

Literature. &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

THE PAGAN QUESTIONING DEATH.

THE OUTWARD DARKNESS AND THE INWARD LIGHT.

O mist of night and blindness, that must hang
Before the life to come!
O tomb! that closes once with iron clang,
And is for ever dumb!

Ships, which go forth upon the boundless main
And perish far at sea,
Are tossed in fragments to the land again—
But naught returns from thee.

No whisper comes from all the generations,
Through thy dark portals thrust;
No breath of life, among the buried nations,
One moment stirs their dust.

No souls beneath, e'er struggling into sight,
Heave up the silent ground;
Though the green sod above them is so light—
So frail the crumbling mould.

I listen by the sea, to catch some tone
From spirits that are fled;
There is no voice in its eternal moan—
No voice, of all its dead.

The stars look coldly down when man is dying,
The moon still holds its sway,
Flowers breathe their perfume round us; winds
Keenly sighing;
Naught seems to pause or stay.

Yes! blindly on—o'er all that thinks and feels,
The universe must roll;
Though at each turn its adamant wheels
Crush out a human soul!

Toward yon bright vault of heaven I dare
Not raise
The cry of my despair,
Lest I should hear the echo which betrays
That all is empty there.

Yet has my soul within the gift of seeing
Beyond this earth and sky;
I feel the immortal instinct of my being—
I know it cannot die!

From Dickens's Household Words.

TWO COLLEGE FRIENDS.

NEXT morning, at 6 o'clock, the old woman, on coming to her daily work, found the door on the latch. On the table she saw a note, and took it up stairs. She knocked at Arthur's door.

'Come in,' he said. 'Is that you, Winnington? I shall get up in a moment.'

'No, zur, the young gentleman be gone, and I thought this here letter might be of consequence.'

Arthur took the letter, and by the gray light of dawn, read as follows—

'I am going to leave you, dear Arthur, and feel that I did not part from you so kindly as I wished. I don't like to show my feelings; for in fact I have so little command of them, that I was afraid you would despise me for my weakness. It will give your messages and your letter to Lucy. I will tell her you are coming soon. Even now the dawn is not far off, and I am going before the hour I told you; for I will not allow you, in your present state of health, to accompany me to Hawsleigh. It is to London I am going. Oh! pardon me for going. I think it my duty to go. You will think so too, when you reflect. If they are surprised at my absence (for I may be detained) explain to them where I have gone. I should have told you this last night, but did not dare. Dear Arthur, think kindly of me. I always think affectionately of you.—W. H.'

'He should have signed his name in full, said Arthur, and laid the letter under his pillow. 'To London—to the attorney—with specimens of the ore. I shall get to town before him, in spite of his early rising.'

There was a smile upon his face, and he got up in a hurry.

'He can't have been long gone,' he said to the old woman; 'for the ink he wrote with was not dry.'

'I thought I saw him as I came,' she replied, 'a long way across the heath; but, p'raps it was a bush, or maybe a cow. I don't know, but it was very like him.'

After breakfast he hurried to the village. The drunken shoemaker was earning a farther title to that designation, and was speechless in bed, with a bandage over his head, which someone had broken the night before. The money Winnington had paid him for carting his luggage was answerable for his helpless condition. There was no other horse or vehicle in the place. So, moody and discontented, Arthur returned, put a shirt in each pocket of his coat, and proceeded on foot to Hawsleigh. He arrived there at one o'clock. The post waggon started at ten. The shoemaker had carefully instructed the driver to convey Winnington's luggage to Exeter; and as he only jogged on at the rate of four miles an hour, and loitered besides on the way, he was not to wait for his passenger, who would probably walk on

a few miles, and take his seat when he was tired.

There was no conveyance in Hawsleigh rapid enough to overtake a vehicle which travelled even at so slow a pace as four miles an hour with the advantage of three hours start; and once in the coach at Exeter, there was no possibility of contending with such rapidity of locomotion. It would take him to London in little more than five days.

Arthur, however, discovered that a carrier's cart started at three o'clock for the village of Oakfield, twelve miles onward on the Exeter road. He was in such a state of excitement and anxiety to get on, that rest in one place was intolerable; and though he knew he was not a yard advanced in reality by availing himself of this chance, as after all he would have to wait somewhere or other for the next morning's post waggon, he paid a small fee for the carriage of a few articles he hastily bought and tied up in a bundle, and set off with the carrier. He seemed to be relieved more and more as he felt nearer the object of his journey. With knitted brow and prest lips he sat in the clumsy cart or walked alongside. The driver, after some attempts at conversation, gave him up to his own reflections.

'A proud fellow as ever I see,' he muttered, 'and looks like a lord. Well, he should'n't travel by a cart if he did'n't speak to cart's company.'

The cart's company increased as they got on. Women with poultry baskets, returning from the neighbouring hamlets and farms; stray friends of the proprietor of the vehicle who were on their way to Oakfield; and at last little village children, who had come out to meet the cart, and were already fighting as to who should have the privilege of riding the old horse to the water when he was taken out of the shafts; it was a cavalcade of ten or a dozen persons when the spire of the church came in view. Arthur still walked beside them, but took no part in the conversation. There seemed unusual goings on in the main street as they drew near. There was a crowd of anxious-faced peasantry opposite the door of the Woodman's Arms; they were talking in whispers and expecting some one's arrival.

'Have you seen him coming, Luke Waters?' said two or three at a time to the carrier.

'Noa—who, then?'

'The crowner; he ha' been sent for a hour or more.'

'What's happened then? Woa horse!'

'Summat bad. He's here!' said a man, pointing to the upper window of the inn, and turning paler then before; 'he was found in Parson's Meadow—dead—with such a slash! The man touched his throat, and was silent.'

Arthur began to listen. 'Who is it? Does any one know the corpse?'

'Noa; he was a stranger, stript naked all to the drawers—and murdered; but here's the crowner. He'll explain it all.'

The coroner came, a man of business mind who seemed to be no more impressed with the solemnity of the scene than a butcher in a shop surrounded by dead sheep. A jury was summoned and proceeded up stairs. A few of the bystanders were admitted. Among others Arthur. He was dreadfully calm; evidently by an effort which concealed his agitation. 'I have never looked on death,' he said, 'and this first experience is very terrible.'

The inquest went on. Arthur, though in the room, kept his eyes perfectly closed; but through shut lids he conjured up to himself the ghastly sight, the stark body, the gaping wound. He thought of hurrying down stairs without waiting the result, but there was a fascination in the scene that detained him.

'The corpse was found in this state,' said the coroner: 'It needs no proof more than the wounds upon it to show that it was by violence the man died. But by whose hands it is impossible to say. Can no one identify the body?'

There was a long pause. Each of the spectators looked on the piteous spectacle, but could give no answer to the question. At last Arthur, by an immense exertion of self-command, opened his eyes and fixed them on the body. He staggered and nearly fell. His cheek became deadly pale. His eyeballs were fixed. 'I—I know him!' he cried and knelt beside his bed. 'I parted from him last night; he was to come by the wagon from Hawsleigh on his way to Exeter, but left word that he was going to walk on before. He was my brother—my friend.'

'And his name?' said the coroner. 'This is very satisfactory.'

Arthur looked upon the cold brow of the murdered man, and said, with a sob of despair:

'Winnington Harvey!'

The coroner took the depositions, went through the legal forms, and gave the proper verdict—'Murdered; but by some person or persons unknown.'

It was a lawless time, and deeds of violence were very frequent. Some years after the perpetrators of the deed were detected in some other crime, and confessed their guilt. They had robbed and murdered the unoffending traveller, and were scared away by the approach of the post-wagon from Hawsleigh. Arthur caused a small headstone to be raised over his friend's grave with the inscription of his name

and fate. Callous as he sometimes appeared, he could not personally convey the sad news to Winnington's relations, but forwarded them the full certificate of the sad occurrence. It is needless to tell what tears were shed by the unhappy mother and sister, or how often their fancy travelled to the small monument and fresh turf grave in the church-yard of Oakfield.

When thirty years had elapsed, great changes had taken place in Combe-Warleigh. It was no longer a desolate village, struggling in the midst of an interminable heath, but a populous town—busy, dirty, and rich. There were many thousands of workmen engaged in mining and smelting. Furnaces were blazing night and day, and there were two or three churches and a town-hall. The neighbourhood had grown populous as well as the town; and a person standing on the tower of Sir Arthur Hayning's castle, near the Warleigh waterfall, could see at great distances, over the level expanse, the jutting of columns of smoke from many tall chimneys which he had erected on other parts of his estate. He had stewards and overseers, an army of carters and wagoners, and regiments of clerks, and sat in the great house; and from his richly furnished library commanded, ruled, and organized all. Little was known of his early life, for the growth of a town where a man lives is like the lapse of years in other places. New people come, old inhabitants die out, or are lost in the crowd; and very recent events take the enlarged and confused outline of remote traditions. The date of Sir Arthur's settlement at Warleigh was as uncertain to most of the inhabitants as that of the siege of Troy. It was only reported that at some period infinitely distant, he had bought the estate, had lived the life of a miser—saving, working, heaping, buying where land was to be had; digging down into the soil, always by some inconceivable faculty hitting upon the richest lodes, till he was owner of incalculable extents of country and sole proprietor of the town and mills of Combe-Warleigh. No one knew if he had ever been married or not. When first the population began to assemble, they saw nothing of him but in the strict execution of their respective duties; he finding capital and employment, and they obedience and industry. No social intercourse existed between him and any of his neighbours; and yet fabulous things were reported of the magnificence of his rooms, the quantity of his plate, the number of his domestic servants. His patriotism had been so great that he had subscribed an immense sum to the Loyalty Loan, and was rewarded by the friendship of the King and the title that adorned his name. And when fifteen more years of this seclusion and grandeur—this accumulation of wealth and preservation of dignity—had accustomed the public ear to the sound of the millionaire's surname, it was thought a natural result of these surpassing merits that he should be elevated to the peerage. He was now Lord Warleigh of Combe Warleigh, and had a coat of arms on the panels of his carriage, which it was supposed his ancestors had worn on their shield at the battle of Hastings. All men of fifty thousand a year can trace up to the Norman conquest. Though their fathers were hedgers and ditchers and their grandfathers inhabitants of the poor-house, it is always consolatory to their pride to reflect that the family was as old as ever; that extravagance, politics, tyranny, had reduced it to that low condition; and that it was left for them to restore the ancient name of its former glory, and to re-knit in the reign of George or William the line that was ruthlessly broken on Bosworth field. Lord Warleigh, it was stated in one of the invaluable records of hereditary descent, (for which subscriptions were respectfully solicited by the distinguished editor, Slaver Lick, Esquire,) was lineally descended from one of the peerages which became extinct in the unhappy wars of Stephen and Matilda. It is a remarkable fact, that in a previous edition, when he was only a baronet, with a reputed income of fifteen or twenty thousand pounds the genealogy had struck at James the First. But whether his ancestry was so distinguished or not, the fact of his immense wealth and influence was undoubted. He had for some years given up the personal superintendence of his works. Instead of extracting dull ore from the earth, he had sent up dull members to the House of Commons, good dull magistrates put upon the bench, and exercised as much sovereign sway and masterdom over all the district, as if he been elected dictator with unlimited power. But there is always a compensation in human affairs; and the malevolence natural to all people of proper spirit lying in the shade of so preponderating a magnate, was considerably gratified by what was whispered of the deprent condition of his lordship's spirits. Even the clergyman's wife—who was a perfect model of that exemplary character—looked mysteriously, and said that his lordship never smiled—that a housemaid who had at one time been engaged in the rectory, had told her extraordinary things about his lordship's habits—about talks she had heard—the housemaid—late at night, in his lordship's library, when she—the housemaid—was morally certain there could be no person in the room but his lordship's self; how she—the housemaid—had been told by Thomas the footman, that his lordship, when dining quite alone, frequently spoke as if to some person sitting beside him; when he—

Thomas—had sworn to her—the housemaid—that there was no person whatever at the table with his lordship, no, not the cat; and then, she—the clergyman's wife—added, as of her own knowledge, that at church his lordship never listened to the sermon; but after apparently thinking deeply of other things, hid himself from her observation, and pretended to fall asleep. How sorry she was to say this, she need not remark, for if there was a thing she hated it was tittle-tattle, and she never suffered a servant to bring her any of the rumours of the place; it was so unlady-like; and his lordship had been such an excellent friend of the church—for he had made an exchange of the wretched old glebe, and given a very nice farm for it in the vale of Hawsleigh, and had built a new parsonage-house where the old manor-house stood, and was a always most liberal in his donations to all the charities; but it was odd, wasn't it? that he never saw any company—and who could he be speaking to in the library, or at dinner? Dr Drowes can't make it out: he was never asked to the castle in his life; and tells me has read of people, for the sake of getting rich, selling their souls to the devil—Isn't it dreadful to think of? His lordship is very rich to be sure; but as to selling his soul to—! Oh! it's a horrid supposition, and I wonder Dr. Drowes can utter so terrible a thought.

But Dr. Drowes had no great opportunity of continuing his awful innuendoes, for he was shortly appointed to another living of Lord Warleigh's in the northern part of the country, and was requested to appoint a curate to Warleigh in the prime of life, who would be attentive and useful to the sick and poor. To hear, was to obey—and the head of his College in Oxford recommended a young man in whom he had the greatest confidence; and Mr Henry Benford soon made his appearance and occupied the parsonage-house. He was still under thirty years of age, with the finest and most delicately cut features consistent with a style of masculine beauty which was very striking. He was one of the men—delicate and refined in expression, with clear, light complexion and beautiful soft eyes—of whom people say it is a pity he is not a girl. And this feminine kind of look was accompanied in Henry Benford by a certain effeminacy of mind. Modest he was, and what the world calls shy, for he would blush on being presented to a stranger, and scarcely ventured to speak in miscellaneous company; but perfectly conscientious in what he considered the discharge of a duty: active and energetic in his parish, and with a sweetness of disposition which nothing could overthrow. He had a wife and two children at this time, and a pleasant sight it was amid the begrimed and hardened features of the population of Combe-Warleigh to see the fresh faces and clear complexions of the new-comers.

A great change speedily took place in the relations existing between pastor and flock. Schools were instituted—the sick were visited—a weekly report was sent to the Castle, with accurate statements of the requirements of every applicant. Little descriptions were added to the causes of the distress of some of the workmen—excuses made for their behaviour—means pointed out by which the more deserving could be helped, without hurting their self-respect by treating them as objects of charity; and in a short time, the great man in the Castle knew the position, the habits, the necessities of every one of his neighbors. Nothing pleased him more than the opportunity now afforded him of being generous, without being imposed on. His gifts were large and unostentatious, and as Benford, without blazoning the donor's merits, let it be known from what source these valuable aids proceeded, a month had not elapsed before kinder feelings arose between the castle and the town—people smiled and touched their hats more cordially than before, when they met his lordship as he drove through the street; little girls dropped curtsies to him on the side of the road, instead of running away when they saw him coming; and one young maiden was even reported to have offered his lordship a bouquet—not very valuable, as it consisted only of a rose, six daisies, and a dandelion—and to have received a pat on the head for it, and half a crown. Lord Warleigh had had a cold every Sunday for the last year and a half of Dr Drowes's ministrations; but when Benford had officiated a month or six weeks he suddenly recovered and appeared one Sunday in church. His lordship generally sat in a recess opposite the pulpit, forming a sort of family pew which might almost have been mistaken for a parlor. It was carpeted very comfortably, and had a stove in it, and tables, and chairs. In this retirement his lordship performed his devotions in the manner recorded by Mrs Drowes—and when the eloquent Dr. was more eloquent than usual, he drew a heavy velvet curtain across the front of his room, and must have been lulled into pleasing slumbers by the subdued mumble of the orator's discourse. On this occasion he was observed to look with curiosity towards the new clergyman. All through the prayers he fixed his eyes on Benford's face—never lifting them for a moment—never changing a muscle—never altering his attitude. His hair, now silver white, fell nearly down to his shoulders; his noble features were pale and motionless. Tall, upright, gazing—gazing—the congregation observed his lordship with surprise. When