

**VAGARIES OF LIFE,
IN TWO VOLUMES,
VOL. II**

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Vagaries of life, in two volumes, Vol. II by W. Wellington Cairnes

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W. WELLINGTON CAIRNES

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BY

W. WELLINGTON CAIRNES, ESQ.

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VAGARIES OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. Longfellow is now dead: he slipped his moorings, *nauticé*, on the very night of the Prices' return to town; long expected, and without a struggle, his death brought no violence of grief, being to him but a glorious release.

Sir William, sister, and Lucy, arrived at Bridlestone in time for the last rites; and, the solemn ceremonial over, things began to wear their wonted calm yet cheerful sunshine.

“Look on this picture, and on this!” Bridlestone and Lawrenceville; Norah Burton and Hélena Greenspur; Norah about to be married, and Hélena returned from her wedding tour.

But first Norah: one evening shortly after Mr. Longfellow's death—it may have been that of the funeral, when we remember Blake dined at Bridlestone—Sir William proposed a walk in the garden to the jaded spirits and melancholy faces around him.

“It will do us all good,” said the worthy Baronet cheerily, and accordingly they sauntered out.

Being far advanced into the spring, spreading leaves, odorous flowers, balmy airs, and carolling birds, lent their genial influence to that soothing twilight hour: every one seemed the better for it, indeed.

Sir William, with his widowed sister, and Miss Price leaning on Lucy Sandys, led the way: *it just so happened*, therefore, that the curate and Norah were left behind.

"Mr. Longfellow has made ample provision in his will for Norah," began Sir William, when the parties were sufficiently scattered to permit this introduction of private topics; "and, as I think I have discovered a certain preference lately working its way in the girl's mind, it is just as well that herself and her worthy choice should have means to carry out their project."

"But are you certain," asked Mrs. Longfellow interestedly, "that the regard is reciprocal?"

"Norah seems pretty certain of it!" returned the old gentleman drily.

"Well, I myself consider it not only likely, but desirable; it would be, in all

respects, a well assorted match, Mr. Blake is so excellent, and our dear Norah.....”

Now let us fall back on No. 2 :

“We should hear of them so far as Gibraltar, in another week, should we not?” asked Miss Price.

“I hope so; I dare say we shall, unless Wellesly be so new-fangled with his trip as to forget us completely,” returned Lucy, pausing to disentangle the skirt of her dress from a straggling brier.

“Why, Lucy, my lass!” cried the old maid, with a jocose oscillation of her head, “what lover does *this* portend?—Who is there coming to marry you?”

Just at this moment a step, heard on the gravelled path behind them, caused both to look hurriedly round: it was only a footman.

“Whom do you want, Taylor?”

“I’m in search of the master, ma’am;