with, for she had tried to do both Dan's work and her own, "so that the poor beasts should not want their meat," and in her care for them had well-nigh forgotten food for herself.

Her clothes were thin and worn, and her shoes were heavy, yet far from water-tight, and the roads she had to travel alternated between bits that were hard and frost-bound, but comparatively passable where the wind had swept them clear, and others inches thick of snow, where it lay in the hollows, and the air was keen and cold, and pitiless as that of Dante's "Inferno" itself.

It was well on to ten o'clock when she started, and the night was dark save for the stars, and the gleam of the unsmirched icy snow.

Such a night in the country is the acme of loneliness. The world itself seemed dead and the wind alone left to mourn. Not a sound of bird nor beast to break the stillness; and the solitary wayfarer may travel miles without meeting another human creature.

Jane was prosaic enough, and yet weird new thoughts came to her in that night's walk.

Strange, she hardly knew what the night was like till then, for all her forty years of country life, for she had been wont to go to bed at sundown, and, weary and sleepy, had never thought of rising to look from her window at midnight storms or midnight calm.

How far off the sky seemed, and how big the dark, threatening clouds that told of more snow yet to come. Did God live up there, and would Dan—her Dan—have to go all the way up there by himself? And would God ken who he was, and not be hard on him, for he'd never had much schoolin'? And maybe Dan would forget his manners, as he used to do when he met the parish priest, and not think to pull his forelocks till she minded him what the Quality looked for.

God was, in Jane's mind, not so very unlike the "priest," only bigger and older; and, in her heart, she thought, kinder, for "He had heard her when she prayed for a good crop o'taties, and that was good of him, seein' he'd such a lot o' things to mind, and sae many folks speakin' to him that could make 'grand prayers.' Eh! Would he happen to listen if she asked him to spare Dan?

One moment she knelt beneath the stars in the piercing cold, and all her soul went out in a cry for help to the Power she knew so little but yet felt was good.

Then a little more hopeful, a little stronger, even as it seemed, in body, she went on her way.

It was slow work at best, and the drifted snow was toilsome; the woman's breath came in short, hard gasps at times, and there was a sound in her ears like church bells far away, and she wondered what it meant.

Once or twice she staggered, but never for one moment thought of relinguishing her purpose.

At last she reached the village and roused the man she sought. "It's Dan—wor Dan—ye maun come, for he's gae bad," she sobbed, and leaned against the door-post as she spoke; and the doctor, weary though he was, looked once into the woman's face and knew it was no light case that had brought her there.

"Poor soul—poor soul; sit down a bit and rest. You are not fit to walk back," he said. But Jane had done her work and turned to go.

"Ye'll ride your mare, doctor; she'll travel faster wantin' the gig, for the snow's gae thick in places and barely passable," and the wisdom of her counsel stopped his offer of a seat by his side.

Back into the night the woman went, and the darkness was deeper, and the cold more pitiless. No sound, no human footsteps, only by and by the doctor passed her on his horse, and spoke a kindly word, but did not wait her reply, and, indeed, she had no voice to answer.

Once or twice she stumbled, and once she fell and lay a moment or two in blissful rest. Oh, the relief of giving up the struggle and the strange sense of peace; and again that far-off ringing—was it really bells?

And was it a warning? Folks did have them whiles!

Then through all her fainting senses came again the thought of Dan, and nerved her for another effort. She must see his canny face again— must know how he was—and upborne by her intensity of love, the tired woman managed the last mile or two almost in a state of trance. She grew unconscious of all that surrounded her—of the cold, the darkness, and even of her own body, and seemed to herself to be already present where her loved one lay.

"He is easier now, and I'll try and come again to-morrow," said the doctor, who had remained longer than usual at the cottage, fighting Death with his own hands for the old mother was far from an efficient nurse.

Even as he spoke the latch was lifted, and Jane entered. Her eyes were set—her lips drawn across her teeth, and she looked tall and straight and white as one already dead, yet her pallid lips tried to form a question. Tried, but tried in vain.

"Yes, there is hope—hope assuredly," the doctor said, answering that pathetic appeal; but even as he spoke he laid the woman on the low trestle bed and tried to feel the pulseless wrist.

The hours passed, and the woman lay apparently unconscious—though the doctor was still in the little home trying every means he knew to keep the ebbing life—for Death, great Death, was hovering near.

Morning broke, and Dan lay sleeping like a child, his breathing peaceful, and his hot and feverish forehead cool and moist; but Jane's face looked strangely grey in that early light of dawn. Then her eyes unclosed and her lips murmured one word just audible to the doctor, as he stooped over her, "Dan!"

"Dan will pull through now, my woman," he answered; but his voice had a quiver in it that surprised himself.

A smile—a gleam of joy—"Eh, God did hear then, bless him, and heaven maun be nearer than I thought, the music is that sweet."

Then there was silence, and another soul was free from earthly bondage forevermore.

Isabella Weddle.

HE COMPROMISED.

How a Much-Abused Man Settled With the Railroad Company.

The railroad superintendent was very busy, and when the pale man with ragged whiskers limped in with one arm in a sling, patches of court plaster all over his face and a bandage tied around his head, he looked up impatiently and said:

"Well, what is it?"

"I've got a damage suit for $50,000 against your road," said the pale man, "but before filing it I thought I'd come and see if you'd like to settle it out of court. I'm ruined for life and there ain't a jury in the state that would cut it down more'n half."

The superintendent wheeled round in his chair and his manner changed.

"Come in, sir," he said, "and take a seat. At what place on our road were you hurt?"

"Three miles from here, where she curves. I don't sleep any of nights and I guess I'm injured internally. One of my arms may have to come off, and my spine's getting weaker every day."

The superintendent congratulated himself that the man had fallen into his hands before the lawyers had gotten hold of him, and his hand began to wander towards his check book on his desk.

"Its getting worse," said the pale man. "I don't see no rest night or day."

"How were you hurt?"

"Well, it was this way. I was tramp-in' down this way lookin' for work, and I laid down on the track a while to rest and dropped off to sleep. That was 3 o'clock in the afternoon and the fast express was due to come along at 3.30."

"Did the cowcatcher strike you?"

"No, it wasn't the cowcatcher. That's where my damage suit comes in. You see, your train was two hours behind schedule time, and I woke up about 4 o'clock and went over to a farmhouse to ask for some grub. There was a red-headed widow running the place, and she took a shine to me, and I took a shine to her. About three weeks later I married her. Talk about cowcatchers, colonel! cowcatchers ain't in it with that woman. You see, the fix she's got me in. If your train had been on time I'd have been killed nice and easy and never got into this trouble. What'll you offer for a compromise?"

The superintendent felt relieved sufficiently to hand out half a dollar, and the pale man accepted it.

"It's below my figures," he said, "but we'll call it square. I'll get a pint of whisky with this, and if that old cowcatcher runs against me when I go home to-night she'll think she's jumped the track, collided with a gravel train and went through a forty-foot trestle. You may consider my suit against your road withdrawn, sir."

THE SULTAN AND ELECTRICITY.

The Sultan seems to have a curious mingled liking for and a dread of electricity. Some years ago he caused to be erected in the grounds of Yildiz Kiosk, a small theatre lighted by incandascent lamps. One day, he saw the workmen trenching the walls in order to bury the wires leading from the engine-room to the theatre, and stopped the work, insisting that the wires should all be placed in sight on poles, as he feared that otherwise they might be used to produce an explosion! He has also an electrical boat on a small lake, an English dog-cart driven by electricity, and a tiny electrical tram-car, upholstered in satin and gold which run to a circle. It is said that he has never yet ventured inside any of these vehicles; and also that he has forbidden the use of telephones in Constantinople, lest murderous conspiracies should be devised over the wires.

IN DISGUISE.

Do you like cabbage?

Well, I never eat it, but I smoke it sometimes.

BRITISH COLUMBIA GOLD

A TITLED INVESTOR'S VIEWS ON MINERS' PROSPECTS.

From the Drawing-Room of Civilization to a Miner's Life—A Striking Contrast Between American and Canadian Life at the Mines—Rossland's Prospects.

When Sir Charles Ross stepped out of the drawing-room of civilization it was to step into the woollen shirt, and the coarse leggings of the unconventional west. Sir Charles might have been content with the drawing-room of life, for it was furnished with all softness and ease. Balnagown Castle, in the north of Scotland, confessed him lord and master. He might have cast a prideful eye over seven hundred thousand acres, of which he was the sole possessor; and he was conscious of the homage of hundreds of leal-hearted Highlanders, who recognized him as head of the clan, who had not changed with the years, and who were as unsophisticated as if the miracles of steam and telegraphy had never been.

But then Sir Charles was only twenty-two; he loved the adventurous and the unknown; he had been the pride of the Cambridge University crew; he had thrown the shoulder stone and run in the half-mile; and, in fine, was a splendid young fellow, who stood six feet, and felt it in his blood and bones that he should have a period of roughing it.

So he came out to British Columbia a-hunting. That was about four years ago. He said farewell to his dressing case, and with woollen shirt, and rough leggings, and a stout little pony, not forgetting a plentiful supply of pork and beans,

HE STARTED FOR THE WILD.

And it was while engaged in shooting things that he turned to mining. He met a mining expert, and the result was that he examined the prospectus in a certain claim. This claim to-day is known as the 'Centre Star' mine, close to the 'War Eagle.' It has passed the experimental stage. It is as certain as anything can be certain that it will speedily pay handsome dividends. Sir Charles put a considerable amount of money into it; so did, subsequently, a few friends. No shares are offered for sale to-day. The business is a close corporation.

Pity you could not see Sir Charles as typifying, in his dress, the unconventional west.

"The fact is," he said to a reporter in Montreal the other day, in the course of some talk, "that I was thinking of getting my photograph taken in my coarse suit; but I will confess to you" (laughing heartily) "that I was too ashamed to have the business done. Roughing it is all very well for a while, and particularly when you do it for pleasure, and not from compulsion; but I can tell you that it gets a little tiresome now and then. You feel, after a few months of it, that you would like to get back to civilization. For instance, you have to discard all notions of refinement. You wear a coarse woollen shirt and leggings. You take with you upon your trips pork and beans, and a pot of treacle as a special luxury. You camp out at night on the ground, wrapping your blankets about you. If you are long out your clothes will get ragged and dirty. I remember entering Vancouver once with

ONE SLEEVE IN MY SHIRT,

my boots full of holes and a fortnight's beard on my face. I was thoroughly disrepatable, and felt it. I hope I am not finical, you know. I can rough it, and am going back to the business now for about three years, with, of course, a holiday now and then thrown in; but (with a little grimace) "you can have too much of it."

"There is no social life in Rossland yet, of course?"

"Not an atom. The miners all dress alike, of course, and I dress like the miners, when I am in town. When we go out upon long trips to the hills we have to take pot-luck for everything. Call it free and healthful but the good things of civilization taste good when you return."

"Could you give a word of advice to people in the east as to making investments?"

"Well, the best advice, I think is to severely investigate all claims and prospectuses put forward by interested parties. There is no doubt in the world that there is a splendid mining field in British Columbia, but on the other hand, there are not a few swindling affairs. Can the seductive prospectus be made good? That is the question for the investor. Well, if you cannot go yourself to make investigation, you can engage a reputable lawyer in Rossland to do the business for you. That is the best way. For instance, we saw some time ago a prospectus issued by an eastern firm which set forth that rich veins had been discovered in a certain property. We all laughed at it. It was a lie, pure and simple. But, curiously enough, after the issue of the prospectus,

RICHNESS WAS ACTUALLY STRUCK.

This was an accident. The intention was to deceive. Again a certain offer was made to me touching a certain property. The mining machinery was said to be new. It was second hand, as a matter of fact. Now second-hand mining machinery may be as good as new, or it may be absolutely worthless. These are samples. Be sure of the men who are engaged in the business, and make rigid enquiries. All men are not mining experts, and doubtless not a few men are imposed upon who issue these flaring statements in all honesty."

"The miners are a singularly quiet set of fellows. Not that they are angels, by any means. On the other side of the line, not a few of them had cut up the devil. When they cross to British territory, they seem to imbibe a wholesome respect for the British flag. This must be it, for we have no force at all. Well, in Rossland, we have Mr. Kirkup, and his assistant, Mr. Houston, but they never go armed; they use no threats; they go in and out, and yet, because they represent law in their persons, they keep a population of over six thousand people, drawn from all quarters of the world, in order. It is not so on the other side. The miners there sometimes fire free. That is to say, they carry guns, and pop them off before you can say winking."

Sir Charles says this with a delicious sort of coolness, all the more zestful from the vision which his words conjures up.

"Do you ever carry arms yourself, Sir Charles?"

"Certainly not, and especially when I am on the other side of the line.

"How is that?"

"Well, I consider it a tempting of Providence. On the other side it is morally certain that the "other fellow" will shoot first if he suspects you have a gun. If you have no gun, you will probably get along quieter."

"What about Rossland itself? Will it become all that is claimed for it—a great centre of population?"

"Well, it is claimed that it will become a second Butte, Montana. Certainly, I think it will experience great development in the course of a few years. Already the population gravitates towards it. A great deal of business is transacted in it. Some of the people are beginning to bring their

WIVES AND FAMILIES,

so that we may expect a social life in

"As a steady diet, Sir Charles, what the place before long."

do you think of pork, beans and treacle?"

"Well, can 'go it,' you know, but perhaps after a few months it becomes a little monotonous. At the same time, after a little holiday spent at my own home, I come back to it without misgiving. It is not the food so much as the absence of other comforts. One does not mind cooking his food; but perhaps a shave now and then, or a bath, would be desirable. I say nothing about shreds and patches, for these we must expect out west."

"I suppose it feels good to get home, Sir Charles, and experience the delights of fresh linen?"

"Oh, yes, but at home I do not wear this kind of dress"—pointing to his tweed morning suit—"I wear Highland costume."

"And so the steam and the telegraph haven't spoiled the picturesque at Balnagown?"

"Not a bit of it."

"And your people have still their simple ways, still render homage to the head of the clan?"

"Yes, I observe no change in these regards. I had some pictures taken showing the Highland costume, when I was at home. Some are coming out, and I will manage to let you have one."

"Thanks. I wish you had had yourself photographed that day you entered Vancouver with one sleeve in your shirt and your trousers and boots full of holes, and that I could have had a copy."

"Not for the world," was the laughing reply.

RAILROAD PROGRESS.

The Wonderful Advance Which Has Taken Place Since the Early Days.

Probably few people at the present time can realize what a quaint and curious line the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was in its early days, or how totally different were all its appointments from those to which we are now accustomed, says the Railway World. Yet travelers were vastly pleased with it, and thought that to pay five or six shillings to go thirty miles in an hour and a half was the perfection of cheapness and speed. They went into ecstacies about the delight of jingling along over a jarring stone block road, in compartments about as commodious as London four wheeled cabs or in semi-open chars-a-banc, where they became blinded with sparks and ran considerable risk of being set on fire. Every time the train stopped the passengers were bumped against each other, screw couplings being unknown till 1835; but they seem to have borne it all complacently. The first class vehicles were painted yellow, and bore such names as Queen Adelaide, Marquis of Stafford, Treasurer, and Despatch. Being usually eight feet long, upon a base of only six feet, they pitched up and down considerably as they ran. To the second class coaches there were light roofs or awnings, but often no sides and no doors; the color of these airy conveyances was

BLUE OR PINK.

About two and a half tons was the average weight of all the coaches, some more, some less, but all were constructed in the lightest and weakest manner, by builders who had by no means grasped the difference in working conditions between road and rail traction. The guard sat on the roof of the last coach, or of one fitted with a brake, and was exposed to rain and snow, heat and cold, dust and sparks, in a barbarous manner. This mode of treating a man so important to the safety of the train was usual on most lines in this country till nearly 1850, and was but one of the many ways in which the early railway men copied the stage coach system without considering how essentially different it was. The first class were "inside" passengers. The second were "outside" who must expect a taste of bad weather. The third were inconsiderable "stage waggon" people, who were contemptuously hitched on anyhow. Even as late as the seventies, might be seen an inscription over the gateway of an important London terminus: "Entrance for horses, dogs, and third-class passengers."

A QUEEN'S DEVICE.

All official cablegrams for Her Majesty are addressed "Queen, London," and are invariably couched in secret language. The Queen usually signs her private family messages, "V. R. I." She seldom telegraphs in plain language, but uses one of her word or cipher codes, compiled so as to defy detection. Her Majesty has private ciphers with her principal Ambassadors, the Viceroy of India, the Governor-General of Canada and with any General abroad on active service.