

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

EVENING THOUGHTS.

Oh softly fall the sunbeams
Across the prairies wide,
And the distant landscapes spread out
In silent sunny pride;
And the wood-crowned hills are gleaming
In one wide rosy glow.
While shadows deep are stealing
Over the vales below.

It is a time for memories,
And, like those golden rays,
Flash over my brain the sunbeams
Of happy departed days;
But midst these sunny visions
Of the days of long ago,
There are dark regretful shadows
Steal over the heart below.

The sun is fast departing,
And the western skies are bright,
And the lingering clouds of evening
Catch up the glorious light;
But from the east, slow stealing,
Dark sombre shadows come,
And the eastern clouds are deepening
And broadening into gloom.

Thus glows the light of childhood
That may no more return,
And so in solemn radiance
The lights of memory burn;
But dearly o'er our future
Hover the shades of gloom,
And darkly float before us
The shadows of the tomb.

The sunlight has departed,
And melts the golden light,
And droops the wing of darkness,
And earth is robed in night;
But over all—above all—
The stars of heaven move,
And stray their radiant glory
Along the vaults above.

So, though the night of darkness
Around the soul my sweep,
And the grave's sunless shadows
May gather dark and deep,
Beyond the tomb, the starlight
Of glory strews the way,
And from the heavens burst on us,
The light of endless day.

A LEGEND OF FLODDEN FIELD.

"Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
And not a history."—SCOTT.

MORE than a twelvemonth had elapsed since Hugh Maxwell and his retainers had ridden from the strath of Glensleath—another harvest had come round. But, oh! what a contrast did the lonely glen present to that which it had exhibited when the sickle the preceding year had been put in requisition! Scarce half the crofts in spring time had felt the ploughshare, a slight return of grain remunerated imperfect tillage; but still the striking picture of the fearful consequences which follow war might have been found defective, had not the appearance of those who were employed in gathering the wretched harvest given strong but tacit evidence. In the ill cultivated fields, with a few exceptions, old age and youth alone were toiling; not a full grown form was seen among the feeble group, and women essayed the labour which lusty manhood should have claimed. Where were the bold riders of the strath? A few were resting in their fathers' graves,—the bones of more were whitening on the cold hill side of Flodden. Many a proud family in Scotland had sad reason to curse the folly of their rash and wayward king; but none had greater cause to lament the monarch's infatuation than the once important house of Nithsdale. When the left wing of the Scottish army was broken, and the right hand disbanded for the sake of plunder, the fury of the English chivalry was launched against the centre, where the Maxwells were arrayed beneath the royal banner. Gallant, but unavailing, was the resistance of the devoted family while they withstood the combined efforts of Surrey's left wing and the English reserve; while

Front, flank and rear, their squadrons sweep,
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their king
But yet tho' thick the shafts as snow,
The charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Tho' billmen ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring;
Though stubborn spearmen still made good,
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell,
No thought was there of dastard flight,
Linked in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble—squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well,
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded king.

Of five brothers of the house of Carlaverock four died sword in hand—the fifth, young Ralph, being carried from the field by a devo-

ted follower when Surrey drew off his forces, and from the red hill side,

'Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one,
The sad survivors—all were gone.'

It may be readily imagined that the terrible defeat sustained by the Scottish army on the fatal 9th September plunged the kingdom into universal grief; for there was hardly a noble house throughout the land which had not relatives to mourn for. If the castle was fearlessly visited, the cottage did not escape—peasant and peer had been involved in the same desperate calamity; and when the name of Flodden was heard, the old man shuddered for the son he lost, and the smile died on the infant's cheek whom that disastrous day had rendered from the proud earl to the common spearman, many a bereaved family were left lamenting. Alas! two hundred of the clan had fallen.

Of the many who did not return from 'the lost battle,' the gallant bride-groom of Mabel Foster was unhappily included. For many a day succeeding the fatal fight, wounded stragglers dragged themselves to their native glens; and there, were the hurt medicable, the gentle agency of women was not employed in vain; and if the injury was mortal, the eyes of the dying borderer were closed by those he had loved in life. Weeks passed, Hugh of Glensleath did not come back to his fair bride and lonely tower; nor had the border beauty the melancholy pleasure of smoothing the pillow of him for whom kindred and home had been abandoned. Nor to the fallen knight were the rites of Christian sepulchre permitted. Like his royal master's, Hugh Maxwell's corpse could not be distinguished among the maimed bodies which heaped the battle field, and with many a departed gallant he filled a common grave.

Slowly and doubtfully young Ralph's recovery proceeded. Months intervened before he regained strength to keep the saddle; but the moment he was able to accomplish the journey he hastened to the house of mourning to offer his condolence to the sufferer, and acquaint the bereaved one that her deceased lord had committed the fair widow to his cousin's care. Indeed, protection was required. The consequences of border warfare were always the loosing upon the world a number of reckless men, whom loss of property or kindred had driven to desperation. Hitherto the Maxwells were too powerful to dread any wandering marauders, who passed them by, to plunder others with impunity. But the strength of that proud house was shorn—their best and bravest were no more; freebooters no longer respected a name whose anger once the boldest reiver on the borders would not have ventured to provoke. Of all the detached families of the house of Carlaverock that of Glensleath had suffered most severely; and ere six months had passed after the defeat of Flodden, twice had the strath been forayed, and a quantity of cattle driven off.

The meeting of Mabel Maxwell and her fair kinsman was affecting; for the last time she had looked upon her lord when living was in the presence of young Ralph, and now the fatal parting with her lover was painfully recalled. In the appearance of both, 'tokens true' of that calamitous day for Scotland, which laid 'her king, her lords, her mightiest low,' was visible. The youthful knight no longer exhibited 'footstep light and spirit high' as he entered the hall of his deceased kinsman, the bloom had faded from his cheek, and the bright blue eye was lustreless; while she, the once famed border flower habited in sable weeds, threw herself, in speechless agony, upon her kinsman's breast, and sobbed as if the heart were bursting. Gently the youth whispered his condolence—minutes elapsed; suddenly another impulse seized the mourner—she sprang from the arms which supported her, signed to her cousin to be seated at her side, wiped her tears away, and, in a voice that had assumed astonishing composure, she asked, 'Tell me how Hugh Maxwell died?'

'Alas! dear Mabel,' said the young knight, 'even in that I cannot pleasure thee, for ere that sad event occurred, I was borne to the earth by an English rider, and how I was dragged afterwards from the field I wot not.—Evening was closing, Lord Dacre's horse assailed our centre furiously; hedging their wounded monarch with their bodies, the flower of the Scottish nobles were fighting hand to hand as the English chivalry charged where the royal banners still formed a rallying point for those who disdained to fly. In the thickest of the fray, and for the last time, I heard my brother's war cry, and at his right hand I saw thy noble husband dealing death around. I know no more.—Hark! a bugle!'

As the young knight spoke he sprang from his seat, and looked from the casement of the tower which opened down the glen.

'A sturdy band!' he cried; 'Saint George emblazoned on their pennon, too!—English by Heaven!'

Young Mabel gazed a moment at the horsemen, who were now within a bowshot of the tower. Paler and paler grew her cheek; at last suspicion changed to certainty, and sinking to the seat she had risen from, she exclaimed, 'May the Virgin protect me? It is my father! his frown will kill me!'

A few minutes passed. Young Ralph endeavoured to restore the lady's courage. The ringing of spurs and rapiers was heard as several armed men ascended the stone stairs, the door flew open, and the warden of the Middle Marches entered the hall.

Whatever might have been the old knight's intents, and whether he had come to reproach a daughter who had erred in filial duty, and deserted her father's hall, his angry mood instantly gave place to pity. The stern countenance of the warden softened, he paused within a pace or two of his agitated child.

'Mabel! he said in a voice whose compassionate tones betrayed at once the feelings of the father, 'how couldst thou wound the pride and wring the heart of one who loved thee so fondly as I did?'

In another moment nature did the rest; the child was sobbing on her parent's bosom, and tears stole down the rugged cheeks of one of the rudest warriors of that rude day.

Six months elapsed, the feud between the Fosters and the Maxwells had been stanchied, and under the joint protection of two potent houses the relief of Hugh Glensleath remained undisturbed in her lonely tower. Her castle was respected, foragers no longer ventured to approach the strath. The spirit of her late husband's kindred which Red Flodden had almost crushed, was gradually reviving. Once more two hundred Maxwells could take the saddle, and as many Fosters were ready to ride at the fair one's command.

Mabel had become a mother, and on the third day after the anniversary of her lord's death, his relict laid aside her mourning, and prepared to welcome a goodly company who were expected that afternoon to honour the melancholy ceremony, which was to give a dead father's name to his orphan heir. When evening came, the hall was crowded with high born guests, while courtyard and offices below were thronged with their squires and attendants. The sacred rite was over, a noble banquet followed, all went merry as a marriage bell, and in deep draughts the Maxwells and Fosters pledged each other right honestly, and swore that for the future their pennons should flutter side by side, and their pokers ride shoulder to shoulder. But in the merry hall more than one aching heart was beating. The baptismal rite had painfully recalled the memory of her deceased lord to the beautiful widow, while, sanctioned by a parent's consent, her former admirer was about to renew his suit, and urge for the second time, his claims upon the fair Mabel's hand. In the deep recess formed by a casement, Ralph of Carlaverock was standing aloof from the company, engaged in deep converse with a palmer, and so deeply were the company engaged in joyous revelry that none seemed to notice or regard them.

At last the noisy merriment subsided for a moment, when the bold knight of Coldingham announced health to the heir and happiness to the lady of the tower. The loud pledge with-in was answered by a wild cheer without, as every goblet was drained to the bottom, and for a time the glen echoed back the festive outbursts. When silence returned, he of Coldingham respectfully addressed the beautiful widow, urged his unshaken love, reclaimed a hand, his formerly, and by a father's sanction, deep silence followed the knight's declamation, and every eye rested on Mabel Maxwell.—Ralph's cheeks turned pale, and as the palmer stretched his tall figure from the recess, he too seemed hanging on the lady's answer with deeper interest than one removed from worldly anxieties might be supposed to feel. The warden whispered in his daughter's ear, it might be to restore her courage or back her lover's suit.

Palid and trembling, the fair one rose. For a few moments her lips appeared to move, but none could catch what fell from them. Some sudden impulse seemed to nerve her—her eyes turned on the wall against which the blood stained pennon and dinted head piece of her departed lord were hung, and with a returning calmness which surprised the company, she thus addressed the knight:—

'I thank you, noble sir, for the honor you have conferred, and for the courtesy with which you have overlooked a former disappointment. For the constant love you profess, a widowed heart like mine could find none to make suitable return. With the dead my affections are buried, and the hand given to him who rests on Flodden side shall never be pledged to living man again!'

The knight by turns became red and pale. His pride was wounded, and sooth to say, the refusal on the lady's part was rather unexpected. The warden appeared still more mortified, and springing up, he caught his daughter's hand.

'Nay, sir knight!' he exclaimed, 'heed her not!—'tis but a woman's waywardness! Mabel, thou wedded once to pleasure thyself, and thou shalt mate thee now to please thy father! Knight of Coldingham! thus I do plight thee the hand of Mabel Maxwell!'

'I deny the right, and I forbid the ceremony!' exclaimed a deep voice from the recess, and the palmer stepped forward to the centre of the hall.

'Who art thou, in the devil's name?' exclaimed the angry warden—'who dares gain-say a father's power?'

'One who brings tidings from the Holy Land, where, under vow of miraculous recovery, he has for many a month been wandering.'

'Peace, fellow!' returned the warden; 'dost thou impugn a father's right to replace, a dead husband with a living one?'

'How know ye that the fair dame is widowed?' demanded the stranger.

'Pshaw! thy words, palmer, are sheer mockery!—the knight rests in his grave.'

''Tis false!—the knight stands in his hall!' and flinging his russet cloak away, Mabel sprang into the stranger's arms, and fainted on his bosom.

As the lady gradually recovered, Dark Hugh murmured as he pressed the loved one to his heart, and covered her blushing cheeks with kisses:

'Yes, Mabel, fondly does the memory of that blessed evening return that made the border flower mine, and all that beauty can bestow was given me in thy peerless self!—all that fancy could picture I found realized, sweet girl, in the real. But oh! what was the lover's rapture to that with which I press thee to this bosom now, my own—my tried—my faithful one!'

AMERICAN HOTELS.

In the St Charles Hotel, New Orleans, this Season, the greatest number of guests sleeping on any night was 725; the greatest number dining on any day was 850. There are 650 beds, and 270 servants. About one third of the guests are permanent boarders, who remain from three to five months. About one-third of the boarders and guests are planters and their families, the remainder are principally business people and a small proportion are ordinary travellers. The servants of the establishment do not sleep or eat in the house, and are not included in the above numbers as sleeping or dining in the hotel. The United States Hotel, at Saratoga, with the connected premises, covers six acres of ground. It contains 800 beds. There are 175 male and 75 female servants; and it occasionally accommodates as many as 1,200 guests at one time.

HOTEL LIFE.

In every sense I think it bad. It destroys all sense of domesticity, and increases that excitement which is the bane of American life. It tempts the men to loaf about the lobbies and bars, smoking, dram-drinking and disputing. In the women it encourages an idle, gossiping disposition, even where it does not foster a love of still more dangerous excitement. And as for the children, the poor children! for them it is sheer ruin. What can possibly be conceived more pernicious than the glare, hurry, noise and dissipation of a New York or a New Orleans hotel? The poor infant is *blase* before it is well born; corrupted and used up, before it has left its nurse's apron string. I have seen infants of three or four years of age, playing about the corridors of a New York hotel, till nine and ten at night, while their parents were perhaps absent at a ball or an opera, and their black nurses were pilandering with the Irish waiters. Need we wonder that the precocious *roue* takes to drams and cigars while yet a boy and dies of old age before he reaches manhood?—*Stirling's Slave States.*

A RARE OLD YORKSHIREMAN.

THE last of a jolly old race, who remembered when men got up at sunrise, and did not lie a bed till nearly noon, to be in time for the chase was the late Sir William Ingleby. His riding used to ring with capital stories of that capital landlord. It was his habit to pay his own bills, periodically, and in person. On one occasion, he repaired to one of the houses with which he dealt, in the neighbouring county-town, for this purpose. The proprietor was a new comer, and did not know Sir William Ingleby's bill, he took the baronet for the baronet's butler, and invited him into his parlour. Such a mistake was the greatest joke possible to Sir William, who sat down with his grocer, smoked his tobacco, drank water and brandy with him, answered all questionings as to the comfortable place he had got and the time he had been there, man and boy, and finally took butler's discount upon his own bill—as no one had a better right to do! It was only when he drew a cheque that the grocer saw his error, and rose to vehemently apologise. 'Sit down, man! sit down!' cried jolly Sir William; 'your tobacco is good, and your brandy is better—let us have some more of each, and part friends.' This is an illustration of an *old lawgiving* period—not long after that when Yorkshire families spent their winters, or fashionable seasons, not in London, but in their county town.—*Post Office Directory of Yorkshire.*

A JUDGE OF PORK.—'No man,' says Mrs Partington, 'was better calculated to judge of pork than my poor husband was. He knew what good hogs were, for he had been brought up with 'em from his childhood.'