

LITERATURE, &c.

FROM THE LIVERPOOL ALBION.

THE TWINS.

Is a beautiful and highly cultivated part of England, not one hundred miles from the town of Richmond, in Yorkshire, stands the ancient ancestral residence of Sir Charles Delville.

The stately lady Delville was sitting alone in her boudoir, when a servant opened the door, and announced Sir Charles. The lady threw aside the dignity which she thought befitted her in her deportment with the world, and advanced. "My dear son," said she, "how truly happy I am to see you. I hope you are tired of the country, and have come to spend a portion of your time amongst us."

"So far from it, mother, I have come on purpose to request you to accompany me to the family seat in Yorkshire."

"The seat in Yorkshire!" repeated she, stepping back with surprise, "why, it cannot be fit for a ploughman to inhabit now; it has not been fitted up these thirty years."

"Let us be seated, dear mother, and I will tell you what I have done. I wanted money. I went to the estate to mark some wood for the axe. When I surveyed the 'tall ancestral trees,' they reminded me of the glory of days departed, and of the individuals who had planted them, and taken a pride in their glorious but solemn grandeur. In fact, they conjured up to my fancy a thousand dreams, which you would call romantic, and which I have not time to detail, and I determined not to cut a single tree. When I passed through the house, of which old Mark, the steward, inhabits a part, I saw the portraits of my sires, and my heart smote me with my neglect of their ancient halls, which used, at one time, to be warmed with the cheer of their primitive hospitality. I determined, for the future, to live there, and I have given orders for the house to be put, forthwith, into habitable order."

"This is a strange whim of yours, Sir Charles," said Lady Delville; "but 'tis just like you. Well, I don't care if we do go down there, and patronize you for a few months; but we must have some company, or the place will be as dull as a Dutch village."

"As you please, mother; but, if it be so, you must not expect me to do the honours of the mansion. I shall leave the whole conduct of that matter to you. I confess, I am now doubly sick of the idea of chattering to old ladies, and pert, flippant young ones."

"I had hoped, Charles, that you had become less of a misanthrope. I fear you will never mend. O, how I should like to see that strange, wayward heart of yours caught in the snares of Cupid! You know how anxious I am to see you married; I would to heaven you would at once gratify yourself and me by entering that blissful state!"

"Faith, my lady, my heart has had some most fortunate escapes; but yet, if you will find me a woman I can love, you shall have your wish."

"Oh, you are so fastidious! When half the beauties in town were pulling caps for you, you passed them all by, as coldly and as insensibly as though you had been chiselled out of a block of ice. What can I do?"

"Allow matters to remain as they are for a short time, ma tres chere mere, and, in the mean time, if you please, I will take a little refreshment."

In a few days, Sir Charles returned to Yorkshire, to superintend the alterations which he had ordered. In due time, he sent intelligence to the dowager that all was completed, and that lady hurried down to await the arrival of the fashionable coterie whom she had invited.

One day, after Sir Charles had returned from a long ramble through his parks, which were as new and as strange to him as the forests of America, he dashed, in his usual careless manner, into the drawing-room, and had crossed the floor and thrown himself, not in the most graceful attitude, at full length on the sofa, before he perceived that he was not quite alone. A young lady, who had been partially concealed, as she stood in the recess of one of the windows, advanced timidly forward, as if to see who the intruder was. Sir Charles felt awkwardly enough. He was too careless, however, about opinion, to show much of it. He started from his impolite recumbency, and uttered a slight apology. The lady assured him, with easy frankness, that it was unnecessary. In accordance with his avowed contempt for all form, he at once requested to know whom he had the honour of addressing.

"Miss Archer," was the reply.

"Now," thought he; "that abrupt question would have put one of the fantastical misses of the beau monde to instant flight. This must be a girl of a different school. May I beg of you to be seated, Miss Archer; and, as it is but fair that I should, in return,

tell you who I am,—Sir Charles Delville, very much at your service."

The answer of the lady was frank and polite. "She was happy to meet with the son of a friend so much esteemed as Lady Delville."

The reader will have perceived, that the fair portion of the human genus by no means ranked much above zero in the estimation of Sir Charles. He had been wont to consider them a set of beings who cared for nothing but admiration, dress, and show; beings without intellect, or any one solid qualification to counterbalance their excessive lightness and frivolity. The easy manner of Miss Archer soon allured him into conversation, and he was no less surprised than pleased to find in her the antipodes of all that he had considered peculiarly characteristic of a woman. He saw that her person was beautiful,—that would have had small effect,—but he also perceived that her judgment was correct, her taste highly cultivated, her acquisitions extensive, her imagination brilliant, and, to sum up all in one great charm, he felt that she was fascinating. "Strange!" mused he. "Can this be the only female who possesses these qualities, or have I overlooked them in others. If so, how much happiness have I lost!" He pursued this train of thought till it was interrupted by the entrance of Lady Delville.

"Charles, for shame!" exclaimed she; "this is your usual gallantry. I dare undertake to say, you have never opened your lips to amuse this young lady since you entered the room."

"For once, my dear mother, you are mistaken. My conversation with Miss Archer has been one of the most delightful I ever experienced."

"Bless me! a compliment, I declare! You are improving wonderfully. But, Charles, here is an avant courier below, who gives notice of the proximity of company. The Danbys, the Howards, and the Daltons are close upon us, and we must prepare."

He will pass over the bowing, the smiling, and complimentary salutations which accompanied the introduction of the above-named very noble personages. Nor will we speak more of an equally noble repast, to which the guests did ample justice. Sir Charles was as negligent as usual, except to one individual, who absorbed the whole of his attention. He found the general manners of Miss Archer as much to his taste as her conversation had been. There was no obtrusive affectation of a superficial politeness. Her words and her actions were evidently the dictates of her heart. She did not play off any little coquetish airs to attract attention. On the contrary, she seemed rather to shrink from, than to solicit the notice of the company.

"This is the very beau ideal of a female!" said Sir Charles to himself, as he passed at a late hour to his chamber. Sweet was his sleep that night, and pleasant were his dreams; and beautiful, as the fairest fancy of a youthful poet, was the angel that flitted with him through the bright fields of imagination. That angel, by some strange coincidence, bore the express face and form of Miss Archer.

Sir Charles found Lady Delville in the breakfast-room alone the next morning. The fashionables,—the Danbys, the Howards, and the Daltons not having yet risen. "Where is Miss Archer?" was his first question.

"Gone."

"Gone?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Home."

"Very laconic! And, pray, where is her home? I thought she was one of your guests from town."

"Oh no! She is one of the twin daughters of the vicar of C—. She has frequently spent a few months with me in town, and I hope we shall see much of her here, she is a most amiable girl."

"Very amiable! exceedingly!—I must go instantly to the vicarage, and pay my respects to the worthy clergyman, and invite him hither."

"Spare yourself the trouble, Charles; 'tis done already. Miss Archer has promised to bring her father over to dinner."

The time between breakfast and dinner seemed an age to the impatient spirit of Sir Charles. At length, he took horse, and determined to pass the time away by the stimulus of a good gallop. 'Tis the best expedient in the world in such a case. On his return, he passed immediately to the drawing-room. He entered, and was struck dumb with surprise, when he saw Miss Archer performing a not ungraceful, but wild chasser, round the room, to a lively French air, which Miss Howard was playing on the piano-forte. The entree of Sir Charles did not cause any falter in her step, and, as he passed over to pay his respects to the vicar, the music changed to the undulating measure of a waltz, on which the fair figurante began to whirl round the room, with arms extended, performing all the evolutions of that most voluptuous dance, till she was compelled to throw herself into a chair, from mere exhaustion.

"That's a mad girl of mine," said the Rev. Mr Archer, "but I find it impossible to restrain her exuberant spirits within bounds."

"I perceive so," dryly answered Sir Charles.

"My love!" said the vicar, "Allow me to present you to Sir Charles Delville."

"I believe we are already acquainted," said the latter.

"La! you naughty creature, how can you tell such fibs? I never saw you before."

"I shall not dispute the point with you, ma'am," said Sir Charles. "This," thought he, "is some whim of hers. How astonishing, that a woman can at one time appear so sensible, at another so silly. I will see farther."

"Are you fond of dancing, Miss Archer?"

"Yerv! oh very!"

"So it would seem. I imagine you follow in the lead of Miss Latetia Hardy, and wish to be 'the soul of whim, and the spirit of variety.'" Sir Charles here adroitly diverged, and ran into a somewhat glowing eulogium on the beauty of the surrounding scenery.

"Now if that is not like one of sister Emily's pompous declamations. La, now, don't bore me any more with those fine speeches, but come and dance a minuet with me." Sir Charles declined the honour, and left the room, mentally ejaculating, "Can this be the woman I thought so clever, so fascinating! Truly is it said, 'woman's a riddle.' From this moment I abjure the whole sex for ever." As he crossed the hall he met Lady Delville.

"How long does Miss Archer remain here?"

"Miss Jane Archer, I believe, will remain two or three days only. Her sister—"

He waited not to hear more. He seized his hat, and hurried into the open air. He felt unhappy, and he scarcely knew why. There was a strange heaviness about his heart;—he could almost have wept.

During dinner he noted her conversation. Still more was he puzzled. No revulsion, no outbursting of the spirit which had charmed him so much the night before. He, at length, determined to keep his attention from her, but, as is usual in such cases, he only looked at her, and thought of her the more. He saw a defect in one of her eyes, and wondered that he had not previously observed it.

Two or three days passed on thus, and, so far from improving on acquaintance, Sir Charles began to think Miss Archer little less than a downright idiot. Still, he could not banish from his memory his emotions of the first evening he spent in her company. He had occupied the afternoon in visiting some of his tenants, and it was during his ride homewards, that these thoughts passed through his mind. "With such a being as she then appeared to be, I could pass my whole life. Surely I must have been mad, or under the influence of some strange delusion. Can it be possible for a woman so to change in less than twenty-four hours? No matter; 'tis well she has discovered herself so soon." With this thought he dismounted, and entered the house. He was unobserved as he stepped into the room which Lady Delville had appropriated for her train of little fashionable elegancies. The first object which struck his attention was the figure of Miss Archer, who was seated at a table arranging some flowers. Lady Delville leaned over her, in an attitude of attending admiration, and Miss Howard stood at a little distance listening, with great apparent interest, as she proceeded. "I cannot tell you how much I love flowers of all kinds; from the wee, modest, crimson tippet; daisy, to the fragrant rose and gaudy tulip. They seem to me to be the very poetry of nature, mingling themselves with all our most delicate and delightful imaginings and associations." Sir Charles was thunderstruck. "This was very unlike the pretty, little, flippant sentences which, during the last few days, he had been in the habit of hearing from Miss Archer. As she spoke, her face was turned upward to Lady Delville. He had a full view of it, and he thought that even her countenance was altered to a more beautiful expression. As he advanced, she recognized him, and raising, extended her hand with that easy frankness which had so much charmed him on his first interview. Her eyes sparkled with pleasure as she spoke to him, and she requested to know how his health had been during her absence. "Absence!" he exclaimed; and, as he gazed on her beautiful and expressive face, he saw that the defect in her eye, which he had noticed, had vanished, which bewildered him the more. At this juncture Lady Delville took Miss Howard's arm, and led her from the room. "Absence!" repeated Sir Charles. "I was not aware that you had been absent since you brought your father over to visit us." "You are not the first, who had made a similar mistake, Sir Charles. That was my sister Jane." "Your sister! Can it be possible! Beautiful Miss Archer,—pardon me,—I know not what I say. Dear, dear Miss Archer, can such a resemblance exist? Can I have made such a mistake?" "Very early, sir. She is my—my twin

sister, Sir Charles, that persons be able to do as they term

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