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GRAY HAIRS.

BY L. H. SICOURENY.

Gray Hairs!—I marvel why they strike
Such terror and dismay;
No mark of wickedness or shame
Or foul disgrace are they.
As gently as infant dreams
They o'er the cradle down,
They have their sparkling silver threads
In the black and brown.

Gray Hairs!—the waning beauty smiles
And for a moment flies,
Up to its place,
Oh! had it its place,
If one that lily hand,
They say should fall,
To attend more will come
Of a general.

Gray hairs!—
Arrayed in the Queen of France
Receive the state,
The titled and the land,
And while her great
Were praised by hand and grace
The long white rill on tongue,
In fearless close

Gray hairs when spread here and there,
In beard and whisker,
Inspire respect and reverence,
More than youthful
Of knowledge of mankind they tell,
Perchance of serious thought,
And loss at the expensive school
Of sage experience taught.

Gray hairs!—I think them beautiful
Around the ancient face;
Like pure unsullied snows they lend
The wintry landscape grace,
In wisdom's way, they crown
The forehead with their gray
Of joy,
Of sorrow,
Of life,
Of death.

BEWILDERED.

"Please, Sir, there's a boy outside
wants to see you."
"See me?" I asked, surprised.
"Yes, Sir; I think they want a doctor,
sir; mother told them you was one."
I hurried out, forgetting my breakfast,
and found the boy standing at the door.
"What's your name?"
"Phil Wish, yer honor."
"What do you want?"
"Please, Sir, Ellen's tuk worse, and
yer mother don't think as how she'll
live much longer, she's quite scrambled,
sir."

I wondered who 'Ellen' could be,
and what 'scrambled' meant, but con-
sented myself with signing to him to
lead the way. We walked on in the
right early morning, every thing look-
ing fair and beautiful. Presently we
came to the brow of a hill, and looking
down into the valley, bathed in bright-
est sunlight, I saw a few white cottages
dotted here and there. Phil in-
formed me that 'Ellen' lived in one of
these, pointing out the identical one
with his finger.
"What's the matter with Ellen?" I
asked.

"Dunno, Sir," in a tone which, if it
led to imply he didn't care, at least
proved he was not disposed to be com-
municative. I wondered what the
mystery could be, but thinking what-
ever it was it would soon be solved,
I walked on in silence. We at last ar-
rived at a cottage very low. An old
man appeared and beckoned me in-
side. I entered, stooping low as I did

A small room, a very small room,
every thing scrupulously neat and
clean. A little girl, apparently about
five years old, was seated on the floor,
holding her doll, in an under-tone, 'not
make a noise, because mother was
asleep.' A working-man's hat and coat
hung in one corner, with a cheap photo-
graph of their owner. (I don't know why
it certain it was his) suspended over

them. The shutters of the latticed
windows were half closed, producing a
dimly subdued light. I walked toward
the bed, and softly drew the curtain.—
The small face, half hidden in the
pillow, seemed very young and girlish,
the eyes closed, the breath short and
hurry. The bird was literally shriek-
ing—I signed to the woman, and she
covered the cage. All was quiet. I
lifted the pale hand from the coverlet
and felt for the pulse—gone.

"How long has she been so?" I asked.
"Since daylight, Sir."
"Ah! she can't last long."

The professional phrase escaped in-
voluntarily. I started as I uttered it,
and dropped the hand. The movement
roused her. The heavy eyelids unclos-
ed; I drew back.

"Is Jack here, mother?"
"No, darling!"
"Ah! I forgot."

A moment's pause. Then in a quick,
hurried tone, as if the thought were first
impressed upon her mind,
"Mother, am I dying?"

A sob was the only answer. Another
pause longer than the first: then the
aria was placed under the pillow for a
moment, and drawn forth again.

"Give this to Jack when you see
him."

She tried to move her hand along the
bed, and its hidden contents to the wo-
man weeping by her side; but ere she
could do so, the will that directed it
grew weaker still, and left it idle where
it lay. I unclosed the almost rigid
fingers, and gave to the woman the ob-
jects they had clasped—a wedding ring,
and a lock of fair hair tied with a blue
ribbon.

"Ellen, Ellen! would you like to see
your child?"
"Not now!—Poor Jack!—How dark
it is mother!"

I knew by that that it was very near;
but the woman, in her ignorance, walk-
ed across the room, and opened both the
shutters and the window. The staring
sunlight came rushing, streaming in.

"Mother—mother!"
A deadly change came over the coun-
tenance. "I'm here, Ellen. Child—
darling—speak!"

Another pause, very, very long, never
to be broken by the form lying before us,
pale and still. A distant shout of har-
vest-home came strangely on the so-
lemn silence. Ah! truly harvest home!
Another drooping soul for the universal
harvest! Another wearied heart for
the world's great reaper—Death!

I turned hurriedly away. The child
had fallen asleep with the doll by her
side, still murmuring in her dreams that
'they must keep quiet'—a little rosy
face but strangely like the dead one on
the bed. I reclosed the window-shut-
ters, thinking of the light she had found
—that great eternal light that will one
day dawn on all—covered the pale dead
face, and left the woman weeping and
in prayer.

I set off the next morning for the old
woman's cottage. She was standing at
the door, evidently expecting me.

"Oh, Sir, is it you? do walk in!"

I entered, glancing as I did so at the
bed where the dead girl was still lying.
The woman saw the look, and began
weeping bitterly.

"Oh, Sir, my poor child!"
I spoke soothingly and calmly.

"Oh, Sir, it's not only losing her! it's
not only losing her! it's the way—the
way?"

"The way?" I said, inquiringly.

"Yes, Sir; but to be sure you don't
know. She was bewitched, Sir?"

"Bewitched?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, Sir, this long time. She's been
ailing since last year, and it's been the
death of her at last."

Seeing my continued look of surprise,
she 'went on' as she expressed it, 'to
tell me all about it,' still holding, as she
did so, the dead girl's hand in hers.—
The story, as nearly as I remember, ran
as follows:

"You see, Sir, Ellen was my only
child, and a good one she was. Many's
the time I've told my old man she'd
live to be a comfort to me; and so she
truly did, nursing me and taking care
of me when he died; for many a long
day.' (Here she fondled the dead hand
closer still.) 'Well, you see, Sir, she
was still quite a child, when a young
chap comes to work up at the Squire's
where Ellen took the milk every morn-
ing. It wasn't long after he came that
I thought I saw a change in her; she
wasn't so light-hearted like, as if she
had some secret. So, one morning,
when she comes in from the Squire's
with the odd look on her face, I turned
short at her and says, 'What's the mat-
ter, Ellen?'

"She reddened, but answered quite
boldly, for she was always as open as
the day,

"Why, mother, I think Jack's very
fond of me."

"Fond of you?" says I; 'and pray
who's Jack.'

"Him that works up at the Squire's;
but you'll soon see him, mother; he's
coming up to-night."

"And sure enough he came. He was
a handsome spoken young fellow
enough. He told me he wanted Ellen,
and would take great care of her. He
seemed so honest and bright-looking,
and Ellen so fond of him, that somehow
I couldn't say 'No,' and the end of it
was they went to the church, and the
parson himself told me he'd never seen
a prettier couple. They were just like
two doves; he had plenty of work up
at the Squire's—you see he was a brick-
layer, Sir, and the Squire was having
his place done up—and Ellen she took
in needle-work, and come over every
day to help me. They use to live there
Sir.' (She pointed to a little cottage
close by, now wearing a dreary deserted
look.) 'They lived there nigh upon
two years, Sir, till long after the baby
was born. Well, Sir, my Ellen—
though the best-tempered girl in the
world—was a bit spirited when any
thing crossed her; and one morning
Jack and her had a quarrel—the first
they'd ever had—it was about her coun-
sill Tom, poor fellow, who had been her
sweet-heart before she was married—
and Jack went to work without bidding
her good-by. She was mighty vexed
at this, and when I went over I found
her crying. I thought Jack was wrong,
and was just telling her so, when I
heard a knock at the door, which was
open, and there was a witch standing
looking."

"What witch?" I asked.
"Why, her that lives in the hut on
the hill; there's only one witch, Sir."
Again the look of astonishment. I
signified a satisfaction I was far from
possessing, and she continued:

"Well, Sir, she was standing staring,
and Ellen, thinking she'd heard what
we'd been saying, told her sharply to go
off; but she didn't move, so Ellen got
up and pushed her out, but not before
she had cast an evil lock and muttered
herself."

"Ellen," she's cast an evil eye in
my way, she looked pale, but said, in her
own way, 'I don't care if she has,
I'll be her.'"

"I don't care if she has,
I'll be her."

"I don't care if she has,
I'll be her."

"I don't care if she has,
I'll be her."

"I don't care if she has,
I'll be her."

"I don't care if she has,
I'll be her."

thing would come of it; but didn't say
anything to any one.

"When Jack came home that night
I talked to him a good deal. He didn't
take much notice at first, but at last he
promised to make it up with Ellen. I
don't know, Sir, if it ever was made up;
maybe, you see, the witch wouldn't let
her bring her mind like to do it, for Jack
and her were never the same after-
ward, and Tom went to the cottage
oftener than ever. I used to be quite
frightened at Jack's look, when he'd
come in and see them two a-talking to-
gether; but I knew poor Ellen was be-
witched, and couldn't help teasing him.
The neighbors know it, too; for, you see
bewitched people have a queer look a-
bout the eyes, and grow thin and pale,
like Ellen did, till they die quite away.
I dreaded Jack finding it out, and it
was a long time before he did; for the
people didn't like to talk about it before
him, and when he saw them whisper-
ing and looking at him, he'd think they
were talking of Ellen and Tom, and
feel jealous like, and angry. At last
one night Ellen rushed in to me with
her face all pale and trembling:

"'He's off, mother!' says she.

"Who Ellen?"

"She looked quite wild, and pointed
to the cottage. I left her fainting-like
in a chair, and ran over. He was
standing with his white face near the
door, putting his things together.

"Jack," says I, where are you off to?"

"Going on a tramp, mother; there's
no more work up at the Squire's."

"Jack," says I, 'it's about Ellen—'

"He never moved or answered.

"Jack," says I, putting my hand on
his shoulder, for I began to get fierce,
thinking of Ellen and the child, 'Jack,
think of the little one.'

"Mother," says he, in such a quiet
voice that I didn't feel frightened any
longer at his pale face, 'mother,' says
he, 'I've heard the neighbors a-talking
about what has happened to Ellen, and
I know it's true. Ellen can't help it;
but what's the use of my stopping here?
She'll be better without me; she looks
dying like, before my very eyes, and
cares nothing for me, so what's the
good mother?"

"I let my hand drop from his shoul-
der; for you see, Sir, I knew it was all
true, and I couldn't answer it, though I
tried hard. At last I said, 'Jack! won't
you bid her good-by?' For I thought,
when it came to kissing her and the
child, maybe he wouldn't go through
with it. He went to the window,
where he could see her lying in the
chair, as I left her pale and still. A
fierce look came over his face, and he
muttered something about Tom.

"It's not his fault, Jack!" says I.

"No," says he, 'not his fault—not
hers—it can't be helped. Good-by,
mother!'

"Jack!" I said, 'for God's sake stop!
speak to Ellen only one word.'

"He went out of the cottage. I was
almost wild. 'Ellen! Ellen!' I called
out; I rushed over; I shook her; I
pointed to Jack in the distance going
farther and farther away; but I could
not rouse her, she was quite gone. I
watched him go over the hill, without
once looking back; and we've never
seen him since."

"And Ellen?" I asked.

"Oh, Sir! when she came to she
seemed quite mad. She said she'd go
after him, and take the child with her.
I couldn't quiet her at all. Then she
was very ill for a long time, without any
sense, talking about Jack all day and

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