

**JULIANA HORATIA
EWING AND
HER BOOKS**

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Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books by Horatia K. F. Gatty

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HORATIA K. F. GATTY

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EWING AND
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George Hunt Art

George Hunt Art

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Imp. A. Burval Paris

JULIANA HORATIA EWING AND HER BOOKS.

BY HORATIA K. F. GATTY.

WITH A PORTRAIT BY GEORGE REID, R.S.A.
SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SKETCHES BY J. H. EWING.

AND A COVER DESIGNED BY
RANDOLPH CALDECOTT.



Our latest pet, a collie pup.

LONDON:
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
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1885.

All hearts grew warmer in the presence
Of one who, seeking not his own,
Gave freely for the love of giving,
Nor reaped for self the harvest sown.

Thy greeting smile was pledge and prelude
Of generous deeds and kindly words :
In thy large heart were fair guest-chambers,
Open to sunrise and the birds !

The task was thine to mould and fashion
Life's plastic newness into grace :
To make the-boyish heart heroic,
And light with thought the maiden's face.

* * * *

O friend ! if thought and sense avail not
To know thee henceforth as thou art,
That all is well with thee forever
I trust the instincts of my heart.

Thine be the quiet habitations,
Thine the green pastures, blossom-sown,
And smiles of saintly recognition,
As sweet and tender as thy own.

Thou com'st not from the hush and shadow
To meet us, but to thee we come ;
With thee we never can be strangers,
And where thou art must still be home.

"A Memorial."—JOHN G. WHITTIER.

PART I.

In Memoriam

JULIANA HORATIA,

SECOND DAUGHTER OF THE REV. ALFRED GATTY, D.D., AND
MARGARET, HIS WIFE,

BORN AT ECCLESFIELD, YORKSHIRE, AUGUST 3, 1841,

MARRIED JUNE 1, 1867, TO ALEXANDER EWING, MAJOR, A.P.D.,

DIED AT BATH, MAY 13, 1885,

BURIED AT TRULL, SOMERSET, MAY 16, 1885.



HAVE promised the children to write something for them about their favourite story-teller, Juliana Horatia Ewing, because I am sure they will like to read it.

I well remember how eagerly I devoured the *Life* of my favourite author, Hans Christian Andersen; how anxious I was to send a subscription to the memorial statue of him, which was placed in the centre of the public Garden at Copenhagen, where children yet play at his feet; and, still further, to send some flowers to his newly-filled grave by the hand of one who, more fortunate than myself, had the chance of visiting the spot.

I think that the point which children will be most anxious to know about Mrs. Ewing is how she wrote her stories. Did she evolve the plots and characters entirely out of her own mind, or were they in any way suggested by the occurrences and people around her?

The best plan of answering such questions will be for me to give a list of her stories in succession as they were written, and to tell, as far as I can, what gave rise to them in my sister's mind; in doing this we shall find that an outline biography of her will naturally follow. Nearly all her writings first appeared in the pages of *AUNT JUDY'S MAGAZINE*, and

as we realise this fact we shall see how close her connexion with it was, and cease to wonder that the Magazine should end after her death.

Those who lived with my sister have no difficulty in tracing likenesses between some of the characters in her books, and many whom she met in real life ; but let me say, once for all, that she never drew "portraits" of people, and even if some of us now and then caught glimpses of ourselves under the clothing she had robed us in, we only felt ashamed to think how unlike we really were to the glorified beings whom she put before the public.

Still less did she ever do with her pen, what an artistic family of children used to threaten to do with their pencils when they were vexed with each other, namely, to "draw you ugly."

It was one of the strongest features in my sister's character that she "received but what she gave," and threw such a halo of sympathy and trust round every one she came in contact with, that she seemed to see them "with larger other eyes than ours," and treated them accordingly. On the whole, I am sure this was good in its results, though the pain occasionally of awakening to disappointment was acute ; but she generally contrived to cover up the wound with some new shoot of Hope. On those in whom she trusted I think her faith acted favourably. I recollect one friend whose conscience did not allow him to rest quite easily under the rosy light through which he felt he was viewed, saying to her : "It's the trust that such women as you repose in us men, which makes us desire to become more like what you believe us to be."

If her universal sympathy sometimes led her to what we might hastily consider "waste her time" on the petty interests and troubles of people who appeared to us unworthy, what were we that we should blame her ? The value of each soul is equal in God's sight ; and when the books are opened there may be more entries than we now can count of hearts comforted, self-respect restored, and souls raised by her help to fresh love and trust in God,—ay, even of old sins and deeds of shame turned into rungs on the ladder to heaven by feet that have learned to tread the evil beneath them. It was this well-spring of sympathy in her which made my sister rejoice as she did in the teaching of the now Chaplain-General, Dr. J. C. Edghill, when he was yet attached to the iron church in the South Camp, Aldershot. "He preaches the gospel of Hope," she said—hope that is in the latent power which lies hidden even in the worst of us, ready to take fire when touched by the Divine flame, and burn up its old evil into a light that will shine to God's glory before men. I still possess the

epitome of one of these "hopeful" sermons, which she sent me in a letter after hearing the chaplain preach on the two texts: "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God"; "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

It has been said that, in his story of "The Old Bachelor's Nightcap," Hans Andersen recorded something of his own career. I know not if this be true, but certainly in her story of "Madam Liberality" * Mrs. Ewing drew a picture of her own character that can never be surpassed. She did this quite unintentionally, I know, and believed that she was only giving her own experiences of suffering under quinsy, in combination with some record of the virtues of one whose powers of courage, uprightness, and generosity under ill-health she had always regarded with deep admiration. Possibly the virtues were hereditary,—certainly the original owner of them was a relation; but, however this may be, Madam Liberality bears a wonderfully strong likeness to my sister, and she used to be called by a great friend of ours the "little body with a mighty heart," from the quotation which appears at the head of the tale.

The same friend is now a bishop in another hemisphere from ours, but he will ever be reckoned a "great" friend. Our bonds of friendship were tied during hours of sorrow in the house of mourning, and such as these are not broken by after-divisions of space and time. Mrs. Ewing named him "Jachin," from one of the pillars of the Temple, on account of his being a pillar of strength at that time to us. Let me now quote the opening description of Madam Liberality from the story:—

It was not her real name; it was given to her by her brothers and sisters. People with very marked qualities of character do sometimes get such distinctive titles to rectify the indefiniteness of those they inherit and those they receive in baptism. The ruling peculiarity of a character is apt to show itself early in life, and it showed itself in Madam Liberality when she was a little child.

Plum-cakes were not plentiful in her home when Madam Liberality was young, and, such as there were, were of the "wholesome" kind—plenty of breadstuff, and the currants and raisins at a respectful distance from each other. But, few as the plums were, she seldom ate them. She picked them out very carefully, and put them into a box, which was hidden under her pinafore.

When we grown-up people were children, and plum-cake and plum-pudding tasted very much nicer than they do now, we also picked out the plums. Some of us ate them at once, and had then to toil slowly through the cake or pudding, and some

* Reprinted in "A Great Emergency." Bell & Sons.

valiantly dispatched the plainer portion of the feast at the beginning, and kept the plums to sweeten the end. Sooner or later we ate them ourselves, but Madam Liberality kept her plums for other people.

When the vulgar meal was over—that commonplace refreshment ordained and superintended by the elders of the household—Madam Liberality would withdraw into a corner, from which she issued notes of invitation to all the dolls. They were “fancy written” on curl-papers, and folded into cocked hats.

Then began the real feast. The dolls came, and the children with them. Madam Liberality had no toy tea-sets or dinner-sets, but there were acorn-cups filled to the brim, and the water tasted deliciously, though it came out of the ewer in the night-nursery, and had not even been filtered. And before every doll was a flat oyster-shell covered with a round oyster-shell, a complete set of complete pairs which had been collected by degrees, like old family plate. And, when the upper shell was raised, on every dish lay a plum. It was then that Madam Liberality got her sweetness out of the cake. She was in her glory at the head of the inverted tea-chest, and if the raisins would not go round the empty oyster-shell was hers, and nothing offended her more than to have this noticed. That was her spirit, then and always. She could “do without” anything, if the wherewithal to be hospitable was left to her.

When one’s brain is no stronger than mine is, one gets very much confused in disentangling motives and nice points of character. I have doubted whether Madam Liberality’s besetting virtue were a virtue at all. Was it unselfishness or love of approbation, benevolence or fussiness, the gift of sympathy or the lust of power, or was it something else? She was a very sickly child, with much pain to bear, and many pleasures to forego. Was it, as the doctors say, “an effort of nature” to make her live outside herself, and be happy in the happiness of others?

All my earliest recollections of Julie (as I must call her) picture her as at once the projector and manager of all our nursery doings. Even if she tyrannised over us by always arranging things according to her own fancy, we did not rebel, we relied so habitually and entirely on her to originate every fresh plan and idea; and I am sure that in our turn we often tyrannised over her by reproaching her when any of what we called her “projukes” ended in “mulls,” or when she paused for what seemed to us a longer five minutes than usual in the middle of some story she was telling, to think what the next incident should be!

It amazes me now to realise how unreasonable we were in our impatience, and how her powers of invention ever kept pace with our demands. These early stories were influenced to some extent by the books that she then liked best to read—Grimm, Andersen, and Bechstein’s fairy tales; to the last writer I believe we owed her story about a Wizard, which was one of our chief favourites. Not that she copied Bechstein in any way, for we read his tales too, and would not