

LITERATURE.

CIGAR PHILOSOPHY.

When the weather's unpleasant and dreary,
And the night is unblest by a star,
How sweet to a fellow that's weary
Is the breath of a fragrant cigar!
What a balm to the spirit that's lonely,
To gaze at the smoke as it flies;
And bright are the dreams, tho' dreams only,
That with each fleeting circlet arise.

When cares, flesh is heir to, perplex us,
And trifles more harassing far,
Arise in our path and sore vex us,
How soothing the fragrant cigar!
If friends prove false and should leave us,
We can pass off the thing with a joke,
Nor allow their desertion to grieve us,
But let the wound vanish in smoke.

When riches are slow in collecting,
And prospects seem gloomy as night,
There's nought like cigars for directing
The fancy to visions more bright.
So tho' life seem unpleasant and dreary,
And our path be unblest by a star,
Yet smokers will feel when they're weary,
There's bliss in their fragrant cigar.

THE TWO RAVENS.

A STORY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

(Continued.)

On Sunday the dames and Emilie were returning from vespers, which they had heard at *La Major*. The day was beautiful, soft was the breeze hovering over the bosom of the sea; glimmering were the various hues reflected therein from the rosy clouds. The saline perfumes of the sea-weed, wafted by a gentle wind, mingled with the fragrance of spring. The terrace was thronged with myriads of promenaders, eager to inhale those reviving emanations, and enjoy the last hours of sunshine.

"Oh, I declare there is M. de Greoulx yonder!" exclaimed Susanne, joyfully; "look you, Emilie, with your young eyes, for mine often deceive me."

Emilie started, and turned round instantly.

"It is the chevalier, indeed it is (she could not mistake him!) he does not see us. What in the world is he looking at so attentively?—He stands erect, just like a saint in a niche."

They soon neared the young man who said hurriedly—

"I just called upon you; I have had a letter—from the baron!"

"At last!" observed both dames with one voice. From the sadness depicted in his countenance they surmised unfavorable tidings; they added, with anxiety—

"So you have got bad news?"

"You shall see," replied he, handing the letter.

"At Chateau de Greoulx, 16th of April, 1743.

"*Monsieur mon petit-fils*.—You shall not marry Mademoiselle de la Verriere. I desire you to return near me without one moment's delay. Under this sole condition will I forgive your conduct. I hope that, in future, your respect and obedience will make up for the past.

"Now, having expressed my will, I pray God may be with you.

"C. BARON DE GREOULX."

Gaspard accompanied them homeward, and they continued conversing on the engrossing subject.

"Well you must depart immediately," advised Berthe. "Things take a more favorable turn; this is the first time I heard of the baron giving up his own way!"

"How changed he must be, to be sure," remarked Susanne.

"All is going on rightly now," replied Berthe.

"Let us hasten home: we'll talk over it more at ease than in the streets. Well, well! the baron has yielded for once—given up your marriage; it's as good as a miracle! I would not have believed it, if I had not seen the letter, written and signed with his own hand."

Emilie had wrapped herself in her mantle, and kept at a little distance, walking in silence. As they neared the house, Gaspard, having purposely loitered, joined her and said in a low and reproachful voice—"Mademoiselle, you alone seem to be indifferent to what happens me."

"She raised her mantle, and, for her sole response, lifted up to him her eyes suffused with tears.

"Ah!" said he in a tone of unspeakable affection and joy, "dear Emilie!"

"What is the matter with you, my dear?" asked Berthe, observing an alteration in the

young girl's countenance. "How very pale you are! you must have caught cold; go quickly and warm yourself."

The evening wore away sadly. The Ravens would not play at cards; the idea of parting with their "*dear gentilhomme*" affected them deeply. The two lovers were absorbed in the enjoyment of these last hours of happiness, not free from sorrow. They listened with a restless dread to each stroke of the clock, and when nine was heard chiming at St. Laurent's, a shudder passed over Gaspard, and Emilie; a few minutes more, and both young hearts exchanged an affectionate but melancholy adieu.

Before daybreak, M. de Greoulx quitted Marseilles. In the evening the Ravens were sent for to watch over a corpse, so that poor Emilie remained alone in the spacious chamber. She sank into that state of despair and prostration experienced at the loss of all that gives zest and endowment to life!

During the day she had drawn her strength and energy from the necessity of concealing her grief; no change had been perceptible in her air or manner; no apparent sign of inward trouble on her countenance. Moreover, albeit she knew Gaspard to be every hour further from her, she still expected him in the evening as was his wont. But once left in solitude, she needed no longer to silence her secret feelings; she sat at the very place where usually sat he whose destiny she felt interwoven with hers, and whose presence alone had awakened in her that undefined longing of every heart for the sister soul.

She recalled every circumstance, even of the most trifling nature, linked with Gaspard; repeated to herself his last few words, so perfectly veiled in their meaning, but to which the emotion of his voice, the eloquence of his glance, added more than volumes. How fondly the forlorn orphan clung to this dawning affection! Her vivid imagination became heated to the utmost enthusiasm, but the sooner to fall from its fanciful regions. Despondency spread its icy shroud over all her fair visions, and she yielded to the melancholy influence.

She bent her head on her breast, let fall her arms, and, mournful and sad, remained in the same place where the two sisters found her in the morning, cold, pallid, and in tears.

CHAPTER VI.

Four days after M. De Greoulx's departure, the young girl and the Ravens sat sadly round the table, wishing to pass away the weary evening playing their wonted game; but Berthe shuffled the cards in an abstracted manner, and neither sister spoke of beginning. Presently a loud tapping at the door made them start.

"That's like the chevalier's knock," exclaimed Berthe.

"It is he!" muttered Emilie, growing pale.

In truth he had just arrived from Greoulx. Susanne hurried to open the door, and scarcely had he entered the house, than she exclaimed with joy, not mingled with fear—

"Gracious heaven! are you come back?—What does this sudden return mean?"

"Without waiting for, or indulging in greetings or salutations, he answered the question—

"It means that the baron has expelled me from the chateau—disinherited me!" And he added with a satisfaction contrasting strangely with his words—"Now, I have neither family or fortune; nothing! In fact I am free."

"Gracious goodness! what has taken place?"

Gaspard responded not, but stood gazing at Emilie, who, mute and trembling with joy, dared not raise her eyes.

"But tell us what has taken place," repeated Susanne, impatiently; "you look triumphant, like Sain Mitre, when he walked through the town of Aix, with his head in his hand; I don't see that there is any cause for joy. Do take a seat, and let us hear all about it."

"When I reached the chateau," said Gaspard, "my grandfather was in the gallery next to his own apartment; it was there he received me."

"The picture gallery?" asked Berthe.

"Precisely. The baron was lounging in his huge black-leather fauteuil, in the very posture in which he receives his vassals and tenants. Father Sylvestre, his chaplain, stood close by him. I advanced, my heart rather disturbed, and remained before my irritated guardian, awaiting that he would hold out his hand to me.

However, my expectation was not gratified.—"*Monsieur*," said he, knitting his thick silvery brows, "it is time you should make your submission." "I obey your orders," I replied; "and I beg to assure you I feel deeply the condescension you have showed to me concerning that marriage." "Of course, I had to give it up," he interrupted, with bitter irony; "how could it take place! the heiress has been cut off by a malignant fever."

"Oh!" triumphantly exclaimed Susanne, who could not help indulging in her peculiar reflections, "God has crushed the baron's will; it is well poor Mademoiselle De la Verriere has been called to heaven."

"Were she still alive," continued Gaspard, "I should find myself neither more nor less happy, for I was fully determined not to marry her."

"Having announced to me this news, the baron dismissed me from his presence. Meanwhile, I saw clearly, from his manner, that something remained to be told. In fact, the next day, after mass, I was sent for; the reverend chaplain was still present.

"Gaspard," said my grandfather, in a rather amiable tone, "I have decided that you shall take a wife before this year is over, and again, this time, I have chosen a helpmate for you.—You shall wed Madame de Chateaufort; her late husband left her an immense fortune; it is a most desirable alliance. You may thank, for the success of the negotiations, Father Sylvestre who made the demand, and pledged both my word and yours." I remained dismayed and stupefied."

"Is the widow such a disagreeable person?" hinted Berthe.

"On the contrary, she is a handsome *brune*, of a lively and pleasing disposition, but the name she bears is anything but aristocratic, albeit, her late husband bought one of those offices called *savonnettes a villain*.* However, the best gentilhomme in the country have come forward; she might, if she chose, be married to a Simiane or a Fontevez."

"Why should you not marry her?" Susanne interrupted, with astonishment.

"Because I have not the least liking for her."

"This strikes me as perfectly unreasonable," retorted Susanne, shaking her head with disapprobation; "but let us see; what objection did you state to the baron?"

"Merely that I did not wish to marry yet.—I besought him to allow me a year or two more of liberty. Then —. But there is no need to tell you what passed; you know the character of the baron. He gave me his malediction, and expelled me from his chateau. I retired immediately, took the coach back to Marseilles, and came at once to your house."

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the Ravens, "are you to lose the handsome inheritance and the old title of your family? No, this cannot be."

"But it will be, in all probability," quietly said the chevalier.

"There is no chance that the beautiful Madame de Chateaufort will oblige you by dying also—is there?" ventured Berthe.

"Heaven forbid that she should!" he returned.

"Methinks you would act rightly," observed Susanne, "this time, in obeying your guardian. Now, to tell you the truth, I don't see anything very rational in your refusal; you don't love the charming widow; granted. Well, marry her first, and love will come afterwards."

"Never!" retorted Gaspard, turning his looks towards Emilie. "Moreover, I have another reason; not a personal one though, to refuse the hand of the widow. Paul de Gillaret, an intimate friend of mine, is an ardent admirer of Madame de Chateaufort. Perhaps she loves him. So you see that I could not become his rival after having received his confidence. This of course, I could not tell the baron."

"Certainly not," said the dame; "however, it behoves a true gentilhomme not to betray a friend, even at the loss of the title and fortune of the Greoulx baronage; yet—"

"Believe me, I regret nothing!" interrupted Gaspard, with boisterous joy; "I feel myself so full of hope and courage. Oh! liberty, independence, are fine and grand things! How sweet it is to live thus, the mind easy, and the

*Offices which at that time were purchased to enoble the holder.

heart master of itself! Doubly sweet it seems to me, when I think of the dull youth I spent in the midst of luxury and riches! What is it to me to work? To be poor? I feel I shall be happy. And shall I confess the pangs of my latter years? I was like a captive sighing after liberty; nor could I help thinking that the death of my relative would make me free; certain it is that I would not have wept over him; still my conscience often smote me. But, thank Heaven, now I can pray that he may live a long and happy life."

"He is seventy-five," observed Berthe, "and the late baron, his father, after whom he takes in many ways, lived until ninety-eight years of age. He also was a terrible man, who caused the death of three wives through sorrow and ill-treatment."

"Did you know him, too?" asked M. de Greoulx, with surprise.

"We did," returned Susanne, curtly, not wishing to say more on the subject.

The chevalier was rather perplexed to know how the dames had become acquainted with his family; however as they always avoided satisfying him on this point, he left it to time or their own leisure to unravel this mystery.—Moreover, another and dearer thought engrossed his mind.

"I look cheerfully upon things now," he resumed; "I have conquered, perhaps, twenty years' independence and happiness! My good ladies, some day I shall tell you the secret of my heart; for the present I must, without tarrying any longer, consider what I had best undertake to make out an honorable livelihood. I think I will enlist in the army!"

The words caused an alteration in Emilie's countenance, for she lost not a word of this conversation, spite the attention she appeared to bestow upon some embroidery work. The Ravens exclaimed with one voice—

"Don't dream of it, *Monsieur le Chevalier*; there is not a worse trade than war."

"Yet I must do something; I could not support myself long with the hundred *louis* I may procure by the sale of some jewels, now perfectly superfluous to me. Even without a *carrosse* or *laquais*, I should soon see the end of this sum."

"Don't let this torment you," rejoined Berthe; "and don't you by any means go and sell your jewels to some jew, who would not give you half their value. Remain quietly at your hostelry."

"But," he retorted, "I cannot possibly lead any longer the life of a nobleman. Nor will I wait till I am compelled to accept your generous offer. I have the greatest aversion to debts."

"Don't I tell you not to mind it," repeated the Raven; "some day or other we will talk again about your affairs, and, with the help of God, they may prosper better than you imagine; don't you think so, sister?"

"I quite agree with you," responded the other Raven.

M. de Greoulx heartily thanked the good dames for their devoted interest. He could not help smiling at their assurance. They, poor old women, who foretold that he would arrive at fortune! However, he felt not the less grateful for the self-denial they showed in putting all their resources at his disposal.

Meanwhile, Emilie remained silent; but at this moment she would have been glad to kiss the dames' furrowed hands, which the first day she would not have touched without repulsion.

When the chevalier was gone, Berthe secured all the doors. The young girl withdrew to the far end of the room; she knelt down and prayed beside the small couch that had been prepared for her, close to the Ravens' large bed; Susanne and Berthe remained seated at the chimney, which, through economy, was left fireless, spite the still cold evenings.

"Susanne," said Berthe, "don't you think we could manage so that Gaspard might still live as handsomely as if the baron had not forsaken him?"

"We might, to be sure," replied Susanne; "the same idea struck me this evening; we'll call upon M. Vincent; and afterwards—"

"Hush!" interrupted the other, pointing to Emilie's bed; "maybe she is not asleep; she might overhear us."—(To be Continued.)

Happiness—with man, a little more money, with woman, a little more dress.