

LITERATURE, &c.

ROBESPIERRE.—He was the very perfection, the type of triumphant mediocrity. Talents he had none, nor ideas, although, by dint of exertion, he acquired the semblance of the one, and purloined the others notoriously from all around him. His speeches were written for him, and the debates of the jacobin clubs, at first philosophical and given to the discussion of principles, supplied him with a political vocabulary at least. Thus his friends, his future enemies being included in that class, lent to this hawk the features that impeded his wing and taught him, at length, to soar. He was totally without passion, unless vanity deserve that name; but his vanity was wise and wore all the loftiness of pride. Then he had honesty and consistency, two qualities that cannot be denied him, however he might have adopted them in calculation. From his first vote in the constituent assembly he had been the rank democrat that he ever was, professing all those extreme opinions to which others tended. His private morals were irreproachable. He held to his condition, lodged to the last with the same humble carpenter's family that at first housed him. Unlike his colleague, Danton, no bribe, no peculation, no expense, no licentiousness, considered as such in that day at least, could be laid to his charge. No petty ambition distracted his views, or blemished his character for disinterestedness. He was never minister, nor even commissary. After the fall of the Gironde, when he was all-powerful, he did not become member of the sovereign committee till it pleased the convention and the jacobins, of their own accord, to appoint him. With this there was no affection in his *sans-culotism*. He neither shaved his head nor mounted the red night-cap. Political courage he certainly did not want, though, physically, he was, with Marat, the most arrant of cowards. Ruthless as a tiger, at first reckless, then greedy of blood: such was the tyrant of the day.—*Crowe's History of France.*

THE PEERAGE.—A state of contempt is the very worse state into which the peers as a body could fall. There are some, though, considering the numbers of the peerage, only a very few, individuals, among them, such as Lords Grey and Brougham, Plunket, Lansdowne, Holland, the Dukes of Sussex, Bedford, Wellington, the Earl Fitzwilliam, and perhaps Lord Harewood, would be respectable and much respected men in any station of life in which we could suppose them to be placed. But for the rest, the Kenyons, the Eldons, the Ellenboroughs, the Londonderries, the Mansfields, the Farnhams, *et hoc genus omne*, strip them of their peerage and what are they? As a body, allowing always for the few exceptions which we have made, the peers have been for many years gradually becoming less and less venerated. Their education is by no means so well attended to as it had been in former times; in this respect they are excelled even by the mechanical classes, not to speak of the wealthy ranks which interpose between the latter and the peerage. Those ranks from amongst which our best statesman, our most able politicians, and those distinguished men who constitute the pride of the country in the eyes of foreign nations, have sprung. And then look at the *morality* of the peerage. Have they entitled themselves to a great increase of respect in that way? Do they, generally speaking, even know what morality means? Have we forgotten the scenes of unblushing vice disclosed in the history of Lord Ellenborough's divorce from his wife? Do we not see frequent instances of the most scandalous depravity in the conduct of the female part of the peerage towards their own servants, towards artists whom they employ in their houses for the purpose of gratifying their passions, and towards theatrical persons whom they openly patronize? Do we not see the most profligate women on the stage raised by inconsiderate and unworthy marriages to the peerage, and have not common prostitutes, in the same manner, come to wear coronets? It is not well known, that the routs, masquerades, and fetes champetres, which are given by the nobility, are very much used by the most convenient occasions for deeds of debauchery, to which we must forbear even to allude? To such a pitch hath gambling and other crimes in

high life carried the extravagance of expenditure, that there is hardly an estate in the possession of a peer which is not mortgaged beyond its value; numbers of them have not means of paying their tradespeople; and more than three fourths of them would now be living in the King's Bench, if their privilege had not protected them from arrest; had they been within the meaning of the bankrupt laws, they would not have a bed to sleep upon. It wants but a national earthquake to level this artificial fabric of the peerage to the earth: at the first real shock it must fall to ruin. And we do believe that this is the destiny which awaits it.—*Monthly Review.*

FROM THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

THE HAREBELL.

BY DELTA.

SIMPLEST of blossoms! to mine eye
Thou bring'st the summer's painted sky;
The maythorn greening in the nook;
The minnows sporting in the brook;
The bleat of flocks, the breath of flowers,
The song of birds amid the bowers;
The crystal of the azure seas,
The music of the southern breeze;
And, over all, the blessed sun,
Telling of balcyon days begun.

Blue-bell of Scotland, to my gaze,
As wanders Memory through the maze
Of silent, half-forgotten things,
A thousand sweet imaginings
Thou conjurest up—again return
Emotions in my heart to burn,
Which have been long estranged; the sky
Brightens upon my languid eye;
And, for a while, the world I see,
As when my heart first turned to thee,
Lifting thy cup a lucid gem,
Upon its slender emerald stem.
Again I feel a careless boy,
Roaming the daisied wold in joy;
At noontide, tracking in delight
The butterfly's erratic flight;
Or watching, 'neath the evening star,
The moonrise, brightening from afar;
As boomed the beetle o'er the ground,
And shrieked the bat lone flitting round.

Yet though it be, that now thou art
But as a memory to my heart,
Though years have flown, and, in their flight
Turned hope to sadness, bloom to blight,
And I am changed, yet thou art still
The same bright blossom of the hill,
Catching within thy cop of blue
The summer light and evening dew.

Yes! Though the wizard Time hath wrought
Strange alteration in my lot,
Though what unto my youthful sight
Appeared most beautiful and bright—
(The morning star, the silver dew,
Heaven's circling arch of cloudless blue,
And setting suns, above the head
Of ragged mountains blazing red)
Have of their glory lost a part,
As worldly thoughts o'erturn the heart;
Still, what of yore thou wert to me,
Blythe Boyhood seeks and finds in thee.

As, on the sward reclined he lies,
Shading the sunshine from his eyes,
He sees the lark with twinkling wings,
For ever soaring as she sings,
And listens to the tiny rill,
Amid its hazels murmuring still,
The while thou bloomest by his knee—
Ah! who more blest on earth than he?
Ah! when in hours by thought o'ercast,
We mete the present with the past,
Seems not this life so full of change,
That we have to ourselves grown strange?
For, differs less the noon from night,
Than what we be from what we might?
The feelings all have known decay;
Our youthful friendships where are they?
The glories of the earth and sky
Less touch the heart, less charm the eye;
Yet, as if nature would not part,
In silent beauty to my heart,
Sweet flowret of the pastoral glen,
Amid the stir, the strife of men,
Thou speakest of all gentle things,
Of bees, and birds, and gushing springs,
The azure lake, the mossy fount,
The plaided shepherd on the mount,
The silence of the vale profound,
And flocks in quiet feeding round!

The following is the account of the number of stitches in a shirt, as usually made at present:—Body, 9,506; sleeves, 10,160; breast, 9,043; collar, 2,712; total, 31,421, exceeding the number of stitches in a coat by 6,178.

FROM THE WINTER'S WREATH.

THE VISIT TO A MONEY-LENDER.

BY W. M. TARRANT, ESQ.

A FRAGMENT FROM 'THE FRENCH OF M. BALZAC.'

Un avaro peggio degli altri.—GOLDONI.

I HAD promised the young Vicomte de Confians to accompany him; and, almost as soon as I had risen, he called to remind me of my engagement. When we had arrived at the Rue des Gres, he looked round with an anxiety and uneasiness that surprised me. His face, by turns, became livid and crimson, he was a prey to some horrible anguish; and the perspiration started from his forehead when he perceived that we had arrived at the gate. At the moment we got out of his tilbury, a FIACRE entered the street, the falcon-eye of the young man enabled him to distinguish a female within the carriage, and then an expression of almost savage joy animated his countenance. He called a boy who was passing, and desired him to hold his horse. We mounted the steps of the old miser: since I had left the house, he had placed a small square grating in the middle of the door, and it was not till after I had been recognised that we were admitted. I found him seated in his arm-chair, motionless as a statue, his eyes fixed upon the mantle-piece, where he seemed reading some memorandums of accounts. A small lamp, once green, but now obscured with smoke and dirt, threw a lurid glare upon his pale face. He turned his eyes towards me, but did not speak. 'Father Gosbeck,' said I, 'I bring you one of my most intimate friends.' 'Whom I mistrust as much as the devil himself,' whispered the old man. 'On my account you will render him your good offices at the ordinary price, and you will extricate him from a pressing difficulty.' The vicomte bowed in confirmation, seated himself, and prepared to hear his answer, with one of those courtly attitudes of which it is impossible to describe the graceful baseness. Father Gosbeck remained in his chair at the corner of the fire, unmoved and immovable. He resembled the statue of Voltaire, as it appears at night on entering the vestibule of the Theatre Francais. He raised slightly, as by way of salutation, the worn-out grey casket with which he covered his head, and the small portion of yellow skull it exhibited completed his resemblance to the marble. 'I have no money, except for my customers,' said the usurer. 'You are vexed then that I have been to ruin myself with others besides yourself,' said the young man, smiling. 'Ruin you!' replied Pere Gosbeck, with a tone of irony. 'You would say that one cannot ruin a man who has no capital?' 'But I defy you to find a man more capital than I am,' cried the vicomte, rising, and turning upon his heel. This half-serious buffoonery had no effect upon Gosbeck. 'Can I, with any decency,' said he, 'lend a sou to a man who already owes thirty thousand francs, and does not possess a denier. Besides, you lost ten thousand francs the night before last, at M. Lafitte's ball.' 'Sir,' replied the young man, with exquisite impudence, and approaching as he said it, 'my affairs do not concern you. He who has time owes nothing for the present.' 'True,' 'My bills will be taken up.' 'Possibly.' 'And at this moment the business between us is simply to know if I offer you sufficient security for the sum that I am about to borrow.' 'Just so.' The noise of a fiacre stopping at the gate was heard without. 'I go for something that will perhaps satisfy you,' cried the young man. He soon afterwards returned, leading by the hand a young lady, who appeared to be twenty-five or twenty-six years old. She was of remarkable beauty, and I had no difficulty in recognising the countess of whom Gosbeck had formerly spoken to me. On entering the damp and sombre chamber of the usurer, she cast a look of suspicion upon the vicomte. The terrible anguish of her heart was evident, and her proud and noble features had an almost convulsive expression. I could easily believe my companion had now become the evil genius of her destiny. They seemed both standing before their judge, who, with a cold and severe look, examined them as an old Dominican of the sixteenth century may have watched the tortures of two Moors in the dungeons of the holy Inquisition. 'Sir,' said she, with a trembling voice, 'are there any means of obtaining the price of these diamonds, (presenting a casket) reserving to myself the right to re-purchase them?' As I volunteered to explain to her how this might be done, she seemed to breathe more freely; but the vicomte knit his brow, aware that, with such a condition, the usurer would advance a less sum upon them. Gosbeck was absorbed: he had seized his magnifying glass, and was examining the jewels in silence. If I were to live a hundred years I should not forget the remarkable picture that his pale face presented at that moment. A flush spread over his pale cheeks, his eyes seemed to sparkle with supernatural fire, he rose, went to the light, and held the diamonds near his toothless mouth, as if he would have devoured them. The glitter of those beautiful gems seemed reflected in his eyes, he murmured some vague words, lifted by turns the bracelets, the ear-rings, the necklace, the diadem, and held them to the light to judge of their water, their color, and their polish. He took them out of the casket; he put them back, and again put them back, played with them to bring out all their brilliance, more like a child than an old man, or, perhaps, like both at once! 'Beautiful diamonds,' he exclaimed, 'before the revolution they would have been worth three hundred thousand francs.—what water! what beauty! under the empire it would have required two hundred thousand francs to have made such a set. But,' added he, with an expression of scorn, 'at present the diamond is falling in price every day. Since the peace, Brazil and Asia have overwhelmed us with them,—they are no longer worn except at court.' Yet, even while uttering the discouraging words, he examined the stones, one by one, with an unspeakable joy. Without a spot!—yes, here is one spot—here's a flaw—but this is a beauty! And his wan visage, as the light of the jewels glared upon it, seemed like one of those mouldy, antique mirrors that we meet with in a provincial inn, which gives the traveller, who has courage enough to look at himself, the appearance of a man who has fallen into a fit of apoplexy. 'Well,' said the vicomte, striking him on the shoulder. The dotard trembled. He relinquished his baubles, laid them upon his desk, seated himself, recommenced the usurer, and again became smooth, hard, and cold as a column of marble. 'How much must you have?' 'A hundred thousand francs, for three years.' 'Possibly!' He then drew from a mahogany box, which was his casket, a pair of balances, inestimable for their exactness. He weighed the stones, estimating with a glance the weight of the setting.—Heaven only knows how! and