# Literature, &c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

### MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND.

"Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me,
And the changes that will surely come
I do not fear to see ;—
But I ask Thee for a present mind,
Intent on serving Thee.

I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
By constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with cheerful smiles,
And to try the weeping eyes ;
And a heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize.

I ask Thee for the daily strength,
To none that ask denied,
And a mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping by Thy side ;
Content to fill a little space
So Thou be glorified.

And if some things I do not ask
In my cup of blessing be,
I would have my spirit filled the more
With grateful love to Thee ;
And anxious, less to serve Thee much,
Than to please Thee perfectly.

There are thorns besetting every path,
Which call for watchful care ;
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer ;
But a quiet mind that rests on Thee
Is happy anywhere.

In a service which Thy love appoints
There are no bonds for me,
For my secret heart has taught the truth
Which makes Thy people free ;
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty.

From Sharpe's Magazine.

### THE QUADROON GIRL.

The tropical heat of noontide was over, but the air was still sultry and oppressive. A slight breeze had indeed sprung up, but too langid to raise the heads of the drooping flowers, it only whispered to them, perchance in praise of their luxurious grace, and then died again into stillness.

There was but one moving figure to be seen, and it ill accorded with the desolate character of the landscape, for Lucille, the Quadroon girl, was very beautiful, and, clad in the brilliant hues which so well became her, seemed to tread the lonely path by the light of her own loveliness.

It was indeed a dreary scene, for she was approaching one of those extinct volcanoes with which the island of Martinique abounds, and the rugged ground was seared and darkend by the hot breath which had passed over it. Here and there the masses of gray stone were clothed with the exuberant vegetation of that glowing climate, but for the most part all was bare and black, as though some ancient curse rested upon the spot, and chilled the generous hand of nature.

Lucille seemed little to heed the scene ; her large eyes, dark as night, were sadly gazing eastward, and her small head set so proudly on the column like throat, was bent dejectedly. Occasionally she raised it to reconnoitre, and at last a gleam of pleasure and recognition shot across her face. A stranger would never have dreamed of human habitation in that wild spot, but Lucille's eyes sought out a dark hollow in the rock, and already distinguished within it the stooping form of an aged woman. As she approached, her step quickened, and at last, seemingly in unconquerable impatience, she darted forward into the cavern.

'What, Lucille! and hast thou come at last?' said the old woman, 'and will naught but sorrow ever bring thee to my side? Nay, deny it not, there are tears in thy heart, hanging like thunder rain in the heavens ; and see, the first touch of my hand has brought the torrent down!'

It was true, Lucille had flung herself to the ground in an agony of tears, the violence of her sobs shaking down her hair into a wilderness of darkness round her polished shoulders. Very soon however, like the storm-drops to which the old crone had compared them, the large tears ceased to flow, and she looked up.

'Mother you are right,' she said ; 'Whether by the power of that dark art which all ascribe to you, or whether by the love you bear me, I know not—but you read clearly as ever the secret of my heart, and I dare not, if I would deny it.'

'Gabriel has deserted thee.'

'It is so, mother, but oh! tell me, tell me at least that my heart is still my own—that he has striven to free it, but cannot.'

'Lucille, canst thou bear it? I can tell thee somewhat.'

'Oh! mother, there is nothing I could not bear if he but loves me still—did I not tell you long since, when first I bent over him in that wild fever, that I could die content, nay, that I could live, and see his face no more, if but once I heard him say that he loved me?'

'And thou hadst that wish.'

'Yes! dear mother, you foretold that I should live to hear those precious words, and I did'

'No great wisdom was needed for that prophecy, child,' rejoined the other, with a fondness of tone that came strangely from her thin whithered lips. 'Even now, I marvel as I see thee, that he could ever gaze enough on those eyes of thine.'

'Hush! mother, hush!' said Lucille, impatiently, snatching away a silken lock which the old woman was smoothing over her fingers ; 'you said you had somewhat to tell me ; conceal it not, if it concern him or his.'

'Thine own fears have sufficiently forewarned thee,' my child. The girl hid her face in her loosened hair. 'He will marry!' she whispered at last, as if afraid to give voice to the words. 'But, mother, may he not love me still? Oh! the white woman's eyes may be as blue as our summer heavens, but will she love him as I have done? will her pale cheek burn as mine, at the sound of his footsteps?—will she toil for him through the heat of noon, and watch through the silence of the night?' Lucille raised not her head, and her companion, in compassion as it seemed, broke the pause.

'My child. he may love thee yet.'

'Oh! thanks, mother, thanks, your words are ever true—now will I cast off the selfishness of this sorrow, and, if only he will sometimes say that he loves me still, be happy as of old.'

'Lucille, what of thy child?' he is wont so to fill thy talk, and to-day thou hast told me nothing of him.'

There was, alas! no shadow of shame on the young girl's cheek as she answered :—'He is well, mother, and fairer than ever ; you say that my skin bears scarcely a trace of the swarthy hue of our people, but his—oh! it is purer than moonlight, our darkness has all fled into his eyes! I would that they had been blue, but he has at least his father's rosy mouth, and clustering golden hair. Did I tell you, mother, that when last Gabriel saw him, he wept?'

'Thou didst not, child. I am glad for thy sake that the babe is so fair, perchance even yet he may save thee, or even if Gabriel wed this Madelaine de Beaucour, who is doomed by some fate or other to cross thy path in life ; even her heart may be touched by the beauty of this child, and knowing the wrongs of our race, she may stoop to save him from poverty and labor, and set him amongst his father's people. Thou wouldst be a happy mother then, Lucille!'

'I know not that I could take aught from her hand,' answered the girl, proudly, looking unconsciously so majestic in the queenliness of her beauty, that her companion wondered for the hundredth time how Gabriel Delacroix, even with his pride of descent and worldly ambition, could resist its influence.

A moment's thought, however, and she sighed deeply What availed the charm of that mien, or the warmth of that heart? Did a European ever wed with one of her despised race? and was not Madelaine de Beaucour, whose name rumor had united with that of Gabriel, a daughter of the wealthiest family of all their wealthy oppressors?

Lucille at that moment was saddened by no such sorrowful reflection, her elastic nature had already thrown off for the time the burden of her grief. Of her poverty she thought little ; a flower-maker by trade, she could always earn a sufficiency by the exercie of her graceful art, either amongst the luxurious ladies of the island, or by exporting her handiwork to Paris. To her position, sanctioned, alas! by custom amongst our race, there attacted little idea of disgrace, and could she have hoped to retain something of her lover's affection, and to bring up her child in greater ease and refinement than she had known herself, she might have been happy. 'Mother,' she said, after a pause, 'it would relieve my heart to look upon the beauty of this white woman, Madelaine ; I know her father's chateau well, I will take the boy in my arms, and if she is alone, I will even speak to her, and hear the voice that has charmed my Gabriel. She cannot see the child unmoved, for he is fairer than the fairest babe ever cradled beneath their rich roofs.'

'Do as thou wilt, my Lucille,' replied the old crone fondly, 'and,' she added, with a bitterness that seemed far better to accord with her harsh features, 'woe unto her and hers, if she show thee aught of the overweening pride of her people.'

It was a bright burning day, with scarcely a breath stirring even through the cool jalousies of the Chateau Beaucour.

The fair Madelaine lay languidly on a sofa, the delicacy of her transparent skin enhanced by the soft, white drapery and rich lace in which she was robed. The room was partially darkened, and on one side of her knelt a servant, who gently agitated the air with a large fan of beautiful eastern workmanship, while on the other, a young girl, who served as a companion to the heiress, was reading to her the last French novel.

Within the shrubbery, and not many paces from the house, poor Lucille had lain, crouching in the stifling heat, for many hours ; anxiety to accomplish her object, and the fear of detection, having induced her to take up her station much earlier than was necessary.

The excessive heat, and the want of nourishment, had made her very faint, though her child, whom she had fed, and rocked to sleep in her arms, lay still and peaceful as a waxen image of infancy.

She had dressed herself with unusual care, and bore in a light basket on her arm, some of the choicest specimens of her skill—delicate, night-blossoming buds, and gorgeous tropical flowers, imitated with wonderful accuracy and grace.

At length her child awoke, and she began to fear from his restlessness that she should be obliged, for that day at least, to give up her plan, when from the lofty door of the chateau, Madelaine de Beaucour, attended by a lady and gentleman, entered the grounds. Lucille's eyes dilated, and her bosom heaved, but no! it was not he, she saw that at a glance, and her gaze was again rivetted on the lady. Something like disdain flashed across her beautiful face as she looked, and then faded into an expression of relief and congratulation ; truth to tell, the lady, with all the adjuncts of wealth and luxury around her, could not bear a moments comparison with the dark-eyed Quadroon, and Lucille felt this instinctively.

Awhile she paused, irresolute, then caressing her child, slowly advanced, with her stately tread to where Madelain had seated herself ; but her tongue failed her, and she could only silently display her gracefully-fashioned flowers

The lady looked on coldly, and made no answer to her companion's warm comments on the rare beauty of the mother and child. Her gaze was directed to the proffered flower-basket, and after turning over its contents with a careless hand, she glanced at the Quadroon.

'Your own work, I suppose? Ah! I would have purchased some, for they are really very well done, but you have nothing all white, I see and these gaudy colours badly suit my complexion—

'Strange, is it not?' she continued turning languidly to her companion, 'that the absence of refinement in these people should be so preceptible even in their dress—they all prefer those glaring colors.'

'Nay,' he answered quickly, but with as little care to subdue his tones as she had displayed, 'if they have all the gorgeous beauty of this splendid creature, they should wear no other hues.'

Lucille stood motionless, only her curling lip betraying that she was conscious of their words—'Would the white magnolia, or the silver lotus, please the Lady Madelaine?' she asked in her soft rich voice.

'Yes ; either would do,' replied the lady. 'You may make me a wreath of the white magnolia, I think, and bring it here by next week—not later,' she added, with a half smile, and waving her hand in token of dismissal. But the young girl by her side had started up—'Oh! Madelaine, the child, have you noticed it? I never saw anything half so lovely! what magnificent eyes! may I not hold him a moment,' she continued, with a pretty beseeching look at Lucille, and already taking one tiny hand in hers.

The mother's face softened, though she held the boy still closer to her bosom.

'Therese, Therese, of what are you dreaming?' exclaimed Madelaine, angrily, rising from her seat. 'I forbid you to touch the child ; every other girl, of common modesty, shrinks from these low-born creatures, and the offspring of their depravity ;' and she swept haughtily into the chateau with her companions, the abashed girl giving a deprecating glance at Lucille.

The Quadroon followed Madelaine's retreating steps with a look of fiery disdain, and long after the party had disappeared, still she stood, transfixed to the spot, every muscle quivering with suppressed anger.

Her boy's soft fingers wandered in wonder over her averted face, recalled her thoughts, and she turned away with a step of yet statelier pride than the lady.

Through that night and the next, and again the next, two women sat together in the cavern of the gray rock. Of naught pure and holy was their talk, far as the hours sped by, the beautiful face of the younger woman was transformed to smething like the bitterness and cruel rage of the elder. Her occupation accorded little with the expression of her features, for she was skilfully fashioning, into all but living beauty, the snowy flowers and swelling buds of the white magnolia.

'Are you sure that it cannot fail, mother?' she whispered, after a long pause.

'As sure as that the sun will rise to-morrow.'

'But you have not tried it,' she added, with a creeping shudder.

For all answer the old crone tottered across the room, and uplifting the folds of a bright-hued shawl which lay heaped upon the floor, displayed the motionless form of a small mountian goat. It seemed to have lain down and died there without a struggle, so peaceful was its attitude. The girl shuddered violently as her companion dragged the body across the cave, and precipitated it over the hill side.

'No son shall she live to bear him,' muttered the old woman, fiercely, as she took the wreath from the girl's hand ; then drawing a phial from her bosom, she poured into each open cup and half-closed bud, a few drops of clear white liquid.

The following day was one of rare festivity at the Chateau Beaucour. A grand fete, at which the heiress, in her bridal array, was to appear for the last time as Madelaine Beaucour, had been planned ; for the next morning was to see her the bride of Gabriel Delacroix. As she sat in her chamber, robing for the ball, she was told that a Quadroon girl waited without, asking to see her.

'Ah! my white magnolia wreath,' she said gaily, 'twill be more becoming than this tira of pearls ; bring the girl here, Therese, quickly.' With her own hands, Lucille placed the clustering flowers amid the lady's hair, and then retired with a deep reverence. Through the open windows she watched the bride elect, threading with HIM the graceful mazes of the dance, her cheek flushed, her blue eyes sparkling.

Still she watched on, and prayed with clenched hands, until she saw the lady's cheek blanch, and her hand seek her brow with a troubled gesture. Then she laughed wildly, and sped away from the perfumed air and the brilliant light of that festive scene. Even as she fled, the bride had fallen to the earth, and was borne to her room, silent and motionless. Only when they uncovered her pale bosom, and loosened her shining hair, her hand, in obedience to some strange spell, sought the flowers on her brow, and none could remove them.

The next sun rose upon her, a bride indeed in her bridal array, fair and flower-crowned, but cold, voiceless, and still forever.

### THE POSTMAN AGAIN.

The postman is an everlasting topic. We will not repeat commonplaces ; but has it ever occurred to our readers that he is the only Government official of whose incivility complaints are not made, and almost the only public man of small means and very humble functions whom no one thinks of treating with disrespect? For ourselves, we have always felt a distinct emotion of respectfullness for the postman. We can laugh at the scavenger, at the sweep, at the undertaker, at the soldier, at the policeman—they are all fair food for fun ; but let no one burlesque the man who delivers the letters! Has his livery ever been treated with ridicule? Never! Was his cockade ever flouted? Never! And this although the tardy postman, the purloining postman, the stupid postman, the careless postman, be neither of them an uncommon type. We never even disrespected the almost idiotic old fellow who used to deliver letters in our own district, and who is now superannuated. He was the widest divergence from the true postal type we ever knew. He never condescended to knock. He loitered on his way. He would stop a little girl with a clothes-basket to talk to her. Suppose he has a letter for you. Suppose your name is Hands. Suppose he has brought letters to your lowly cot a kundred times before. You are roused by a wild stamping on the door-step, which makes you think somebody must be wanting to tumble through into the coal-cellar, and is trying to remove the iron trap lid for that purpose. You hear a fierce, cracked voice shrieking, "Letter! letter!! letter!!! Now, then, good people, letter, letter, letter. * *"—You go out, and stretch forth your hand for the missive. Don't you wish you may get it! He holds it away at arm's length saying severely, "Name o' Ponds live here?" No, you reply Hands—don't you remember. Then why the, devil can't people write plainer? That ere letter's is the greatest consekence to you, I'm sure on it by the looks of it: and you migtn't never ha' got it cos its directed so bad. Bones, did you say? No Hands! Hands, indeed, its a good deal more like Ponds ; here take it ; people ought to be ashamed o' such writing—and off he goes grumbling down the street, till he meets some crony, or passes a beer-shop.—We are not exaggerating ; this sort of scene was enacted time after time, till the poor old man was laid by. Yet we never lost temper with him, and, if he had been our own father we could hardly have treated him more respectively than we did. And we think there is a general tendency to respect the postman. The leading journal, in one of its happiest veins challenged, the other day, the efficiency of scholastic examination as a test of suitableness for public duties under Government. Might not a postman, it was asked, be strong in the brains and weak in the calves? No one can deny it! But how pleasant to meet a post-man who is strong in calves and brains too ; who cultivates letters as well as delivers them ; who frequents the Olympian Hill! Perhaps the fact that we have met one or two such postmen has something to do with our respect for the whole body. Anyhow we do respect the postman!

A Schenectady editor describing the effects of a squall upon a canal boat, says :—When the gale was at its highest, the unfortunate craft heeled to larboard, and the captain and another cask of whiskey rolled overboard.

When a person losses his reputation, the very last place where he goes to look for it is where he lost it.