

THE
HIGHLAND
COTTAGE,

A PLEASING
TALE FOR YOUTH.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
BENEVOLENCE,
A FRAGMENT.

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THE

Highland Cottage.



NOW there 'dwelt in a little valley, amidst the mountains of the north, a husbandman who was just and upright in his dealings, and he was a breeder of sheep; and

and the Lord had blessed him, and his flock multiplied exceedingly, and fed upon a thousand hills.

The man was not a native of the hill country; he came from the country of the plain; but his wife was one of the daughters of the land, even a daughter of the mountains; and her name was Maini: and they had been married a few years, but had no children.

And it came to pass that a stranger, who was a pilgrim, came down into the valley, seeking shade and refreshment; and he alighted from his horse, and came unto their dwelling, which was low and humble, after the rude manner of build-

building in those parts, and he stooped, and passed the threshold.



Now it chanced that the man had taken his departure at the rising of the sun, and was absent on a journey ; but Maini, his wife, was in the house : and when she saw the stranger she bade him welcome, and brought him into a little chamber,

chamber, which was clean though homeiy.



The woman also was neat in her attire, and fair spoken; her voice was soft and gentle, and it sounded pleasing in the ear of the stranger.

Then she brought forth milk and butter, even sweet butter, in pure vessels

vessels ; and she hasted to bake a barley cake on the embers, and set it before him and he did eat.

And she spake cheerfully to him, but with all modesty and sweetness, and said, “ Now, of a surety, this wild country, and the manners thereof, must seem strange unto thee.”

And he said, “ The very wildness of the country is pleasing to me, and for the manners thereof, this kindness to the traveller must, indeed, seem strange to those who come from afar ; for the people in other parts are not used to be so comfortable to strangers.”

And she said, "Dost thou come from afar? These mountains, and the rough ways therein, are wearisome to the traveller; thou needs must want repose."

And the man paused a little, and replied, "I come from the farthest parts of the south; I am a pilgrim, and the days of my pilgrimage have been many, and now, indeed, at last, I am weary, and my beast is weary also: let me, I entreat thee, tarry a few days under the shadow of thy roof, so shall I have rest, and my beast shall have rest likewise."

And

And she seemed to wonder at his request ; and she answered discreetly, and said, “ Alas for me ! that it is not in my power to entertain thee ; I have heard of the country from which thou comest, that it is a rich and plentiful country, and the people thereof live in fair dwellings, and eat of the fat of the land ; but this country, as thou seest, is poor and barren, and the manners thereof are rude and ignorant ; thou canst not, surely, be pleased with such things : my house also and household stuff are mean and scanty. We intend soon, if the Lord shall bless us, to make it better : peradventure, if thou shouldst

shouldst chance to pass this way hereafter, it will be in my power to receive thee as I could wish."

But he answered—"Nay, speak not thus to thy servant: if I shall not straiten thee in thy dwelling, this little chamber will suffice for my lodging, and the fare which serveth thee will content me well; but if I should be burdensome to thee, speak the word, and I will depart."

And she said—"Assuredly thou shalt not depart, if thou canst be pleased to tarry under this poor roof. Thy stay will not be long,
but

but I will do what little I can to make it less irksome to thee,"

And he thanked her for her courtesy, and said—"Trouble not thyself much to provide for me; a little will suffice. And he was glad to tarry, for rest was needful to him; and he was pleased with the understanding and natural courtesy of the woman. Moreover, he was curious to see the simple manners and household customs of those parts.

Then they ungirded his beasts, and housed them, and gave them provender. And Maini carried the
stranger



stranger forth into the field beside her dwelling, to shew him the pleasantness thereof: and lo! it was a little valley of green pasture, smooth and level, and a swift stream divided it in the midst; and there were trees for shade; and where the valley opened to the south it was

was bounded by a narrow arm of the sea, and on every other side the mountains stood round it like a mighty wall; and there was the sound of many waters, which foamed as they fell from the rocks above, but where they gathered into a pool beneath were pure and clear as crystal.

And behold, as they walked in the field, there chanced to pass that way a shepherd boy, one of those who kept their flocks on the hills; and she called him unto her, and spake gently to the lad, and said, "Go fetch a lamb and a kid from the mountain, and see thou choose
aright,



aright, that this stranger may taste of the best of our flock ; and take thy dog with thee, that thou mayest be able to catch that which thou markest, for thou knowest they are wild on the hills, and difficult to be taken."

And

And the stranger said, "Let me now speak a word, I beseech thee. Send not for both at once; send either for the lamb or for the kid, as seemeth best unto thee: will not one suffice?"

And she said, "Nay, but the lad shall bring down both, and we will first eat of the lamb, and I will feed the kid with milk from the cow, so shall it be fat, and fit to set before thee when thou hast eaten of the lamb."

She said, moreover, "I will make for thee whey of the milk of the goat, if thou wilt drink thereof:

it

it is a pleasant and wholesome drink.”

And he said, “I see thou art kind and careful. Thou shalt have the blessing of the stranger: do then according to the kindness of thy word.”



Then she spake again to the lad, and charged him strictly: so the

lad ran, and hasted to the mountain, and his dog went with him.

But the man stood still in the field, and pondered, and said within himself, "Surely this is the ancient world, and the manners of the times of old: did not Sarah or Rebekah do after this this fashion, when she received the stranger in the absence of Abraham or Isaac, her lord?"

And as he continued musing, she said, "What musest thou upon?"

And



And he turned and looked wistfully on the woman (for he had not much regarded her countenance before), and he saw that she was lovely to look upon, and that the favour of her countenance was full of simplicity and mildness, and loving kindness.

And

And he cast his eyes around, and the place seemed to him as a portion of Eden; and the sun was bright in the heavens, and shone upon benevolence and innocence, and he was transported with the sight, and his heart glowed within him, and he could not refrain from speaking to her as one surprised; but he spake in a low voice, humbly and reverently, and said, "Behold I am a stranger in the land, and the face of the land itself is strange, and what I see around me looks like enchantment; tell me now, I pray thee, is it usual to meet with angels among these mountains?"

And

And she said, "I never heard of any in these parts; and she blushed lightly, even as the blossom of the wild sweet-briar, which grew beside her on the bank of that pleasant brook, and smiled, and held her peace.

And they walked and communed together, and were as familiar friends; and when he commended the pleasantness of the place, Maini seemed to mock there at, and said, "To us, indeed, it seemeth a sweet and pleasant place; but can it be that these wild rocks should delight the eye of the stranger who cometh from the fruitful country of the south?"

And he said, "Doth not novelty heighten many pleasures? therefore, perhaps, these wild scenes are more pleasing to me than to thee who are accustomed to them."



And the man sojourned there more than twenty days: moreover, when he departed thence, he looked back, and sighed. Then he

took his way through the desart of mountains, and vacancy and silence were around on every side. And as he journeyed on through the land he remembered Maini, for hospitality was within her gates, and her little dwelling was a dwelling of peace.

BENEVOLENCE.

A FRAGMENT.



“WHY lay you here—have you lost your way, my lad?” said I, to a poor sailor boy, as he looked wistfully in my face as I raised him from the ground. “Have you

you lost your way, my lad?" said I, in a still softer tone of expression.

"Yes, your honour," answered he. "But, indeed, (as if recollecting himself,) "I have no way to chuse; every place is a home to me, for nobody pities the poor sailor boy. I have sailed two voyages to Jamaica, your honour, continued he, "and, on my return from the last, took a long journey to visit my father: his name is
George

George Trueman ; but he disowned me ; said I was no child of his, and turned me adrift. I returned to the ship, but my place was early supplied ; and here I am, your honour, on my way to London, to seek out a birth for the poor sailor boy.”

As he finished, he was turning away, about to leave me, when I laid my hand on his arm, to detain him. Whether it was that he could not read “charity” in my countenance

nance—whether he did not think himself entitled to my compassion—or from what or other cause it was he turned away I know not, but of this I am certain, if my face did not wear the kindest look of pity, it belied my heart.

“God help thee!” said I: “thy years,” for he had hardly seen twelve winters, “they are unfit to buffet with the wind of Fortune, and the tide of Adversity. Fortune is more fickle than all the winds



winds, and Adversity more irresistible than all the waves thou hast ever met with in the Atlantic Ocean!" [I owed Humanity a debt, and here I paid it.] "And if ever thou seest me in want of sixpence, thou shalt repay it with interest,"

interest," said I, as he dropped a tear on the piece I had given him. I accepted this tribute of his heart instead of a thousand thanks, and, buttoning my coat, walked away.

Tell me, ye philosophers, what it is that gives a man such calmness and tranquillity of mind, that sets him so at peace with himself, after doing a good action?—For I think if Doctor Lenitive himself had laid his finger on my pulse at that moment, his stop watch could not
have

have told him of the least irregularity in the pulsation of it.

Envy me my feelings, ye who have never felt “the luxury of doing good;” who have never shed a tear over the miseries of others; and learn not to suppress the inclinations of doing a good action; for too true it is that we feel them but seldom!

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