

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Godley's Lady's Book for October.

THE MATCH-MAKING MOTHER.

EMMA was amply endowed. Better perhaps for her had she been forgotten in her uncle's will, but we will not anticipate.

Mrs. J— bore her sorrow as a Christian should every dispensation of Providence, yet the shock was to great for her debilitated system. A few more weeks, and the family were summoned to her bedside to receive her parting blessing. To each one she delivered an affectionate, though short address. To Emma she said—

But for you, my niece, all would be well. — Louisa has a kind husband; for her I have no fears as regards her temporal happiness, and I hope I need have none for her eternal. Your sister Eleanor will soon marry and leave home. It will then be your duty to go to your mother. If Edward ——— should strive to renew his attentions to you, I fear the result. "Obey your parents," is a Divine command; but God does not require obedience to an earthly parent when by it you must sacrifice your duty to Him. Look at at your sisters, and take warning. — Never like them, be persuaded into a situation that promises nothing but misery. I look upon it as one of the greatest sins of which woman can be guilty of, to take upon herself the solemn vow that she is required to take at the altar, "to love, honor, and obey" a man for whom she has not even a feeling of regard. There is no situation in which she could be placed that would justify such a thing in the sight of God. I hope you may not be subjected to the trials I allude to; yet I cannot help fearing.

The next day she tranquilly breathed her last. Not a cloud darkened her way. All was calm and serene. To picture this distressed family would require a more graphic pen than the humble writer of this story can command. Earnestly did Emma and Louisa pray for strength to follow the advice, and wisdom to imitate the example of one whose life had been a sermon.

Perhaps no one, except Louisa and Emma, felt the loss more deeply than did Henry Sherrard; much of his success in life he owed to Judge J——, and much happiness to his inestimable wife. He heard with deep regret that Emma would soon leave. He knew he could not visit her often, owing to his professional duties. This was all that caused his sorrow, for he dreamed not of the trials that awaited them. Emma knew her mother's disposition, and had but little hope of gaining her consent, yet she resolved not to trouble him with her gloomy apprehensions while there was any hope.

As we are not writing a love story, we will not recapitulate the scene at their parting. — Eleanor was married, and shortly after accompanied her husband to his home in Louisiana. — But a few months after Emma's arrival home, Edward visited her. Does our readers suppose that love prompted him? Edward ——— was not capable of loving. His heart was too much filled with his idol, self, to admit another occupant. He knew from the first that Judge J—— was wealthy, and intended making Emma equal in fortune to his own child. This alone prompted him. His father died when he was young, and left him in the possession of a handsome estate; but, so soon as it came into his possession he wasted it greatly by gambling. The world still believed him wealthy; none but a few intimate friends, his endorsers, knew that his property was worth but few thousands more than would pay his debts. This accounts for his love, if it does not desecrate the name.

As soon as he left, after his first visit, Mrs Osgood commenced—

"Well Emma, have you rejected Edward again?"

"Yes, ma, and I hope for the last time. I am fully determined to listen to him no more. — I have told him to-day that I can never love him, and he must not mention the subject to me again."

"Have you no regard for my wishes? I have repeatedly told you how much I desire to see you the wife of Governor ———'s son. There is no girl in the State but would feel honored to be united to that family. Again, he is wealthy, handsome, and one of the most intelligent young men I ever saw."

Emma made no reply and Mrs Osgood continued—

"Were your dear father alive, it would receive his warmest approval."

"Not unless it was agreeable to me ma. Pa could not wish me to marry a man I do not even esteem," said she earnestly.

"It is all foolishness for you to act thus," said Mrs Osgood not heeding her reply. "You cannot expect to remain single always. My health is feeble, and I wish to see you married before I die. This is the only eligible offer you have ever had, and I must insist that you accept it."

"Ma, I cannot it is unless to urge it any further. Besides he will not return again, after all I said to him. Surely, he would not accept the hand, when he has been told the heart is not his."

"The heart is not his" repeated Mrs Osgood

with bitter irony. "I suppose you have given that to Henry Sherrard; but rest assured, you shall never marry him if I can prevent it! Neither shall he ever visit my house."

"I never will marry without your consent; and if you desire it, I will write to him to-night and tell him all; but never, never can I marry another!"

"Mrs Osgood was surprised at Emma's calmness. She expected tears; but she forgot that Emma had been preparing for this for several months. She had not said before that she should never marry Henry; now she had, Emma deemed it her duty to tell him all, particularly as she had said he should not visit her, and his vacation was near at hand. A short paragraph from her letter to him will show her feelings: "Yes, Henry, our long-cherished hopes must be abandoned. I cannot neither do I believe you would desire it—marry you whom my mother has positively forbidden it. Should I ever gain her consent, you shall know it immediately; if I never do, rest assured my first my only love, I shall ever remain Emma Osgood."

Henry was wounded deeply, yet he was a Christian, and knew that Emma was right. — Except that a shade of seriousness was on his countenance, none would have guessed that anything had occurred. He loved her better for her self-sacrificing spirit, and, in reply, wrote her a long letter, in which he promised to wait patiently. "Perhaps," wrote he, "my Emma, we need this trial. Let us, then, bear it, hoping a happier day will dawn ere long."

Edward intended to return, yet he rather feared to do so. He therefore wrote to Emma, expressing his love in the most eloquent language, entreating to see her once more, closing by telling her he should be there on a certain day not far distant, unless she forbade it. Emma had taken a walk when the letters arrived. Mrs Osgood knew by the postmark that one was from Edward ——— or Henry Sherrard; fearing the latter, and wishing to break up the correspondence, she intercepted the letter. Finding it from the former, she thought it best to say nothing about it, but let him come, trusting to her own judgment to arrange matters before his arrival. A short time after, Emma came in, and Mrs Osgood commenced—

"Emma, if Edward ——— should return, are you still determined to persist in disobeying me? Are you determined not to marry him?"

"Ma, you have my answer. I had hoped the matter was settled, and that we should never again have our feelings wounded by another conversation on the subject. If he has the least delicacy or refinement, he will never enter this house again."

"You are mistaken; he will be here next Thursday, and I wish you to make up your mind to answer him according to my wishes."

"Next Thursday!" said Emma, in astonishment. "How did you?"

"It matters not; he will be here. Will you do as I desire? Will you promise me, at least, to treat him politely, and postpone giving him another answer yet awhile?"

"That would encourage a false hope."

"Emma, listen to me; you are my child, I have a right to expect obedience, and I now require it. You must marry Edward ———, and hear my reason. I am in debt; if my matters were arranged, all would have to go to satisfy my creditors. — Edward has promised that I shall not be disturbed about these things, if he marries my daughter. Will you see your mother's home and everything taken from her now when age is coming on?"

"Never! never! My uncle has left me enough—more than enough; you shall have all."

"Listen to me I say. The whole property, at the death of your father, was valued at \$50,000. One-third of this was mine during my life. I owe \$5,000. This is more than I could get for it in this way, were I to sell it. As for yours, your uncle left it in the hands of a guardian until you are twenty-five unless you marry. So you can only draw your annual allowance."

"If these are your reasons, ma, I will marry Henry Sherrard, if you will agree to it. I will tell him all, and——"

"Then we can do no more. I will never marry another."

"You will not? You have said it at last. As you please, then. I have borne much; I cannot bear much more. The day you discard Edward ——— again, you will be an orphan I cannot, I will not live to witness such ingratitude!"

"My mother, dearest mother, how are you talking? You will not live? What do you mean? You are excited. Let us say no more about this matter until you are more calm."

"Calm! calm! I was never more calm in my life, and again repeat——"

"Oh, do not do not repeat! You know not what you are saying."

"I do repeat, I will not live to know myself a beggar, when my child could have prevented it."

"I can, and will prevent it. I will go to Dr. Williamson. He will arrange it. I can pay all in five years, if you will not allow me sooner."

"You shall not go to any one. You know my determination, decide for yourself. Life has but few charms for me. I would as soon die as

live; and, when I am gone, remember you have been my murderer."

"Oh, God spare me! Oh, my mother, pity me! On my knees let me beg for mercy! Oh! take back these awful words! I will——"

"Will do what?" was the quick reply.

"Anything but marry that man. Oh, do not urge it! Look at my poor sisters. Laura you thought, married well; but how sadly disappointed have you been. But a few weeks ago, her husband ordered you to leave his house, and tauntingly accused you of marrying your child to him through mercenary motives."

"He never would have done this had he not been under the influence of wine."

"And did you not tell me, ma, that you knew of his intemperate habits before his marriage with my sister?"

"That has nothing to do with the present conversation," said Mrs Osgood abruptly. "This fault you cannot allege of Edward."

"Neither can it be alleged of Virginia's husband; and is she happy? There is my sweet sister Jane; well do I remember when on her knees she entreated you, in the name of our departed parent, not to urge her to marry a man whom she had promised that parent to cease to notice. Yet you urged, and what a life she leads with a husband who deserves not the name of man. Oh, mother, spare me, I beg you! Let my sisters warn you to save me."

"Ungrateful child! and do you make me the author of all your sisters' misfortunes?"

"I am not ungrateful, dearest mother, but I cannot marry that man."

Mrs Osgood was determined to hear no more, and abruptly left the room, leaving Emma in despair.

"What shall I do? Oh, my father! my uncle! my aunt! would that I were in heaven with you! My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Here she fell again on her knees, and never in all her life had she prayed a more fervent prayer. Yet she was not comforted, all was dark and gloomy.

Mrs Osgood was not so utterly void of feeling as not to pity her child; but her better feelings were too weak to overcome her inordinate desire for fame. She was determined to carry her point, if she sacrificed every thing to its accomplishment. Since she had become composed, she saw the impropriety of her conduct. She thought she was calm, but she had mistaken the intense excitement, that made every nerve motionless, for calmness. Her rash words were now bitterly repented, yet she was not the less determined to persevere.

It was Monday, Jane Howard sent over early requesting Emma to spend the day with her, as Mr Howard expected to be from home all day. Mrs Osgood made no objections, and Emma was soon seated by her sister, and little Lucy, Jane's only child, fondling on her. During the day she unburdened her sorrows to her sister.

"I cannot tell you," said Jane, sorrowfully, "how to act. I dare not advise you to marry him. My own sorrows forbid it. For nine years I have known nothing but misery, misery, that I have never divulged even to your mother. Misery rendered fourfold worse by knowing it has been dealt by a hand that I never loved. I will not pain you with a recital of my troubles, you have enough. But for my little girl, gladly would I go to rest. She needs my care; for her sake, I can suffer on. Nothing else on earth could induce me to continue the slave of Louis Howard. — Long since I should have left him, though to seek an asylum among the poorest and humblest on earth. I could bear his cruel temper, but——Oh Emma, I cannot, I will not tell you all."

Mr Howard returned early. Jane knew that her swollen eyes would betray her. Naturally suspicious, he was fully persuaded, as soon as he saw her, that she had related a scene enacted that morning that he was particularly anxious should not be known. At Jane's earnest solicitations, Emma sent her little niece and a servant to her mother, to inform her that she would not be at home until early in the morning, but that she, little Lucy, would remain with her that night. After all had retired to their rooms, Mr Howard said to his wife, in a sarcastic tone—

"I hope you have spent a pleasant day in relating your grievances."

Jane was silent and he continued—

"Have I and my faults afforded you a topic? I repeat, have I been the subject of remark? If so, you shall rue it. Speak! I demand an answer."

"You have," was the faint reply.

Without a moment's reflection, his impetuous temper giving strength to his arm, he dealt a heavy blow upon the head of his delicate wife, which threw her against the grate and inflicted a deep wound on the side of her head. One loud shriek, and she fainted. Emma, alarmed, flew to her sister's chamber. Oh, what a sight! The blood flowed freely from the wound, and she lay as one dead. The angry husband sat quietly looking on his work, without power to move. He looked the very picture of despair. As Emma entered, he gazed wildly at her, as one roused from a dream, and exclaimed—

"I have done it at last! O God, forgive me!"

"What have you done?" was all Emma could say. The servants, having been alarmed also, were flocking in. Emma tried to compose herself, and, with their assistance, laid her on a

bed, and did all their skill could suggest to restore her. Dr. Williamson and her mother were sent for in haste.

While all this was going on, Mr. Howard sat motionless. "I have done it at last! O God, forgive me!" were the only words he had uttered since he struck the fatal blow. Dr. Williamson soon came in. Knowing the character of Howard, and having heard of his cruel treatment to his wife, at a glance he saw into the cause of this scene. He was a man of forethought, and never acted without reflection. The first thing he did he pointed to the door, signifying to the servants to leave. They did so with heavy hearts, for they loved their mistress affectionately. They believed she had fallen and hurt herself in some way, but did not think of Mr Howard's guilt, knowing Emma to be there, and that he was always remarkably kind to his wife in company. While examining the wound, the unfortunate woman roused up, and faintly said, "Emma! mother!" At this moment Mrs Osgood walked in. Dr. Williamson motioned her to be silent. "Mother," said she again, "oh that I could see you once more!"

"My child, I am here," said the unhappy mother.

"I am dying, mother, come nearer. I am willing to go; but promise me——"

"I promise anything, my child, that you ask."

"Then I ask you, as a last and dying request, not to urge Emma to marry Edward——"

"It shall be as you desire. And oh, dear, injured child, forgive, forgive your erring mother!"

"I have nothing to forgive, my dear mother. Take care of my little Lucy. Tell Louis I forgive him."

Mr Howard heard this, ran to the bedside, and on his knees, in the most piteous accents, implored pardon of his injured wife.

"I forgive! I forgive!" were her last words; a few moments after, she died.

After her cold and lifeless form was laid out, Mrs Osgood requested to be left alone with the corpse. Falling on her knees by the side of it, with her eyes uplifted to heaven, she exclaimed, in a plaintive tone—

"Oh, miserable woman that I am, I have murdered one child, and almost another! Two more I have rendered miserable! And for what?—Great God! can I ever be forgiven?"

For some time she remained kneeling in that chamber of death. When she arose she was an humble woman; ambition was satiated, avarice was satisfied. She said truly that she had murdered her child. Howard dealt the last blow, but she was equally guilty of the murder; for over the dead body of her husband she had walked to accomplish her purpose. And what had she gained but anguish, heart-rending anguish, misery of the direst kind! Mothers, beware of what you are doing. You, too, may be paving the way, almost unconsciously, to a similar wretched end. Say not this is an exaggerated story. Look around you, and can you not call to mind at least a few miserable wives?—Ask the cause, and not unfrequently you may trace it to a mother's ambition. Then take warning, and shield your children from the worst fates, an unloved and unloving wife. You are responsible to a great degree; then beware how you trifle with such a responsibility.

Have you a little prattler now fondling on your bosom, to whom your heart's best affections are given? What are your views in regard to her? Does your imagination wander far into the vista of the future, and picture for her visions of wealth and earthly glory? or are your praying God to enable you to raise her for usefulness here and hereafter and immortal happiness in eternity? Have you a daughter just on the verge of womanhood? She needs your watchful eye and prayerful attention more than ever before. Lay no schemes for the future but such as you can ask God's blessing upon. Have you one just about to enter an engagement that must render her happy or miserable for life or perhaps tend to the promotion or overthrow of her happiness in another world? Oh, mother, look well before you decide! What are that man's qualifications? Is he all that a praying mother could desire? Can you commit that precious one to his care, believing that he is fitted to guard such one here, and go hand and hand with her to everlasting joys there? If so, give her to him. He may be a son of poverty no matter. God will bless them. But if, on the contrary, his recommendations are nothing more than such as Mrs Osgood required, let us entreat you, in the name of the holy office of mother, be warned before the unchained fury of God is visited on you. Do not sell that priceless treasure for gold. If you do your punishment will come. Take our word for it, it must come. God may not even allow you a respite until he calls you to judgment. He may punish you here in a way too plain to be misunderstood. But to our story.

Mr Howard was a sincere penitent, and, for his child's sake he was permitted to pass unpunished, at least at an earthly tribunal. No one except the family knew of his guilt. He seemed anxious to do all in his power to repair his deed, settled his vast estate on his little Lucy, and, with about four thousand dollars, left the country. Emma and Henry were married in about twelve months from Mrs Howard's death, and went to reside in his native village.