

LITERATURE, &c.

FROM THE AMULET FOR 1832.

TWO SCENES FROM THE CIVIL WAR.

CONCLUDED.

Time flew—years passed—the temporary success obtained by General Goring over the forces of Oliver Cromwell was swept away and forgotten in a tide of brilliant triumphs won by the Parliamentary general, who trod upon steps of victory to the government of an empire. He had conquered his opponents by the sword; he had conquered his partisans by hypocrisy; he had subdued all to his will, and, under the name of Lord General, ruled with more power than a King. In the mean while, Sir George Herrick and Henry Lisle had fought to the last in the cause of their ancient monarchs; and their zeal—like that noblest of human energies, hope—had grown but the stronger under the pressure of misfortune and distress. Amongst the various changes of the civil war, five times had the day been appointed for the union of Henry Lisle with Margaret Herrick, and five times had some unforeseen mishap intervened to delay what all so much desired. Each day that went by, Lady Herrick, with means quite exhausted and hopes quite depressed, longed more and more to see her child united to a man of talent, and firmness, and resource; and each battle that passed by, Sir George Herrick, struck with a presentiment of approaching fate, thanked God that he had lived to place his sister's hand in that of his friend.

The last time the marriage was suspended, was on the fatal call to Worcester held, where Sir George Herrick fell; and Henry Lisle only escaped to bear his companion's last request to Margaret, that without further pause or delay—without vain ceremonies or useless tears—she would give herself, at once, to her promised protector. Their wedding was a sad one—no glad peal, no laughing train, announced the union of the two lovers; and, ere the day of their bridal was spent, Henry Lisle was a prisoner, journeying towards the tower of London. His trial was delayed some time; but when it took place it was soon decided. No evidence was wanting to his full conviction of loyalty to a king; and the block and axe was the doom pronounced upon him. A brief three days lay between him and death; and Margaret, who was permitted to see him, clung in agony to her husband's bosom. Lady Herrick, to whom he had been more than a son, gazed for some time, with equal agony, upon his fine but faded countenance, which, worn by toil, and anxiety, and long imprisonment, was still more clouded by the hopeless despair of her he loved. But suddenly without a word, the mother turned away and left the prison.

It was in that great and unequalled hall, whose magnificent vault has overhung so many strange and mighty scenes in English history, and whose record of brief and gorgeous pageants reads as sad a homily on human littleness as even the dark memorials of the tomb. It was in Westminster Hall, on the 16th day of December, that, with the clangor of trumpets and all the pomp and splendor both of military and civil state, a splendid procession moved forward to a chair or throne, raised on some ornamented steps at the further extremity of the building. Judges, in those solemn robes intended to give dignity to the judgments they pronounced; and officers, dressed in all that glittering panoply destined to deceive and hide the rugged form of war, moved over the echoing pavement between two long ranks of soldiers, who kept the space clear from the gazing and admiring multitude. But the principal figure of the whole procession, on which all eyes were turned, was that of a stout broad-built man with a dingy weather-beaten countenance, shaggy eyebrows, and a large red nose. His countenance was as unprepossessing as can be conceived; nor was his dress, which consisted of plain black velvet, at all equal to those which surrounded him. But there was something in his carriage and his glance not to be mistaken. It was the confidence of power—not the extraneous power of circumstance and situation, but of that concentrated internal strength which guides and rules the things around it. Each step, as he planted it upon the pavement, seemed destined to be rooted there forever; and his eye, as it encountered the glances of those around, fell upon them with a calm power which beat them to the dust before its gaze. Passing onward through the hall, he ascended the steps which raised the chair of state; and, turning round, stood uncovered before the people. The two keepers of the great seal, standing on his right and left, read a long paper called the Institute of Government, by which, amongst other things, the Lord General, Oliver Cromwell, was named Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England. The paper was then signed, an oath was administered, and, putting on his

hat, the figure which had advanced to the chair sat down, amidst the acclamations of the people, while the rest continued to stand around uncovered.

Various other ceremonies were performed; and then the Great Usurper, rising from his seat, led back the procession towards the door of the hall: but scarcely had he traversed one half of its extent, when a woman, who had been whispering to one of the soldiers who lined the way, pushed suddenly past, and cast herself at Cromwell's feet. "An act of grace, Lord Protector!" she exclaimed, "an act of grace, to bring a much-needed blessing on the power you have assumed!"

"What wouldst thou, woman?" demanded Cromwell; "somewhere I have seen thy face before: what wouldst thou? If thy petition be conceived in godliness, and such as may be granted with safety to these poor disturbed realms, it shall not be refused on such a day as this."

"When Colonel Cromwell failed in his attack on Faringdon House," said Lady Herrick—for it was she who knelt before him, "and when General Goring surprised and cut to pieces his troops at night near Warnham Common"—Cromwell's brow darkened, but still she went on—"he fled from a disaster he could not prevent; and was cast from his horse, stunned, at the door of a widow woman, who gave him shelter. He was the enemy of her and hers, and flying from a battle in which her own son had fought; and yet she gave him rest and comfort, and opposed that very son, who would have shed his blood by her hearth. There, too, Henry Lisle interposed to save his life, and was successful; otherwise, Lord Protector, I tell thee; thou wouldst never have sat in that seat which thou hast taken this day. Condemned by your judges for acting according to his conscience, I now ask the life of Henry Lisle, in return for the life he saved. Grant it—oh, grant it, as you are a man and a Christian!"

Cromwell's brow was dark as thunder; and, after gazing on her for a moment in silence, his only reply was, "Take her away; the woman is mad—take her away and put her forth; but gently—gently—bruise not the bruised—so—no—let us pass on, for, in truth, we have been delayed too long."

Put out of the hall by the soldiers; her last hope gone; her heart nearly broken for her child and her child's husband, Lady Herrick wandered slowly on towards that sad place where she had left all that was dear to her. The gay and mighty cavalcade, which conveyed the usurper back to his palace, passed her by like one of those painful dreams which mock us with sights of splendour in the midst of some heavy woe; and before she had threaded many more of the solitary streets, robbed of their population by the attractive ceremony of the day, a single trooper galloped up, gazed on her a moment, and rode on. At the tower no formalities were opposed to her immediate entrance of the prisoner's chamber—she was led to it, at once; the door itself was open; an unsealed paper lay upon the table; Henry held Margaret in his arms; and tears, which she never before had seen in his eyes, now rolled plentifully down his cheeks, and mingled with those of his bride: but, strange to say, smiles were shining through those tears, and happiness like the rainbow-sun, beamed through the drops of sorrow!

"Joy, mother, joy!" were the first and only words: "joy, mother, joy!—Henry is pardoned!"

DELICIOUS FRUIT.—We now found ourselves in an elevated valley, embosomed in higher hills, with a magnificent lake below us. The hills were clothed with trees of an infinite variety of foliage, covered with fruit—chestnut, walnut, plum, cherry, fig, apple, quinces, pears, and medlars—in such incredible profusion as to be sufficient to supply the whole population of England; yet there was no one to gather them. You may think it an exaggeration to say, that these fruit trees formed large forest wood; but the luxuriance of vegetation in this country is such, that dwarf plants with us grow here to the size of giants. About mid-day we stopped at a dervin, or a pass in the forest, where there is generally a small Turkish guard: attached to this was, as usual, a coffee-house, where we lighted our chibouques, and had some coffee. The coffee-house was under the shade of a large tree, covered with yellow fruit, the nature of which, as I had not seen any thing like it before, I was curious to ascertain. Against the stem I found a hanging ladder, which I climbed up; and after ascending forty steps, each one foot perpendicular, I found I had not got so high as the middle of the tree. The tree was a cherry tree, producing an immense profusion of fruit, of a beautiful transparent amber colour, and of the richest flavour. I brought down my hat full, and they sent us a basket full, for which we paid the value of about a penny to the man for the trouble of gathering. I took away with me some of the stones, to try to propagate the kind at Constantinople, where it is unknown, as well on account of the delicious flavour of the fruit as the beauty and magnitude of the tree, which could not be less than one hundred feet

high; I also sent some to the Horticultural Society of London.—Dr. Walsh's Visit to Nicæa.

DECISION AND PLIABILITY.—Without decision a human being is a pitiable atom, the sport of contrary and casual impulses. It was Decision that won Liberty for England, on the plain of Runymede; it was decision that rescued Switzerland from the grasp of a tyrant; it is decision that concentrates the powers of genius, and shows what men can do; it controls the 'freaks of ability,' and prevents waste of mind, of time, and of energy; it gives dignity to character, and usefulness to talent. The most noble and affecting instances of self-devotedness, of the moral sublime, have been the result of calm Decision. Let us contemplate Curtius, deliberately leaping into the flaming gulph to save his country; Guyon, of Marseilles, encountering death in its most loathsome form, to stay the plague that desolated his native city; and, if I may avail myself of the poet's vivid dreams, let me instance

The seraph, Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he;
Among the innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, untempted,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number, nor example with him wrought,
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind.
Reflect upon these instances, and deny, if you can, the moral beauty, the sublimity of Decision. Pliability may be graceful and winning, but it requires the control of a watchful eye and vigilant conscience. It is fit only for a holiday state of things, it will not do in this work-a-day world; it often makes us linger and loiter in the path of duty, or turn into by-ways, that lead us far away. You will tell me, perhaps, that I preach; but, in the atmosphere of this world, Pliability dwells amidst contagion, and wears no antidote to secure her from the fearful risk. We breathe not here the pure air, we hear not the holy sounds of paradise. Contamination is easy; and it is the least difficult of all things to follow the multitude to do evil. If you consult the oracles of truth you will find, that, as there is little moral beauty, so there is little spiritual beauty without Decision. When the harp and the dulcimer, the sackbut and the psaltery sounded in the plains of Dura, would not Pliability have bent her knee in grateful homage to the splendid idol? Contemplate the characters of those who will 'shine as stars for ever and ever,' and you will find them distinguished by the holy boldness of decision. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, reformers, martyrs; in all it shone conspicuous. Decision will not surrender a single moment to indifference or delay; he keeps the goal in view, and quickens his step because time is short.—Amulet.

MY FIRST DUEL.—*** We moved on, each of us wrapped up in his own meditations, when, on clearing the city, he at length broke the silence that had prevailed, by asking me if I had ever been out before? On my answering the question in the negative, "I supposed as much," he continued. "At your age one has seldom drawn a trigger but on a hare or partridge; remember, therefore, to follow implicitly the instructions I shall give you on placing you on the ground; and take this cigar," he added, taking one from his case; "it is a powerful stimulant, and quickens the circulation of blood." We had by this time reached the field of action, and discovered my adversary, his second, and a medical attendant, smoking their cigars beneath the shade of a cluster of cocoa-nut trees that stood in loneliness in the valley. They arose on our approach, saluted me sternly, and interchanged friendly greetings with my companion. "You will, of course," observed my adversary's friend, "have no objection to sixteen paces." "As the challenged party, we have the right of choosing our own distance," rejoined my second; "say, therefore, twelve paces instead of sixteen, and the firing down." "Twelve paces," I repeated to myself; "can he be playing me false?" But I did him injustice, for to this arrangement I owed to all human certainty my life. The ground was measured. My second placed me with my back to the sun; a disposition that brought his rays right in my opponent's line of sight. The seconds retired to load. The ramming of the balls grated with portentous effect upon my ear. All being ready, my second, taking a handkerchief from his pocket, bound one end of it tightly round my right hand, and measuring the length of my arm which he marked by a knot, brought it across the back over the left shoulder, where the knot was tightly grasped by the left hand. "Now then," he said, on putting the pistol into my hand, "cool! when the signal is given, let your hand steady!"