

## Literature, &amp;c.

## WOMEN OR WINE.

BY T. WARD,

An Episode to the President of the New England Society, who recommends the introduction of Women in place of Wine at entertainments.

Oh, weak and foolhardy reformer!  
To substitute woman for wine,  
The glow of whose presence is warmer  
Than sunniest juice of the vine.

Believe me, less fatal are juleps  
Than woman in witchery skilled;  
For there oozes more venom from two lips  
Than ever from grain was distilled.

Who barter for beauty his whisky,  
The change will be certain to rue;  
For her eyes shed a spirit more frisky  
Than lurks in the "mountain dew."

Ah! those eyes at each meeting so merry,  
You'll find to outsparkle champagne!  
And ringlets more golden than sherry  
Will fuddle too well the poor brain.

More tapering necks than the bottle's,  
With mouths more bewilderingly crowned,  
Will pout from their ravishing throattles  
A stream that a sage would confound.

If wine makes us brutes, love is able  
To turn us to fools with like ease;  
If the one lays us under the table,  
T'other brings us at least to our knees.

Still at table some mischief she's brewing;  
Her feet scrape acquaintance below;  
Ah! no heel-taps so pregnant with ruin,  
As those hidden taps of the toe,

And hands, between courses at leisure,  
Make friends when there's no one to mark;  
Ah! less poison yield grapes under pressure  
Than fingers thus squeezed in the dark,

As home reels the toper of beauty,  
How crimson his visage, poor elf!  
How fevered he sleeps! how his duty  
If left to take care of itself!

When thwarted, how palsied his powers,  
Till he sinks in despair at death's door;  
Oh! if woman her victim thus lowers,  
Say, what can the bottle do more?

No spirit so ardent as woman's—  
So sure to intoxicate man;  
Her touch is "delirium tremens,"  
That maddens him more than he can.

The glance of her eye is "blue ruin,"  
Her blush is the blood of the vine,  
Her pout is a punch in whose brewing  
Tart, sugar and spirit combine.

So sparkling, so heating, so heady,  
No hope for her victim appears;  
Should her smiles only render him giddy,  
He'll surely be made drunk with her tears.

Not the grape-juice of Eden made Adam  
So stupidly forfeit his all;  
But the lure of his volatile madam  
Led him tipsily on to his fall.

Not the wines of fair Cyprus the rover  
So sure as the woman beguile;  
Better rest where is he, "half sea's over,"  
Than steer for so fatal an isle.

Oh! then shun such a tempter as this is,  
Nor commence such hazardous court,  
Who embarks on the waves of her tresses  
Will grieve that he ventured from Port.

From Chambers's Journal for April.

## MILICENT.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. II.

WE do not care to go into the details of the warfare that inevitably raged between Millicent and her relations. The oppressed and the oppressor cannot strike hands unless the former is worthy of his fate; and no consideration could prevent the proud vehement girl from betraying her feelings at times. For her sister's sake, she controlled such rash speeches as the one which had exasperated her uncle's aversion on the night of her arrival; but her profound scorn for his character and conduct could be read in tones and gestures which she did not try to propitiate. Mr. Rivington's hatred for the girl he had injured grew morbid under these provocations; the glance of her eyes, if they happened to fall upon his face—and all the more, it seemed, because of their beauty—excited in him an uneasy emotion of aversion. The tones of her clear rich voice grated on his ear; he followed every lithe and graceful motion with a fascinated repugnance. Almost to the same extent, but from a different cause, Augusta shared her father's feelings. The beauty of her cousin, the charm of her ardent conversation, lightened by the fire of a crude but brilliant genius, when circumstances overcame her haughty reserve—every gift and grace she possessed was a heavy cross under which she groaned daily. To be eclipsed was a new thing to Augusta, whose sister had never contended against her acknowledged inferiority of attraction; but to be eclipsed by Millicent

who rarely deigned to exert herself from habitual indifference, and showed such contempt for her own arts of pleasing, was very hard to brook.

'How many admirers were you bent on securing this evening?' the young lady demanded bitterly on one occasion, when Millicent, being excited to talk, had engaged all ears by her grace and enthusiasm.

'None. To try to be admired is one of the humiliations to which nothing can bring me; but I don't deny that I enjoy myself to-night. I found it pleasant to prove that I had not lost everything with my fortune.'

Mrs. Rivington sneered: 'Omnipotent in charms! I like your modesty. It was a pity they had not always been so powerful!'

It was impossible not to detect some insult in the implication. To have let it pass, would have been wisdom and dignity; but it would have been impossible to Millicent. With the keen intuition of her sex, she felt the blow was aimed where it would be sacrilege to let it fall.

'What do you mean?' she demanded, scarcely conscious of the imperiousness of her tone, her whole form dilating, and cheek and eye kindling together.

'Look at the girl!' cried Mrs. Rivington, excited in her turn. 'Are we her slaves, that she dares to take such a tone? You seem to defy me, madam, to tell my meaning. I allude to what all the world knows, that you were jilted by Luke Forrester!'

'Because I was no longer an heiress?' The words were spoken very softly. Millicent had covered her flushed face with her hands; the tears were falling unchecked through her fingers.

'Let them think it!' she said to herself.—'To defend his character to these would be to humiliate him.' She was dwelling on the recollection of his worth: it lowered her pride to the dust; it exalted it anew to think he had loved her. Memories of low words, scarcely heard, but never forgotten; kisses dearer with each reiteration; golden plans frustrated; life's happiness sacrificed to the resentment of an hour—possessed and moved her beyond her control. Even his friendship rejected! 'Offer it to me again, Luke, and I will take it humbly. Come and teach me what now I ought to do, and I will be led; come—or, rather, never come back, lest I sob out my love at your feet.'

'If I had lost a lover, I would never cry for him,' said Augusta's voice, breaking up the love dream.

Millicent raised her tearful face with a proud smile. 'Different principles move us, you know. I seldom shed tears; but there are some taunts a woman cannot bear.'

Augusta was not a thoroughly bad nature; and if she hated her cousin, and tormented her as only one young woman can torment another, over and above all was the excuse of jealousy.

Mr. Halford had never declared himself as a lover otherwise than by attentions sufficient to bind a man of a nice sense of honour; but Augusta had long accounted him as such. It would have been hard to say what had attracted him to her. He was a man of good fortune much courted in society, and known as one of the most subtle and successful reviewers of the day. He held such a literary reputation very lightly; some men on less would have demanded laurels and a statue. Augusta was very pretty, very amiable, to him: she sang well; and he had a prejudice, he said, against clever women. Moreover, he wanted a wife; that he esteemed her worthy of the honour, his attentions had seemed to prove. He still paid his court to her, but it was in languid form. Even while talking to her—or worse, turning over the leaves of his favourite songs—his eyes were continually engrossed in watching Millicent. It was not absolutely a gracious scrutiny, but it seemed an absorbing one; and Augusta trembled, not only lest the unexceptionable match should escape her, she was an heiress in her turn, and might have looked higher—but lest the man she loved in her degree should disappoint the hopes he had justly excited.

Mr. Halford was not a man of punctilious honour; he said to himself, no word pledged him to Augusta; the girl was the veriest butterfly, incapable of love.—She was rich now, and could look higher; and, in truth, so attractive a woman as Millicent Tyrrell had never before crossed his path.

He did not see nearly as much of her as he wished. Lilly's health was very delicate; and if the weather was fine, Millicent would be out walking with her in the adjacent park; otherwise, engaged in teaching her—for she had undertaken what education was practicable—in another room. The season was advancing into summer; and both sisters willingly availed themselves of the seclusion of their bedroom—the only privacy secure to them—and here the long evenings were perpetually spent. Millicent left nothing untried to soften to Lilly the change in her lot; she fired her imagination in weaving stories for her amusement, sang in under-tones the songs which had a string in every note, and talked, to please the tender drooping child, of Roseneath and the agonising past, till her checked passionate heart was ready to burst.

'But I am almost as happy now with you Milly, as I was then; the younger would say, pressing against her sister's side, and raising her heavy eyes to the anxious eyes that watched her; 'only I never want to go down stairs.'

What hours Millicent passed when Lilly was asleep, after every point of love, regret, and desire, had been touched to the quick in her childish talk!—how her love grew under the pressure of self-reproach and hopelessness, until the force of the cumulating fervour startled herself! What could she do at such times but recall every trait of noble heart and generous principle, who had been shown from the hour when the boy-lover had knelt at her almost childish feet, up to the day of their separation—what could she do in her present misery but paint the future that might have been in impossible colours, and stretch out her vain hands after the unattainable?

'Does he love me still?' was the question, perpetually silenced to return again.

Mr. Halford, who watched her whenever he had an opportunity, wondered a little at her ceaseless restlessness. The colour for ever fluctuating on her cheek, the light for ever gleaming in the eyes, shewed a heart never at rest. He had seen her in rare moments of abstraction, with her eyes fixed as if looking beyond present things, with an eager yearning expression, and then soften into tears. It was strange how this moved him; he longed to draw near and speak gently and soothingly to her; he longed to meet that asking look, and see the satisfied glance fall on himself. He had many a time been conscious of an entirely new emotion, when he had marked the tender passion with which she caressed the timid Lilly, or heard it vibrating in the tones of her voice.

'I begin to fear I am in love,' he thought; 'and with a woman with a temper!'

Circumstances precipitated this conviction. One evening, on going to the house, he found Millicent alone in the drawing-room; she was laying on the sofa, her face buried in the cushions, and her whole frame trembling with excitement. He divined there had been strife amongst the women; he knew what would be the chief weapons employed by the one side, and he felt a powerful emotion of indignation.

'Miss Tyrrell, forgive my intrusion,' he said, 'I thought the room was empty.'

Millicent sprang up precipitately, her cheeks burning with shame. 'That you should see me thus!' she began warmly; but her listener was gazing at her with such compassion, that it melted her pride, and she burst again into tears. 'I am overcome with what has just passed,' she resumed, struggling successfully against her tears, and turning a little away: 'it shall be the last dispute we have. If I live here much longer, God knows what I might become! I can bear no more; I ought to bear no more. You have shewn a friendly feeling towards us, Mr. Halford; will you help us to get a living?' She smiled as she spoke, and tried to throw a tone of gaiety into the words but her earnestness mastered her. 'I am resolved to leave this house,' she pursued, interrupting Mr. Halford's disclaimer; 'and equally resolved not to be dependent elsewhere. It is in your power to help me; it is not in your power to dissuade me. I am not out of my senses when I talk of getting a living. An old servant left me an inalienable annuity of twenty pounds; I have good knowledge of music, and can sing well. If I can get daily pupils, we can not only live, but live beyond fear of abject poverty, to which I would not submit my sister. I have a friend, poor, but of unquestioned respectability, who will let me have a room in her house. Some people, whom I knew in my father's lifetime, and who admired my singing, will, I dare say, have no objection to my teaching their children; I shall ask nothing else from them. You have a large circle of friends, will you speak for me? But I forget; you have never heard me sing.'

She was moving towards the piano at once; she had spoken with such breathless eagerness, he had not been able to interrupt her; now he suddenly stretched forth his hand, and intercepted her intention.

'You would stoop to this!' he exclaimed; 'you would teach where you are known! you would play for my approbation! Millicent!'—He broke off abruptly, and took a turn through the room. Millicent gazed at him in surprise.

'If I am proud,' she said coldly, 'it is not the pride that unfits me to submit to necessity. Teaching music does not seem to me a degradation. I love music,' she added kindly. 'If I have only pupils enough to provide what my sister needs, I shall be happier than I have been since—since long.'

'It is drudgery of the worst kind; it is slavery of the mind and body; it would be death to you!' interjected Mr. Halford hurriedly. 'Millicent, you asked my services; mine is the place of suppliant. I scarcely knew I loved you till this moment; I feel it now in every pulse of my being; accept my love; command me as my wife.'

He had begun in doubt, without meaning to go so far; but, as she stood erect, incredulous, beautiful beyond any other woman he knew; his passion had kindled. He spoke at last fer-

vently; he wished he had the power and eloquence of a god to constrain or win her.

'Mr. Halford,' said Millicent, coldly, 'you are carried away by an impulse of generosity, for which I might thank you, if I could see you in any other light than my cousin's suitor. Let us forget what we have said to one another! I shall be able to carry out my plans alone.'

She turned away as stately and inaccessible as on a former occasion; but there was no undercurrent of feeling now to flush the pale cheek or shine in the averted eyes.

Mr. Halford, convinced of her sincerity, felt animated by only one desire—to conquer her indifference. She was more desirable to him than ever. With more abandon than he would have conceived possible an hour ago, he renewed protestations and entreaties; he even threw himself at her feet.

'For your own sake, sir, rise!' exclaimed Millicent, indignantly; 'and do me the honour to believe what I say. I resent your pertinacity as an insult; you have forgotten your engagement? Hush! I hear voices; for pity's sake do not subject me to this new contumely!'

It was too late; Augusta and her mother had entered the room. There could be no doubt of the position of the two; Mr. Halford was flushed and disconcerted; Millicent looked indignant and distressed. Augusta turned pale as the truth flashed upon her mind, and sat down to conceal her emotion; she had enough of dignity to wish to hide from the man that had betrayed her, how deeply she felt the wound. She did not think Millicent had tried to seduce his affection, but she rather hated her the more that her triumph had been so involuntary and unearned for.

Mrs. Rivington judged differently: she had not a doubt that the whole affair was the result of the arts of the girl they had fostered; she had complained of her position, had secretly disparaged her cousin; it was a tissue of ingratitude and deceit! Her face flushed; words of vituperation rushed to her lips; but Mr. Halford interposed.

'You have surprised me at an unhappy moment, madam,' he said, with heightened color. 'Your niece is not happy in your home. I was beseeching her to become the mistress of mine but in vain.'

'Sir!—Mr. Halford—such effrontery I never heard—Augusta!' interjected Mrs. Rivington; but Mr. Halford bowed and was gone, and a moment after Augusta ran out of the room.

Had the intention of leaving her uncle's house not been formed in Millicent's mind, that hour would have matured it. The late cause of dispute had been her refusal to accompany them to Roseneath, whither the family were about to proceed. Apart from the agonising associations and regrets the place would excite she could not bear to go to Luke Forrester's immediate neighbourhood. She had begged to remain at home under any deprivations; had humbled herself to expostulation; but in vain. Now to the taunts and sneers her reluctance, and at length her refusal, had excited, was added Mrs. Rivington's abuse of her treachery towards Augusta; all that a course and vulgar mind could suggest in the first outburst of wrath, was poured forth without restraint.—Millicent listened with silent scorn, till some epithet more abnoxious than the rest stung her sensibility to the quick.

'No more, madam; I can bear no more!' she cried in an agony. 'If the alternative was death, I could not pass another night under your roof.'

Millicent did not belie the confidence she had professed to Mr. Halford in her capability of earning a livelihood as a teacher of music, but brought nobly all her energies of mind and body to the task. Without that gentleman's assistance, she obtained as many pupils as she wished; and as the majority paid her, contrary to custom, not according to her poverty, but her desert, she had no difficulty in discharging all her obligations, and provided for her sister the comforts and luxuries that were indispensable. Hers was not an easy task to fulfil; bred in the refinement of wealth and rank, she felt painfully the entire absence of those accessories of life which custom had made all but essential; and, above all other deprivations, was that of the pure keen air, the open downs, and wide horizons of her native country.

'O for a long, deep breath of that exhilarating air!—a moment's glance over the free open landscape to the ocean!' was so perpetually the uppermost aspiration of her soul, that it threatened to become a complete *malheur de pays*; and then Millicent's fine sense and fortitude rose to keep the evils in check. Then the physical and mental fatigue of her calling were new things to Millicent, but not of that class which were likely to find her vanquished by them. Her health was good, and she had never been careful of fatigue; moreover, the long walks that were necessary from one house to another, were often the best relief to her restless and vehement mind. The hardest effort of all was to bear with gentleness and patience the dullness or carelessness of her pupils, which was torture to her quick intelligence and sensitive ear. Had there been some tender eye to mark and applaud her efforts over her natural temperament, and some high palpable award