

Literature. &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Mackay's Songs and Ballads.

We shall at once begin to cull a posy, beginning with "The Rose's Errand":—

I sent a message by the rose
That words could not convey;
Sweet vows I never dared to breathe,
And wishes pure as they;
A mute but tell-tale messenger,
It could not do me wrong;
But told the passion I conceal'd,
And hopes I cherish'd long.

My Love received it with a smile,—
She read its thoughts and sigh'd,
Then placed it on her happy breast,
And wore it till it died.
Immortal Rose! it could not die;
The spirit which it bore
Lives in her heart, as first in mine,
A Joy forever more.

This has just the simplicity—the fragrant simplicity—that makes the soul of an enduring ballad. "Love in all Seasons" admirably alternates and attunes his utterance to the changing time:—

I love my Love in the days of Spring,
And for her sake, each living thing;
We gather garlands by the way,
We pluck the blooms of the merry May,
We roam the woods, we trace the streams,
Our waking thoughts are bright as dreams:
No bee on the blossom, no lark in the sky,
Is happier than my love and I.

I'll love my love in the summer time,
Our years shall ripen to their prime;
We'll sit in the shade a little more,
Beneath the elm-trees at the door;
We'll watch with joy the children run,
We'll give the world our benison:
No bird in its nest on the tree-top high
Shall be so blithe as my love and I.

I'll love my love in the Autumn eves,
We'll gather in our barley sheaves;
We'll reap our corn we'll press our wine,
We'll hear on the hill or lowing kine;
We'll pluck our peaches from the wall,
We'll give our friends a festival:
There is no joy the world can buy
That we shall not share, my Love and I.

I'll love my Love in the winter cold;—
So shall our tale of life be told;
We'll sit together by the hearth,
Spectators of a younger mirth;
And as the children come and go,
We'll dwell in the light where their faces glow:
We'll live in love; and loving die,
And still live on my love and I!

"Pour the Wine in the Cup" ought to warm the cold water in the veins of a teetotaler. Only imagine how different the charm, if the words—cold from the pump—ran as thus—

"Pour the lymph from the mug!"
Pour the wine in the cup,
Beading up!
We'll be merry and wise, though we're few;
Fill each glass to the brink,
And we'll drink
Success to the gallant and true!
Confusion to knaves!
And freedom to slaves!
And joy to the honest wherever they be!
Bad luck to the bad!
Good heart to the sad!
And health to the Queen of the free!

Pour the wine in the cup,
Beading up!
Once again we'll be all of a mind;
Fill each glass to the brink,
And we'll drink
Success to the fair and the kind!
To blue eyes and black,
That shine on life's track,
The bright beaming hazel, the brown and the grey!

Every joy may they prove,
If they tell us they love,
And mean the kind words that they say,

Pour the wine in the cup,
Beading up!
Let it sparkle and foam in the light;
Fill each glass to the brink,
And we'll drink
Success to the cause that is right.
May justice be strong!
May truth flourish long!
May rulers and people true freedom allow!
And may each who is here
Keep a conscience that's clear,
And never be worse than he's now.

From Dickens's Household Words.

THE OPAL RING.

That night there was a fete at the hotel of the Duchesse de Maubreul, the house where she had first met Gaston. Would he be there?—Probably; his family was connected with that of the Duc, and she knew he was always a welcome guest.

Her toilet that evening was performed with a care greater than she was wont to bestow on it. She wished to keep up some illusion in her own eyes; she wished, when the ring did its

work—the work she knew it was, by no power of hers, charged to perform—to feel or to fancy that her woman's charms had some share in the effect. She looked in her glass with pride and triumph. Hope and security had lent a new bloom to her beauty. The diamonds that blazed in her luxuriant dark hair were not more brilliant than her eyes; and her cheek wore a bloom that needed no aid from art. Most men who saw her that night might have thought the aid of the ring superfluous.

As she entered the apartment of the hotel Maubreul, there was a general stir and murmur. Gaston was there; he heard it; he looked where he saw other eyes directed; and for the first time was struck by the beauty and majesty of the woman whose unconcealed preference he had so coldly and constantly discouraged.—His eyes followed her through the crowd; he saw how it bent in homage before her; he saw with what dignified indifference she received it—how valueless in her sight was the adoration of those who sought but a word or a smile to treasure and be proud of. And this woman had humbled herself to him—had waited but for him to be gracious. The demon of vanity had begun to work in his breast ere ever the ring approached his finger.

Between the dances he went up and spoke to her. Her manner was far less earnest and encouraging than usual; if not cold, it was at least marked with a calm dignity, very different to her usual tone with him. This piqued him, and he longed for an occasion when he might converse with her more at ease than he could do there, standing before her seat, and surrounded by the other guests. She complained of the heat, he hastened to offer to conduct her to one of the less crowded and cooler apartments—a proposal she quietly accepted.

Passing through several rooms they reached the last of the suite, which was becoming nearly deserted by the renouncement of the dancing, and leading her to a sofa, Gaston took a place by her side.

The conversation was resumed, by her, in the same calm, ordinary tone; by him, with a certain earnestness, which she seemed at first rather to put aside; but by degrees, as she saw his interest evidently increasing, she suffered her manner to relax, and her apparent indifference to give way to a softer aspect.

"I am told, Monsieur de Montrouge," she said at last, "that you are going to be married to your cousin. Forgive me if I commit an indiscretion in speaking thus on the subject; but I trust you will believe how sincere is the interest I feel in aught that so deeply concerns your happiness."

Gaston had coloured violently at the commencement of her speech. Genevieve! this was the way he was keeping inviolate his love and faith to her! But for this emotion his wily interlocutor was fully prepared, and she put into the conclusion of her sentence an accent that soon reassured him. She knew now that he loved another; she had regulated her own feelings, or at least the expression of them accordingly; and he might look upon her now as a friend. She was a noble woman after all!

"You will not be offended," she said in the same kindly, smiling manner, "if I ask you to accept a slight token of the friendship I feel for you. Many of your other friends will offer you marriage gifts. You will not, I trust, deny me a similar privilege?"

As she spoke, she drew the ring from her finger, and between her words, glided it on his. She knew that once there, she need not fear his removing it.

He took the had that performed the act and covered it with passionate kisses.

Poor little Genevieve's sweet face bears a far different aspect to the sunny one it presented that happy evening when with Gaston by her side she and her father strolled out together.

Now she rarely sees him, and though his manner is always kind, it is ever constrained and uneasy. Sometimes he betrays a restless impatience; sometimes a sort of pitying regard; and he seems at all times ill at ease and dissatisfied, but more with himself than with others.

At first she used to question him tenderly, but now she she has learned that this, so far from leading to a solution of the mystery, only adds to the uneasy symptoms.

At times she is jealous, offended, angry; but then her father blames him, and her woman's nature rises up to defend and justify him. But, let her mood be what it will, she is ever anxious, fearful, and unhappy.

All this Madame de Vaucrasson learns; and her cruel nature takes a savage delight in the sufferings of the unoffending girl.

Meanwhile, Gaston's stormy love for the relentless woman secures daily a deeper hold on him; changing his whole nature, making him who was gentle, cheerful, and loving, impatient, irritable, and jealous—at times almost brutal. Occasionally, this fierce passion almost takes the aspect of hate; he treats her with tyranny and scorn; he has a thousand caprices; a thousand exigencies and fierce disputes, embittering all their intercourse, rise between them.

At last, the marquise remembers the promise the magician extracted from her when they

parted. She had never performed it. Perhaps to this act of disobedience on her part may, in some degree, be attributable the unhappiness the realization of her desires has brought her. She will lose no time in attempting to avert his pleasure; and not later than to-morrow, she will go to the Rue des Truands, and lay her difficulties before him.

That night Gaston came to spend the evening with her. He seemed in better humor than usual; and she fancied that the magical power of the old man might have made him acquainted with her resolve, and that this had already produced a certain amelioration in the position. Her determination was, therefore, more than ever fixed that the morrow should not pass without bringing the execution of her design.

The evening passed quietly. Gaston was more like his former self than she had seen him since the commencement of their attachment, and she rejoiced in the idea that had presented itself to her. At last the hour for his departure approached.

"How long it is," he said, "since we have had a day altogether to ourselves! Let us go to-morrow into the country, and spend it there."

"Not to-morrow, Gaston. I have engagements in town; but the day after—any other day."

"I will not have another day! Engagements! When I command, what other engagements stand!"

"Command! This to me? You forget yourself strangely, monsieur!"

Long and loud was the dispute; fierce and cruel were the insults bandied between them; and with far more of hate and vengeance than of love in their hearts, they parted.

At sunset, the Marquise de Vaucrasson, disguised as of old, stole forth from the wicket by which the garden of her hotel opened on a quiet street, and after looking cautiously round, turned her steps in the direction of the Rue des Truands.

Hardly had she turned the first corner, when the little door she had looked behind her, opened again, and a man with a cloak and a slouching hat and drooping feather, stepped forth, and proceeded in the direction she had taken, following her without ever approaching her closely, until she arrived at the door at which she knocked opened, and closed upon her.

Just opposite to the house was a low, dark arch-way, leading no one could, from the street, and at this hour, distinguish whither. Beneath its shade Gaston placed himself, and remained in observation, quite unconscious that while all his attention was riveted on the opposite side of the street, he was himself the object of no less rigid surveillance on the part of two men of peculiarly evil aspect behind him.

Suddenly, he was made acquainted with the fact by being seized from the back, pinioned, gagged and carried off; it was quite impossible to say whither, for his cloak was wrapped around his head, so as to exclude every other object from his sight.

After some minutes, he found himself on his feet, and his head released from its covering though his arms still remained bound. Looking round, he found himself in a low den, surrounded by three or four men whose appearance was in no way calculated to re-assure him, and who, with coarse jokes and laughter, mocked at his incantation, while they proceeded to strip him of whatever objects of worth he had about him.

Suddenly a thought flashed across him. The ring! He remembered not that the man who had tied his hands had silently drawn it off in the operation. Yet, strange to say, not a tinge of regret accompanied the recollection. His love for the donor, whither, too, had it fled? Marvellous! The memory of it was but like a fevered, hateful dream, from which he had but that moment awakened. Love her! He must have had a fit of madness. Forsake Genevieve for such a woman! Was he still in his senses, or was not the whole thing a troubled vision? No, the present, at least, was painfully real; and it would be time enough when he should have escaped from his actual position, to try to explain to himself the feelings and events that had preceded it.

At last the men found that there was little else worth taking, and they announced to their captive that they were bons enfans, who had no wish to do him any hurt, and that as he had not troubled them with any foolish and useless resistance, his liberty should be restored to him; adding, however, that he must submit to being conducted thence in such manner as they considered desirable to adopt. Knowing the hopelessness of disputing the point, Gaston assented to their arrangements; and his head being again enveloped, he felt a strong hand laid on his shoulder, and himself, with various brief warnings and directions, led through a variety of tortuous ways, now mounting, now descending, now turning to the right, now to the left, until a certain change of atmosphere, and altered sound in his own footsteps and in those of his conductors, warned him that he had got into the open air. After walking a little further they stopped; suddenly he felt the cord that bound his hands loosened; but before he could, with his utmost speed, release his head from the folds of his cloak, he found him-

self standing in the street under the quiet starlight alone.

He looked around bewildered. The street he was in was one a considerable distance from the Rue des Truands; the affair seemed to become more dream-like than ever; but one thing was clear; he was free, and his way lay unobstructed before him.

How long a time had elapsed during the progress of these strange events, the absence of his watch prevented his being able to tell. He guessed, however, that it could not be too late to find his uncle and Genevieve still stirring—Genevieve, towards whom his whole heart yearned as if years of pain and cruel absence had kept him from her.

With a rapid step he proceeded to the well-known door. Suddenly, when about to ring, he remembered the signal which of old used to announce to her his coming; and passing on he softly tapped at the window where she was wont to sit of an evening at her embroidery.

How long it was since she had heard that sound! She was watching there now; but not for him; her father was out, and she sat alone waiting his return. Formerly she used to fly to open the door herself when that signal sounded; now, with a voice she struggled hard to modulate, she bade the old servant, Catherine, do so, while she continued to work, but with stitches, all of which must come out to-morrow. Gaston entering, stopped at the door contemplating her in silence.

"Bon soir, mon cousin!"

She always marked the relationship now when she addressed him.

"Genevieve?"

What was there in his voice that made her turn her averted look upwards? Something strangely eloquent in that and in his face there must have been, for in another instant his brown eyed bird was in the arms he had opened to receive her.

Meanwhile the interview of the Marquise de Vaucrasson with the man of magic was come to an end, and once more she steps out into the dark and squalid street. Ere she has proceeded far, she is conscious of a step behind her; she quickens her pace; the step becomes more rapid; still faster and faster she goes; still faster and faster the step follows. She is about to run when a hand is placed upon her shoulder, and a hot breath penetrates her veil.

"Do not shriek! a hoarse voice says, 'it is useless; I mean you no harm, only come with me quietly,' and the other hand grasps her.

She does shriek and struggle, but not long for a thick muffler is placed over her mouth and she becomes unconscious.

When the marquise woke from her trance, she found herself lying on a miserable and filthy mattress, in a room which better merited the appellation of a cellar. By the dim, flickering light of a wretched lamp whose fumes added a fresh ingredient to the combination of loathsome odors which filled the den, she gradually distinguished the objects that surrounded her, each and all partaking of the same mean and disgusting aspect.

She was alone—that was something—and, starting up, she looked around: when there—close by the head of the pallet—sat a man watching her. She shrieked and hid her face in her hands.

"Do not fear me," said the voice that sounded in her ears just before she became insensible; "I would not harm you ma belle, I adore you! and he tried to withdraw the hands that covered her eyes.

"Monster! I hate you—do not approach me—away!"

"Gently; I tell you I love you—love you passionately—but remember, you are in my power, do not provoke me, for I am not patient. And what does not yield, I break."

Her utter, utter helplessness came across her stronger than any other feeling, and she wept aloud in passionate despair.

"Let me go, for Heaven's sake! for mercy's sake let me go! What can you gain by keeping me here? Only release me, and I swear to make you rich for life."

"I may not be so poor as I seem; it is for your own sake I choose to keep you. Look here! this is not a beggar's possession."

He took from some secret receptacle, and held before her, a ring, which, even in that dim place, gleamed and flashed like a mirror in the sun.

She understood her position now, though not how it came about. Gaston—where was he? Lost to her for ever, wherever he might be. One thing before all others presented itself to her; she must regain possession of the ring, must free herself from the hated thrall of this wretch's affection—anything—anything on earth was better than that.

She knew the only course to be adopted was dissimulation; and, though her soul recoiled from the attempt, she must feign a disposition to be won over to listen to his detested advances.

She would not irritate him, she would gain time, and trust to find an opportunity to attain her object. And thus temporising and watching, the day, whose wan light she was only dimly conscious of for a few hours, passed away and again night came.

All that time she had, broken in body and