

Literature. &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

WITHIN.

BY J. MARTIN LUCK.

On the broad highway of heaven's dominion,
Two pilgrims journeyed hand in hand;
By their quaint discourse, and their free opinion,

We knew them akin to our mother-land.
A goodly proof of his time taught learning
The elder gave, though he spoke the less;
For his life had taken many a turning
By the furrowed way, and the wilderness.

"All nature streweth its bounty round us;"
So said the pilgrim of younger years.
"Still dim as the dawn of reason found us,
We loiter along in the vale of tears
The old love liveth in lonely musing—
It filleth the vacant dreams of yore,
And, fondly memory's page perusing,
We sigh for losses it can't restore.

"Of the morrow's brightness, hope is speaking—

The promised Eden for which we pray,
The high and the lowly alike are seeking;
The wise are willing to point the way,
And hold a beacon to one another,
And say there's a happier goal to win,
But canst thou tell to me, my brother,
Where lieth the Talisman?"—Within!

"Tis not where wealth, with its gilding graces

The pageantry of a passing hour;
Tis not where rank with its title traces
A lineage linked with kingly power.
Oh, be thou just in thy worldly doing,
And be thou firm in thy cause and creed,
And be thou true in the truth pursuing,
And charitable in the hour of need;
Each heart is fraught with its own emotion;
And joy and sorrow are sisters twin;
They sit at the helm o'er life's rude ocean,
And the only haven is found—Within!"

From Household Words.

A MOTHER.

I was left a widow at the age of five and twenty, after a three years' peaceful marriage, with a little boy of only a year old to bring up as I best could. I was resolved that my boy should prove an exception to the bitter rule which makes the only sons of widowed mothers educational mistakes; and, from the hour of his father's death, I devoted myself to his education with a singleness of purpose, and an exclusiveness of endeavour which I thought could only bring me a rich harvest of reward. He was too frail and delicate for a public school; besides, I was afraid, not only of the rough usage he would meet with there, but also of the moral mischief sure to be contracted. So that I had nothing else to do but to keep him at home, and engage a modest-mannered young woman to teach him the rudiments of what he ought to know. Thus, until the age of fourteen he was brought up solely by women, and never suffered to hear a word or to read a line which the most saintly maiden might not have joined in; for I understood nothing of the difference which people assert ought to exist in the education of boys and girls. To me, morality was single and direct, and admitted no species of deviation. When nearly fifteen I arranged for my boy a kind of daily tutorship with our young curate; still keeping him at home under my own eye, and superintending his studies myself. For I remembered to have heard strange things of the classics, and I would not trust even a clergyman with my child's studies unchecked. I made Mr Cary translate to me every evening the lesson he was to give the next morning; and as I do not confide implicitly in any one, I learnt enough Latin myself to feel sure he was not misleading me. Mr Cary did not like this superintendence,—but he was weak and poor, and dared not oppose.

I was never a fond mother. I have a horror of all kinds of demonstrativeness, and look on impulse and expansion as very nearly convertible terms with madness and imbecility. But, perhaps I loved my child all the more because I thought it wise and good to be self-restrained. It seems to me that the concentration of inward affection strengthens and consolidates; whereas superficial expansion excites, but weakens it. Therefore, very few caresses or endearing words passed between Derwent and myself; but we were none the less good friends on that account. I was proud and fond of him, for all that I did not show my pride by the foolish caresses which most mothers indulge in. He was a fair, waxen-looking creature with delicate features, and slender, well-shaped limbs, very quick, very agile, like a young chamois in some of his movements; and taking greedily to all accomplishments. He was a good musician, and a clever draughtsman; he sang sweetly, and danced with peculiar grace; but he knew nothing of the more essentially manly exercises. He had never climbed a tree in his life—at least I trust not; he could not swim, for I was afraid of his taking cold in the water; and, of course, all such exercises as fencing, boxing, or wrestling, I should not have dream-

ed of allowing to him. I did not suffer the companionship of other boys; not even our vicar's sons, when home for their holidays, for would they not have taught him their school-vice, rough, and vulgar, though brave and generous lads, as they were. I did not regret his want of that rough hardiness and coarse strength which people generally think necessary for boys. I would rather have had him the ethereal creature he was, than the bravest and most powerful of a class; if, to gain those qualities, he must have lost the purity of the gentleman's son.

At last I was obliged to part with him. I had nothing for it but to send him to the university. It was the first wish of my heart that he should be a clergyman; and, to gain this I must needs see him pass through the terrible ordeal of a college career. I could only hope in the power of the education I had given him, and pray and believe that it would prove sufficient against all the temptations which I knew, by report, must necessarily beset him.

Derwent's first letters were very satisfactory. Breathing love for his old home, and saintly abhorrence at all that he saw around him, they did not bear a trace of any new influence; and I was reassured if, by chance I had ever unconsciously doubted. But, by degrees, the tone of his letters changed. He spoke of strange men as his friends, to me, who had so often urged on him the necessity of keeping aloof from all intimacy whatsoever with his fellow-collegians. For had I brought him up in seclusion from boys, to see him adopt the habits, perhaps the vices of men? The very name applied to strangers made me predict all sorts of unknown dangers. Soon, also, he began to use strange words whereof I knew not the meaning; to talk of parties of pleasure, which seemed to be sadly at variance with the object of his studies; to speak of subjects that froze the blood in my veins—and then, what was hardest to bear of all, he more than once reproached me with the carelessness of my education, and bewailed a pampered boyhood, which left him nothing but an ignorant and ridiculous manhood. He soon grew to speaking of himself in the most humiliating and degrading terms. I felt that it was not modesty, but wounded pride, which made him use these bitter words, and they angered me even more than they pained; for the sting of each was meant for me; yet I had been a faithful and devoted mother.

Thus a coolness between us grew and spread, till soon I felt that I had two sons: one who had died in boyhood, and one who had come suddenly before me as an alien—but still my child. It was a fearful feeling—for a mortal death is more fearful to witness than any physical death.

Vacation time came. How I had looked forward to this time! I had turned back to school-girl days, and counted the hours which lay between me and the moment when I should hold my son to my heart. For the consciousness that he was drifting from me made me feel much more tenderly, more fondly for him, than I had ever done before; and I think if he had come to me then, I could have redeemed him by my very love. But, a week before the appointed day, I received a letter from him, telling me that he had engaged to go with a reading party into Wales, and that he could not consequently see me until the next vacation, which would be at Christmas. It was now midsummer. Wounded and hurt, I wrote back a cold reply, simply consenting to the arrangement, but not expressing a word of sorrow at my own disappointment; knowing, alas, that the omission would not be remarked. Nor was it. Derwent's answer was full of pleasurable anticipations of his summer with his dear friends, enthusiastic praises of his party, disrespectful satire on his home at Haredale, and on men tied to their mother's apron strings; which last observation he qualified by adding praises on my common sense in not requiring such milkop devotion. He ended with his usual expressions of regret at his early education, and of self-contempt for his want of manly acquirements. A want, however, lessening daily, he said, under the able tuition of his friends.

What followed until Christmas was merely a deepening of those shades; till, at last, the silent misunderstanding between us grew out into a broad black line—an impassible barrier, which none of us sought to conceal.

Derwent had been absent a year and a-half when I saw him again. And, had it been a spectre which had usurped the name of my child, I should not have recognized him less readily than I did now in the vulgar roue who returned to me in place of that pure saint I had sent out like a dove from my ark. The long golden hair which had floated on each side of his dark face low to his shoulders, was cut short, darkened by oils, and parted at the side. The face which had borne no deeper traces than what a child's simple sensations might have marked, was now blotched by dissipation. The very features were different. The eyes were smaller, and the blue less blue; the lips were hard and swollen; the nose thicker; the jaw more square; while his figure retained nothing of the slightness nor of the grace which had made him once so beautiful. His hands were covered with purple scars; his shoulders were broad, his neck coarse and muscular. He

was not the Derwent I had sent to the great university. As changed in outward seeming, so was he in manner and in thought. Coarse jests with the servants and the low people of the village; incessant smoking; spirits, beer, drunk at all hours, from the early morning to late at night; a lounging, restless, dissipated habit, seemingly unable to concentrate thought or energy on anything but the merest sensuality; perpetual satire—satire on the noblest, satire on the highest subjects; a conversation blackened with the vilest oaths: this was the Derwent whom the alma mater sent back to his own mother: this the reaction of my careful schooling—the hideous mark to which the rebound had fallen.

The six weeks were only half over, when Derwent, yawning more noisily than usual, came lounging through the hall to the drawing-room.

"Mother," he said, plunging himself at full length upon the sofa, "Haredale is awfully slow. By Jove! it uses a man up twice as fast as the fastest college life. I am positively worn out with the monotony of these three weeks.—! You seem asleep in this precious old toad-hole. I can't stand it any more, that's a fact.—In plain English, mother, I must go."

"At your pleasure, Derwent," I said, coldly, not even raising my eyes.

"Well, now, that's prime! You are a fine little mother, anyhow!" he said laughing; but I fancied that his voice had a slight accent of disappointment in it. You are not like most mothers of only sons," he added, with emphasis.

"Your visit, Derwent," I went on to say, has not been of such satisfaction to me as to cause me much regret at its termination. Your habits your way of life, your tone of thought, and style of conversation are all so foreign to my ideas of a gentleman—of what my son should be—that I confess to more sorrow than pleasure in your presence. Once you were my pride; now—"

"Upon my soul that's cool!" shouted Derwent, interrupting me with his college laugh and a college oath. "Still," he added after a pause, "it leaves me freer than I might have felt if you had taken to the pathetics. For I don't know how much resolution might have been melted, like Cleopatra's pearls, in your tears."

"I don't think you ever saw my tears," I answered, very coldly.

"No; that's true mother. Your heart might be of iron, for any water-founts leading from it to your eyes," said Derwent.

"And the first assuredly, shall be on account of your absence, when that absence is desired and planned by your own will."

"Then we part good friends, mother?" he said, lounging up from the sofa, and taking a cigar from his case.

"Quite as good friends, Derwent, as we can ever hope to be now," I replied with a voice sterner and steadier than usual; because I had more emotion to conceal.

I felt him look at me fixedly, but I did not raise my eyes: and, in a few moments, he strode out of the room, whistling a vulgar air.

That evening he left Haredale while I was absent for an hour; and, when next vacation time came, I myself volunteered his spending it away from home.

Soon our letters decreased into brief quarterlies. Soon they became nearly half-yearly communications; and, in due course, decree time came, without Derwent's attempting a second sojourn at home. In the meanwhile my hair had grown grey, and my face always pale, paler still and wrinkled. I lost all enjoyment of life; and, though a woman still in the prime of middle age, felt and lived like one on the border of a thorny grave. It seemed to me that the sun never shone, and the south wind never blew. It was nothing but a grey, chill, winter time that I lived through; a time of spiritual death.

Perhaps I was to blame for all this. Had I been more demonstrative: had I condescended to sue, to entreat, to caress, I dare say I might have softened him somewhat to the old shape. But I could not do this; the iron of my nature was too strong and too intolerant. So I left him to his own way, and left on his own head the curse or the blessings of his life.

The examination for degrees came, and my son was plucked. He could not pass, even among the lowest of the lowest class. He wrote in a careless, off-hand manner, about this new dishonor, saying that it did not much signify, as he intended to become artist, Bedouin, Bohemian, Sagaburd, anything rather than a parson; and that M. A. would look worse than ridiculous after the name of an historical painter, or a marker at a billiard-table. I answered that he had my consent to any course of life he chose to adopt—a consent wrung from a shattered pride and ruined hopes—and that I was too indifferent to his future now to interfere in any of the details of its disgrace. But he did not know that this letter, so hard, and stern, and cold as it seemed was written between tears and sobs; and, in the fitful bursts of such a storm of passionate anguish, as I never thought could sweep through my strong and chastened heart.

He went to London; which he said was the only field for him; and, in short time, he told me he had begun to study art seriously; but that he feared he should never make much substantial progress.

Time passed; fading ever into deeper duller gray, until all the horizon round my life became soon black and mourning.

I need scarcely say what disgust my son's profession caused. I had always held the artist world as something different to and below ourselves, and should as soon have expected a child of mine to have turned mountebank of a strolling company as to have seen him take up painting as a profession. No one knew, and none could see or guess what I suffered; for I bore myself in my own manner, and hardened that I might strengthen myself. But this, coupled with the disgrace of his college failure, nearly broke my heart.

One day a telegraphic message came from Derwent, requiring my instant presence in London. It was the only communication I had had from him for above a year; and, until I read his address in the message, I did not know where he lived. I hesitated at the first moment whether I should go or not: but the remembrance of my old love, rather than any present affection—no! that had been lived down in his disgrace!—determined me. And the evening saw me on my way to town. I arrived at about eleven that night, and drove direct to the obscure street near Fitzroy square where Derwent lived: a part of the town I had never known in my former days, and which sufficiently shocked me when I saw it. A dirty coarse looking woman opened the door to me, and, after a long time of insolent scrutiny, admitted me into a narrow hall, the close smell of which, and its neglect and filth, prepared me for the scene I had to witness up stairs. At the top of the house, in a low, squalid garret-room, worse than any belonging to the meanest peasant on my estate, with daubs rather than pictures scattered confusedly about it; with dirty strips of red and blue hung round at various points in hideous mockery of the bits of color artists delight in: in the midst of one tangled mass of dirt, confusion, and poverty, crouching in bed beneath a heap of soiled blankets, lay my son, my only child, the one-time pride and glory of my life. Mercy! how he was changed! I should not have known him had I met him unexpectedly: he had not the faintest trace of resemblance with his former self. It was another man, more hideous and more degraded than the college roue who had so shocked and estranged me at Haredale. By the side of the bed sat a pretty-looking woman, her hair dishevelled, her dress disordered, and dirty: herself evidently a creature of the humblest class of society: but with a certain frank good-nature in the midst of her vulgarity that I could imagine might have prepossessed some who were not quite so exclusive as myself. She gave me a broad, bold stare when I entered, not moving from her place till Derwent said in a languid tone, "My mother, Melly," when she got up from the bed and offered me her hand. I was astonished—too startled to refuse it. She shook mine warmly, saying—

"O! how glad I am you have come!"

I turned to Derwent, and I felt that my lips were set and my brows contracted as I looked at him inquiringly. I fancied that I saw a blush cross his pale, haggard face as he answered my silent inquiry by "My wife, mother," adding as he took her hand, "and a good wife, too!"

I do not know what strange feeling took possession of me; but all the room grew dark, my son and that terrible creature faded into small dim specks: I thought I was dying and fell prone on the floor, for I fainted—the first and only time in my life that such a thing happened to me. When I recovered, I found they had placed me on the bed by my son: that fearful woman bending over me and tending me, I must confess, carefully and tenderly enough. Derwent was weeping; sobbing passionately. I felt his tears fall hot on my hand, as he kissed it again and again. I was bewildered. There was evidently a mystery in all this beneath the mere surface of degradation easy enough to read. But I was afraid of nothing now; it seemed to me as if nothing could be worse to hear than the shocking fact of his marriage with such a woman.

When I had recovered sufficient physical strength to speak and move, I withdrew myself from Derwent's side, and placed myself on a chair, fronting them both.

"Tell me frankly," I said, "the meaning of all this. Why have you sent for me? Why are you in this state? Why do I find you living the squalid life of a pauper, when your allowance ought to have kept you like a gentleman? Why have you married so far out of your own sphere?" And I shuddered, and they both saw I shuddered. "Without, too, telling me that you were even engaged? Tell me what it all means?"

"It is a long story, mother," said Derwent, trying hard to speak in a composed voice, but failing sadly in the effort poor soul. "I have been unfortunate, and I have been guilty, and between the two' (here he smiled with a flash of reckless gaiety more painful to witness than any despair), "I am done for. I have [lost at