

## Poetry.

## THE MOTHER'S GRIEF.

Addressed to Mrs. M. Affee.

SELECTED FOR THE CARLETON SENTINEL.

How sad is our dwelling, how dreary and lone,  
The wraith has been broken, the flower is gone,  
My heart has been stricken, its altar is crashed,  
And its dear cherished idol laid low in the dust.

So bright was thy presence, my gentle gazelle,  
I loved thee so deeply, so fondly, so well,  
I never could think as I gazed on thine eye,  
That the sweet-blushing rose-bud would wither and die.

But the bright star that shone round my pathway, has gone,  
Far, far from my bosom the birdling has flown,  
The rainbow of promise is shrouded in gloom,  
And my heart's dearest treasures are strewed o'er the tomb.

Ye bid me be happy, ye speak but in vain;  
For my heart can near brighten with sunshine again,  
And earth's fairest flowers no sweetness can shed,  
While its own gentle lilly lies withered and dead.

Oh, cease, weeping mother—your sorrow restrain,  
For God ne'er afflicts his dear children in vain;  
Though the wraith has been broken, 'twas parted in love,  
And the rose-bud transplanted to blossom above.

Though the birdling has flown from thy bosom away,  
Regret not its flight, and oh! wish not its stay;  
It has plumed its bright wing for the regions above,  
To warble with angels its accents of love.

Look upward! the star is not shrouded in gloom,  
Oh! sweet is the halo it sheds o'er the tomb;  
And brighter the rainbow of promise now given,  
To lure thee from earth, and unite thee to heaven.

Woodstock, March 21, 1856.

## Select Tale.

## THREE MONTHS AFTER DATE.

BY ANDREW HALLIDAY.

"Three months after date pay to me or my order the sum of forty pounds twelve shillings and eight pence."

To Thos. Sparkes, Esq.  
90 Pezzy Street, Tottenham Court Road."

Mr. Thomas Sparkes sat up in bed, contemplating these words written on a slip of stamped paper. A letter accompanied it, to which Mr. Sparkes low turned. It ran thus: "Dear Sir,—Please accept the enclosed as arranged, and return it to me.

Yours, most obediently,  
JACOB SHEARS."

"Very good," said Mr. Sparkes; and getting out of bed, he seized a pen, and wrote across the slip of stamped paper: "Accepted—Thomas Sparkes."

Having enclosed the document in an envelope, addressed to Mr. Jacob Shears, High Holborn, Mr. Sparkes tumbled into bed again, appearing inwardly to "thank goodness that that fellow was paid."

I need not explain the circumstances which led to the above transaction between Mr. Thomas Sparkes, gent., and Mr. Jacob Shears, tailor, &c. The acute reader will already have perceived that Mr. Thomas Sparkes owed Mr. Jacob Shears, tailor, for clothes supplied, the sum of £40 12s. 8d., and that Mr. Jacob Shears, wearying of calling again to-morrow, and made sick by the deferred hope of the death of Mr. Sparkes' rich aunt, who had been on the point of paying the bill by her demise any time during the last eighteen months, had, at length, resorted to "a bill," in the hope of realizing his just demand by the screw of the law.

To a man who is looking forward to his quarter's salary, three months is a long time; but to a man who has a bill to take up at the end of that period, three months is no time at all. The three months which intervened between the signing of Shears' bill and the arrival of the same at maturity, passed rapidly away. Mr. Tom Sparkes could hardly believe his eyes when he received notice that the bill would fall due to-morrow.

To-morrow came, and the bill was presented, and Mr. Tom Sparkes was not prepared to take it up, and—why, of course the bill was dishonoured.—A few days passed, and a visitor made his appearance at Mr. Sparkes' lodgings at an early hour, in fact, before Mr. Sparkes had finished his night's rest; and Mr. Sparkes was informed, from the landing, that a gentleman wished to speak with him. The "slavery," as Mr. Sparkes called her, was requested to ask the gentleman's name.—"Please, sir, the gentleman says his name is Thompson." Now Sparkes had a particular friend by the name of Thompson, and he hurried on his clothes eager to press his friend's hand. On reaching the foot of the stairs, he encountered a short man with shaven cheeks, an alpaca hat, and a knobby stick. The individual was not Sparkes' friend Thompson.

His was Thompson, though; and politely arresting Mr. Sparkes' progress, he presented him with a slip of paper, apologizing for the disagreeable duty he had to perform in the most polite manner, and hoping Mr. Sparkes would settle the amount of debt and costs by a certain date to save further expenses.

Mr. Sparkes returned to his room with the sensation of having been served with a writ—a sensation to which I hope every one of my readers is a stranger.

Mr. Tom Sparkes was sufficiently old in the ways of the world to know that it was little use going to Shears to ask for time. He knew very well that Shears would declare that he had paid the bill away—that it was not in his hands—and that he had no power to arrest the proceedings. So he went to his aunt. The old lady was obdurate.—The terrors of "judgment could not extract a sovereign from her. Repulsed by his aunt, Sparkes had no resource but to appeal to his uncle. Tom knew well that that benevolent relation was ready to listen to any appeal which was sufficiently backed up by security; Tom had none to offer; positively none. To be sure, he had a silver watch, a gold signet ring, a silver mounted meerschaum, a cornet-a-piston, a revolver, and a torquise shirt-pin. But what were all these in the scale against £40 12s. 8d. Sparkes felt they were but as £2 10s.—scarcely enough to cover the costs.

Nearly a fortnight had passed in fruitless efforts to raise the needful, and no less fruitless excogitations how to evade the impending vengeance of the law, when Sparkes received a letter from his friend Jones. Jones was in the law, and his letter ran thus: "Dear Sparkes,—In the way of business, I learn that judgment has been signed against you for £40 odd, at the suit of Grabbins & Co., cloth merchants, Gresham Street. Nuff ced. Your friend, Harry Jones."

Mr. Sparkes' belongings were few. They might all have been put into a carpet bag in five minutes. As if to prove the possibility of the thing, Sparkes crammed them into his bag in half that time. To settle with his landlady, and bestow a sixpence upon the "slavery" was the work of a moment; the next Mr. Sparkes was in the street.

Whither should he fly? Ah! a man in an Alpaca hat was loitering at the end of the street.—Mr. Sparkes took the opposite direction. A few steps brought him in view of a man with a knobby stick. Sparkes turned hastily to the right. The number of suspicious men in alpaca hats, carrying knobby sticks, about the streets that morning was incredible. They loitered at ever post, started up at every corner, and stood sentry at every turning. At length, after much walking, Mr. Sparkes found himself in Chancery Lane. Looking up suddenly, he observed written on the blind of a window, "Pluckett, Officer of the Sheriff of Middlesex." Like the little birds, which are said to be fascinated by the glare of the snake's eye, Mr. Sparkes found himself rooted to the spot by the proximity in which he found himself to the very danger which he sought to avoid. He stood for a moment transfixed with terror, uncertain whether to fall down in a faint or rush down the nearest alley. Great emergencies give birth to bold resolutions. At that moment Mr. Sparkes caught sight of a card in Pluckett's window. It was inscribed, "Lodgings for single gentlemen." The next moment Mr. Sparkes was on the sheriff's officer's steps, knocking at the sheriff's officer's door. A burly man in a low-crowned hat answered the summons.

"You have lodgings to let, I observe," said Sparkes.

"Yes, I have," replied the stout man.

"Can I see them?"

"Certainly."

Mr. Sparkes entered, and the stout man proceeded to show him the rooms.

"Have I the pleasure," inquired Sparkes, "of speaking to Mr. Pluckett?"

"You have, sir; Pluckett, officer of the Sheriff of Middlesex;" and as Sparkes, with an assumed air of ease, inspected the various fittings of the apartment, Mr. Pluckett drew from his pocket a piece of paper, and appeared to be taking an inventory of his visitor. "Very strange," he muttered in an undertone to himself, "but the description tallies exactly—tall, dark hair and whiskers, large front teeth, brown eyes, and wears collars turned down. Answers the description to a T; but no, it cannot be. A man with a capias out against him would never go and take lodgings at a sheriff's officers. Pooh, pooh, of course not;" and Mr. Pluckett dismissed the thought with disdain.

"Well, I think the apartments will suit me, Mr. Pluckett," said Sparkes.

"Very good, sir; when would you please to come in?"

"Why, now, Mr. Pluckett. I've brought my carpet-bag, and mean to take possession at once. There's a week's rent in advance."

It was a rule with Mr. Pluckett to dispense with references, when money was paid in advance; and thus Mr. Sparkes became installed in his new apartments without further trouble.

"Would Mr. Pluckett take anything?"

"Well, Mr. Pluckett did not mind."

Mr. Sparkes and his landlord were speedily engaged in discussing a pint of stout, over which they became good friends indeed.

"I should think, now," said Sparkes, in a philosophic tone, "that yours is a strange life, Mr. Pluckett."

"Well, it is a strange life," replied the sheriff's officer.

"An exciting life," said Sparkes.

"Quite so," replied Pluckett. "Hunting the human species is very exciting, especially when a man takes a pride in it."

"Which you do, I suppose, Mr. Pluckett."

"Well, it depends entirely upon the case, Mr. —, I beg your pardon, but I think you said your name was—"

"Thompson," replied Sparkes.

"It depends entirely upon the case, Mr. Thompson," continued Pluckett. "If a party sits quietly at home in the bosom of his family, waiting to be took, its unpleasant. There's no sport in that kind of business; but where a party locks his front gate and goes and comes, night and morning, over the garden wall, there's excitement in that. You feel some satisfaction in catching a clever dodger like him."

"Have you many affairs on hand now, Mr. Pluckett?"

Mr. Pluckett owned to a few.

"I have just had instruction," said that worthy, "to look after a young gent up Tottenham Court Road way. A tailor's bill, I think, forty pounds odd. He's sure to run agin me some of these odd days. Ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Thompson, hiding his confusion in the pewter.

"Very odd," said Mr. Pluckett, "but description of the gent just answers to you, Mr. Thompson. I'm dashed if I didn't think you was the cove when I opened the door to you; but of course, a man wouldn't come here to look for lodgings if he wanted to keep out of the way of the sheriff's officers. Ha! ha!"

"Gent's name," continued Mr. Pluckett, looking at his pocket-book, "is—let me see—Sparkes, tall, hair and whiskers, brown eyes, and turn down collar. I dare say, by this time, he has shaved his whiskers off, and taken to wear all-rounders. Ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha!" echoed Thompson. "I dare say you are up to all such dodges, Mr. Pluckett."

"Mr. Pluckett winked, as much as to say, "rather."

The stout having come to an end, Mr. Pluckett took his leave, hoping Mr. Thompson would find his lodgings comfortable.

Mr. Sparkes' first impulse, on the departure of Pluckett, was to escape at once. He started up, seized his carpet-bag, and was making for the door, when he heard a footstep in the passage. Some one knocked at the door. Mr. Sparkes dropped his bag, fell into a chair, and cried, "Come in," with contemporaneous precision.

It was Pluckett's servant come to put the gentleman's bed room to rights.

There was no escape now. As the damsel carried off his bag into the next room, Mr. Sparkes resolved to take his chance in the lion's den.

Days wore on, and Mr. Sparkes continued to dwell in security. Mr. Pluckett having clearly no suspicion with respect to his lodger. Landlord and lodger became fast friends. They were continually smoking pipes and drinking beer together; and in the evening, they would play a game at cribbage over hot gin-and-water. On these occasions Mr. Pluckett would relate the adventures of the day and describe with infinite gusto the capture of Jobson in the disguise of a brown wig and green spectacles; how he had nailed Smith just as he was stepping on board the Antwerp boat; or how some one who had sustained a siege of three months in an old house in Camden Town, had last capitulated through Mr. Pluckett's cleverness in cutting off his supply of water.

Thompson was naturally anxious to know how Pluckett had got on about Sparkes; but as Pluckett did not for some time volunteer any information, he thought it prudent to refrain from broaching so delicate a subject. Pluckett had evidently not caught Sparkes, or he would have been too happy to say so. At length, one evening, while Thompson was shuffling the pack for a new game Pluckett, gazing thoughtfully at the smoke which curled from his pipe, said: "You remember, Mr. Thompson, my speaking to you of a young gent of the name of Sparkes that I was after."

"Sparkes, Sparkes," said Thompson, in a re-

membering tone, and flicking the cards—"ah, I think I do."

"Well," said Pluckett, "I haven't caught him."

"Haven't you?" said Sparkes, with as much indifference as he was master of.

"No," said Pluckett; "and it vexes me rather."

"Does it, now?" said Sparkes, throwing a little more commiseration into his tone.

"It does, Mr. Thompson. Of course he'd cut from his lodgings; but I couldn't get anything out of the people about him. The old woman said he'd gone to Jericho, she supposed; and the gal said she shouldn't wonder if he'd gone to Bath to get his head shaved."

Thompson could not refrain from laughing at what he knew was nothing more than the natural impertinence of his old landlady and her "slavery;" but finding Mr. Pluckett inclined to take the matter seriously, he suggested gravely, that Sparkes might still be in hiding at his old lodgings.

Mr. Pluckett shook his head. "No, Mr. Thompson. I'm clear about that. He's left the neighborhood; but never mind, I'll pitch upon him one of these odd days, or my name's not Pluckett," and Mr. P. led with the knave of clubs.

Mr. Pluckett continued for some days to return home from his hunting of the human species without having pitched upon Sparkes. It vexed him more and more.

"I'm really vexed, Mr. Thompson, about this chap. I can't pitch upon him any how; and yet people tell me that they've seen him about. Levy knows him, and he swears that he saw him only yesterday admiring the new statue of Sir Robert Peel in Cheapside—in Cheapside, Mr. Thompson, and in broad day—ah! and more than that, Filer's clerk, over the way—who knows him from having served him with a summons—declares that he saw him pass my door, and actually look in the window."

Mr. Thompson took the matter seriously, as it became him, and condoled with Mr. Pluckett.

"It injures me, this sort of thing," said Pluckett; "if this goes on much longer my reputation will suffer."

Mr. Thompson wished sincerely he could help Mr. Pluckett in the matter. What sort of a person was this Sparkes? If he happened to stumble upon him, he would watch him.

Mr. Pluckett went minutely over the description and reminded Mr. Thompson that he was a man not unlike himself, a reference to which Mr. Thompson listened with some uneasiness. A few more days passed, and Mr. Pluckett had not then "pitched upon that chap Sparkes." He was becoming perfectly furious over the matter. His reputation was being ruined; people chaffed him about it; it was notorious that the fellow was about, and yet he could not drop upon him; he would give any money if he could catch that chap. It was not the amount of the chap's debt that he cared about; forty pounds was nothing to his reputation he would give anybody forty pounds, then and there, if they would show him where to pitch upon him.

Mr. Thompson ventured to say here, that he thought he had got some inkling as to Sparkes's whereabouts. A person, answering the description, frequented an eating-house where he dined. He couldn't be sure about the man,—but—

"Mr. Thompson," said Pluckett, with energy, "if you can put me on the track of this Sparkes, I wouldn't mind giving you—"

"Forty pounds," suggested Thompson, half jocularly.

"Yes, Mr. Thompson," said Pluckett, with almost a fierceness of tone—"I'll give you forty pounds; for to tell you the truth, Mr. Thompson, I have just had a note from the plaintiff, to say they will take the matter out of my hands—and that, that, Mr. Thompson, would ruin me." And with that, Mr. Pluckett ran his fingers into his hair, and sat down in an attitude of despair.

"Mr. Pluckett," said Thompson, after a pause during which time he had been contemplating the sheriff's officer across the table.

"Yes," said Pluckett, inquiringly, and releasing his hold upon his hair.

"Where's the money?"

"The money?" said Pluckett inquiringly.—

"What mo—?"

"The forty pounds, Mr. Pluckett."

"What!" exclaimed Pluckett, "then you can pitch upon the chap, Mr. Thompson?"

"I can," replied Thompson.

"To night?"

"To night."

"Then the money's yours, and my reputation will be saved!"

"Very good," said Thompson; "of course you will not object to give me a writing to that effect,"