

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From the Anglo American Magazine.

## THE UNKNOWN.

There are states of mental abstraction, and of deep and engrossing passion, which seem so effectually to counteract the power of wine on the animal spirits, that men under their influence can scarcely become intoxicated. Such was my case; and I frequently arose from the table perfectly master of my faculties, but under strong excitement, and in a mood to do aught that opportunity might dare me to do. On one of these occasions I caught up my hat, and pursued my way to the house of Augusta. Unfortunately, for I knew it not, Lewis was in the country, superintending the improvement of his residence previously to his nuptials, and the servant ushered me into the drawing-room. Augusta was alone, reclining on a couch placed in a window, whose balcony was filled with flowers. The sultriness of the day had left her spiritless and languid; here eyes had little of their usual vivacity, and, after the interchange of common civilities, we relapsed into silence.

Why should I thus harrow up my long buried emotions to gratify the curiosity of one to whom I am as nothing? why should I thus tear the veil from my own frailties? why repeat the sophisms by which, on this eventful night, I won Augusta from my friend, and procured my own ruin? Let it suffice, that the following day she became my bride.

In the first paroxysm, for it deserves no other name, of my happiness, I refused to think of Emma Gordon, of my mother or of Lewis. I had Augusta—she was mine, mine only; how, it mattered not; my ambition and my self-love, the prevailing sins of my nature, were equally gratified by the possession of such a woman, so surpassing in beauty, in accomplishments, in intellect. All bliss that I had known before seemed poor and tasteless compared with this, and I revelled in the fulness of delight. A letter from Lewis at length reached me; it was a partial sedative to my heated imagination; it was indignant, scornful, severe: it demanded from me the satisfaction that one gentleman owes to another. I was flushed with wine when I answered it. I replied that I was too happy in the society of the lady who had done me the honor to prefer me to him, to risk my life against one who had no wish to lose his own; that, if he was insupportably weary of himself, there were ways enough to terminate existence without aid. The result of this insolent boast was, that he branded me to the world as a villain and a coward.

It had long been a maxim with me, that, in the opinion of the world, the success of an enterprise will prove a justification for him that undertakes it; and that of two men, who should with the same means, motives and ability, enter on the same pursuit, the one proving successful and the other not, the fortunate one would be deemed prudent in his speculations, the other the reverse. I therefore flattered myself that a little millinery from my friends upon my hasty marriage would be the only consequence of my dishonorable conduct; I was far from anticipating the universal scorn that awaited me. It seemed when I appeared among my former intimates, that I had a kind of moral leprosy—every one shrunk from holding the least communication with me; both as a private, and as a public character, my reputation was gone. I was too proud to attempt to regain it; and retired with Augusta, to spend the remainder of my life in a secluded residence which she possessed in the north of England, and where, in the second year of our union, I became the delighted father of a lovely boy. His appearance, by awakening in us the feelings of pleasure that had of late been dormant, effectually preserved us from matrimonial ennui; for since I had neither fame to seek nor fortune to win, I felt 'o'ercast with sorrow and supineness.' Augusta was of too lofty a spirit to sit down quietly and be the butt of my ill-humour, as Emma Gordon had been; she had always received homage, but had never paid any; and whenever my fickle and irritable temper seemed to intrude upon the quietness and comfort of the house, she withdrew to her own room, nor appeared again until I was perfectly master of myself. After the birth of Augustus, she reasoned with me on the impropriety of indulging my ill-humour on trivial occasions; and so forcibly pointed out to me the bad effects which my example would have upon the child, that I resolved to reform. I can, indeed, safely affirm, that I scrupulously guarded myself from betraying before my son the weakness of my character; I was unwearied in my attention to his welfare, and as he grew in years, I was his instructor, his companion and his friend. He was a noble youth; he had much of the beauty and the unspeakable grace of his mother; he had no mean or sordid feeling in his composition; he was proud, spirited, and aspiring; he had the capacity for doing great actions—and I felt renewed in him those hopes of renown for my family that were for ever blighted in myself. He had attained his sixteenth year, and it was necessary that he should now become acquainted with so-

ciety; he was of an age to be ushered into life, but most assuredly I could not be his protector. I resolved however, before I committed him to the care of another, from whom he might learn the story of my dishonor, to communicate it to him myself; and I chose for the time of my history the hour of our evening walk.

The mansion in which I had so long resided was situated near the edge of an extensive common; and, at the time of our marriage, it was unsheltered by a single tree. To vary my employments, as well as to increase the value of my property, I had planted innumerable forest trees at the extremity of my grounds, varying them as the plantation approached the house, with flowering shrubs of every description. I was delighted with the flourishing appearance of my growing forest, and I contemplated, with a delight unusually devoid of selfishness, the hour when my child's children might ramble beneath its shade and bless the memory of his grandfather. But of this felicity did my own evil passions also disappoint me.

I intended, with regard to my son, to communicate to him, without disguise, the whole facts relative to my marriage with his mother; and I hoped that nature would so plead for me in his bosom, that I should sink but very little in his esteem. I also resolved that he should be the mediator between me and my mother, who was still alive, surrounded, as I heard, by the children of Lewis and Emma Gordon, whose marriage had not been delayed very long after mine. I felt jealous that the grandmother of a boy like mine should lavish her regards upon those who were not of her kindred, particularly as Augusta had no relative in the world to whose care we might commend our treasure. I hoped everything from the prepossessing manner and appearance of Augustus. I ever believed that Lewis would forget his resentment against me, and become the protector of my son.

With such hopes as these I walked gaily forth, and conversed with Augustus upon indifferent topics until I had wound up my feelings to relate to him my secret. I found it a task more difficult than I had expected; I veiled my interest in it under a feigned name; I courted his comments upon my conduct—for I was anxious to discover whether the lessons of virtue and honor that I had so carefully taught him would form the rule of his own life, and of his judgment upon others; or whether he would palliate falsehood and countenance dishonor. He acted as I expected he would do: he denounced me as a wretch unworthy of the happiness that fell to my share; condemning with the fiery ardor of unsophisticated youth, my double perfidy, my ingratitude, and my cowardice. What an inconsistent being is man! I had laboured for years to make my son what he was; yet I was angry with him because he did not disappoint me; and I hated him for his vehement adherence to those principles which I had taught him to prize. How could I now submit to say to him—I am the man whose conduct you have condemned? How endure the contemptuous pity, or the ill-repressed resentment of this boy, who was the judge of his father's actions? Yet this, too, I had brought upon myself; I had, at my own pleasure, unlocked the treasure-house of memory; I had taken from her stores the delicious recollections of Augusta such as she was when I became enamoured of her beauty. I had revelled again in the happiness of the early days of my marriage; but I was not to rest here; I could not forget the subsequent detestation and contempt I had been called upon to endure; I was maddened by the stings of self-reproach, and, with a frightful vehemence of manner, I revealed to my son that I was the man whose conduct he so severely reprehended.

I know not whether he was sorry to discover that his father was not so perfect as he had imagined; or whether he was ashamed to have so severely criticised the offences of one so near to him; certain it is that he was silent and embarrassed, and answered not the reproaches I savagely poured upon him. In the rudest and most impassioned language I denounced him and all mankind. I was a very madman.

He took my hand, probable as an attempt at pacification; I struck him passionately from me, he fell; his right temple came violently in contact with a projecting branch of a fallen tree; a green escape him; it was the last sound he ever uttered!

Gracious Heavens! if through the countless ages of eternity I am doomed to retain, unimpaired the recollection of that moment, how shall I endure the undying torments? It is true that I was not deliberately his executioner, but he was a victim to my uncontrollable temper, and thus was the measure of my crimes completed. 'Augustus, my son!' the words echoed my cries of desperation and anguish; on his ear they fell unnoticed and unheard. I sat beside him on the ground, holding his cold hand in mine, and insensible of the approaching darkness; I was utterly unable to resolve with myself how I should act; how to unfold to the mother the fate of her son. She, perhaps, might acquit me of intentional murder, but would the world also? I dared not encounter its judgment on this point, and I determined to conceal the body of Augustus, and to repair, as early as possible, to the continent of Europe.

I hid my victim in the underwood, and returned home to Augusta. She immediately

inquired for her son, and I told her the story I had constructed for the purpose. I said that we had met, in our walk, with some of his friends, who were setting out on an excursion tour through England (so far I spoke the truth) and that they had prevailed on me to suffer him to accompany them. She was displeased that he had departed without saying adieu, and with so little preparation for such an unusual journey; I was afraid that she would embarrass me by further inquiries, and, pleading fatigue, I retired to my dressing-room, whence I could descend, by a private staircase, into the garden. I waited, in an agony of impatience, until I believed that the servants were at rest. I then descended to the garden, and procuring there a labourer's spade, I pursued my way to the wood. I drew the body of Augustus from its hiding-place. I took it in my arms, and staggering beneath its weight, I passed out of the wood on to the moor, by which it was skirted. Having fixed upon a place that seemed, from the nature of the soil, to offer facilities for digging his grave, I laid him on the earth and proceeded to perform my unholy office. From the hour of sunset the air had been sultry, and oppressive; and at midnight the thunder storm began. At first, the flashes of lightning were few and transient, and their attendant peals were heard at a distance; by degrees, they became more vivid, and frequent and forked, and their light outshone that of day. The heavens seemed to be torn asunder by them—the earth shook beneath the thunder peal—and the rain literally poured down upon me as I stood, benumbed, by the grave I had prepared, the cold dew wrung from me by toil and terror standing thickly upon my brow!

Amid this conflict of the elements I had laid my first born, my only son, in his last resting place; but I delayed to cover him with the turf I had taken up. I was alone, in the midst of a barren heath, resting on my spade by the side of a grave, whose murdered inmate was my own child, the last heir of two ancient and noble families. Within a few hours he had been full of life—vigorous, happy, talented, and brave.—Now he was like the clod he rested upon! What had availed to him the generous humanity of his nature? His acquirements were as nothing—his genius and his learning had not preserved him from the fate of the meanest kind. And what was I? Stupified, yet sensible amid my stupor that I was insupportably wretched. I bowed not to the raging of the storm—it suited well with the temper of my soul. I even folded my arms upon my bosom, and awaited the flash of lightning that should show me again the features of Augustus, ghastly and livid beyond expression in that awful glare. He was dead! yet I uttered no complaint; I did not rave, nor supplicate, nor pray. The requiem over my boy was the pealing of the thunder. I was myself in the place of a priest, and mourner, and herald, and mute; and his tomb—wherefore should he have one to perpetuate the ignominy of his sire?

At length I covered for ever the face of Augustus. I pressed the clod upon his breast.—Yes! I even trampled upon it to prevent it being perceived that it had been removed. I noted the spot where I had laid that fair head in the dust, and returned precipitately home.

In the course of a few days I effected to receive a letter from Augustus, stating that he had accompanied his friends to Paris, and requesting us to meet him there. I persuaded Augusta that we should find pleasure in such a journey, and having made hasty arrangements for discharging my servants, and disposing of my estate, we set off for the continent.

We arrived in Paris, and Augusta demanded her son. For some time I parried her inquiries, but she became so anxious, so earnest about him, that I was compelled to impart to her the secret of his fate. She did not betray me—that I expected of her—but she shrunk from me with unconcealed abhorrence. She hated me, as she herself said, less for the passion which had so unfortunately proved fatal to Augustus, than for selfish perfidy and deceit, in concealing from her, at the time, so melancholy an event. 'Alas! my son,' burst from her lips, 'thy midnight burial was unconsecrated by thy mother's tears—that consolation might, at least, have been afforded to me.'

She did not long survive her exile, for such in reality, it was; and her last moments were embittered by the knowledge that the body of Augustus had been discovered and recognized, and that common report assigned her husband as his murderer. The sudden disappearance of Augustus, and my subsequent precipitate removal from the estate on which I had so long resided, gave a coloring to the suspicion. I felt that I could never again revisit his grave.

Augusta was interred among strangers, and I became a solitary wanderer on the face of the earth. Like another Cain, I seemed to bear about with me the curse of the Eternal. Whoever looked upon me hated me. Spring and summer, autumn and winter, passed over me unnoticed and unenjoyed. I became old in sorrow, yet mine was not the grief to kill.

Now, however, unless my existence be supernaturally prolonged, I cannot be far from its termination; and grateful shall I feel myself for permission to escape from a world that has been to me one scene of sorrow and remorse. Thou who hast perused this narrative, learn from it

that it is easy to depart from probity add honor, and that the downward path of error, once entered upon, leads rapidly to the commission of the most atrocious crimes—no man having the power to say to his unbridled passions, 'thus far, but no farther, shall ye go.'

The student closed the manuscript of the Unknown; he returned to his apartment, and looked intensely on the features of the dead.—They betrayed, even in the composure and rigidity of death, many traces of passion and of consuming sorrow; but one might have presumed to say, from only viewing the remains of that once noble countenance, 'This man was a murderer.' The student laid the head of the stranger in the grave; he then returned home, and related to his family the adventure which had befallen him. His father recognized in the Unknown the false friend of his youth; the student discovered himself to be the son of Lewis and Emma Gordon, and he rejoiced that the well governed temper and right principles of his father ensured happiness to his family instead of destruction. With an education more limited, and with talents far less splendid than those which had fallen to the possession of the Unknown, Lewis had conducted himself honorably through life. He had found, in the society of the quiet unpretending Emma, a pleasure that he might have missed with the brilliant Augusta. As a son to the mother of the Unknown, as a husband, and as a father, he fulfilled the minutest duties of existence; and, at the very verge of life, when he had become so singularly acquainted with the fate of his once valued friend, he drew from it a lesson that served to impress upon the mind of his too imaginative son, this truth (elsewhere expressed by a man eminent for talent and virtue), 'that all is vanity which is not honest; and that there is no solid wisdom but in real piety.'

From Fraser's Magazine.

## THE PERSONNEL OF RUSSO-EUROPEAN QUESTION.

In almost artistic contrast with this personification of Muscovite barbarism, under the mask of European civilization, stands the character of the Turkish Sultan—mild and calm, but loyal and brave. While Nicholas has but pretended, Abdul Medjid has practised progress. To raise the Sultan, the rights of Constantine had been set aside; the Sultan's first act on ascending the throne was to pardon and cherish his brother, at once rival and rebel—departing in this from immemorial usage, which dictated his murder as a mere precaution. While the whole life of Nicholas has been devoted to advancing the nefarious hereditary policy, or by simulated emancipation of the serfs to strengthening the power of his house; the less stormy and imposing, but more noble and useful career of Abdul-Medjid has presented a picture of personal integrity and political wisdom—in a Musulman infinitely illustrious.—In truth the public virtues of the Sultan have caused the public vices of the Czar. If the one had been content to pass a life of sloth and sensuality, while the institutions of his country ran to rankness or decay, the other would have been content to see him thus preparing the victim for the sacrifice, and would not have hacked its members prematurely. But while the Emperor of Russia has been worsening the despotic system of his empire, the better to wield it for conquest, the Sultan of Turkey has pursued a policy of enlightened wisdom, enfranchising the minds of his subjects from political fanaticism and superstition, and increasing their freedom by developing their material resources. His policy like that of Nicholas, was inherited; but his personal character has as much exalted it, as the fell energy and consistency of Nicholas have intensified the criminality of that of Russia. While the reputation of the Emperor is stained by many acts of perfidy and cruel tyranny, not one crime is scored up against the name of the Sultan; on the contrary, the whole heart of Europe throbbeth in sympathy with his nobility of nature, when he risked the anger of his two irresistible neighbours rather than break his faith with his Kossuth, or give up to their persecutors those who had tasted of his hospitality.

These generous virtues have in all ages rendered illustrious the Turkish character, while the name of Muscovite has ever been almost synonymous with treachery and cunning. The Emperor of Russia pretends much zeal for the Christians; if he could make himself as good a man as the Sultan, or his subjects as free and as prosperous as the Turks and the Christians under their sway, his pretensions might have better chance with the common sense of mankind. In the present Sultan of the Turks we have indeed a worthy ally. Many times we have fought the battles and saved the fortunes of the worthless and ungrateful; such is not, nor will be, Abdul Medjid. He has given proofs of his honorable nature; and if there were no reasons of state for supporting his cause it would be satisfactory to under take it. The picture presented to the mind by the Turkish Sultan is a grateful contrast to that of the Russian Czar. In espousing his cause, we are really talking the side of civilization against barbarism. If Russia could prevail against associated Europe in this struggle, she would have attained the permanent triumph of principles opposed to those free forms of government which are the possession or the right of the European nations, and which are associated with the progress of