

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From the Presbyterian.

A RESOLUTION.

After the pattern of St. Paul's in the xiv. and xv. Chapters of ROMANS.

I saw no danger in the cup ;
It seemed a blessing given

To cheer the weary, help the weak,
A gift of love from Heaven ;
I thought so then, I think so still—
Yet drink it more I never will.

And will you then, I hear you say,
The gift of Heaven refuse ?
The glory of the noble vine,
Was it not given to use ?
It was, it was, I own it still—
Yet drink it more, I never will.

We sat around the festal board,
All brethren of the LORD,
We ate with thanks, we passed the cup
With prudence and accord ;
We saw no harm, we thought no ill—
Yet touch it more, I never will.

For one was there who had been plucked
As from the burning flame,
I marked him, as the wine went round,
Grow pale with fear or shame ;
I passed as I my cup did fill,
And drink it more I never will.

I know that, if he touched the wine,
He was a fallen man,
And, as I saw his wavering look,
Words through my memory ran :
I heard them then, I hear them still,
And drink it more I never will.

Destroy not with thy meat (or drink)
Thy brother frail and weak,
For whom Christ died upon the Cross ;
But help him, boldly speak
And say, the glass I never fill,
And touch it more I never will.

Another sat beside me there,
A Christian full of zeal,
Who thought 'twas wickedness to taste,
And condemnation's seal,
I saw his soul with horror fill,
And drink it more I never will.

And one was there whose cheerful face
Wore much too red a hue,
And, where his brethren drank but one,
He took with pleasure two ;
With grief I saw the coming ill,
And touch it more I never will.

The burthen of the frail and weak
We who are strong should bear,
Nor place a stumbling-block for those
Who need a brother's care ;
I know thou'lt say, I do no ill,
Yet drink it more I never will.

Saviour, didst Thou lay down Thy life,
For these weak brethren's sake,
And shall not we for Thee, for them,
One luxury forsake ?

Dear LORD, with love our bosoms fill,
And drink it more we never will.

From Dickens's Household Words.

WHY MY UNCLE WAS A BACHELOR.

'Nobody thought, nobody spoke, of any thing but the beautiful actress. We soon learned that she was a niece to the manager, and was residing in the town with her mother, a widow, and three or four brothers and sisters. We went to the theatre whenever she acted. Mrs. Topham invited her to her house; so did all the ladies in the neighbourhood.—In the morning she looked even more lovely than on the stage; she was hardly seventeen; her complexion had the transparency and the variability of early youth; in her mind and manners, the simple trustfulness of the child was blended with the opening sensibilities of the woman. It is impossible to give you any idea of the elastic grace of her motions, of the marvelous and ever changing expressions of her countenance: nothing that approached her could withstand her witchery.

'As a natural consequence of her position and her singular beauty, Violet Elder was capricious and proud. She did not attempt to conceal her dislike of some of the forward coxcombs who pressed their attention upon her or her displeasure at an ill-expressed or too open compliment. How it was, I know not; perhaps, because my silent admiration was better suited to her taste; perhaps, as I rather incline to think, from the natural kindness of her heart, which led her to see the loneliness of mine, and to compassionate the nervous tremor with which her presence inspired me; for these or other reasons she soon distinguished me, and showed pleasure in conversing with me. She took me into her confidence, demanded little services of me, treated me as a friend, and invited me home to see her mother, whom she loved with

a devoted though sometimes dictatorial affection. If she looked lovely among the gay and wealthy, where her only business was to be amused, how much more lovely did she appear in her simple home, the support and ornament of the humble household! Here, all pride, all restraint was lost in her affection for her mother—a gentlewoman still eminently handsome, and not beyond the love for her younger brothers and sisters. I must not dwell on this part of my story, though God knows I could linger over it for hours.

'That I loved her with a true and earnest passion, I need hardly tell you. She returned my love; I had the assurance from her own dear lips. After the term of my visit at Topham Court had expired, I took lodgings not far from Warwick, accounting to myself and to my mother for not going home by the necessity of reading for my approaching examination. My mother wrote to me frequently, and continually mentioned my cousin Grace. This I did not remark at the time, and merely read and replied to her letters in an absent manner. I was wrapped in the sweet delirium of a higher existence; all that was gross and material about me seemed to be laid to rest. Violet was all in all to me. I had no thought, no apprehension for any thing except her. Creation seemed clothed in divine beauty; life, in its larger fuller sense, was opening upon me, for I drank deep of the golden waters of love.

'Thus passed half a year. I returned to Oxford, but we corresponded almost daily. I did not communicate anything relative to Violet to my mother, from an instinctive apprehension, I suppose; for certainly it was not the result of design. Besides I never had been accustomed to speak of my feelings to her or to any one, and I was such a child in worldly matters that I had never yet formed any plan for the future. When I returned to Warwick at Christmas, however, Mrs. Elder gently required of me some explanation, some statement of my intentions. She told me that it was very much against her wish that her daughter had ever embraced the profession of the stage; that nothing but the representations of her brother-in-law and the necessities of her family had induced her to consent to her making use of her talents in this way; that it would be a very great happiness to her to see her united to me, convinced as she was of our mutual attachment; that she felt the dangers of Violet's position, and was extremely anxious to place Violet in one more congenial to her tastes, and better calculated to develop the softer portions of her character. She concluded by informing me that Violet had lately received an extremely advantageous offer of an engagement in London, but that they had delayed accepting it until she had spoken with me.

'I replied that I was just ready to take orders, that there was a good living waiting for me, and that I would write to my parents by that night's post to request their consent. Mrs. Elder looked a little grave that evening, but Violet and I were perfectly happy. We sat talking of our future. I described to her the Parsonage and the surrounding country; spoke of my father, of my mother and of my grand relations at Cobham Hall.

'The next day was also one of unmingled happiness. We walked in the bright winter weather along the hard roads, her brothers running races past us. Her complexion assumed a more transparent brilliancy; her eyes sparkled with health and happiness.

'That night, when I returned to my lodgings, I found my mother waiting for me. She was white with passion. In unmeasured terms she upbraided me with dissimulation and every species of misconduct. In her anger she told me that my hand had long since been disposed of; that I was affianced to my cousin Grace, that she and her brother had settled it when we were both children. She reminded me of the calling for which I was intended, and demanded if I thought an actress a fit wife for a clergyman and a Watson? At first her vehemence stunned me, and I listened in bewildered dismay; but the contemptuous mention of Violet roused the dormant passion within me. I sternly and indignantly protested that Violet was worthy of a much greater fortune than I could offer her. I declared that I would not be bound by a contract made without my knowledge. I asserted that I would make Violet my wife—that in the sight of Heaven we were already united. My mother was in her turn astonished; she had never suspected that I inherited so much of her own temper. From angry denunciation she turned to entreaty, to supplication.

I met her in the same spirit. I begged her too see Violet—to judge for herself. She absolutely refused; and commanded me, if I valued her blessing, to attend her home on the morrow.

'I had been to long accustomed to obey her to refuse compliance, especially as she enforced her command by telling me of my father's severe illness, and of his imperative desire to see me. Besides, I was frightened

at the strength of my own passions, and hoped to be able to soften her, and to win my father to my side.

'While my mother was dressing next morning, and while the post-chaise in which we were to travel was waiting at the door, I ran down to Violet's house. It was still very early, and I had to wait some minutes before Violet could see me. I had not been in bed, nor had I closed my eyes all night. I suppose I looked very haggard, for she started when she saw me.

'Is any thing the matter ?

'No, no, dearest; I am only come to say good-bye. I am obliged to go to the North. My father is very ill, and wants to see me.'

'Violet's face brightened. She laid her hand lovingly on my arm.

'I am very sorry, love; but I hope he will soon be better, and that you will not be many days gone.'

'They were the last words I ever heard her speak. I could not bear her trustful tenderness; my tears choked my utterance.

'How my mother detained my letters; how my uncle himself went to Warwick, saw Violet, appealed to her pride, told her that if I married her I should be disowned by my family, and ruined; how by a thousand other false and cruel arguments they wrung from her a renunciation of my engagement to her, and at last induced her to send me back all my little presents, and all my letters. I never knew until long, long afterwards. She sent me a few lines—a little letter—with them, but I did not receive it at the time—not until long, long afterwards. Though the things of which I speak are long past, though the paper is yellow with age, and the words traced in her pretty girlish hand are illegible, I know them by heart.

'Dearest, I shall never write to you again. I send you back your presents, and, what is much harder, your letters. Your mother and uncle are quite right. I never thought I was fit to be your wife. I wish you very, very happy. Do not think I blame you at all.—God bless you. Perhaps I ought not to pray for you, but I cannot help it yet; and I do not think my prayers can do you harm. You know how dearly I loved you; but I do not love you now, since it would be your ruin.—Oh! if I must become very wicked, if I must grow proud and sinful, still pray for me, you who are so good, who are to live a pure and holy life: your prayers will be heard; and it cannot do you harm to pray for me.—VIOLET ELDER.

'P. S.—I hope you will marry your cousin and that you will be happy.'

'I do not think my mother, fertile as she was in expedients, could have succeeded in keeping me away from Violet, but for my father's continued and serious illness. As it was, I wrote again and again to Violet, and, as I received no answer, no explanation of the returns of my letters, I was in a continual state of agitation. An idea of the truth—that my letters were detained—sometimes flashed across my mind; but I found it hard to believe that my mother would have recourse to such means. At rare intervals I felt displeasure against Violet. At length, my father getting no better, but rather worse, the doctors ordered him to a warmer climate. I am not sure that my mother did not suggest the remedy; she was certainly very eager in adopting it.

'While we were in London on our way to the Continent, I insisted on going to Warwick. My mother made no difficulty; she was probably aware of the inutility of my visit.

'When I reached the lodgings which the Elders had occupied, I found them empty, the theatre was closed, all the company were dispersed. The keeper of the lodgings informed me that Violet had been very ill; that she had gone to Scotland—she believed, to fulfil an engagement. We were to sail for Italy on the morrow. To follow her was impossible, and the woman could give me no clue to her address. It was even a comfort to know that Violet had been ill; that might be the reason of my letters remaining unanswered. Her mother, too, would probably be offended at the refusal of my parents to sanction our engagement. Violet had been very ill, the landlady said, for three weeks. She had a fever, and they had cut off nearly all her beautiful hair. She used to cry out and talk wildly when she was ill; but her mother nursed her herself, and allowed no one else to go into the room. She was almost well before she went away. She used to go out in a carriage, and she revived and smiled again, too; but, somehow, there seemed a weight on her spirits: it wasn't her old smile—but then she had been very ill.

'Perhaps the woman had connected Violet's illness with me. Women have an intuitive preception of such matters. At first she was very cold, and little disposed to be communicative. But I suppose my own countenance bore some traces of the suffering I had undergone. Perhaps she saw in me something that moved her compassion; be that as it may, she threw off the constraint she had at first put upon herself, told me many touching details of Violet's weakness, and permitted me to visit the room where I had so often sat with her. She also gave me a braid of the hair which had been cut off;

how she came to have it I don't know; I have sometimes hoped it might have been left with her for me.

'I accompanied my parents to Italy with reassured spirits. Violet loved me, and my heart was strong within me. I would make the best use of my time while I was abroad, and if on our return my mother still refused her consent, I would be able to support my wife by my exertions. Time and distance seemed as nothing. A little year, and Violet would be mine. But the year lengthened into two. My father slowly declined; he pined to see home again, and we sat on our journey. But he was never more to set his foot on English ground: he died at Naples, and there he lies buried.

'When my mother had a little recovered from the shock, she, my sister, and I set out on our return. Perhaps in that saddened state of her feelings she might have softened towards Violet, but it was now too late.

'During our stay in Italy I had heard of Violet only in her public character. I had heard of her appearance in London, and of her triumph. My college friend, Topham, wrote me accounts of her. He told me she was surrounded by admirers, among whom there were more than one of rank and station who aspired to her hand; but he said that she was grown very haughty; more beautiful than ever—unquestionable more beautiful, but strangely proud, disdainful, and wilful. He confessed that she had treated him with marked and with what he considered supercilious coldness. Topham was by no means the person to whom I could confide the secret of my affection. He belonged to the class of young men who have no depth of feeling themselves, and whose system of honor has no reference to any thing beyond the opinion of the narrow circle in which they move. I imagined that Violet knew the strength and constancy of my love, that she had faith in me, and for my sake assumed this repulsive manner to her suitors. Knowing her trustful tenderness and abundant affection, this seemed to me nothing but a veil with which she sought to hide the sufferings of her heart. I panted for the moment when I should see her once more, face to face, and tell her all I had endured and hoped.

'My uncle, Sir George, met us on our arrival in London. We were to stay at a house which he then occupied in Grosvenor Street; my aunt and my cousin Grace were also there, and George Mildmay, a fine boy of seventeen, just returned from Eton. After the first emotions of meeting were over, the ladies withdrew together; my uncle retired to his library; and George and I were left to ourselves. I could not help looking with admiration at the handsome intelligent face, and listening with surprise to the masterly manner in which my cousin, whom I had never thought of but as rather a spoiled boy, dealt out the news of the town.

'You'll like to see what's doing at the theatre, I dare say,' said he, when a pause in the conversation suggested the introduction of a new subject: 'we'll run down to Drury Lane by-and-by, if you like; not that there's anything worth looking at in the way of women. It was a monstrous shame of Woodhouse to run off with our little Sultana.'

'With whom?' inquired I mechanically.

'Why, the very princess and fairy queen of actresses: the brightest eyes—the loveliest hair—such a glorious laugh—and a foot and ankle that were delightful to look at. It's a splendid thing for her. Woodhouse has somewhere about four thousand a year in *esse*, and double as much in *posse*; though, to be sure, so he ought, for he's a slap-and-dash fellow. They say he's growing tired of his prize already; and she's so confoundingly cold and proud! But you know her; you were at Warwick when she came out.'

'Yes, I did know her. I had known, ever since he began to speak, of whom he was talking; but the sudden and unexpected blow had stunned me, and I was glad to let him rattle on. Violet, my Violet—she whom I had never for one moment ceased to love—she, my own tender Violet—married, and married to such a man!

'The boy talked on, retailing all the little town gossip respecting her who dwelt in my heart's core. An irrepresible desire to see her to assure myself of the extent of my misery, came over me. I asked the boy where she lived; he replied by mentioning a street not far distant. How I broke from him, I don't know, nor does it matter now; I only know that I hurried to the street which he had named, and almost by instinct found the house.

'I must have inquired for Violet by her name, for I was admitted—in a minute I found myself in her presence. The room was luxuriously furnished; Violet sat beside a lady, probably a visitor, on a sofa. She looked eminently handsome, but with a beauty different to that which I had loved; her carriage was more stately, and there was something haughty in her expression; her dress, too, had lost the girlish simplicity which was familiar to me. It was but a brief space that I could gaze upon her unobserved—and at the time I was conscious of none of these