

**NAN DARRELL; OR, THE
GIPSY MOTHER, IN TWO
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Nan Darrell; Or, The Gipsy Mother, in Two Volumes, Vol. II by Ellen Pickering

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ELLEN PICKERING

**NAN DARRELL; OR, THE
GIPSY MOTHER, IN TWO
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

NAN DARRELL;

OR,

THE GIPSY MOTHER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE HEIRESS," "THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER,"
"THE SQUIRE," "THE PRINCE AND THE
PEDLAR," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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NAN DARRELL;

OR,

THE GIPSY MOTHER.

CHAPTER I.

It is a hard matter for friends to meet; but mountains may be removed with earthquakes, and so encounter.

As you Like It.

Poor lady, she were better love a dream.

Twelfth Night.

Mrs. DIXON had a strange idea that to see sights was a proof of fashion, so after having quarrelled with the waiter, and the charges at one hotel, and removed to another, she set off with Kate to see the copper works on the other side of the water, openly expressing her disgust at being obliged to consort, for the brief two minute's row in the ferry boat, with market men and market women—a Welsh farmer, and a Welsh pony; two riotous dogs; and three more riotous, dirty boys.

Katharine with difficulty checked a smile at her declamation against the vulgarity of her fellow passengers, thinking how often the angry declaimer was herself sub-

ject to the same censure ; and the smile could no longer be repressed when Mrs. Dixon, rather than accept the proffered aid of a somewhat dirty hand to assist her over the wet, slippery plank, and the as wet slippery shingles, for the tide was low, missed her footing, and came down on one knee, thereby, to her great discomfort, soiling a favourite silk dress, and subjecting herself to the laugh of those whom she had so openly abused. The same rough, dirty hand was extended to Katharine with a sly smile at Mrs. Dixon, and a friendly admonition to take it. Kate accepted it, as frankly as it was offered, and was safely handed to the top of the slippery, shingle bank by the gallant Welshman, proud of being allowed the honour, and absolutely grateful for her gentle thanks.

"Well, she is a sweet creature, surely ! but she ain't long for this world," was the honest Welshman's thought.

To save the expense of a fly, Mrs. Dixon had chosen the nearest copper works wherewith to satisfy her curiosity, and prove her fashion ; and the agent, who happened to be on the spot, came forward politely on learning her wishes, to do the honours of the copper lions, pointing out every thing worthy of notice as they passed along.

The copper ore had been looked at as it came out of the vessel—the door of one of the enormous ovens in which it is cleansed from arsenic and other particles had been opened, Katharine thinking, as she looked in and saw the flame curling round the vaulted roof, of the oven of the nursery tale into which the giant is thrust by the captive sisters ; and the whole party were standing in the great smelting division with its numerous coppers full of boiling metal. It was a large, square space, with a raftered roof partly resting on rough wooden pillars. The various implements employed were scattered round in picturesque disorder ; and, being near the time of the midday meal, the men were dispersed into groups, some conversing, some receiving their dinner from the hands of wives or children clad in the primitive Welsh dress,

the striped jacket and petticoat, with the black beaver hat over the broad frilled cap ; and some were already seated at their humble repast at the further end of the building, or in one adjoining seen through an opening. That building would have been dark but for the fiery glow, and rich, red light shed around by the furnace fires and the melted ore.

Disliking the heat, which was intense, Mrs. Dixon drew back, but Katharine still stood before an immense copper in which boiled and bubbled the smelting metal, gazing admiringly on the mass of liquid fire, the colour of vivid flame ; save where dulled or darkened by the scum, or catching tints of blue, or green, or purple, from accidental causes. One of the men advanced, and Katharine watched him, as he stood before her reeking with the heat, clear off the scum of varied colouring with a long handled iron scraper ; and then open a passage from the boiler. Out poured the boiling ore, rich, glowing like a stream of lava, dimpling, bubbling, as it passed along, a gush of liquid fire, mimicing the dimpling and the bubbling of some summer rivulet.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed the delighted Katharine, raising her hands with something of the child-like rapture of her happier days, to the great amusement of the agent, to whom such admiration was a novelty.

For some moments longer she continued to gaze admiringly on the stream of fire, still flowing on into a large reservoir, gradually deepening in colour, and becoming less liquid as more cool, and then she turned to look on the effects of the vivid light on the objects round, throwing out some in glowing relief, casting others from intervening projections into deep shadow. Struck like the agent, by her delighted admiration, some of the workmen had drawn towards her, conversing in the Welsh language, and as she gazed on the nearest group, with the red light glaring full on their faces, she started, and turned pale, for there stood her father—her dreaded father, with his keen eye fixed upon her. For an instant she turned away—when she looked again that dreaded face was no longer there; but a man she fancied,

in obedience to some order of the agent given in Welsh, was leaving the building through an opposite doorway.

"Who is that?" she questioned quickly, with some faint hope that she might have been mistaken.

"David ap Reece: one of our best workmen, who has been with us these ten years," replied the agent, not without surprise at her abrupt question.

Then she had been mistaken. And yet that eye!—it had a power over her which no other eye possessed. She wished to believe that she had been deceived—that her alarm was vain; and to a certain extent she succeeded, in persuading herself of what she desired; yet she did not breathe freely, (strange if she had in the atmosphere of a smelting house,) till she found herself winding round the foot of Kllvey Hill on her homeward way. The later lions of the copper works had been scarcely noticed—her thoughts had been on other things; and she had gazed anxiously on each fresh group—round each fresh building, fearing to meet again that startling look.

Mrs. Dixon felt too little interest in her health or feelings to remark the increased paleness of her cheek; or if she observed at all attributed it to the heat and suffocating atmosphere. No wonder that the grass and flowers droop and die beneath that blighting, smothering vapour; and yet the people near live to a good old age.

The day passed without a fresh fright, and Katharine decided that she must have been deceived. The agent had been right;—it was the unfear'd David ap Reece, not the dreaded James Darrell. Thinking only of one person herself, she never considered the vagueness of her question—"who is that?" when there were many present.

Mrs. Dixon found a letter at Swansea which decided her on proceeding by the steamer on the following Monday to Stapleton, a village in the neighbourhood of Bristol, where a friend had taken her lodgings, and Katharine, though resolved to believe that she had been mistaken, was not sorry for their speedy departure.

The next day, after showing her smart bonnet and

pelisse, both more gay than elegant, at St. Mary's Church, Mrs. Dixon called on Katharine to accompany her in a walk, determined that all the inhabitants of the town should have an opportunity of admiring the said bonnet and pelisse. After pacing up and down the boroughs and the pier, (the sands from a high tide being unpeccable,) Mrs. Dixon turned up Wind Street with the laudable intention of equally enlightening the other end of the town as to the fashions.

"I wonder what all that uproar at the back of this street is about! I should like to know," remarked Mrs. Dixon, whose curiosity equalled her vanity, stopping to listen to a confused murmur of many voices.

"Only some of the common people quarrelling, I dare say," answered Katharine, having a horror of a crowd, particularly with only Mrs. Dixon for a chaperon, and aware from experience what reply was most likely to check her curiosity.

"I should not wonder; really the rabble should be kept in order; they are come to such a pass that elegant people cannot walk in peace for them—they have no respect at all for their betters," and on went Mrs. Dixon lecturing on the insolence of the rabble, all the way up broad Wind Street, and half way along narrow Castle Street, uninterrupted by Katharine, who rarely spoke but when compelled.

Here the oration was brought to an abrupt conclusion.

"Bless me! there is a large drop of rain; and here is another—I declare it is raining fast. Where is the umbrella, Miss Darrell?"

"You said it would not rain, ma'am, and therefore I did not bring it."

"That is always the way with you—you never do nothing right. Once for all I tell you never to go out without an umbrella; my bonnet and pelisse will be quite *spilte*; and all through you," cried Mrs. Dixon, looking out for a place of shelter as she spoke.

Being Sunday, of course every shop was closed, but a few paces forward was a low, arched way to the right,