

THE LADY'S BOOK.

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Written for the Lady's Book.

CLARA LAWSON ;
OR, THE RUSTIC TOILET.

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SOME persons think that all mankind are born with mental capacities alike. How preposterous the idea! that, when the mass of inert matter is wrought into innumerable diverse forms, and when animated existence appears under every specification of colour, figure and energy, that immaterial and divine essence, the mind, should exist in all rational beings exactly the same, evincing no modification and discovering itself in but one development, and that all the grades of intelligence are purely adventitious—the effects of circumstance, education and observation.

Consult Nature! Behold the great hierarch of day, eldest of the sons of light when God said, 'Let light be, and light was,' and then contemplate the pale star that gems the coronal of night—from the mountain, whose proud head o'ertops the clouds, turn to the lowly plain and more lowly valley—from the lion-hearted sea, whose roar is heard around the globe, turn to the purling rivulet—from the unwieldy kraken of the North to the sportive shrimp—from the elephant, beneath whose tread the earth quakes, to the chirping grasshopper—from the soaring condor, that cleaves the storm-cloud, to the tiny midge that quivers like a moth in the sunbeam—from the mountain oak to the pliant ozier—from the blazing diamond to the dull and opaque sand-stones, and by analogy of reason, as you run through the different *genera* and *species*, and the innumerable shades of variety in the same species, you must come to the irresistible conclusion, that the Creator has specified in man every grade of intelligence,—diversified by various degrees of power, brilliance and energy—the majestic intellect that is calculated to grasp the universe—the patient investigating mind, slow yet successful in inquiry.—the penetrating mind that, like a sunbeam, at a glance comprehends truth—and the dull, opaque mind, that neither has light of itself nor can reflect the light of others.

But without any process of reasoning, observation must establish the fact, that there is an infinite disparity in the minds of different individuals; for many, possessed of every facility for expanding their intellects and devoting their days and nights to unremitting study, are never able to attain to distinction: while others, not enjoying like advantages and bestowing less attention, rise to eminence and obtain an enviable fame among men. And this difference of mental ability

is alike obvious, whether we look at the great *arena* of intellect, the world, where often by mere mental energy, the obscure hind has risen above nobility itself, to sway the rod of empire—or, at the *cradle* of intellect, the gymnasium, where the careless and erratic, though gifted son of genius, bears away the scholastic prize from the dull and plodding student.

But to our story. And now smile not, gentle reader, when you find the above philosophical reflections designed as an introduction to the 'short and simple annals of the poor;' for our heroine, though munificently endowed with the riches of the understanding, was poor in outward circumstances. Clara Lawson was the daughter of humble and obscure parents. Her mother was a native of New York, and, after a short acquaintance, married an Englishman, greatly her senior in years, who, after living with her about three years, converted what moveables she had into money, and abandoning his wife and infant daughter to the charities of the world, embarked for New Orleans, where he fell a victim to the diseases of the climate and his own licentiousness.

Clara's mother thus stripped of every thing, had no friends to whom she could apply, but was dependent upon her own exertions for a precarious subsistence. The occupation which she adopted was that of a washerwoman; and, although her earnings were small, she was enabled by a strict economy to provide for herself and child fare sufficient, though homely, and procure comfortable attire, though of the coarsest fabric. Time passed on, and she was generally known throughout the city as the 'melancholy washerwoman with the pretty child;' for from the hands of no other did the linen come as purely white, or the frill or ruffle as neatly plaited. And never was any epithet better applied than the above to Clara and her mother; for the face of the one was motionless as the sea of oblivion, while that of her child was like a rivulet flashing in sunlight and dimpled by the soft fingers of every zephyr.

The melancholy of Mrs. Lawson had nothing in it of dissatisfaction with outward circumstances, or of repining at labour to which her constitution was unequal—it was the deep settled gloom of a mind where the sun of hope has ceased to shine—of a heart whose warm feelings

unkindness has congealed. She was young and ardent, and attributing to her suitor excellencies that, in him, had only an imaginary existence, gave her hand to him with all the devotedness of woman's first love; and when the clouds of error were dissipated, and the creations of fancy gave way to painful truth; in the midst of unkindness she endeavoured to 'hope against hope;' and even when he had abandoned her and her infant, continued to cherish the recollection of him who had won her early affections, as the ivy enfolds the ruined rotten trunk of its early embrace. Her bruised spirit would have sunk beneath the pressure of sorrow, but maternal love nerved up her strength, and enabled her to make exertions for her child that she could not have made for herself. Often when she would have fainted over her wash-tub with fatigue, the sight of Clara, as she sported over the green with a countenance like an angel, inspirited her, or her innocent laugh as her little arms plashed in the water playing with the soap-bubbles, or her soft voice as she hummed the infant hymns her mother had learned her.

Modest merit is unobtrusive of its griefs and is permitted to suffer, while forwardness is hearkened to and relieved from its very importunity. Although the thin form of the heart-broken woman for four years was seen gliding like a spectre along the streets, during the week, laden with the clothes of her daily toil, and her little child with piles of linen, o'er which her bright locks fell in ringlets like sunbeams on flakes of snow; and although every Sabbath they occupied the same humble seat at church, no one had inquired into their destitute condition, nor had endeavoured to put them into a way of earning a livelihood more suited to the mother's failing strength. 'The melancholy washerwoman and her pretty child' came from the lips of many as before, but was a sentiment of the lips, in which the heart had no share. It created no charitable desire to cheer the melancholy of the one, or shield the frail unprotected beauty of the other from the hardships and snares of an evil world.

Paler grew her cheek, slower the step, and more stooped the figure of the lone daughter of sorrow, yet with her wasted hands worn through the skin by attrition, she continued late and early to ply her accustomed labour, while deeper and deeper shadows spread over her countenance—the dull twilight of life darkening into the night of death.

It was a morning in May; the sky was flushed with the rosy tints of the rising sun; and the hum of the distant city, with the gush of waters and the song of birds, came like the music of enchantment on the fresh air, scented with the breath of the flowers of Spring. Every thing around smiled in the beauty and peacefulness of Eden. Deeply did Mr. Letour and his warm-hearted lady drink the influence of all that surrounded them: for the virtuous and charitable alone are calculated to enjoy the calm beauties of nature. They had risen earlier than usual, and had continued their walk beyond the precincts of the city, until they came to the humble suburban habitation of the poor. The sun had not risen, yet the smoke was curling up among the clustering boughs of the weeping willows from the fire in the open air, where, beside the

spring, the slender form of the washerwoman bent over her daily task. They had often marked the sorrowful countenance of the deserted woman as she and her little daughter took away weekly and returned the clothes which they gave her; but the peculiar hardness of her fate had not presented itself to them until, in their morning ramble, they saw the unmitigated toil to which she was subject, and contrasted her cheerless poverty and wakeful labours with the extravagance and indolent day-slumbers of the wealthy. If the luxurious inhabitants of the city would give to morning exercise the hours they waste in feverish sleep, and witness the hardships and the toils which the poor, late and early, have to undergo for a scanty subsistence, how often would pride and haughtiness learn a lesson of humility—how often would avarice listen to the dictates of charity, and the glow of benevolence expand the breast that wraps itself up in its own narrow interest.

As they approached the humble cottage, the cries of a child, from the thick bower of willows, arrested their attention. They proceeded hastily to the spot from which the noise came. The water was bubbling in cauldrons over a brisk fire—confused heaps of dry clothes dotted the green grass over, like islands—there lay masses that had already been washed, in twisted rolls piled together—there stood the tub with its contents from which the excited bubbles had scarcely disappeared, and beside it lay extended the washerwoman, as she had sunk down from exhaustion—pale, motionless, stiffening in death. Beside the corpse was her little child, with her face buried in her arms, weeping aloud. In the firm grasp of the dead was a crumpled letter that she had received that morning, which told the story of her woes. It bore the post mark of New Orleans. The letter was from her husband; and was full of touching penitence for the manner in which he had behaved to her, and entreaties for her forgiveness. The conclusion was by another person that gave an account of his death. Labour and ill health had reduced her form to a mere skeleton—hope, the oil of life, was extinct, and the sudden excitement had quenched the feeble light of existence, as the gentlest breeze extinguishes the dying snuff that flickers in the socket. Restoratives were resorted to, but in vain—the sufferer had reached that peaceful clime where the 'weary are at rest.' The dead was committed to the tomb, and her orphan child found a home in the family of the charitable Letour.

Clara was now in her eighth year, and was taken by Mrs. Letour into her nursery to assist in taking care of her young children. She had received from her mother some elementary instruction, and was able to read with considerable ease. Madame Letour had been educated in Paris and was a woman of handsome acquirements, having, besides a knowledge of the modern languages of Europe, an acquaintance with the ancient Classics, together with the Belles Lettres. She spent the half of each day in the nursery with her children, instructing them. The sprightliness and good sense of Clara soon attracted her notice; she made her a pupil with the class of her own daughters, and in the different studies to which she directed her attentions

was pleased to see her make astonishing progress. During five years Clara continued in the family, doing service half the day, and devoting the residue to study, and in that time obtained an education such as few young ladies had then an opportunity of getting. She was tall and well grown for her age, and her countenance was ever lit up by intelligence and cheerfulness. If she had any faults they were those of excessive energy of character, and of her mixing with the world in her infancy;—a confidence bordering on forwardness; a lively perception of the ludicrous and a keenness of wit and satire that, while it excited wonder, created fear.

About this time, a certain Miss Margarette Lawson, an antiquated maiden lady on the wrong side of fifty, the eldest and only surviving sister of Clara's father, came over from England. She found out her interesting niece in New York, and took her to reside with her in one of the little villages in the western part of the State. How much soever Miss Margarette might resemble her brother in features and national prejudices, she certainly had nothing of his extravagance—for a more sparing housewife never lived: and, by a rigid stinting of table and wardrobe, she had not only kept unbroken the principal of a small bequest made to her in her more girlish days, but had laid up also some guineas of the interest. Some fur dresses of coarse gray stuff, comprised all her every-day wearing apparel—while a rusty silk gown, venerable enough in cut and colour to have belonged to her great-grandmother, with a black silk-hooded mantilla, made up her dress of state for extraordinary occasions.

Four years passed away in the village of —, and Clara had grown up to womanhood, and a beautiful and interesting girl she was, truly—yet she seemed a flower destined to “waste its sweetness on the desert air!” for her high-toned sentiments and mental acquisitions were ill understood by the inhabitants of the village in which she lived, who were noted for a plainness and simplicity bordering on stupidity. The school-master of the place, a tall handsome personage of twenty-four, was the only one in any degree able to appreciate Clara's abilities: yet Reading, Writing, and a limited knowledge of figures, Grammar and Geography, were the radius that described the *cyclopaedia* of his lore. The slight pretensions which Herman Lincoln had to learning, established something like a community of feeling between them, which soon grew into a warm attachment.

I hope my readers will not hastily conclude to despise my humble hero of the birchen-red—but will recollect that, in 1800, (to which date the above history belongs,) the village school-master who could read Dilworth's Spelling Book and the Psalter, and cypher through Gough's Arithmetic, was no-inconsiderable person—and if, in addition to these, he had a smattering of Grammar and Geography, and could survey and plot a field, was set down as a prodigy. To resume, however, Herman certainly was the only one of any intelligence or reading in the place, and he had drawn upon himself the envy of the young rustics, on account of supplanting them in the affections of the village-belle, though their envy had nothing of bitter-

ness in it, for he had grown up among them, and his amiable disposition prevented any feeling of the kind.

The months of July and August were a busy season;—and, as the youngsters were too much engaged in harvesting to attend to books, Herman took advantage of the recess of school to visit the West, where he had some friends. Clara found the village rather duller than usual, after he had gone, and availed herself of his absence to pay a visit to the friend of her childhood, Madame Letour, in New York. She was received with the greatest kindness by her benefactress; and, after spending seven or eight weeks in a very delightful manner, returned home, bearing many little presents that she had received,—and, among others, all the necessary cosmetics, perfumes, powders, &c. &c. for a fashionable toilet. These, to be sure, were not needed to deck Clara's peerless beauty;—but Madame Letour was a Frenchwoman, (which is another name for *rouge*;) and delighted in perfumes; and human nature is so constituted, that, in making presents, our self-love often induces us to present what *we* prize, without consulting the taste or the circumstances of others.

Important changes often occur in the space of a few weeks. During Clara's short absence, revolutions to her highly important had taken place in the small village of —. The sun was nearly set, as the stage rolled in sight of the place. The eyes of the maiden were directed to the elm trees, through which a glimpse was caught of the school-house. The door opened. The swarm poured forth, with laugh and song, and merry shout, and hats and bonnets tossed in air. And now the maiden's heart fluttered, and the colour came and went on her delicate cheek—and now she caught the glimpse of her—could it be!—her own Herman. The figure emerged from the shade. It was not the tall manly form of her lover, but stood in the light, in outline, more like a short thick sack of wool, than a human being. But was he the teacher? Was there no other person in the room? Did not that small whitewashed log-cabin of twenty feet by twelve, contain one of more estimation, in her view, than all the opulent proprietors of the princely piles of brick and marble that she had seen in New York? No! The locking of the door—the bundle of books under his arm, and the pompous philosophical strut of the stranger dispelled all her hopes, and left but little more to doubt or fear. Her lover was dead, dismissed, or had removed forever—a fresh instance of the inconstancy of mankind—even a parting farewell unsaid.

As she came near a group of children who were behind the rest, and who seemed to be particularly intent on their books as they walked along, confused voices reached her, like the hum of bees; and presently she could distinguish *hic, hæc, hoc, hujus, hujus, hujus—bonu', bona, bonum, bonis, bonæ, boni—spero, speras, sperat, speramus, speratis, sperant, &c.* but *O tempora! O mores!* such pronunciation—such barbarous Latin had never been heard since the days of Romulus! I should mention that the inhabitants of — were a mixed population. There was the deep guttural accent of the German, the broad Irish, and the stammering Ame-

rican mouthing Latin. The sounds, mingled together, were like the confusion of Babel, or the yell of triple-headed Cerberus himself. It was past all doubt.—They had a new master, and a linguist.

Clara entered the house with a melancholy heart. Scarcely had she embraced Aunt Margarette, before the old lady, in breathless haste, informed her that "they had gotten rid of that fool of a fop, Lincoln, what knew nothink at all, and had gotten in his place an English gentleman, a royal prophesier of all kinds of larnen—what knew every thing. Lincoln writ on that he was sick, in delicate health, and expected to come as soon as he got well: but you see, Clara dear! they warn't going to wait, but took the royal prophesier." Clara could scarcely refrain from tears—yet indignation at the manner in which Lincoln had been treated, and irritation at the language of her aunt, gave her energy, and she replied to her aunt in a warm manner, "Professor, I presume you mean, aunt!—and, as the gentleman professes every thing, I would *prophesy* that he knows nothink. I suppose that he is some boasting *blockhead* that has come to this country to prevent his head being brought to the block. He is certainly no gentleman to undermine another, especially while he is confined to a bed of sickness. I cannot see why people should be so foolish—as to drive from among them those they know, and take in strangers, about whose talents and morals they know nothing, as if no one had any brains or worth, unless he came from over the sea."

"And why arn't it so, Miss? Don't the choice of every thing come over the sea—wines and silks and the like, and why hain't folks there more brains too!—Ar'n't they more 'lightened?'"

"Why, as to that, I can't say," replied Clara; "but, if they have more brains over the sea, most persons take care to have their heads *lightened* of a large portion—for I generally find them as addle-pated as you seem to think the Americans."

Clara here perceived a tremendous cloud on Aunt Margarette's brow, and hastened to escape from the torrent of abuse that followed; but, as she tripped up stairs to her room, she heard repeated the words—'impudence—fool—and personal inflections.'

The next morning Clara was confirmed that she was correct in the estimate which she had made of the Professor's abilities, by the perusal of the following card, which her aunt produced:

"*A Card.*—Henry Hardigan, Royal Professor from London, where he has taught several of the princes of the blood and nobility, announces to the public that he has taken the Academy in the village of —, where he will teach the following branches: Orthography, Kaligraphy, Brachygraphy, Reading and Geography, Numerics, Optics, Katioptrics, Hydrostatics and Pneumatics, Algebra, Fluxions and Saxeopontine Constructions, the Mathematics analytically, synthetically and geometrically, Demonology, Psychology and Mythology, Ontology and Dontology.—Also all the ancient and modern Languages, together with whatever is comprehended in the most extended cycle of the cyplopedia of art and science. Great attention paid to the morals of the pupils, and the most polite perfections and genufections of the finished courtier instilled. Terms moderate."

It was true the faithful services of young Lincoln were forgotten. Parents were anxious to procure for their children the blessings of an education which they had not themselves;—and, with a pitiable credulity, which is still an American characteristic, exalted a foreigner over one identified with their own interests and honour. The Royal Professor was engaged, and the inhabitants of the village of — expected the goddess of Wisdom to break a shower of knowledge over the place, as Jupiter had formerly done a shower of gold over the Lycians. Plain English and useful knowledge were eschewed—and to please the impotunity of the children—to pay proper respect to the teacher, whose dignity might not brook plain learning so well, and, furthermore, to gratify the foolish vanity of parents—boys who could not tell the difference between the centre and the circumference, or distinguish a noun from an interjection, were forthwith put into Latin. The children were delighted with the change—the change of teachers, and the change of lessons. Each one looked with contempt on his former studies and the teacher who superintended them; and looked forward to the period when they should become *royal professors* themselves, and have *royal* times of it, and take very Parnassus by storm.

Time passed on, and the inhabitants of — congratulated themselves on having secured the services of so eminent a Professor. He was regarded as the greatest philosopher of the age. He not only understood all the discoveries made since the flood, but made some himself, with which he contemplated soon to astound the natives—not of our little nameless village, but of the world. He had also formed very long and learned theories, which were exceedingly mystified, and so the people did not understand them. This, however, was a proof of the correctness of the theories, as any which they would have understood, could not have been correct. Of these theories, I will cite one of the shortest and most plain, that my readers may judge of the deep sagacity of the Professor's inquiries into the nature of truth.

That the days are longer in summer than in winter, is a natural fact—that all bodies expand with heat, and contract with cold, is a natural law—that the days in summer are expanded by the heat, and the days in winter contracted by the cold, is a natural inference. Was there ever a deduction more natural? The above was the theme of one of the Professor's lectures, delivered in the school-room a few evenings after he had come to the village: and, after detailing some interesting experiments which he and his young friend Lord Stanhope had made in London with a *theometer*—an instrument that gives the condensation and rarification of heat, to determine the phenomena of the long days in summer, and also some experiments which he and Earl Musgrave had made, with a *spymeter*—an instrument that shows the radiation of cold, to explain the phenomena of the short days in winter, he was enabled to demonstrate the truth of the above law and inferences to the entire satisfaction of his astonished auditors.

He boarded at the village tavern, and lodged in the upper room of the school, which was a building of a story and-a-half; and here, late at

night, when every light in the village was extinguished, would be seen the gleam of Professor Hardigan's lamp. He was polite enough to drop in of an evening, and see his neighbours for a few minutes: but such, he said, were his studious habits, that he enjoyed social intercourse as the dessert of life, but hard, abstruse study as the substantial meat. At first he called on his friend and countrywoman, Mrs. Margaret Lawson, almost every evening; but, after Clara's return, his visits were more seldom, and less lengthy—which was strange, as the intelligent like to mingle with those of kindred spirit; and certainly she was the best fitted to comprehend and enjoy the Professor's profound erudition. When he did visit her aunt, Clara used her ingenuity to draw him out on particular subjects, that she might sift his pretensions somewhat; but Aunt Margaret and the Professor were both so fond of talking, that she could scarcely edge in a word at all, much less enter into a thorough unravelling;—besides, when she had an opportunity, she was afraid to proceed very far, lest she might offend the gentleman, and provoke the ire of her aunt, who had not sufficiently studied Blair, to have in her rhetoric proper regard to the decourms of time and place, when in a wrathful mood.

In addition to his voluminous reading, Professor Hardigan devoted much of his time to astronomical observations, and had converted the window seat of his attic dormant into an observatory. Here he sat of evenings, with several lamps around him, and with arms bent like an Indian bow, supported a small tube directed towards the stars. From many a window in the village were turned the eyes of sire and son, to the star-gazing man of science, as they thought upon the stupendous discoveries likely to be made—and all by the teacher of their school too—'twas overwhelming to think of. True, the tube was a very small one: but by some discoveries which the Professor had made in *optics*, he had so improved it, as to bring the moon sufficiently near to enable him to hear the roar of its sea. That the instrument was a good one, may be inferred from the fact, that by nice calculations made with it, assisted by a good *almanac*, he had actually come within five minutes of the time of an eclipse, by the landlord's watch. In addition to a valuable philosophical apparatus contained in a large chest, he received from Albany, shortly after his coming to the village of —, a box containing philosophical instruments, to be used with his telescope when looking from his observatory. These instruments were a present from the Astronomical Society of London, on account of some discoveries which he had communicated some time before his leaving England. These instruments were put into the *sanctum* of his attic bed-chamber, whither no one had access—not even to make his bed, and so the anticipated pleasure of seeing them was lost.

A slight accident, however, happened, in the using of the above philosophical instruments jointly with his telescope, which, perhaps, may be of some interest to my readers. The astronomer had mounted his observatory as usual, and commenced his starry speculations. He was in the habit, generally, of muttering

to himself while so engaged;—but, this evening, he was more boisterous than ever. One of the villagers, who was curious in astronomical matters, had gone to the school-room for the purpose of hearing, if possible, what the philosopher was saying. The villager was a simple-hearted man, and had heard that wicked men, by magical incantations to the stars, had wrought much mischief; and it was not clear to him, that the strange conduct of the schoolman had good in it. He placed his back against one of the elms, and continued to witness the behaviour of Professor Hardigan, and listen to his singular language, until he fell asleep. The astronomer continued his speculations, until his large head and shoulders declined rather much from a perpendicular—he lost his centre of gravity—his centrifugal force overcame the centripetal—there was a crash of the dormant-window-seat observatory, and the rattling of chains and telescope—the burning lamps fell on the head and breast of the affrighted star-gazer, setting fire to his gorgeous ruffles and his greasy bushy head,—and, Phaeton-like, he was hurled towards the earth, "*flamma rutilos populante capillos.*" The noise awakened the sleeping villager;—and, opening his eyes, he looked up with consternation. He had not time to move his limbs—but the action of the mind is quicker than that of the body. As the fiery meteor descended, he recollected that Hardigan had said he had often drawn down the moon; and the idea presented itself, that he had *now* drawn down a star—or, remembering that the Professor dealt in astrology, he thought that he had drawn down the devil upon him; and the next instant he thought just nothing at all—for the astronomer's large bony head struck his, fairly knocking out his senses, and both lay extended on the ground.

The attic dormant was dim, for the observer, like the lost Pleiäd, had vanished from his place. When the *royal* professor was taken up to his dormitory, he exhibited every appearance of being *royally* drunk; and the fumes of his wrath rather bore testimony against him: but yet it was hard to judge rashly, for he had never been known to purchase a glass of drink of Mr. Krause during the time he boarded at the tavern. The key was left, however, a few days after in the door which led into the upper apartment, and as boys will be prying into mysteries, they endeavoured to get a peep into the box of philosophical instruments from Albany, and, on looking in, discovered two kegs, neatly packed, which, to credit the evidence of the olfactory nerves, contained brandy. But, says one of the little boys, more considerate than the rest, "Well! what if it is brandy? May it not be one of the transparent media that the professor tells us about, through which he contemplates the moon?" Who knows that the simple youth was not right?

We will now turn our attention to another person, of whom we have lost sight for some time. Herman Lincoln returned, but ere he had reached the village, rumour apprised him of the sad reverses that had befallen him—the loss of his school, and, worse than that, of the loss of his sweetheart; for it was also reported that Professor Hardigan was unremitting in his attentions; and cold must have been the heart that

could have resisted the soft rhetoric of so learned a man. Lincoln was sullen in feeble health, and this intelligence was any thing else than a balsam. He was disposed to be a little jealous, and he could now readily credit the faithlessness of Clara, since his patrons had cast him off. The parents, in fact, were ashamed to see him after the manner in which they had treated him, but the children had all their former regard awakened at the sight of one who had always treated them with so much kindness. They fared differently now; for the professor's bony knuckles, like a bag of marbles, were continually rattling about their little republican heads. This they and their parents considered a direct violation of their reserved rights; for while they left all that extensive territory from the *collar vertebra* on the north to the ankles on the south to the full sweep of the rod of empire, they constituted all the more northerly regions a free territory. However, as Latin was a good thing, the parents allowed that it was to be gotten at the expense of—a little suffering in the flesh. The children thought differently, and would have greatly preferred conning their simple multiplication tables which they could understand, to being beaten with the royal professor's sceptre, a huge hickory, through Latin, of which they could understand nothing.

But what of Clara? Was she pleased with the attentions of the Englishman which had become so frequent? Had the solicitations of Aunt Margarette disposed her to listen to his addresses? Could she so soon forget the object of her early affections? Frailty! thy name is woman. Herman's lynx-eyed jealousy discovered from her conversation a real or pretended preference for his rival. If real, it was most ungrateful—if pretended, cruel. Clara Lawson was a volatile girl—volatile girls are often fickle—sometimes mischievous. But more anon.

The village of — was a healthy place, and did not much require the services of a physician; yet, Dr. Grayson, a young licentiate, rather a disciple of Momus than Æsculapius, selected it as the scene where he was to study medicine and practise—jokes. He was the soul of fun and frolic. His liveliness and intelligence could not fail to render him agreeable to Clara—here was another rival more formidable than the professor. Herman was unhappy; he had lost his school; Clara had either ceased to love him, or had so little regard for him as to take delight in teasing him and keeping him in suspense. He determined upon arranging his affairs and forever leaving a place where he had been treated with so much ingratitude and injustice.

Halloween is a time of festivity, of fun and frolic, of cake-making and nut-cracking. In 1800 it was a more joyous season than it is now—for modern refinement has either obliterated or lessened the good old customs of our forefathers. The inhabitants of the village of — could not be without their share of sport; and there was to be a merry making—Will you believe it, reader!—at Aunt Margarette's. Yes, that sparing, stinting housewife, after great importunity from her niece, resolved to give a feast to others, though she should fast herself afterwards sufficiently to make it up. Yet a part of the guests, at least, were not to go scot-free, for the old lady contemplated on making them sew to the amount

of the entertainment; so a quilting was determined upon—that best of merry-makings of the olden time.

“Why, Clara!” said Aunt Margarette, entering the room, “You astonish me! Not dressed yet! Why *railly* now, Clara! with your milk-of-roses, your *co-log-ne*, and your pearl-powder, you'll take up half the evening at your *toilet*, as you call it—and a toil you make of it now to be sure. I wish you would stir yourself and get ready. You know I must be in the kitchen at the cake, and no one will be ready to receive the *gals* as they come in. Besides, I want you to mark out the diamonds of the quilt before they come, that as little time as possible may be lost. I dare say, with their giggling and laughing, they'll not do much, no how. Come, child! haste!”

“Yes, aunt,” said Clara, “I am in haste; but we are to have the gentlemen, you know,” and I want to be a *little* particular.”

“Yes, that's well enough,” says her aunt; “but I dont think you need be *very* particular, for I can tell you the Professor is over ears in love already.”

“Well, aunt,” said Clara, with a laugh, “that is not very deep, to be over the ears of such a duck-legged mannikin.”

“But he *is* in love *very* deep,” resumed aunt Margarette, “and let me tell you, Clara! he is an Englishman, and hates the French and all their fooleries, as I do myself—he'll like you none the better for being powdered and perfumed over. Confound that French woman, for turning your head with such nonsense.”

Her niece was irritated at the disrespectful language used respecting one to whom she owed so much, and replied readily—

“Suppose I was to tell you, aunt! that I am an *American*, and hate the English and all *their* fooleries?” and the arch little maiden, with a roguish smile, continued to twirl the long golden tresses through her fingers, while her graceful neck assumed every variety of attitude as she studied her looks in the old fashioned mirror that rested on the bureau, by the side of which she was sitting. Aunt Margarette's countenance, which was cheerful, became serious. She could not tell whether her niece was in earnest or in jest. A cloud began to rise on her brow, the precursor of a storm—and a storm with Aunt Margarette was no small affair. It was a real hurricane—a tornado of passion. She then informed her niece that the Professor contemplated making a formal tender of his hand to her; and then opening the bureau, she showed Clara a large amount of gold in a secret drawer, and informed her, that the reception of that at her death depended upon her listening to the addresses of Professor Hardigan. Of all rhetoric the silent eloquence of cash is most persuasive. Yet Clara had a head and a heart on which nature had stamped freedom—she was not to be moved by Aunt Margarette's gold. A smile at her aunt's earnestness, and a laugh at the Professor's expense, tended to excite our irritable dame of the black silk hood. Clara was sarcastic—her aunt became abusive. I will not repeat what passed. Suffice it to say, that Aunt Margarette was furious, and gave unrestrained vent to her madness in “words that burn.” She attributed

all the mischief to the airs which that "vile French woman" had put into her niece's head, and seizing up the *paraphernalia* of the toilet, cosmetics, perfumes, &c. &c. hurled them over the house. Never was a room scented better with cologne or a young lady whitened with powder.

How great is a calm after a storm. Aunt Margarette sat in the room with a countenance brightened with cheerfulness, enjoying the conversation of the evening. Only one thing was wanting to make her happiness complete—the presence of her countryman, Mr. Hardigan. Ever and anon she went to the window to look out for his advent. She desired his coming ardently, for she thought Dr. Grayson appeared to engross too much of Clara's conversation. Herman Lincoln thought so too, and so did many of the rustic *beaus* who were assembled on the occasion. Presently the sound of footsteps was heard along the rude pavement, like the roll of a drum, and the royal Professor was descried moving along, puffing and blowing like a steamboat. That he was a man of great impetuosity might be gathered even from his walk.

He came driving on at a tremendous rate, and as he entered the door with vehemence, and was about taking Aunt Margarette's extended hand, the toe of his boot stuck in the carpet, and his head drove against the ribs of the old lady with the force of a battering ram, knocking her against the door. Clara said something to Dr. Grayson about "polite perfections and genuflections" which caused a titter. "Plague take the fellow's head," said a rustic beau to the tavern-keeper's daughter, "he nearly knocked daddy's brains out the other night at the school-house." Here was a general burst of laughter.

When the Professor entered the room he was the 'observed of all observers.' Reader! would you see him? Well, then, fancy to yourself a low square-built man, five feet high and six feet thick, cased in grey stockings, black breeches that fitted as tight as the skin, and an old claret coloured coat, dotted over with metal buttons as large as a crownpiece. But you would hear of the features. I will particularize. The head was large enough to have suited a statue of Atlas, and was covered over with long bushy hair of the deepest red. The brow was low and wrinkled, and—strange to say!—had nothing philosophical about it. The mouth had an expression of—openness, say three inches and a half. The eyes were large and protruded, between a blue and a green, and had that appearance of inflammation which *generally* is the effect of nocturnal lucubration. But the most prominent feature has not yet been described. His nose—Shade of Ovidius Naso! behold yourself surpassed!—his nose, I say, from the plain of the *plainest* face in Christendom, towered up, like Mount *Ætna*, huge and undulating, and like Mount *Ætna*, red and fiery at the *apex*. And, what is unusual, his nose bore a conspicuous part in conversation, for it warmed with his animation, and by sundry twitchings and gestures seemed to second the force of his arguments. Such were the figure and features of Professor Hardigan, as they appeared to Dr. Grayson, who was a caricaturist, and to Herman Lincoln, who

was a jealous man. They may possibly be a little overstrained.

The Professor had been *peripatetically* engaged, as he classically expressed it. It was one of those very warm evenings which will sometimes happen in Indian Summer, and exercise had heated him. He felt oppressed, and scarcely had he taken his seat between Clara and Dr. Grayson, and found time, after his introduction, to inquire of the latter at what college he had graduated, when he so far forgot the proprieties of courtly etiquette, which he professed to teach others, as to pull off his old claret coloured coat and throw it upon the bed which stood in one corner of the room. Such strange conduct excited surprise; but a smile was on the countenance of every one as they glanced from their needles to the coat that was spread out on the counterpane—forming a circle, or rather an oblate spheroid; for it was broader than it was long. Clara was provoked at the disrespect which the Professor had shown, and, looking first at the coat and then at its owner's nose, apparently entering into the conversation which had been started, asked the Professor if he had not graduated at Brazen-Nose College. The roar of laughter was now immoderate, and all joined in it except Clara and the person interrogated; for not perceiving that any thing was intended, he proceeded regularly to give the history of his collegiate course. This gave her an opportunity of drawing him out in conversation, which she gladly improved, while Dr. Grayson, who sat by listening to their conversation, kept thrusting his red pocket handkerchief into his mouth until it had nearly disappeared. Strange conduct, indeed! Was it done to prevent his laughing?

The young ladies and gentlemen were all attention, though they could seldom comprehend either question or answer. One reply, however, which the Professor made, they readily understood. While he was speaking of Astronomy, Clara interrupted him to know what was meant by an *upside* of the moon. The *upside* of the moon, did you ask? Why the upper *orn*, child! to be sure. They had become familiar with his swallowing the letter *h*, and readily received *orn* for horn, as it was intended. After a long dissertation on Demonology the Professor related some freaks of witches, in which he believed implicitly. During his essay, the tavern-keeper's daughter, amazed at his display of learning, whispered Clara to ask the philosopher if he knew where the philosopher's stone was to be found. "In the philosopher's head instead of brains," she returned, in a low voice. Dr. Grayson caught the remark; his head shook as with a palsy, and he appeared eating his bandanna as before. Mr. Hardigan now commenced Mythology and History. In the former he made occasionally some slight errors, merely of numbers, such as the *seven* Fates, the *nine* Graces, the *three* Muses, &c. Roman history he inflicted next, from the time that Romulus called on Jupiter Stator to arrest the flight of the Romans *ad finem*. Jupiter Stator, by-the-bye, was a favourite deity, for all his exclamations were made to him.

After he had proceeded for some time, he made mention of the "wolf Nero," as he was pleased to call him, and in his remarks attributed to him some actions that belonged to *Æneas*.

How he bore from Troy, which he had set on fire out of pure wickedness, his aged father Anchises, and the like. Clara fixed her bright, piercing eye on the Professor's face—paused, and then begged to know in what he had read the wonderful account. "In the *hannals* of Tacitus, the Latin historian." Clara unlocked a little drawer, and put Tacitus into his hands. Professor Hardigan was surprised—Dr. Grayson laughed—Herman Lincoln straightened himself up in his chair, where jealousy had been transforming him to a statue, to prove that he had not become all stone—the girls stuck their needles in the quilt and looked on, wondering what was to be done next. Clara evinced no emotion, but patiently awaited the result of the Professor's investigation.

Professor Hardigan was in a quandary. He thumbed the leaves carefully, and then with triumph pointed to the passage, on a page where the name of Nero stood conspicuous. Clara begged a translation of the part. He regarded the expressive countenance of the girl cautiously, and then began—but seeing symptoms of an irrepressible laugh on her lips, conjectured that Clara had some knowledge of Latin, and was not to be humbugged. So he ceased translating, and acknowledged that he had made a *mistake*, and that the actions of the savage "wolf Nero" could not be found in the "*hannals*" of Tacitus. Aunt Margarete was hurt for her countryman, and endeavoured to assist him. She trotted away into another room—and returning, said to him, "If the wolf Nero could not be found among the 'hannimals' of Tacitus, maybe you'll find him among the *hannimals* of Goldsmith;" and, so saying, she threw into his lap Goldsmith's Animated Nature.

He was silent, and continued to look at the pictures. At length he closed the book, repeating some lines from his favourite poet, Ovid—probably his ancestor, which had come over his mind like inspiration. Clara went to her drawer, and a copy of Ovid was soon in the hands of Professor Hardigan. "It was a mere *lapsus linguæ*—he meant to say Virgil." Clara handed him Virgil, desiring to be favoured with a sight of the passage. "How could he blunder so!—It was Persius." Persius was offered to him. "No! No! Jupiter Stator!—What made his senses fly from him!—It was Theocritus." Clara's hand dropped into the drawer for another book. Professor Hardigan mounted up from his chair horrified—a chill had seized him—he ran to the bed. His herculean shoulders were encased in his old claret coat, and he would have been off instantly, had not Aunt Margarete just come in to announce tea, and forcibly detained him. Clara had subjected the pretensions of the royal Professor to a fiery ordeal. In the course of the evening, without his perceiving it, she had drawn him out upon all the branches set forth in his card, (with the exception of one,) and had proved him to be a royal blockhead and imposter, much to the amusement of Dr. Grayson, and the relief of her lover.

The girls had plied their needles faithfully. Their labours were unremitting—not even the laying out of a diamond occurring to break the monotony—for all, the quilt was laid out when

they came. They were pleased with the relaxation offered now from work, and, together with the beans, followed Aunt Margarete to tea. The quilt was nearly finished. Aunt Margarete's expectations were so surpassed by their despatch, that she felt an unusual expansion of heart, and did the service of the table in a most hospitable manner, and with as much grace as could be expected. The "tea" was not like the tea of modern times,—but was a substantial feast of roasted, boiled, and fried—light bread—cakes, various as those made by the epicure Apicius, and pies.

There is much philosophy in eating. It diffuses a calm over the feelings—the melancholy man forgets his sorrows—the angry man his ire, as the process of mastication goes briskly on. It was thus with Professor Hardigan and Herman Lincoln. You will recollect, reader! that I said Clara had had an exhibition of the Professor's skill in all the branches which he professed, with the exception of one. That one was the science of "*dontology*;" and, to do the man justice, I will say that he understood the use of teeth as well as any man living. As plates of cakes disappeared before him, and spare-ribs and whole broiled partridges were crunched beneath his teeth, Clara had before her, barring the *two* eyes, the Polyphemus of Homer preying upon the bodies of Ulysses' companions. In fact, she looked upon him as the only type of that "*monstrum horrendum*" which she had ever seen. After disposing of some half-a-dozen cups of tea, with a proportional quantity of meat and bread-stuff, he gave a final proof of his skill in performing that most difficult of mathematical problems, the quadrature of the circle, by taking a quarter section of a pumpkin pie, about eighteen inches in diameter.

Herman's jealousy during the evening had been put to rest, pretty much, so far as the Professor was concerned;—but Dr. Grayson excited his fears. He was very attentive to Clara;—their understanding appeared to be good; and their whispering together sometimes, convinced him that she had merely thrown aside one of his rivals, to take up another. However, he soon experienced relief, at least for the present—for the young Esculapian had a professional visit to make, which compelled him to tear himself away from the company. That Dr. Grayson should have a professional visit to make, was something wonderful! Herman had now an opportunity to enjoy Clara's company, and came to the conclusion that she had not entirely forgotten him. I will not describe to my readers the rustic games with nuts, the naming of apple-seeds, and other innocent trifling of the evening. They have all seen and taken part in the like. The cheer was good—all were delighted, and the company broke up at a late hour—the beaux waiting on the young ladies to their respective homes.

But it was Halloween, and more was to be done before sleeping; and it was therefore resolved that the gentlemen, according to the good old custom, should try their sweethearts by dipping the right sleeves of their shirts in south-running water,—and then, placing them by the fire, see or dream what lady was to come

and turn them. But where was there a south-running stream? No such stream could be found, except one that burst out in a long subterranean cavern, near the village. A beautiful spot it was—fit residence for a *naïad*—two apartments, with sides and ceiling of moss-grown rock, with a narrow opening like a door, connecting them. But Professor Hardigan did not like to study its geology by night—much less on Halloween—the holyday of witches and warlocks. Nevertheless, so much had Clara interested him, notwithstanding her quizzing him, that he determined to perform the ablution, if another would only enter and do so before him.

Some thirty yards from the mouth of the cavern, they stood debating who should enter first. At length one volunteered;—and, leaving the band of his comrades, boldly entered the cavern and returned, having performed the ablution. The Professor's courage was now put to the test;—and, in truth, he proceeded valiantly, that he might not be outdone by his predecessor. He entered the cave with his imagination filled with witches, and continued his walk, cautiously feeling his way along the rocky sides, towards the spot where he heard the gurgling of the waters. At length he reached them, and had stooped down to perform the rite, when he heard the rattling of chains;—and, on looking up, saw in the passage between the caverns, a horrid-looking fiend, robed in a mantle of fire, with eyes lambent with flame, and blazing horns! During the "reign of terror" within the cavern, there was terror without: for a most unearthly-looking being passed by the group that the Professor had left, striking fear into the hearts of the most hardy. Mortal it could not be!—Witch it might have been, had it been bestriding a broom, or had it glided noiselessly by. But its tread was like the footfall of a giant, with the clank of the heaviest clogs that ever shod the foot of an Irishwoman.

Professor Hardigan was spell-bound in the cavern;—but, recovering his strength, he rushed from the dread being, who rattled his chains, and came driving on to poke him through with his long horns: but, in running from one fiend, he encountered another more frightful at the mouth of the cave, for it addressed him—"Och! Hairy Hardigan! ye rogue ye! Is it frim your wife and three childer ye hive rin away, to try sweethearts in Immerica? Och hone! but I'll see ye hanged yit! Shame on ye! I'll"—but Henry Hardigan heard no more, for he had reached the open air, and was running with a speed which Jupiter Stator himself could not have arrested. Need I inform my readers that Dr. Grayson had paid a professional visit to—the cavern, covered over with a luminous coat of olive-oil, and phosphorus, and a respectable pair of horns, to personate his Satanic majesty;—and that the wife of Professor Hardigan had come over from England to claim her rightful lord, who had absconded from her bed and board.

The village of — had lost its brightest ornament—for their philosopher, astronomer, and Professor had decamped, and was never heard of after. Parents were taken in, for they had paid in advance for a quarter, only part of which had been put in. The landlord had received

nothing as yet for board,—but he considered himself safe, as the Professor's apparatus would more than pay his demand. Accordingly, he levied on his telescope, his *chest* of philosophical instruments, and the *box* of instruments from Albany. The telescope was not of great value—for it was a plain one, of easy construction, being the handle of an old warming-pan, with glasses neither convex nor concave, but plain on both sides, such as is generally used in windows. The chest contained jugs—the box, kegs. These jugs and kegs had contained brandy, but now contained—nothing. Never had so great a rig been played upon a humbugged people, as the royal Professor had played.

But what became of Herman Lincoln? "The course of true love never did run smooth." Its *termination*, however, does sometimes. Will you believe it, reader?—there was *another* company at Aunt Margarette's, and Clara Lawson dressed in white, with Herman Lincoln at her side, stood in the middle of the floor—a minister before them, and the villagers gathered round in a circle;—and they, whom rivalry and fears had separated, "became one flesh," to be disjoined no more. The morning after the wedding, Aunt Margarette felt sorry that she had destroyed the neat little box which Madame Letour had presented to her niece, although it *did* contain French perfumery. It would have been some little ornament to the bridal bed-chamber, which was very plain. But her regrets could not re-unite the disrupted fragments of the box. She therefore did what she could to repair the matter, and presented her niece with an old-fashioned box that had belonged to her grandmother. This box was valuable, because it was a relic of antiquity;—but more so, because it contained five hundred guineas.

Herman Lincoln obtained his school;—and the villagers, to repay him for the injustice which they had done him, gave him a greater patronage than ever. He taught *English* by day, and studied Latin at night, under Clara. "Tis sweet to be schooled by female lips," says Byron. So thought Herman. His proficiency was astonishing—he soon became a perfect linguist; and a neat two story brick building, with tall spire and bell, occupied the place of the old white log school-house, and the pure Greek and Latin were at length heard within its classic shades.

The village of — increased in size—in intelligence and population. Dr. Grayson became an eminent practitioner of medicine as well as jokes, and was ever the family physician of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, and all the young Lincolns. Clara attended to her domestic duties like a faithful housewife, yet found time occasionally to write a poem or essay, which, in gratitude for the five hundred guineas, she always dedicated to "My Dear Aunt, Miss Margarette Lawson." Aunt Margarette, notwithstanding the abatement of some of her anti-American prejudices, was still an Englishwoman;—and, as she turned up her nose at all American Magazines, sent all her niece's productions to England, where they appeared in the different periodicals.

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What a plain tale! exclaims the critic. Well, I have heard it said that a good moral will re-

deem the dulness of a tale, barren in style and in incident; and, fearing that this may have been without sufficient interest, I have endeavoured to redeem the dulness of it, by making it have three morals:—Firstly. Let not married men, who have wives living, take the trouble of trying sweethearts on Halloween. Secondly. Let Royal Professors be examined, before they are engaged. Thirdly. Let aunts, who are anxious to marry their nieces to foreigners, first learn whether they have not wives already.

Brookeville, Md., Feb. 27th, 1836.

PRIOR ANSELM'S LUTE.

"WELL-A-DAY! Gregory!—here is another string gone! this bitter mountain air hath surely a particular controversy with music—go thou to my cell, and see if thou canst find me another."

Away trudged Gregory to fulfil his superior's pleasure, and, after a moderately long absence, returned with the comfortable assurance that no string could be found to replace the broken one:—"I think," added he, "your reverence finished the last of the packet from Rome some weeks ago."

"Good-bye to music for a while, then," sighed the patient Prior Anselm:—"I shall miss its consolations much on the long winter nights which are to come. Truly, the worldly who revile us as an idle sensual race, know little how few and far between are the enjoyments which some of us possess, or perchance they would judge of us more charitably. In sadness I declare that this good old lute hath been my sole pastime ever since I was compelled to leave my dear city of Milan and take up my abode here—and now it is useless to me—till the spring shall set the roads free again. Well, it may be, I took too great delight in it." The old man, as he spoke, removed the favourite instrument into a safe corner with melancholy care, and taking from a shelf a huge volume of divinity, grim with antique cuts of martyrdoms and miracles, began to read.

It was no small trial for the Prior Anselm thus to be cut off from his favourite recreation. He had been stationed (some whispered in consequence of a misunderstanding with his Bishop) at the head of this monastery, seated in a wild corner of the Simplon Alps. No principal road passed near it, and the by-way on which it stood was merely a communication between two mountain hamlets, so difficult of access, that the small convent of Dominicans over which he presided had been reared, half for the purpose of shelter and accommodation to wayfarers in so wild a country; and, like its more celebrated prototype, the Hospice of the Great St. Bernard, was more renowned for its simple hospitality than as a place of retirement and penitence. The guests, however, who claimed this, were of no more distinguished order, for the most part, than benighted peasants or travelling merchants, who came thitherward with their packs full of conveniences and cheap luxuries, only a few times in the year.

The inhabitants of this lone monastery were, generally speaking, adapted to their position—

being ignorant benevolent men, without any ideas or wishes passing the immediate sphere of their duties. Their Prior, however, was much superior to this—and not extraordinarily well beloved among them. Their suspicion of him might, in some measure, arise from his solitary habits, and from his discountenance of, if not disbelief in all manner of modern miracles and prodigies, signs, omens and dreams. He was too good for his situation—perhaps, sometimes too little careful of concealing that he was aware of this, and preferred shutting himself up with his lute to mingling familiarly among them. He therefore failed to gain the ascendancy over them which he might otherwise have done. Altogether there was a strong party against him, consisting of the more ancient and narrow-minded of the brethren—and when Gregory, who was a perfect sieve, announced that, for the present, the Prior Anselm's lute was rendered useless, not a few of those assembled in the refectory spoke of it, as the illiberal will always speak of the mishaps which befall the intelligent, with scarcely concealed satisfaction. "It may be that our blessed St. Antony," observed the bulky Father Cyprian, the chief dreamer of dreams in the community—"it may be that our holy patron hath taken away this snare from among us. Truly, the enticements of yonder idle instrument have ever been a stumbling-block in the way of our superior's humility."

"Ay," replied Father Adam, a withered pinched-up old monk, with a nose like a dry love-apple, who had long considered himself the wise man of the flock—"the snapping of that string, an' he read it right, may be a lesson unto him, how—but what? I say nothing."

"And I," interrupted Gregory, "say that some of ye should go to the wood-house, and bring in some logs for the fire ere night set in. The snow will fall thick presently—I would have done it, and not spoken save for my ague—oh! such a shake as I had this morning!"

"Thou would'st!" replied Adam, "humph!—that same ague of thine is a remarkable ailment. For me, I am under a vow not to approach a spot where the Evil One hath so recently been seen—were our Prior to"—and he wound up his speech with his usual finale—"but, remember, I say nothing."

Now, the rumour to which he alluded had troubled the brethren much for many days. These good men, themselves so free in fabricating legends and miracles, were far from being exempt from mortal fear—and many a shadow flitting over the savage scenery around them—and many a hollow gust of wind pining through their long dreary corridor at midnight, had been magnified by their timorousness into a supernatural visitation; more particularly as the last who had heard and seen any thing, always for the time being, took some state upon himself. But the last had been a more tangible matter than the above; Father Hilary having stoutly declared, that, on returning home from the wood-house a few nights before, his path, short as it was, had been more than once crossed by the Prince of Darkness, in visible presence, clad *cap-a-pie*, in sable-hat, plume, doublet, mantle and hose, all black—and that once, while passing him (hastily it may be divined, though pious