

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

MR. WHITEHEAD'S WILL.

Mrs Scrope, roused to something like self-possession, now replied with dignity: 'it is unusual for a young lady to carry firearms, and to wear a riding-dress in a drawing room. Has Miss Pamela Gordon countenanced such proceedings?'

'La, my dear old soul!' interrupted Ellie, laughing good humouredly, 'Miss Pamela and I think alike in all respects. You don't think I'd disobey her, do you? She told me to come here, and here I am. She told me to ride over on Vixen, and so I did. She told me to take the dogs for company, and they followed me. She told me to put the pistols in my pocket for protection, and here they are. She told me I mustn't refuse to marry Cousin Sam, and I don't mean to. And so, if Cousin Sam will take me 'for better for worse,' here I am—all meekness and obedience. La! Mrs Scrope, you don't know what a girl I am, and how I've been brought up. I mean to turn Scrope Hall out of windows when we are married. Did you ever follow the hounds Sam? it's such fun! Sam faintly said 'No,' retreating further and further, pursued by the young lady, her dogs having quietly stretched themselves on the rug. At length, matters reached their climax; for Miss Elspeth Gordon pulling off her gloves, placed one lily hand on Sam's shoulder and with the other patting his fat white cheeks, saying in a coaxing tone: 'Ducky mustn't be frightened. Ducky will learn to leap a five barred, won't he? and to ride steeple-chase, won't he, to please Ellie?'

'Blushing scarlet, Sam eluded her gentle touch, and rushed from the room, while Mrs Scrope, bewildered and miserable, persuaded her singular guest to adjourn to the chamber prepared for her reception. She reissued thence in the same attire, merely having cast aside her sloughed hat, and substituted a velvet cap of conical form in its stead beneath which her hair was not visible, while the green spectacles rested on their nose as before. After the repast was over (a repast most uncomfortable to Mrs Scrope and Sam, who scarcely tasted food or uttered a syllable, the young lady talking incessantly all the time about horses, dogs' firearms, her own wonderful feats, and what she would do when she became her own mistress) Ellie took out a cigar-case and handed it to Sam, inquiring indifferently: 'Do you smoke?' Too much astonished and embarrassed to reply, the young man looked at his mother, who with grave looks answered for her son: 'No, miss. Sam doesn't smoke; and allow me to say, it is remarkable to see a lady carrying and offering such things as those.'

'La! ma'am, Aunt Pamela said to me: 'Don't forget your cigar-case, Ellie,' replied the guest with simplicity; 'and so you see I didn't forget it.'

'I don't allow smoking on my premises, Miss,' said Mrs Scrope authoritatively.

'Well, well, ma'am don't put yourself in a passion,' rejoined Ellie sweetly: 'I'll wait till they're mine, and then see if I don't smoke you out! Ha! ha! ha! But perhaps cousin Sam is a snuff-taker—handing to the wretched Sam a unique gold box full of Prince's Mixture.'

'No, miss, my son does nothing of the kind,' replied Mrs Scrope, she alone being the speaker—Sam's heart was too full for speech—and allow me to remark, that snuff-taking is another singular habit for a young lady.'

'La! ma'am,' responded Ellie, smiling imperturbably—Miss Pamela said to me: 'Don't forget your snuff-box, Ellie; and you see I didn't forget it.' I'll teach Sam to snuff famously when he's my husband. Won't we snuff and smoke, Sam? Are you found of home-brewed, Sam? You should see our groom Tom drink it.'

'You're a water-drinker, I observe, miss,' said Mrs Scrope stiffly, by way of saying something.

Elspeth looked very sly, and smacking her pretty lips, replied: 'Ah, I ain't very thirsty to-day! you should see me sometimes!'

'And this is the young lady of Miss Pamela Gordon's bringing up!' said Mrs Scrope when she retired for the night, tears of vexation ready to start from her eyes: 'this is a wife for my poor Sam. She'll marry him perforce; I see she will, she's so desperately in love with him already. They say opposites often fancy each other in this way; but if she had a million, instead of only forty thousand pounds, she'd never do for Sam. I see her eyes sparkle through those green glasses; she'll smoke me out—O to be sure!'

Mrs Scrope, in the habit of thinking aloud, did not remark that her maid Martha loitered in the room, as if desirous of speaking out something which burdened her mind; and unable to keep it any longer, the handmaid

broke in with: 'O missis, 'xouse me, but Tom, Miss Gordon's groom, as cam' with her, says—at least he hints, which is much the same—that Miss Ellie won't never do for Master Samuel. She's a regular lass of spirit, he says, and he means more than he says. And he says outright, with such a broad grin on his red face, that if Miss Ellie ever marries Master Sam, she'll horsewhip him to a dead certainty, and turn the old one out of doors. Yes, ma'am, she calls you 'the old one!'

'Alas! thought Mrs Scrope, as she laid her head that night on a restless pillow, 'what is to be done? There is near forty thousand pounds at stake. What could Mr Whitehead mean by making such a will? and knowing this odious miss too!'

For one whole week did Miss Elspeth Gordon turn Scrope Hall completely topsy-turvy; never was such a din and racket heard; the servants grinned, and ran hither and thither, and Mrs Scrope was nearly out of her mind with fright and vexation. Miss Elspeth also made such desperate love to Sam, that Sam, flattered and bewildered, was inveigled out on a wet day to walk with the Amazon through the woods; and following her steps through brake and briar, fairly stuck in a dismal swamp, got soaked to the skin, and took to his bed at once, putting his nose out of the blankets, only to ask 'if that Jezebel had gone.'

'No, my dear,' said his anxious mother; your cousin Elspeth is not gone yet; she wants to see you.'

'To see me!' cried Sam, 'What! would she follow me even into my sick-chamber, the impudent hussy? I'll never see her again, mother; you may tell her so—she'll kill me; tell her to begone. Oh—oh—what a twinge! I wish she had it, the Jezebel! and she laughed at me too. I'll never forgive that.'

'But the forty thousand, Sam,' said Mrs Scrope, sighing deeply: 'think of that Sam.'

'I do think of that, mother,' said the miserable Sam; 'and it almost breaks my heart, it does, to give it up. I wish she'd give me up; I wish with all my heart that she had taken a dislike to me.'

'Ah, my darling,' said the fond mother 'you cannot wonder that she does not do that. The mortification will be severe enough when she has to return to that precious Miss Pamela with the tidings that you have refused her. But, after all, she may improve. Sam, my dear, and perhaps it is worth while to try; for though you possess forty thousand pounds of your own, it would be very convenient to have as much more.'

'Mother,' replied Sam solemnly, 'if you wish to see me in my grave, you'll marry me to this dreadful woman. Tom Hicks, Miss Pamela's groom, a most respectable man, who has lived with Miss Pamela these twenty years, and whose wife is cook there—Tom Hicks told me that if ever Miss Ellie Gordon was my wife, he'd not give a brass farthing for my life. If she marries you, sir, she'll worry you to death in a year: if you marry her, sir, you'll get a Tartar! No, mother, my mind's made up: I'll have nothing to do with her, and you may tell her so at once. She laughs so wildly, too, I declare I'm all over skeer-like when I hear it. Let her go! let her go!—and well rid of her at any cost.'

Do you really mean to tell me, ma'am, that Mr Samuel Scrope, of Scrope Hall, absolutely refuses to marry me?' cried Miss Elspeth Gordon in a voice of high indignation. 'I'll not give him up so easily—no, that I won't, that I won't, and the voice almost rose to a hysterical sob and laugh.'

'Calm yourself, pray Miss, replied Mrs Scrope with severity—she did not care about keeping terms now the chance had gone—calm yourself, pray. My son's mind is quite made up; and allow me to say, that the sooner you return to the protection of Miss Pamela Gordon the better, as we particularly desire a quiet house, now my poor son is so ill—an illness, miss, entirely brought on by your extremely improper and indelicate proceedings.'

'I'll tell Aunt Palm!' whispered the young lady, taking out her cambric handkerchief. 'I'm badly used by Cousin Sam—that I am. You asked me here to marry me to him; and now I've come you send me off again, just because Cousin Sam don't like my great specs.'

'No, Miss; you well know that is not the reason why my son Sam rejects the honour of your alliance,' responded Mrs Scrope, bridling up, and getting very red in the face; 'and if you had ten thousand times forty thousand pounds in your hand to offer him for marrying you, he'd refuse the bride miss.' Mrs Scrope spoke very loud. 'My son, Sam Scrope, will never marry, for the sake of lucre only, a smoking, snuffing, horsewhipping, dog-baiting—'

'Go on, ma'am—go on with your peroration,' sobbed the young lady, with her handkerchief at her face. 'I'm very badly used—that I am; and I cannot face Aunt Pamela, and tell her all this. She'll never believe it, unless Cousin Sam writes her a letter all in form, to say he won't marry me. I cannot

tell her myself, ma'am—indeed I cannot,' and Miss Ellie began to blubber violently.

'Well, I'm sure if you'll go away in peace, miss, my son shall write the letter at once, and communicate, in formal terms, his rejection of your hand,' interrupted Mrs Scrope, only too glad to clear her house on any terms.

'I'll go when you give me a letter—but won't you let me see Sam?' said the green-spectacled damsel, in a wheedling tone, sidling up to Mrs Scrope, with her conical velvet cap vibrating from some inward emotion. 'Give my love to cousin then; and if I may not see him, tell the dear fellow that I'll be a sister to him in heart, if he refuses me for a wife.'

'Indeed I'll tell him no such thing, miss,' said Mrs Scrope with asperity; 'he'd rather not have you in either character. You've half killed him; and the mischief your two-dogs have done is incalculable. You shall have the letter in half an hour; so please to be in readiness for departure then, miss, if it quite suits your convenience. Excuse my want of ceremony; but a sick house, miss, must plead for a mother's want of time; so I bid you a very good morning, and wish you a very pleasant journey, miss; and, pray, present my compliments and Sam's compliments to Miss Pamela Gordon.' As the incensed lady hurried out of the room, and up stairs to her son's apartment, what a wild elfin laugh rang in her ears! What could it be? It was doubtless the Jezebel in hysterics; and Mrs Scrope hastened her steps in a fright.

Mounted on Vixen, prancing and curveting down the avenue, and attended by Tom, with Juno and Peto bounding and frisking for joy, Miss Elspeth Gordon, provided with the letter, turned her head, and waved an adieu to Scrope Hall; and as the little cavalcade receded in the distance, again the same clear wild laugh floated past on the morning breeze.

It was not very long after these events, when Mrs Scrope—who had never ceased to lament the loss of Mr. Whitehead's fortune, even going the great length of upbraiding Sam for having been too premature in rejecting the young lady—was informed by her elder son in person, of his approaching marriage with Miss Elspeth Gordon. Mrs Scrope was of course delighted to hear that the money, after all, was not going out of the family; but concluded her remarks by saying:—'Well, Frank, I'm sure I wish you joy of your bargain; forty thousand pound is not to be sneezed at, as I told Sam. However, you have fine health and spirits, and may be able to manage her; but mind, I shan't be in the least astonished to hear that your bride has horsewhipped you before the honeymoon is over!'

'Never mind, mother,' cried Frank, gaily laughing; 'if she horsewhips me, I'll flog her soundly, I promise you. I hope you'll come and see me soon, and bring Sam with you. I'll promise that Ellie shall behave herself.'

To Mrs Scrope's dying day, she never could comprehend by what means her son Frank Eardley had wrought so wonderful a change in his wife; and even Sam, who always remained a bachelor, was heard to declare, that if he could meet with an exact counterpart of Frank's wife, he too would marry.

'But who could gess,' said Sam, 'that matrimony would transform a mad woman, in odious green spectacles and a sugar-loaf cap, into a mild, pretty, kind creature, who never laughs at a fellow because he's got a cold or a face ache?'

LIFE OUT OF DOORS IN THE WEST INDIES.

The country-houses, for the three or four miles that we followed the road, are as near together as spacious grounds will permit, and they seem built for a world where there is no suspicion,—nobody to shut out, no reserve, and little or no privacy. I presume we saw every member of every household we passed, the fences are very ornamental, but quite open, and there is no vine or shrubbery between the house and road. The high foliage of tall trees is like a portico, under which we look, with no obstruction except their trunks like pillars far apart. The houses themselves are mostly of one story, with high and spacious apartments, and the windows are so large and the partitions inside so few, that we could see through them as through bridgways. The ladies were walking about in loose negligé, some with cups of coffee in their hands some feeding the chickens and turkeys (which here are admitted into good society, rank as pets, and walk in the front of the house, or where they please), and some leaning indolently over the balustrade, talking to the negroes or watching the pranks of naked black children; but it so happened that he saw not one with a book in her hand. The gentlemen of almost every house seemed to be lounging on easy chairs under the portico, reading the newspapers. From the difficulty of preserving or raising grass in these latitudes, the grounds about the houses are very bare, except where rich flowers are cultivated, and this is an unpleasant contrast with the sumptuousness of the wooden architecture, the fence-posts crowned with vases, the

gaudy colours and general air of magnificence only. Of comfort there is no sign—the climate doubtless rendering it unnecessary.—How much the English, by the way, owe of their perfection in comfort, to the compulsion of climate; and how much of the northern taste for privacy, unpromiscuousness, and hedge-about-ness is an unnatural and fastidious growth of excessive indoor life, are questions that occur to one, in looking at these people. To feel nobody's eyes, and be as unconscious of observation as a bird, seems to be a universal result of the southern habits; as, to be nervously exclusive and social only by effort, seems a result of the northern.—*A Health Trip to the Tropics, by N. P. Willis.*

A TASTE FOR READING.

SIR JOHN HERSHEL says on this subject—'Give a man this taste, and you place him in contract with the best society in every period of history—with the wisest, the wittyest, with the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters which have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations—a contemporary of all ages. This world has been created for him. It is hardly possible but his character should take a higher and better tone from the constant habit of association with a class of thinkers, to say the least of it, above the average of human nature.' What is still farther in favor of this habit, it may be cultivated as amusement, not as an occupation, and therefore may be possessed by any one; for it need not interfere with any business of life. The testimony of literary men indeed goes to show that literature itself should never be the sole employment even of an author, but should be pursued only in the intervals of business, as a relaxation. Mr Coleridge speaks feelingly on this point, and recommends to every literary man to have some occupation more or less mechanical, which, requiring no labor of the mind, will cause the hours of leisure, when he can turn to his books, to be looked for with pleasing anticipations.

It will be found that the authors who have written most and written best, were chiefly men of active lives whose literary labors were their amusement. Cicero, one of the most voluminous of ancient writers, was a lawyer, and a statesman whose whole life was passed in the contention of the forum or in the service of the republic, inso-much that no great political event of the period is without some mark of active participation therein. Milton was a school-master and a warm controversialist. He was better known to his contemporaries as the antagonist of Salmasius than as the author of Paradise Lost. What was Shakspeare's life but a continued scene of active labors, and those too of a very various kind—for he was the manager of a theatre. The voluminous works of Sir Walter Scott were written, no one could tell how or when, so numerous were his other occupations.

The knowledge derived from books, and that which is gained by a practical acquaintance with the world, are not of such diverse natures that both cannot be pursued together. On the other hand, the act by mutually as correctives; the one tends to liberate from narrow views, the other to give reality and truth to intellectual conceptions. There is moreover a certain freshness and elasticity of mind acquired by mingling with the business of life which enables one to use efficiently the knowledge derived from reading. He learns to understand the character of men in various points of development, to comprehend the spirit of the age, its wants, its tendencies, and to know how to accommodate himself accordingly.

But with authorship most of us have not much to do. Our purposes was to show by the instances just cited that if men busied in the daily concerns of life could find time to write books, and voluminous ones, how easily may all, if they are so disposed, cultivate a taste for reading. There are few occupations which do not allow intervals or fragments of time which may be thus employed, without detracting anything that is properly due to social intercourse. To young persons especially does this refined and useful accomplishment commend itself. The taste once formed will grow of itself; the mind will require no urging to yield to it, but will look for each coming hour of leisure, and enjoy it when it comes. Grosser delights will gradually loosen their hold upon the affections as this gains strength. 'For there is,' says the same writer whom we quoted at the beginning, 'a gentle, but perfectly irresistible coercion in a habit of reading, well directed, over the whole tenor of a man's character and conduct; which is not less effectual because it works insensibly, and because it is really the last thing he thinks of.'—*Journal Education, U. Canada.*

NIGHT IN CEYLON.

As the sun sank, large clear and unclouded in the west, the full moon rose with a splendour peculiarly her own in the clear air of the tropics, upon the east. I know not how to give an idea of the loveliness of that night, as we enjoyed it, walking in the verandah