

Original Poetry.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE DEATH
OF MESS JESSIE PORTER.

BY A FRIEND

That all must die we know is certain,
For holy writ has told us this;
But that decree should not dishearten
Those who hope for endless bliss;
For on this stage there's constant trouble,
As every day brings forth its cares,
And to each frail and sinful mortal,
This world is but a vale of tears.

Yet friends must mourn for her departed,
The young and tender flower so fair;
The maid unspotted and light hearted—
She to her parents still most dear.
She's gone and left them here in sorrow,
Long, long her early call to mourn.
They know they after her must follow,
But she to them can ne'er return.

She's gone, alas! she's gone forever,
To that strange place prepared for all;
The friendly circle this does sever,
And many a by-gone scene recall.
The infant joys—the schooltime pleasure—
The sprightly days of maiden prime,
With virtue pure, that greatest treasure—
These, dear Jessie, all were thine.

Knowing this should make all those rejoice,
Who now must shed the friendly tear;
Knowing that she was unstained by vice—
This should their mourning hearts all cheer.
That her early call was for the better,
None will doubt who did her know.
For if we believe the sacred letter,
Her soul is now where the just shall go.

Richmond, Oct. 25, 1853.

G.

Literary Selections.

THE HUSBAND'S REVENGE.

A Romance of the Marshes.

BY EDWIN F. ROBERTS.

(Concluded.)

"Good evening, Donna," said he in Spanish, with cold respect. "I have ordered the painter here to take your likeness, and he will wait upon you to-morrow. In the meantime I have arranged to take our young friend Enrico to another part of the country for a time, where his delicate health shall be cared for."

The wife gasped for breath. "I do not understand you, Ruy," said she.

"I am speaking very plainly, my wife," replied the nobleman. "It is at his desire as an old friend of yours that I have your picture drawn, and," added he, with a cold smile, "it is for your sake that I care for him thus; but, for my honor," he continued while looking fixedly upon her, "you do not seem to comprehend the extent of the good I meditate."

"Oh! pardon, Ruy—pardon me, signor," said she, in a voice of tender entreaty; "but I—I had no thought that he was unwell."

"Unwell! Why his cheeks are growing whiter than your own are at this moment; and now I bethink me, I do not know but you yourself would be the better for a change of air."

"Signor!" ejaculated the wife, all of a tremble.

"Yes, you, Donna; and therefore I should propose to you the sea-coast on the South."

"But Signor! but Don Arpela!" said Hero, rising up, and advancing her pale but lovely face to his, while she laid her tender hand upon his arm, "where, then, goes Enrico? Oh! signor, be kind to him!" she continued half weeping and carried away beyond her prudence "for we were once very dear to one another."

"And now," broke in the Spaniard, with a withering of the lip, "and now?"

"And now," she repeated proudly, "I am Hero, the wife of Signor Ruy Arpela, and Hidalgo of Spain."

"Apropos! that is well remembered," observed the nobleman, "very well remembered, Donna."

"Signor, hear me!" continued the lady upon a sudden impulse: "we were children together,—we have played together,—he loved me, and I loved him as my betrothed—I love him now, but only as my dear brother. Signor, I swear to you before God, that is all;" and with this singular though uncalled for avowal, the poor girl fell on her two knees before Don Arpela, and held up her hands imploringly towards him.

"If I were assured so," murmured the Spa-

niard, as he drank in the overpowering beauty of her statuesque features, lovely as those of the smiling Athene! but he only coldly said—"Donna Hero, rise! I declare to you also, upon my word, that this is uncalled for; I am a man of honor, my wife," he added, with a sarcastic expression; "and permit me to ask what this theatrical display was intended for?"

This cold irony,—the almost contemptuous expression,—the overwhelming superiority thus asserted between the nobleman and the poor musician, fell with such a cruel revulsion upon her feelings, that she rose up with a heart cold and stony, with an outraged and insulted confidence. "Once more the husband she had vowed to love and cherish—whether willingly or unwillingly—the vow was spoken—became her tyrant."

"I—I do not know, Don Arpela," she said. "Nor I either," replied he dryly; "therefore I think it well that you prepare to go with me."

"My husband, I prefer remaining here."

The nobleman on hearing this answer, bowed with an air of mockery so profound that it became an absolute insult.

"You will prefer whatever you please, Donna Hero," was his reply, "but you will act as I think proper," and he quitted the chamber.

The next day a great painter came and lined the splendid outline of her features, and taking with him a small portrait which the Spaniard was wont to wear round his neck, he departed saying that he could finish the painting without seeing the lady again. "The face," he added, "was so striking, that every feature dwelt in his remembrance with all the power of vitality."

During that day she had vainly endeavored to speak with Verzoni, but she failed; for her husband appeared to have totally engrossed him to himself, and the young artist seemed filled with joy, because his gratitude was boundless, and because he fancied that his society relieved his patron from an unaccountable melancholy that of late had seized him.

That evening he rode forth with Don Arpela for many miles, and by the early dawn the Spaniard returned alone, and sought his wife's chamber. The young musician had been installed in his lonely house.

He was inveigled into the den destined for him, and discovering what was meant, he gave himself up to it with an apathy and listlessness that might have savored of insanity.

A week—nay two passed away, and the lovely lady went with her husband to the seaside; but he noted that she smiled no more—a melancholy so sad had taken possession of her, that though Don Arpela never heard her murmur the young musician's name, he knew well that she pined because of his absence. If she had fears, she never disclosed them; if she had doubts, they were never hinted; and what astonished her husband most of all was, that she never asked about her picture; for the painter never brought it to her.

Nearly a month had gone by—the weather had been dull and wet—miserable in the extreme; and on a dark misty evening we convey the reader to the following scene, the outside of which we have also given a glimpse of.

It is the interior of the hovel that stood upon an elevated mound in the centre of the fens. It was built on the margin of a large pool of water, where wild-fowl were occasionally taken in large quantities; and at eve or night, the place, with all its frightful loneliness, had a desolation and emptiness about it that was enough to chill every drop of blood in the body. The outer walls had a foundation of piles about twenty feet high from the ground, and they were interwoven with long little willows and rushes that abound in the neighboring marsh; the interstices were filled up with lime and clay, and whitewashed over with white-wash that never dried, while the roof was formed of furze thrust through and between, under and over some horizontal poles laid across the top, so that they formed a sort of eaves; this again rose conically in order to prevent the admission of more moisture than they could absolutely help, and thickly packed with furze, rushes, clay and lime kneaded together.

The walls, twenty feet apart, had a kind of

smoothness about them too; and at the time we speak of, two burning torches cast a fierce light on their glaring surfaces, which threw into powerful relief a magnificent full-length portrait of a female that hung in the centre of one wall.

This painting was finished in that powerful and brilliant style, with an effect of such life-breathing vigor, and in reality, that the parted lips seemed about to speak, the expressive eyes to follow you, the bosom to heave, the dark glowing hair to move and toss about; the form in fact seemed about to leave the canvass, and to walk forth into the floor. This was the picture of Donna Hero, the wife of Don Ruy Arpela.

At the opposite end of the hut, on a low pallet thrown on the rude flooring, lay the form of a young man, the silent, but by the expression of his eyes, the adoring spectator of this wondrous picture: it was Enrico Verzoni, the young musician.

His limbs were drawn together with distortion; his lips trembled with an uncontrollable agony; great clammy drops were on his brow; but the eyes were serene, and so sweet and calm in their heroic expression, as to derive no power from his sufferings. They manifested resignation and hope.

There was no longer the beauty of youth on the cheeks, but they were yellow and shrivelled, and haggard; the hair was ragged and tossed about, and its black hue had given place not to whiteness, but to a dark greyness, which gave it the appearance of having been sprinkled here and there with powder. Every now and then he turned his faint eyes to the door, with a glance so piteous and imploring, that manifested his heart to be interested in the appearance of some one.

A pause elapsed: he endeavored to move but the horrible torture this slight act gave him, wrung out of him a groan of unmitigated agony, which, by firmly compressing his thin lips, changed into a dull moaning. The cold, keen, wet air swept by with a hollow wail, and screamed across the inky pool, and the screech of the bittern mingled with the hooting of the owl. Beneath the dark, starless canopy, a tempest was gathering, but still the eyes of the sufferer were turned alternately to the door and the picture.

At last the latch gave way, the door opened and a form enveloped in a mantle entered.—Some one had accompanied her, for a rude hand and strong arm thrust itself in, and drew the door to, leaving them both together. By the brilliant light of the musician's eye; by the glow of joy and ecstasy that flashed his worn and haggard cheeks; by the smile on his mouth, it seemed that the angel he had prayed for had come.

"Hero! O beautiful Hero! you are here at last," cried he.

"Here, Enrico—here at last!" and she seated herself at the pallet, having flung off her mantle, and took his wan head and laid it gently on her bosom.

"Look at that picture, Hero," he said, "your husband was killed after all—that has been smiling upon me all the while that I have been dying."

She uttered an exclamation, and bending her head over his, gazed into his eyes, now darkening into death.

"Hush! Hero," he said. "I loved thee, oh! so mighty; but, alas! thy noble husband had fearfully deceived himself—not thou, nor I," he added with a faint smile. "Will he not be happy when my heart beats no more? One victim will prove enough."

"No—no Enrico. God has not given us hearts to be wasted thus. Was I not content," she cried passionately, "to yield to the prayers of my poor, beggared, proud father? Did not Arpela learn that I loved you? and had I not given up that love, and turned with every power of my being to my new duties, when he must needs bring us together again, and even then, has not our communion been sinless?—Oh! no—no, on him be the responsibility—on him be the infamy of this."

"Hero!" The voice that spoke was low and solemn, in that fearful silence it sounded like the voice of a spirit.

There went by, across the black pool, and over the boggy marsh, and played in the rush-

es, and echoed beyond, a sound like the rushing of mighty wings.

"Enrico!" and she clasped his head closer to her. It lay on her shoulder.

"I—am—dying—Hero!" these words uttered in gasps, seemed to freeze the blood of the woman at her heart.

"No—no," she cried, "not yet,—oh! not yet! It is but two nights ago since I found you; but two days since, after much watching, and fatigue, and travel, I was able to discover this horrible place, and bribed the ruffian who lives on the spot—with a large sum to let me be with you—only two nights ago. And will you leave me now?"

"Hero!" said he softly, "you were never from me—on that picture I have gazed till my soul went out of me at my very eyes; but now that thou art here—oh! Hero, let me die—die as I am now, with my head on thy bosom, and my hand in thine, and thy low, sweet voice speaking to me. Hinder me not, Hero!"

"Die, Enrico—my Enrico, die," said the noble lady; and with a voice full of music, but low as the murmur of a soft summer rill, she spoke to him of Italy, of home, of old faces, and of past happy times. Suddenly he uttered a sigh, and his head pressed itself closer to her. "Die, dear Enrico!" said she, and Enrico died.

Don Ruy Arpela one day suddenly missed his wife from her home; he knew not what could have become of her. Had she in some bitter moment flung herself into the sea, from some of the beetling crags around their place of dwelling? Had she been carried off by smugglers who infested the coast? Had she become a maniac and gone forth wandering unsheltered in that wet, cold season? Every inquiry was fruitless—every effort vain. He sought for her far and wide: but he did not find her.

Some days after, supposing that one portion of his jealous vengeance was sated, he travelled into Lincolnshire, and arrived at the horrible marsh on the evening after Enrico's death. The man to whom he had confided his charge was by turns surly and jovial—morose and humorous—while there was a fierce scowling on his black brow and lips; there was also a gleam of satisfaction in his flashing eyes.

Following his guide, they at last got to the lonely hut, and torches being lighted, they opened the door and entered, and as the nobleman advanced, he screamed with fright, while every muscle of his body quivered.

On the low and sordid pallet sat the pale lady, with a face as white as her white dress; and on her bosom was resting the head of Enrico, while his chilled and cramped limbs were drawn hideously together.

Arpela advanced a step. He held down the lights and looked into the stony eyes of his wife. "She is dead!" he murmured.

"Both dead!" muttered the man of the marshes.

SERPENTS.—*Trying Position.*—Two stories were told me by a military friend, as having occurred in his presence. He and several others were sitting after dinner, over their wine, when one of the party turned very pale, and said, a snake has come in, and twisted itself round my leg, and that of the table. His companions hastily rose, in order to kill it, but he said, if you awake it, it will stick its fangs into me, and then I am a lost man. You had better all go out of the room, and I will sit quietly with my hookah till it awakes of itself; and then probably it will glide away without doing me any injury. After some expostulation, his plan was adopted, and there he sat with the most perfect stillness for an hour, and an hour of much greater anxiety could scarcely have been passed; he was, however, rewarded by the snake quietly uncoiling itself, and taking its departure. The other story was that of an officer being about to put on his boots, and thrusting his foot into one of them, felt something wriggling at the bottom. With the greatest presence of mind he instantly stamped his foot upon the ground with the utmost violence. His chief difficulty was, to know when to leave off this fatiguing exercise; but at last his leg ached so much that he stopped, and finding all still, he drew off his boot, and there found a venomous serpent, which had crawled in, and coiled itself up in the foot of the boot, but which he had killed by his exertions.