

## THE PRETTY HAYMAKER.

How George III., in the young may-time of his manhood, fell over head and ears in love with a pretty haymaker, and would have married her had he not been prevented by the Prime Minister, the Earl of Bute, and his own scheming mother, the Dowager Princess of Wales, is well known to every reader of the life of the good old King, when he was Prince of Wales. In those young years he had no engagement with Charlotte of Mecklenburg, nor was there any Marriage Act in existence to prevent him from being united to the young lady he loved; but, as far as law went, he was as free to pair with his pretty partner as any bird that flew over the green meadows by Holland House, where he fell in love with her. The world-renowned "Pretty Sally that lived in our alley" we never saw a *carte-de-visite* of, but the face of the young Prince's pretty Sally is familiar to hundreds, for in after life she became the mother of a family of heroes—the famous Napiers. What a race of brave Princes England might have had if the Royal lad determined to marry the "darling of his heart"! For love of her he would have eaten raw lions, instead of living on boiled mutton and turnips and drinking barley-water as he did after marrying Princess Charlotte. The pretty haymaker, Lady Sarah Lennox, would never have let him become "George the Farmer;" but, seating her beautiful form in the saddle (she was all we can imagine of an angel,

save wings for heaven),

have ridden beside him to his favourite reviews, and made every soldier a lion in battle who had only once seen her sweet face. Her beauty drove more than one man mad; "to see her was to love her," says Rogers, and the polished poet was a good judge of beauty, and knew her well, for he had many a time chased butterflies in a cocked hat when a boy in the very meadows at Kensington where her peerless beauty first stole the Prince's heart while haymaking.

We have seen a sketch by Stothard, copied from an original pen-and-ink drawing, of the beautiful girl in the costume she wore when the young Prince fell in love with her. She stands with the hayrake in her hand, a gipsy bonnet aside on her head, the skirt of her gown drawn through the pocket-holes, and oh! such feet and ankles! No "girl of the period" ever looped up her dress on a croquet-lawn half so gracefully as "pretty Sally's" appears in that hayfield, though we must remember that very few artists ever drew a female figure like Stothard. The young Prince might well love her; he never loved another. As to Hannah Lightfoot, that was a vile slander. We have read about the frail fair ladies who took lessons in dancing in those days, and met at Mrs. Cornely's, in Soho-square, but "pretty Sally" was never seen there, we believe; though that real "girl of the period," who afterwards became the Duchess of Kingston, was "here and there and everywhere," and did her utmost to put the good Royal lad "up to a thing or two," but failed. It is our faith that Hannah Lightfoot was the Mrs. Harris of the day, and that "Chudleigh's light-heeled girl" first issued the "penny novel" which has ever since had so large a circulation, and made such a sensation amongst scandal-loving readers. England would never have had "the first gentleman of Europe" for a King, nor all-but-blameless William, if the pretty haymaker had blended her fiery blood with the young Prince she is said to have loved. She would have dragged the Royal lad clean away from his unkind mother, and even have fought her for interfering with her husband—upset the boiled mutton and the turnips, and made "a pretty kettle of broth" in the old palace, had he married her. But fate ordained otherwise, and sent her brave blood to circulate in the veins of heroes, where it burnt up England's enemies, and left fresh and green the beautiful places where she walked in her maidenhood—a pretty haymaker that might have shared the crown of the young King had the "course of true love run smooth."

Which is the noblest eminence to reach—to be the mother of Princes only, or of heroes who make for themselves a name that will live for ever?

All that has reached us after the lapse of a century relating to the good old King does credit to his honest heart; and his conduct when his scapegrace son got into hot water with Mrs. Robinson, the pretty Perdita, proves that he was a forgiving and indulgent father; for never was a kinder letter written than that sent by the King to Lord North in the August of 1781.

His own mother, the Dowager Princess, was a stern, cruel woman; and Walpole tells us that when she pointed to one of her sons, in the presence of the rest of her children, *to laugh at the fool*, how the sensitive child replied to his mother, "I am not sulky, but was thinking how I should feel if ever I had a son as unhappy as you make me." Pretty Sally would have scratched her old rouged cheeks.

What a peaceful English picture of haymaking does our Engraving represent! We can see at a glance that it lies

In a land of ancient peace,

that that green landscape has for centuries slept unscathed by "wars and rumours of wars," that many a once handsome couple has whispered vows of love under the shadow of those silent trees to where the little rustic style points the way, beyond where the couple is now reposing. What a heavy drag those children must have had through the green lanes before reaching the hayfield with their little cart in which baby has had many a long ride; and what a heavy load of meat and drink they have brought, and

which after their long journey from the village they will be as ready to partake of as any hungry haymaker in the field!

She was a lady, fair and young, who rested beside her lover on the new hay watching the hungry children sharing the meal they had brought to the hayfield for their parents. The gentleman reclining beside her was the heir to that vast estate which extended many a long mile beyond the limit of our picture. She was also endowed with many a broad acre of hill, and wood, and valley.

"I hope I shall never be the mother of such a pack of hungry wolves as those," said the lady; "look how they are tearing the bread to pieces with their hands."

"And glad to get it any way, my dear Kate," replied the gentleman; "though, I dare say, their parents keep them a little more in order when seated round the table at home. They bear an excellent character, and I should like to pay them higher wages than I do; but the gentlemen about here say I should be setting a bad example;" and he ended by pulling to pieces a lowly wild-flower which had escaped the scythe. The young lady sat thoughtful and silent for the long space of a minute, then sighed heavily, and wished she had not spoken the words she had uttered. Then with a little laugh, that came not from the heart, she rose, swept the straggling hay from her rich dress—for the lovers had been haymaking to wile away an idle hour—and said, "Perhaps I may never be a mother. Who knows?" The gentleman muttered something about the estates never lacking heirs through five long centuries. Then they walked slowly along in silence, both buried in thought.

Are harsh and evil thoughts like circles in the water, that once set in motion always spread on—though unseen by us—until they break upon some distant shore, no matter how remote?

What thousands of times that lady's thoughts reverted to the hayfield and those hungry children tearing their food to pieces, and to the words she then uttered. She was now alone in the world, with no one to share her wealth. All were dead. She never felt the heart-piercing cry of "Mother!" She never had a child. The heir to the estates was an old grey-headed man she had never seen, only just near enough in blood to her dead husband to inherit the property. She had the windows of her stately hall that overlooked the well-remembered hayfield boarded up, for she never looked out of them without feeling a great pain at her heart. She never set foot on that greensward even in her husband's lifetime, and after he died it seemed to her like a land of death. The old oak still throws its broad branches over the spot where she reclined and looked with disgust on the dear, hungry children who devoured their food with the appetite of young lions. Oh! what hundreds of times she had wished she had been the mother of a boy like poor little "rive-rags" who scooped the butter on that day out of the little brown pot with his dirty fingers, so hungry was he after his long journey through the wooded lanes! What would she not give to be followed by a troop of children, to pull down the brown nuts and the blackberries that look carved out of jet, and the crabs that look so tempting but would make the sweetest face appear sour after only one bite! But all her wealth will never purchase the dear name of "mother" now; she will never have a "famished wolf" of her own to feed.

Well do we know those green embowered lanes through which the dear children then passed! They are seldom traversed except in the haymaking season, at harvest time, or when manure is carted to the fields in winter. The birds, the butterflies, and the bees well know those old flowery byways, and have traversed them through unnumbered generations for centuries. Fortunate was it for the haymakers that the season was too early for ripe nuts, bramble-berries, crabs, sloes, and bullaces, for there is no knowing what time those children would have reached the labourers had they met such temptations on their way. By the looks of him, that little boy is what they call in the country "a regular rive-rags," and would have been in and out among the brambles, and clambering up the crab-trees, and shaking down the highest and brownest nuts wherever he could climb to reach them, while the stitching of the patches his careful mother had taken such pains with gave way under such exertions. We need but look at him and his dog to see that even a poor field-mouse would not escape them without a hard run for it. Doesn't he know the water-courses by which the pied wagtails are to be found, and which the ouzel frequents? Ask him, and a smile will cream over his dirty face while he throws a stone at something or another which his sharp eyes see, and he will nod his little head to signify that he knows all about their haunts. And he does too, and will tell you, if you loosen his tongue with the bribe of a penny, a deal more than you ever before knew unless you are "up" in ornithology. He knows that there are four species, and that the black-and-white are almost as common as sparrows, and the yellow pretty plentiful; and that they do not hop when they walk as if their legs were tied together, as some birds do, but step out, putting their best leg foremost, as if marching to the tune of "I'm ninety-five." Also that those who say wagtails leave us in winter know nothing about their habits, but that they may be found for looking for all the year round, though they shift about to various places. Also that he is sometimes mistaken for the beautiful lemon-coloured yellow-hammer; and that foreigners may call them what they like, but they are water-wagtails after all. And "rive-rags" is right, though a few may make a trip to the Continent.