

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

TO MY CIGAR.

THE lovers of smoking will be pleased with the eulogy on their favorite amusement, contained in the ensuing stanzas; and it is believed there are none of our readers but will admire the ingenuity which could adorn so fumid a subject with so beautiful a moral.

Yes, social friend, I love thee well,
In learned doctor's spite;
I love thy fragrant misty spell,
I love thy calm delight.

What if they tell, with phizzes long,
Our years are sooner past;
I would reply with reason strong,
They're sweeter while they last.

And oft, mild tube, to me thou art
A monitor, though still;
Thou speak'st a lesson to my heart,
Above the preacher's skill.

When, in the evening lonely hour,
Attended but by thee,
O'er history's varied page I pore,
Man's fate in thine I see:

A while, like thee, the hero burns,
And smokes and fumes around,
And then, like thee, to ashes turns,
And mingles with the ground!

Thou'rt like the man of worth, who gives
To goodness every day;
The fragrance of whose virtues lives
When he has passed away.

Oh, when the snowy column grows,
And breaks and falls away,
I trace how mighty realms thus rose,
Then tumbled to decay!

From beggars' freize to monarch's robe,
One common doom is passed;
Sweet nature's works, the mighty globe,
Must all burn out at last!

And what is he that smokes thee now?
A little moving heap,
That soon, like thee, to fate must bow,
Like thee, in dust must sleep.

And when I see thy smoke roll high,
Thy ashes downward go,
'Tis thus, methinks, my soul shall fly!
Thus leave my body low?

From Fairs Edinburgh Magazine.

THE ASSASSIN OF THE PAS DE CALAIS.

FERRERS returned to his residence with his mind completely set upon pursuing the investigation, and already felt a strong presentiment that the mystery of the crimes in the Pas de Calais was about to be cleared up. He was just about to enter the door of the house when, by a singular chance, he described De Vernelle lounging idly along on the other side of the street. It was more than six years since he had seen him; but had it been twenty years, he could never have forgotten that strange and strongly marked face. Under an impulse, arising from the strength with which former associations had just been awakened, he stepped directly across and accosted him. De Vernelle started violently, and turned deadly pale as he perceived him; but he rallied himself immediately, stood boldly erect, and held out his hand with the old air of fine breeding, and the old grim smile. Ferrers reminded him of the circumstances which brought about their first meeting, and asked if he still was prepared and willing to bestow a handsome reward for the discovery of the wretches who had formerly rendered the neighbourhood of St. Omer and Arras so frightfully notorious? 'Peste!' exclaimed De Vernelle, still smiling, 'is not all that forgotten yet?' Ferrers remarked, that he could not answer for other people; but, for his own part, he feared he should never be able to forget; and proceeded to relate how he had found his ring, how he had consulted the police, how he had visited and interrogated Madlle. Duvernois, &c. The smile became fixed and gaily upon the face of De Vernelle, as he listened. 'Madlle. Duvernois!' muttered he; 'that is surely the name of an old friend of mine, whom, however, I have not seen for a long time. He then became silent, and abstracted to a remarkable degree. Ferrers, sanguine in his project, continued to talk of the steps he intended taking; but his companion seemed to hear nothing, seemed like a somnambulist standing dream-stricken in the street. 'Come, come!' exclaimed Ferrers, with a laugh, 'are you ready to hand over the five thousand francs, for I intend very shortly to demand them?' 'Shortly?—how do you know?—five thousand francs? Ah! I remember—yes, yes—I am always ready; though it were twice six years ago, to whom-

soever made the discovery at once would I hand over the promised bounty. Succeed, Ferrers, and it is yours; and a handsome fortune, too! but, wait, tell me again about that ring, or rather let me see it. Ferrers took the ring from his pocket-book and handed it to him. He examined it curiously, and then burst into a loud scornful laugh. 'Your ring!' exclaimed he; 'take care, or you will become the laughing-stock of the whole world! This is my ring, or rather was mine. I gave it to that little witch, Duvernois some years ago. It is mine, I say, I know it by this chasing, and this, and this, and this. I would swear to it in any court of justice, or any where else; and my wife would swear to it too, if she was not too much of a saint to swear at all.

You are quite mistaken—quite, quite, quite. The ring was mine for years, sir. It was given me by my wife, long before we were married, and my initial was engraved on the inside; when, sick of all associations of my wedded life, I resolved to part with it; I had that initial effaced; and I can take you this moment to the jeweller who did it, if you desire to be satisfied.' Ferrers was completely thunderstruck by a rebuff so unexpected, and by the force and vehemence with which it was administered.

A sudden idea possessed him, however, and, without another word, he desired to be taken to the jeweller. De Vernelle conducted him rapidly to a shop in the Rue St. Honoré. In answer to Ferrers, the Jeweller stated that he remembered M. De Vernelle bringing to him the ring produced, for the purpose of effacing a letter on the inside, which was done. 'And what was the letter effaced?' asked Ferrers, in some excitement watching sharply to see if he could detect any hesitation in the man's manner. 'If I remember rightly it was an 'F,' answered the jeweller. Ferrers actually started with exultation and astonishment. 'Well, what do you say to that?' he demanded, turning to De Vernelle. 'F,' stands for Ferrers, not for Vernelle!

'Bah!' sneered De Vernelle, with a mocking laugh; 'this ring, my poor man, was a love gift, and my wife, who was then my sweetheart, never called me De Vernelle, but always by my christened name, Ferdinand, and as 'F,' stands for Ferdinand it was engraved upon the ring.' Ferrers' head drooped; he really could say nothing. De Vernelle seized his arm, and declared that they would go to Madlle. Duvernois, to see if she would not remember him. They did so. That lady recognised De Vernelle immediately, and at once unhesitatingly stated that it was he who made her a present of the ring.

With a sigh Ferrers put the bauble in his pocket; the ring was remarkably like his, certainly, but it was lucky he had not taken further proceedings on a false scent.

'There,' exclaimed De Vernelle, 'Be grateful that you chanced to meet me. I have certainly saved you much needless trouble, and perhaps some ridicule. Adieu! au revoir.'

The more frequently Ferrers examined the ring, the more he became dissatisfied with the position of affairs, and persuaded that it was the same of which he had been robbed. If there were two rings in the world previously alike, were not De Vernelle and Mademoiselle Duvernois as likely to be deceived as himself? He was cogitating over the matter, when the agent of police who had been with him the day before, called to know what further steps he intended to take. Ferrers related what had happened, supposing that for the present nothing more could be done. 'The officer, M. Perrault, was not so easily satisfied however; he appeared to take the liveliest interest in what he heard, and eagerly asked a number of questions, eliciting from Ferrers everything he knew respecting De Vernelle, pursuing his inquiries with a practised adroitness, which informed him even of the various peculiarities in the manner and behaviour of them.

'Well, monsieur, said he curtly, after his curiosity had been satisfied, 'we must look after this De Vernelle!'

'But said Ferrers, 'De Vernelle was a holder of property in the neighbourhood in which the robbery had taken place, and from the first, he had been one of the most active in prosecuting the search of the offenders, and has offered, and still offers a reward of considerable amount for their arrest.'

'Aye, aye,' returned Perrault, with a dry smile. 'If we should find he had a hand in it, after all that, it would be very astonishing would it not? Clever man! we must try and be better acquainted with the history of him, during these last few years.'

The machinery of the law was immediately put into action, to preserve a surveillance over the movements and proceedings of De Vernelle. It was found that he was living in an apartment at a house near the Barrière de l'Etoile, that he was in the habit of coming into the city in the afternoon of every day, and returning home very late, sometimes several hours past midnight; that he was a constant frequenter of some of the gambling houses in the street branching from the

Boulevards: that sometimes his means appeared to be ample, and at others, for weeks together, he was extremely poor, having hardly sufficient to procure him the necessities of life. It was found also that he had been endeavouring to sell his property in the country, but as yet he had not been able to find a purchaser, in consequence of the dilapidation and disorder to which it had been brought by years of neglect. Altogether, it was ascertained that he was living an irregular, haphazard life, and that at the present time, his affairs were in anything but a satisfactory state. M. Perrault, dressed in the costume of a fashionable idler, and disguised by a pair of blue spectacles, paid sundry visits to the bells frequented by De Vernelle, for the purpose of watching his behaviour and the character of his associates. At three o'clock one morning, he saw him leave one of these places in company with three or four others. There had been some strangers at the table during the night, and, in consequence, the *habitués* had met with some luck. De Vernelle was unusually gay, and laughed and talked with his companions incessantly. As they were going out into the street, a handsomely dressed young woman stepped into the house. 'Ah! Aspasia is come to look after me!' cried one of the group, 'Au Diable!' exclaimed De Vernelle, stepping forward with an air of mimic bravado, and offering the female his arm; 'it is for me she comes. Aspasia is a lady of discernment!'—'No, no,' returned the woman, shrinking from him, with an air of absolute aversion: 'I do not like dreamers; especially when they talk all night long of bleeding throats and bark like dogs!' 'Ah, ah!' laughed De Vernelle grimly; 'to be sure the nightmare is a very disagreeable sort of thing; but it does not remain always with one—only at times—only at times.' He spoke somewhat confusedly, and though at the moment he laughed loudly and effected great amusement at Aspasia's serious look, he soon became silent and abstracted, and walked away presently, his head drooping upon his breast. M. Perrault cautiously followed him, keeping at some distance, and on the other side of the way. All along the Boulevards, and up the avenue of the Champs Elysees, he kept him in sight. There was something in the appearance and behaviour of the strange, friendless being which excited the professional instincts of the agent of police. He still preserved the broken-down look which had settled upon him as he left the gaming-house, and walked all the way at a slow, sluggish, dreamy pace. Once or twice he stopped for a full minute, and turning his pale, haggard face this way and that, looked eagerly on all sides. Favoured by the trees, however, M. Perrault managed always to keep himself concealed.

De Vernelle was not far from the house in which he lived when he stopped in this manner for the last time. As before, he looked around him. Seeing no one and hearing no sound, he proceeded to search about, and presently picked up a broad flat stone. Then going beneath one of the trees, where the soil was soft and damp, he commenced scooping a hole in the ground. He worked with great eagerness, aiding the stone with his foot, and in a very short time had succeeded in turning over two or three pounds of earth. He then took from his pocket a purse, apparently heavy laden, a gold watch from his fob, a ring from his finger, and a brooch from his cravat. These he put into the hole, pressing them down with all his strength, and then replaced the earth carefully, and stamped and scuffed over the place to give it as much as possible the same appearance as the rest of the walk. After this, he flung away the stone he had used, in such a direction that M. Perrault narrowly escaped receiving a heavy blow. With a long, deep gasp, like a groan of agony and desperation, he continued to walk slowly on, tearing some small pieces of paper into very minute fragments, and scattering them about as he went. Presently he took off his hat, crushed it between his hands, and flung it away into the road, unbuttoned and threw open his coat and waistcoat—tore his cravat, so that it hung down from his neck, and broke open his shirt front—apparently endeavouring to put himself into as violent a state of disorder as possible. This done, he took a small pistol from his coat pocket, and went, with hurried and precipitate steps, into the middle of the road, where, after scuffling and scraping about the dust with his feet, he stood erect, and—it seemed with elaborate care—placed the barrel of the pistol in his mouth.—It was a most singular scene, and M. Perrault was strongly excited, as a full compensation of De Vernelle's design now flashed upon his mind. It was plain that the wretched man contemplated suicide and was endeavouring to perpetrate the act in such a manner as to ensure a belief that he had been robbed and murdered. With a loud cry the officer rushed upon him, struck the weapon from his hand, and before the poor, appalled schemer could recover presence of mind, had secured his arms with a small but strong pair of iron gyves.

'It is evident you are mad,' said the officer curtly. 'I must take care of you.'

'I was, I was,' cried De Vernelle, in great

excitement, struggling to free himself; 'but only for the moment. The fit is over now, and I am all right again. Quite right, now, I say; it needed but some one to appear, to speak to me, to touch me, to drive the fit away. I am quite recovered now. Take these things off, man, and let me go on home.'

'It would be as bad as murder to trust you to yourself. Come with me; I will take care of you.'

De Vernelle resisted; but M. Perrault was powerful, and, assisted by the gyves, did not find great difficulty in forcing his captive along. Arrived in the city, he procured assistance, and the prisoner was temporarily placed in the Clichy gael, charged with attempting self-destruction.

The whole circumstances of the case were laid before the Perfect, and a rigorous investigation was immediately instituted, especially with regard to the long-sealed mysteries of the Arras murders. M. Perrault being charged with the superintendence of the proceedings. In the first place that intelligent officer immediately proceeded with Mr. Ferrers to the neighbourhood of Arras, four miles from which, and about six from the country residence of De Vernelle, was situated the modest chateau of M. Grielle, the father of De Vernelle's alienated wife, who, although he lived in plain and unostentatious style, was the owner of considerable property. It was here that Madame De Vernelle now lived, having sought an asylum from a most uncongenial husband in the home of her youth, and it with her the visitors sought an interview. With some emotion, Ferrers met this unfortunate lady for the second time; her face was no longer blooming and bright, but it was still handsome, and the soft, sweet expression of other days was tempered into a look of mingled sadness and resignation which even the slightest knowledge of her history served to render touching and saintly. M. Perrault showed her the ring, and enquired if she remembered it as one she had presented to De Vernelle many years ago. She answered directly with much surprise, that she had never made her husband such a present, and this ring she had never seen before! and then, immediately, and as if some suspicion had rushed into her mind, became agitated, and added that perhaps her memory failed her. M. Perrault asked no more respecting the ring, but noted down the whole of the curious reply, a proceeding which much increased the lady's perturbation. He then asked her if she could remember distinctly the events attendant upon her marriage, and particularly whether M. De Vernelle was with her the whole of the night immediately following its solemnization? This question produced a distressing effect. With a slight shriek, Madame De Vernelle directed a piercing glance at her questioner, became deadly pale, and swooned away.

This occurrence produced the presence of M. and Madame Grielle, and a formal, indeed official, explanation to the former of the object for which the stranger had visited the house. M. Grielle became very grave immediately, and had a private consultation with M. Perrault, in which he stated that from certain communication which had been made to him by his daughter, he had long been harassed by suspicions that De Vernelle was implicated in the crimes which had taken place in parts of the Pas de Calais.—It appeared that she had frequently heard him talking in his sleep in a manner which caused her infinite astonishment and alarm, and had discovered peculiarities of disposition which had possessed her with indelible aversion and dread of him. The consequences were, a series of matrimonial disagreements and finally the return of the wife to her parents. With regard to whatever proceedings might be taken, M. Grielle declared he would do his utmost to forward the ends of justice. It would not have been safe, and would have appeared like cruelty to his daughter, if he had taken any hostile steps against his own son-in-law upon the ground of mere suspicions, but now the matter was taken up by another party, these objections vanished. As soon as Madame De Vernelle had sufficiently recovered her composure, she was again interrogated by M. Perrault, her parents earnestly advising her to afford all the information in his power as to the eccentricities of behaviour and character which had caused her to feel such a horror and detestation of M. De Vernelle. The revelations were made with great pain. The principal features of them were, firstly, that M. De Vernelle on the evening of their marriage had set out for Paris with her, and that when some miles on the way he had taken a horse and ridden his house, stating that he had forgotten something of great importance, and telling his wife to continue her journey as far as the next post-inn, where he would overtake her in a few hours. He was absent the whole of the night, and arrived at the post-inn the next morning at about seven o'clock in a state of great exhaustion. And, secondly, that he was frequently talking in his sleep of the looks of murdered men, of bleeding threats, of the teeth of dogs, of hidden money.