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## **The Pilgrims of the Rhine**

**Lytton, Edward Bulwer Lytton**

**London, 1834**

Chapter III.

[urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-120544](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-120544)

### CHAPTER III.

#### FEELINGS.

GERTRUDE and her companions proceeded by slow, and, to her, delightful stages, to Rotterdam. Trevylyan sate by her side, and her hand was ever in his, and when her delicate frame became sensible of fatigue, her head drooped on his shoulder as its natural resting-place. Her father was a man who had lived long enough to have encountered many reverses of fortune, and they had left him, as I am apt to believe long adversity usually *does* leave its prey, somewhat chilled and somewhat hardened to affection; passive and quiet of hope, resigned to the worst as to the common order of events, and expecting little from the best, as an unlooked-for incident in the regularity of human afflictions. He was insensible of his daughter's danger, for he was not one whom the fear of love endows with prophetic vision; and he lived tranquilly in the present, without asking what new misfortune awaited him in the future. Yet he loved his child, his only child, with all the warmth of attachment left him by the many shocks his heart had received; and in her approaching connection with one rich and noble as

Trevylyan, he felt even something bordering upon pleasure. Lapped in the apathetic indifference of his nature, he leant forth from the carriage, enjoying the bright weather that attended their journey, and sensible—for he was one of fine and cultivated taste—to whatever beauties of nature or remains of art, varied their course. A companion of this sort was the most agreeable that two persons never needing a third could desire; he left them undisturbed to the intoxication of their mutual presence; he marked not the interchange of glances; he listened not to the whisper, the low delicious whisper, with which the heart speaks its sympathy to heart. He broke not that charmed silence which falls over us when the thoughts are full, and words leave nothing to explain; that repose of feeling; that certainty that we are understood without the effort of words, which makes the real luxury of intercourse and the true enchantment of travel. What a memory hours like these bequeath, after we have settled down into the calm occupations of common life!—how beautiful, through the vista of years, seems that brief moonlight track upon the waters of our youth!

And Trevylyan's nature, which, as I have said before, was naturally hard and stern, which was hot, irritable, ambitious, and early tinctured with the policy and lesson of the world, seemed utterly changed by the peculiarities of his love; every hour, every moment was full of incident to him; every look of Gertrude's was entered on the tablets of his heart, so that his love knew no languor, it required no change; he was absorbed in it; *it was himself!* And he was soft and watchful as the step of a mother by the

couch of her sick child; the lion within him was tamed by indomitable love; the sadness, the presentiment that was mixed with all his passion for Gertrude filled him too with that poetry of feeling, which is the result of thoughts weighing upon us, and not to be expressed by ordinary language. In this part of their journey, as I find by the date, were the following lines written; they are to be judged as the lines of one in whom emotion and truth were the only inspiration.

## I.

“As leaves left darkling in the flush of day,  
When glints the glad sun chequering o'er the tree,  
I see the green earth brightening in the ray,  
Which only casts a shadow upon me!

## II.

“What are the beams, the flowers, the glory, all  
Life's glow and gloss—the music and the bloom,  
When every sun but speeds the Eternal Pall,  
And Time is Death that dallies with the Tomb?

## III.

“And yet—oh yet, so young, so pure!—the while  
Fresh laugh the rose-hues round youth's morning sky,  
That voice,—those eyes,—the deep love of that smile,  
Are they not soul—*all* soul—and *can* they die?

## IV.

“Are there the words ‘No MORE’ for thoughts like ours?  
Must the bark sink upon so soft a wave?  
Hath the short summer of thy life no flowers,  
But those which bloom above thine early grave?

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## V.

“O God! and what is life, that I should live,  
 (Hath not the world enow of common clay?)  
 And she—the Rose—whose life a soul could give  
 To the void desert, sigh its sweets away!

## VI.

“And I that love thee thus, to whom the air,  
 Blest by thy breath, makes heaven where'er it be,  
 Watch thy cheek wane, and smile away despair—  
 Lest it should dim one hour yet left to Thee.

## VII.

“Still let me conquer self,—oh, still conceal  
 By the smooth brow, the snake that coils below;  
 Break, break my heart, it comforts yet to feel  
 That *she* dreams on, unwakened by my woe!

## VIII.

“Hush'd, where the Star's soft Angel loves to keep  
 Watch o'er their tide, the mourning waters roll;  
 So glides my spirit—darkness in the deep,  
 But o'er the wave the presence of thy soul!”

Gertrude herself had not as yet the presentiments that filled the soul of Trevylyan. She thought too little of herself to know her danger, and those hours to her were hours of unmingled sweetness. Sometimes, indeed, the exhaustion of her disease tinged her spirits with a vague sadness, an abstraction came over her, and a languor she vainly struggled against. These fits of dejection and gloom touched Trevylyan to the quick; his eye never ceased to watch them, nor his heart to soothe. Often when he marked

them, he sought to attract her attention from what he fancied, though erringly, a sympathy with his own forebodings, and to lead her young and romantic imagination through the temporary beguilements of fiction; for Gertrude was yet in the first bloom of youth, and all the dews of beautiful childhood sparkled freshly from the virgin blossoms of her mind. And Trevylyan, who had passed some of his early years among the students of Leipsic, and was deeply versed in the various world of legendary lore, ransacked his memory for such tales as seemed to him most likely to win her interest; and often with false smiles entered into the playful tale, or oftener, with more faithful interest, into the graver legend of trials that warned yet beguiled them from their own. Of such tales I have selected but a few; I know not that they are the least unworthy of repetition; they are those which many recollections induce me to repeat the most willingly. Gertrude loved these stories, for she had not yet lost, by the coldness of the world, one leaf from that soft and wild romance which belonged to her beautiful mind. And, more than all, she loved the sounds of a voice which every day became more and more musical to her ear. "Shall I tell you," said he, one morning, as he observed her gloomier mood stealing over the face of Gertrude, "shall I tell you, ere yet we pass into the dull land of Holland, a story of Malines, whose spires we shall shortly see?" Gertrude's face brightened at once, and as she leant back in the carriage as it whirled rapidly along, and fixed her deep blue eyes on Trevylyan, he began the following tale.

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THE CHURCH OF ST REMBAULD.

*Mechlin.*

*J. Smith, Sculp.*

SAATCHI & SAATCHI. — FOR THE PROPRIETOR, E. S. ROBERTS.