

Literature, &c.

The American Magazines
FOR JUNE.From the Columbia Magazine.
ENNUI AND ITS ANTIDOTE.BY MRS. ANNA CORA MOWATT.
CHAPTER I.

"Ah! it's a dull world! a dull world! Hamlet was right—'flat, stale, and unprofitable'—flat as the jokes of a pertentious punster; stale as the manoeuvres of women; and unprofitable as a newspaper or a lecture!"

Frederick Faulkner, as he drew out the last word, let fall the pamphlet which he had been endeavoring to read, and stretched himself at full length on one of the luxurious settees in the ladies' parlor at the Astor. With his arms beneath his head, and his eyes half shut, he lay for some time, gazing wearily at the different articles of furniture; wondering why people gave themselves the trouble to construct them; and at intervals, expanding his finely-shaped mouth to its utmost dimensions by a long but silent yawn.

The drawing room was vacant, for at that hour in the morning the ladies busied themselves in their own apartments; and idlers of the other sex found greater attractions in the smoking and reading rooms. It was therefore some time before the tediousness of Faulkner's meditations was disturbed. At length the door opened, but he did not trouble himself to alter his recumbent posture; nor had he sufficient energy to start at the possibility of a feminine intruder.

"Halloa, Fred!" exclaimed Frank Gaylord, with a laugh, "is that you?" "Are you asleep?" "Asleep? I wish I was," half sighed, half yawned Faulkner. "Asleep? Sleep is too great a luxury for a fellow who is tired to death of all the world and himself into the bargain!"

"Thank you for the implied compliment," returned Gaylord; "the world is much obliged to you, so is your humble servant."

"It's the first time, then, I ever put the world under obligation," answered Faulkner, listlessly.

"Perhaps that is the very reason that you are so desperately disgusted with it. A man generally takes interest in his debtors you know!"

Another long yawn, accompanied by an elongation of his well-dressed limbs, was Faulkner's only reply.

Gaylord was one of those happy beings who carry about a heart as light as their purse; exemplifying the proverb, that the absence of weight in the one counterbalances the ill effects of emptiness in the other. Full of projects—of activity—of hope: kindly in his feelings—almost undiscriminating in his affections, he never gave offence and was never offended—consequently, the loud, light laugh which broke from his lips, as he contemplated the prostrate ennui, awoke no unpleasant emotions.

"Glad you're amused," said Faulkner, turning on his side.

"That's generous of you, my dear fellow, to find happiness in affording others what you cannot enjoy yourself. But let us know, Fred, what unexpected misfortune has tumbled you into the Slough of Despond?" questioned Gaylord.

"Never had a misfortune in my life!" "What ails you, then? You don't look like a dyspeptic—you are not envenomed with a scolding wife—report says you are worth ten thousand a year."

"And ten thousand blue devils to heighten its enjoyment! Dyspepsia would be something to think about, and a scolding wife would keep one awake. I'm dying of a stupor, occasioned by the absence of sensations."

"Why do you not travel?" "Oh, I've travelled—been jolted in every stage, shaken in every rail car, and cribbed up in every steamboat in Europe. Did me no good. Men and women—hills and mountains—lakes and rivers—herbs and trees—the same all over!"

"Come, there is another panacea for ennui—matrimony. Why do you not get married?" "To some woman who thinks ten thousand a year sufficient inducement to permit me to encircle her finger with a ring, and hang a chain upon my own inclinations? A rich man has not the privilege of marrying a wife, he can only expect to play the husband to a mercenary woman. That occupation is not to my taste."

"Nor, upon my word, does any other occupation seem to be! I beg pardon, my dear Fred, but why do you not employ yourself?"

"Oh, I've tried it. Tried to drink—gave me the headache; preferred not making a beast of myself. Tried to smoke—made me quailish; preferred not smelling like an old pipe. Tried to gamble—no fun in losing. Tried everything—it's no go. Haven't a pulse for enjoyment! Don't know what to do with myself—tiresome world!" He concluded his sentence with a succession of yawns, and stretching out his arm for an additional cushion, which he placed beneath his head, laid himself upon his back, with his mouth half open and his eyes fixed upon the ceiling.

Gaylord turned away, for he found the yawns contagious, and was about to leave the room. Just as he reached the door, he turned round, and said, "By the way, Fred, they tell me you have a law suit pending. Why don't you amuse yourself with looking after that? Who is likely to win?"

"Don't know—don't care! If old Scrapeall gets it, I shan't be worth a copper. Can't help

it. Don't believe he will—don't care if he does!"

"There will be plenty of anxious mamma and marriageable daughters to cure, I warrant," resumed Gaylord; "but I am afraid that your prospects of winning are too good for you to break the fair one's hearts by anything but your indifference. So adieu! I wish you a happy deliverance from your cerulean enemies!" And Frank Gaylord made a sudden exit, for he perceived his friend's mouth slowly enlarging itself with another protracted yawn and his own began to give tokens of the sympathetic force of example.

Faulkner lay awhile longer, and after turning repeatedly from side to side and finding all positions equally uncomfortable, he languidly rose to his feet. The mirror, directly in front of him, reflected his attractive person. He walked slowly towards it, passed his fingers through his dark and waving hair, contemplated for a moment his regular but inanimate features, and drew out, "Wish I wasn't such a good looking fellow; wish I'd been squint-eyed, or lame, or hunch-backed; then I'd have had something to think about!" With this extraordinary regret, he turned away, paced the room once or twice, looked out of the window, first at the gloomy sky above, and then at the peripatetic umbrellas which jostled one another beneath.

"I'll take a walk!" he suddenly exclaimed, with a kind of energy which resembled the desperate flickering of a candle just before it expires in the socket. "Mackintosh—India rubber shoes—can't get wet—don't care if I do!"

He was soon prepared for his promenade, and slowly descended the steps of the Astor, spreading his umbrella as he gave vent to his favorite ejaculation of "Tiresome world! oh! very."

It was a day in March, and the air was as cutting as the breath of scandal. The rain which fell, was fine but penetrating, and the mud that darkly carpeted the paving stones, rendered the walking slippery and difficult. Faulkner sauntered, or rather slid down Broadway, not from any particular choice, but because his face happened to be turned in that direction when he issued from the hotel. The friends he met were hurrying along, intent on seeking shelter; while his slow pace plainly bespoke that the object of his walk was to find refuge from ennui and its goal any which chance might offer.

"Please give us a penny! a penny, please!" was the first sound that saluted his ears at one of the crossings, and two little hands were stretched out within the circumference of his umbrella. He looked down and saw a couple of ragged children, each with a wet broom in one hand, while the other was extended supplicatingly toward him. As a sort of diversion for himself, rather than with any defined desire of being charitable, he thrust his fingers into his waistcoat pocket and drew forth a two-shilling piece. Just as he placed it in the hand of the elder petitioner, his eye fell upon a third little girl who stood near the others. She was busily sweeping the crossing, and though she did not stretch forth her hand, she looked up in his face with a half-timid, half-imploping look, and then pertinaciously plied her broom.

"Divide it amongst you—give that little girl some!" exclaimed Faulkner, as he passed on. After walking a few paces farther, he turned back to take one more look at the little street sweeps. The two that had addressed him were evidently quarrelling about the alms which he had bestowed. The third little girl stood leaning upon her broom, anxiously regarding them, but without taking part in the dispute. Faulkner had an eye for the beautiful, under all its guises and disguises; and he could not help remarking the almost inappropriate grace of the young girl's attitude. Her form too, was remarkably slender; and mean as was her garment, there was an air of taste in its arrangement. The folded red shawl crossed over her expanding bosom and knotted behind, displayed the delicate roundness of her waist; the striped skirt, cut so short that it escaped all contact with the mud, exposed to view a pair of small and well-turned ankles; the shoes—but these were large, badly shaped, and much worn, and if the feet within them corresponded to the ankles, the shoemaker had done himself no credit. Then the little blue hood, tied so closely over the pale face! The pallor of that face reminded him of the sorrowful expression of the large dark eyes that were for a moment turned to his.

Faulkner walked slowly on, pondering upon the misery of street sweepers in general and of this little trio in particular. One of his habitual yawns, which at that moment surprised him, made him come to the conclusion that after all they were not to be pitied so much as himself; and once or twice more exclaiming, "tiresome world! tiresome world!" he turned to retrace his steps, with the intention perhaps of again wooing Morpheus upon the comfortable lounges at the Astor.

Once more, he approached the crossing where the three little girls were stationed. Two of them were just starting in pursuit of a fat, good-natured looking gentleman, who seemed half disposed to listen to their prayers. The third—the one who had temporarily excited his interest, was still industriously sweeping away the mud, although her ungloved and purpled hands seemed almost too cold to grasp her broom. At the sound of steps she raised her head, apparently recognised Faulkner, for the ashy hue of her cheek gave way to a slight flush; then with even quicker movements, resumed her occupation.

"Here, little girl!" said Faulkner, yielding to a sudden impulse of generosity; "take this!" and he placed in her half frozen hand a gold piece worth two dollars and a half.

The child, for she was scarcely more, gave one bewildered look at the gold, convulsively

closed her fingers upon it, and with a cry of joy which was almost wild in its sound, darted down the nearest street. Her broom, which she still grasped, trailed after her without impeding her progress—the strings of her little blue hood loosened, and it fell to the ground, but she did not pause to recover it. Faulkner caught but one glimpse of the brown hair that curled in close, round rings about her head and she had disappeared!

For several moments he stood gazing abstractedly at the corner round which she vanished. The inquisitive glances of the passer-by recalled him to a sense of the ridiculousness of his situation. With a quicker step he returned to the Astor and sought the ladies' parlor. But he no longer felt any inclination to throw himself upon the settee, for his eyes had lost their heaviness and his limbs partook of the activity of his mind. He walked about with rapid steps, that pale thin face ever and anon rising before him, and the strange cry that had burst from the little girl's lips ringing in his ears.

And then he pictured to himself the relief, or at least the pleasure, which his accidental donation had afforded this unfortunate child, and wondered if her pale cheeks were not at that moment flushed and her eyes bright, and congratulated himself as the author of the unwonted hue and happy lustre.

"At least I have purchased a sensation, cheap at two dollars and a half, and I do believe I have not yawned these three hours." As he uttered these words the dinner bell disturbed his reverie, and he hastened down with the unusual accompaniment of an appetite.

Before night, however, he had almost forgotten the little street sweep, and his ennui returned with redoubled violence.

CHAPTER II.

In the basement of a house situated in one of the most obscure parts of the city, sat an old and decrepid man bending over a small table. Every thing about him bespoke the most abject poverty. In his trembling hands he held a pen, and before him lay a paper which, strange to say, bore strong resemblance to a will. He was in the act of signing it, and two females stood beside him, evidently as witnesses. He had scarcely made one stroke with the pen, before a violent fit of coughing interrupted his labours. Completely exhausted, he laid back in his chair, and the elder of the women advanced to support his head, but, at the same time gave utterance to an exclamation of petulant disappointment.

"You shall have all—all—when I am gone! But that won't be yet—all. Lucy shall never see the color of my gold. Never fear—never fear! I say you shall have all!"

"You are better now, come sign, sign," answered the woman, forcing her harsh voice to imitate the tone of kindness. "Your signature is wanting!"

"Never fear—never fear—plenty of time. I'm not going yet!" And another violent fit of coughing seemed to contradict his words.

The repulsive countenance of the elder woman was distorted by mingled vexation and dread. She evidently exerted an all-powerful influence over the old man. And yet, though shattered by disease and the influence of evil passions, though sinking prematurely into his dotage, his ruling love—avarice—was stronger even than her fierce and despotic will.

"It's mine—the money's mine!—Abby, you shall have it when I'm below ground, but it's all mine yet—and there's more coming to it! More—more!—Never fear!"

Abby replied by placing the pen in his hand and whispering "Yes more—more. But sign or it all be Lucy's one day. Come, your name, Hiram Scrapeall!" It's soon written.

As she spoke she placed her own hand upon the one that held the pen and commenced grinding the fingers over the paper.

A knock at the outer door—a low and timid knock, made the old man start and drop the pen, for he was weak and nervous.

"What's that, Abby! What's that?" he demanded, trembling.

"Go and see," said Abby Conklin to her daughter; "but do not admit any body."

The young girl (for though so old in appearance, so withered by care and worn by calculation—she had numbered but few years) gave a warning look to her mother and left the room.

A few moments afterwards a beseeching voice was heard in the entry—"Let me see him! I must—I will!"

With a sudden movement darting by the person who was attempting to prevent her entrance, a girl some fourteen or fifteen years of age rushed into the room. Mrs Conklin seized her rudely by the arm, but she broke loose, and with one bound stood beside the old man who was groaning and shaking in his chair.

"Who is it? who is it?" he gasped out, shrinking away from the intruder. Her thin and pallid face, and those large penetrating eyes fixed on his, alarmed him.

"It is Grace! Your own grandchild," answered the little girl in an excited though not unmusical tone. "My mother is starving—dying. That woman, (pointing to Mrs Conklin) has driven me from your door day after day; but your own child is dying of want and I would see you!"

"Let her die!" fiercely ejaculated Mrs Conklin. "She married a beggar against her father's will. What should her child be but a beggar—and that in consequence of his will?" And as she shrieked forth these words she pointed savagely to the document lying upon the table.

Grace turned slowly round, and even that evil woman quailed before her rebuking look, and the pitying reproach of her tone, as she said, "You are a wicked woman, God forgive you. It was you who made my mother's life so wretched. She married to escape from

your persecutions—you incensed my grandfather against her—she is now almost—" The word that she was trying to utter seemed to choke her—"starving!" she exclaimed at length with a strong effort. "And yet she is happier in the midst of misery, than all her father's wealth can render you, in the very lap of luxury!"

Livid with rage, Mrs Conklin once more seized the girl by the arm and attempted to force her from the room.

"Grandfather! Grandfather! My poor mother—"

The old man seemed too terrified and bewildered exactly to comprehend what passed. He looked at Mrs Conklin, whose iron grasp had completely mastered Grace, with a vacant stare; and then gazing at the young girl muttered "Take her away, take her away."

"Do you hear that?" shrilly screamed Mrs Conklin. "But perhaps he will give a message that you can carry to your dainty mother!" she added maliciously. Then addressing the old man, she asked "What about Lucy? What were you saying of Lucy?"

Her voice seemed to arouse him, and to recall the train of thought which Grace had interrupted; for he groaned out "She shall never see the color of my money! Never fear—never fear! The money's mine—all mine! I'm not going yet. Never fear!"

Grace was too much shocked by these words to make any further resistance to Mrs Conklin's will. Almost before she knew how she came there, she stood in the street, and the door was closed against her. Mrs Conklin had returned to the room, to witness the appending of Scrapeall's signature to the document which made her heir to a miser's carefully accumulated wealth.

[To be concluded.]

From Graham's Magazine.

THE MASQUERADE.

A hundred happy hearts that night

To melody kept tune,

And dancers' feet were tinkling light

As woodland showers in June.

Their forms went flitting gay along

Like sylphs in light arrayed;

But I only saw, of all the throng,

The belle of the masquerade.

Her form was tall, and proud her mien,

Her step with grace replete,

She moved as might Olympus' queen

With world's beneath her feet!

She danced—I thought I Dian saw

With nymphs in forest shade—

And I watched, in mingled love and awe,

The belle of the masquerade!

A horrid mask her face concealed,

'Twas black as raven's wing.

What madness led her thus to shield

So bright and fair a thing?

But then I thought of old romance,

And some enchanted maid,

And longed to save with sword and lance

The belle of the masquerade.

At length alone she turned aside,

I hurried where she fled,

"Resplendent one!" I kneeling cried,

"Why, nephew, la!" she said.

Her mask fell off, ye gods! 'twas true,

My aunt, old Marmalade!

Thin, sour, scraggy fifty-two,

The belle of the masquerade!

A. A. IRVINE.

THE BRITISH MAGAZINES FOR MAY.

From the Illustrated Magazine.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FUDGE.

BY JOHN LASH LATEY.

[Continued from our last.]

NEED a word be said of the fudge of Trade? Is it not written in characters so glaringly conspicuous that all who run may read? And yet "Ruinous Sacrifices!" and "Fifty per Cent. under Prime Cost!" have their victims even now. Alas for poor glibbly human nature!

Doth not Humbug lord it with a high hand in the Senate? and chuckleth he not with exceeding glee at the pooling booth and on the hustings? There, with the mind's eye may he be seen, squatted in one corner like an imp, taking sights, now at the several candidates, and anon at the "free and independent electors," who suffer themselves to be bought, and then wonder when they are sold. To a spectator who has never been behind the scenes an election is a magnificent moral spectacle. Nothing, to his view, can be freer or more unconstrained than the electoral body in the exercise of their right; tyranny or compulsion of any sort would seem to be altogether out of the question; no lying to one's conscience—no hypocrisy; no voting for one candidate while the heart and understanding are with another; each elector walks with the dignity of a free-born Briton to the polling booth, and there, unawed, unchecked, unbribed, breathing the atmosphere of truth and liberty, he gives his vote to the man whom his reason approves. "Fudge!"

Freedom of Election! Purity of Election! Free and Independent Electors! Sounds sweet to hear—how much sweeter to realize! Candidates and voters bamboozle each other. "Church and State" is the watchword of one