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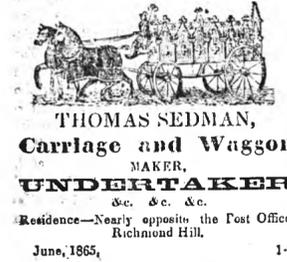
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Poetry.

Grass.

I seek for blossom far and wide, Is there not then one early comer? Through all the wood, one single bud To tell thy yearning heart of summer?

Literature.

LITTLE HARRY:

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Literature.

LITTLE HARRY:

CHAPTER I. It was the dawn of the morning of New-Year's Day, 1864, and in a small, poorly furnished apartment in which there was no fire, a woman sat sewing by the light of a small lamp.

with the utmost diligence. The quick passage of her needle being the only sound that broke the stillness of the dingy room.

At that early hour of a winter morning it was bitterly cold to sit waiting a fire, but she had only a few coals in the house—not more than would serve for a portion of the day, and she did not wish to light the fire till Harry rose to enjoy its warmth.

Gradually the morning grew stronger even in that little room, the window of which looked upon the black smokey wall of another house on the opposite side of the narrow alley, and the moment it was light enough for her to do without a lamp she extinguished it, and went and sat down near the window, where she continued to sew with the same untiring industry.

Presently a low gentle tap came to the door which she immediately answered by calling, 'Come in.'

The door opened, and an old man with thin white locks, and a most pleasant face of sparkling benevolence came briskly in.

'A happy New-Year to you Mrs. Talford,' he eagerly cried.

The same to you, Simon,' returned the woman, making an effort to smile.

'I hope I am your first-foot. I hope nobody has been here before me,' said Simon as he displayed in each hand a large slice of currant loaf.

'No one,' answered Mrs. Talford. 'You know you are the only friend I have in the world, Simon. If it had not been for your kindness I would have broken down altogether.'

'My kindness,' repeated the old man; 'Oh dear, I haven't the power to show much kindness to any body; I wish I had, for I like to see everybody happy.'

'Ah dear Simon, it is just that desire which gives you the power. Your cheerful words and hopeful anticipations have kept me up where otherwise I would have given way to despair.'

'But you mustn't despair, Mrs. Talford. Master Walter will be sure to return, and then we will be all so happy.'

'I wish I could think so, Simon,' she said as she sadly shook her head.

'I know he will. I am quite sure of it. You will see what a lucky first-foot I will be to you, Mrs. Talford. Who knows but I may get a letter from him at the Post-Office to-day when I go a'long.'

'Ah, you have said that every day for the last six months.'

'So I have; but those he has sent must have miss-carried. One will be sure to come right soon, and why not to-day as well as any other day? But, dear me, this is a holiday, Mrs. Talford. You're surely not going to sew any more.'

'I must, Simon.'

'What! on New-Year's day? It is for bread. These shirts must be finished to-morrow or we can have no food. I spent my last shilling yesterday.'

'Oh, dear—I just have a shilling. Take it, Mrs. Talford. It will do you more good.'

'No, no, Simon, dear, good, kind Simon. The noblest, warmest heart in old Glasgow beats in your bosom; but you want your earnings for yourself. Besides, I do not want to be idle to-day. I am best when at work, it keeps me from thinking so much.'

'A happy New Year, mamma; a happy New Year, Simon,' exclaimed a bright cheery voice; and at the same moment a smart hand some boy came bounding from the next apartment, like a sunbeam.

He flew into his mother's outstretched arms, clasped her round the neck, and kissed her again and again. In a transport of unspoken affection she drew him to her heart and fondly embraced him. Old Simon stood looking on with a smile upon his lips and great round tears coursing down his cheeks.

'The moment the boy got clear from his mother's arms, he leaped up to Simon and treated him to a hug of the same nature.'

'Bless your bright, young, noble heart!' cried the old man. 'How

proud papa will be when he finds you such a brave, beautiful boy.'

'Oh, I do wish papa would come,' said Harry, 'for then we would be so happy, and get back to our nice home again, and mamma would not have to sew all the day as she does now. Do you think he will come soon, Simon?'

'I am sure he will.'

'He promised before he went away to take me to the pantomime on New-Year's day. Now, something must have kept him, or he would have been sure to be here.'

This artless remark overcame his mother with renewed grief; and Harry seeing her weeping, sprung again into her arms.

'Don't cry, mamma,' he whispered, 'papa won't be long now. I know he won't, for I dreamt last night that he had come.'

'Oh, my poor, poor, boy!' sobbed Mrs. Talford; 'let us pray that your dream may come true.'

'Oh, yes it will—won't it, Simon?'

'Of course it will,' he returned cheerily. 'I am quite sure this is to prove a happy New-Year. Let me light your fire, Mrs. Talford, and then I will go to the Post-Office.'

'Oh,' cried Harry, clapping his hands, 'and I will go and hear the music. You will lit me go, won't you, mamma?'

'Yes, dear, you may go out for a little, if you will promise me not to go into any of the busy streets, and be careful to keep out of the way of coaches and carriages.'

'Oh, no fear, mamma, I will be very, very careful,' cried the happy boy, rushing away for his cap.

'But stay, my darling, you have not got breakfast.'

'I'm not a bit hungry, mamma. I am too glad to be hungry. Nobody is hungry on New-Year's day.'

'Hear to the little prince,' cried Simon, looking round at the glad child with eyes that sparkled with pleasure.

'Then here is a bit of Simon's nice cake. Take that and eat it outside,' said Mrs. Talford, handing Harry one of the slices which lay on the table.

'Oh, how nice!' exclaimed the excited boy, who was all impatience to be out. 'Good-bye, mamma; I won't be long. Good-bye, Simon, and thank you a thousand times for this beautiful cake.'

And with a merry laugh he ran from the room, and they heard him singing to himself as he rushed down the stairs.

'Isn't he a little emperor?' said Simon, as he gazed after him with pride in his eyes.

'He is indeed a dear, generous, frank, open-hearted boy,' said his mother and her eye too sparkled with maternal tenderness and love.

'But what I am to do with him, how I am to bring him up as he should be brought up, I don't know. Do as I may, I can earn only what procures us a scanty support of the plainest food.'

'I wish I was rich,' said Simon emphatically.

'You are rich, Simon,' was Mrs. Talford's quiet rejoinder.

'Rich!' repeated Simon with a puzzled look.

'Yes—very rich.'

'Why I have only a shilling,' he answered with great simplicity.

'I do not mean rich in silver or gold, said Mrs. Talford with a sweet though sad smile; 'but in something far more valuable—in kindness, benevolence, and true Christian charity. You, Simon, and such as you, are the only really rich people in this world.'

'Not in this world, Mrs. Talford, if you please,' said Simon gravely. 'It is money makes people rich in this world; the other things you speak of are the riches of the world to come; and I only wish I was as rich in them as you say. But I do know what I like to see people happy.'

'And to sacrifice everything to make them happy,' added Mrs. Talford in a grateful tone.

'There I have got your fire lighted now, and I will go up to the Post-Office,' said Simon, who blushed with modesty at the other's commendation, and like all true natures, did not think himself worthy of it.

'And keep up your heart,' he cried with animation as he went out at the door. 'Maybe I'll have good news when I come back.'

And away went the honest, simple-hearted, good-natured old man, who was in truth all that Mrs. Talford had said; for a more unselfish, warm-hearted fellow was not to be found on that New Year's day in old Glasgow.

In fact it was his honesty and integrity that had made him so poor, and landed him in his old age in penury. Poverty had not, however, soured the milk of human kindness which welled like a spring in his bosom, or tempted him to entertain hard thoughts of his fellow creatures.

There was just one man in the world against whom he cherished something like animosity, and yet this animosity was of a very diluted kind, and more akin to pity and compassion; although he, and others whom he loved, had suffered at his hands deep injustice.

'Oh dear,' he muttered as he walked along the street, 'I do hope there will be a letter from Master Walter to-day, it would be such a welcome New-Year's gift.'

On presenting himself at the window in the Post-Office, where he had appeared every day for months back, he did not require to put a question, for the clerk knew him and knew his errand.

'No letter.'

It was the same answer he had got hundreds of times before, and, leaving a sigh, he turned away with sadness at his heart, in which, however, was already springing the unyielding hope of better news to-morrow.

CHAPTER II. SELF REPROACH.

In a large, well-furnished room in one of the best houses of Blythwood Square sat an elderly man alone. There was a bright, blazing fire, and the room contained all manner of comforts, yet its occupants seemed melancholy and unhappy. His form was thin, and he had a noble commanding presence.

Over his broad massive brow his iron-gray locks disported themselves, and lines of care, if not of sorrow, were deeply marked on his forehead, while his large full eyes were dull and joyless.

The large house seemed very desolate in its silence on that festive New-Year's morning. The gloom of its master seemed to have fallen upon it, for it was cheered by no domestic sounds, nor brightened by the sunny presence of gayly laughing faces.

At length there was a creaking upon the stairs, and slow, quiet footsteps in the passage. Presently the door of the chamber was softly opened, and a fat buxom woman in cap and morning gown made her appearance. With a smile on her good-natured motherly countenance, she walked forward to where the gentleman sat, and said—

'Mr. Mowbray, I have come, sir, to wish you a very happy New-Year.'

'Ah, Mrs. Wilson, it is very kind of you. I thank you for your wish, and heartily return it; but no New Year can bring happiness to me. I cannot enjoy it. I have no right to look for it.'

'Do not say that, sir,' returned Mrs. Wilson kindly. 'We were meant by our maker to be happy, and why should we not be so?'

'Because our own actions may prevent it. Some people Mrs. Wilson, through simple pride, dash the cup of happiness from their lips with willful impious hands. That is what I did.'

'I know what you mean, sir,' rejoined the housekeeper. 'You are sorry for having turned Master Walter from your house ten years ago, when he would not marry according to your wish, but would take the girl he had fallen in love with.'

'He was my only son, Mrs. Wilson. His mother died when he was a mere boy, and he grew up the pride of my life. My whole affection was centered on him, and I was proud of him, for, as you know, he was a noble, high-spirited honorable youth.'

'His like was not to be had in Glasgow,' said Mrs. Wilson, with peculiar warmth.

'He obeyed in all things, till the matter of his marriage, when he refused to solicit the hand of the lady I wished, and went and married an obscure girl of whom I knew nothing.'

'Because he had gained her affections and loved her in return,

poor, dear boy,' said the housekeeper.

'I could not see it in that light,' added Mr. Mowbray. 'I was then a very proud haughty and self-willed man, and his presumptuous and undutiful opposition to my wishes made me angry beyond all control. I ordered him to quit my house and presence forever. He went, and I have never seen him, never heard of him since.'

'Alas! no,' sighed Mrs. Wilson. 'Poor, dear boy, I have often been grieved when thinking of him, for I loved him like a mother.'

'Yes; and you remonstrated with me at the time, and I harshly ordered you to be silent and never mention his name any more in my hearing. Simon Burton did the same, and I instantly turned the old man, my father's faithful servant and my own, out of my service. This act of cruelty has likewise caused me miserable reflections. Oh, how many thousand times have I mourned over my pride and sinful anger, and wished the past undone; but that is impossible. I can obtain no trace of Walter, or of Simon either, and must bear the consequences of my crime in that solitude, desolation, and misery which I have brought upon myself.'

'Oh, sir, do not despond in that sad way. Now that you have seen the error of what you did, perhaps Providence will bring you the Master Walter, and the old house will become happy again. I am sure I have prayed a thousand times for this to be.'

'You are a good right-hearted soul, Mrs. Wilson,' rejoined her master, 'and had I listened to your remonstrances, and the honest words of old Simon, all would have been well. But I was blinded by passion, and made stubborn by self-will, and I have seen my folly when it was too late. I do not expect to see Walter again. I think he must have left the country; perhaps he is no more; perchance he died in some foreign land, cursing the hard-hearted father who made him a wanderer and an exile.'

'Oh, dear, dear, sir, don't go on in that way,' said Mrs. Wilson, the tears coming into her eyes. 'You must not—indeed you must not. You shut yourself up too much, Mr. Mowbray; and if you will forgive me for saying so, you might bring some comfort and satisfaction to your heart, instead of sitting there all alone by yourself thinking of your trouble.'

'And how may I get comfort?' asked Mr. Mowbray languidly.

'Well now, here, for instance is New-Year's day, when everybody is happy and enjoying themselves, and when all are meant to do kind things, and say pleasant words to one another. But there are many poor creatures in this city, Mr. Mowbray, who can have no happiness or joy on this festive day, because they are sunk in poverty, and have not the means to make merry. Perhaps at this moment some poor widow with her helpless family are crying for want of food, or starving in their cold room for want of coals, and there you sit with the power to aid them, and bring down their blessing on your head. Depend upon it, sir, if you knew that you had given to the helpless, and comforted and cheered some heavy hearts, it would make the burden of your own lighter when you laid your head upon your pillow to-night.'

Mr. Mowbray listened to the words of his good-hearted housekeeper with interest. Shut up hitherto within the sphere of his bitter self-reproach, and a brooding for ever over his past injustice and its consequences, he had given no thought to the care and the welfare of others, while he had all the means which ample wealth could command to lessen the trials of struggling innocent poverty, and send gleams of sunshine into homes which want had made sorrowful.

He rose and walked to and fro in the room lost in thought, and Mrs. Wilson took care not to interrupt his meditations, but waited till his thoughts had wrought themselves out.

'You are right,' he at last said, as he stood at the window listening to and looking at a band of musicians who were opposite the house, and making the square echo with the clang of their brass instruments.

'You are right, Mrs. Wilson. I will relieve the necessities of some deserving family, who on this New-Year's day are sad and joyless, while all around them are feasting and making merry. But where am I to find such deserving objects of help? How am I to seek them out?'

'Providence will direct you,' said Mrs. Wilson, reverently. 'Then with the warm enthusiasm of a heart filled with Christian love and overflowing with human charity, she rejoined in a tone which her earnestness made musical two verses of one of the Scotch paraphrases:

Let such as feel oppression's load Thy tender pity share, And let the helpless, homeless poor Be thy peculiar care. Go, bid the hungry orphan be With thy abundance blest; Invite the wanderer to thy gate, And spread the couch of rest.

Let him who pines with pining cold Be thine the blissful task to make The downcast mourner glad. Then bright as morning shall come forth In peace and joy thy days, And glory from the Lord above Shall shine on all thy ways.

To be concluded next week.