

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

## MEMORIES.

BY MARY W. JAMESON.

I sat by the sea-side at nightfall,  
In the twilight cold and grey,  
And close at my feet the waters  
Were washing the sands away.

The voice of a storm came moaning,  
In from the surging sea—  
And the sobbing tones of the storm-wind,  
Were bringing sad memories to me.

For I thought how the waters were leaving  
Beaches of tropic sands;  
And cried, 'Oh! what hath befallen  
The wanderer in foreign lands?'—

Cold were the billows before me,  
And strong and chill was the tide—  
But colder the words I had spoken,  
And stronger and sterner my pride.

For, years ago had we parted  
Down where the white sands sweep—  
One of us broken-hearted,  
And the other too proud to weep!

He for wearisome wanderings  
Afar on the Indian main—  
And I—oh, I, for the struggle—  
The struggle and toil after Fame!

And in the years that had followed  
That hour of passion and pride,  
Love's tree had shed all its blossoms,  
And white Hope had fluttered and died.

No one had breathed his memory—  
No one had spoken his name;  
And my heart had grown cold and deadened,  
Nor come to it pleasure or pain.

But as I sat in the gloaming,  
Down by the desolate sea,  
How weary and sad the memories  
The storm winds were bringing to me.

From the Recollections of a Student.

## CRIMES OF A GOOD MAN.

In a lonely valley on the banks of the Neckar, replete with all the beauties of nature, there so beautiful, but on this spot of a character sad and even sombre, rose an unpretending, ancient manor-house. It was of simple structure, but massive, and bore the impress of antiquity. Its mouldering walls were grey, its vivid turrets green, rising above it, like Hope upon a grave-stone. There was no porch, no castellated tower, with shattered battlements telling of past wars.—Through a low arched door you entered the solemn hall; on its rafters no storied tale, on its antique walls no knightly blazonment, but the dark, green pines that waved against the windows hung that silent chamber with an arras of shadow.

Within it dwelt a grey-haired, pale old man, who seemed bent with cares, and still to smile beneath them. He was quiet and unpretending, like his dwelling; yet he had a pleasing solemnity, a winning pensiveness, that made you feel his friend from the moment you beheld him.—He was an uncle of Issendorff; thence I knew him, and, accompanied by my unfortunate friend I often strolled to that old man's dwelling, and passed away many an evening hour most pleasantly, and yet I scarce knew how.

Issendorff sometimes revealed to him the difficulties of his situation, and always left him comforted by his advice, which, though so good he could not follow.

One evening we found the old man more melancholy than usual; he received us with a sadder smile, and with a warmer welcome. He looked paler than his wont—his brow white as the hair that clung around. How beautiful are the silver locks of age! They look like a halo. It is as though the spirit, drawing so near to heaven, was already brightening with its glory.

We entered the ancient hall, though it was a cold evening of autumn, the fire had expired on the hearth, and its large and gloomy space yawned like a grave. The leaves fell from the trees, and the gusty wind whirled them against the casement like the tapping of fingers. I could scarcely forbear deeming it was a spirit calling that old man away from his fireless hearth and his gloomy house.

'Issendorff!' he exclaimed; 'I am going! Where?'

'Where?' His voice sank and his eyes quailed. 'I know not; but 'tis to a land whence none return.'

'I hope you will be spared us many years longer, dear uncle. This is but a passing fancy; you must cheer up. And if you were, why fear? The good all go to heaven?'

'I hoped for heaven once; but now I dare not!'

'And why? All mortals are sinful, but you are the best of all I know. All who speak of you call you the good Count Denneberg.'

'I know they do; but so I thought myself. I believed I had never committed a crime. I searched my own actions, and was convinced I had not. And now—O God!'

Issendorff looked at me in amaze. 'Uncle!' he exclaimed, 'let us replenish the fire, and wheel round your arm-chair.'

'No, no!' cried the old man with gasping energy, 'the fire in my heart is going out, and there shall be none on my hearth. Oh! it is cold, very cold! and so cheerless, within and without!'

Thinking that the paroxysm would pass away, and that it was only the weakness of age, we noticed him not, dear as he was to us, but began to converse on the affairs of my friend, which at that time already assumed a hopeless hue.

Seeing he was not attended to, the old man burst into tears.

'Thus it is!' he exclaimed. 'Once I was young and strong in body and intellect; all gathered round me and sought me, and now that I am weak, perchance in both, they leave me alone, and I may die without any one to close my eyes and speak comfort to my departing soul.'

'No so, dear uncle!' cried Issendorff; 'we are near you still, and we will not leave you.—Cheer up! There are still many bright days in store for you. But, alas! poor old man! you are not more deserted, more unhappy than I, and I am yet so young!'

'Then you are truly happy. Feel sorrow young, and you will die happy; the deathbed of the unfortunate is easy. But my life has been one of happiness, though I always thought a good one; and yet I die in agony. Alas! how vain are our good intentions! how little can we rely upon the strength of human wisdom! O listen to me Issendorff, and you, my young friend; now about entering life, you have, no doubt, your high aspirations, your noble plans. It is well: cherish them, they may lead to good, but mistrust them—weigh well every action before you commit it—yea, even every word!—Wait, my children; I see a tempest coming across the mountains. You cannot go home yet, therefore spend the evening with me, and I will reveal to you the cause of my sufferings, and my unavailing and too long delayed repentance.'

He ceased, and apparently exhausted, sank back in his arm-chair. Issendorff walked to the window and opened it, and in truth a faint gleam of lightning flickered against the casement, and partially lit the walls, gleaming on the time-silvered head of our own venerable host. The dead leaves awoke from their rest and rustled without, and the low wailing that precedes a storm crept among the long, withered grass. Dun clouds glided between the mountains, and a muttering of thunder was distinctly audible. The air was keen with frost, making a thunderstorm at that time of the year, the more surprising. It was evidently coming fast over Heidelberg, that lay a dark mass in the distance.

A sudden gust arose, and a loud peal of thunder rattled overhead, casting its fire athwart the old tower of the far-famed castle.—Issendorff shut the casement and turned away, for suddenly the old man moved and bent down to the ground, crying in anguish—

'Oh! hark, hark! how the Eternal chides!—See how His eyes lightens upon me! See how His almighty anger rolls aloft! And I am called hence, and must meet Him in His wrath! What if I die to-night! See, there is a hell in the sky!'

We shuddered, for an awful expression dwelt in the countenance of Denneberg. It was appalling to behold him suddenly raise his time-bent form and stand before us with all the vigor of youth. There was a majesty in him but it was that of the spirit. His eye shone forth with unearthly light, but his body seemed wasting before the fire of his soul.

For a time we did not venture to speak; we felt that we dared not intrude a common-place word upon his thoughts. We were awed in the double presence of the angry storm without and that sorrowing man within. The flashes came thick and fast; every moment the thunder pealed louder, and every moment his anguish seemed to increase. Never shall I forget the countenance with which he gazed upon the clouds. A dreadful thought seemed raging within him, but at length he grew calmer, re-seated himself, and, motioning us to his side, began thus:

'I need not prelude to what I am about to relate. You may think me insane, but I am not; though the sudden conviction that he has committed endless crimes, forced upon a man who thought his life exemplary, were enough to goad to madness in the hour of death.—Speak not! I know what you would say, but I reveal the truth! Thus has my life been, and it is now on the point of ending.'

In truth, we saw that the state of excitement under which he was laboring could not be sustained long, and that it was the last flickering of the lamp ere it expired. With feelings moved to agony, we listened! The Count resumed:

'Yesterday I was sitting alone on the same spot, by the expiring embers of my hearth.—All was quiet in the house and without. The very air seemed dead, and hung heavy in the room. All was silent as thought. The walls looked bare and blank, the lamp burned dim, and I felt cheerless. Suddenly a strange feeling came over me—a feeling of impending death. It was indescribable; a bodily chill and a foreboding in the spirit, that weighed me down,—

I looked around with a shudder, for one would feel thus if Satan had entered the room. I cannot tell why, but I knew that it was the dreadful warning, the first precursor of death! I never felt so before. I am a care-worn man, but my cares sat lightly on me, for they were mere worldly misfortunes: loss of friends, and wealth, and rank and disappointments. I had grieved for them, but I had never felt thus.

'I tried to comfort myself by looking over my past life. Oh! it was a difficult task! It was like commencing a long journey when one is tired to death. But I did begin it, and sought comfort in the retrospection. All my actions I had modeled according to what men considered the laws of right. I had always been an enthusiast for the good and the noble; if ever man was faultless, I had deemed myself such. Had I not suffered for the good of my fellow-creatures—had I not undergone misery and privation to serve them? Was I not justified in hoping for comfort in the retrospection? What good must I not have done?'

Thus I said to myself, aloud, as one who fears to be alone, but there was a lurking consciousness of evil. I paused.—Good heaven! I heard a still small voice answer me! Fearfully it stole on the silence of the chamber.—The voice was most strange; it was so low I scarce could hear it, and yet every word thrilled deeper than this thunder. I listened, and lo! the voice came from within me. Still I continued to speak, and still it answered me, in that low, whispered, awful tone. It came from the depth of my heart, and I felt it was the voice of God!

'The consciousness of my past actions now came over me. But the path that my memory would have traced was not the one that I was permitted to follow. I began with what I considered the first main action of my life, one that I had thought would alone entitle me to eternal reward; that dreadful voice stopped me. 'This is not thy first sin,' it breathed; 'thy catalogue of crime begins far sooner! Recollect' one evening in long past years, you met Dietrich Schaffner; he was very young at the time, and his fiery imagination easily impressed. You conversed with him, and the theme was God. Did I then not whisper close to your heart, 'Forbear! it is not well done to speak lightly on serious themes, to one so wild of thought!' you conversed on all the different codes and sects, and compared their relative merits; but it was more satire than discussion. Fate and the free agency of man became your subject. You said in conclusion: 'We claim the possession of a free, unfettered soul, and yet dare not venture to act for ourselves, but suffer our actions, nay, our thoughts to be ruled by visionary laws. How must the eternal spirits smile at us! do you not feel humiliated before them? For my part, I would break from such puerile guidance, if I thought I were a plaything in the hands of Fate, for I feel, and so must every man, an immortal power within me, that can think and act for itself. Why bow without enquiry to the quaint fancies of visionary minds, clothed with the names of morals and religion? These sacred names are easily applied to any tenant.' These were thy words.'

'I could not deny them, but I had spoken them without an evil intent. I had wished to assert the sovereignty of the human will, but I had not thought that I was committing an evil.'

'These words,' continued the voice, 'laid the train of thought; they sank deep into the mind of thy young listener—they ruled the actions of his after life; he became self-confident, thence reckless, fierce, and proud. He died an outcast upon a scaffold, and thou art the cause.'

'I shuddered and bowed down, for the weight as of a world rushed over my heart. Is it thus I have acted? Then am I indeed unblest! Are actions I scarce heeded at the time—words I did not recollect for an hour, of such fearful importance? At once I was dashed from the highest pinnacle of self-applause into the lowest gulf of despondency. With a feeling of unutterable woe, I tried to wave away the visions of the Past, and to silence the dreadful voice: but the more I strove the thicker they thronged around me, and the tones of that awful monitor loudened to a thunder!—

'Oh! I cannot tell the feeling of utter wretchedness that seized me or the chill of horror that I felt, as recollection after recollection rushed across my mind.

'I will not, cannot dwell on them, though they are burnt in characters of fire on my brain. Merciful heaven! strike me not yet with these bolts! I am unprepared!'

The Count gazed at the lightnings, that now thronged thick and lurid in the sky, like the fancies of an evil heart. A darkness hung around, save where those fires melted downward from Heaven, like burning ore, and the trembling voice of that wretched man came low and hollow as of one in the grave.

'My next crime,' he continued, 'consisted in an action that I thought one of my most meritorious. I had joined an army of patriots—where I will not say, for many of the first of our land are implicated in the event—it was in a far distant country. Brilliant victories crowned our endeavours for a time; then we were beaten by an overwhelming force. A scanty band, which I commanded, still remain-

ed; some of the loftiest in the realm were in the number, and the noblest hearts that ever beat to battle. Resistance was hopeless, and retreat was open—they might have all been saved. Many would not have been suspected, most would have been pardoned and attained happy years; surrounded by those they love; but I advanced before them.

'Comrades!' I cried, 'the way for fight is free, but freer is the road to glory! Your country demands a sacrifice, let us not survive its liberties, but seal them with our blood. I call on you all to die for your cause. A brighter flame will arise from our grave than we could ever kindle in a lengthened life!'

'I thought this heroism—it may have been, but even at this moment I heard a voice within me. I heeded it not, for I knew it not. I saw by the pale quivering lip, and the gleaming eye of the doomed soldiers, that the smiles and tears of those they loved, of parents, wives, and children—the bereft, the orphan, were present to their thoughts. I saw that recollections rolled over them, and half unnerved; the bright memories of childhood and its promises.

'I felt, as it were, a remorse for what I had said; but then I reasoned thus: Private feelings must yield to public good, the country commands the sacrifice. Do I not share the same fate? But the broken hearts at home! Away, unmanly fancies! Be the spirit brave, and drink the cup of glory, though the draught be death! I saw they wavered, I saw many thought of those they loved, and half sheathed the sword.—Onward! I cried, 'If none will follow me to death, I go alone!'

'Forth from its scabbard, as lightning from the cloud, leaped every blade, and lifting it above him, each soldier swore to die by my side. The foe came down, and every one of my valiant band was slain. I fought bravely, nay heroically. An old man, woe-stricken, on the brink of doom, says it, and curses himself for having done so. They perished. I was taken prisoner and escaped soon afterwards. I always thought this was one of the proudest and brightest actions of my life—but yesterday the hand of God unveiled the awful secret. I was a murderer a thousand fold; and methought I heard in the dreadful silence of the midnight the beating of the hearts I had broken.

'The people obtained their liberty afterwards, by foreign interposition, and the bootless sacrifice of so many valiant hearts is scarce known or recorded. Oh! listen not to the call of false glory, for its halo is a wildfire on a grave, and its laurel is a weed from hell.

'The Count Waldren was my true and dear friend; he had stood by me in many dangers, he had aided me in many undertakings. I owed him a debt of gratitude, and tried to repay it. He was noble and wealthy, and did not want assistance, but providence gave me the power to render him a service.

'Large possessions and lordly castles were enjoyed by a young and distant relative of the count, but my friend said he had a right and laid claim to them; they formed almost the only property of his competitor, Sigismund of Seedorff, who without them would become a captive beggar.

'Sigismund was on the point of being married to a noble and beautiful lady; they loved each other tenderly. I knew it. Chance threw it into my power to render such evidence as caused my friend to gain the lawsuit—but the day before the last hearing of the case, Sigismund Seedorff came to me.

'I know,' he exclaimed, 'that you can make your friend gain the contested property. He is rich already and does not want it, I shall be a beggar, and Henrietta's father will withhold his consent to her marriage with the landless outcast. The ruin of two hearts, mayhap souls will be your deed.

'Your argument, sir, is powerful,' I replied, 'but it is useless. My conscience can never reproach me for doing that which is right; let every man have his right; and it behoves every individual to do as much as lies in his power to accomplish so desirable a result. If such were the case, the earth would become a paradise.—If the property belongs by right to you, it will be yours, for no subterfuge is used, and the judges are strictly honorable; you cannot deny that this is fair.'

'I do not; but is it merciful? It is just before man—is it so before God? Supposing your friend to have a legal right—he is rich, but I shall become poor. I care not for myself—but—' and his voice faltered—'there are other hearts to break!'

'I felt the appeal; something prompted me to yield. But alas! I reasoned—that bane of the soul—I reasoned with worldly reasoning.—Were it not joining in a conspiracy against my friend? My evidence would decide the case; or if withheld, would place the antagonists in an equal position—should I withhold it? No! The stoic mind, the duty of friendship, the debt of gratitude—all forbade; and after the maturest consideration I decided upon supporting the cause of Count Waldren. I felt convinced I was fulfilling the dictates of earth's noblest feeling—friendship. My heart beat proudly at the thought. On the morrow I repaired to the court of justice; several little incidents combined to warn me away. Was it the hand of God? does Providence give us these