



LITERATURE.

From "The Convict, and other Poems," by Mrs. M. S. PEACE, St. Johns, Newfoundland.

THE WISH.

"Oh, that I had wings like a dove,
Then would I flee away and be at rest."

O would I were far, far away o'er the ocean,
A voyage to some foreign strand;
Far away o'er the depth of its dark heaving bosom,
From the shores of my dear native land.

Away from stern poverty's cold chilly blast—
From its narrow and stinted controul;
Away from the friends who are hollow and false,
And have stung to the depths of my soul.

Away from a home which has proved so unkind—
From its sights and its sounds of distress;
Away from the wounds of my own haughty mind—
O would I were far o'er thy breast!

Away from the gaze of an unfeeling world,
And from rotten hypocrisy's guile;
Away from the sneer of contempt which has curled
On lips which I sought for a smile.

Away from the feelings which torture my brain—
From dreams which too quickly depart;
Away from reality's vulture-like pain,
Which has torn, and is tearing my heart.

Away from a land which is cold to my sight—
Away from the graves of its dead;
Away from the scenes of my childhood's delight,
And the memory of joys that are fled.

For those who have loved me have sunk to their rest,
And the friends of my childhood are gone!
And I'm left in youth's morning on life's dreamy waste,
Uncared for, unheeded, alone.

I have twined like the ivy round friendship's fair tree;
But, alas! it has withered and died;
I have loved, and thou knowest, thou dark rolling sea;
There are hearts 'neath thy merciless tide.

O had I the wings of a dove I would flee
In search of a home o'er thy breast,
Till the summons arrive which my spirit sets free,
And then, surely then, I shall rest.

A STORY OF THE OLDEN TIME.

RICHARD BRIDGNORTH.
A LEGEND OF PATERNOSTER ROW.

BY CHARLES WILTON.—Concluded.

When it became publicly known that their marriage day was fixed, the invitations to fashionable parties were even more numerous than before; and whether by accident or design, wherever Marie was, there the prince made it convenient to be also. Not that he noticed, or appeared to notice, Marie more than another; or that his attentions were more particularly addressed to her; but it became the subject of pointed remark that the prince was more frequently in public than had been his custom. However this might be, or to whatever extent surmises were directed towards Marie, she scarcely noted the circumstance, and was certainly too much occupied with her own happiness to observe or be annoyed by the Dauphin's presence.

It would be idle to dilate upon the preparations that ushered in the marriage-day, or upon the magnificence of the wedding, or the feasting and festivities that followed the ceremony. It is sufficient to say, that as the wedded pair had arranged to leave Paris on the evening of the same day, to pass a few hours at a country place some miles from the capital, and proceed thence direct to England, the Count of — and his friends would part with them on no other condition than that they should devote the last few hours of their stay in Paris to a farewell party in the Count's mansion. In vain Richard pleaded; the Count would take no denial, but promised to release them at an early hour, as they had determined on leaving Paris that night.

The evening the Dauphin was not present, and the mirth was unrestrained; but time flew on, and every minute seemed an hour, to two at least—to the young couple. No sooner would Richard allude to the necessity of departure, than he was surrounded, and cheated into staying a little longer. The Count had an admirable story to tell—the Marquis recollected a striking illustration to it—and some one else, now that the affair was mentioned, remembered a singular collateral circumstance—and, in fine, it was near midnight before they escaped into their carriage, and drove rapidly away.

It was a night in spring, and the heavy clouds had deepened in their hue, and hung like a pall over the silent capital. The streets were now deserted, and the feeble light of the lamps, that scarcely served to show the ropes by which they were sustained across the roads, appeared more fitful and cheerless than ever.

The carriage was proceeding slowly along an ill-paved street, in a quiet quarter of the city, when a man, masked

and cloaked, suddenly stepped forward to the horses' heads, and cried in a loud voice,—

"I arrest you!" seizing the reins with both hands. At the same moment four others, without masks, emerged from an archway and rushed to the carriage door; but Richard had thrown it open at the sound of the voices, and now confronted the assailants.

"What means this? Who are you that dare to stay us in the public road?"

"Gentlemen of fortune," was the laconic reply of one; "we pick up our living in the streets."

"Industrious artisans," said another; "for we work while our neighbours are asleep."

There was no need for these facetious explanations, for their exterior betrayed their calling.

Not caring to parley with the ruffians, who were too numerous, also, to be easily shaken, Richard drew out his purse, saying—"You are poor—you want money; take this and let us pass—I have no more."

"A very benevolent gentlemen," remarked the fellow who had just spoken, as he snatched the purse; "and a very acute sense of the wants of his fraternity; but at the same time, that lady must come with us," producing a pistol as he spoke, "just as a pledge of your good faith, you know."

Richard started back, and the words—"My wife!" escaped his lips as he grasped the carriage door; and, as he spoke, a coach came slowly from the archway into the street, and drew up.

"Sorry to disturb conjugal felicity," rejoined the man, rubbing his chin with the muzzle of his pistol, "but if you're like me with your wife, you'll stand something handsome to get rid of her."

"Why do you delay?" demanded a tall, masked figure who had alighted from the coach; "bind him if he resists, and seize the lady."

The terrified Marie screamed as the men approached, and Richard instantly exclaimed to the masked figure as he held fast the door, and kept the men at bay—

"Dauphin, your disguise is useless! I know you—and I know you now for a villain!"

He had not drawn his sword, for policy withheld him; and although the prince, to avoid the possibility of bloodshed, and depending on superior force, had strictly forbidden the pistols to be loaded, Richard knew it not; and in a moment he was overpowered, and Marie dragged into the street; she implored the prince's mercy, and called upon his honor, but in vain, when a thought seemed suddenly to strike the prince, and at his command they were released, Marie flying to her husband for protection.

"You see," said the prince to Richard, "that you are at my mercy; Marie must and shall be mine; and now reflect; if you resist, she is mine by force, and the law will avail you nothing against me. Consent to an accommodation, and to-morrow you are the richest man in France, and my influence shall procure you a title to your name."

The husband's face was crimson as the dauphin spoke, and the haughty "Never!" that passed his lips in reply, went to the prince's heart, and again the latter grasped Marie by the arm.

Richard's breath came thick and fast. He gasped—"Prince are you mad?"

"Beggars!" was the reply.

The prince had motioned the men aside while they spoke. Alessandro, for Richard now saw it was he, had left the horses' heads and the opportunity was ripe for a desperate venture.

In a suppressed tone, and grinding his teeth with the words, the jeweller cried—"Beware, Monseigneur, and loose your hold!"

"*Sacre!—Canaille!*" shouted the prince in scorn.

The bridegroom uttered not a word; for one moment his cheek flushed with a burning rage, and in another instant the Englishman's sword was red with the Dauphin's blood.

A cry escaped his followers as they saw him fall to the ground, and in the confusion Richard sprang the fainting Marie into the carriage, secured the door, and leaped upon the coachman's box. Away went the horses over the rugged street, scattering the sparks from their hoofs as they dashed madly on—their nostrils extended, and the white foam flying from their mouths—till far behind was the scene of danger, and the house of Delvise was gained. Richard, forbidding the coachman to move, first reassured Marie, then dashing open the door of the house, and pale, agitated, and breathless, stood in the chamber of Delvise.

"Where is my passport, Delvise? give me some money, for I must fly!"

"It is there!" he exclaimed, and as Richard took it from the table, asked in terror—"Richard! Richard! your looks alarm me—what have you done?"

"Nay, do not ask me, Delvise; I have drawn my sword in the streets of Paris, I have slain the Dauphin of France!"

The old man groaned, and sunk heavily back upon the chair; a light footstep was heard upon the staircase, and the terrified Marie stood by her father's side. The jeweller clasped his daughter to his bosom, and then the pent-up feelings found an utterance, and she sobbed upon his breast.

"O God! O God!" cried the wretched husband, "and this is my wedding night!"

He buried his face in his hands and in the pause that followed, a thousand thoughts were chasing through his mind, and above them all there rose the image of the galleys, or of immediate and shameful death. He started from his momentary lethargy, with a wildness in his look and accent, as he exclaimed—

"Father, I must away; every moment wasted now is a letter on my tombstone!—Marie! my wife! you will go with me!"

"To death, Richard!" was the proud response, as she placed her hands in his with unshaken confidence and love. "Then we must know no rest till the seas are beneath us. The ship is ready at Calais. Once on board, we are safe. Father, you will remain secure—they cannot harm you, and give us now your blessing."

"God bless you!" cried the old man, as the tears started to his eyes. Richard grasped his hand, Marie took a last embrace, and the clocks of Paris struck out the hour of one, as the carriage halted at the barrier, whilst the passport was examined—and the open country was before them, and they were driving swiftly on towards Calais.

Paternoster Row was then, as now, a busy thoroughfare, but it was before the days of the booksellers, and various was the merchandise for which its houses were celebrated, but the mercantile firm of Bridgnorth & Son, which for many years had been its leading feature, no longer transacted business there—its operations being now conducted in more spacious premises on the banks of the Thames; and the deserted house refitted and rearranged, had lately become the town residence of the youngest son of the family, who, after an absence of some years, had returned from France, with a rapidly acquired fortune, and with a lady who bore his name.

Richard and his wife had not been many days in their new habitation, before they received a letter from Delvise, which conveyed to them the joyful intelligence that the Dauphin had survived his wound, and was out of danger; but then, to Richard, followed this alarming passage.

"As was inevitable, sentence of death has been passed upon you, and a heavy reward held out as the price of your apprehension: this you need not have feared; but I know from positive authority of a private nature, that the Spaniard Malpertiz, induced by the hope of a title, and by the desire to revenge some wrong that you have done him, has taken a sacred oath to follow you to your retreat, and at the risk of his own life, to capture or destroy you."

At that moment a ship was crossing the seas to England, and Alessandro Malpertiz was pacing to and fro upon her deck.

A cloudy day had given place to a clear, starlight night. The autumn winds were abroad, and the few leaves that remained upon the solitary tree in the garden attached to Richard's house fluttered mournfully upon the branches—for their companions were yellow and dead, and scattered upon the ground, and the rustling song of the green and crowded leaves, that had given renewed youth and cheerful life to the old tree, was now silent and gone, and the sound occasionally given forth, as the strong wind more rudely shook the branches, was but the memory of a former time, and the heavy sigh of old age for the faded glory of youth.

One apartment of that house, which looked upon the garden, presented a striking contrast to the cheerlessness without; a large bright fire blazed ruddily in the grate, and lighted up the paintings that were hung about the room, while the magnificent mirror upon the mantelpiece reflected the dancing rays as they shifted fantastically about, and followed their curious antics in a hundred various phases.

It was one of those roomy and substantial houses that our ancestors loved to build; and every chamber gave an indication of wealth and ease. The rich tint of Sienna marble was on the walls, and the broad and many stepped staircases, the massive and highly finished doors, the warm wainscoting and profuse drapery—all served to stamp the habitation as that of a family of affluence. It was in a time when the rich merchants of London invariably dwelt in the city, and built for themselves houses more resembling the mansions of nobility than the dwellings of tradesmen, and this house was one of the most sumptuous. Retired somewhat from the public thoroughfares, and reached by a court-way closed at night by tall and massive iron gates, it combined at once the comfort and convenience of a town residence with the repose and safety of a castle. But on the night of which we speak, when the iron gates were closed, they shut the enemy in. At dusk, a stealthy footstep had passed unheeded up the court-way, and when the porter secured the gates and entered the house, he saw not the dark figure crouching beneath the shadow of the garden wall.

Let us return to the chamber where the broad mirror is chasing the shifting rays upon the pictures, and as we pass through the doorway, we may hear in a low tone the single word "Check!" pronounced.

The two figures seated at the table by the fire, with the curious little ivory men between them, are Richard and Marie, and they are playing the thoughtful game of Chess. They were well matched in the game; it was a contest of equal skill, and the result was yet doubtful.

"Check!" said Richard, as he moved his only castle half across the board.

There was scarcely a pause before Marie hailed, saying, "I return the compliment—check!" and bringing up a bishop, she at once covered her own king and gave check to her adversary. Richard moved his king hastily back, and it was now on a line with his castle; but he had moved unwarily; Marie saw the advantage, and she looked in his face and laughed as she pushed forward her second bishop, and checked at once his king and castle.

"Ah! peste! he exclaimed; that loses me the game."

But a deeper game was being played—a game of mighty import, to be won and lost that night. The old tree in the garden, whose branches touched the window, was shaking violently, and it was not the wind that shook it; it was no bird that alighted now upon it, for a strong man had climbed the trunk, and was straining every nerve to reach the window by the aid of his sturdy arms.

"You are not playing well to-night, Richard," said his wife.

"I am not altogether well, myself, Marie," he rejoined, as he threw himself back in the chair. "The weather influences one's spirits; it has been very gloomy to-day, and I have had sadder thoughts than usual; I have been thinking of Paris, and I never think of Paris without being sad."

"You should not give way to desponding thoughts," said Marie, tenderly; "I can think of Paris, and yet not be sad."

"It is when I think of you, Marie, that the shadow comes. You do not betray a wish to see France again, and I know it is in kindness to me you hide your thoughts. Do you never long for your native country? do you never sigh for the home of your birth?"