



LITERATURE.

WE ARE GROWING OLD.

We are growing old—how the thought will rise
When a glance is backward cast
On some long remembered spot that lies
In the silence of the past,
It may be the shrine of our earthly vows,
Or the tomb of our early tears;
But it seems like a far-off isle to us,
In the stormy sea of years.

Oh, wide and wild are the waves that part,
Our steps from its greenness now—
And we miss the joy of many a heart,
And the light of many a brow;
For deep o'er many a stately bark,
Have the whelming billows rolled
That steered with us from that early mark—
Oh, friends, we are growing old.

Old in the dimness and the dust
Of our daily toils and cares;
Old in the wrecks of love and trust
Which our burdened memory bears.
Each form may wear to the passing gaze,
The bloom of life's freshness yet,
And beams may brighten our latter days,
Which the morning never met.

But oh, the changes we have seen,
In the far and winding way—
The graves in our paths that have grown green,
And the locks that have grown grey;
The winters still on our own may spare
The sable or the gold;
But we saw their snows upon brighter hair—
And, friends, we are growing old.

We have gained the world's cold wisdom now,
We have learned to pause and fear—
But where the living founts whose flow
Was a joy of the heart to hear?
We have won the wealth of many a clime,
And the lore of many a page—
But where is the hope that saw in Time
But its boundless heritage.

Will it come again when the violet wakes
And the woods their youth renew?
We have stood in the light of sunny brakes,
Where the bloom was deep and blue;
And our souls might joy in the spring-time then,
But the joy was faint and cold—
For it ne'er could give us the youth again
Of hearts that are growing old.

MARY OF ELTHAM.

[CONCLUDED FROM OUR LAST.]

When Gamaches came to Eltham, the moment I saw him, I recollected his person well. At Paris I had seen him after the most horrid tortures of the *brodequin* had been repeatedly applied to my suffering brother—I had seen the monster approach, not to soothe the fainting victim, but bitterly to reproach, while he sought by every insidious hint to urge him to perjury. Holy men of other days have with pious care, so ordered it that the offender to whom death was awarded, should in his last hour be assisted by a minister of religion, to the end that the departing spirit might feel in some degree purified from its earthly stains, and fitted to enter into that glorious immortality which divine mercy holds out to the truly repentant sinner. This charitable boon in the case of my poor relative, was turned into an instrument of torture, more tremendous than all the rest. In these moments when his maddening pangs might be expected to shake reason from her throne, was he tempted by the offer of an instant respite from pain, to accuse, being on his oath (for before the rack was applied, he was solemnly sworn), others of his name, as partners of his crime. For his sake, I rejoice that he passed through this sad ordeal with the resolution of a martyr. I marked with horror and disgust the alacrity with which the servant of Heaven, as he presumes to call himself, advanced to prompt the crime in the preliminary process to which Francois was subjected. With like cheerfulness, and on a public scaffold, this same person repeated his barbarous persuasions in the last stage of my brother's dreadful sufferings at the *Place de Greve*.

"From this I formed my judgment of Gamaches. Mary was I right? Did he act as the friend of your father or did he seek to betray you to shame?"

"He proved himself a wretch," said Mary. "But for your generous interference, I know not what outrage his baseness would not have offered."

"The explanations I have given, you will now hear to your father. Unmask the Judas, that when I am no more

an earth, he may not dare again to approach the humble, but peaceful shade of innocence.

"I will detain you no longer. Pray for me while I depart; my dying blessing shall be yours Mary—my friend."

"I thank you, sir, for your indulgence," added he, looking towards the magistrate, "I would now pass to my cell."

"Cruel Rossiter!" said Mary, "why, why did you not sooner trust me with your secret? why did you not tell your reason for wishing to put to sea, in despite of the storm? I would have gladly thrown myself on the troubled deep, have listened with pleasure to the bursting thunder, and wooed the blue lightning's most vivid glare, had I known that braving these might save my protector from peril."

"Your story," said the mayor, "is sad. I would it were mine to give you comfort. For this helpless female I will regard her safety. To-night she shall rest in the house of the master of a ship, who sails in the morning. His wife is kind and trustworthy, and will shew every attention in her power."

The prisoner was then removed, and Mary conducted to the residence of the mariner. The moment of separation was sad—Rossiter was calm; but to look on the tearful eye of Mary, with a consciousness that in this world they could meet no more, and not experience the deepest affliction was impossible.

The care of the mayor was extended to the property Mary had in her keeping. He followed her at a late hour to the quiet retreat to which, by his orders she had been taken. There he saw the master, and after some conversation with him, both left the house. When they returned it was nearly midnight. Mary was weeping.

There was in the looks of the magistrate something indicative of cheerfulness, and he reproved the stranger for her deep despondency, which he remarked could do no good.

"I am aware of that," Mary replied, "tears cannot remove calamity, but to refrain from shedding them beneath its most fearful pressure, is impossible. Can you say aught to dry them? If you can, I am sure you will. Is there no hope for the prisoner?"

"While there is life," according to the old proverb, "there is hope." I fear to wake expectation, yet this would I say, whatever may transpire—whatever you may hear from any one—even from me, of a disheartening tendency, still keep up your courage, and should a secret be confided to you, faithfully keep it."

He took his leave—Mary made some enquiries of the master, but gained no information that could console. She learned from him that preparations were making for an execution, and that a gallows had already been set up in the market-place.

Mary did not seek sleep that night. In her small chamber she counted the hours as their departure was successively announced from the Clock-Tower, till the hour of eight was sounded. She was then invited down to breakfast, but took no refreshment. Mary was still resisting the friendly invitations of her hostess, when the mayor entered.

"I could not rest," said he, "without enquiry after your health this morning. Your mind I hope is now made up to all that may have chanced. Do you wish for any particular information that it may be in my power to supply?"

"I would ask," said Mary—"if it—"

"He is no more on earth?"

"He is departed."

"May Heaven have mercy!"

Mary covered her eyes with her hands, but offered no remark. Grief seemed to have wholly withdrawn the faculty of speech.

"I wish not," said the mayor, "to afflict you with details. My task, I need not say, was not voluntarily assumed. It is past, and nothing remains but to comfort you. This good man will leave for Dover in two hours, and any assistance you may require for your security or convenience on your voyage, or after your arrival, scruple not freely to claim."

Mary bowed with a look of gratitude, but her heart was too full to admit of speech. Subsequently, she was told that, before day-break Rossiter had been taken to the market-place. There, the ceremonial of death was gone through, and when the inhabitants arose at their accustomed hour, a corpse, suspended between earth and Heaven met their view.

At the time fixed, Mary found herself on board the vessel. She had borne in mind the words of the mayor on the preceding night—"whatever you hear even from me keep up your courage, and if a secret be confided to you, faithfully keep it." She laboured not to give way to despondency, but her face was repeatedly suffused with tears.

To the most retired part of the cabin she withdrew to escape observation. The weather had become calm, and nearly all the passengers were on deck. One, however, kept near her the greater part of the voyage. She scarcely looked at him, till, finding himself quite alone, he approached her side. Then it was that she recognized with horror the vengeful Gamaches.

She turned away with indignation. He applied himself to appease her. In the humblest terms, he excused the course pursued towards Rossiter, as growing on the excess of his love.

"Mine," said he, "is a nature that admits of no medium between love and hatred. The rival who had insulted me is no more. Let Mary now consent to be mine. I for her am prepared to risk, nay, to sacrifice all—my fortune—my country—nay, Heaven itself."

"The last," Mary answered disdainfully, "you have not now to lose."

"Accept, then, my offered love. That is no less ardent than my rage is deadly. The wretch, Rossiter, as he called himself, learned to know the latter could not be scorned with impunity."

"What further course of crime you contemplate," said

she "I know not, but, even though your might were equal to your malice, I would brave all its fiercest exertions, rather than endure one hour's deceitful kindness from the wretch I know you to be."

"Beware!" he solemnly exclaimed. "Danger may be where it is least suspected."

Mary left the cabin to avoid her hateful companion. Approaching Dover, the ship could not make the harbor. A boat put off from the shore. It was dusk when it reached the vessel. Gamaches officiously pressed forward to assist Mary when she was about stepping into the boat. A man who had been seated at the bottom rose to receive her. It was Rossiter.

Amazement seized her. She involuntarily rushed towards him. Gamaches strove to restrain her, but in that moment he saw the never to be forgotten features of his supposed victim, and his harts dropped nerveless by his side. The sudden start which Mary had made was fatal to him. It had drawn him to the vessel's edge, and, in the horror and consternation of the moment he could not recover himself. He fell—the sullen plunge was heard by those on board, and a cry was raised to save him, but to no purpose. After a frantic scream and a feeble effort to contend with the waves, Gamaches sank, never to rise again till the graves give up their long-forgotten inmates.

His last words—"Danger may be near when it is least suspected," still rung in Mary's ears. She trembled equally from joy and terror. Scarcely could she believe her senses when she saw, in the same moment, her friend, supposed to be dead, restored to the living; her heartless prosecutor numbered with the dead.

Rossiter and Mary landed in safety, and proceeded to the inn where Rossiter had been waiting her arrival.

"To see you safe, Mary," said he, "in your native land, is happiness, but I fear you have suffered much on my account. You no doubt were informed that I had been put to death. Of the ingenuity which saved my life, till now I could not apprise you."

"The jailer to whose keeping I was confided, had marked the grief of the mayor at being called upon to act so stern a part, and thought that he should recommend himself to the favorable notice of that functionary, by suggesting what might save me. Walking near the port, he had stumbled over the corpse of a seaman which the raging waves had thrown ashore. The dead man, it struck him, was nearly of my size, his dress was the same, the jailer in consequence waited on the mayor, and requested to see him alone."

"The mayor confessed that he would gladly save my life if it were possible. With his assistance the jailer thought it might not be difficult. The execution might be ordered to take place at an early hour in order to prevent popular excitement, and the dead sailor could be substituted for the living prisoner. The mayor at first thought the jailer mad, but his benevolence soon prevailed, and he came into the scheme."

"Before day-break the magistrate was at the prison door, and with my hands bound, I was placed in a casket by the side of a stone cold, dead body. None of the prison attendants were allowed to follow—the mayor and jailer alone accompanied me. At that time, not more than two or three wanderers were lingering near the market-place. These, when we drew near, concluded we were but the workmen sent to complete the preparations. In the next moment the dead man was suspended from the fatal tree, and I was at liberty."

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Mary with deep emotion.

"I thought," he resumed, "my last hour was come, when I found that I was free. My head turned round. It seemed a dream, and my confusion would probably have betrayed the cheat, had not the mayor prudently hurried me on board a ship, and binding me to secrecy, left me there."

"Now," cried Mary, "do I understand the words he addressed to me last night, 'whatever you hear, keep up your courage, and should a secret be confided to you, keep it faithfully.'"

"It will be faithfully kept," said Rossiter. "Would that a life so wonderfully preserved were worth the saving."

"And is a friend so constant and sincere as you have proved of no value?"

"Of little, very little. I breathe but that is all. Yet Mary, shall I say it?—I am different from what I was."

"I hope not, for I would see you ever the same."

"A friend only a friend?"

"It were to break our compact to speak, to think of love."

"True! My secret is now known to you. Why I lived in concealment has been explained—I wished not to become a lover, because I would not join you to a name on which indelible disgrace had been stamped."

"That disgrace was none of yours. You participated not in the deed of your relations. Cruelty akin to that which included you in his sentence, could alone desire to make you suffer for your relationship—for your birth, not for your acts—for the will of your Creator, not for your own misdoings."

"Far from approving of that dreadful act which caused my brother's fate, my parents and myself were among the most loyal subjects of King Henry. His liberality of soul was the theme of our daily admiration, and Francois had long been at variance with us, because we were of the reformed religion."

"I have heard you say that no possible event could make you content to think of love, as the decree of Heaven itself had for ever interdicted you from assuming the character of husband."

"True—it was madness, the madness of my brother, which I regarded as a family disease. That alone would have forbidden me to marry. The witness brought last night to identify me, removed the objection. He proved what I had never heard, that the insanity of Francois was caused by a concussion of the brain in his youth—that his malady was the result of accident, instead of being constitutional."

While he spoke he pressed the hand of Mary with tenderness, she smiled and asked.