

Literature, &c.

From the London World of Fashion.
THE JEWESS AND THE CHRISTIAN.

A TALE IN THREE PARTS.

Part the First.—The Mountain Pass.

He who has travelled on the high road of Lusa, cannot but have remarked that in the midst of that species of gulph that opens on the right side of Mount Cenis, there are erected some few very small cottages, thatched with straw, and that look so tiny and so frail, that they seem to tremble when exposed to the rude blasts of the north wind. It may be affirmed, that in the spot where they are located, the sun never gilds the rock with his rays, and that the only appearance of animation that is given to the scene is that conveyed by the dull monotonous brawling of a brook, that seems to be enclosed in the mountains, and with difficulty forces its way into the lower regions of the plain. The ice and the snow constitute the sole covering of these steep rocks, and the barren earth is more ungrateful to the tiller than the rugged lands of Switzerland. It is desolate, but there is about it not one single feature of grandeur; it affrights the spectator, but does not fill his mind with awe. Such is the Novelese.

It was upon a certain evening in the year —, that there were observed upon one of the narrow and steep paths of the Novelese, two mules; they advanced with apparent difficulty. There was seated upon one of them a very old man, and in his looks might be remarked the pleasure with which he contemplated the barren prospect that was before him. Its sterility did not affright him by its wildness, and desolation seemed to be an enjoyment to him. Upon the other mule, there was a very young maiden, clothed in white, and whose limbs seemed to be frozen by the cold and freezing blasts that she encountered. She cast no glance around her; seemed to be a stranger to the country through which she was passing, and its novelty had evidently no charms for her. These two were preceded by one individual, who was clad like a rustic, and over whose shoulders were cast the rough skin of a bear. Just as the travellers appeared, dark and reddish clouds covered Mount Cenis, and at the same time a thin cold rain began to fall. The mules continued to advance, and their sweet-sounding bells were heard, until, at length they stopped before a cottage, from which there soon issued an old woman, supported by the arm of a strong and athletic mountaineer. The old man then alighted, and he instantly went to help the maiden from her mule. The delicate creature was so exhausted, either by grief, or so transfixed by cold, that she could not move from her pillion, and they had to carry her in their arms into the cottage.

"Rachael," exclaimed the old man, "Rachael, my daughter, thou art now suffering; but the Lord will have mercy on thee. Hath he not delivered us out of the hands of Pharaoh. Hath he not given us to drink of fresh water, even in the arid sands of the desert? I have saved thee, thee, my beloved one, from the snares of Ammon. Lift up, then thy head, thou child of Israel."

The maiden made no answer; but she turned her eyes from the brook to the high summit of the Alps, and shuddering, affrighted, panting with grief; she showed in her look, and in her attitude that she was about to fall into a paroxysm of despair; but then in a moment afterwards, an idea, as if it were vague, obscure, and half formed, seemed to come to her mind; it warmed her cheek with blushes; her eyes shot forth brilliant glances; and her soft, low, and musical voice pronounced the single word, 'Louis.' It was uttered with a charm so ineffable, that as the Jew listened to it, his hands were clenched as if in agony and the hoarse growl of despair was heard to issue from his lips, as if torture alone had forced it from his heart.

In a small cottage, which had received the Jew and Jewess as guests, there might be observed an air of the greatest neatness. Two lovely infants played close to the fire, and, as they did so, they eagerly tried to bring warmth into the limbs of the hapless Rachael. Her father, Solomon, took the young mountaineer to a dark recess in the cottage, and then the two were seen to converse in whispers for a very long time.

The remainder of the day was passed in sighs, in tears, in counsels, in expostulations. The wild air of the rough mountaineer contrasted strongly with appearance of all else that was in the cottage; and it might be noticed, that every time the harsh tones of the moun-

taineer's voice were heard, a cold shivering made the white robes of Rachael tremble, as if the wind had blown upon them.

The last rays of the sun had already cast a crown of gold upon the pinnacle of Mount Cenis, when Solomon Levi again disappeared in the passes of the Novelese, for the purpose of proceeding to Susa, from which conveyance can easily be procured to Turin.

Part the Second.—The Assassination.

Already a cruel month of feverish expectation had passed. It was gone before Louis, who loved the Jewish maiden so dearly, and by whom he was as tenderly beloved, could discover her retreat. He had, however, discovered the neighborhood in which she was concealed; and, in order that his absence might not be remarked, he had stated to his attendants that he intended for a few days to sport in the mountains. He set out then one fine morning, with his fowling piece in proper order, and his horn well filled, and followed by two of his dogs. It is not necessary to say, what was the direction that he took, or what his thoughts, his hopes, his desires, and his fears.

During that month—the month in which he was searching for her—how many days were there not of slow and cruel agony for Rachael! She, alas! had fallen into that state of paroxysm, that, little by little, is sure to undermine health, and, eventually to destroy life. How often had the echo of these Ci-Alpine rocks repeated the beloved name of 'Louis!' How often might the unfortunate maiden be seen, her hair scattered in disorder, and leaning as if from the summit of the mountain, and measuring with a haggard eye those abysses that Nature has dug out, as if they were so many vast graves yawning to engulf her?

Antonio, for thus was the mountaineer named, was, as if it were by a species of enchantment, always to be found near her, even in her greatest despair, and her most bitter sorrow. He placed himself between Rachel and every precipice that was beside her path; and then, looking at her, his hands clasped together he seemed to supplicate her to live, and by a sort of smile which he gathered upon his lips, he appeared anxious to remove from his face all that was lowering, and to put off those fearful impressions that his coarse and savage voice were likely to excite. There was in the man something so strange, that it was easy to comprehend that some emotion stronger than that of pity characterised his conduct. Reared in the mist of the Alps, he had dreamed more than once of that happiness that steals on the soul when one gazes in the face, and looks into the eyes of a beautiful maiden. He now felt it, but he dared not to tell to Rachael what were his feelings.

How could he, he so low, so foul, so ugly, and so obscure, presume to look up to the loveliness and the brightness that invested her, and that followed in her footsteps; her beauty that, in such a situation, rose like a resplendent vapor, from a dark, dark valley. But then, if he could not give free vent to his love, he could, at least indulge in all its energy, and with all its strength, the hatred of the Jew against Louis; and when that dreaded, detested name was uttered by the lips of Rachael, then did this thorny hand grasp, with a firm, deadly gripe, the dagger fastened in his belt.

Solomon had charged this man to watch Rachael attentively; and the manner in which he executed this duty, showed that there was a stronger motive for his conduct than the mere desire to please the father. The state of the young girl gradually became worse; her sufferings daily were greater; and her heart was so full, that even the tears which she shed could bring to her no consolation, and in no wise assuage her sorrows. Like unto bodies deprived of life, and submitted to the voltaic battery, there was no positive electricity for her, excepting one—the name of the Christian that she adored. To her, every thing else was a mass of confusion—senseless, charmless, graceless, cold, cold as ice. Already consumption, that disease as cruel and remorseless as it is insidious, had seized upon her, when Solomon, one day, came to tell her of the death of her mother, her excellent, her affectionate, her beloved mother; and yet, she remained, on hearing this, like to one who has been stricken by a thunder-bolt; broken down—nerveless—her eyelids drawn back—her breath stopped, and incapable of uttering a single word. The Jew wept as he clasped her to his heart; he endeavored, but in vain, to reanimate her drooping spirits. He would have sacrificed all his fortune to save her

from this frightful lethargy; but he would sooner have followed her bier, than wed her to a Christian. The hatred of fanaticism has no pity, no sensibility, no feeling, no remorse.

Time thus passed away, when, one fine evening, Rachael, sad and silent, walked along a narrow path that leads to the mountain of the Three-Lances. She had just reached a mass of shapeless marble, which witnessed the passage of the Alps by Hannibal, when she suddenly stopped, and, raising her eyes to Heaven, she murmured forth sounds, and though they might be said to be inarticulate, still betrayed what was the secret of her heart. The noise made by the crackling of some wild plants, as they were crushed beneath the feet of some traveller, first drew her attention from the meditation in which she was plunged. She looked, a piercing cry came from her lips—she could not move—she had to lean for support against the block of marble. Louis the Christian was at the foot of the Jewish maiden.

How can one draw the exact picture of that interview? It was on the one side as on the other, joy, the very delirium of delight, the intoxication of supreme happiness. There were questions without an end, and there were answers that were perfectly incoherent. They were insane with love, and it was necessary for both to re-say a thousand times that which both had a thousands times before repeated.

The moon had already begun to shed its beams through the thick foliage of the old oaks, and Rachel had not yet returned to the cottage!—the mountaineer stood at the cottage door, and called her; but he called in vain. Never before that evening had she failed to answer him.—He felt this, and then bethought himself of the orders of the Jew, and of the fears which the father had expressed in their last interview. Instantly he determined to go in search of her.

Armed, according to the custom of the mountaineers of the Novelese, with a broad cutlass, he bounded over the rocky torrent, and he climbed the ascent of the Three Lances, with all the agility of a chamois hunter. The only thing that broke the silence that then reigned around him, was the rustling of the branches as he rushed along. It was not until he had traversed a large portion of the mountain, that he thought he heard the sound of voices, mingled with sighs. Then, and not till then, his place was stealthy. He proceeded silently, and at last he was able to see that Rachel was not alone.

The dogs of Louis started up suddenly, and their loud and vehement barking could be heard far and near.

The lovers, absorbed alike in their sorrow and their affection, seemed to be ignorant of all that was passing around them, when the mountaineer, who had contrived to conceal himself behind the block of marble, suddenly appeared, and it could be seen, foaming with rage, while his right hand brandished a cutlass, which he presented at the breast of Louis. A frightful struggle took place. Louis endeavored to make use of his fowling piece; it was held by a more vigorous hand than his own, and, as he sought to free it from the grasp of the savage, he felt that he was wounded in the breast. He writhed with pain, and as he hid so, the mountaineer's brawny arms grasped as if he were a child, and bearing him to the edge of a deep abyss hurled him down, the body crashing, crackling, and bursting, as it descended!

Rachel, clinging to the Mountaineer with all the energy of despair can give to weakness, sought also to precipitate herself into the gulph; but drawn back by the vigorous gripe of her lover's executioner, she was flung upon the bare face of the rock.

In a few moments afterwards, nought could be heard near the place where the lovers had met, but the howling of the dogs as they scented the blood of Louis.

Part the Third.—The Unjust Judgment.

It was in the middle of the month of November in the same year —, in which the transactions already detailed took place, that the Lords of Savoy were summoned by order of his Majesty the King of Sardinia, to examine into a case of great importance. It was in November that these senatorial Lords were to be seated upon their thrones of crimson velvet, whilst there was brought before them Solomon Levi, the Jew accused of the wilful murder of Count Louis.

These senatorial Lords seemed alike to forget their character as Christians and as judges, when they beheld the unhappy Jew, heavily ironed before them. It was

indignation alone that animated them when they gazed upon the Israelite surrounded by his guards, and by a sad combination of human prejudices, even the crowd that was collected in the court, shuddered as the unhappy man passed through them, as if there were contamination in misfortune, and that a difference of creed could justify the obliteration of all traces of humanity. The accused was more calm, more cool, and more collected than his judges, his accusers, or the auditory. He had that calmness which results from innocence and resignation.

Unfortunately for the Jew, he had arrived at the cottage, in which he sought a retreat for his daughter, upon the very evening that her lover Louis had been assassinated. Rachael, who had been carried thither by the fierce mountaineer, could not, when she arrived recognize her father. She had lost her reason, and with it, the remembrance of the past. The Jew, however, observed that there were some drops of blood on her dress, and driven to despair, he asked what had occasioned this unlooked for misfortune. The assassin stammered out an explanation, namely, that he had found Rachael stretched at the foot of a rock, and at the same moment he had remarked a hunter, who had fled away through the passes of the mountain.

'Ah!' cried the Jew, 'it was Louis, who must have discovered where I had hidden her, as I thought, from his sight;' and saying this, he turned to his daughter and exclaimed, 'Daughter of Jerusalem—gentle flower, whose tender head had been struck down by the tempest. I thought to have preserved thee pure from the Christians; I thought to have placed thee here as in a promised land, where thou mightest be saved from the hands of Pharaoh—'

But he could not continue, so much was his soul afflicted by the cruel spectacle that he gazed upon. All that night he watched by the pillow of his daughter, and aided in his cares by the ancient female cottager. The mountaineer, on the contrary, hid himself in a corner of the cottage, keeping his blood stained countenance carefully concealed beneath his cloak.

The next day Rachel had, in some degree, recovered her strength, and was immediately removed to Susa, where the most watchful and tender care was bestowed upon her. The same day, a shepherd, who was passing along the stream, discovered the dead body of Louis. It was frightfully disfigured from the fall; two dogs were resting beside it,—the one seemed to be watching the first fatal wound that had been inflicted on his master, while the other was nestling close to that face to which hitherto it had looked up with affection, and that always repaid it with smiles.

In a few days afterwards, the Hebrew was arrested at Susa, and he was dragged from the arms of his daughter to be plunged into the dark cells of the senatorial prison. Many attempts were made upon the Jew to induce him to avow his guilt; but he withstood them with a firmness, in which innocence when subjected to the agonies of torture, has often been found wanting.

At length the Jew was taken from his prison to go through the forms of a trial and to find that to one of his tribe, there is no mercy. The sentence of the Judges was already determined upon, although the proofs were defective, and the witnesses could state nothing certain. All had been determined, even though Rachel was not yet able to utter a single word and that her distraction was a negative proof of the innocence of her father. Her presence, however, in the Court, was deemed necessary; and she, too, was brought to the bar to assist at this last sacrifice to injustice. At length she appeared, and then pity—which seemed to have fled from the hearts of all—took possession of them, and asserted her supremacy. A murmur of compassion accompanied her on her way from the prison to the Court House. To look at her, so innocent, so pure, so completely thoughtless of self, and, dressed as she was, she looked in her white robes, contrasted with the blood red robes of the Judges, like an angel in the midst of the flames of purgatory. The change produced by this apparition was terrible. The hapless Jew made a movement, as if he would approach to her, but the chains—the cruel chains—with which his arms were bound, would not permit him to open them, in order that he might clasp his child—his dear, his only child to his heart. He could not kiss his daughter, but his groans could be heard by every one, and still his Judges were moveless, passionless, heartless.

She was asked several questions but to none did she give any answer. She