

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

EVENING SOLACE.

BY CURRER BELL.

The human heart has hidden treasures,
In secret kept, in silence sealed;
The thoughts, the hopes, the dreams, the pleasures,

Whose charms were broken, if revealed.
And days may pass in gay confusion,
And nights in noisy riot fly,
While lost in Fame's or Wealth's illusion,
The memory of the past may die.

But there are hours of lonely musing,
Such as in evening silence come,
When soft as birds their pinions closing,
The heart's best feelings gather home.
Then in our souls there seems to languish
A tender grief that is not woe:
And thoughts that once wrung groans of anguish,
Now cause but some mild tears to flow.

And feelings, once as strong as passions,
Float softly back—a faded dream;
Our own sharp griefs and wild sensations,
The taste of others' sufferings seem;
Oh! when the heart is freshly bleeding,
How long it for that time to be,
When, through the mist of years receding,
Its woes but live in reverie.

And it can dwell on moonlight glimmer,
On evening shades and loneliness,
And, while the sky grows dim and dimmer,

Feel no untold and strange distress—
Only a deeper impulse given
By lonely hour and darkened room,
To solemn thoughts that soar to heaven,
Seeking the life and world to come.

JOHN MILD MAY,

OR, STILL WATER RUNS DEEP.

'Captain Hawksley,' said Miss Sternhold, 'you little expected to find me here, but your villany and duplicity are discovered. Fortunately for myself, and more fortunately for poor Emily, I overheard the conversation this morning. Was it not manly in you to seek the ruin of a young and lovely bride? To blast the hopes of a family by your specious villany? You stole the key to the garden gate and removed the bolt from the door, that your plans for her ruin might be accomplished, and the gift of your dog was but the design of an artful villain.'

'Your excitement, Miss Sternhold,' said he with calmness, 'makes you illogical. I admit I have done all this, and—'

'Would have done more,' interrupted she, 'if I had not prevented you. I have warned a viper that it might sting you, but I have saved my niece, and instead of resting in your arms she now reposes in the bed of her husband, whose absence you would have availed yourself of to dishonor her.'

'Now, really, Miss Sternhold, you are getting melo-dramatic. Couldn't you possibly introduce a little blue fire?'

'Listen Hawksley! Because I have been weak, you have thought me blind. I have been your benefactress—yes, wince! I say your benefactress—but in your eyes I was but one dupe the more. You did not know that a woman could love a man without esteeming him. From the first day I have known you, I have seen through you—your commission—your services—the credit you boast—the luxury you parade. I knew it all a lie—a shallow, transparent lie! You are nothing—you have nothing—'

'By Jove, madam,' exclaimed he, starting up.

'Be still. I have not done yet. I say, I know you, and yet was weak enough to love you. That love drew me on to serve your ends—blindly, devotedly—to give countenance to your deceptions—credit to your lies: this is what I have done for you, and thus it is I am rewarded. My blind love has made me thus guilty, and you—you, for whose sake I have done those things—upbraid me with my weakness! Heaven is just! but 'tis bitter! very bitter!' and she burst into tears.

'Don't cry! You'll spoil your complexion!'

'From this moment I devote myself to your destruction, with all the energy I have hitherto employed for your service. I know your heart is invulnerable. I will not strike at that,' exclaimed Miss Sternhold, whose countenance was an index to the resolves of her heart.—

'Your fortune shall crumble into thin air, for I will divulge your secrets, and the money I have wrung from my brother for your speculation, and which you rely upon to meet your engagements to-morrow, will not be paid.' A fresh flood of tears choked her utterance, and she sank into a chair. Hawksley's brow was contracted and he assumed the air of a bravado as he asked in a stern voice—

'Have you done?'

She made no reply, when he approached her. 'I was waiting for you,' he said, 'to get out of the quicksands of sentiment to the solid round of business. Be good enough to listen to me—and, above all, follow my argument closely. I am here in two characters—as a gentleman, and as a man of business. As a gentleman, I confess, my conduct has been scandalous—I admit it. Call me what you like, I deserve the very

worst your abundant vocabulary can supply.—but, as a man of business—hands off! There I decline your jurisdiction altogether. The speculator cannot in fairness be saddled with the lover's peccadilloes. Mr Mildmay intends to invest largely, I hope, in Galvanics. You will be good enough not to prevent him from executing that laudible intention.'

'Sir, you mistake me—for I shall forbid him.'

'And I forbid you,' responded Hawksley, 'to say a word to him in the matter! And woe to you if you breathe one syllable of my concerns to him, or any other living soul! You talk of my imprudence! have you forgotten your own? You can ruin my fortune! True. But your own reputation—that reputation so intact—so awful—kept up at such a cost of hypocrisy and deceit. I am an adventurer! Granted. What are you?'

'What am I?' repeated Miss Sternhold, imperiously, and then paused, as if her past character came up to remind her that she was, as she confessed, a most unhappy woman.

'Yes, you speak truly, but you will have a better title, Miss, to that name, when I have shown you to the world in your true colors.'—She cast an insulting glance at Hawksley and sneeringly remarked: 'It is not in your power. Who will believe you?'

'Allow me to observe that I am the fortunate possessor of no less than thirteen of your letters.'

'You have not burned them!' exclaimed the poor woman, petrified with astonishment at his rascality—'you swore to do so on your honor—Even I did not know this man,' and Miss S. for the first time in her life felt how helplessly she was committed. She saw no way to escape his clutches, and she stood trembling with fear at the thought of what she had done. To appeal to the better instincts of such a man would have been vain and her tears flowed faster than ever.

'Look you, Miss Sternhold,' said he as he prepared to leave. 'This is my ultimatum!—Peace or war as you will. I prefer peace infinitely, but if Mildmay doesn't show to-morrow with the money—your interesting autographs will be added to the literature of the country,' and he passed, almost brushing with his elbow, the form of Mildmay. Miss Sternhold went to her chamber to reflect upon the scene she had just passed through, and Mildmay was satisfied that his *laissez aller* principle had been in operation quite long enough and he sought his couch to plan a *coup d'état*.

Miss Sternhold passed a sleepless night. The reader was probably prepared for this announcement. Foolish girls and inexperienced maiden ladies generally do lose a deal of sleep when engaged in love affairs, for Cupid is the natural antagonist of Morpheus, and when his arrows pierce the heart, they seem to touch a nerve connecting with the eye. To recover possession of the letters must be done at any and every sacrifice. Oh, that she had written them in magic ink which would have faded in a day! Should she go to his rooms in Oxford street and plead her cause? No, that was too much—she could not do that, and a thousand ideas flitted through her brain, only to be succeeded by others more ridiculous and impossible. Her mind finally fixed upon John Mildmay, — the poor stupid Mildmay, as her champion, and she descended to the breakfast table, determined to enlist him in her cause, as soon as he should return from Manchester. Her brother noticed her swollen eyes and asked the cause, but woman's equivocation was too much for him. Fearful that it had been caused by his refusal to invest more money in the shares, he inferred her that he had concluded to do as she wished, and also informed her that Mildmay had also determined to become a participator in the profits of the enterprise, stating at the same time that he had not gone to Manchester. She made him send John to her as she had business of moment with him, and to serve the guardian angel of the family, as he believed her he left his cup of coffee to find him. To inspire Mildmay's sluggish nature with a spark of chivalry and induce him to extort from Hawksley's fears, what she could not obtain from his generosity was her aim, and though he entered as coolly as ever, she at once commenced the attack. She wished to entrust to him a secret, but John quietly asked for the sugar; she pledged him to secrecy, but he interrupted her by a request for the butter; she then supposed a variety of cases appropos to her own, but Mildmay, aware of which way the wind lay, shaped his course accordingly, until she finally came to the point, and asked him flatly: 'If a man gave you a blow, what would you do?'

'Hit him again' was the bluff reply.

'Yes, responded Miss S.—, who saw daylight peeping through the darkness, 'if he were a bruiser; but if he were a gentleman, you would use the weapons of a gentleman in your defence. Your honor and that of your wife's relatives are one: you have been insulted through me. Now do you understand?'

The language was plain enough for one less initiated into the position of the dramatic personae of this domestic drama to understand, and after a moment's thought Mildmay said: 'I see: a lady has been insulted, and she wishes me to insist on gentlemanly satisfaction on her account. Well, there's one remark I wish to make on that point; yesterday, after dinner, as I was lying on the sofa, asleep, as you thought, you said to my wife, 'Mr. Mildmay is dull, stupid, I admit it; but then he has none of those ridiculous pretensions that most men set up to a will of his own; you could do what you like with him, if you'd only take the trouble.'

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Miss S. protested against any recollection of such imputations.

'If you don't recollect. I do, Miss Sternhold. I have no doubt that you were quite right; only I don't see how a man without any will of his own is to set up a character for pluck and energy all of a sudden, and turn fire-eater, not on his own account but on yours; there's my difficulty.'

'You are trifling, sir, and this is no answer,' replied the lady, provoked at his manner.

'Well, then, I think I can put it into unmistakable English. I have been married nearly a year, and I've taken things as they came. I confess I have always had a sort of idea that a man ought to be master in his own house; but I know that isn't your notion; you think a man ought to let his wife lead him by the nose; that a woman should control everything, in fact, you're the head of the family. I daresn't ask a friend home to dinner without notice given, and leave obtained beforehand; the servants look to you for orders, and to me only for wages; you settle the patterns of the furniture, and the laying out of the garden; in short, you're A. 1, and I'm nobody. I've no objection; only if I'm not to have any authority, I can't think of taking any responsibility; if I'm a cipher, I claim the right to act as a cipher.'

She rose indignant at his refusal, and left the room, muttering something about 'just as she expected,' 'the feelings of a man,' &c., when Potter entered, and if his sister went out the personification of anger, he stood the type of joy, for Mildmay offered to take his shares in the Inexplosible Galvanic Boat Co., at par, which were quickly endorsed over to him, and he left for the city to see Hawksley to secure others which he intended to take.

'Poor lad,' exclaimed Potter, after he left—'I've done my duty, I've cautioned him against the plan. He thinks himself a devilish clever fellow! If he had a little of my experience! But there's no taking the self-conceit out of the young men now-a-days,' and with these reflections he commenced the perusal of his morning paper.

John Mildmay in an hour's time was ushered into the luxuriantly furnished apartments of Capt. Hawksley, who received him with somewhat of the *empressment* that a spider would a fly, or a lion a lamb. He regarded him as a stupid goose who had come to be plucked, and he was determined to discharge the agreeable duties in the most skillful manner. A surgeon never held the knife over a splendid subject with more inward satisfaction, than did Hawksley regard his victim. They took seats, and the expert swindler spoke of the ladies and the weather, and if, as by mere accident, brought the conversation upon Galvanics.

'Ever done much in that sort of thing, sir?'

'No,' replied Mildmay, 'but I might like to get a few shares.'

'Ah!' said Hawksley, 'you see there's been such a run on 'em, that we've had twice as many applied for as could be allotted. But there may be a few in the market still. Another week, and you'd not have had a chance. Perhaps it would be as well, though, before you connect yourself with it, that I should give you briefly, an idea of our schemes, our means of carrying it out, and its profitable results.'

'If you would be so kind,'

'Steam, it has been often remarked,' commenced the angler, 'is yet in its infancy—galvanism, if I may be allowed the comparison, is unborn. Our Company proposes to play midwife to this mysterious power, which, like Hercules, is destined to strangle steam in the cradle. But, to do this effectually is the work of no mere every-day speculator. We require a plan of operations calculated on a solid and comprehensive basis. You follow me?'

'Oh, yes,' said John. 'A solid and comprehensive basis? I suppose that means a good lot of money.'

'Precisely. Money is the sinews of industry, as of war. Now, to anticipate events a little, let us throw ourselves into the future, and imagine our Company at work. We have created between the ports of the West of Ireland and the United States, Mexico, the West India Islands, and Brazil, a line of Galvanic Boats—rapid, economical, safe, and regular. For rapidity, we can give four knots an hour to the fastest steamer yet built. As for safety, our Galvanic engines can't blow up.'

'But suppose the Company should?' suggested Mildmay. Companies do blow up sometimes, don't they?'

'Bubbles do, but not such Companies as this. But to resume; economy we ensure, by getting rid of coal altogether.'

'Get rid of coal! Do you really? And pray what do you use instead?' queried the incredulous Mildmay.

Hawksley proceeded at some length to paint the beauties of the scheme, to depict in glowing colors the revolution in the mercantile world it would effect, and consternations it would cause among cities which would be injured by its introduction. No Spaniard ever revelled in more luxurious castles in the air, and no dreamy enthusiast every pictured a more brilliant future than Hawksley drew of this Company and when he imagined the gull fairly winged he inquired the number of shares he would like?'

John Mildmay threw himself back in his chair and quietly replied, 'Not one.'

'The devil!' exclaimed Hawksley—'Miss Sternhold has been advising you.'

'I assure you she has not.'

'I must satisfy myself on that point,' said he pacing the room, and then turning suddenly

round he walk towards Mildmay and seating himself on the corner of the table and looking at him said, 'Well, as you don't know your own mind for four and twenty hours together, there's nothing more to be said. But as you don't want these shares, may I ask what has procured me the pleasure of seeing you this morning?'

'Certainly. I had two objects in coming.—In the first place, about two months ago, my father-in-law, Mr Potter, took twenty shares in your Company. Those shares have come into my hands this morning by Mr Potter's endorsements. Now, as I don't care about them myself, and as there seems such a rush for them in the market, I suppose you'll have no objection to take them off my hands at par.'

'Eh? Take them off your hands at par?—Ha! ha! ha! No! By Jove, that's rather too good! My dear Mr Mildmay, I know you're the most amiable of men—a consummate cultivator of that delicate vegetable, celery—a distinguished house painter and decorator—but I had no idea how great you were at a practical joke.'

'Very well. We'll drop the shares for the present, and come to motive number two.'

'Pray do—and if it's better fun than motive number one, I shall have to thank you for two of the heartiest laughs I've enjoyed for many a day.'

'We shall see. You have in your possession thirteen letters, addressed to you by Miss Sternhold. The second motive for my visit was to ask you to give up those letters.'

Hawksley started back, and clinching his fist exclaimed in low tone, 'so the murder's out! She prefers war! She shall have it!' and then addressing Mildmay he continued: 'Sir, your first demand was a good joke—I laughed at it accordingly; but your second you may find no joke, and I would recommend you to be careful how you persist in executing this commission of Miss Sternhold's.'

'I beg your pardon. I have no commission from Miss Sternhold.'

'It was not she who told you of those letters?'

'It was not,' replied Mildmay firmly, 'and you'll excuse my telling you how I became aware they were in your possession. I was prepared for all this bluster, but I came to obtain the money on those shares, and to secure possession of those letters, and I came prepared with means for compelling you to grant both of my demands. Now be seated and I'll explain.'

'Do, if you please,' said the Captain assuming an air of indifference, 'but let me light my cigar first.'

Mildmay waited till he was seated in his fauteuil and then commenced.

'When you explained the theory of your speculation just now, you thought you were speaking to a greenhorn in such matters. You were under a mistake. Some four years ago I held a partnership in a house in the city, which did a good deal in discounting shares—the house of Dakymyle, Brothers, of Broad Street. You may have heard of it.' (Hawksley started.) 'One day—it was the 30th of April, 1850—a bill was presented for payment at our counting-house, purporting to be drawn on us by our correspondents, Touchet and Wright, of Buenos Ayres.' (Hawksley appeared uneasy.) 'Though we had no advice of it, it was paid at once, for it seemed all right and regular; but it turned out to be a forgery. Our correspondent's suspicious fell at once upon a clerk who had just been dismissed from their employment for some errors in his accounts. His name then was Burgess—dear me, you've let your cigar out.' (Hawksley puffed at his cigar with an effort.) 'The body of the bill was apparently in the same hand writing as the signature of the firm; but a careful examination of it established its indentity with that of the discharged clerk, and in a blotting-book left accidentally behind him, were found various tracings of the signature of the firm. The detectives were at once put on his track, but he had disappeared; no trace of him could ever be discovered.—Well, this money was repaid, and the affair was forgotten. It so happened, that when the bill was presented for payment, only one person was in the counting-house—the clerk who paid the money and who is since dead. But in the private room of the firm, which was separated from the counting-house by a glazed door, was the junior partner who, through the door, saw the bill presented, and observed the face of the person who presented it. I was that junior partner: the person who presented the bill—Burgess, as he was then called—the forger—was you.'

Hawksley fell back in his chair, and his utterance was choked. He gasped for breath and with an effort finally exclaimed:—

'It's a lie, an infamous calumny. You shall answer for this insult.'

'I don't think so,' replied Mildmay undisturbed. 'But allow me to conclude. How you have passed your time since that 30th of April, 1850, I have not the advantage of knowing; but I know that soon after my marriage, and retirement from business, I met you as a visitor at my father-in-law's house. I've a wonderful memory for faces—I remembered yours at once.'

'It's a lie, I tell you.'

'No, it isn't. I resolved not to speak till I could back my words by proof. I applied to my late partners for the forged bill. One of them was dead, the other absent in South America; so that for months I found myself obliged to receive, as a guest, at my own table, as the intimate and trusted friend of my wife's family, a person I knew to be a swindler and a forger.'

Hawksley rose, and lifted his hand to strike,