

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Chambers' Journal.

FOUR SEASONS.

BY ALFRED WATTS.

WHEN Life was Spring our wants were small,
The present hour the future scorning—
A stunning partner at a ball,
A place among her thoughts next morning;
No fears had we that she could lose
The varied charms our fancy lent her,
Terpsichore was then our Muse,
And Mr Thomas Moore our Mentor.

Time passed till, though our wants were few,
Hopes rose, but 'twas not hard to span 'em—
An opera-box *paille* gloves a new
Rig out, or ten pounds more per annum
When deeper aspirations came,
We called in aid—Imagination,
And drew our Fancy for our Fame,
And for our Love—upon Flirtation.

Grown more sagacious, by and by,
The wants and hopes of Life advancing,
We learned to spell love with an *i*
And dining took the *pas* of dancing;
We smiled at Fancy; pitied youth;
In power began life's aim to centre;
Demurred at Faith; and doubted Truth;
Till self became both Muse and Mentor.

Another Season served to prove
Our false appraisal of Life's treasure,
We found in Trust, and Truth, and Love,
The very corner-stones of Pleasure;
That youth of heart shewed age of head;
That gaining was less sweet than giving;
That we might live, and yet be dead
To all the real joys of living.

Our dreams how shadowy and vain
We've found; and turn back truer hearted,
With humbler quest to seek again
The simple faith in which we started;
And deeper read in Wisdom's page,
Know now how we have been beguiled,
who'd

Suppose the objects that engage
The hopes of youth—the aims of age
Should find their end in second childhood.

From the National Magazine.

AN OLD MAID'S ROMANCE.

BY HOLME LEE, AUTHOR OF "GILBERT MASSENGER," ETC.

In every life—even the quietest, even the least disturbed and eventful—there must surely be some little vein of romance, some golden vein in the earthly ore, if we might be permitted to trace it in the sunshine. I do not like to think that any of the thousand throbbing, hoping, fearing hearts I meet can be all clay, all indurated selfishness; the hardest, most unpromising people, for aught we know, may have acted long romances in their own proper persons, and have grown cold and passive after them to a degree that would lead one to believe they had never felt.

There was Miss Fernley of the Bankside, for instance, a maiden lady of immense antiquity, whom we used to visit when I was a little girl. She lived in a large, genteel, red-brick house, enclosed in a stiff garden, with a great iron gate guarded by grim stone lions on either side. Miss Fernley was precision and neatness personified, but her parlor was intolerably dull and gloomy; moreover, it was infested with three of the surliest cats I ever knew, and a parrot, the most vicious of its race. I remember with awe the solemn tea-parties, to which all the children of her acquaintance were annually invited. Depression fell on my spirits as the gate clanged behind me; by the time my bonnet and cloak were taken off I was rigid; and when I was sat down on a stool, at a considerable distance from the fire, but within reach of the cats, I was petrified into stupidity for the rest of the night. Miss Fernley delighted in me accordingly; she was accustomed to say to my mother, that 'I was such a quiet prettily-behaved child; and in consequence she often sent for me to spend the afternoon on Saturday half-holiday, giving as a reason that she liked company. She was a kindly, ceremonious old lady, with no idea whatever of amusing a child. Every time I went she gave me an old brocade-satin bag filled with ends of worsted and silk for tapestry-work; these she bade me sort out into packets according to color; and when she had done that, she left me alone until tea-time. Once I abstracted from its shelf an illustrated copy of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, in which Apollyon was represented as a handsome Crusader in scale armor, standing on a prostrate Christian. I did admire Apollyon, he was so grand, and had such wings; but an audible remark to that effect caused me to be immediately deprived of the book, and in all subsequent visits at this period my attention was divided between the end-bags and the cat.

Miss Fernley's parlor never underwent any change. If one of her pets died, it was replaced by another of the same sex and color. All the cats were king cats and gray,—and they did spit sometimes! The wainscot was painted

drab; the straight-backed, slender-legged chairs always stood primly up by the walls; the heavy sofa preserved its angle by the fireside as if it were fastened to the floor; and the discordant old piano was for ever open. I used to perform upon it a line and a half of "Paddy Carey," the only tune I knew without music, every time I went. Later in life, I did the "Caliph of Bagdad" and the "Battle of Prague," to Miss Fernley's delight; and I remember her once singing to me, with the remains of a very sweet voice, "The Wood-pecker tapping," and a little Spanish air.

There were two circular portraits in this room of Miss Fernley's brothers, both in uniform; the elder had been drowned at sea, and the younger killed at the battle of Talavera. She loved dearly to talk of these two brothers, when once she had begun to be confidential, and would quote a great deal of poetry in her narrative of their histories; I believe she grew to love me for the interest with which I always listened to the oft-told tales. It probably never occurred to me until some years later to think whether she were a pretty or an ugly old lady; she was tall, thin, stiff; scantily dressed in silks of a uniform cloud-color, with a lofty-crowned cap with a good many white bows; she wore a frill of fine rich lace about her neck, and ruffles at her wrists when nobody else did, and had a particularly precise and almost courtly air—I should say she was proud, and one bit of ceremony always observed by me to the day of her death was, never to sit in her presence until invited to do so. She made many remarks on the manners of her young friends, and always said that familiarity was vulgar.

The way I became acquainted with the life-romance of this gray, lonely, old lady was as follows. She invited me to take up my abode at her house for a week when I was about sixteen, to be company for three mad-cap girls, her nieces, and daughters of the younger brother whose portrait decorated the dismal parlor. Their exuberant spirits were very trying to Miss Fernley; they outraged the cats by dressing them up in nightcaps and pocket-handkerchiefs; they taught the parrot to be impertinent, broke the strings of the old piano, whistled as they went up and down stairs, and danced threesome reels in the hall, to the great scandal of the primmy old serving-man and serving-woman.

One long wet day their pranks went beyond all bounds; they wanted to act a play in the drawing-room, and to bribe them from their intention, Miss Fernley gave them the key of a great lumber room, and bade them go and ransack the chests of ancient apparel therein contained for amusement. Up we all accordingly went. Out upon the dusty floor, with screams of laughter, the wild girls tossed armfuls of garments of all degrees of hideousness and antiquity; startled sometimes by a moth fluttering out from the heaps, and arrested often by some article of attire more curious than the rest. One of them—Lettie, the youngest—lit upon a sack of crimson silk, and immediately cried out that she would dress up, and astonish Aunt Jeanie. Her costume, when completed, was rather incongruous, but a quaint old mirror against the wall showed her a very pretty, if fantastic figure, draped in the crimson sacque, with amber-satin petticoat, and a black Spanish hat, with a plume shading down over her golden hair. Lettie Fernley was a bright-complexioned Scotch lassie; and as she walked a stately step before the glass you might have thought her a court-beauty of fifty years ago stepped down out of a picture frame.

Meantime the elder sister had been pursuing her investigations into the depths of a huge black trunk, and drew forth a packet of letters tied round with a faded rose color ribbon.—'What have we here?' cried she; 'a mystery, a romance; somebody's old love-letters!'

'In an instant Lettie, still in the crimson sacque, was down on her knees by her sister, full of vivid curiosity.

'Gently, gently,' said the other, turning aside her impatient fingers; 'let us consider a moment before we disturb old memories.—What hand traced these discolored characters? Is the hand dust yet, or only slow and heavy with the dead weight of age?'

'Have done with your speculations, Minta, and let the letters speak for themselves,' interrupted Lettie eagerly.

Minta loosened the string, and divided the packet carefully. A piece of printed paper fell to the floor: it was a column cut from a newspaper; the story of a great battle, and an incomplete list of killed and wounded.

'Let us lay that aside till we seek a clue for it,—till we see whose name on that list is connected with those letters,' suggested Minta; and we all approached our heads together to read the faded yellow pages. The first letter was written from a vicaragehouse in Cumberland, and bore date half a century ago; the writer was one Francis Lucas. We had never heard the name before; but we conjoined the lines lingeringly and with interest, for they were such as all hearts echo to—warm, loving, tender.

'Francis Lucas, whoever you may have been, one thing is sure,' said Minta, as she read; 'you were a gentleman and a true knight of dames. I can picture to myself the blushing

face that fifty years ago bent over these lines, and laid their sweet promises away in a heart as worthy as your own.

We paused long over that letter; for its speech was so full of life and love and hope, that we were loth to put it away amongst the things of the past,—almost as loth as must have been the 'darling mouse' to whom it was addressed. It still breathed the same old song of love and trust which is never out of date, and sounded as true as earnest passion ever does.—There were seven letters with the date from the vicarage amongst the Cumberland Fells; the last spoke of a speedy meeting in words that thrilled all our maiden pulses.

'O, Francis Lucas, I hope you were happy with your "faithful heart,"' cried Lettie. 'I hope you live yet in a green old age together amongst those wild bleak hills.'

The next letter was written after an interval of two months, in May 17—Francis Lucas was then a volunteer in the army of Flanders; and his bright glad words reflected the high courage which he knew "would make his darling love him more." Those were his words. There was but one other; it was very short, written on the eve of battle, and it was the last.

'O, Minta, I could weep for that "faithful heart,"' said Lettie, with tears in her eyes. 'Look at the list now; it is no longer a sealed page to us; there is his name—Francis Lucas killed.' There the story ends.

'But the "dear mouse," the "faithful heart," who is that?' asked Minta, turning the yellow paper over, while Lettie idly twisted the ribbon that had tied the letters together—'who can it be?' The moisture cleared from our eyes slowly; more than one great tear rolled down my cheeks.

'It is Aunt Jeanie, Aunt Jeanie!' suddenly exclaimed the second sister, who had read in silence. 'You remember, he says "darling Jean" in the first letter.'

'Aunt Jeanie,' echoed Lettie. 'O, I wish we had not been so curious; it was very wrong of us!'

'But who could have thought there had ever been a love-story in her quiet life?' said Minta. 'How beautiful and how nice she must have been! I dare say she might have been married over and over again.'

'I am glad she was not; I shall like to think of her as Francis Lucas' "faithful heart" better than as the richest lady in the land.'

'And so shall I; and O, Minta, how we have plagued her! Help me off with this red thing,' said Lettie, pulling at the crimson sacque. 'It would be profanation to go to her jesting, after what we have just found out. Dear Aunt Jeanie! If she has had a faithful heart, she must have had a suffering one too.'

The door opened softly, and Miss Fernley looked in. 'Children, you are so quiet, I am sure you must be in mischief,' said she, in her gentle voice. She came amongst us, and looked over Minta's shoulder as she sat on the floor with all the papers scattered in her lap; stooping, she took up the strip of newspaper, and gazed at it through her spectacles, I saw her lip quiver, and her hands tremble.

'Where did you find these letters, children? You should not have opened that black trunk,' said she hastily. 'Give them to me; have you read them?'

'Yes, Aunt Jeanie,' replied Lettie penitently. The old lady took them from Minta's hand without another word, and left us to our researches; but we had seen enough for one morning, and quickly restored the old dresses to their dusty receptacles, and left them to the moths and the spiders.

When we descended to the parlor, rather subdued, and ashamed of our curiosity, we found Miss Fernley rummaging in an ancient Japan cabinet; she brought out two miniatures, and showed them to us; one was Francis Lucas, a young gay-looking soldier, the other was herself. The latter bore a marked resemblance to Lettie, only it was softer and more refined in expression. Then she told us her love-story—how she was to have married Francis Lucas on his return from that fatal campaign, and how she had consecrated to him, in life and death, her faithful heart.

'O, Aunt Jeanie, I may be like you in the face, but if I were to live to be a hundred I should never be as good or as kind as you are!' cried Lettie as she finished. And this was the romance of old Miss Fernley's youth.

Fraser's Magazine contains an article entitled "THE INTERPRETER," from which we take the following extracts, which furnish some graphic scenes and incidents witnessed at Sebastopol:

AN INCIDENT IN THE CAMP.

ON an elevated plateau, sloping downward to a ravine absolutely paved with iron, in the remains of shot and shell fired from the town during its protracted and vigorous defence, are formed in open column 'the duties' from the different regiments destined to carry on the siege for the next four-and-twenty hours. Those who are only accustomed to see British soldiers marshalled neat and orderly in Hyde Park, or manœuvring like clock-work in 'the Phoenix,' would hardly recognize in that motley, war-worn band, the staid and uniform figures which they are accustomed to contemplate with pride and satisfaction as the 'money's-

worth' of a somewhat oppressive taxation. The Highlanders—partly from the fortune of war, partly from the nature of their dress—are less altered from their normal exterior than the rest of the army, and the Guardsman's tall figure and bearskin cap still stamp him a Guardsman, notwithstanding patched clothing and much-worn accoutrements; but some of the line regiments, which have suffered considerably during the siege, present the appearance of regular troops only in their martial bearing and the scrupulous discipline observed within their ranks. To the eye of a soldier, however, there is something very pleasing and 'workman-like' in the healthy, confident air of the men, and the 'matter-of-course' manner in which they seem to contemplate the duty before them. Though their coats may be out at elbows, their firelocks are bright and in good order, while the haversacks and canteens slung at their sides seem to have been carefully replenished with a view to keeping up that physical vigour and stamina for which the British soldier is so celebrated, and which, with his firm reliance on his officers and determined bull-dog courage, render him so irresistible an enemy.

There are no troops who are so little liable to panic—whose *morale*, so to speak, is so difficult to impair, as our own. Napoleon said they 'never knew when they were beaten.'—And how often has this generous ignorance saved them from defeat! Long may it be ere they learn the humiliating lesson! But that they are not easily disheartened may be gathered from the following anecdote, the truth of which many a Crimean officer will readily vouch for:—

Two days after the disastrous attack of the 18th of June, 1855, a private soldier on fatigue duty was cleaning the door-step in front of Lord Raglan's quarters; but his thoughts were running on far other matters than holystone and whitewash, for on a staff-officer of high rank emerging from the sacred portal, he stopped the astonished functionary with an abrupt request to procure him an immediate interview with the Commander-in-Chief.

'If you please, Colonel,' said the man, standing at attention, and speaking as if it was the most natural thing in the world, 'if it's not too great a liberty, I want to see the General immediate and particular.'

'Impossible! my good fellow,' replied the Colonel—who, like most brave men, was as good-natured as he was fearless.—'if you have any complaint to make, tell it me; you may be sure it will reach Lord Raglan, and if it is just, it will be attended to.'

'Well, sir, it's not exactly a complaint, replied the soldier, now utterly neglecting the door-step, 'but a request, like; and I wanted to see his lordship special, if so be as it's not contrary to orders.'

The Colonel could hardly help laughing at the coolness with which so flagrant a military solecism was urged, but repeated that Lord Raglan was even then engaged with Gen. Pelissier, and that the most he could do for his importunate friend was to receive his message and deliver it to the Commander-in-Chief at a favorable opportunity.

The man reflected an instant, and seemed satisfied. 'Well, Colonel,' he said, 'we know you, and we trusts you. I speak for myself and comrades, and what I've got to say to the General is this. We made a bad business o' Monday, and we knows the reason why. You let us alone. There's plenty of us to do it; only you give us leave, and issue an order that not an officer nor a non-commissioned officer is to interfere, and we, the private soldiers of the British army, will have that place for you, if we pull down the works with our fingers, and crack the stones with our teeth.'

'And what,' said the Colonel, utterly aghast at this unheard of proposal, 'what—'

'What time will we be under arms to do it?' interrupted the delighted delegate, never doubting but that his request was now as good as granted.—'why at three o'clock to-morrow morning; and you see, Colonel when the thing's done, if me and my company *wasn't* the first lads in!'

Such is the material of which these troops are made who are now waiting patiently to be marched down to the nightly butchery of the trenches.

'It reminds one of the cover side at home,' remarked Ropsley, as we cantered up to the parade and dismounted; 'one meets fellows from all parts of the camp, and one hears all the news before the sport commences. There goes the French relief,' he added, as our allies went slinging by, their jaunty, disordered step and somewhat straggling line of march forming a strong contrast to the measured tramp and regular movements of our own soldiers, as did their blue frock coats and crimson trowsers to the *veritable rouge* for which they had conceived so high a veneration. Ere they had quite disappeared our own column is formed. The brigade major on duty has galloped to and fro, and seen to everything with his own eyes. Company officers, in rags and tatters, with swords hung sheathless in worn white belts, and wicker-covered bottles slung in a cord over the hip, to balance the revolver on the other side,—and brave, gentle hearts beating under these tarnished uniforms—and sad experiences of death, and danger, and hardship behind those