

Poet's Corner.

THE GALLANT'S OFFER.

"Your home, dear Miss, is very far,
The winds are cold and high,
No splendid moon or twinkling star
Is looking from the sky;
So please, Miss, take my proffered arm,
Then let the varmints come;
I'll see you safe from fright or harm
Within your quiet home."

"I know, dear sir, the way is rough,
I know the night is dark;
And certain 'twould seem well enough
For me to have a spark;
But then I vowed some years ago,
Call me you may a humbug,
My arm should never enter through
The handle of a rum jug!"

RETRIBUTION.

[From the Home Annual.]

A PAGE IN A PHYSICIAN'S EXPERIENCE.
Concluded.

22d.—There has been but little change for two days in the condition of Mr. S., no change in his mind. The physician, in his round of duty, is often obliged to see much that not only pains, but disgusts his heart; and I have to confess that in the case now before me I never enter the house but with feelings of the deepest abhorrence, much as I pity the wretchedness and loneliness of the man.

I found by his bedside this morning, the Rev. Mr. J——, a good old man; and full of love to all his fellows. He was striving, as I entered to direct the mind of Mr. S. to a better train of feeling, and was evidently in profound sorrow at the state in which he found him. His eyes were filled with tears, and his hands clasped in great earnestness as he urged upon the dark soul of my patient the mild and refreshing hopes of the gospel.—It was a wonderful contrast.

"I am told, Mr. S.," said the minister, as I entered the room—"I am told that you cannot recover—that your disease is of that character that you must sink under it, or that you may, at any moment, die in the most horrid agony of suffocation. I speak plainly because I would impress upon your mind the importance of preparing your heart to stand before your stern and unrelenting Judge. Drop, I beseech you these vindictive thoughts, and—"

The sick man had listened thus far without moving, but now rising to a sitting posture in his bed and fixing his eyes sternly on the minister he said calmly:

"Sir, I do not believe one word in what you say. I have been a member of your church for years because it was for my interest to be so. Now unless God will aid me in my revenge, I renounce my hypocritical profession forever. I shall get well, sir, and shall devote the remnant of my life to paying the debt of scorn and neglect due to my fellow-men."

He sunk back in bed, and the minister, with eyes and hands raised to heaven, said, "May God be merciful to him," and he arose and left the room.

The angel of mercy had departed. The last appeal had been made, and now what is left?—Would that I never should be under the necessity of witnessing such a case again. My very heart is sick and I almost wish when I call again to find him—dead.

Midnight.—It was not the consequence of my involuntary wish—it was not the doing of man—it was not the direct effect of his disease—but Mr. S. is dead. It is retribution—not the death, but the manner of it. Though summoned in great haste, at ten o'clock, he was dead before I reached him—dead by the visitation of heaven. What follows, I learn from one of my students, a young man of great intelligence, who had volunteered to take care of him through the night.

Shortly after I left the house in the afternoon, there was a loud knock at the door, which the young man opened. A woman of about five and thirty years, attended by a girl of perhaps sixteen inquired for Mr. S. Both were persons of plain appearance, though well dressed, and seemed by their manner to belong to the higher walks of life. But the elder one, especially, though she had a look of sadness in her countenance, was still a woman of surpassing beauty and grace.—She walked directly in, and upon being told that Mr. S. was just fallen asleep, and might not awake for some time, she said that she wished to see him and would sit till he awoke.

"I have learned," she said, "that he is very sick, and there is little probability of his recovery."

"Scarcely any at all," the young man replied—"Indeed, he may die at any moment."

"Indeed," said she, "so bad is it? The more important then, that we should see him. Be so good, sir, if you please, as to call me the moment he awakes. I have a few words of the utmost importance to say to him."

The young man left the room. The sick man did not awaken till nearly seven o'clock, and upon being told that a lady was waiting to see him he directed her to be admitted. "There is one, then," said he, "who has not forgotten me."

Forgotten him! oh no. Through all the years of girlhood and womanhood—through all the weary months of desertion and sorrow—through all the hot and tear-washed footpaths of lonely and uncheered nursing, and rearing and watching and guarding the young years of the young and beautiful girl by her side—in the waste of feeling, and in the midst of the wilderness that always springs up around despised and forsaken love, she had never forgotten and could never forget him.—Who would have believed that the hardened and scared man who now lay sick in that house, and who had never been known to feel sympathy or sorrow for a fellow mortal, and who was now—with the hand of God upon him, and pressing him down into the very grave's mouth—planning vengeance upon men because they had no sympathy for him—that such a man had ever yielded to the flower of woman's love. Yet such is woman. Her love twines itself about all our better feelings, and if in after life, we cast it off and spurn it for the grosser love of sense, be sure the hour will come when it will work its retribution.

She stood by his bedside—the same she had been sixteen years before—the same in all, but her love for him. He looked on her face, and knew her—and in one moment, an instant, memory and conscience traveled back through those long, bitter years, and the hardened man covered up his face and groaned aloud, "Mary?"

"Then you know me, George S——n," said she, after a moment's pause, as if to collect herself, and keep down any of the tenderness of years ago, that might now be revived at the sight of his distress and sickness. "You know me then.—You have not forgotten me. Well I am not much changed, if I have suffered, since I was your beautiful Mary." Do you remember all George—

"Oh, I do!" he groaned out, "you need not tell them—I remember!"

"The days when you came to my father's house a poor young man—cared for by none—and how we received you into the family, and fed and clothed you and took you to our hearts and when you began to forget what you had been, how you looked up and saw I was beautiful—and Aggy—my elder and dear sister Aggy—poor girl—do you remember her? I know you do. You shall never forget her, nor me. She is dead, George—dead—in the cold grave, where you will soon be, if the earth does not cast you out, or refuse to receive you into its bosom."

"Dead!" cried the sick man, "dead! How did she die? Tell me all. Yet no—I cannot hear it!"

"But you must hear it. It is for that, with other things, that I came here to-day. I have watched you George S——n, through all the years of our separation, and waited patiently for this hour to tell you all—all you have been to Aggy and to me. She died by her own hand, George, the very hour her child was born, your child, the child of her shame and your treachery. Yes, let it eat into your heart till it cankers there, as it ought, and take it into the grave with you!"

"You remember when my father died, after you had been gone from our house more than a year, that with all the confidence of the unsuspecting heart that raised you to what you were, he left our property in charge to you, to preserve it for us.—You know how well you did it. Wretch! you robbed us of our property and worse—far worse—you robbed my sister of her fair name, while you had made me your dishonored wife!"

"It is false!" exclaimed the craven wretch who was beginning to collect himself, and was now determined to deny the whole—why do you not take the woman away? she will kill me!"

She continued: "It is not false, George S—— I have the proofs here, though I did not come to reclaim the honor of lying by your side.—I am your wife and I have come to see my husband die. Will it not be good to have me close your eyes, and receive your last breath and wipe the dew from your forehead, thus—"

She passed her handkerchief over his brow, but he shrunk away, with a gesture of disgust. She smiled contemptuously and continued: "George S. am I not your wife? you dare not perjure your soul in this your dying hour, for you are dying, George. The damps are gathering on your brow this moment."

"Away," fiend of hell!" he exclaimed, starting upright, away—it is a lie—I am not dying. You are all leagued together to kill me. Will no one take her away?"

"No George," she replied, "none will take me away from the bedside of my dying husband.—You know me, George—you know that I was your wife, but do not know all. You do not know how I loved you when you fled and left me in dishonor, and my sister in her shame—you do not know, how for years, I continued to love you, and knew not where to find you—how I nursed my sister's child—your child—resolved when you should return to forgive all and still love on. And Aggy—the gentle, forgiving girl told me the very day she destroyed herself, that she forgave you, and hoped we might be happy again."

"But all that is gone by, though I feel like a girl again as I turn back to all these memories—a girl in all save my love for you. The time came when in the very place where we made our first vows—in the church where we were married—in the green fields where we used to ramble and be happy—everywhere where I had ever been with you, I taught my soul to hate and abhor you, and on my sister's grave I vowed, kneeling by her side, to hate you to death. The sight of all these nurses and fed the new-born hate in my soul, but more—oh, immeasurably more! the sight of that fair young girl that grew up by my side, with her mother's face, but your traitor's blood in her veins.—And she—I taught her to despise and hate her father."

The sick man had heard her; thus far, with only an occasional interruption of passion, but now he seemed to feel his weakness and the mastery she had over him, and her words seemed to enter like daggers into his soul.

"Where is she?" he exclaimed—"bring her to me—let me see her. I will do all I can to atone for my wrong, and whilst I live, I will use all my wealth in her behalf. Let me see her; and Mary, by all the memories of the past—forgive me, and speak comfort to me. Do not treat me as the whole world treats me. I am deserted by all—come to me once more."

"Yes, I have come to you, but not to be as we have been. That could never be, if you had yet numbered years of life before you. There is between us the boundless gulf of deep and implacable hate and contempt. You are rich—very rich, in money coined from my heart and sister Aggy's, and oh, of how many others. Your ill-gotten gold could never make us happy. Yet it is only right, since it cannot be restored, and is that upon which the world places honor, that your child should have the advantage of it. And it is for that, too, I have come to you in your dying hour. I do not ask it for her, for when you are dead, it will be mine, and I will give it to her. She is my child now, and as beautiful and loving and gentle as her mother."

"What wonder that you are deserted—that you are left here to die alone? The traitor must suffer the traitor's doom. I am with you again—not to smooth your pillow, but to add thorns to your remorse—to bring to your mind, when it is too late to repent, the memory of all your wrongs, and forbid you to think of heaven!"

It was now that the man was unmanned—the words of his long deserted wife harrowed up his soul. Memory travelled over all the past, and gathered up stores of anguish. Conscience was now wide awake. Revenge was crushed, every thought of revenge. The fear of death was swallowed up in the agony of his mind. Then followed a flood of confessions of foul crimes and cruel wrongs, enough to wring the heart of any but his deserted wife. She sat unmoved and heard all.—She looked steadily in his eye and saw his utter despair, and spoke no word of hope. He begged her to forgive him, but she answered not.

My young student who had been present throughout the whole scene, and had forbore to interfere, on account of his conviction of the truth of the lady's claims, now interposed and besought her to retire lest the man should die at once. But her deed was not yet completed. She stepped to the door and called "Aggy."

Whether it was the memory of the past, renewed with greater poignancy by the mention of that name, or whether the sound of a hasty, light step on the stairs, in answer to the call gave him the idea that his wife had deceived him as to the death of her sister, it is impossible to tell. The truth he never knew himself. He saw the very face of her he had wronged and destroyed, just as she had been in her girlhood, more than sixteen years before. He stretched out his hands eagerly and beseechingly to her and his lips moved as if to speak but instead of his voice there issued from his mouth a sudden and copious torrent of blood, and he fell back in his bed—a corpse.

When I reached the house shortly after ten o'clock, no one was there but the young man.—He related to me the above scene, and said the young lady seemed to be greatly affected by the result. But the elder one, stepping to the bedside and laying her hand on the forehead of the corpse looked upward and said, "Thou hast avenged her blood and our shame, and taking the other by the hand, left the room and the house."

I directed the proper persons to be summoned and leaving the body in their charge to be prepared for burial, I went home with a deep sense of the justice of heaven.

The funeral took place on the second day following. A few persons assembled at the house, more from the habit of attending such scenes than from any feeling of friendship for the departed.—As the little procession moved from the house, preceded by the minister and the hearse, an open carriage, drawn by two beautiful horses, and containing two females, took its position in the place of the chief mourners. They were the wife of the dead, and his daughter. The latter was closely veiled and exhibited signs of deep sorrow. But the former sat stately and erect, and her dark eye flashed proudly; while her elegant attire and her flaunting plumes, spoke plainly the mockery that brought her there. They reached the grave, and as the few followers gathered about it, and the sexton was preparing to deposit the coffin in it, a surprise occurred. Suddenly the sides of the excavation fell in, and the grave was filled nearly to its mouth.

"Ha! ha!" scornfully and wildly laughed the long-widowed wife "I told him the earth would refuse him in its bosom. Come, Aggy, let us go."

She led the young lady unresisting from the church-yard, and entering the carriage, drove rapidly at once to the house of the deceased. She then sent for Mr. B. the most eminent lawyer in the place, and put into his hands the proofs of her being the lawful wife of George S. They were incontestable, and no will being found, she became heir to his property. But this was not all. In a few days she settled upon the young lady the greater portion of the wealth of her late husband, which was enormous.

From this time all was changed with her.—Satisfied with the retribution of Heaven, and afterwards apparently deeply repenting her own revenge, she erected a plain, but costly stone at the head of her husband's grave, and she caused the remains of her sister to be interred by his side.—With her now full-grown and beautiful niece, the care of her first lonely years, and the pride of her maturer years, she is living in contentment and usefulness, devoting the ill-acquired riches of her husband to purposes of benevolence and charity.

NITROUS NICHOLAS.—The Standard has the following paragraph:

"Saltpetre. The prospects of war have led to increased transactions in saltpetre, and within these two days a rise of 2s per cwt. has occurred upon the advanced prices of last week."

The increase of the price of this supporter of combustion, is of course, owing to the operations of that incendiary who occupies the throne of Russia. It is not unlikely that Nicholas will invest his capital in saltpetre to such an extent, that the name of his imperial city will be altered to Saltpetersburg.

Creditors never annoy a man as long as he is getting up in the world. A man of wealth only pays his butcher once a year. Let bad luck overtake him, and his meat bill will come in every morning, as regular as breakfast and hungry children. Again we say, never plead guilty of poverty. So far as this world is concerned, you had better admit that you are a scoundrel.

SERVICE IN AUSTRALIA.—A young servant girl previous to going into service, and after ascertaining very particularly what amount of work there was to be done, wanted to know before she could accept the situation, whether "her mistress was prepared to make herself generally useful."

A WISE MAN OF THE YEAST.—We understand that the Mayor of a town in the West of England has sent round a Circular on his own responsibility, to all the bakers of the place, recommending them during the high price of flour to leave out the yeast, as he has reason to believe that it is yeast which makes the bread rise.

A CASE OF CHLOROPHORM.—It is mentioned in the papers that a tiger recently had his diseased nails extracted whilst under the influence of a powerful dose of chloroform. A wretched punster of our acquaintance, on being told of it, remarked that this was certainly the most extraordinary case of claw-reform he ever heard of.