

LITERATURE, &c.

The British Magazines.

From the London People's Journal.

LUCIE DE ROCHEFORT.

A Tale of 1117.

CHAPTER I.

The rain had fallen in torrents, and the large drops beat against the old-fashioned windows of the royal abode, whose noble park refreshed by the grateful showers, looked even more verdant than before. A young black-eyed girl wandered from window to window, hoping to see from some of them the blue sky peeping through the sombre clouds, but in vain. At length weary of waiting, and heedless of the dapp, she went to the park in which was her favorite garden. Passionately fond of flowers she stooped to gather some, and amongst others a bunch of the lovely lilies so peculiarly the flower of France. Their graceful heads had bent beneath the drops of rain, which, like pearls, hid themselves amid the recesses of their corollas. The maiden, thinking only of their beauty and fragrance, allowed the water to run down her head and neck, thereby wetting her dress.

'Lucie! Lucie!' cried an angry voice; and raising her eyes towards the palace, the young girl perceived her mother, the wife of the Grand Seneschal, in the balcony of her apartment. Hastily collecting her flowers she formed them into a bouquet, and held it up smiling, to her mother, then bounding, light and graceful as an antelope, across the park, she hurried up stairs, where the Countess de Rochefort awaited her.

'The flowers were for you, my mother,' cried she, kneeling beside the arm-chair of the latter.

Her mother was satisfied with the excuse, for wiping away the drops of rain which trickled down Lucie's silken tresses, 'Come to my heart,' she said, and then folding her in her arms, gazing on her with a look in which pride was mingled with admiration, she added, 'Can it be that you are indeed queen of France! you, who are only thirteen years of age, Queen of France! Do you know, Lucie, what it is to be adored by a great nation, and to have a husband sharing with you his throne? Will you not be kind to your subjects, my child? and will you not dearly love your husband?'

'Fear not,' my mother, replied the young girl with emotion. 'I would that my husband should bless our union, and the people our reign. I would that their days, like the hours of a sun dial, should be measured by sunshine. Oh mother, I am happy—so happy, that I can scarcely believe in its reality.'

'Believe it, my child. God will watch over you; and your husband's father has been under too many obligations to yours to allow of his son's being ungrateful to the Count de Rochefort.'

One of the pages of the countess entered at this moment, bearing a letter from the Grand Seneschal: muttering the page to withdraw, Lady de Rochefort read aloud, as follows:

'My dearly beloved, and very noble wife, Elizabeth Cracy—I, Count de Rochefort, and Grand Seneschal of France, have the honor to inform you that, before raising the siege of the town of which I bear the name, I could have taken prisoners the Lords of Garlande and of Troyes; but remembering our near relationship to our most gracious king Louis, I ventured without formally asking his majesty's permission, to grant them their liberty. Inform him, however, of the circumstance, on the part of your devoted husband, Gail-le-Rouge, Lord of Monthery, Count de Rochefort, and Grand Seneschal of France.'

As soon as she had finished reading, Elizabeth rose, and said to her daughter, 'come, let us bring the letter to the king, and plead the cause of the two rebels, in order that he may not blame the clemency of the Count de Rochefort.'

Thus saying, she drew Lucie out of the hall, and the marble pavement was strewn with the young queen's flowers. Those flowers so fresh, so lovely, soon faded—their reign had lasted but a day.

CHAPTER II.

Some time after this, the king held a council in the great hall.

'Command Lucie de Rochefort, and the wife of the Grand Seneschal to attend,' said Louis to one of his pages.

Elizabeth and Lucie soon appeared, agitated by a vague uneasiness. The Count de Rochefort and the other noblemen wished to rise, in honor of the young queen, whose gentle countenance bespoke her amiable disposition.

'Remain seated, gentlemen,' said Louis VI., coldly; 'my council need not rise to a countess.'

The Countess blushed with anger. 'What!' thought she, 'do they refuse the title of queen to my Lucie? She is, however, the legitimate wife of Louis in the sight of God and man.'

'A tear rolled down the cheek of the young queen, as the king rose and said:

'We, Louis VI., King of France, by the grace of God and the saints, declare that we repudiate Lucie de Rochefort, daughter of Gail-le-Rouge, Count de Rochefort, and Grand Seneschal of France, and of Elizabeth de Cracy; and that the marriage be declared null and void, and that the separation be pronounced in our loyal town of Troyes; as we do

not wish to find a master in our father-in-law, whom we hoped to have found a dutiful subject.'

At these words various emotions were painted on the expressive countenance of the Count de Rochefort. Elizabeth tried to rise, but sank down again in her chair. As to the unfortunate Lucie, a plaintive cry escaped her—her eyes remained sad and fixed—her unusually rosy cheeks were overspread with a deadly paleness, and she resembled a marble statue. Poor young creature, thus rudely was the cup of joy dashed from her lips!—thus vanished, and for ever, her dreams of greatness and glory! Like her flowers, she had reigned but for a day.

'Take her away!' cried Elizabeth, 'she is fainting!'

The count advanced towards his daughter, and raised her in his arms. The young queen bent her head over his shoulder, and grasped him convulsively. He bore her thus to her apartments, and laid her down beside her mother, who embraced her in a transport of affection.

'My poor broken lily,' said she, 'who can restore you to your former happiness! You were the pride of our gardens, the ornament of our fetes—already has a storm passed over you.'

The accents of the maternal voice pierced Lucie's heart, and falling on her knees beside the countess's arm chair, she exclaimed in despair, 'Oh my mother you did not prepare me for this cruel blow; you must teach me how to live without love, without royalty, without a crown.'

Then, in the same attitude as on the day when the countess spoke to her of her joyous prospects, she hid her face in the long folds of her veil, and wept bitterly. Her tears, which she tried in vain to restrain, fell burning on her mother's bosom, that mother, wounded in her affections, humbled in her pride, had not power to console her; she could only mutter a few words, which revealed the deepness of the wound she had received.

CHAPTER III.—A. D. 1115.

Paris resounded with the joyful acclamations of the people, and the ringing of the bells of Notre Dame, together with the agitation which was everywhere perceptible, announced a fete, in which every inhabitant of the town was to share. It was on the occasion of the king's marriage with Adelaide de Maurienne, daughter of Humbert II, count of Savoy. The people enthusiastically welcomed a descendant of the great Charlemagne; she was adorned with a magnificence worthy of her noble ancestors; and the fickle multitude soon forgot the solitary star, which had shone but for an instant, and left, alas! no trace behind it.

In the evening the park was brilliantly illuminated, and presented a splendid spectacle. The trees were ornamented with colored lamps in such a manner as to give them the appearance of being encircled by garlands of fire; the walks were strewn with flowers, and every one appeared pleased and happy. But no, not all; in a lonely path, the only one forsaken by the crowd, a lady walked slowly along, guided by the moonbeams which pierced through the trees; she appeared to listen sadly to the noise of the people, whose joy contrasted so painfully with her own sad thoughts.

The present—the future—could they give her any pleasures, comparable to those which she had lost? The joy of her soul had fled!—and yet she was but twenty, and might she not yet, therefore, feel a sentiment capable of re-animating her existence, and making her forget those glad days when she thought her power was unlimited, because a look or a word made every one yield their will to hers. But oh! how everything was now changed! she was treated with coolness and contempt. 'The inconstant crowd worshipped the divinity of the day, and loaded her with the incense which had formerly burned for another. At these thoughts a sigh escaped her, and tears flowed down her cheeks. A slight noise behind roused her from this painful reverie; she started involuntarily, and then fancied it was the wind playing amid the trees; but a young man approached.

'Alone here, madame,' said he, 'can it be that you are weary of the amusements of the evening; or have you lost your way amongst these lonely walks?'

'Amusements,' replied she in a trembling voice, 'that is a word which awakens no echo in my heart; there was a time when each day brought with it new joys, when my lively imagination held its sway over the stern realities of life; or when, like a fairy a touch of my wand would animate all around! Oh, how pleasant is this power! how dreadful to be obliged to renounce this empire.'

'This power,' said the young man, looking with admiration at the pale, but noble features of the lady who addressed him, 'this power is the power of beauty; to attract by a look, to ensnare by a smile, to captivate every heart, such is your fate, and oh is it not a sweet and pleasant destiny?'

'There are women,' she replied, 'who have never been loved; they have been cast aside like a broken toy; and youth and beauty have remained powerless before caprice and fashion. Life is like a crystal, whose innumerable faces produce a variety of different colors; but would not the brightest appear dull when looked at in the light of the noonday sun?'

'Who are you?' replied the young man in amazement, 'that speaks thus bitterly of the world and of life?'

'A victim of fate, an overthrown idol—Lucie de Rochefort, formerly Queen of France,

now a shadow walking in the midst of the living.'

At these words, pronounced in a grave tone, the young man cast down his eyes in respect and astonishment; an unbidden tear rolled down his face. When he looked up the fair vision had vanished beneath the deep foliage, amongst which he heard a faint rustling.

This interview remained for a long time engraven on the heart of the young nobleman; he sought for the young queen, wishing to offer her a pure and deeply seated love. He found her; his devoted affection consoled her for the loss of a crown; and before long Lucie de Rochefort became Lady de Beaujeu.

From the London People's Journal.

INDUSTRIOUS IDLERS.

It is strange that in this world of care, business and pleasure, there should be many who pine for the want of something to do—something to occupy their leisure, and fill up the vacuum caused by too much wealth. It is a common thing to hear these who labor from 'early morn to dewy eve' wish that they had time to enjoy themselves; and it is not unfrequently the case that they whose fortunate, or rather unfortunate, lot it is to be born to riches, pine for the health and strength that labor seldom fails to bring.

'Industry,' says Bishop Berkeley, 'is the natural sure way to wealth;' but what is industry to those who already possess the wealth without of living without labor? Why, it is, or should be, the means of diffusing happiness among the sons of toil; but, unfortunately, there are many who possess wealth, and yet want the power or the inclination to render it useful to the world.

Money, it has been cleverly said, is like manure, quite useless in a heap, but a very good thing when it is spread; and they who keep it locked up in coffers, or what is much the same, expend it uselessly, are like the old miser in the fable, who, when he buried his treasure in the field, and coming to feast his eyes on it, found it gone, bewailed his hard fate, and cursed the thief. Everybody heard the story, but it is worth repeating, nevertheless, for in the moral of it is concealed a deep truth. Hearing the lamentations of the miser, a traveller who happened to be passing inquired the cause of his grief. 'Look,' said the old man, pointing to the empty hole, 'I laid my riches there and they have been stolen.' 'You laid your riches there,' said the traveller, 'that was a very silly proceeding on your part; why not have kept them for your daily occasions?' 'Daily occasions,' whined the miser; 'what, do you think I meant to spend my money?' 'Oh,' exclaimed the traveller, 'if that be all—if you merely laid it there to look at, you have nothing more to do than to put a stone in its place, pay your devotion to that, and you will never feel your loss.'

But to the industrious idlers this fable does not apply; for, whatever faults may be laid to their charge, that of inactivity is not among the number; indeed it seems quite contrary to the genius of Britons to *luxuriate* in idleness—the climate is not fitted for lying in the sun; and, to our honor be it said, there are very few really idle people to be found amongst us. Even they who have no regular occupation or profession, no 'daily occasions' for exertion, ever find means to rub off the dust of leisure, and become positively laborious in their pleasures; and to these the industrious idlers belong.

To this feeling we owe, oftentimes, the ardour of the sportsman, the untiring curiosity of the traveller, the enthusiasm of the learned rich, and haply, the spendthrift propensities of our younger nobility;—the rich *parvenu* who made the tour of Europe, and brought home nothing but a bag of noses clipped from the faces of ancient statues, is but a type of the class—and the youth who has more money than wit, and expends his too much energy in driving through bred horses, and knocking about ivory balls upon a green baize cloth, but another illustration.

Without something to engage his thoughts the rich man is—*must be*, necessarily—a most miserable being; and bearing in mind the dreariness that comes of want of occupation, I often thank God that I am among the world's laborers—for honest labor is honorable no matter of what degree. How wretched it must be to feel that sleeping listlessness, so well described by the American poet, stealing over the frame, and occupying the mind to the exclusion of all higher thoughts. Hear what the poet says:

'How often, O how often,
I have wished that the ebbing tide
Would bear me away on its bosom
O'er the ocean wild and wide!
For my heart is not and restless,
And my life is full of care,
And the burden laid upon me
Seems greater than I can bear.'

But the industrious idler is seldom troubled with thoughts like these; for, thanks to the restless activity of our nature, there is no standing still in the crowd, and if they cannot occupy themselves in matters useful, their surplus energies are expended in trifling, frivolous, though sometimes mischievous pursuits; and those who are not profitable members of society become the dupes of intriguing sharpers, and others of the same kidney. If the bias lie towards things that are laudable and good for their species, well; and if not, why it is better to be industrious in little things than to be positively and really idle;

for activity in the moral, is like wind and storm in the physical atmosphere—it fits it for better things, by clearing away the impurities that gather in the sunshine.

With us, however, there is not much danger of extreme idleness, for whichever way a man turns there is something calls for his interference—something invites his co-operation: and, whether he spends his money in dissipation, or wastes it in the thousand-and-one schemes invented for the amusement and occupation of the wealthy, it matters little— for anything is better than nothing: pleasures pall at last, and something good occasionally comes out of the vagaries of the industrious idler, if it be only a new method of getting through a thousand a year, without thought.

Various have been the plans adopted for 'killing time,' with good or bad results as the case may be. Some men take to building, which is a very harmless, though frequently expensive method—Beckford found it so, no doubt when he built Fonthill Abbey by torch-light: some have a fancy for collecting pictures and works of art; a laudable way of spending time and money, without doubt, though sometimes carried to a ruinous excess; others, in gathering together heaps of knick-knackeries, like Horace Walpole, which is not altogether an useless occupation: while some again hunt up old books, old coins, old clothes, and old memories—the antiquarian idleness being perhaps the least to be condemned: others seek excitement in the senate or the field, and work off their high pressure energy in talking or fighting—the last, doubtless the least useful of all.

Some take to ornamental farming, some to novel writing—the ladies especially: some to mere pleasure, which is an unsatisfactory and tiring mode of idling; and some to hard drinking; some going to gambling; and others to taking the chair at public meetings and city dinners, or busying themselves about the erection of baths and wash-houses, and writing for 'The Times.' These last, by the way are always industrious and never idle, and would be busy if they were confined within four stone walls, upon a straw bed—they, therefore, scarcely belong to this class, but as we have placed them in the list they must be content to abide there. Goldsmith was an eminent specimen of industrious idlers; he always put off writing till he was positively without money; but the best of it was that he had not sufficient wealth to be idle altogether: and the world had need be thankful for it; for had he been a rich man the 'Vicar of Wakefield' would never have been written, and we should have lost the finest novel in the language. To conclude—for the charm of an essay is in its brevity—the industrious idlers are a very useful class in their way, for they help to illustrate the value of constant activity. Idleness, we are told, is the devil's plaything, and riches is the root of all evil: we long for the first and strive for the last. Better pray to be preserved from both.

WONDERS IN NATURAL HISTORY.

The greyhound runs by eyesight only, and this we observe as a fact. The carrier pigeon flies his two hundred and fifty miles homeward by eyesight, namely, from point to point of objects which he has marked; but this is only our conjecture. The fierce dragon-fly, with twelve thousand lenses in his eye, starts from angle to angle with the rapidity of a flashing sword, and as rapidly darts back, not turning in the air, but with a dash reversing the action of his four wings—the only known creature that possesses this faculty. His sight then, both forwards and backwards, must be proportionately rapid with his wings, and instantaneously calculating the distance of objects, or he would dash himself to pieces. But in what conformation of his eye does this consist? No one can answer. A cloud of ten thousand gnats dances up and down in the sun, the gnats being so close together that you can scarce see between them, yet no one knocks another heading upon the grass, or breaks a leg or a wing, long and delicate as these are. Suddenly amidst your admiration of this matchless dance, a peculiarly high shouldered vicious goat, with long, pale, pendant nose, darts out of the rising and falling cloud, and settling on your neck insinuates a poisonous sting. What possessed the little wretch to do this? Did he smell your blood in the mazy dance? No one knows. A four horse coach comes suddenly upon a flock of geese on a narrow road, and drives through the middle of them—a goose was never yet fairly run over; nor a duck. They are under the very wheels and hoofs, and yet somehow they contrive to flap and waddle safely off. Habitually stupid, heavy and indolent, they are nevertheless equal to any emergency. Why does the lonely woodpecker when he descends and goes to drink, stop several times on his way, listen, and look round before he takes his draught? No one knows. How is it that the species of ant, which is taken in battle by other ants to be made slaves should be the black, or negro ant? No one knows. A large species of starfish possesses the power of breaking itself into fragments, under the influence of error, rage, or despair. 'A' it does not generally break up,' says professor Forbes, 'before it is raised above the surface of the sea, cautiously and anxiously I sunk my bucket, and proceeded in the most gentle manner to introduce *Luidia* to the purer element. When the cold air was too much for him or the sight of the bucket too terrific, I knew not, but in a moment he dissolved his corporation, and at every mesh of the dredge his fragments were seen escaping.'