



LITERATURE.

OLD WINTER IS COMING.

Old Winter is coming again—alack!
How icy and cold is he!
He cares not a pin for a shivering back—
He's a saucy old chap to white and black;
He whistles his chills with a wonderful knack,
For he comes from a cold countree.

A witty old fellow this winter is—
A mighty odd fellow for glee!
He cracks his jokes on the pretty sweet Miss—
The wrinkled old Maid unfit to kiss—
And freezes the dew of the r lips—for this
Is the way with old fellows like he!

Old Winter's a frolicsome blade, I wot,
He is wild in his humor and free!
He'll whistle along for the want of his thought,
And set all the warmth of our furs at naught,
And ruffle the laces by pretty girls bought;
For a frolicsome fellow is he!

Old Winter is blowing his gusts along,
And merrily shaking the tree!
From morning till night he will sing his song—
Now moaning and short—now howling and long;
His voice is loud, for his lungs are strong—
A merry old fellow is he!

Old Winter's a wicked old chap, I ween—
As wicked as ever you see!
He withers the flowers so fresh and green—
And bites the pert nose of the Miss of sixteen,
As she trippingly walks in maidenly sheen!
A wicked old fellow is he!

Old Winter's a tough old fellow for blows,
As tough as ever you see!
He will trip up our trotters and rend our clothes,
And stiffen our limbs from our fingers to toes—
He minds not the cries of his friends or his foes—
A tough old fellow is he!

A cunning old fellow is Winter, they say,
A cunning old fellow is he!
He peeps in the crevices day by day,
To see how we are passing our time away,
And marks all our doings, from grave to gay—
I'm afraid he is peeping at me.

A TALE OF JEALOUSY.

Nearly three centuries ago, an extensive portion of that part of the country which lies on the Wallachian banks of the Danube, belonging to Demetrius C., a powerful Boyard, descended from one of the Greek princes who had been driven from Constantinople at the fall of the Lower Empire. He was wealthy, generous, and magnificent, the father of a promising son, (who at the period to which this history relates, was eighteen years old,) and the husband of the most beautiful woman in the country. Helen C. was looked upon as the happiest and most enviable of her sex, and she might have justified the general belief, for nature had endowed her with mental powers no less remarkable than her personal perfections, had it not unfortunately happened that, amidst the countless roses with which her path in life had been strewn, one sharp thorn had lurked and pierced her to the heart, rendering her, in the intolerable anguish it occasioned, regardless of the many other blessings that had been showered upon her. In a word, she was of a suspicious and jealous disposition; passionately attached to her husband, and to all appearance adored by him; she nevertheless lived in a constant distrust of him, when his character and manners were too well calculated to justify, for his general admiration of beauty was a matter of notoriety. And although, from a knowledge of his wife's disposition, he had taken such precaution in his infidelities towards her, that she had never yet been able to detect him in a love intrigue, she nevertheless felt so persuaded that he was constantly involved in such pursuits, that she became a prey to vague jealousy, which embittered every hour of her existence.

At last her restless suspicions appeared to have found an object on which to settle. Among her female attendants, was a young and pretty Transylvanian, named Anastasia, whose superior education had rendered her a favourite with her lady. All at once, the daisy became negligent of her duties, absent in mind, and inattentive to the wishes of her mistress; when reprimanded by her, she betrayed insolence and hauteur. Helena threatened to dismiss her from her service; the prince opposed such measure; and, in proportion, as the displeasure of his wife was evinced toward the delinquent, the voice and manner of her husband softened in her favour.

This was more than sufficient to fire the suspicions of

the princess. Eager to ascertain the reality of that which she dreaded, resolved to rush upon a knowledge that would break her heart, she forgot her dignity so far as to play the eaves-dropper and spy over her attendant—for some time without any result. One day, however, when the young girl had been sent for by her, and had neglected to attend the summons, Helena, eachersly crept up a back way to her menial's chamber-door, and noiselessly stationing herself outside of it, listened to what was passing within. A murmur of voices in the room convinced her that Anastasia was not alone, and almost immediately that of the suspected daisy struck upon her ear, in accents the purport of which could not be mistaken.

"Leave me," she said, "for heaven's sake leave me! I am my mistress's wife to know of your being here, I should be lost for ever! Already she suspects, and watches me, and I live in daily terror of her discovering a love, which would draw upon me her eternal enmity; Go, prince—go, Demetrius! This evening, as soon as it is dark, I will contrive to steal out to the fountain in the sycamore grove, meet me there at eight—your pretext of absenting yourself from home will prevent the princess from suspecting that we—"

Here the voice became fainter, as the person speaking moved towards an open side door; the footsteps of a man were plainly to be distinguished moving in the same direction; Helena could hear no more—she strained her eyes to the crevice of the door, at which she was stationed, but could see nothing. Her heart overflowing with dark tumultuous passion, she was for a moment tempted to burst open the door, and confront the guilty one who had presumed to rival her in her husband's love; but, listening again, she felt assured that the room was empty, and a moment's reflection showed her that, by a few hour's delay, she might render her vengeance more signal and complete. She therefore returned in the same stealthy manner to her own apartment, shut herself up, and took her measures accordingly.

Her determination was to prevent the possibility of Anastasia quitting the house, and then to disguise herself in the dress of a serving damsel, and to personate her perfidious attendant at the rendezvous in the sycamore grove which she had heard arranged by her. These meditations were interrupted by a message from the Prince, apprising her that he should be absent from home for the remainder of the day, and should probably not return till late at night; and this message, an additional proof of the calculating treachery which her faithless husband scrupled not to exercise towards her, was the last drop that overflowed the cup. The exasperation of her outraged feeling knew no bounds; and she remained in solitude in her apartment, that no member of the family might notice her agitation.

An hour before sunset, Anastasia was summoned to her lady's presence, and received an order to remain near her, and finish some embroidery with which she herself had been occupied. Not daring to disobey, and hoping to finish her task before the hour for her appointment with her lover had arrived, the young girl sat down to her work with unwearied alacrity. The room in which they were was an upper chamber, and formed the last of a spacious suite, having no entrance but through the apartments that preceded it. Not long after Anastasia was seated at her embroidery frame, the princess arose and quitted the room, locked the door of it, and leaving her attendant a close prisoner there, with no possibility of egress until she herself should release her, she proceeded to Anastasia's chamber, where she selected a suit of her clothes, hastened to disguise herself in them, and throwing a veil over her head, quitted the house, and directed her steps towards the trying place.

It was late in the autumn; the days were shortening visibly; the evenings were cold and gloomy; night closed in immediately after sunset, and there was no moon to illumine the dark sky. Helena was the first to arrive at the place of rendezvous; and under the influence of never-slumbering suspicion, she fancied, when she found herself there alone, that her schemes had been discovered, and that her husband would detect her plan of vengeance, by not appearing; but a few moments' reflection sufficed to undeceive her. A quick, lightstep approached. What eagerness was in that tread, and how indignantly did her heart throb, as she listened to it. The obscurity was so complete, that she could not discern even the outline of the person who drew near; but the perfume of ambergris, with which her husband's hair and garments were always impregnated, floated upon the air, and a low, concerted voice breathed forth the words—"Hail, Anastasia! Are you here love?" directed her towards him.

She stretched forth her hand with a whispered "Yes," and grasped something which she recognized as the embroidered kaffian worn by the heads of the princely house of C—. In the next moment, the arms of the impatient lover were thrown around her, and she was drawn towards him in a passionate embrace. Transported to fury by the tender endearment, which she knew was not intended for her, but for an unworthy rival, and breathing only the deadliest vengeance for her wrongs, the outraged wife thrust her hands in her bosom, drew thence a poniard, and raising it on high, plunged it into the faithless heart that wildly beat against her own. The blow was dealt with such an unerring aim that the victim could only utter an indistinct cry, and, relaxing the grasp with which he had held her so closely embraced, fell lifeless to the ground. Helena drew her breath, and listened for a moment; a gurgling noise in the throat of the murdered man was all that she could distinguish. Fear and remorse suddenly overcame her for the deed, which, in a moment of frenzied excitement she had perpetrated, and, turning hastily from the fatal spot, she rushed homewards.

The first object that met her eyes, as she entered the house, was her husband! There he stood, unharmed and surrounded by his attendants, and in his riding dress, just as he had alighted from horseback, and a tranquil smile upon his lips, and he inquired whether the princess was in her apartment.

"You here?" she shrieked, running up to him, "I have not killed you, then! Oh! thank heaven, I have, not killed you!" and she fell gasping at his feet.

"The princess?" ejaculated her husband, bewildered at the sight of her disguise, and her violent emotion, and raising her from the ground—"What means this phrenzy, and why are you so disguised?"

But she answered him not. With her distended eyes wildly fixed upon him, she passed her hands repeatedly over her bosom, and muttered to herself—"No poniard, no wound! and yet I struck him there, and felt his hot blood gush forth upon my hand!" And see," she continued, shuddering, "there it is;" and holding up her hand as she spoke, the crimson drops that stained it attested the truth of some fearful deed being connected with her mysterious self-accusation.

"Helena, dearest love," said the Boyard, in soothing accents. "Something has terrified you; but you are safe now—I am here to protect you. Tell me, what is the meaning of this agitation?—what is the meaning of this blood?"

"You, Anastasia!—the sycamore grove!" she uttered, in broken cries. "Were you not there? now—just now to meet her?"

The prince shook his head, in silent consternation. "Whom have I murdered, then?" burst from the lips of the unhappy woman, with a thrilling shriek; and, starting from her husband's support, she fled, with the speed of a man, towards the fatal spot from which she had so recently returned.

The prince and his attendants followed her—some with torches lighted; but such was the speed with which the frenzied state of her feelings lent to her movements, that they only overtook her at the moment of her reaching the fountain. There she suddenly stopped, as though rooted to the spot, and shuddering pointed to the ground. The prince advanced hastily to her side; his attendants followed, and raising their torches, discovered at the margin of the fountain, the body of a man extended on his back, and weltering in his blood. The ghastly face was turned upwards, and as the glare of the torches fell upon it, an exclamation of horror burst from the lips of all present, and Helena leaning forward, recognized her victim, with a thrill of agony which caused all the blood to thrill in her veins, and all her pulses to stand still. At that one glance, the whole truth flashed upon her with terrible clearness, and she comprehended when too late, the fatal error in which her blind and mistaken suspicion had plunged her. There lay her son!—her only child—her beloved Demetrius! bathed in the blood that welled forth from the death wound which her murderous hand had inflicted! He it was, then, whose boyish passion had been reciprocated by her young attendant; he it was for whom Anastasia had devised the love meeting, which had that morning changed her own jealous fears into dreadful certainties. He it was, oh, God! upon whom her imaginary wrongs had just been so barbarously avenged! The similarity of name and of dress had deceived her. Why had she not thought of this before? Why? Does suspicion ever pause to reason or reflect? Is not jealousy blind as love (whose dark shadow it is) is said to be? All this passed through her mind with the rapidity of lightning, as that one awful glance revealed to her the extent of her crime. No words escaped her lips; but, as it struck by a thunderbolt, she fell heavily forward, and lay prostrate, and to all appearance lifeless, by the side of the beloved son whose life had fallen a sacrifice to the rash and ungovernable suspicions of the jealous wife.

The first use that Helena made of her returning faculties, was to cast herself at the feet of her husband, and make a full confession of the feelings which had driven her to commit so desperate a deed, imploring death at his hands, in expiation of her crime. But death, which would have terminated her earthly torments, was a boon which the exasperated husband was resolved not to grant her.

"Woman," said he, "you shall live, to die a thousand deaths every day! You shall live to curse the day on which you were born. You shall live to expire, in lingering torments of mind, the misery you have inflicted upon me!"

And, inflexible in his determination, he caused his unfortunate wife to be conveyed to the Rock of Babiako, where, in a rudely constructed stone chamber, she was condemned to linger out her miserable existence, without being suffered to exchange a word with any human being, and with no companionship save her own wretched thoughts. Her senses failed her, under the severity of the punishment; but madness, instead of bringing oblivion to her woes, seemed to have imparted new activity to her faculties of suffering. Every evening, as darkness came over the earth, the poor manne forced herself again and again in the dreadful scene which had stained her soul with the guilt of murder; and the fiercest shrieks she uttered during the night were heard from afar, waking the echoes of that dreary solitude, until daylight brought with it a temporary cessation of her agonies, in the calm of exhaustion.

One day, at last, when the attendant, who daily brought her supplies of food, entered her prison, she had disappeared. Every part of the rock was searched; but no vestige of her was to be found, nor could any trace ever be discovered to account for her mysterious vanishment.

A RIVAL OF SIEGON BLITZ.—A wag in a country bar-room, where each man was relating the wonderful tricks they had seen performed by Siegon Blitz and the rest of the conjuring family, expressed his contempt for the whole tribe, declaring that he could perform any of their tricks, especially that of heating a watch in pieces and restoring it whole. It being doubted, he demanded a trial. Several watches were at once produced for the experiment. "There," said he, "there are the pieces." "Yes," all exclaimed now let us see the watch." He used mysterious words, shook up the fragments and at length put down the watch and mortar, observing, "Well, I thought I could do it, but by George, I can't!"