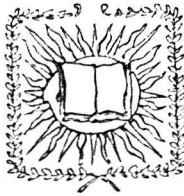
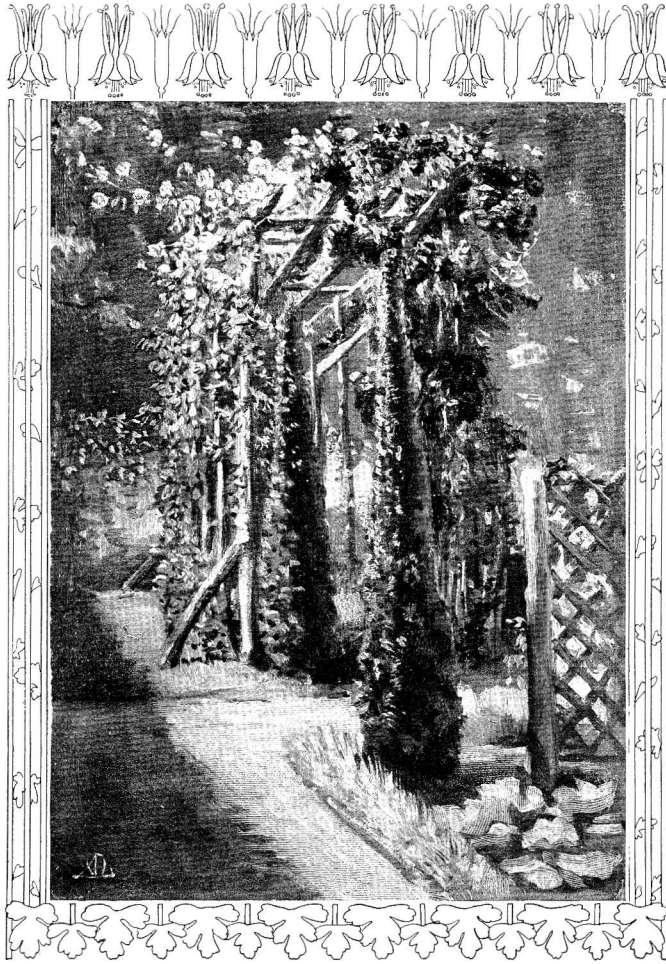


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HALF-TONE PLATE ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON.

THE PERGOLA.

follow winter, for life renewed to follow death; and realizes the joy and love of the Creator in his creation. This joy of creation, of thought becoming form and life in infinite design and beauty—has not here and there a human being been allowed to taste this divine joy, and thereby been made more specially in the likeness of God?

## THE TRUE STORY OF HARMAN BLENNERHASSETT.

BY THERESE BLENNERHASSETT-ADAMS.

THE intimate relations which existed between Aaron Burr and Harman Blennerhassett, and the mystery surrounding the latter, have given rise to many public misstatements. It is the opinion of surviving relatives, who have carefully guarded the private papers of Harman Blennerhassett, that the time has come, all of his children and grandchildren being dead, when these

misstatements may properly be refuted by a frank presentation of the facts.

The purpose of this paper is to give, for the first time, the true story of Blennerhassett, his origin and antecedents, his social standing, and his financial responsibility, and to set forth why, more than a hundred years ago, he sold his birthright, a magnificent patrimony, and crossed the Atlantic for the pur-

pose of establishing a new home in another country. From time to time articles concerning him and his wife, Margaret Agnew, have appeared in print, but they have always been singularly inaccurate in detail.

Harman Blennerhassett, born in Hampshire, England, in 1765, was a direct descendant of King Edward III of England through Constance of Langley, wife of the Earl of Gloucester and daughter of Edward, Duke of York and Isabel of Castile. The Blennerhassetts are English in origin, none of

during the reign of Elizabeth. Harman Blennerhassett's father was Conway Blennerhassett of Castle Conway, Killorglin; his mother, Eliza, was a daughter of Major Thomas Lacey. As the youngest of three sons, Harman Blennerhassett, in selecting a profession, chose the law, but soon after finishing his studies, the death of his brothers, John and Thomas, made him head of his branch of the family. Of his sisters, one was married to Lord Kingsale, Premier Baron of Ireland; another to the brother of Lord Kingsale,



HALF-TONE PLATE ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON.

HARMAN BLENNERHASSETT, FROM A MINIATURE TAKEN IN LONDON IN 1796, NOW OWNED BY DR. FRANCIS C. MARTIN OF BOSTON.

them having been known in Ireland before the reign of Elizabeth; but previous to that time, as far back as 1357, the family—originally of Blennerhassett, a small town in Cumberland, afterward of Carlisle, subsequently of Flimby Hall, Cumberland—many times represented Carlisle in Parliament. They have been continuously in Parliament for more than five hundred years; on one occasion a father and two sons represented their county and county town at the same time.

The old manor-house of Flimby Hall is now owned by the Earl of Lonsdale, whose ancestors bought the Blennerhassett estates. Over three of the doorways of Flimby Hall the Blennerhassett crest is cut in stone; the walls are ten feet thick, and the great oak beams look as if they would last forever.

The first of the Blennerhassetts to settle in Ireland was Thomas, who, with his son Robert, went from Flimby Hall to Kerry

the Hon. Michael de Courcy, Admiral of the Blue; one other to Daniel McGillycuddy, high sheriff of Kerry; one to an Agnew; one to Captain Coxon; and the last, Avice, never married. The children of these sisters in turn married men of high position: a daughter of Admiral de Courcy being the wife of Sir J. Gordon Sinclair; a daughter of Lord Kingsale, the Hon. Martha de Courcy, the wife of Major Andrew Agnew, son of Sir Stair Agnew of Lochnaw. Added to these strong family connections, the power and standing of the family to which he belonged brought Harman Blennerhassett in contact with the best people of the day.

Conway Blennerhassett died a very rich man, leaving his daughters handsomely portioned, and bequeathing a large fortune to his son. When Harman Blennerhassett broke the entail and sold the estate to Thomas Mullin, afterward Lord Ventry, he received \$160,000 in money. Outside of this was an

income not vested in the \$160,000, and besides a small income of \$6600, which belonged to the entailed property as a separate portion, and could not be transferred, the use of which he had until he died. His wife also came of a family with money; but, as will be seen, she was disinherited when she married Harman Blennerhassett. Her sisters, however, laid aside money for her benefit, and sent it to her regularly.

Early in 1796 Harman Blennerhassett, then thirty-one years old, married in England Miss Margaret Agnew, daughter of Captain Robert Agnew of Howlish, County Durham, a young lady of eighteen. Her father was lieutenant-governor of the Isle of Man, and a son of General James Agnew of Revolutionary fame. Soon after their marriage, the young couple embarked for America, landing August 1, 1796. After extensive travels through the eastern part of the country, a portion of the island in the Ohio which bears their name was purchased, and preparations for building were begun. The house and grounds when completed represented an investment of sixty thousand dollars. After the island house was no longer an abode, Blennerhassett and his family removed to a plantation of one thousand acres on the Mississippi River, six miles above Port Gibson. This home they called "La Cache," and here they lived for twelve years, when they sold the property for twenty-eight thousand dollars, and, after stopping in New York to pay a visit to the family of Mr. Emmet, proceeded to Montreal. In 1821, Blennerhassett, after a residence in America of twenty-five years, left Canada for England, where he hoped to be benefited through an influence he no longer possessed. Ten years of heartache and buffeting passed, and then came failing health, which ended in his death at Port Pierre, on the island of Guernsey, February 2, 1831, in the sixty-sixth year of his age.

We now come to the secret of the Blennerhassetts, which was carefully kept from their children. Catharine, one of the sisters of Harman Blennerhassett, married an Agnew. It was her daughter Margaret who married Harman Blennerhassett, her mother's brother,<sup>1</sup> and it was for this cause

<sup>1</sup> The bare fact is mentioned in Foster's "Noble and Gentle Families of Royal Descent."

<sup>2</sup> One instance in illustration of this may be cited: Soon after his marriage Harman Blennerhassett, his wife, and one of his sisters were seated together. The younger woman asked the elder some passing question, addressing her, as was her habit, as "Aunt Mary." "I am not your 'Aunt Mary,'" was the quick reply. "But

that she was disinherited. The young lady was absent at school; her uncle was sent to take her home; instead of doing so, he married her. But he reckoned without his host, or perhaps he did not reckon at all. When he returned with his bride, the family affection that he thought would greet them, the family influence that he thought would protect them, were wanting. The couple were met only with reproaches: because of his thirty-one years he was held responsible; because of her eighteen years she was pitied, but not the less blamed. Since remaining in his own country meant social ostracism,<sup>2</sup> Blennerhassett sold his property, and brought his young wife to America. No political entanglements were about him to cause him to come to this country, for though a close observer of current events, he took little interest in politics; his tastes were quiet—literary and musical. Nothing brought him to America but the fact that his family would not countenance his marriage.<sup>3</sup>

When news of the strange marriage became noised about in their own country, those relatives not closely enough allied to feel injured began to nod their wise heads in time to prophesy of dire disaster for the future of the young couple. But when it was decided to sell the estate and leave the country, then indeed all the kith and kin, to the most remote degree, were up in arms against the breaking of the entail. A few of the younger kinsfolk sympathized with the young people, but they were in the minority.

Let us see how the prophecies referred to were verified. During their residence on the island three children were born to Blennerhassett and his wife. Of these the eldest, Dominick, was, be it said with keen pity, a moral degenerate. No one can read the references made to him in the letters of his heartbroken mother and not feel sympathy for her. The second child, Margaret, died in infancy. The third, Harman Blennerhassett, Jr., was little better than his eldest brother, and was restrained from excesses as great only by the watchfulness of the youngest brother, Joseph Lewis, during a portion of his life. The fourth child, an-

you are of her blood, and might be kind to her," said the young husband, looking up. "Yes, that is the trouble; I am of her blood," was the rejoinder, as the haughty dame left the room.

<sup>3</sup> Within the last twenty years a dispensation was granted to certain crowned heads of Europe to wed whose consanguinity was of exactly the same degree as that of Harman Blennerhassett and Margaret Agnew.

other Margaret, died in infancy. The fifth and last child, Joseph Lewis, was a man of classical education. He was graduated in law with high honors, and was a fine linguist. With all this he had distinguished manners. Yet, though having the means upon which to live comfortably, he passed the last twenty years of his life in various small towns, where he taught school, practised a little law, and spent much time in dissipation.

It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the connection of Blennerhassett with the so-called expedition of Burr beyond two points: first, the moneyed losses of Blennerhassett through Burr, second, his object in joining Burr at all. According to the brief of Harman Blennerhassett, prepared by his own hand for his expected trial at Richmond, Virginia, Burr, while on a Southern tour in the spring of 1805, visited Blennerhassett at his island home. On that occasion it appears that the conversation was general. The following December, on the return of Colonel Burr from his Southern journey, he again called on Blennerhassett, who, with his wife, was on a visit to New York and Baltimore. After his second visit, Colonel Burr addressed a letter to Blennerhassett, in which he gave expression to regret at not having found Blennerhassett at home. The latter answered Burr's letter in like manner. Also he expressed a desire to be admitted to a participation in any speculation that might have engaged the attention of Colonel Burr during his late journey through the Western country. So the acquaintance between the two men began—an acquaintance that meant moneyed losses for Blennerhassett, but which did not destroy his home, as has been said. Despite the eloquence of William Wirt, who depicted "the serpent entering the bowers of Eden," there is no evidence to support the figure of speech. There is much and oft-repeated evidence of the trust in, and the devotion to, his wife on the part of Blennerhassett, which is a tribute that would not have been paid to a wife who was a party to despoiling her home.

There is no record of the direct plans or intentions of Blennerhassett and Burr. Probably those were largely dependent on the shaping of events, foremost among which would have been the United States becoming involved in a war with Spain, in which case the perfidy of General Wilkinson, commander-in-chief of the United States army, would have aided the scheme that has always been credited to Burr and Blennerhassett.

For the "treasonable" feature charged to them,—severing the Southern and Western States from the Union,—that could not have been through their thinking the then territory of the United States too large to hold together, if they did think so. That opinion was held by a large number of influential people, so difficult were all means of travel and communication over the vast country separated by the Alleghanies before the days of steam. Burr met Blennerhassett at a period of his life when Burr had little to lose and much to gain. That Blennerhassett sustained losses through indorsing for Burr is shown by his papers. In a letter of Colonel Alston, the son-in-law of Burr, to Blennerhassett, dated June 22, 1807, the writer states that he has that day written Colonel Burr making certain offers which he hopes will facilitate a settlement; "but," he adds, "should they unfortunately fail, I shall certainly consider myself bound both in honor and justice to fulfil my engagement to you." In letters of Blennerhassett to his wife occur the following passages: "On my arrival here [Lexington] I was taken into custody for my indorsement of some of Colonel Burr's bills, of which I am now getting clear by an arrangement Mr. Clay is drawing up between Mr. Sanders and me, affected by my transferring Colonel Alston's obligation." And, "In the midst of my occupation by the cares of my concerns with the government, I have made arrangements for removing the greater part of the indebtedness affecting our property on the island. Miller, who, you know, attached the chief part of our effects, is not here, but will probably accept the same accommodations by Mr. Sanders, namely, a transfer of Alston's obligation, with a deed of trust on the island as a further security." Later Blennerhassett writes to his wife: "Alston is endeavoring to raise money here [Richmond] to meet all demands. On failing of this, he, Alston, will assume the whole, payable one half a year from next January, the remainder the January following, with interest." Again he writes his wife: "Shall go to Philadelphia with him [Burr] to try his success there in raising some money for me." August 5, 1807, Blennerhassett says: "This evening I have inclosed various papers to Mr. Alston, showing him how my property has been sacrificed on the Ohio, and praying his aid to recover it for my children, by virtue of his responsibility for my indorsement of Colonel Burr's protested bills." When Alston, by his unwillingness to make any terms looking to a settlement with Blen-

nerhassett, showed he was not acting in good faith, and "Burr declared he did not believe Mr. Alston had executed any writing by which he, Alston, could be bound" to Blennerhassett, the latter exclaims: "What! did his [Burr's] memory, perhaps the most energetic of all his talents, here lose its polish by the abrasion of his own calamities? Did he forget that he himself drafted that very paper, after having considered another, which Alston had written, as insufficient?" So extracts without number might be given to prove the assertion of Blennerhassett's moneyed losses at the hands of Burr; but these may be passed until the letter of March 2, 1811, is reached. That letter from Blennerhassett to Colonel Alston states Blennerhassett's losses through Burr at \$50,000, \$12,500 of which had been paid. A request is made for the payment of \$15,000 six months hence, the balance to be adjusted by agreement, the alternative of acquiescence to this proposition being the publication of a book containing much inner history, which Blennerhassett believes will yield \$10,000. On Burr's return from England, a similar communication was addressed to him. But that was not demanding \$10,000 "hush-money." It was simply calling on Burr and Alston to fulfil an obligation of long standing, a just and honest debt which they were seeking to evade.

Blennerhassett's reason for joining Burr was not love of adventure, but to remove himself farther from those who knew him. He had family friends who respected him through the position he occupied in his own country. Among those who knew the sad story of his life, there were not many on this side of the water; but the dread was with him always that the truth would become known to his children. In 1824 Blennerhassett returned to Canada for his family. The intercession of his wife's sisters, who were devoted to her, secured for Mrs. Blennerhassett in England and Scotland respectful treatment. Avice Blennerhassett, the maiden sister of Harman, who had willed him her property, and who survived him, died in February, 1838. As soon as business matters connected with the settlement of the estate permitted, Mrs. Blennerhassett returned to this country, to join her son Harman in New York, arriving in the summer of 1840. Joseph Lewis, the youngest son, with his wife,

was then living in Swansea, South Wales. At the time of Blennerhassett's death this youngest son was nineteen years old. It is, then, a mistake that at her husband's death Mrs. Blennerhassett was left with a family of dependent children. On her arrival in this country she desired to present a claim to Congress for indemnity for losses on the island through the Wood County militia, sent to take possession of the property on account of the alleged treasonable character of the expedition. Besides this, she wished, if possible, to regain possession of the island, on the ground that no record existed of its transfer, and that the connection of her husband with Burr was not sufficient cause to make null the right of his wife and children to ownership of the island property. For the purpose of assisting his mother and brother, Joseph Lewis decided on joining them in June, 1841. A bill was introduced in Congress, and received some support, which might have led to its passage but for the death of Mrs. Blennerhassett, which occurred in New York on June 16, 1842. She died in her sixty-fourth year in the house she herself rented and paid for at 75 Greenwich street.

Many misstatements have been made as to the circumstances of her death. She died in the arms of her son Joseph Lewis, Harman also being present. It is a mistake that "no soothing hand of a relative fanned her fevered temples," and that but for the "kindly ministrations of a society of Irish females" she was deserted. Her sons (her only living children), who idolized her, were both present at her death-bed. They, with the family of Mr. T. A. Emmet, followed her to her grave in the plot of Mr. Emmet in St. Paul's churchyard, Broadway. It was not necessity that caused her burial there, but the fulfilment of a promise between Mrs. Emmet and Mrs. Blennerhassett that in death they would rest side by side. If sisters of charity were present, it was not known to her sons; it is not customary for them to attend the last rites for the dead if there is any one to take their place.<sup>1</sup> But why not, in the interest of fiction, let this same "society of Irish females" follow her?

The abject-poverty tales of Blennerhassett and his family serve well the purpose of romance, but not of fact, because they are untrue. While the family of Blennerhassett

<sup>1</sup> After his mother's death Joseph Lewis returned to his wife at Swansea. He did not come to this country again until 1847. It is not true that Harman Blennerhassett, the younger, was dependent for necessities on

the good ladies of the "Old Bowery Mission." Unhappily, his habits in his latter days led him to associate with the class of people relieved by that excellent charity; hence the mistake.

condemned his marriage, they would never have allowed him to be in need. The same is true of the sisters of Mrs. Blennerhassett. True, Blennerhassett lost heavily, and they had serious moneyed trials, often traceable to their own foolish expenditures. It has been said that the elder Harman Blennerhassett filled a drunkard's grave. As a matter of fact, he was a man abstemious in the use of intoxicants. It has been said that he was a shiftless Irishman with a few thousand pounds. The incorrectness of this has been shown in this article. Also it has been stated that he lived "without doing even the smallest thing to aid in the welfare of mankind"; that "his own lack of purpose, and easy-going disposition, and a wife with an overweening ambition," were accountable for the reverses of his latter days. These reverses have been magnified to match other points already named. The "overweening ambition" of Mrs. Blennerhassett has its origin in the articles of some of her biographers. There was too much sorrow in her life to make her "ambition" more than ordinary. What field had her aching heart for ambition? None except that grown in the fertile brain of her biographers. She and her husband were kind, generous people in time of

sickness and trouble, and did many things "to aid in the welfare of mankind." Many a struggling musician was aided substantially in his work by Blennerhassett, himself a fine musician.

Joseph Lewis Blennerhassett died in Missouri on December 8, 1862. His two little boys, Robert Emmet and Harman, died some time before their father. With him the last direct descendant of Harman Blennerhassett passed away; but even so the family is far from "extinct." There are a number of people related by blood to Harman Blennerhassett on this side of the Atlantic,—among others Dr. Francis C. Martin of Boston, who is a great-grand-nephew of Mrs. Harman Blennerhassett,—and on the other side there are Rowland Ponsonby Blennerhassett of Trales, who represented Kerry in Parliament in 1885; Sir Rowland Blennerhassett, president of Queen's College, city of Cork, Ireland; Arthur Blennerhassett of Ballyseedy, representing the oldest branch; Mr. Blennerhassett-Chute of Chute Hall, Blennerville, County Kerry. These gentlemen, who do not comprise all of the family across the water, have given more than one proof that the family is not extinct.

## THE FUGITIVE.

BY ARTHUR STRINGER.

A HUNTED thing, through copse and wood  
 Night after night he skulked and crawled,  
 To where amid dark homesteads stood  
 One gloomy garden locked and walled.

He paused in fear each step he took,  
 And waited till the moon was gone;  
 Then stole in by the little brook  
 That still laughed down the terraced lawn.

And up the well-known path he crept,  
 And through the tangled briars tore;  
 And he, while they who sought him slept,  
 Saw his ancestral home once more.

There song and lights were still astir,  
 And by her he could see one stand,  
 (And he had fared so far to her!)  
 Who spoke with her and took her hand.

Then back by copse and wood he crept  
 While yet the dawn was cold and dim;  
 And while in her white room she slept,  
 'T was his old hound crawled back with him.