

POETRY.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN.

A FRAGMENT.

Low o'er his couch his anguish'd daughter hung,
His weeping partner to his weak arm clung;
O'er his pale bloodless lips a smile serene
Play'd sweet and mild—like the last setting beam
That Heaven's bright glorious orb on earth bestows
Ere on the Antipodes his light he throws.
His eyes was lit with more than mortal fire,
With Christian hope, not Atheistic ire;
His changing cheek his dissolution shew'd,
Now corpse-like pale—with fever now it glow'd,
The hand he rais'd its weight could not sustain,
His Ella caught it ere it fell again.
With broken whispering voice he cried, "Adieu!
My Ella think on me.—A moments few
And I shall be a senseless clod of clay;
But my bright soul shall fly t'et'herial day.
Adieu, my child, receive thy father's kiss,
Ere his freed spirit flies to realms of bliss,
Receive his blessing and his last advice,
Adhere to virtue—fly from every vice.
O sob not so,—why thus, my love, despair?
To Heaven I go—I fly—to wait ye there.
One parting kiss from thee, my dearest wife,
Ere I resign this sublunary life.
—My eyes grow dim. Heav'n opens on my view,
Mary, my child, my Ella—wife—adieu!"
A gentle sigh bespoke his spirit flow
To praise his Saviour and adorn a throne!

LOVE AND JEALOUSY.

A GERMAN STORY.

'Drive to the church,' said Emilia Countess Z**** to her coachman, as she stepped into her carriage. It was the eve of All Saints, and the pious Emilia wished to unburden her mind by confession. 'A young and amiable woman, united to a husband who was the choice of her own heart—adored by him—already the mother of a charming boy—soon to produce the second pledge of nuptial love—gratefully plucking every flower which joy scattered on her path—willingly fulfilling every duty of a faithful wife and tender mother—what can such a woman have to confess? With a heart devoid of guile, and a conscience without blemish, why does she visit the chair of absolution? What will she reply to the priest, if he require more than the universal declaration—I am a miserable sinner?' Thus spoke Gustavus Count Z**** to himself, as he was standing at the window, and heard his Emilia's direction—'Drive to the church.' 'Shall I privately follow her,' continued he in his soliloquy. 'Shall I conceal myself in a corner of the church, and bear the avowal of my beloved sinner? Is this curiosity? No! Is it jealousy? Pshaw! Well, what is it then? A joke and nothing more. I am her husband, and surely have as great right to know her little secrets as father Anselmo. I shall rally her—she will be surprised—I shall laugh—and there the matter will end.' He went. It was not far to the church. He crept into it under the cover of twilight, and approached as near to the confessor's chair as was possible without being detected. He listened attentively. Emilia spoke rather loud. This is the fragment of her confession, of which her unfortunate husband lost not a word—'Yes, reverend father, the youth's person was lovely. For more than six months he daily passed several hours in my bed-chamber, and while I was at supper with my husband, he escaped by means of my maid, through a private door. I have always concealed from his lordship my reason for dismissing this girl from my service.'

Oh, all ye husbands! whoever of you is in possession of a beautiful wife, whom he loves with the whole fulness of his heart, in whose arms he carelessly reposes, on whose chaste bosom he conceives himself a god, let him fancy, if it be possible, let him fancy himself in the situation of the listening Count. His first motion was with his hand upon his sword, but the idea of profaning the ALMIGHTY'S Temple, and of defiling his floor with blood,

prevented him. He left the church, to him the grave of his repose; arrived, without knowing how, at his own house, and demanded horses. A light post chaise was prepared. The Count left a note for his wife, in which he very laconically informed her, that business of importance obliged him to visit one of his estates, threw himself into the carriage, and fled from the place.

Emilia returned from the temple with that cheerfulness so peculiar to pious simplicity, when it believes it has liquidated all accounts with Heaven. Her husband's note surprised her much. He had never before quitted her in so unaccountable a way—without a parting kiss—without fixing any time for his return—without having even thought of the journey two hours before.

These reflections made the gentle Emilia uneasy. She summoned the steward, and asked whether he had spoken to the Count, before his departure. The steward replied he had seen him, but not spoken to him—'Not spoken to him!' exclaimed Emilia. 'No orders! no directions! I mean only with regard to the household?' 'None whatever,' answered he. 'That is strange,' said Emilia. 'Ay, strange indeed, my lady,' returned the steward. 'I have known his lordship ever since he was born, I have often had the honour of carrying him in my arms, but I never saw him as he was to-day. Twenty times he was pleased to send for me—twenty times I had the honour of waiting on him; but there I stood, and he never even looked at me. Once or twice I took the liberty of coughing, but all in vain. His lordship did nothing but bite his nails, and all the while looked as red as my good old master, his father, of blessed memory, when he had swallowed five bottles of wine after dinner. At last his lordship threw himself into the chaise, without so much as just saying good bye, Thomas, as he was always pleased to do, when he left home.' 'Inexplicable!' murmured Emilia—'Undoubtedly some very unpleasant accident has torn him from my arms.' Far, very far, was she from suspecting the real cause.

Meanwhile the Count pursued his journey day and night. 'Twas night within his soul—not a gleam of hope there cast its transient twilight. On the evening of the third day he reached the bounds of his estate. An ancient castle of the ninth century, furnished with turrets, moats, draw-bridges, and palisades, just caught the last beam of the sun, and cast a long shadow on the flowery meadow.

It was the first time that the young Count had visited this, the remotest of his estates, since he inherited them from his father. A steward, an old gardener, and his wife, were the only inhabitants of the castle. All three harboured not the most distant expectation of a visit from their young master. They surrounded him with every demonstration of joy, and welcomed him with hearty goodwill; but he scarce even saw them; his eyes were wild and gloomy; he threw himself upon a sofa, and desired to be left alone.

The whole village was in motion. The oldest boors dressed themselves in their Sunday clothes, and plodded towards the castle, while the bailiff on the road studied a complimentary harangue, with which he proposed to surprize his lordship. At the gates of the castle, however, they were informed that the Count was fatigued after his journey, and would not be seen by any body. The good people returned sorrowfully home. The late lord never was so high with us, said one to the other. 'Whenever he came here to hunt and shoot, he always received us, and said—'Good day, my lads!

How goes your corn on? How are your cattle?—God bless his good old soul.'

Early on the following morning, Count Z**** examined the castle, searched into every corner, and dived into the lowest cellar. At the end of a lonely gallery, through which he heard the echo of his every step, he stumbled against an iron door, which guarded the entrance to one of the four turrets at the corner of the castle's roof. The door was opened—a loathsome stench of long confined air burst through the chasm. He entered—found four naked walls and some mouldered straw. For the first time the Count's mouth was distended to a smile, but it was a grim diabolical smile. He silently quitted the turret, and dispatched the servant who had accompanied him, with a note to the Countess. In the mean time, by his command, a table, a wooden chair, and a bundle of fresh straw, were carried to the turret.

Emilia received with rapture the tidings of her beloved lord, whose embrace her beating heart too long had missed. With the beautiful bloom of fervent desire upon her cheek, she opened the note, and read.

'The bearer hereof has orders to bring you to me. Z****.'

Great was Emilia's astonishment at the dry laconic style of her husband, yet made she not a moment's hesitation to accompany the messenger. The journey was extremely difficult to a lady in the seventh month of her pregnancy; but Emilia, with the impatience of affection, forgot her burden, scarce has allowed herself a few hours sleep at night, and on the fourth evening arrived safe at the castle.

Her husband awaited her within the walls of the dismal turret, seated on the wooden chair, and ruminating on his misery. Emilia flew to embrace him—with his clenched fist he struck her on the breast, and felled her to the earth. 'Heavens! what means this?' cried the unfortunate Countess, and crept upon the straw. The Count spurned her from him, 'Monster,' roared he, in a tone of the most dreadful fury, 'Thou art unasked. Here, here shalt thou end a life of which I have not courage to deprive thee.'—'Oh, Heavens!' whimpered Emilia, 'spare at least the child which I bear beneath my heart.'—'Damned be the child, the dishonour of my house, and witness of thy infamy.'

With these words he forsook the wretched Emilia, and locked the door. Left to reflect in solitude upon her misery and innocence, doomed, with the purest conscience, to the cruellest of punishments; Emilia sunk upon her knees, and prayed to that Being who reads in our hearts, as in an open book, to tear from the eyes of her husband, her still much loved husband, the bandage woven by infernal calumny. The night crows shrieked during her prayer, and the ear of inexorable fate seemed deaf to the sighs of suffering innocence.

On the noon of the succeeding day bread and water were administered to her through a hole. She salted the bread with her tears, and her heart almost broke with melancholy, as often as the infant moved within her womb. She had begged that she might be allowed writing materials, but they had been denied. By chance she found in her pocket a little blue silk and a needle. She washed her handkerchief, and sewed upon it these words:—'I am innocent. Save me and our child.'

She sent the handkerchief to her husband. The deluded wretch tore and returned it. A burning tear fell from Emilia's eye upon it. When the period approached at which she was to be delivered, the old gardener's wife was admitted to her, and Emilia, writing on straw, bore a daughter. The first cry of this child, the first sound which

she had heard within these dreadful walls, for two long months, alleviated her sorrow. She pressed the little cherub to her fond maternal heart, and recommended it to the care of the Almighty. She gazed at it, thought she saw it smile, and forgot her misfortunes. But alas! scarce had she regained her strength, when the gardener's wife tore the infant from her arms, and locked the prison. 'Jesus Maria!' exclaimed poor Emilia; 'leave me at least my child, she fell to the earth in a swoon, and, when she awoke, prayed to God for death.'

Her inexorable husband would not even see the child. He sent it to the wife of a boor, and ordered it to be educated as an orphan. The gardener's wife quitted Emilia two weeks after her delivery, the Count returned to the city, and the wretched victim remained a prey to consuming misery more than three years.

It was at this time that Baron T—, her brother, a Major in the Brunswick service, returned from America; he loved his sister sincerely, and Count Z**** had been the friend of his early years. He, therefore, as soon as possible after his return, obtained leave of absence, for a few months, and hastened to embrace his relations. Accustomed to see his brother's house the seat of every pleasure; accustomed there to find an entertaining circle of both sexes, drawn together by the Count's affability and hospitality, he was not a little surprised to perceive the door shut, which formerly was ever open. He knocked at the door; a miserable Swiss opened it. 'Is your master at home?' 'Yes' replied the porter. 'At home is he?' said the Baron, 'well, so much the better.'

He entered: no footman opened the door; no lady's maid tripped forth to meet him; no lap-dog barked; no parrot chattered; all, all was dead, as in the habitation of a miser. He walked into the Count's room, and found him sitting on a sofa, with his heavy eye riveted on Emilia's picture, which hung opposite to him.

Started, as if from an oppressive dream, he staggered towards the Baron, burst into his arms in speechless agony, and pressed him with fervour to his heart. At the same moment a flood of tears gushed from his eyes, for time had converted his rage into melancholy.

'Brother,' exclaimed Baron T—, 'what means all this? Your house is now no more the same, and you—scarce can I recognize you. Where is that manly bloom, which once adorned your cheek? Those frightful looks forebode some terrible calamity. Where is my sister?' 'Ah!' sighed the Count. The Baron started, and hastily demanded—'Is she dead?' 'To me she is dead,' returned Gustavus. 'Explain yourself,' said her brother, 'Alas!' cried he, 'the grave of her honour was the grave of my peace.' Displeasure lowered on the Baron's forehead. 'Her honour? Is it possible? No; it cannot be.' 'And yet thus it is,' cried the unfortunate deluded Count. Sobbing, and scarce able to articulate his words, he related to the friend of his youth, to the brother of his still loved Emilia, the adventure of that hateful eve of All Saints, his anguish, his fury, his revenge.

Baron T— stood fixed in gloomy meditation, shuddering at the conviction of his sister's infidelity, and in vain seeking any means of vindication. For ever-cursed then, cried he at last, 'be the whole hypocritical sex! What look can be the look of innocence if Emilia's was not?—Brother be a man. Forget a woman unworthy of your love. Let no recollection of a faithless wife intrude upon the joys of youth which beckon to you from every side. You have concealed this affair, you have thereby spared the honour of my family, for which I thank you; and now, for this moment, Emilia is dead, her name is for ever banished from our conversation.—(To be concluded in our next.)'

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