

Poetry.

MOONLIGHT.

BY J. J. CALLANAN.

This sweet at hush of night
By the calm moon to wander,
And view those isles of light
That float so far beyond her,
In that wide sea
Whose waters free
Can find no shore to bound them;
On whose calm breast
Pure spirits rest,
With all their glory round them.
O, that my soul all free
From bonds of earth might sever!
O, that those isles might be
Her resting place forever!

When all those glorious spheres
The watch of Heaven are keeping,
And dews, like angels' tears,
Around are gently weeping,—
O who is he
That carelessly
On virtue's bound encroaches,
But then will feel
Upon him steal
Their silent sweet reproaches?
O, that my soul all free
From bonds of earth might sever!
O, that those isles might be
Her resting place forever!

And when in secret sighs
The lonely heart is pining,
If we but view those skies,
With all their bright host shining,
While sad we gaze
On their mild rays,
They seem like seraphs smiling,—
To joys above
With looks of love
The weary spirit willing.
O, that my soul all free
From bonds of earth could sever!
O, that those isles might be
Her resting place forever!

Select Tale.

THE CHINA VASE.

Translated from the French for the "Republican Journal."

It was autumn, in the full month of October, in that wild and poetic country which bears the name of Morvan. A last ray of the sun glittered indecisive and trembling, like the smile of an aged man, on the old towers of the chateau situated at a mountain base, bathing its walls in a pretty Morvan river, and girt with a cincture of meadows and melancholy poplars, the verdure of which the first October frosts had respected as yet. The chateau was a little dilapidated, but it had a grand air and appearance. They would have called it Alcibiades or Lauzun in their seventieth year.

The park, neglected and scrubby, enclosed some of those great oaks that are the glory of the interior of France: the towers, converted into dovecotes, retained their battlements and port-holes. Here and there upon the two fronts was perceived a gothic window, with its colored and armored panes. Over the principal entrance door, an eticuteon well drawn by the hand of a master, said that this old dwelling never, in spite of times or revolutions, had changed proprietors.

This castle was called La Roche, the name of its ancient possessors, who bore the title of barons. At the time our recital commences, it was inhabited by the widow of the last baron,—and this evening, for night had succeeded the last rays of sunset, the widow was seated at the fireside of her boudoir, an attractive little room situated at the second story of one of the towers, looking upon the river from one window, and upon a beautiful forest by the other, furnished and decorated with the usual Parisian comfort, notwithstanding the feudal and severe appearance of the castle.

Madame de la Roche had been a widow for two years, and was scarcely twenty-five. She was a widow of romance in the common meaning of the word: nevertheless she was not fair and visionary like the heroines of Walter Scott, nor even small, plump, and blooming, like the widows of Monsieur Dumas. Madame Roche had a type of beauty her own, and at least original. She was brown as an Andalusian, delicate, slender, with full bust, lips red and shaded with the imperceptible down. Her foot and hand were the foot and hand of a child.—Her great black eyes might have expressed joy or anger, if they had not been ordinarily melancholy and dreamy.

The baroness was, then, seated at the hearth corner, alone and abandoned to that revery, charming and full of mystery, which attaches itself to females when their isolation is voluntary. A glance

consulted occasionally the clock on the mantel, a pretty piece of rock-work of the best times; then, she looked on a small table of buhl which supported a large China Vase, of the kind that are called celadons, and then one of those enigmatic smiles, mute and mysterious, in which women seem to indicate their prospects, and design plans of future conduct, half-parted her lips, and at the same time contracted the ivory of her brow into one of those imperceptible wrinkles which show a resolution well taken and unchangeable.

The hand of the clock reached the figure five, and five o'clock struck. At the same instant the sound of a carriage was heard in the court-yard of the chateau, and with this noise was mingled the barking of the dogs of hunters.

"Here are my three lovers," murmured the baroness; "they have the punctuality the race always shows."

A door opened soon after, and a servant in livery cast in their turn to the echoes of the boudoirs, these three names:

"Monsieur the Count Masille."

"Monsieur Baron d'Arcy."

"Monsieur Max de Lerth."

The baroness arose, and received these three visitors with a smile. They were young, all the three, good looking, of a different style of beauty, and clothed similarly in dark suit with silver buttons, the usual hunting-dress of the region.

"Messieurs," said the baroness, "I thank you a thousand times, that you have accepted my invitation to come here after a day of the chase, to seat yourselves at the table of a poor widow, truly isolated, and who has not even this evening a chaperon, for the marquis, my father, went to-day for Paris, and will not return till to-morrow. Monsieur Count, please allow me," and the baroness conducted the young men into the dining hall, where dinner was served.

The baroness placed the count on her right, the baron at her left, and the third invited guest opposite to her. These three gentlemen had been intimate friends of the deceased baron; this explained then a little, at first view, the singular invitation of a young woman, without husband or chaperon, to three young men, of whom the eldest was scarcely thirty-five. But that which especially threw a new and mysterious light, and entirely original, to the attentive observer, upon the reunion of these persons, was the china vase from the boudoir, which a servant brought and placed on the table at the desert. And as the guests showed surprised attention at this appearance, the baroness looked at them all, and said with a smile:

"Gentlemen, this vase plays a sufficiently important part here; it is my repository of letters."

At the word *letters* a visible embarrassment was depicted in the countenance of each, and made each so solicitous to conceal his own trouble, that it hindered them from perceiving the trouble of his neighbor.

"Gentlemen," said the baroness, "I have had a very mysterious design in praying you to dine here, and if you wish to have the key of the mystery, allow me the word and promise to listen to me attentively."

The three persons bowed assent.

"My late husband, M. de la Roche," continued the baroness, "was your friend, each of you. He was of your age, Count Masille, and from the windows of this chateau are seen the towers of yours. You, Baron, have studied law and medicine with him, and your relations together have continued fifteen years, you also had lands in the neighborhood, and have quitted Paris each year for a period during the autumn, to visit them. You, finally, Monsieur Lerth, were a more recent friend; but not the less dear; we met five years since in Italy, where he had conducted me for my health, and where you were making the pilgrimage obligatory on artists who devote themselves faithfully to their art.—Have I said true, Messieurs?"

The three bowed assent.

"The late baron was passionately fond of the chase, and had founded the club of Baille-Morvan, and you entered it with him. The baron is dead, alas! and you have remained faithful to your engagements as hunters, and to fulfil them you assemble each year at your house, Monsieur Count.—Now, messieurs, behold, the second year of my widowhood is finishing."

The three gentlemen trembled at the same time.

"I am twenty-five years of age," continued the baroness, "and isolation reigns about me; the marquis, my father, reaches extreme old age, and I have need of a protector. Whatever attachment she may have had for her husband, however great may be her veneration for his memory, how violent soever may be her grief, a widow of twenty-five marries again, if she is not able to place her affections on the fair head of a child. You have understood this, gentlemen, and each one of you has written to me to demand my hand."

At these last words of the baroness, the three gentlemen regarded each other with looks of astonishment. Neither of them had confided his secret to the other.

"The late baron had reduced his own fortune," pursued the baroness, "and had even diminished my dowry. Then I am not rich, I scarcely possess two thousand dollars of income; you love me, then, since you wish to marry me, for you Monsieur Masille have thirty thousand francs income; you, Monsieur d'Arcy, have one hundred and fifty, and you, Monsieur Lerth, who have only a small patrimony, are become one of our greatest painters, and your canvass is covered in advance with pieces of gold. I believe, then," and Madame La Roche smiled with melancholy coquetry, "that you love me, all three of you."

"Yes," they answered spontaneously.

"What to do then? You are friends, you all three possess noble qualities that render the choice difficult, and truly it embarrasses me very much. I do not wish you to become enemies, and I will never marry if the happiness of one of you will bring towards himself the hate of the others."

The baroness at these words plunged her white and delicate hand into the china vase, and drew forth the three declarations of these gentlemen.

"Here are your letters," said she. "They resemble each other in the main; nevertheless, it is easy to see that you all three love me in a different way, and that each one of you has a dream of the future in his own manner. Will you please permit me to read successively your letters?"

The embarrassment of the lovers was now at its height, but the smile of a loved woman is irresistible. She opened, then, the letter of Count Masille. The Count commenced by a declaration in form; he avowed his love, his hopes, and finished by making to the baroness, a tableau of the life to which he destined her. "Our lands touch each other," said the letter; "they will form together the most beautiful domain in the country. You shall be the beautiful chateleine, and I shall be proud and confident of possessing at once the prettiest and the most amiable of wives, and the finest landed fortune in Morvan. We will pass the winter at my hotel in Avallon, the spring and summer at Massille, the autumn at your house, for La Roche is a delicious rendezvous for the chase.—We will receive our neighbors, and give them fetes. I wish, madame, that your names should raise echoes of admiration throughout the province; and that the region cite Count Massille as the happiest of men."

"I conclude from that," proceeded the baroness, "that you hope to make me partake with you, your rural taste, and your love of the province?"

"Oh, madame!" exclaimed the Count, "is it possible to live and to love always?"

"I do not discuss the question, I simply speak of it. Let us see now the letter of the baron."

The first half of this second letter was like in substance the beginning of that of the count. But the projects of the baron were entirely different.—"The hotel of the Rue de Grenelle, Saint Germaine," said he, "is very vast, very deserted now, but I would wish to make a charming dwelling of it, if you would consent to inhabit it with me.—The winter shall be for us one long fete, of which you shall be the Queen. All the elegant society of Paris will crowd our saloons, and will admire you in envying me my happiness. Then in the spring, at the first breezes of May, we will depart on our travels. Germany, Italy, the sea-shore, will be for you places where your beauty will triumph in universal admiration."

"I see," said the baroness, on concluding, "that it will be necessary to renounce, if I love you, the calm existence I now lead in the country."

"Indeed, madame," replied the baron, half ironically smiling, "do you think that the fields covered with snow, the woods bare, the mournful silence of the old manor, may be in winter very agreeable things?"

"Let us pass, said the baroness, "to the letter of Monsieur Lerth."

This last one was short and is here entire. "You know, madame; two revolutions and the blind prodigality of my parents, have constrained me to seek from a profession, the resources which a slender patrimony was not able to afford me. At twenty it became necessary to choose a career. Diplomacy, the army, the magistracy, was closed to me by my religion of the past—I could serve Louis Philippe only. I had some talent so I became an artist. I have had the good fortune to succeed; success has crowned my efforts and recompensed my vigils.—For a long time the excitements of glory have sufficed to fill up my life, leaving no void in my heart; but now there is a void. I look about me and I see only isolation. Within, I have perceived at the bottom of my heart a generous cord that has not vibrated as yet. I have asked myself then for what

are glory, successes and works, if I am not able to consecrate them to one of those angels, as they call women, who are to fill the existence of a man who has faith in his future. It is then, madame, that I have dared to elevate my thoughts towards you, to dream—ah! if it was permitted to me to place at your feet my youthful renown,—if I could say in the evening, after a long day passed in contests, with an inspiration long time rebellious, conquered at last!—if it was for her that my fame was to increase—if it was permitted me some day, one of those days of discouragement artists alone know, turning my eyes from my unfinished canvass to set them on you—on you dreamy, yet smiling at once in the most sombre corner of my studio, and encourage me by a look—and if I might build in some unknown and retired valley many leagues from Paris, on the banks of a river concealed under the massive foliage of oaks and willows, a pretty nest, small and beautiful, to shelter our love, at that season blessed of God when he lets drop from his hand the carpet of lilies and violets, on the borders of the stream—alas! madame, it is only a dream?"

"Decidedly, messieurs," said the baroness, smiling, "Monsieur Lerth is less exclusive than you, for he counts on leading with me a double life, at Paris and in the country."

A disdainful smile glided upon the lips of the gentlemen. He is an artist, thought they both.

The baroness continued: "You see that each one of you has arranged the mode of life that he reserves for me if I become his wife; but one thing only has been forgotten,—to consult me. So that my embarrassment is increased instead of being diminished."

"What to do then?" said all three in their turn.

"Listen," replied the baroness. "You each love me with a different love. Well, I have a condition to propose to each of you, and the one that accepts it will obtain my hand. To-day, gentlemen, sees the close of the October chase; to-morrow you will return to Arcy, M. de Lerth to Paris, and you, count, will remain at Massille."

"Yes, madame."

The baroness plunged her hand anew into the mysterious urn, and drew from it three little billets of rose-paper, carefully folded and sealed.

"You are to give me your word," said she, "not to open the letter directed severally to each, till you all shall be separated. If the condition I connect with my hand meets acceptance of any of you, he shall turn about, instead of pursuing his journey, and return to dine with me."

"But if we all three accept?"

"Then," said the baroness, smiling, "we will advise again."

"Adieu, gentlemen."

Madame la Roche dismissed the three aspirants, for the hands of the clock on the mantel indicated nine, her solemn hour of retiring.

The following morning at eight o'clock, in the court of the chateau of Massille, the Baron d'Arcy and de Lerth placed foot in stirrup, while the count said,

"You will scarcely have passed the boundaries of the park ere I shall have broken the seal of my letter; and I engage you will do as much, and that we shall all then dine at La Roche. Then, gentlemen, till we meet again."

When the gallop of horses was lost in the distance, the count opened the billet of the baroness, and read:

"Monsieur Count,—

"You know I am a Parisian. My late husband put on me the heavy sacrifice of being obliged to live at La Roche a part of the year. I have a horror of the country, and cruelly regret my early youth and the excitement of the elegant world of Paris, in the midst of which it was passed. I can consent only to marry a man who will bravely renounce a life in the provinces, and carry me again to Paris."

"Indeed!" cried de Massille, "she is foolish.—On that account it would become necessary to sell my lands at Massille, my woods and parks. I renounce the chase! That is entirely impossible. My faith! D'Arcy is the man who will suit her better as a husband;" and the count added, sighing, "decidedly, I shall not dine at La Roche."

The baron and the painter rode together for half a league, and then separated, expressing mutual compliments for their speedily meeting again.

Then D'Arcy opened the rose billet, and read:

"Dear Baron,—

"You have believed that I love the world, noise, and fets. You are mistaken. I have become a little disillusioned, and now experience a great need of repose, of solitude, and I may say isolation. For three years I have experienced a dream, a dream charming to my eyes,—that of living in Italy, under a Neapolitan sky, and in one of these verdant and perfumed islands, about which sigh eternally the blue waters of the bay of Naples. Is the love you have for me sufficiently strong to make you re-