

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE BRITISH MAGAZINES.

From the London People's Journal.

## A NEW SONG FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Look alive! look alive!  
There is plenty to be done;  
In this busy human hive  
There should never be a drone;  
Some new triumph every day  
Will be ours if we strive;  
Shake all lethargy away—  
Look alive! look alive!

Look alive! look alive!  
Put your shoulder to the wheel  
And the time will soon arrive  
When the progress you will feel.  
Nought by indolence is gained;  
We must toil if we would thrive,  
'Twas for this we were ordained—  
Look alive! look alive!

Look alive! look alive!  
Whatever you may be;  
He who deep enough will dive  
May bring pearls from every sea.  
All abuses from the land  
Every man should help to drive;  
We have simple means at hand—  
Look alive! look alive!

Look alive! look alive!  
Shake all apathy away;  
We have only got to strive,  
To secure a better day.  
There's a task for every one  
In this busy human hive;  
Let the work to do, be done—  
Look alive! look alive!

From Chambers's Journal.

## THE DESERTED HOUSE.

By the time my companion had reached this point in his narration we found ourselves at the entrance of the village, where the church stood, and beside it the small house occupied by the curé. It had a small garden in front, and under the porch sat a very ancient woman, basking in the sun. Her head shook with palsy, her form was bent, and she had a pair of long knitting-needles in her hands, from her manner of using which I saw she was blind. The priest invited me to walk in, informing me that was Rosina; and adding, that if I liked to rest myself for half an hour, he would ask her to tell me the rest of the story. Feeling assured that some strange catastrophe remained to be disclosed, I eagerly accepted the good man's offer; and having been introduced to Henriette's former companion, whose memory, in spite of her great age, I found perfectly clear, I said I feared it might give her pain to recall circumstances that were doubtless of a distressing character.

'Ah, madame,' said she, 'it is but putting into words the thoughts that were always in my head. I have never related the sad tale but twice: for I would not for my dear mistress's sake, speak of such things to the people about her; but each time I slept better afterwards. I seemed to have lightened the heaviness of my burden by imparting the secret to another.'

'You were very much attached to Mlle de Beaugency?' said I.

'My mother was her nurse, madame, but we grew up like sisters,' answered Rosina. 'She never concealed a thought from me; and the Virgin knows her thoughts will never keep me an hour out of Paradise, for there was no more sin in them than a butterfly's wing might bear.'

'I suppose she suffered a great deal when she heard of her cousin's death?' said I. 'How long was it before she married the count? For she did marry him, I conclude, from what I have heard.'

'Ay, madame; she did, about a year after she—the news came, worse luck! Not that she was unhappy with him exactly. He did not treat her ill; far from it; he was passionately fond of her. But he was jealous—heaven knows of whom, for he had nobody to be jealous of. But he loved like a hot-headed Spaniard, as he was; and I suppose he felt that she did not return his love in the same way. But how could she, when she had given her whole heart to her cousin? Still she liked the count, and I could not say they were unhappy together; but she did not like Spain and the people she lived amongst there. The count's place was dreadfully gloomy certainly. For my part, I used to be afraid to go at night along the vaulted passages, and up those wide dark staircases, to my bed. But the count doted on it because it had belonged to the family time out of mind; and it was only to please her that he ever came to her family home at all.'

'But surely this place is very dismal too?' said I.

'Dismal,' said she. 'Aye, now, I dare say, because there's a curse on it; but not then. Oh, it was a pleasant place in old M. de Beaugency's time! Besides, my poor mistress loved it for the sake of the happy days she had seen there; and when the period approached that she was to be confined of her first child, she entreated her husband to bring her here. She wanted to have my mother with her, who had been like a mother to her; and as she told him she was sure she should die if he kept her in Catalonia, he yielded to

her wishes, and so we came. The doctor was spoken to, and everything arranged; and she was so pleased, poor thing, at the thoughts of having a baby, that as we used to sit together making clothes for the little creature that was expected, she chatted away so gaily about what she would do with it, and how we should bring it up, that I saw she was now really beginning to forget that she was not married to the husband her young heart had chosen.

'Well, madame,' continued Rosina, after wiping her sightless eyes with the corner of her white apron—'we were all, as you will understand, very happy, and looking forward shortly to the birth of the child, when, one afternoon, when my master and mistress were out driving, and I was looking through the rails of the garden gate for the carriage—for they had already been gone longer than usual—I saw a figure coming hastily along the road towards where I stood, a figure which, as it drew near, brought the heart into my mouth, for I thought it was an apparition! I just took a second look, and then, overcome with terror, I turned and ran towards the house; but before I reached it, he had opened the gate and was in the garden.'

'Who was?' said I.

'M. Eugene, madame—Eugene de Beaugency, my lady's cousin,' answered Rosina. 'Rosina, don't be frightened,' cried he. 'I'm no ghost. I suppose that you heard I was killed? But I was not, you see; I was only taken prisoner, and here I am alive and well, thank God! How's my cousin? Where is she?'

'I leave you to judge how I felt on hearing this, madam,' continued the old woman. 'A black curtain seemed to fall before my eyes, on which I could read wo! wo! wo! I could not tell what form it would take; I never could have guessed the form it did take; but I saw that behind the dark screen which veiled the future from my eyes there was nothing but wo on the face of the earth for those three creatures. The Lord have mercy upon them, thought I; and for the world to come I hope my prayer may have been heard—but it was of no avail for this.'

'Well, madame, my first fear was that the count would return and find him there, for well I knew there would be bloodshed if they met; so without answering his questions, I entreated him to go away instantly to my mother's, promising that I would follow him presently and tell him everything; but this request, together with the terror and agitation he saw me in, made him suspect the truth at once; and seizing my arm with such violence that I bore the marks of his poor fingers for many a day afterwards, he asked me if she was married.'

'She is,' said I: 'the thought that you were dead; she had no money left; and you know it was her father's dying injunction that—'

'Married to the Spaniard—to Ruy Gonzalez?' said he, with such a face, the Lord deliver me! (and the old woman paused for a moment, as if to recover from the pain of the recollection.) 'Yes,' said I, 'to Ruy Gonzalez; and if he sees you here he'll kill you.'

'Let him,' said he.

'But it will be her death,' said I; 'and she's—she's—' and I had not the heart to go on.

'What?' said he.

'In the family way—near her confinement,' I answered.

He clenched his two fists and clapped them on his forehead.

'I must see her,' he said.

'Impossible,' I answered, 'he never leaves her for a moment.'

'Where are they now?' he asked.

'Out driving,' said I.

'In a dark blue carriage?'

'Yes; and I expect them every minute. Go, go, for the Lord's sake, go to my mother's.'

'I saw the carriage,' said he with a bitter smile. 'It passed me just this side of Noir moutier. Little I thought—and his lips quivered for a moment, and his features were convulsed with agony. 'I must see her,' continued he; and you had better help me to do it, or it will be worse for us all. Hide me in her room, he does not sleep there, I suppose?'

'No,' I replied; 'but he goes there often to talk with her while she is dressing.'

'Put me in the closet,' said he; 'there is room enough for me to crouch down under the book-shelves. You can then tell her; and when he has left her for the night, you can let me out.'

'My God,' I cried, my knees beginning to shake under me. 'I hear the carriage; they'll be here in an instant.'

'Do as you like,' said he, 'seeing the advantage this gave him; if you won't help me to see her, I'll see her without you. I shall stay where I am!' and he struck his cane into the ground with a violence that showed his resolution to do what he threatened.

'Come away, for the Lord's sake,' cried I, for the carriage was close at hand, and there was not a moment to spare; and seizing him by the arm, I dragged him into the house; for even now he was half inclined to wait for them, and I saw he was burning to quarrel with the count. Well, I had just time to lock him into the closet and put the key in my pocket, before they had alighted, and were walking up the garden.

'You may conceive, madame, the state I was in when I met the count and my lady; and my confusion was not diminished by finding that he observed it.'

'What is the matter, Rosina?' said he; 'has anything unusual happened?' and as he

spoke he fixed his dark, piercing eyes upon me in such a way that I felt as if he was reading my very thoughts. I affected to be busy about my mistress, keeping my face away from him; but I knew he was watching me for all that. Generally, when they came home he used to retire to his own apartment, and leave his wife with me; but now he came into the salon, took of his hat and sat himself down; nor did he leave her for two minutes during the whole evening. This conduct was so unusual that it was plain he suspected something; besides, I saw it in his countenance, though I did not know whether his suspicions had been roused by my paleness and agitation, or whether anything else had awakened them; but I felt certain afterwards that he had seen the poor young man when the carriage passed him; or, at least been sufficiently struck with the resemblance to put the true interpretation on my confusion. Well, madame, you may imagine what an evening I spent. I saw clearly that he was determined not to leave me alone with his wife; but this was not of so much consequence, since I had resolved not to give her a hint of what had happened, till the count had taken leave of her for the night, because I knew that her agitation would have betrayed the secret. In the meanwhile she suspected no mischief; for although she observed something was wrong with me, she supposed I was suffering in my mind about a person I was engaged to marry, called Philippe, who had been lately very ill of a fever, and was now said to be threatened with consumption.

Whilst I pretended to be busying myself in my lady's room, they went out to take a stroll in the garden; and when I saw them safe at the other end, I put my lips to the keyhole, and conjured Eugene, for the sake of all that was good, to be still; for that I was certain it would not only be his death, but my mistress's too, if he were discovered; and he promised me he would.

I had scarcely got upon my feet again, when I heard the count's foot on the floor of the salon.

'The countess is oppressed with heat,' said he, 'and wants the large green fan; she says you'll find it on one of the shelves in the closet.'

Only think, madame; only think! I thought I should have sunk into the earth. I stood for a moment agast, and then began to fumble in my pocket.

'Where can the key be?' said I, pretending to search for it; but my countenance betrayed me, and my voice shook so that he read me like a book. I am sure he knew the truth from that moment. He looked hard at me while his face became quite livid; and then he said in a calm deep voice:

'For the fan no matter: I'll take another; but I see you are ill: you have caught Philippe's fever; you must go to bed directly. Come with me and I'll lead you to your room.'

'I am not ill, Monsieur le Conte,' I stammered out; but taking no notice of what I said, he grasped my arm with his powerful hand and dragged me away up stairs; I say dragged, for I had scarcely strength to move my feet, and it was rather dragging than leading. As soon as he had thrust me into the room he said in a very deep, significant tone:

'Remember you are in danger. Unless you are very prudent this fever will be fatal. Go to bed, and keep quite still till I come to see you again, or you may not survive till morning.'

With that he closed the door and locked it; and I heard him take out the key, and descend the stairs. Then I suppose, I swooned; for when I came to myself it was nearly dark; I was lying on the floor, and could not at first remember what had happened. When my recollection returned, I crawled to bed and, and burying my face in the pillows, I gave vent to my feelings in sobs and tears; for I loved my mistress, madame, and I loved M. Eugene, and I knew there would be deadly mischief among them. I expected that the count would break open the closet, and that one or both would be killed; and considering the state she was in, I did not doubt that the fright would kill the countess also. You may judge, madame, what a night I passed; sometimes weeping, sometimes listening, but I could hear nothing unusual; and at length I began to fancy that the conflict had occurred whilst I was lying in the swoon. But how had it terminated? I would have given worlds to know; but there I was, a prisoner, and I feared that if I tried to give any alarm, I might only make bad worse.

Well, madame, I thought the morning would never break; but at length the sun rose, and I heard people stirring. It seemed indeed that there was an unusual bustle and running about; and by and by I heard the sound of wheels and horses' feet in the court, and I knew that they were bringing out the carriage. Where could they be going? I could not imagine; but on the whole I was relieved, for I fancied that the meeting and explanation was over, and that now the count wished to leave the house, which, under the circumstances, I could not wonder at. He spared Eugene for her sake, thought I. And this belief was strengthened by master entering my room shortly afterwards, and saying—

'Your mistress is going away; I am afraid of her taking this fever. When I think it proper, you shall be removed; till then, remember that your life depends on your remaining quiet.'

He placed a loaf of bread and a carafe of water on the table, and went away, locking

the door as before. I confess now that much as I felt for M. Eugene, I could not help pitying the count also. What ravages the sufferings of that night had made on him! His cheeks looked pale and hollow, his features all distorted, and his complexion like that of a corpse. It was a dreadful blow to him certainly, for I knew that he loved my mistress to madness.

Well, madame, I passed the day more peaceably than I could have hoped; but my mind being somewhat relieved about my lady, I began to think a little of myself, and to wonder what the count meant to do with me. I felt certain he would never let me see her again if he could help it, and that alone was a heart-breaking grief to me; and then it came into my head that perhaps he would confine me somewhere for life—shut me up in a convent perhaps, or a madhouse. As soon as this idea possessed me, it grew and grew till I felt as if I really was going mad with the horror of it; and I resolved, though it was at the risk of breaking my neck, to try and make my escape by the window during the night. It looked to the side of the house, and was not very high up; besides, there was soft flower beds outside to break my fall; so I thought that by tying the sheets together, and fastening them to an iron bar that divided the lattice, I might reach the ground in safety. I was a little creature and though the space was not large it sufficed me to get through; and when all was quiet, and I thought everybody was in bed, I made the attempt and succeeded. I had to jump the last few feet, and I was over my ankles in the soft mould; but that did not signify—I was free; and taking to my heels I ran off to my mother's, who lived then in a cottage hard by, where we are now sitting; and after telling her what had happened, it was agreed that I should go to bed, and that if anybody came to enquire for me she should say I was ill of the fever, and could not be seen. I knew when the morning came that I should be missed, for doubtless the count would go into my room with food; and besides that, I had left the sheets hanging out of the window.

For two days, however, to my great surprise, we heard nothing; but on the third, Philippe (the young man to whom I was engaged) hearing that I was not at the Beaugency house, came to our cottage to enquire about me. We had not met for some time—the countess having forbidden all communication between us, as she had a horrible dread of the fever, so that he could only hear of me through my mother.

'Rosina is here and unwell,' said my mother: 'we think she's got the fever; for although we might have trusted Philippe with our lives, we thought it would be safer for him to be ignorant of what had happened. Upon this he begged leave to see me; and she brought him into my chamber. After asking about himself, and telling him I was very poorly, he said—'

'That is indeed a sad thing for the countess.'

'What is?' I asked.

'You're being ill at this time,' said he, 'when your services are so much needed by her.'

'What do you mean; the countess is not at the house,' said I.

'Don't you know she's come back,' said he 'and that she's ill. The doctor has been sent for, and they say that she is very dangerously ill.'

'Gracious heaven!' I exclaimed; 'is it possible? My poor, dear mistress ill, and I not with her?'

'Robert the footman says,' continued Philippe—but he bade me not to mention it to anybody—that when they stopped at the inn at Moutonville, Rateau the landlord came to the door of the carriage, and asked if she had seen M. de Beaugency; and that when the countess turned pale and said, 'Are you not aware my cousin was killed in battle?' he assured her it was no such thing; for that M. Eugene had called there shortly before on his way to her house. Rateau must have taken somebody else for him of course; but I suppose she believed him, for she returned directly.'

'Rateau told her that he had seen M. Eugene?' said I.

'So Robert says; but Didier the mason says she was ill before she went, and that it was the rats in the closet that frightened her.'

'Rats!' said I, sitting up in my bed and staring at him wildly. 'What rats?—what closet?'

'Some closet in her bedroom,' said he.—'The count sent for Didier to wall it up directly.'

'To wall it up?—wall up the closet?' I gasped out.

'Yes, build and plaster it up. But what's the matter, Rosina? Oh, I shouldn't have told you the countess was ill!' he cried out, terrified at the agitation I was in.

'Leave me in the name of God! I screamed, and send my mother to me.'

'I remember nothing after this, madame, for a long, long time. When my mother came, she found me in my night-clothes, tying the sheets together in order to get out of the window, though the door was wide open; but I was quite delirious. Weeks passed before I was in a state to remember or comprehend anything. Before I recovered my senses, my poor mistress and her baby were in the grave, my master gone away, nobody knew whither, the servants all discharged, and the accursed house shut up. Not long afterwards the news came that the count had died in Paris.'

'But, Rosina,' said I, 'are you sure that M.