

Literature, &c.

THE REVELLER'S DREAM.

Around the board the guests were met
The lights around them gleaming,
And in their cups, replenish'd oft,
The ruddy wine was streaming,
Their cheeks were flushed,
Their eyes were bright,
Their hearts with pleasure bounded,
The song was sung, the toast was given,
And loud the revels sounded.
I drained my bumper with the rest,
And cried away with sorrow,
Let us be happy here to-day
And care not for to-morrow.

But as I spoke my sight grew dim,
And slumber deep came o'er me,
Amid the world of mingled tongues,
This vision passed before me:
Methought, I saw, a demon rise,
He held a mighty bicker,
Whose burnished sides ran daily o'er
With floods of burning liquor,
Around him pressed a clamorous throng
To taste this liquor greedy,
But chiefly came the poor and sad,
The suffering and the needy,
All those oppressed by grief and doubt,
The destitute, the lazy,
Blar eyed old men, and reckless youths,
And palsied women crazy,
Give, give, they cried, Oh give us drink,
To drown our care and sorrow,
Let us be happy here to-day,
We care not for to-morrow.

The first drop warms their shivering frames,
And drives away their sadness,
The second lights their sunken eyes,
And fills their hearts with gladness,
The third drop makes them rant and tare,
And play each furious antic,
The fourth drop boils their very blood,
The fifth drop drives them frantic.
"Drink, says the demon, drink your fill,
Drink of these waters mellow,
They'll make your bright eyes blar and dull,
And turn your whiteskins yellow,
They'll fill your homes with care and grief,
And clothe your back with tatters,
They'll fill your hearts with evil thoughts,
But never mind, what matters.

Though virtue sink and reason fail,
And social ties dissolve,
I'll be your friend in time of need,
And find you homes for ever,
For I have built three mansions high,
Three strong and stately houses,
A work house for the jolly soul,
Who all his life carouses;
A hospital to hold the sot,
Oppress'd by pain and anguish;
A prison full of dungeons deep,
Where hopeless fellows languish,
To drain the bumper, and drain the bowl,
And drown all care and sorrow,
Be happy if you can to-day,
And care not for the morrow.

But well he knows this demon old,
How vain is all his teaching,
The ragged crew that round him flock,
Are heedless of his preaching,
And as they hear his fearful words,
They cry with shouts of laughter,
Out on the fool who mars to-day
With thoughts of a hereafter.
We care not for your houses three,
We live but for the present,
And merry will we be to-day,
And quaff our bumpers pleasant.
Loud laughs the Fiend to hear them speak,
And lifting high his bicker,
Body and soul are mine quoth he,
I've bought you both for Liquor.

From Chambers's Journal for April.

MILICENT.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

"You cannot mean what you say, Milicent! Many a woman has sacrificed her happiness to her pride; take care, for your own sake, how you add to the number!"

Had there been any vacillation in Milicent Tyrrell's mind, this adjuration would have fixed it. She perceived in it the implied reproach upon the vehemence of her character, which had wounded her so often—which had brought her, in fact, to the alternative against which her lover warned her. It strengthened her, however; it gave fire to the eyes that might have softened, and firmness to the voice that would have trembled. She answered calmly enough:

"I do mean what I say," she said; "and I shall not sacrifice my happiness. We should not be happy together: you are hard and cold, and I am passionate and headstrong, as you tell me. Your faults lie deep; they never shew on the surface—they mislead you as to yourself—they make you harsh and un forgiving to me. I could not live with a man that was always watching me to detect and reprove; I should learn to hate my husband in the character of censor and judge. Life would be one fierce quarrel, ever growing fiercer. No Luke, it is because I would have neither of us miserable that I am resolved to end our engagement."

She stood erect and resolute, it was impos-

sible to doubt her earnestness. Luke made a few turns in the room; hard and cold as she called him, it was difficult for him to speak as firmly as she had done.

"But you're bound to me," he said at length, "by ties that the caprice of a moment cannot break: my ten years' love, your father's wishes; more than all—you constrain me to say it, Milicent—your own confessions and promises must withhold you. Have you not loved me?" he asked passionately; "or has the past been a part and a lie?"

"If," she replied scornfully, "your words were anything to me now, I should resent such language. Have I loved you?—well enough to submit to be pupil, culprit, slave almost! I have learned to dread your presence in the height of any innocent enjoyment, knowing you would see some fault to blame. Hard constructions have been put on all I did and was. You have schooled me in every relation of life, in every petty detail of conduct, as if you had been, in fact, my husband. No husband, in fact, shall so school me: the wife's position is an equal one, and you would degrade it. No!" she cried eagerly; "I have borne much—I will not marry to such bondage! Often have I said: 'if Luke acts thus again, it shall be the last time.' The last time is now come; nothing will move me! As for your love, you delude yourself; you love rule and self too well!"

"Stop!" cried Luke, interrupting her, "for I can bear no more; I should be bent indeed upon my own misery if I urged you further. Strange, that we have thus deceived ourselves—that instead of loving me, such an intense bitterness is burning in your heart! What blind dreamers we are!"

"I, too, have dreamed," said Milicent; "you are not alone in your disappointment: but it is all over. Mr Forrester, good-bye."

Her attitude, as she held out her hand, was as firm and stately as ever, but her averted eyes gleamed with suppressed emotion, and her flushed cheeks were wet with tears. He had meant to take his farewell without another word, but a glance into the proud troubled face of the girl moved him with an irresistible yearning. Was there not enough of noble heartedness within her, after her faults were weighed, to risk his happiness upon? But what availed such calculation? Did he not love her with soul and strength?—had he hope or care for the future without her?

"Milicent!" he exclaimed with vehement tenderness; but a movement arrested the words. He saw it would be in vain; that she was prepared to reject his prayers as she had done his expostulations. Why should he subject dignity and love to be trampled under foot? Milicent, he repeated more calmly, "farewell!—I shall be able to wish you happiness apart from myself."

He held her hand for a moment in a passionate grasp. How still and proud she stood!—He noticed, in spite of him, every point of her beauty, the very richness of her dress, and the accessories which surrounded her. He knew not the secret agony against which her indomitable spirit upheld her.

"Can she ever have loved me?" was the bitter doubt with which he hurried from her presence. The groom brought round his horse with the same alacrity and respectful cordiality as he had shewn every day almost for years—his had been a long courtship, a Jacob's service—and Forrester spoke to him in the same quiet friendly tone; but he pushed on at full gallop, becoming mad speed, as his thoughts quickened, and the man was out of sight.

The glorious afternoon sunshine flooded the park, and cast the broad tree-shadows unbroken on the grass—the flower-garden was brilliant with a thousand dyes—the ripe harvest-fields and distant river burned in the unmitigated light; the far off hills, crowned with woods and dark in shadow, shut the noble English landscape in—shut in the lands of which Milicent was heiress. She loved riches and luxury—oh, she had enough to satisfy and console her, if she needed consolation. He might never find one to fill the place she had held in his tenacious heart; but she, whose beauty and position opened the highest circles, who loved society, and was worshipped by it—what credulous vanity to suppose some suitor as worthy and more successful than himself would not secure what he had lost! But was it lost?—Was not his present misery the shorter, if sharper, pang to a union with a woman so impatient of the lightest control, so cruelly unjust to the deepest and tenderest affection?—Reversing the cause, was she not right in her own conclusion? It would not be even in the first moment of wrath. He thought of her scorn for all that was mean and little—her lofty truthfulness—the tender passion of a nature that was capable of all sacrifice for the being loved—the earnestness and fire of her mind which ever seemed at the highest point of vitality but occasionally attained by others. Misconception, uncongeniality, and wretchedness there might be, but Milicent was still to him the chief good on earth.

He heard the sound of horses' hoofs, and turned abruptly into an opposite path. He had no wish for companions, least of all for such as Mr Tyrrell and his little daughter Lilly. When secure from observation, he looked back to

watch them, and send after them his last farewells.

Mr Tyrrell's fine face looked brighter and more animated even than its wont, as he bent down towards his fairy companion, the fragile child and darling of the house. The little girl's fair curls danced in the wind as she urged her poney to its utmost speed; and her soft laugh rang through the clear air as she gained the race they were running, without a suspicion that her triumph had been an easy one. Forrester knew how Milicent loved her father; how Lilly was cherished with more than a sister's heart. It might be an unworthy emotion, but he thought bitterly that every good gift had been lavished upon her; that her life was so rich, she would scarcely miss one link from the glittering chain; and for the moment, selfish in his great sorrow, he would have had her solitary and miserable as himself.

Before another hour had struck, deep darkness had fallen upon this brilliant lot. The stumble of a horse's hoof revolutionised life for Milicent Tyrrell. Her father drew his last breath in her arms ten minutes after she had been summoned to his side—summoned from one strife and agony of soul to another scarcely keener; and he died intestate.

We must pass over the scenes immediately following; every adverse power seemed at work to exalt the sudden overwhelming misery to desperation. The death of her father to the daughter's heart, in which he had been supreme, would have smothered lesser woes, had not the first news of the accident brought down his elder brother, the heir at law, and subjected the proud defiant girl to the bitter humiliation of his mastership. There was no gainsaying his rights: the large estates of Roseneath had been left by an eccentric relative to the younger brother, on condition he took his name. They were left entailed upon the male line, but with the momentous saving-clause, permitting the legatee to cut off the entail and will it at his pleasure, if he had no son, and a daughter twenty-one years of age. When Mr Tyrrell died, Milicent wanted a few months of her majority; and her father, having waited for this event to dispose of his property, had not even secured to his children what fortune was under his independent control.

Mr Rivington held no friendly feeling towards his nieces; he had looked upon himself as defrauded during his brother's lifetime, and was disposed to regard his sudden death as a manifest token of the will of heaven to give him back his rights. He meant to take the orphans to his home, and treat them, he said, as his daughters; and had no more sense of his turpitude in seizing thus their expected inheritance, than has been shown since the beginning of time by the lawless possessors of the coveted vineyards.

Fourteen days' intercourse with Milicent made him hate her: he wished to bury his brother with all possible pomp and ceremony; but Milicent, knowing intimately her dead father's wishes on the subject, roused herself from her stupor of anguish to oppose the idea. Mr Tyrrell had often said, as they passed through the village church yard, that he would rather lie under its willows than in the ancestral vault beneath the chancel; and he owed to his daughter's strength of will and energy of purpose that the wish was gratified. Milicent bore down her uncle's opposition with a resolution so absolute that he was constrained to succumb, and resent the necessity accordingly.

Immediate retaliation was in his power—to contract his business at Roseneath to the shortest possible space of time, and hurry the sisters back with him to their new London home. He would have been better pleased had Milicent expostulated on the subject; but her character upheld her from any complaint or protest against her uncle's tyranny. She perceived at once the feelings and motives which influenced his conduct, and she possessed precisely that strength of mind or refinement of pride which would have enabled her to bear the rack without uttering the groan her torturer listened to hear.

The agony of her father's death, after the first irresistible proxysms of grief, she consumed in silence; as well as the even sharper pang that her sudden fall from wealth and authority to poverty and dependance would inevitably produce in such a nature. Sharper, not because her love had been weaker than her pride, but it was comparatively easy to bow to the inevitable blow of Heaven, it was martyrdom to submit to what seemed the caprice of circumstance, the power of injustice and legal fraud.—During this interval, she had a still greater trial, to undergo in the ceaseless efforts of Luke Forrester to obtain an interview with her. The lover she had rejected with such decisive scorn in the recent days of her posterity, could never receive anything from her now; as for offers of friendship and service, they would be intolerable to a heart passionately and vehement as her own. Since the day they had parted, even in the height of her misery, or rather stimulated thereby, Milicent's love seemed on the increase; aiding the master-grief of bitter self-reproach and vain regrets for a future lost for ever. The effects of all this mental strife was such, that, as they reached their journey's end, a fortnight after Mr Tyrrell's death, Mr Rivington, on looking at Milicent, consoled himself with the

reflection that his two daughters had nothing to fear from his rival beauty.

Mrs Rivington and her daughter were in a great state of excitement on the evening of the expected arrival of Milicent and Lilly Tyrrell. The latter, being a child, had little to do with the tremor of curiosity and anxiety that agitated them: it was all due to Milicent, the reputed beauty, the impoverished heiress, the rejected bride. Augusta Rivington, as she coquetted with her crape-trimmings and long curls, pleasantly conscious how well her mourning attire became her, was explaining to Maurice Halford, her reserved, dilatory, but assured admirer, how the case stood.

"Poor uncle could have settled everything on Milicent, and she was always brought up to expect it. Poor girl, it must be a dreadful blow to her. I should feel it myself keenly, little as I care for fortune. But then, you know, the property ought to have been ours before, so that we are only getting our rights after all."

Mr Halford knew all about it, as it was the one subject of talk in their mutual circles, and bowed gravely, in unmistakable acquiescence, as the young lady paused.

"It is shocking to think of!" rejoined Mrs Rivington, stirring into a blaze the before hot fire. "For just one and twenty years my husband has been defrauded by his brother, without the smallest acknowledgment or attempt at compensation; but there is a providence that watches over these things. In spite of their father's robbery, his children shall always find a home with us."

And sisters in your fair daughter? asked Mr Halford, with precisely the same inclination as before. Pardon me, Mrs Rivington, but few women should be capable of such magnanimity.

Augusta looked but a little uneasily; but assured by her scrutiny, said with a little laugh in reply to his first remark:

"I hope so, but they say our poor cousin's temper is so difficult, and she has been so flattered and spoiled, that it will not be easy to be so fond of her. She has governed like an autocrat at Roseneath. It is really a terrible reverse."

"It is quite certain she could not be very amiable," remarked the elder Miss Rivington, in a slightly undertone, "or Luke Forrester would never have jilted her!"

"Hush! my dear," interposed her mother quickly; "it is not fair for one lady to tell such tales of another. Nothing blights a young woman's prospects in society, like the reputation of having been jilted. The secret is safe with you, I am sure, Mr Halford?"

"Of course the lady was jilted in the days of her prosperity?"

"I really can't take upon myself to say, but I fear not: Mr Forrester is not even in that case less disinterested than—excuse me—the sex in general. Portionless maidens are little in demand except in novels."

"A libel!" whispered Augusta softly. "Why don't you take up the gauntlet for mankind?" But Mr Halford was in a muse, and did not hear her; indeed, he heard nothing till a sudden movement announced the guests were come; then he roused and looked about him. The room had a very pleasant aspect, with the glow of fire and lamp reflected in every opposing point of glass and gilding, and heightening the warm tints of the pictures on the wall, and the rich flower-painted carpet under foot. It was thick set with all kinds of fantastic couches, if the travellers were weary; and on the table was a dainty repast, ready spread, to tempt and gratify appetite if hungry; and then what intense anxiety in the faces of aunt and cousins—could the welcome be mistaken?

Mrs Rivington and Augusta hurried down stairs to meet the strangers; they were so long in returning, that Eleanor said she would go and see if anything was the matter; and almost involuntarily, moved by an unusual curiosity, Mr Halford followed her.

Milicent stood in the hall, giving, in clear calm tones, some instructions respecting her luggage; the greeting had no doubt been exchanged, for Mr Rivington was bustling up stairs, and his wife and daughter stood a little apart, watching their kinswoman. Her arm pressed closely by her side her little trembling sister; otherwise she would have stood erect, and her face was turned towards the light. Mr Halford was a sensible man, but he had a great weakness for beauty; he was an absent one, too, and stood and gazed at Milicent, ignorant that his mistress's eyes were upon him. Very pale and worn her face looked with recent watching and anguish, and its expression was fixed and cold, but the perfection of features, the fineness of outline, was unimpaired. There was no extraneous help; her hair, of the beauty of which much had been said, seemed to have been carefully concealed; but the clearly marked line of the brows, the shade of the lashes, hinted at colour and character. These points were patent to all observers; but only one carried the scrutiny deeper, and detected, in spite of the careful self-possession, the latent expression of the deep blue eyes—an occasional scintillation of passion and recklessness that touched him, together with the sudden dilation of the delicate nostrils, the quiver of the line round the flexible mouth.

Mr Rivington stopped short at the head of the stairs. Girls, take your cousin up stairs, if they have finished their orders, and help them