

"IN PART."

By RUTH S. TYLER-COVE.

I TAKE Thee as Thou art ;
All that I do not see,
Or cannot understand,
Or only know in part,
Thou wilt make clear to me,
Leading by Thine own hand.

My mind is not as Thine ;
Thy thoughts so lofty are,
That my poor simple soul
Can only grasp a line
Sometimes, with all my care ;
But Thou dost know the whole.

Only, my Lord, I pray,
Whatever doubts arise,
Be Thyself close to me ;
That, feeling Thee, I may
See all things with Thine eyes
And lose myself in Thee.



ROMANTIC LEGENDS OF SISTERS.

NUMEROUS stories, founded on the heroism and self-denying love of sisters, have long been current in many parts of the country, and form an interesting chapter in the history of our legendary romance.

Thus, in the south aisle of the nave of Beverley Minster is a monument known as the "Maiden Tomb," which tradition says marks the resting-place of two maiden sisters who devoted their days to good works ; and, amidst other acts of charity, gave two of the common pastures to the town. In Ingledew's "Ballads of Yorkshire" there are some lines descriptive of the strange appearance and disappearance of these holy maids, telling how

"The snows have melted, the fields are green,
The cuckoo singeth aloud ;
The flowers are budding, the sunny sheen
Beams bright through the parted cloud,
And maidens are gathering the sweet-breathed may,
But these gentle sisters, ah, where are they ?"

It seems that, at times, they were favoured "with glorious visions" to encourage them in their saintly life, and when at last their work was done, by tender hands

"Side by side, in the chapel fair
Are the sainted maidens laid ;
With their snowy brow, and their glossy hair,
They look not like the dead ;
Fifty summers have come and passed away,
But their loveliness knoweth no decay."

A similar legend is told of the "nine maidens" of the Glen of Ogilvy, a romantic spot in the Vale of Strathmore. The story goes that, far away back in the distant past, the Glen of Ogilvy was the chosen residence of St. Donivald and his nine daughters. According to tradition, they lived in this glen "as in a hermitage, working the ground with their own hands, and eating but once a day, and then but barley bread and water." On the death of St. Donivald, after a long life of incessant toil, the sisters removed to Abernethy, and dying there they were buried at

the foot of a large oak much frequented by pilgrims till the Reformation. Ballad lore describes them as possessed of rare beauty, and thus commemorates them—

"Nine maidens were they spotless fair,
With silver skins, bright golden hair,
Blue-eyed, vermillion-cheeked, nowhere
Their match in Glen of Ogilvy."

After describing their many virtues and life of self-denial, the ballad relates how at their death many sorrowing pilgrims came from England "the oak to kiss, whose branches grand" wave o'er their grave, for—

"Nine maidens fair in life were they,
Nine maidens fair in death's last fray ;
Nine maidens fair in fame alway,
The maids of Glen of Ogilvy."

They were canonised as the "nine maidens," and many churches were dedicated to them throughout Scotland. One of these churches was that of Strathmartine, near Dundee, with which is connected the famous tradition of the "Nine Maidens of Pitempan," who are said to have been devoured by a huge dragon or serpent at the nine maiden well in that parish. It may be added that within the castle grounds at Glamis is the nine maiden well, which is still an object of superstitious awe and reverence.

In some cases, on the other hand, such legendary stories perpetuate the memory of certain sisters whose lives were far from being worthy of imitation. In the parish of Gwendron, Cornwall, are nine "Moor Stones," which are popularly known in the neighbourhood as the "nine maids or virgin sisters." These perpendicular blocks of granite have evidently been placed with much labour in their present position ; and there are various tales current to account for their having been so situated. One tradition says they indicate the graves of nine sisters, and according to another they are metamorphosed maidens who, it is said, were in all probability changed into stone for some wicked profanation of the Sabbath day. These monuments of impiety, with their melancholy history, are scattered more or less over Cornwall. In the parish of Burian, for instance, are the dancing-stones,

commonly designated "the Merry Maidens," and at no great distance from them are two granite pillars named the "Pipers." One Sabbath evening, some of the frivolous and thoughtless maidens of the neighbouring village, instead of attending vespers, strayed into the fields, when two evil spirits, assuming the guise of pipers, began to play some dance tunes. The young people at once yielded to the temptation ; and forgetting the holy day commenced dancing. The excitement increased with the exercise, and ere long the music and dancing became extremely wild ; when, lo ! a flash of lightning from the clear sky transfixed them all—the tempters and the tempted—and there in stone they stand. But it must not be supposed that the same explanation is always to be accepted as the solution of such monuments, for occasionally, says an old local authority, Davies Gilbert, they were probably set up in memory of "the spiritual sisters of some religious house, and not so many maids turned into stone for dancing on the Sabbath day." Whilst speaking of Cornish legends, we may quote another called "The Two Unknown Sisters." It appears that, years ago, one day two "ancient sisters" visited a Cornish village, but none could discover their race or name. To quote the words of an old ballad :—

"Their speech was not in Cornish phrase,
Their garb had marks of loftier days,
Slight food they took from hands of men,
They withered slowly in the glen."

In course of time one of the sisters died, to the intense grief and sorrow of the other. Sympathy was of no avail ; and day by day the lonely survivor passed the long hours in weeping until, at last, death took compassion on her. Referring to the same ballad, this pathetic incident is thus described—

"One died ; the other's sunken eye
Gush'd, till the fount of tears was dry ;
A wild and wasting thought had she,
'I shall have none to weep for me.'
They found her silent at the last,
Bent in the shape wherein she pass'd ;
Where her lone seat long used to stand,
Her head upon her shrivelled hand."

Among other legends connected with stones may be mentioned the "Spinster's Rock," in the neighbourhood of Dogamarsh Bridge, Devon. According to one account, it is reported to have been raised on its present elevation by a father and his three sons, who brought the stones from the loftiest wilds of Dartmoor. But another tradition ascribes its erection to the "three spinning sisters," or spinsters, who accomplished the feat one morning before breakfast. In the latter explanation, Mr. Rowe would detect an allusion to the three Fatal Sisters, the terrible Valkyrias of the Norse Mythology, whose office it was with "abhorred shears to slit the thin-spun life; to weave the warp and weave the woof, the winding sheet" of many a hero's race. The undulations, again, in the chalk cliffs between Seaford and Beachy Head, in Sussex, are known as the "Seven Sisters," a number which it may be noted frequently occurs in the boundary lists of Saxon Charters as "Seven Oaks," "Seven Thorns." And we may compare, also, the remarkably large and handsome clump of seven elm trees, planted in a circular form, at Page Green, Tottenham, in the centre of which there formerly stood a walnut tree, and supposed to be between five and six hundred years old. According to one tradition, a martyr had been burnt on the spot where these trees afterwards stood, but this would seem to be pure conjecture. Another account of these old time-honoured trees tells us that there was a connecting link between the walnut tree and the seven sisters by which it was surrounded. There were seven elms planted by seven sisters respectively; the tree planted by the smallest of the sisters was always irregular and stunted in growth. There was an eighth sister who planted an elm in the midst of the other seven, and the legend relates that it withered and died when she died, and that then a walnut tree grew in its place.

But, turning to the romantic stories of the generosity and self-denying acts of sisters, we are reminded of a pretty legend told of the building of Linton Church, which is situated on a little knoll of fine compact sand, without any admixture of stone or pebbles, and widely different from the soil of the neighbouring heights. The sand has, however, hardened into stone, yet the particles, it is said, "are so coherent, that the sides of newly opened graves appear smooth as a wall, and this to a depth of fifteen feet." This strange and singular phenomenon is thus accounted for by the local tradition. Many years ago, runs the legend, a young man killed a priest in this place, and was condemned to death for murder and sacrilege. His doom seemed inevitable, but by the intercession of his two sisters—who were fondly attached to their brother—his life was granted him on condition that they should sift as much sand as would form a mound on which to build a church. The task was readily and cheerfully undertaken by the sisters, and in process of time the church was built, although, it is added, one of the sisters died immediately after her brother's liberation, either from the effects of past fatigue, or overpowering joy. The villagers, we are informed, still point to the sandy knoll in confirmation of its truth, and actually show the visitor a hollow place as that from which the sand was taken.

Church-building legends of this kind are far from uncommon, and under a variety of forms are found in different parts of the country. Thus, the churches of Putney and Fulham, which stand opposite each other on the banks of the Thames, are, in accordance with a commonly received story, said to have been built by the individual manual labour of two sisters. The enterprise was no lazy matter, as they possessed but one tool

between them. They surmounted, however, this difficulty, by agreeing to work, and to rest alternately for an hour. Their mode of procedure was to fling the tool across the river; and, so when the hour of work arrived for the lady of Putney, she called out to her sister—"Put it high," whilst the watch-word of the Fulham lady was—"Heave it full home." Monotonous as their labour was, in time their perseverance was crowned with success, and the two churches were completed. In the same way the parish churches of Albrighton and Donington, Shropshire, owe their existence, it is said, to the labours of two sisters. These churches, writes Miss Jackson, in her "Shropshire Folk-lore," stand curiously near together on the high banks overhanging one of the picturesque dingles, containing a pretty sheet of water, which are common in that part of the country. The two churches are of different styles and dates, but legend tells us they were built by two sisters in a spirit of rivalry, and that this is the reason why Donington church is so far from any village, and so much in one corner of the parish. And an amusing legend represents Ormskirk church, Lancashire, as having been erected at the cost of two maiden sisters, named Orm, who being unable to make up their mind as to whether it should have a tower or a spire, accommodated their differences by giving it both. But Roby discredits the story, and remarks that each of the sisters might have had her way by building a tower, and surmounting it by a spire. A similar legend was, in years gone by, connected with the churches of Owthorne and Withernsea, Yorkshire, known in the locality as the "Sister churches." A legend current in the neighbourhood tells us that they were originally built by two sisters who at first maintained that a single church would be sufficient for the spiritual needs of the adjoining manors; but they afterwards quarrelled as to the respective merits of a tower or spire; the result being that each sister finally built her own church. York Cathedral, too, has its sister legend; the five lancets in the north aisle being generally termed "The Five Sisters." According to Gents' *York Cathedral*, there is a tradition that five maiden sisters were at the expense of these lights, and the painted glass in them, representing a kind of embroidery or needlework, might have originated this story. But another story is to the effect that four young orphans agreed to fill the lancets with memorial glass, in patterns taken from their embroidery frames, which they had long laid aside for sorrow, in remembrance of a dead sister. Here, the story adds, they are reported to have knelt and prayed until, one by one, they passed away, and were laid in a common grave. Hence these lancets have been popularly designated the Five Sisters.

Occasionally these sister legends commemorate scenes of a tragic character enacted in bygone days. There is a spot, for instance, on the road from Winchester to Andover called by the name of "The Three Maids." A local legend informs us that three sisters poisoned their father, and were for that crime buried alive up to their necks. Travellers passing by were ordered not to feed them; but one compassionate person as he rode along, threw the core of an apple to one of them, on which she managed to subsist for three days. The most astonishing part of the story remains to be told, for from the graves of the three sisters there grew groups of firs. In this way their memories have been perpetuated. The peasantry in the neighbourhood for the most part accredit the story, connected with which there is no doubt a certain amount of truth.

In the village of Ballybunnion, situated within a few miles of Kerry Head, Ireland, is

a cavern which is known by the peasantry as the "Cave of the Seven Sisters." The scenery all around is of the wildest description, frowning rugged cliffs rising abruptly out of the water to the height of over one hundred feet, perforated with numerous caves into which the ocean rushes with fearful fury in winter. On the brink of one of the precipices formed by these cliffs are the remains of a castle said, in days of old, to have been inhabited by a gallant chieftain, the father of seven beautiful daughters. In an unlucky hour an attachment sprang up between the seven fair maidens and the captain and his six brothers belonging to a private ship, which had been captured after a stubborn and desperate resistance. Yielding to their protestations, the seven sisters agreed to fly with them to Denmark. Everything was arranged for the voyage, and one stormy night in winter was chosen for the attempt. Not a single star shone in the sky, the wind with terrific violence came sweeping from the ocean, and the waves roared against the rocky caverns. Escaping from the battlement by means of a rope-ladder they discovered to their horror on reaching the ground that they were surrounded by armed men. Not a word was uttered, but on being conducted within the fortress, they found themselves in the presence of their injured father, whose anger at his daughters falling in love with men whom he considered enemies to his country was unbounded, and admitted of no mercy. One by one they were brought to the edge of the precipice, and were hurled into the foaming flood. What the fate of their lovers was the legend does not say. Since that fearful night the old castle has crumbled into ruins. The chieftain sleeps in an unknown grave, his vengeance forgotten—but the cruel fate of his daughters is remembered, the cave unto this day being denominated the "Cave of the Seven Sisters." According to another version of the same piece of legendary lore, one of the northern sea-kings invaded Ballybunnion, and invested the chieftain Bunnion in his castle. The garrison was slain, and the chieftain rather than that his nine daughters should fall into the hands of the victor, flung them one after another into the abyss. From this occurrence the cave has been designated "the Cave of the Nine."

Legends of this kind might be multiplied, being found in the historical romance of most countries, and as it has been pointed out, must be regarded as based on truth, having come down to us from a feudal period, when the acts described were not altogether uncommon.

Then again the rivalry of sisters forms the subject of many a legendary tale, carrying us back to the familiar fairy story of Cinderella, who was made the drudge of the house by her two elder sisters. Denton Hall, for instance, has for very many years past been reported to be tenanted by a spirit, popularly called "Silky," whose history is not without a legend. There is, it appears, some obscure and dark rumour of secrets curiously obtained by a rival sister, and that as a punishment for her treachery and unisterly conduct, she at times haunts the deserted Hall. But, perhaps, one of the strangest stories in family history, in which two sisters played the leading part, was that associated with Bulgaden Hall, formerly one of the most beautiful seats in the South of Ireland. It seems that George Evans, the youthful master, fell in love with the beautiful daughter of his host, Colonel Stamer. At this period the early wedding-banquet was devoted to wine and feasting—the marriage not taking place till the evening—and, according to custom, sobriety at these bridal feasts was "a positive violation of all good breeding, and the guests would have thought themselves highly dishonoured had the bridegroom escaped scathless from the

wedding-banquet." Accordingly, half-unconscious of passing events, the marriage knot of George Evans was indissolubly tied. As soon as he had recovered from the effects of the bridal feast he discovered, to his extreme horror and dismay, that the bride he had taken was not the woman of his choice—in short, he was the victim of a cheat. He ascertained that the plot emanated from the woman who till then had been the idol of his soul, and that she had substituted her veiled sister Anne for herself at the altar. The result of this unhappy affair was that the young bridegroom left his home and country, unable to reconcile himself to the cruel in-

justice of which he was the victim. Happily, however, a romance of this kind—which savours more of fiction than real life—is unparalleled.

It only remains to add that on the Continent some of these sister legends have become strangely mixed up with superstition. Thus, near Louvain, are three graves, in which are buried the bodies of three pious sisters. But before their graves three clear springs are said to burst forth, possessing marvellous properties. In order to know whether a woman will recover or die of her malady, it is customary to take a hood belonging to her and lay it on the water. If it sinks no

recovery is to be looked for, if it swims the disease is curable. It is, however, necessary to pray fervently and to bring an offering, which must consist of a needle, a thread of yarn, and some corn, all obtained by begging. A Danish legend tells how three pious sisters perished at sea, the waves dispersing their bodies in three separate directions. That of the first came to Tisvilde, where a fountain sprang from her grave; that of the second to a spot where St. Karen's well, named after her, is still shown; and the body of the third sister was in like manner cast on shore, a well likewise springing from her grave.

T. F. THISELTON DYER.

"NOT IN VAIN."

By MARIAN FINDLAY, Author of "Her Promise," "Stranger Than Fiction," etc.

CHAPTER II.



AFTER bidding her husband good-bye the following morning, with as woeful a face as though the parting were to be for months instead of days, Helen set out for her friend Norah Grady's home, which lay only about a mile distant from her own. She was greeted on her arrival with shouts of welcome and shrill barks and yelps of delight, which proceeded from a struggling heap upon the grass in front of the pretty, low, white house, and which, after sundry frantic jerks and squirms, finally resolved itself into a fair-haired, blue-eyed little girl, a chubby mischievous-looking laddie—the Grady twins, commonly known as "the Pickles,"—and a couple of rough-haired Irish terrier puppies, which rivalled their little master in their mischievous proclivities.

Helen responded warmly to the boisterous reception, and then turned to greet a slender delicate-looking lady who now came forward, and who was so youthful in appearance that it was difficult to believe that she was the mother of rollicking Don and dimpled Daisy.

"I thought it must be you, Mrs. Carlyle," she said, smiling. "The children and the dogs give no one else so hearty a welcome. Down, down, Jack and Jill," to the dogs who were jumping wildly round Helen. "Don, dear, don't pull Mrs. Carlyle so, she is not used to such rough little hands, and, Daisy, run in and tell Auntie Norah who is here."

"The top o' the mornin' to ye," cried a merry voice a moment later, as a tall, dark-haired girl came dancing out of the house, Daisy riding triumphantly upon her shoulders.

"Oh, Norah dear, you should not do that," her sister-in-law exclaimed. "Daisy is getting too big and heavy for that sort of thing." To which remark Daisy instantly raised an emphatic and indignant protest.

"You must be wondering what brings me here at such an early hour," Helen said, smiling. "The fact is, my husband has been called away to London on business and will be absent a few days, and my errand is to ask if you will be good enough to spare Norah to me to cheer my loneliness while he is away.

Will you come to me till Tuesday, Norah dear?"

"With pleasure, Nell darling. I shall like it above everything, and you will be glad to be rid of me for a few days, won't you, Lily?"

Mrs. Grady slipped her arm round Norah's dainty waist with a loving smile.

"I will gladly spare you to Mrs. Carlyle, dearest; but you know I hate to have you away from me."

"You darling," said the impulsive Irish girl, with a loving embrace.

Just at this moment, Don, who had been listening intently to the conversation for the past few minutes, sat deliberately down upon the grass and commenced to roar in the most ear-splitting manner.

This was too much for tender-hearted Daisy. She instantly nestled beside her beloved brother, sobbing bitterly in sympathy.

"Why, children, what is the matter?" their mother cried. Norah was down beside them in a moment, and then Don, with his tiny arms tightly clasping her neck, sobbed out, "You wants to go and leave us, Auntie Norrie, and you shan't, so there!"

"Why, you little goose," Norah laughed. "Ah, Don, don't smother me entirely, and Daisy, my pet, don't wipe your tears away upon my gown, you'll find a handkerchief in my pocket, and I don't know but there may be some sweeties there besides."

At this Don raised his head, and soon evinced a lively interest in the paper of sweets which Daisy produced from the depths of "Auntie Norrie's" pocket. Thus peace was once more restored, and at length, after many kisses and good-byes on Norah's part, and many promises that she was not taking the beloved auntie away, "for ever and ever,"—as Don remarked with a sob—on Helen's part, the two were reluctantly allowed to depart, the children accompanying them to the end of the lane, and then standing, with the tear-stains fresh upon their pretty, fair faces, waving chubby, grimy hands, and still grimmer pocket-handkerchiefs, till a bend in the road hid them from sight.

The following days passed very pleasantly. Helen and Norah were delighted to thus renew their old friendship, and thoroughly enjoyed the long talks they were able to have about old times.

Doctor Johnson says—"The world has few greater pleasures than that which two friends enjoy in tracing back at some distant time, those transactions or events through which they have passed together."

And both seemed to realise the truth of this, and many a merry laugh they had over reminiscences of the fun and frolic of their school-days; of mad-cap pranks, in which

wild Norah was ever first and foremost. Then the laughter would grow strangely near to tears, as they spoke of some of the friends of youth who had now passed away beyond their ken.

And they would speak in low tender tones of the wonderful dreams and fair aspirations they had had, of the noble resolutions made, the vows exchanged in all the joyous enthusiasm of girlhood.

"How differently," said Helen, with a little quiver in her soft musical voice; "how very differently our lives have turned out to what we planned and arranged they should be."

"Ah, have they not," Norah responded, with a little whimsical laugh. "You were to marry a clergyman, visit the poor, teach in the Sunday-school, play the organ in the church, and make your sweet little self useful in various other ways—rather hum-drum work, eh, Nellie?" with a saucy uplifting of the graceful shoulders. "Failing the clergyman you were to have a Career, be a Musician, a Composer (all with very large capital letters, if you please), or something equally impracticable and very much more indefinite."

"Ah, well, they were foolish dreams, no doubt, but they had their use, and helped to keep us happy and out of mischief, if they did nothing else."

The following afternoon the two were busily engaged in trying over a quantity of new music, which Mr. Carlyle had sent to his wife by the morning's post, when Norah broke off suddenly in the middle of a song, and ran to the window with an exclamation of annoyance.

"What is the matter, Norah?" and Helen turned from the piano in surprise.

"Ah, Nellie, 'tis 'good-bye' to our peace and happiness for the rest of the afternoon, for here comes that wretched little Miss Smith to call upon you, and she never pays a visit of less than an hour or two at the very least," and Norah groaned in comic dismay.

"But who is this Miss Smith?" Helen questioned, "and why does she pay such extraordinarily long calls?"

"She is the gossip and scandal-monger of the village, and the detestation of the neighbourhood generally, and the reason of the terrible length of her visits is that she wishes to be unconventional, original, and unlike other people—this latter she certainly is, fortunately for 'other people,' though perhaps not quite in the way she means; but here comes Jane to announce her, so you will soon see 'Miss Mischievous'—as we have named her—for yourself."

"Show the lady in here, Jane," and Helen rose to receive the queer little figure which now came forward.