

LITERATURE, &c.

The British Magazines.

From the London People's Journal.

THOU ART BEAUTIFUL, O PEACE!

BY ALEXANDER MACLAGAN.

Thou art beautiful, O Peace!
Thou com'st like summer beams,
Like the glad golden horn
Of Plenty, on our dreams.
Lift up thy holy voice,
It may not be in vain;
The Earth's bright page—the golden
age—
May glad the world again.
Let us love—love on!

Thou art beautiful, O Peace!
Earth spreads a teeming store,
With brighter hopes of heaven,
Vain man, what would ye more?
Away with wasting war,
Away with ruffian might,
A brother's hand, without a brand,
Can guard a brother's right!
Let us love—love on!

Thou art beautiful, O Peace!
Each living scene we see,
All pants for Love's embrace,
All sigh for harmony!
The glorious, glorious sun,
Each heaven-lighted star,
And every flower, in beauty bow'd,
Cries out, 'No War, no War!
Let us love—love on!

Thou art beautiful, O Peace!
Thy bright ideas bring
Girls with rosy garlands,
Birds with golden wings,
Bees with honey treasures,
Lambkins crowned with flowers,
The breath of May, the roundelay
Of Love in summer bowers.
Let us love—love on!

Thou art beautiful, O Peace!
The hour is coming fast
When the earth no more shall start
At the war trumpet's blast,
When every man shall sit
Beneath his own fig tree,
Content in mind that all mankind
Are brothers—let it be!
Let us love—love on!

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A POLICE OFFICER.

THE ROBBER'S REVENGE.

LEVASSEUR and his confederates* sailed for the penal settlements in the ill-fated convict ship, the *Amphytrion*, the total wreck of which on the coast of France, and consequent drowning of the crew and prisoners, excited so painful a sensation in England. A feeling of regard for the untimely fate of Le Breton, whom I regarded rather as a weak dupe than purposed rascal, passed over my mind as I read the announcement in the newspapers; but newer events had almost jostled the incidents connected with his name from my remembrance, when a terrible adventure vividly recalled them and taught me how fierce and untameable are the instincts of hate and revenge in a certain class of minds.

A robbery of plate had been committed in Portman-square, with an ingenuity and boldness which left no doubt that it had been effected by clever and practised hands. The detective officers first employed having failed to discover the offenders, the threads of the imperfect and broken clew were placed in my hands, to see if my somewhat renowned dexterity, or luck, as many of my brother officers preferred calling it, would enable me to piece them out to a satisfactory conclusion. By the description obtained of a man who had been seen lurking about the house a few days previous to the burglary, it had been concluded by my predecessors in the investigation, that one Martin, a fellow with half a dozen aliases, and a well known traveller on the road to the hulks, was concerned in the affair; and by their advice a reward of fifty pounds had been offered for his apprehension and conviction. I prosecuted the enquiry with my usual energy and watchfulness, without nighting upon any new fact or intimation of importance. I could not discover that a single article of the missing property had been either pawned or offered for sale, and little doubt remained that the crucible had fatally diminished the chances of detection. The only hope was, that an increased reward might induce one of the gang to betray his confederates; and as the property was of large value this was done, and one hundred guineas was promised for the required information. I had been to the printer's to order the placards announcing the increased recompense; and after indulging in a long gossip with the foreman of the establishment, whom I knew well, was passing at about a quarter past ten o'clock through Ryder's Court, Newport Market, when a tall man met and passed me swiftly, holding a handkerchief to his face. There was nothing remarkable in that as the weather was bitterly cold and sleety; and I walked unheedingly on. I was just in the act of passing out of the court towards Leicester Square, when swift steps sounded suddenly behind me. I instinctively turned, and as I did so, received a violent blow on the left shoulder—intended, I doubted not,

for the nape of my neck—from the tall individual who had passed me a minute previously. As he still held the handkerchief to his face, I did not catch even a momentary glance of his features, and he ran off with surprising speed. The blow, sudden, jarring, and inflicted with a sharp instrument—by a strong knife or a dagger—caused a sensation of faintness; and before I recovered from it, all chance of successful pursuit was at an end. The wound, which was not serious, I had dressed at a chemist's shop in the Haymarket; and as proclaiming the attack would do nothing towards detecting the perpetrator of it, I said little about it to any one, and managed to conceal it entirely from my wife, to whom it would have suggested a thousand painful apprehensions whenever I happened to be unexpectedly detained from home. The brief glimpse I had of the bawled assassin afforded no reasonable indication of his identity. To be sure he ran at an unusual and amazing pace, but this was a qualification possessed by so many of the light-legged, as well as light-fingered gentlemen of my professional acquaintance, that it could not justify even a random suspicion; and I determined to forget the unpleasant incident as soon as possible.

The third evening after this occurrence I was again passing along Leicester square at a somewhat late hour, but this time with all my eyes about me. Snow, which the wind blew sharply in one's face, was falling fast and the cold was intense. Except myself and a tallish, snow-wreathed figure—a woman apparently—not a living being was to be seen. This figure, which was standing still at the further side of the square, appeared to be awaiting me, and as I drew near, it threw back the hood of a cloak, and to my great surprise disclosed the features of Madame Jaubert. This lady, some years before, had carried on, not very far from the spot where she now stood, a respectable millinery business. She was a widow with one child, a daughter of about seven years of age. Marie Louise, as she was named, was one unfortunate day sent to Coventry street on an errand, with some money in her hand, and never returned. The enquiries set on foot proved utterly without effect: not the slightest intelligence of the fate of the child was obtained—and the grief and distraction of the bereaved mother resulted in temporary insanity. She was confined in a lunatic asylum for seven or eight months and when pronounced convalescent found herself homeless and almost penniless in the world. This sad story I had heard from one of the keepers of the asylum during her sojourn there. It was a subject she herself never, I was aware, touched upon; and she had no reason to suspect that I was in the slightest degree informed of this melancholy passage in her life. She, why I knew not, changed her name from that of Duquesne to the one she now bore—Jaubert; and for the last two or three years had supported a precarious existence by plausible begging letters addressed to persons of credulous benevolence; for which offence she had frequently visited the police courts at the instance of the Secretary of the Mendicity Society, and it was there I had consequently formed an acquaintance with her.

'Madam Jaubert!' I exclaimed with unfeigned surprise, 'why, what on earth can you be waiting here for on such a stormy night as this?'

'I was waiting to see you,' was her curt reply.

'To see me! Depend upon it, then, you are knocking at the wrong door for not the first time in your life. The very little faith I ever had in professional widows, with twelve small children, all down in the menials, has long since vanished, and—'

'Nay,' she interrupted—she spoke English, by the way, like a native—'I'm not such a fool as to be trying the whimpering dodge upon you. It is a matter of business. You want to find Jem Martin?'

'Ay, truly; but what can you know of him? Surely you have not yet fallen so low as to be the associate or accomplice of burglars?'

'Neither yet, nor likely to be so,' replied the woman; 'still I could tell you where to place your hands on Martin, if I were but sure of the reward.'

'There can be no doubt about that,' I answered.

'Then follow me immediately, and before ten minutes are past you shall have secured your man.'

I did so—cautiously, suspiciously; for my adventure three evenings before had rendered me unusually circumspect and watchful. She led the way to the most crowded quarter of St. Giles's, and when she had reached the entrance of a dark blind alley, called Hine's-court, turned into it and beckoned me to follow.

'Nay, Madam Jaubert,' I exclaimed, 'that won't do. You mean fairly, I dare say; but I don't enter that respectable alley alone at this time of night.'

She stopped for a short time, silent and embarrassed. Presently she said, with a slight sneer: 'You are afraid, I suppose?'

'Yes, I am.'

'What is to be done, then?' she added, after a moment's consideration. 'He is alone, I assure you.'

'That is quite possible, still I do not enter that *cul-de-sac* to night, unaccompanied save by you.'

'You suspect me of some evil design, Mr Waters?' said the woman, with an accent of reproach. 'I thought you might, and yet nothing can be further from the truth. My sole object is to obtain the reward, and escape from this life of degradation and misery to

my own country, and, if possible, begin the world respectably again. Why should you doubt me?'

'How came you acquainted with this robber's haunts?'

'The explanation is quite easy, but this is not the time for it. Stay—can't you get assistance?'

'Easily—in less than ten minutes; and if you are here when I return, and your information proves correct, I will ask pardon for my suspicions.'

'Be it so,' she said, 'and be quick, for this weather is terrible.'

Ten minutes had not passed when I returned with half a dozen officers, and found Madame Jaubert still at her post. We followed her up the court, caught Martin sure enough asleep, upon a wretched pallet of straw in one of the alley hovels, and walked him off, terribly scared and surprised, to the nearest station-house, where he passed the remainder of the night.

The next day Martin proved an *alibi* of the distinctest and most undeniable kind. He had been an inmate of Clerkenwell prison for the last three months, with the exception of just six days previous to our capture of him; and he was, of course, at once discharged. The reward was payable only on the conviction of the offender, and the disappointment of poor Madame Jaubert was extreme. She wept bitterly at the thought of being obliged to continue her present disreputable mode of life, when a thousand francs—a sum she believed Martin's capture would have assured her—besides sufficient for travelling expenses and decent outfit, would, she said, purchase a partnership in a small but respectable millinery shop in Paris.

'Well,' I remarked to her, 'there is no reason for despair. You have not only proved your sincerity and good faith, but that you possess a knowledge—how acquired you best know—of the haunts and hiding places of burglars. The reward as you may have seen by the new placards, has been doubled; and I have a strong opinion, from something that has reached me this morning, that if you could light upon one Armstrong alias Rowden, it would be as certainly yours as if already in your pocket.'

'Armstrong—Rowden,' repeated the woman with anxious simplicity. 'I never heard either of these names. What sort of a person is he?'

I described him minutely; but Madame Jaubert appeared to entertain little or no hope of discovering his whereabouts; and, ultimately went away in a very disconsolate mood, after, however, arranging to meet me the next evening.

I met her as agreed. She could obtain, she said, no intelligence of any reliable worth; and she pressed me for further particulars; was Armstrong a drinking, a gaming, or a play going man? I told her all I knew of his habits, and a gleam of hope glanced across her face as one or two indications were mentioned. I was to see her again on the morrow. I came; she was as far off as ever; and I advised her to waste no further time in the pursuit, but at once endeavor to regain a position of respectability by the exercise of industry in the trade or business in which she was reputedly well-skilled. Madame Jaubert laughed scornfully; and a gleam, it seemed to me, of her never entirely subdued insanity shot from her deep-set, flashing eyes. It was finally settled that I should meet her once more at the same place, at about eight o'clock the next evening.

I arrived somewhat late at the appointed rendezvous, and found Madame Jaubert in a state of manifest excitement and impatience. She had, she was pretty sure, discovered Armstrong, and knew he was at that moment in a house in Greek street, Soho.

'Greek street, Soho. Is he alone?' I asked.

'Yes; with the exception of a woman who is minding the premises, and of whom he is an acquaintance under another name. You will be able to secure him without the least risk or difficulty, but not an instant must be lost.'

Madam Jaubert perceiving my hesitation, exclaimed—

'Surely you are not afraid of one man. It's useless affecting to suspect me after what has happened.'

'True,' I replied. 'Lead on.'

The house at which we stopped in Greek street, appeared to be an empty one, from the printed bills in the windows announcing it to be let or sold. Madame Jaubert knocked in a peculiar manner at the door, which was opened by a woman.

'Is Mr Brown still within?' asked Madame Jaubert.

'Yes; but what do you want with him?' inquired the woman.

'I have brought a gentleman who will be a purchaser of some of the goods he has to dispose of.'

'Walk in, then, if you please,' was the answer. We did so, and found ourselves, as the door closed, in pitch darkness. 'This way,' said the woman. 'You shall have a light in a minute.'

'Let me guide you,' said Madame Jaubert, as I groped onward by the wall, and at the same seizing my right hand. Instantly as she did so I heard a rustle just behind me—two quick and violent blows descended on the back of my head, there was a flash before my eyes, a suppressed shout of exultation rang in my ears, and I fell to the ground bereft of my senses.

It was some time, on partially recovering my ideas, before I could realise either what had occurred or the situation in which I found myself. Gradually, however, the inci-

dents attending the artfully-prepared treachery of Madame Jaubert, grew into distinctness, and I pretty well comprehended my situation. I was lying at the bottom of a cart, blindfolded, gagged, handcuffed, and covered over by what, from their smell, seemed to be empty corn sacks. The vehicle was moving at a pretty rapid rate, and judging from the roar and tumult without, through one of the best thoroughfares of London.

It was Saturday evening; and I thought from the character of the noises, and the tone of a clock just chiming ten, that we were in Tottenham court-road. I endeavored to rise, but found, as I might have expected, that it was impossible to do so; my captors having secured me to the floor of the cart by strong cords. There was nothing for it, therefore, but patience and resignation; words easily pronounced, but difficult under such circumstances, to realise in practice. My thoughts, doubtless, in consequence of the blows I had received, soon became hurried and incoherent. A tumultuous throng of images swept confusedly past, of which the most constant and frequent were the faces of my wife and youngest child, whom I had kissed in his sleep just previous to leaving home. Madame Jaubert and James Martin were also there; and ever and anon the menacing countenance of Levasseur stooped over me with a hideous expression, and I felt as if clutched in the fiery grasp of a demon. I have no doubt that the voice which sounded in my ear at the moment I was felled to the ground must have suggested the idea of the Swiss—faintly and imperfectly as I caught it. This tumult of brain only gradually subsided as the discordant uproar of the streets—which no doubt added to the excitement I was suffering under by suggesting the exasperating nearness of abundance of help which could not be appealed to—died gradually away into a silence only broken by the rumble of the cart wheels and the subdued talk of the driver and his companions, of whom there appeared to be two or three. At length the cart stopped. I heard a door unlocked and thrown open, and a few moments afterwards I was dragged from under the corn-sacks, carried up three flights of stairs, and dropped brutally upon the floor till a light could be obtained. Directly one was brought, I was raised to my feet, placed upright against a wooden partition, and staples having been driven into the paneling, securely fastened in that position, with cords passed through them, and round my arms. This effected, an authoritative voice—the now distinct recognition of which filled me with dismay—ordered that I should be unblinded. It was done; and when my eyes became somewhat accustomed to the suddenly dazzling light and glare, I saw Levasseur and the clerk Dubarle standing directly in front of me, their faces kindled into flame by fiendish triumph and delight. The report that they had been drowned was then a mistake, and they had incurred the peril of returning to this country for the purpose of avenging themselves on me; and how could it be doubted that an opportunity achieved at such fearful risk, would be effectually, remorselessly used? A pang of mortal terror shot through me, and then I strove to awaken in my heart a stern endurance, and resolute contempt of death, with, I may now confess very indifferent success. The woman Jaubert was, I also saw, present; and a man whom I afterwards ascertained to be Martin, was sitting near the doorway, with his back towards me. These two, at a brief intimation from Levasseur, went down stairs; and then the fierce exultation of the two escaped convicts—of Levasseur especially—broke forth with wolfish rage and ecstasy.

'Ha—ha—ha!' shouted the Swiss, at the same time striking me over the face with his open hand, 'you find, then, that others can plot as well as you can—dog, traitor, scoundrel that you are! Au revoir—allons! was it, eh? Well, here we are, and I wish you joy of the meeting. Ha—ha! how dismal the rascal looks, Dubarle!—Again the coward struck me—He is hardly grateful to me, it seems, for having kept my word. I always do, my fine fellow,' he added, with a savage chuckle; 'and never neglect to pay my debts of honor. Yours especially,' he continued, drawing a pistol from his pocket, 'shall be prompt payment, and with interest, too.'

He held the muzzle of the pistol to within a yard of my forehead, and placed his finger on the trigger. I instinctively closed my eyes, and tasted in that fearful moment the full bitterness of death; but my hour was not yet come. Instead of the flash and report which I expected would herald me into eternity, a taunting laugh from Levasseur at the terror he had excited rang through the room.

'Come—come,' said Dubarle, over whose face a gleam of commiseration, almost of repentance, had once or twice passed; 'you will alarm that fellow down stairs with your noise. We must you know, wait till he is gone, and he appears to be in no hurry. In the meantime let us have a game of piquet for the first shot at the traitor's carcass.'

'Excellent—capital!' shouted Levasseur with savage glee. 'A game of piquet; the stake of your life, Waters! A glorious game! and mind you see fair play. In the meantime here's your health, and better luck next time, if you should chance to live to see it.' He swallowed a draught of wine which Dubarle, after helping himself, had poured out for him; and then approaching me with the silver cup he had drained in his hand, said, 'Look at the crest! Do you recognize it—fool, idiot that you are!'

I did know it readily enough. It was a portion of the plunder carried off from Portman square.

* See Gleaner of November 25, 1850.