

**LEAVES FROM THE DIARY
OF A DREAMER: FOUND
AMONG HIS PAPERS**

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Leaves from the Diary of a Dreamer: Found among His Papers by Henry T. Tuckerman

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HENRY T. TUCKERMAN

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OF A DREAMER.

FOUND AMONG HIS PAPERS.

"Come, come, my lord, untie your folded thoughts,
And let them dangle like a bride's loose hair,"

DUCHESS OF MALBY.

How can I untie your thoughts?



LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING

1853

A. T.



EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE old carriage-road between Lucra and Genoa, although, for the most part, it follows the shores of the Mediterranean, winds for some distance inland, and there are points of its course which unite a wild and umbrageous vicinity with a glorious seaward landscape. In such a locality is situated the little town of Massa, with its ancient castle, its grass-grown streets and picturesque scenery. The inn is approached without entering the old gateway; its lower story, as is common in Italy, presenting a basement porch in the rear, leading to the kitchen and stables. At this primitive entrance, the *caleche* which had brought me from a neighbouring town drew up at noon, on a beautiful spring day; and, while the ostler watered our steed which had been four hours traversing the

adjacent hills, and yet seemed as fresh as when he started,— I walked about in the genial sunshine and looked forth upon the magnificent panorama of mountains, chestnut groves, emerald slopes, white stone cottages, and flowery patches ;— with, far away, the deep blue sea and, far above, the firmament reflecting the same tint of dense and crystal azure. Glancing towards the inn door, at the sound of a very deep yet subdued voice warbling a popular air, I saw one of the innkeeper's daughters, a cheerful and attractive brunette, with a flat-iron balanced in her upraised hand, moving towards a large table in the inner apartment, which was half covered with a pile of linen bleached to the whiteness of new-fallen snow. At the sight of a traveller, the pretty laundress came to the door, with a "*perdona excellenza*," and a respectful inquiry as to my nativity. A shade of disappointment passed over her face, when informed that I was not of English birth ; but, upon being made acquainted with the fact—to her evidently surprising—that many Americans were descended from the English, and that the latter language was their vernacular, her dark eyes brightened again and the coquettish smile

returned. She invited me to a seat just within the archway, and still balancing the flat-iron upon an exquisitely proportioned arm, with great vivacity and not a little tenderness, related the following circumstances:—"A month ago two young gentlemen had stopped here to dine; one was too ill to proceed, and after lingering a week, sometimes sitting on the very chair I occupied, and looking pensively on the same landscape, and sometimes secluded for hours in his own room, with the friend, who scarcely left him for a moment;—a travelling carriage arrived late at night, and two ladies, one somewhat advanced in years and the other of rare beauty though pale and tearful, alighted,—inquired for the health of the invalid, and hastened to his chamber. During that entire night the three affectionate watchers soothed the dying man; who now appeared calm and grateful: solemn was the grief of the maiden, delicate and thoughtful the devotion of the others; and at dawn he fell into a gentle slumber, his head on the breast of his friend, and his hand in the hand of his betrothed, and so passed away."

I know not how much of the pathetic and

continuous impression which this incident made upon my mind, is to be ascribed to the sympathetic manner and natural eloquence of the narrator, how much to the beautiful scenery around me, or to my own mind at the time; but certain it is that the hour I passed at the old inn of Massa, stands out in affecting relief from the reminiscences of travel, and recurs with a melancholy charm, like one of Sterne's episodes. I examined the landlord's register and ascertained the names of the party described; and subsequently sought them out and found ample confirmation not only of the details of the story, but of the long and beautiful perspective which imagination and sympathy had naturally annexed to these hints of a vivid experience. When the fair hostess perceived that I was interested in her story, she laid aside the flat-iron, wiped her eyes with a corner of her apron, and gliding up the rough stone staircase outside, presently returned with a morocco portfolio carefully incased in three or four copies of "Galignani's Messenger." This she earnestly begged me to transmit to the friends of the deceased, as it had been inadvertently left behind,

—a commission I scrupulously fulfilled. The only survivor of the scene at the inn at Massa, (with whom I afterwards enjoyed long intimacy,) is the young man who first arrived with the invalid. He is now settled in a distant part of the globe; and, at our parting interview, he gave me a journal in the handwriting of his friend, and part of the contents of the portfolio restored through my instrumentality, as a memorial of our intercourse, and with full permission to use it as I pleased, on condition that all names or allusions that might lead to their discovery should be suppressed. Upon ascertaining that the writer was a countryman, although for many years a resident on the continent, my interest in him became more personal; and the confidence of those who were near and dear to him has since rendered that familiarity so great that I can now scarcely persuade myself I am writing of one whom I never saw. Perhaps this knowledge of all the circumstances of his peculiar experience, has invested his speculations with an interest they will rarely inspire among those to whom no such associations recommend them. The manner, however, in

which the specimens that have appeared in a periodical form were received, induces the belief that these stray leaves from the Diary of a Dreamer will be acceptable to a larger circle.

