

## LITERATURE.

## REVENGE.

BY G. P. R. JAMES, ESQ.

It was the beautiful sunny afternoon of a Saturday in the month of September, when, in a wide lawn, sloping upwards, bounded by high walls, and shaded at one end by a row of fine old pines; thirty or forty boys were playing, from the age of twelve to fifteen. The master of the school—for a school it was—was seated in his library, from which he could see the sports of his pupils; and, not very far from the house, a group of eight or ten of the elder scholars were amusing themselves with some game which it is not necessary to particularize.

In the midst of this sport, a younger and much smaller boy cut across and interrupted the proceedings of a tall, handsome, but somewhat swarthy youth, who instantly fell upon him, and struck him several severe blows, adding, at the same time, with a contemptuous sneer, the expression—"Little bastard!" The boy cried more at the name applied to him, it would appear, than at the blows; and the other, seeming to rejoice at the power of inflicting pain, repeated the name, and was adding another blow, when a youth, of the same age, started forward and turned it aside, exclaiming—"Henry Dillon, you shall not hit him any more, nor call him by that name again."

"Who shall prevent me?" exclaimed the other; "it is his right name, and he knows it."

"If you come to that," rejoined the other, "it is your right name too; so I think you might take care how you give it to another."

The boys who stood round instantly set up a loud and laughing shout; and Henry Dillon, with all the wrath of a demon blazing from his eyes, instantly struck his new antagonist a severe blow, which was retaliated with such severe force as to stretch him at once upon the ground. A regular battle would have taken place, in all probability, had not the master appeared on the steps, and he called the two boys, with three or four others as witnesses, into his library.

The cause of the affray was then investigated fairly, and the master expressed his determination to punish severely the conduct of Henry Dillon; adding—"I wonder, sir, how you, of all men, dare make use of a term to one of your school-fellows, which, though in no degree really degrading to him as an individual, must always be most painful to his feelings. Nor were you, Charles Neville," he continued, turning to him who had been the champion of the younger boy,—"nor were you at all blameless in having retaliated upon Dillon—whether truly or falsely I shall not inquire—the coarse and ungentlemanlike epithet he applied to another."

"I know, sir, I was very wrong," replied Charles Neville, with an honest glow upon his face; "I know, sir, I was very wrong; though what I said was quite true, for—"

"Hush," cried the master; "do not add to your fault by repeating it. The punishment I shall inflict on you is to beg Dillon's pardon for what you have said."

"That I will, willingly," replied Charles Neville. "Dillon, I am very sorry, indeed, for what I said; and I beg your pardon with all my heart." He held out his hand to the other at the same time, but Dillon turned away with a scowl; and the master, who remarked all that passed, dismissed Neville and the witnesses, but kept Dillon with him for some time.

It was a childish quarrel, and the matter was passed over, and apparently forgotten by all.—For ten years, remembrance of it slumbered; and therefore over those ten years we shall pass in silence, and take up our tale at their conclusion.

Exactly ten years after, to a day, a large and brilliant party was assembled at the breakfast-table of a noble house, in one of the most beautiful parts of shropshire. The room was long, and well lighted from a large bay window, looking over a lawn, declining from the house into a wide park, where many a brown deer might be seen raising its antlered head. Tall elms and graceful beeches skirted the distant prospect, and nothing was seen around but the calm varieties of an English nobleman's domain;

tranquil, soft and peaceful; inspiring images of easy and elegant retirement, and not undignified repose. Some twelve or fourteen persons sat around the table, and several places were still left unoccupied for the less matutinal guests.—The party, however, assembled, included within itself enough to render their meeting cheerful and pleasant; for though the male part of the guests had come down thither upon the pretence, or for the purpose of field sports, yet they were of that quality of mind which mingles the exercise of the intellectual with that of the corporeal faculties, and gives a zest to each enjoyment by contrasting it with some other.

Midway down the table sat the master of the mansion, a nobleman somewhat advanced in years, but still with all his powers of mind and body unimpaired by time. Two gay young women, distantly connected with himself, sat by the side of the pleasant old Lord Grange, and exerted themselves not a little to amuse him at his breakfast; while, at the further end of the table, on household cares intent, appeared the baron's eldest daughter, who well might have personated Hebe herself, and taken the task of dispensing nectar to the gods. Close by her, again, sat as handsome a young man as the eye ever lighted upon. He was tall, powerful, graceful; and his dark brown hair, sweeping in wavy curls around his forehead, shaded, but did not conceal, the broad expanse of brow, which betokened, not unjustly, high talents of various kinds. All the features of the face were good in drawing, and yet, in looking upon him, the mind desired something different, without well perceiving what. Was it that the lip, naturally or habitually, curved with a slight sneer? Was it that the eyes, fine as they were, approached too near together? Was it that a sudden cloud would, every now and then, gather in a moment on his brow, and would only be swept away again when he spoke to somebody that he desired to please? Such was ever the case when the voice of Miss Grange struck his ear; the wrinkle in his forehead was done away with in a moment, whenever he addressed her, or she spoke to him. Nor was she, apparently, ill pleased at the attention which he paid, and the admiration which she did not disguise.

Not far from her was her younger sister, Lucy; possessing beauty, perhaps less striking, but more fascinating—calmer, more retiring, more timid, perhaps—than her sister. Her whole face and form were in harmony with her character; though not pale, she was paler than Miss Grange; though tall, she was not so tall. Her graces were all of a quieter order: her movements, without being slow, were never hurried; and, though by no means taciturn, it was but to few that she spoke very much, and to still fewer that she spoke very long. An officer in the army—a gay, pleasant fellow enough—sat beside her, and endeavored zealously to entertain her. She listened, and she smiled, and she replied, quite sufficiently to show that she was amused and pleased, and that she wished to give pleasure again; but it went no further; and it was evident to every one that she was not seeking admiration.

It matters not of whom the rest of the party consisted; with those whom we have described we have to deal, and with none others. When breakfast was just done,—and Lord Grange rose from the table, sauntering towards the window, to think over the proceedings of the coming day—a servant, well powdered and arranged, entered the room, and informed his lordship that Mr. Graham, the steward, wished to speak with him. His lordship immediately begged the guests to excuse him, and proceeded to his library, where he found his steward already seated, and spreading out some papers which were to be examined, regarding various portions of his estate.

The steward was a young man of perhaps three and twenty, but looking a great deal older, who had been bred up regularly to the law, and had withered through his youth at the dull desk of an attorney's clerk. He was, however, a man of information and talent, with the best head in the world for business; and Lord Grange discovered, after his former steward's death, that he had got quite a treasure in his place. For more than a year he had now filled that situation, and he had gradually acquired a great influence with the peer, who found his opinion

of much value in matters not at all connected with his professional duties.

The business upon which Mr. Graham had come was soon discussed, and the steward was rising to depart; but Lord Grange made a sign for him not to go, saying—"I have something on which I wish to speak to you, Mr. Graham. I have down, staying here, young Dillon, who has lately been making such a figure in the London world, and in the House of Commons. I have him here, staying with me."

"So I see, my lord," replied the lawyer.

"You knew him, then?" demanded Lord Grange.

"I have not exactly the honor of his acquaintance," replied Mr. Graham, but I have seen him often."

Though the lawyer's tone was always somewhat dry, and often sharp, Lord Grange thought he perceived an additional degree of brevity and sourness therein; and he added, "He is likely to be here very often, Mr. Graham; for he has made proposals to me for my eldest daughter."

Mr. Graham neither looked surprised, pleased, nor displeased; and he said not a word: so that Lord Grange had nothing for it, but to let the matter drop, or go on himself.

"You know, Graham," he said, using a more familiar tone, "that I would never wish Caroline to marry any man she does not like; and therefore I have told him I leave it entirely in her own hands. But still his fortune is immense—forty thousand per annum, I am told."

"At least, my lord," replied the lawyer; "for old Alfred Dillon, of Northumberland, this gentleman's father, never kept any society at all, and laid by—not without great skill and judgment in the placing it—very nearly the whole of his large income, for the sake of this boy. Because he could not leave him the principal estates, you know."

Lord George started. "How so?" he exclaimed; "why not? I understood he had succeeded to all his father's property."

"Oh, no, my lord," replied the lawyer; "the principal estate, nearly ten thousand a year, went to the heir entail. As I see your lordship is ignorant, it is right that you should be informed that this young man is in the same unfortunate predicament as myself—he is a natural son. His mother, I have heard, was his father's cook-maid."

Lord Grange was profoundly silent for a moment or two; and then starting up, he exclaimed, "Well, Graham, good morning, good morning; see that those things be done. This won't do—this won't do at all." And, thus saying, he quitted the room, and returned to the company in the breakfast-room.

Scarcely had he rejoined his guests, when the sight of a carriage-and-four, driving towards the house, caught the attention of some of those who were gazing from the window; and, in a few minutes after, the door of the breakfast room, in which they still were, was thrown open by a servant, who announced Captain Neville. A smile of satisfaction might have been traced upon the countenance of almost everybody present. The old lord himself looked up with an air of rejoicing; but the pleasure which all felt took a different expression on the face of his youngest daughter, Lucy. Her eyes, it is true, danced with gladness, and her lip wore a smile like the rest; but her cheek first turned very pale, and then very red, and she leaned her head upon the table near her, as if she could scarcely stand without support.

The greeting of Charles Neville was, of course, first directed to the master of the mansion; but his next look was for Lucy Grange, and her hand was clasped in his, without any attempt, on either part, to conceal that it was a meeting of full joy to both. The old lord called him "my dear Charles;" and it was very evident to all present, that Captain Neville had returned from a long absence in the British army in the Peninsula, to obtain the willing hand of a well beloved bride, with the consent and approbation of her father. There were many others in the room with whom Charles Neville was acquainted; and, amongst the rest, he grasped the hand of Henry Dillon, his old school-fellow, with unfeigned pleasure.

There is always something in the meeting of an acquaintance of our early youth, which re-

awakens in our bosoms sensations but too seldom known to busy, struggling manhood: the chain between the present and the past seems suddenly completed by the link of a face starting up before us from the long-gone years; and a thousand sweet memories of innocent times, and happy days, and childish sports, play along the bonds of association, and give us back the sweet freshness of expanding life—like the balmy air which sometimes blows upon us from some breezy hill, left far behind, even while we are plodding on through the toilsome journey of the midday. Charles Neville felt all those sweet associations: the dreams of his childhood, the pleasures of his boyish days, were brought back upon his heart by the sight of his old companion; all his old faults, and their mutual quarrels, were forgotten, and he grasped him as warmly as if he had been a brother.—Henry Dillon's feelings were not quite so joyful; but nevertheless, he greeted his old school-fellow warmly and kindly, and the day went on with cheerful serenity. A few minutes before the hour at which the party separated for the night, Lord Grange requested to speak with Mr. Dillon in his library. With what passed the rest of the guests remained unacquainted, but Henry Dillon appeared no more that night; and next morning long before the party assembled for breakfast, his carriage was rolling with him towards London.

Him we shall henceforth follow nearly to the end of the tale; but we must, in the first instance, turn back to mark what was passing in his bosom, when he sought his own chamber after the interview with Lord Grange. Although his step was firm and not a word proceeded from his lips, a thousand outward signs betrayed what was passing within. His cheek was flushed; his brow was gathered into a heavy frown; his fine, white teeth were closely pressed upon his under lip, till the blood had nearly started beneath them; and his eye, as it fixed with slow bitterness upon the ground, or flashed with hasty passion round the splendid staircase which he mounted, to his chamber, showed how fiercely he was moved, and promised some violence as the consequence. His valet, who was an observing and serviceable man, clearly saw that something had irritated greatly a violent and haughty master, and wisely forebore from saying a word. Henry Dillon, however, cast himself into a chair, and wrote with angry haste a few hurried lines on a sheet of paper, folded it in the form of a letter, sealed and addressed it to Captain Charles Neville. The moment he had done so, however, he paused thoughtfully; made a motion as though he would have given the note to his servant; and then suddenly drawing it back as the man was advancing to take it, he tore it into a thousand pieces, and threw it down upon the floor.

"No!" he exclaimed; "no! that would be pitiful; that would not be a thousandth part of what I will wreak upon him!" and folding his hands and gnawing his lip, he sat with his eyes fixed upon vacancy, meditating schemes of fancied injury. The thought did once cross him, that it might not be Charles Neville who had informed Lord Grange of the illegitimacy of his birth—for on that subject had turned the conversation of the peer. But he rejected the doubt instantly; asking himself, who else could it be? The very day of his arrival the matter was made known: and the bright prospects and cherished hopes which he, Henry Dillon, had encouraged, were all blasted in an hour. His mind reverted to the days passed by; he remembered that the voice of Charles Neville had first made known to his boyish companions the secret of his unfortunate birth. All the vengeful feelings which that first injury had given birth to were renewed in a moment, and aggravated a thousand fold by the bitter disappointment he now suffered. It was intense, it was terrible, it amounted even unto agony, the longing, burning thirst for revenge, which now took possession of his soul. Every other passion was swallowed up in that. The unconfirmed love in which interest and ambition had had their share; that ambition itself, which had before seemed, even to his own eyes, one of the master passions of his mind; all the hopes and aspirations of youth, imagination, and an ardent disposition; all the feelings and attachments, the joys and comforts, of which human nature