

Literature, &c.

The American Magazines.

From Graham's Magazine.

THE WIDOW AND THE DEFORMED.

BY MRS. CAROLINE H. BUTLER.

We will now return to Mr. Alfred Oakly, and learn how the world in the interim has fared with him. Prosperity at the helm, his richly freighted vessels careered over the wide ocean, no devastating fires destroyed his dwellings, no whirlwinds uprooted his forests, no blight or mildew stole over his fields to nip the golden harvest, and yet, with all this, there was many a beggar who gleaned the refuse from his kitchen, who knew more of happiness than did this cold, selfish man. In the first place his wife had never recovered from the shock to her affections in being forced to yield up her unfortunate child—not only her health but her temper suffered severely. Toward her husband in particular, this change seemed pointed, and as much as she had loved him previously her coldness was now proportionate. Unhappily, too, for Louisa, the innocent cause of this rupture, it extended itself even to her, and thus childhood, that rainbow-tinted period of life was to her clouded and joyless. Her father, stern and morose, secluding her from playmates of her own age—her mother seldom greeting her with a word of affection or a smile of encouragement—her caresses met by both with coldness, and all the winning graces of childhood frowned down with disfavor. Her education, however, went on as though her frame were formed of iron. There was a stiff governess, whose cold gray eye was ever on her, to watch that she did not loiter in sitting or stoop in walking—that her toes turned out and her elbows turned in—that she neither spoiled her mouth by laughing (little danger!) nor her eyes by crying. Then came in the music master with commands for six hours daily practice for those little fingers—and the dancing-master, saying "Ma'am, you must be very gay—you cannot never learn to dance, you look so fat you call fat-igued." Then came the drawing-master, and the professor of languages; nor were these all to which her mind was tasked, for besides, were those branches which her governess professed to teach—her governess, Miss Pinchem, with whom in comparison Miss Blimber of Blimber Hall would have shrunk into insignificance!

Poor little Louisa!

She would sometimes wonder if the little children she read of in the Bible had to learn all such things to make them good—for Miss Pinchem was great on goodness—always beginning and ending her exhortations with, "Now, Miss Louisa, you must be good, and not raise your eyes from your book!" "You must play that tune with more scientific grace, Miss Louisa, or you will not be good!" "You must turn out your toes if you want to be good!" "You never will be good if you don't pronounce better!"—in short there was a great deal of goodness on Miss Pinchem's wily tongue, let people say what they would, and though Louisa wondered what made Miss Pinchem good!

No sooner had Mr. Oakly accomplished his object in ridding his sight of the poor deformed, than he would fain have held himself excused from all obligation to the widow—but he dared not act on his wishes, fearful in such case that she would claim her own, and thus betray his disgraceful secret. When he received Mrs. Oakly's letter informing him of her intended marriage, his apprehensions were anew awakened. Could it be possible she would keep the secret from her husband! Doubtless she would scorn the imputation that so unsightly a child as Agatha was her own offspring, and thus to preserve her maternal pride forfeit her word! Oh! a thorny pillow was that Mr. Oakly nightly pressed! How often in his dreams did the pale corpse of his injured brother rise up before him, and ever in its fleshless arms it bore the shrunken form of Agatha! But as month after month rolled on, swelling finally to years and hearing nothing further from the late Mrs. Oakly, he felt more at ease, so much so that entirely forgot her request relative to the future advantage of his discarded child! An oversight very natural to such a man!

Louisa reached her seventeenth year, and as the bud gave promise so proved the flower beautiful indeed and lovely. Mr. Oakly was really proud of this! He mentally contrasted her lighthearted figure with the probable appearance of Agatha, and congratulated himself that he had not to bear about the shame of acknowledging the latter! Still, he did not love Louisa—strange that he almost hated her for possessing those very attributes of loveliness for which he had preferred her above his own offspring.

When Louisa emerged from the seclusion of the school room to the brilliant circles of fashion, she was caressed, flattered, adored. Wealth and beauty tripping hand in hand seldom fail to win favor, and brought a throng of admirers to the feet of the heiress, who however, did not seem easily moved and many were the suitors to her favor who met with a kind but firm refusal. But, beware, Louisa, your affections will be held by your tyrant father just as much enslaved as your person; and now, wo to you, should they centre where he does not approve.

Moonlight, golden, twinkling stars, fragrant zephyrs, sweet from the lip of the lily, soft from tinkling leaves, a murmur from the

rippling river, and through the winding shrubbery, slowly along the path tessellated by the moonbeams; which glint through the leafy curtain, Louisa is straying—but not alone. A youth is by her side, one whose arm her own encircles, who clasps her willingly hand in his; one whose whispers are of love, and to whom her own voice, gentle and low, speaks of hope and happiness in return.

Ah! foolish, foolish Louisa! what are you thinking of? only a poor painter—and you in love! True he has talent, worth grace, refinement, but—no money! And you, unfortunate youth, why did you love this beautiful maiden. Know you not that man of heartlessness and pride, her father, would gladly crush you to the earth for lifting your eyes heavenward to his daughter; that he would sooner buy her wedding sheet than that she should don her wedding-robe for thee! And yet, even now, closer and closer are you both riveting the chain, drawing heart to heart, which no hand but death can loose.

It was the second summer after Louisa's initiation into the gay world that the Oak family were once more assembled at Oak Villa, their annual resort during the warm months of July and August. With no taste for reading, a mind not attached for meditation, and the querulousness of an ungraceful old age gradually stealing upon him, Mr. Oakly found the time drag most wearily on amid those quiet groves. In his extremity an idea suddenly flashed across his brain, which he eagerly caught at, as it promised to relieve somewhat of that tedious vacuum between those hours when such a man and happiness may alone be said to look each other in the face; viz., the hour of meals—and this was to summon an artist to the villa, for the purpose of decorating the walls of the saloon with the portraits of his inmates. He had not thought of it before but, quite luckily, it now occurred to him that he already had the address of a young artist in his pocket, for whom some friend of straggling genius had solicited patronage. Now he could kill two birds with one stone, as it were secure the plaudits of the world by taking the artist by the hand in so flattering a manner, and at the same time pull away the drag from the wheels of time. He looked at the card—"Walter Everson"—and to Walter Everson did he immediately address a letter, requesting his presence at the villa.

He came—a fine handsome youth, of three-and-twenty, with an eye like an eagle, and hair dark as a starless night—a dangerous companion, we must allow for the gentle Louisa. He was met with condescending affability made most apparent by the master of the house, and by Mrs. Oakly, who seldom manifested much interest in anything, with cool indifference. No wonder then, that he turned with a thrill of pleasure tingling his heart-strings, to the gentle Louisa, whose manners, at once so courteous and refined, offered so agreeable a contrast.

There are some, perhaps whose hearts have never yet felt the power of love, who rail about love at first sight as a theory too ridiculous to dwell upon—a chimera only originating in the heads of romantic school-girls and beardless shop-boys; very well, let them have it so; I only assert that both Louisa and the artist, at that first interview, were favorably impressed; and that a brief intercourse under the same roof cemented their young hearts with all the strength of a first and truthful affection. Love (himself a sly artist) traced each on the other's heart in fadeless dints. Sincere and unselfish was the love which Walter Everson had conceived for Louisa; a love which he intended to bury within his own throbbing breast—for he dared not flatter himself that it would be returned—she, the heiress of thousands—he, the poor unfriended artist. Vain resolve! It was the evening with which this chapter commences, that, in an unguarded moment, he had revealed to her his love, and received the blest assurance of her own in return. But their cup of joy was even then embittered by the consciousness that her father, in his cold, selfish nature, would tear their hearts asunder, even though he snapped their life-strings.

In the meantime the business which had brought him to the villa was being accomplished. Mr. and Mrs. Oakly saw themselves to the life on canvas, and now it only remained to consummate his work by portraying the features of Louisa. Delightful, yet difficult task! Mrs. Oakly had so far aroused herself from her usual lethargy, as to insist that the figure of Louisa herself should be but secondary in the picture about to be executed. She was tired, she said, of those stiff, prim figures on sombre-tinted ground, looking out from gilded frames with eyeballs ever coldly glaring upon one, and would have a large painting of rare design and skill—woods, fountains, birds, and flowers to relieve the form and face of Louisa from this dull sameness. Various were the sketches brought forward for her approval, and whole days, which Everson wished might never end, were spent in vain endeavours to settle upon some one of them for the purpose. Accident, however, at length furnished the desired *tableau*—although it would be doing injustice to Everson to imply that he lacked talent or originality—fine as were his sketches, they failed to please Mrs. Oakly, because she would not be pleased.

One morning Louisa strolled out alone, and unconsciously pursued her ramble until she reached a beautiful meadow fringed with fine old trees, whose branches bent down to meet their dark, leafy shadows in the bright waters of the *Sisagehana*. Birds were singing merrily, butterflies sported their golden wings, and the grasshopper chirped, blithely leaping through the tall grass. Here and there, where the rays of the sun had not yet penetrated, were the gossamers of elfin broodery—mantles

dropped by fairies on their merry rounds in the checkered moonlight beneath those old trees; there was a drop of bright nectar, too, left in the cup of the wild flower, and the large, red clover-tops were sparkling with dew-gems. I cannot assert that Louisa saw all the beauties of this fine morning; for absorbed in pleasing thoughts, upon which we will not intrude, satisfied as we ought to be that the artist occupied a full share, she seated herself beneath one of those shadowing trees and resting her chin within the palm of her little hand, most likely, I am sorry to say, heard neither the warble of the birds; the cheerful chirping insect, or saw the bright glancing river, with the little boat which was just then dancing over its silver ripples.

The sound of voices approaching in the opposite direction suddenly broke in upon her trance, and she then, for the first time, reflected that she had passed the boundaries of her father's land. The estate joining had lately been purchased by a wealthy Englishman, it was said. For many weeks repairs had been going on in the old mansion, which for several years had been tenanted; and the family were daily expected to arrive. That they had now done so was Louisa's conclusion. The voices drew nearer; but trusting to the thick foliage for concealment, she remained perfectly still; when apparently within but a few paces of her the party stopped.

"What a lovely view!" exclaimed a soft female voice. "I wish ma'ma had not turned back she would have been so delighted."

"It is truly fine," was the reply, in a masculine tone; "it is even more beautiful than the view from the lawn we so much admired last evening? what if you were to sketch it?"

"If I had only brought my crayons, I would do so now. How lovely it is!" answered the lady.

"If you have strength for it after your long walk," was the reply. "I will return for your portfolio; here is a nice shady seat for you—I will soon be back, but do not ramble away from this spot."

Louisa heard the retreating footsteps, and was about to make good her own, when a beautiful Scotch air very sweetly warbled, arrested her attention. The song ceased abruptly, giving place to a scream so loud and shrill, as blanched the cheek of Louisa with the hue of death. She sprang to her feet, and panting with terror, emerged from her shelter into the open meadow just as the scream was again repeated. She now almost breathlessly looked around to detect the cause of alarm. In a moment she saw it all. A noble stag, having probably leaped the park-palings, came bounding swiftly across the meadow directly toward the spot where Louisa was now standing, no doubt with the intention of slacking his thirst at the tempting stream. The terrors of Louisa were at once allayed; and she now hastened to the spot whence the screams issued to soothe if possible the fears of the unknown.

Trembling with fright and clinging to a tree for support, was a female, dwarf-like in stature, and deformed in shape. Her countenance was deadly pale, and her eye-balls, almost fixed with terror, were strained upon the animal, as he came leaping onward. Ere Louisa could speak he had approached within a few paces, and as if now first aware of their presence, he suddenly halted, arched his beautiful, glossy neck, and bending his antlered head, stood at bay. Seeing how utterly helpless was the poor unknown, Louisa sprang forward, and telling her not to be alarmed, quickly placed herself before her; but the noble stag as if disdainful to war with women, after gazing upon them a few seconds with his wild eyes suddenly turned and tossing his head proudly, trotted off in another direction.

At that moment how rejoiced was Louisa to see her lover rapidly approaching—for the stranger had already fainted.

"Water! water!" she cried, "quick, or she will die!"

Without speaking, Everson rushed to the river, and filling his hat with the cooling waters was in a second at her side.

"Poor girl! she will die of terror, I fear. What fine features, and what beautiful hair!" said Louisa, as she swept back the long tresses from her neck and brow, purer than alabaster.

In a few moments the object of their solicitude opened her eyes. She could not speak, but pressing the hand of Louisa to her lips, pointed toward a mansion just discernible through a dense shrubbery at some distance.

"Shall I bear you home?" inquired Everson.

The stranger looked her thanks; and lifting her in his arms as tenderly as if she were a babe, he proceeded with his almost lifeless burthen in the direction pointed out.

Thus met, for the first time, the discarded Agatha and the innocent usurper of her rights.

The fancy of Walter Everson seized at once upon a scene so interesting as the one he had just witnessed. No sooner did he part with Louisa at the door of the saloon, than, hastening to his studio, he began sketching the outlines of his truthful conceptions. Rapidly did he hasten on his own misery—blissfully unconscious the while of the sad termination of his labours. Never had he wrought so well and so rapidly—not a stroke but told. There was the beautiful meadow, with its old brave trees, and the river gleaming through their branches; the fine stag, his antlered front bent toward the two females; the graceful form of Louisa standing beneath the old oak, shielding the terrified stranger, one arm thrown around her, the other slightly raised as if motioning the animal away. Love surely guided his hand; for without a sitting the artist had transferred from his heart to the

canvas the gentle features of Louisa with an accuracy undisputable. Strikingly too, had he delineated the form and face of the deformed—her long, waving tresses—her pale countenance—her large eyes fixed in terror upon the stag, and her small mis-shapen figure. Something, too, had he caught, even in that short interview, of the features of Agatha. He could not, however, proceed in his task until it had received the approbation of the master and mistress of the mansion. He had purposely requested Louisa to be silent respecting the morning's adventure, that he might by surprise obtain the mastery over the whims of Mrs. Oakly, so hard to be gratified. They were now respectfully invited to the picture room, together with Louisa to pass judgment upon his beautiful sketch.

To depict the scene which followed the withdrawal of the curtain he had placed before it would be impossible. Mrs. Oakly gave only a look, and with a dreadful shriek, exclaiming, "My child!" fell senseless to the floor. Mr. Oakly foaming with rage, his face livid and distorted, rushed upon the astonished artist, and in a voice choked with passion, cried—

"Out of my house, villain! Ha! do you beard me thus! Who are you, that have thus stolen my secret, and dare to show me that picture—dare to place that hateful image before me? Out of my house I say, ere I am tempted to commit a worse crime!"

Astonished, bewildered, confounded, Everson for a moment could not speak, nor would the enraged man hear him when he did. In vain Louisa, while striving to restore animation to her mother, interceded, explained, expostulated—alas! her tears and agitation only betraying to her father a new source of anger. Seizing her by the arm, and bidding her seek her chamber, he thrust her from the room, and then turning once more to the artist as he raised the still inanimate form of his wife.

"I give you half an hour to make your arrangements for leaving my roof—beware how you exceed that time; when you are ready, you will find the sum due you in this cursed room—begone, sir!"

Without any attempt to see poor Louisa again, and trusting he might be able to communicate with her in a few days Walter Everson left the villa.

When Mr. Oakly next entered the painting room the money of the artist was still there—but the fatal picture had disappeared.

(To be Continued.)

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

ENEMIES.

Men are continually heard talking of their enemies. It seems to be universally understood that every body has enemies. We hear of such and such a person being ill spoken of; but then he has many enemies. We hear of some one being extremely unfortunate—he has made himself many enemies. I believe there is a great fallacy in all this, and that scarcely any one has enemies worthy of the name, much less that any one is seriously injured by them. People are in general too much engrossed, each by his own affairs, to make any active war against each other. Jealous, envious, rancorous they often are, but to wage positive hostilities, they are for the most part too indifferent. Though it were otherwise, society is not constituted in such a way as to admit of one man being to any serious extent hurtful to another. When I hear therefore of any man attributing his non-success in business, the invariably severe treatment of his books at the reviews, or the rejection of his pictures at the exhibition, to enemies, I feel that a cause inadequate to the effect had been cited, and while listening politely, do not believe though I dare say he does.

The fact is, this proneness to attribute our mischances to enemies is merely one of the reflexes of our self-love. Admitting possible exceptions, it may be said emphatically, that we are none of us anybody's enemies but our own. We are all, however, our own enemies. The same is true of corporations and institutions. Hence it is the merchant who effects his own ruin, it is the author who writes himself down. Dynasties, ministries, parties, die not but by suicide. And it is the friends of great causes and venerable systems who are most apt to be the obstructors of the one and destroyers of the other.

We see this principle hold good in a signal manner in the proceedings of party politicians. The French proclaim a Republic. Before it has three months' trial, behold a military dictator presiding over it. Whose blame is this? None but that of the men who were most republican. For anything that appears, the moderate people would have sat quiet under the purely democratic rule of the national assembly, and the very appearance of a soldier might have been dispensed with. But the ardent lovers of Democracy contrive to frighten the mass of the community, who consequently are fain to abandon liberty for the sake of personal safety. In the same manner in England, let a town muster a few hundred people desirous to state reforms, their sentiments and voice are made of no avail, because of there changing to be perhaps four or five persons in the same place who are so much more zealous in the cause, that they would not scruple to use violence in advancing it. It almost would appear to be the final cause of an "extreme gauche", to raise a salutary terror, and by that means prevent changes being made with inconvenient rapidity. On the other hand is any institution challenged as no longer consonant with the opinions or favours, able to the interests of mankind? We always see that the attacks of those who long for reformation or removal, do little harm, i