



LITERATURE.

THE OLD MAID'S LAMENT.

I see him walling in the street, I see him at the ball,
And still in every crowd we meet, he's gayest of them all,
He looks at me, and I with a smile bow gracefully and low;
I wonder if he sighs the while, to think I told him "No?"

There are no wrinkles in his face, no silver in his hair,
But in my own, alas I trace the ravages of care;
Oh, he must very heartless be, to keep his beauty so,
He doesn't seem to fret like me, because I told him "No?"

He's fifty-two, and flirting yet with every childish face,
And seems completely to forget, my own matured grace;
I do believe he's handsomer, than he was long ago,
I wish he'd only ask me now, I wouldn't answer "No?"

Altho' I'm only forty-eight, I've lost my teeth and hair,
Indeed I can't afford to wait, while he is fooling there;
It isn't right, but yet I must, my feelings let him know,
How much I love him, and I trust he will not answer "No!"

'Tis done—I met him yesterday, and popped the question plain,
And fervently I hope I may, ne'er do the like again;
He answered with a horrid grin, "I'm married long ago,"
And even if I hadn't been, old maid, I'd tell you "No!"

INTERESTING SELECTIONS.

LIFE IN THE WEST.

One of the most startling accounts of attempted robbery was told to me, said my friend Jones, by a man whom I met on board a Western steamboat. He was a powerfully made man, some six foot two inches in height, who bore the marks of being inured to fatigue and danger. He was exceedingly nervous, and although bold enough to face anything which threatened him, was still excitable enough to be roused very easily. The conversation changed to fall upon robberies, and after mentioning the recent seizures which had been made, he said:

"I once met with an adventure in the western country which I shall probably never forget. The incidents are as clearly impressed upon my memory as if they occurred but yesterday. Some ten years ago I was a Western land speculator. I had sold some large tracts, and having collected the payment, which was a very large amount, I started to return to New Orleans to make investments. I was in the extreme western portion of Missouri, and was travelling over desert tracts of country, only here and there diversified by some rude clearing. I had dressed myself very shabbily, and provided myself with a very rusty old pair of saddlebags, to avoid suspicion of having money about me. The only really good things which I possessed were a powerful horse, stout reins and stirrups, and a pair of well-charged pistols.

"It was towards night that I arrived at the only clearing that I had seen for hours, and feeling fatigued, I stopped to inquire the distance to the next settlement. A good looking man came out of an old log house, and told me that the nearest clearing was fifteen miles off. As my horse was used up, I asked him if he could accommodate us for the night. He replied that he could give me such as he had himself; so I jumped off my horse, and taking my saddlebags on my arm, I followed him into the house. The first thing that met my eyes on entering was a party of three women and two more men, sitting around the fire. They were a rough ragged set of people, and seemed to have been drinking largely, for their eyes were bloodshot, and there was a wild expression in their features, which was anything but consoling to a solitary traveller. I disliked their looks so much that I had resolved to remount my horse, and proceed on my journey; but a moment's reflection convinced me that if they were inclined to rob me, they might waylay me in the woods; so I sat down with them and tried to open a conversation. But they were not at all inclined to be communicative. I asked them how long they had been settled there, and how they got their living. They answered that they lived by hunting. This convinced me that I had fallen into dangerous company, for I knew by the nature of the country, that it was impossible to subsist in that way. Then I saw rifles and pistols and bowie knives ranged over the chimney, and this added to the wild appearance of the men, made me wish myself well away from the place. They brought some supper of the poorest sort, and sat looking from one to each other, with most suspicious glances, occasionally exchanging a whisper and a nod of the head. When the meal was over, I asked to be shown to my bed, for I felt tired and was anxious to get some rest. I had noticed two apartments opening into the one in which I had been sitting. One of them had a door which locked, and the other was merely divided from the adjoining room by a blanket suspended before an opening. They showed me into the latter room. I told them I preferred to sleep in the other, but was told that it was the women's apart-

ment, and I could not occupy it. I of course made no further remark, but taking my saddlebags under my arm, went into the room assigned me. I had soon thrown aside the greater part of my clothes, and after putting the saddlebags upon the bed crept into it myself. I fell into a kind of drowse which might have lasted some twenty minutes, when I was startled by a footstep, and looking up saw one of the men creeping into the room; but finding that I was still awake, he pretended to be looking for something. He was so poor an actor that I saw at once he had only come in to ascertain if I was asleep; but finding me awake he left the room immediately.

This incident completely aroused me. Sleep was entirely banished from my eyes, and I began to feel really alarmed. I waited about fifteen minutes more, and then another man came in on the same pretence; but he was as poor an actor as the other, and only excited my fears the more. When he went out, I quietly slipped on my clothes, drew my saddlebags towards me, took out my pistols, which were heavily charged, cocked them, got into bed again, and taking one pistol into each hand placed them under the bed clothes, determined to sell my life as dearly as possible in case of being attacked. I should think that I waited some half hour, listening to every noise about me. I could hear them whispering outside, and moving stealthily round. At the end of about half an hour, as near as I could calculate, I saw the blanket slowly but cautiously raised, and a third man came creeping towards me in his stocking feet. This was too much for me to bear. I had been gradually getting more and more excited; and starting up in the bed, I held my two pistols at the fellow, and shouted in a determined voice:—"Be off with you! if man, woman or child, enters this room again to-night, I will shoot them dead!" I was now thoroughly aroused, and was almost crazy with excitement. The man left the room as if he had really been shot; I heard footsteps in the next apartment; the door beyond was closed; and then all was still.

"In the mean time, a tremendous storm had come up. It rained and blew and thundered most awfully, and it was so dark that I could not see one foot from my eyes. In a state of mind which I cannot describe to you, I lay perhaps for an hour, without hearing a human sound. At the foot of my bed was a window which was low down to the ground, and could be easily entered from without. At the end of that time, I heard the rattling of the window frame, as if some one was trying to open it. I listened without motion—my senses seemed to have acquired a ten fold power that night, for my own breathing was loud enough to almost frighten me. The noise at the window continued, and at last I heard it move, as if some one was prying it up. Leaning forward in the bed, as near to the window as I could reach, and taking aim more with my eye than my ear, I discharged my pistol. The glass flew into a thousand fragments, and I heard footsteps outside like those of running men. Charing my pistol again by the sense of feeling, I again took my position, awaiting any further attack that might be made. "I am a brave man sir," said he, "I can bear a good deal; but, by Heaven!—that night was thirty years long. Every moment was an hour, as I lay there with the big drops on my forehead, expecting every minute to hear the flash of a rifle directed towards me, or to be attacked by three men at once. But I resolved to defend myself to the last and nerved myself to meet whatever should come. Oh! how tediously and fearfully did the night wear away! But at last the morning dawned, with the earliest light, I jumped out of bed and went into the next apartment. The women were already stirring, but the men were nowhere to be seen. I asked them where they were. They did not know. I tried every thing, entreaties, and at last threats, to induce them to tell me, but they resolutely refused, although they cried heartily when I offered to shoot them.

"They got me some breakfast, and I waited till the sun was quite high, fearing to go out of the house, lest I should be picked off from behind some stump, and hoping that some traveller might perhaps come along. At last, finding that it was no use to wait any longer, I asked one of the women to get my horse. She refused, and no entreaties or threats could induce any of them to go after him. After waiting a short time longer, I hung my saddlebags upon my arm, took one pistol in each hand, and cautiously approached the barn, scrutinizing every stump before me lest it might conceal a murderer. But not a soul appeared. I went to the barn, turned the button, stepped back a pace or two to avoid a sudden attack from within—but all was still; my horse was quietly eating his hay, and I mounted him, after carefully fixing my saddlebags across him, and taking out my map examined the route I was to pursue. I trotted very leisurely until I was out of sight of the house, and then taking a right angle from the main road, put spurs to my horse and flew rather than rode, for about five miles directly through the woods. I felt sure the robbers were waiting to waylay me, and I resolved to get rid of them if possible. After I had ridden an hour or so, I again consulted my map, and taking an angle to the left, rode on until I again intersected the main road, a few miles from the next settlement, which was a German village. I recounted the night's adventure, and was told that the place at which I had stopped was the den of the most desperate set of robbers and murderers in that region. Travellers had been known to leave in that direction who were never known to return, and the horses which they rode were afterwards seen in possession of these desperadoes. I thought that I had a lucky escape.

You should have heard this man relate his own story, said my friend. His eyes gleamed as he told of starting up in bed, and his whole frame was active at the mere remembrance of what he had gone through that night. It was no acting which made his story a graphic one, but the relation of what actually occurred told in the most vigorous manner. I shall never forget his appearance.

A LOAFER'S WISH.

"I wish I had a pint and in some secret place,
I'd elevate my arm, and pour it in my face."

WHEN MAY A SCOTCHMAN BE CALLED DRUNK.

Well, Doctor, pray give us a definition of what you consider being *fu*, that we may know in future when a cannie Scot may, with propriety, be termed drunk.

"Well, gentlemen," said the Doctor, "that is rather a knittle question to answer, for you must know there is a great diversity of opinion on the subject. Some say that a man is sober as long as he can stand upon his legs.—An Irish friend of mine, a fire-eating, hard-drinking captain of dragoons, once declared to me, on his honour as a soldier and a gentleman, that he would never allow any friend or his to be called drunk till he saw him trying to light his pipe at the pump. And others there be, men of learning and respectability too, who are of opinion that a man has a right to consider himself sober as long as he can lie flat on his back without holding on by the ground. For my own part I am a man of moderate opinions, and would allow that a man was *fu*, without being just so far gone as any of these. But with your leave, gentlemen, I'll tell you a story about the Laird of Bonniemoon, that will be a good illustration of what I call being *fu*."

"The Laird of Bonniemoon was gae fond of his bottle —a short, just a peor drunken body, as I said afore. On one occasion he was asked to dine with Lord R——, a neighbor of his and his Lordship, being well acquainted with the Laird's dislike to small drinks, ordered a bottle of cherry brandy to be set before him after dinner, instead of port, which he always drank in preference to claret, when nothing better was to be got. The Laird thought this fine heartsome stuff, and on he went filling his glass like the rest, and telling his cracks, and ever the more praising his Lordship's Port. 'It was a fine full-bodied wine, and lay well on the stomach, not like the poisonous stuff, claret, that made a body feel as if he had swallowed a nest of puddocks.' Well, gentlemen, the Laird had finished one bottle of cherry brandy, or, as his Lordship called it, 'his particular port,' and had just tossed off a glass of the second bottle, which he declared to be even better than the first, when his old confidential servant Watty, came staving into the room, and making his best bow, announced that the Laird's horse was standing at the door.

"Get out o' that ye fause loon," cried the Laird, pulling off his wig and flinging it at Watty's head. "Dinna ye see, ye blethering brute, that I'm just beginning my second bottle?" "But Maister," says Watty, scratching his head, "its amais twell o'clock." "Weel, what though it be?" said the Laird, turning up his glass with drunken gravity, while the rest of the company were like to split their sides with laughing at him and Watty. "It canna be ony later, my man, so just reach me my wig and let the maig bide a wee."

Well, gentlemen, it was a cold frosty night, and Watty soon tired of kicking at the door; so, in a little while, back he comes, and says he, "Maister, maister, its amais one o'clock!" "Weel, Watty," says the Laird with a hiccup—for he was far gone by this time—"it will never be ony earlier, Watty, my man, and that's a comfort, so you may just rest yourself a wee while langer, till I finish my bottle. A full belly makes a stiff back, you ken, Watty." Watty was by this time dancing mad; so after waiting another half-hour, back he comes, and says he, "as true 's death the sun's rising." "Weel, Watty," says the Laird looking awful wise, and trying with both hands to fill his glass, "let him rise my man, let him rise, he has farther to gang the day than either you or me, Watty."

"This answer fairly dumfounded poor Watty, and he gave it up in despair. But at last the bottle was finished, the Laird was lifted into the saddle, and off he rode in high glee, thinking all the time the moon was the sun, and that he had fine day light for his journey. "Hech Watty, my man," says the Laird, patting his stomach and speaking very thick, "we were none the warse for that second bottle this frosty mornin'!"

"Faith," says Watty, blowing his fingers and looking as blue as a bilberry, "your honour may be none the warse for it but I am none the better; I wish I wa'." Well, on they rode fou easily, the Laird gripping hard at the horse's mane, and rolling about like a sack of meal, for the cold air was beginning to make the spirits tell on him. At last they came to a bit of a brook that crossed the road; and the Laird's horse, being pretty well used to have his own way, stopped short and put down his head to take a drink. This had the effect to make the poor Laird lose his balance, and away he went over the horse's ears into the very middle of the brook. The Laird, honest man, had just sense enough to hear the splash and to know that something was wrong; but he was that drunk that he did not in the least suspect that it was himself. "Watty," says he sitting up in the middle of the stream and stammering out the words with great difficulty; "Watty, my man there's surely something fu'en plout into the brook?" "Faith you may say that," replied Watty like to roll off his horse with laughing, "for it's just yourself, Laird?" "Hout fie, no Watty," cried the Laird, with a hiccup between every word, "it surely canna be me, for I'm here!"

Now, gentlemen, continued the Doctor, here is a case in which I would allow a man to be drunk, although he had neither lost his speech nor the use of his limbs.—*The Old Forest Ranger, by Capt. W. Campbell.*

LAKE OF ALLIGATORS IN SCINDE.

This curious place is about 8 miles from Kurracher, and is worth inspecting by all who are fond of the monstrous and grotesque. A moderate ride, through a sandy and stoney tract, varied with a few patches of jungle, brings one to a grove of tamarind trees, hid in the bosom of which lie the grisly brood of monsters. Little would one, ignorant of the locale, suspect that under that green wood in that tiny pool, which an active leaper could half spring across, such hideous denizens are concealed—"Here is the pool!" I said to my guide rather contemptuously. "But where are the alligators?" At the same time I was stalking on very boldly with head erect, and rather inclined to flout the whole affair, *naso adunco*. A sudden