

Literature. &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Chambers's Journal.

A FIRESIDE SONG.

BY CALDER CAMPBELL.

Give Hope a place beside our evening fire;
 'Twill add a warmer relish to its glow,
 And bring out pictures from the smouldering
 pyre
 Which darkness and despair can never show;
 'Twill breathe of Night that ushers the glad
 Day,
 And the white Winter followed by green May.

'Twill draw forth images of suns that rise
 From the dark bosom of the passing mist—
 Or smiling glances drying tearful eyes,
 And wan cheeks into roses new health-
 list;
 Hope is not always false, whate'er men say,
 Since after Winter follows green May.

Cold is the night, but colder is the street—
 Be thankful for the fagot in the grate;
 And dwell on every mercy thou dost meet,
 Blessing the hand which spares the griefs
 that wait

On many a sufferer, in whose sterner way
 Lingers the Winter longer than the May.

Thank God for this, that Hope hath come from
 Him,
 And nestles in our hearts, like the birds that
 find
 'Neath some kind thatch shelter from hail storm
 grim,
 And food where stacks of corn keep off the
 wind;
 Stay, heavenly Hope! and teach us well to
 pray
 That Winter may be followed by the green
 May!

THE PLANTER'S BIRTHDAY.

ONE of the most respectable as well as opu-
 lent planters in a French West India Colony,
 was Monsieur Philogene Dupres; he was be-
 nvolent and humane, and together with his
 wife, constantly endeavouring to improve the
 condition of his slaves, at a period long antece-
 dent to that in which our 'black brethren' be-
 came the objects of a more exalted and exten-
 ded philanthropy.

At his death, which was soon succeeded by
 that of his wife, the estate devolved upon his
 only son, Louis Dupres, whose aim in the onset
 of his career seemed to be to tread in the steps
 of his lamented sire, and to maintain the prin-
 ciples and system upon which he had so success-
 fully conducted the estate.

But Louis Dupres, with all his just inten-
 tions, was young, and although good-natured
 in an eminent degree, was not good tempered;
 he was kind and generous, but not having quite
 so favourable an opinion of the race of whose
 good qualities his father was so ardent an admirer,
 he began to find out that although much
 had been done with his paternal acres by fair
 means and sweet words, a little more might be
 done by a more steady perseverance in the ex-
 action of labour; and although he was too hap-
 py to excite his blacks to that labor by encour-
 agement and rewards, still, if he found that his
 attempts at persuasion were not altogether suc-
 cessful, he had recourse to more frequent pun-
 ishments than had been inflicted during his fa-
 ther's lifetime.

This alteration of discipline made for some
 time but little change in the feelings of the
 slaves; they knew their master was resolved to
 have the work done—happy to reward with
 extra comforts, or luxuries, the efforts of the in-
 dustrious; but on the other hand, equally quick
 to correct or chasten negligence or idleness.
 The negroes soon found out what they had to
 expect, and accordingly applied themselves to
 work with even greater assiduity than they had
 done in 'old massa's time,' well pleased that
 his successor did not trouble them quite so
 much upon the subject of their mental improve-
 ment as his venerated predecessor, and perfect-
 ly happy when the day's work was over to find
 themselves well-housed, well-fed, and well-
 clothed.

Amongst these slaves, or rather at the head
 of them, was one called after his young master,
 Louis; he had been the favourite of old Du-
 pres, he was born upon the estate, on the same
 day with his present master, and they became
 until they advanced in life, up to the period
 when difference of rank and station parted them,
 associates and play-fellows. Young master
 Louis, and picanniny Louis, were always to be
 seen diverting themselves in all sorts of games
 and frolics, under the fostering care of Madame
 Dupres, while the black Louis's mother acted
 as nurse to both—the attachment was mutual,
 the boys were never happy apart, and the kind-
 hearted planter used to instance the engaging
 manners and graceful playfulness of the young
 slave as striking proofs of the justice of his theo-
 ry, that nothing but enlightenment and an asso-
 ciation with whites, was wanting to equalize
 their claims upon the regard and respect of the
 world.

Louis, then, and his young master, grew up
 together, till at eight years of age the young

master was sent to France for education, and
 his companion Louis became merely the young
 slave. But during the previous course of his
 life, being infinitely quicker than the generality
 of his race, he had availed himself of the advan-
 tages derivable from the initiatory lessons
 which were given to the heir-apparent, and
 when he joined his brethren in the field, the
 black boys of his own age used to listen to his
 'reading his book' with wonder and sur-
 prise.

After an absence of nine years, during which
 he had completed the education which he con-
 sidered adequate to his intellectual wants, Mon-
 sieur Louis Dupres returned to his home. His
 surprise at seeing the change which, during his
 absence time had wrought in the personal ap-
 pearance of his parents, was exceedingly strong,
 but even that was less than that which affected
 him at the sight of his sable namesake. The
 little playful urchin fancifully dressed up to
 make him look like the associate of 'Buckra
 man,' rolling and tumbling about, and playing
 all the antics of a monkey, had grown into a fine
 manly youth, a head and a shoulder taller than
 his young master. Their interview was most
 embarrassing. The white Louis as a child had
 loved the black child Louis, he was then all the
 world to him, and he parted from him with
 tears in his eyes. But he had been enlightened
 in France—he had been made fully aware of his
 importance as a West India proprietor, the va-
 lue of whose property was proportionably in-
 creased by the number of his slaves, of whom
 this Louis was one, who were catalogued, de-
 scribed, and spoken of in conversation, as if they
 were no more than the brute beasts which for-
 med the rest of the stock amongst whom they
 were classed.

Before he saw Louis, on his return, all his re-
 collections were of a little playfellow, in whom,
 until this knowledge of the world had brought
 him to a sense of his own position, and of the
 wide difference which existed between them, he
 only knew as an equal. But when they met,
 and the affectionate slave, grown into manhood,
 addressed him 'massa,' Louis Dupres started
 back. Nature, however, for the moment, over-
 came pride and prejudice, and the young
 Frenchman shook his former companion heartily
 by the hand, to the infinite amazement of a
 lady and gentleman whose estate joined that of
 Dupres, and who were perfectly scandalized at
 such an outrageous breach of decorum. The
 expressions of their countenances betrayed their
 emotions, and young Dupres, although unable
 to repress his feeling at the surprise of first see-
 ing Louis, felt himself blush at the solemnism he
 had committed.

Louis saw the sudden change in his master's
 look, and fixed his eyes on his features steadily
 for a few moments; M. Dupres turned to the
 lady to say something complimentary of her
 bonnet, and Louis shaking his head sorrowful-
 ly, went his way to his work.

We have already told the reader the sort of
 master the young Dupres made when he at
 length came into possession, which he did when
 he and the black Louis were twenty-seven
 years of age. Louis, however, was first and
 foremost amongst the best men on the prop-
 erty, and on the anniversary of his master's birth
 and of his own, was always called forward and
 given an extra glass of rum, and made the
 bearer of any largess to his brethren, and their
 wives and picannies.

Perhaps, if it be admitted by naturalists that
 the higher passions of feelings of humanity
 may inhabit the negro breast, no human being
 could be more devotedly attached to another,
 than Louis was to his master. His instinct—
 if it were not sense—taught him, very soon af-
 ter Dupres's return, to understand the differ-
 ence of their stations and to regulate his affec-
 tions for him accordingly. But he loved him,
 watched his looks, basked in his smiles, and
 trembled at his frowns; which, however, unfre-
 quently lowered over his brow.

During the nine years which succeeded the
 return of young Dupres from France, he made
 several voyages backwards and forwards, to and
 from Europe, in order to increase his connex-
 ions and enlighten his mind. At the end of
 that period the death of his father placed him in
 possession of the estate, and he settled down as
 a regularly established planter, resolved to put
 every means within his reach, in requisition to
 accelerate the process of money-making, so that
 he might while yet in the prime of life, be en-
 abled to retire from business, dispose of his
 plantation, and retiring to Paris, set up as a
 man of fortune, and if possible of fashion.

It may readily be imagined that with this de-
 sire and disposition, the whip became gradually
 more in use on Bellevue property than it had
 been in former days, and that the punishments
 were more frequent than heretofore; in fact,
 Dupres grew by degrees to be a severe master,
 always doubting that his serfs exerted them-
 selves to the utmost, and most particularly ana-
 thematizing them in, in his hearing, the elder
 ones ventured to express a grateful recollection
 of what they called 'the good old times of
 poor old massa.' The effect produced upon
 these seniors by this alteration of system was
 anything but beneficial; and seldom did a
 week pass without the report of two or three
 runaways, who, after a few days, were either
 caught or tired of starvation, returned to the
 certainty of a flogging, and perhaps the discipli-
 ne of the block.

One evening Dupres was returning on foot
 from a neighbouring plantation, when he heard
 footsteps following him; he stopped, so did his
 pursuers; it was quite dark; all was as silent
 as the grave; the next moment he heard the
 sound of some one running towards him from
 a different quarter.

'Who's there?' said Dupres.
 The answer was a shot from a musket.—
 Dupres stood unharmed—but a heavy fall and
 a deep groan announced that somebody was
 wounded.

'Is massa safe?' cried, or rather sobbed the
 man who had fallen.
 'I am safe!' said Dupres; what does it
 mean?'
 'Massa safe,' replied the same voice, 'me die
 happy.'

The noise of the shot instantly brought one
 or two of the guardians to the spot with lan-
 terns—a gleam of light sufficed to show Dupres
 the faithful playmate of his early youth on the
 ground, bleeding profusely. Dupres and one
 of the guardians raised him up—he was scarce-
 ly sensible, but he pressed his master's hand to
 his heart and kissed it fervently, while tears
 rather of joy for his deliverance than of pain for
 his own suffering fell from his eyes.

'What is all this?' again asked Dupres, who
 could not imagine it possible that anybody
 could entertain sufficient ill will towards him
 to attempt his life. Such, however, was the
 case; two slaves who had marooned some days
 before, had been seen by Louis lurking about the
 plantation; he thought, as was not unfre-
 quently the case, that they were two of Dupres's
 blacks, that they had repented, and were trying
 to sneak back to their huts under cover of the
 darkness, intending to get him, Louis, or
 some other influential comrade, to plead their
 cause with the master; but this not having oc-
 curred, Louis, did not relax in his observation
 of the strangers, and finding them still loiter-
 ing on the path by which his master was to re-
 turn from his social sabbath and 'conversation
 talk,' resolved to keep near in case of need, al-
 though not choosing to accost them. His suspi-
 cions were eventually realized, and at the
 moment Dupres stopped, Louis, who was with-
 in a few yards of the path distinctly heard
 the well known 'click,' produced by the cock-
 ing of a gun, and satisfied as to what was
 to follow, rushed forward just in time to strike
 down the weapon levelled at his master's head
 and to receive the charge in his own leg.

'Ah, Who was the villain who fired the shot?'
 said Dupres.

'Ah, me don't know, massa, me don't know,
 said Louis; he do me no harm—me shall be
 well two or three days, and massa him safe and
 well now.'

'Lift him up gently, said Dupres to the by-
 standers, who had by that time increased in
 number: 'carry him home. I will go call up
 M. Duplaye, the surgeon and we will have him
 looked to directly—remember,' added he, 'I
 owe my life to him—I shall not forget it.'

All this time, Louis, wholly regardless of the
 pain he was suffering, was clasping his hands, as
 if in prayer, thanking heaven that he had been
 the means of preserving his master.

The incident produced a marked change in
 the conduct of Dupres. The manifestation of
 hostile feeling towards him on the part of his
 slaves—for that the shot was fired by some of
 his own people, although Louis even if he had
 identified them kept his counsel to himself up-
 on that point, satisfied with having preserved
 his master, and not daring to be the erminator
 of even his guilty comrades—induced Dupres
 to reflect upon the course he was pursuing, and
 instead of attributing the hostility of the cul-
 prits, for whose detection he made every sea-
 sonable preparation, to the increased severity of
 his discipline, wrought himself up into the be-
 lief that those serious symptoms of revolt against
 authority had their origin in the laxness of the
 system observed upon his property.

Dupres saw in the attempt made on his life
 a warning for the future; and having read M. La-
 borie's observations upon the revolt of Gaillets
 slaves in St Domingo, in which he imputes
 their rebellion, not to wise and indulgent
 treatment which they met with, but to the ex-
 cessive laxity of their discipline, and their ex-
 travagant wealth, became rather doubtful of the
 wisdom of the 'soothing system' on his own.

Dupres accordingly resolved to tighten the
 reins of control, and to prove, even if the as-
 sassins were not discovered, nor of his own
 gangs, that he was not at any rate to be
 frightened from his purpose, or forced from the
 rules he had laid down for the government
 of his property by foul or violent means.

But something more than this general in-
 ducement to an alteration of his policy preyed
 upon his spirits. He had taken it into his head
 that his preserver, Louis, who had received in
 his own person the ball intended for his master
 was somehow connected with the plot of assas-
 sination. His being on the spot at the time, a
 circumstance which arose out of his carefulness,
 and watchful anxiety, Dupres considered as
 corroborative of his suspicions, the entertaining
 of which, in any degree, would appear marvel-
 lous, if the reader were not to be made aware of
 an under current of events which was flowing at
 the same period.

Colonial morality is not perhaps, the most
 rigid in the world; and the master of slaves,

whatever may be his course of conduct towards
 the male portion of his subjects, not unfre-
 quently selects some of the exceedingly smart, pretty
 well figured slave-girls to be about his house.
 Some one—at least for a time—is specially
 chosen to take care of his things, and to act
 in some sort in the capacity of housekeeper, to
 whom it is his pleasure for a season, to be ex-
 ceedingly kind and humane, sometimes conde-
 scending even in playful conversation, and always
 ready to afford her any little indulgence con-
 sistent with her position in his establishment.

It so happened that an olive-cheeked girl,
 called Adele, had been promoted by Dupres
 from amongst the 'herd,' for these domestic
 purposes; and Adele was dressed better than
 any slave on the estate; and Adele could read
 and write, and even 'talk conversation,' an ex-
 pression which to some of our readers might
 not be quite intelligible unless we were to add
 that the acme of a coloured girl's ambition, if
 elevated from a low station to what she consid-
 ers the enviable distinction of being a white
 man's domestic, is to be able to sit all day
 'talk conversation, and comb dog.'

Adele was, of her class, exceedingly hand-
 some, with fine intelligent eyes, and a manner
 much above her station; indeed, her good looks
 and inherent gracefulness, were generally con-
 sidered hereditary gifts from her father, who, it
 was supposed, had before her birth formed an
 attachment to her mother, similar in most of
 its points and features, to that which M. Du-
 pres unluckily had formed for her.

That M. Dupres should do exactly as he
 pleased in his own habitation, and with his own
 slaves, might be all quite right, and certainly it
 is not our intention to peep or pry into the ar-
 cana of any gentleman's establishment, unless
 we are driven to it of a necessity. As for the
 feeling, whatever its nature or character, enter-
 tained by M. Dupres for Adele, it never should
 have been noticed here, were it not for the
 fact, that Adele did not reciprocate the admira-
 tion expressed for her qualities by her master,
 and that she was fondly attached to Louis, his
 former playmate, and recent preserver.

Dupres was conscious of his attachment, but
 still could not conquer the partiality he felt for
 the girl. The cruelty of his conduct in endeav-
 ouring to alienate her affection from the man
 whose devotion to him and his interests were—
 or would have been to any body else—unques-
 tionable, was so obvious, even to himself, that
 he could not but suspect his humble rival of
 harbouring in his breast, the feelings of a just
 vengeance so likely to result from jealousy.

Dupres did his faithful slave injustice. Con-
 scious and satisfied of the truth and goodness of
 Adele, every mark and favour conferred on her
 by their master afforded him pride and pleasure,
 and he anxiously looked forward to the 'Plan-
 ter's birthday' to ask her hand in marriage, sat-
 isfied that on that anniversary the master
 would not hesitate to crown his happiness with
 his consent.

While Louis was recovering from the wound
 which he had received, the attentions of Du-
 pres were constant; but if he found that Adele
 had paid him a visit of kindness, and soothed his
 sufferings by her lively talk, his feelings of jeal-
 ously overcame his gratitude, and if truth were
 to be told, his hopes were rather that his pres-
 erver might die than recover.

Recover, however, he did, and was openly re-
 warded for his gallantry and affection by the
 master; not that but all the slaves upon the
 estate became fully aware of a vast difference in
 their treatment after the attempt had been made
 on his life. Scarcely a day now passed in which
 the discipline of the whip was not adminis-
 tered, and that in many instances where the crimes
 of the sufferers were so comparatively trifling,
 that in former days a slight rebuke or a gentle
 remonstrance would have been the extreme
 punishment. Knowing the favour in which
 Louis was or ought to be held by M. Dupres,
 the other slaves always made their appeals to
 him—begged him to intercede for them, sure
 that an influence secured as his had been at the
 risk of his life, would be successfully exerted
 in behalf of any one of them doomed to the lash
 for a trifling fault; and Louis presuming, or ra-
 ther relying, upon the indulgent consideration
 of his master, sometimes did plead the cause of
 his brethren, whose faults appeared sufficiently
 venial to justify the petition, and had earlier in
 the progress of the system, not unfrequently
 succeeded.

But in the newly excited temper of Dupres's
 mind, these applications harassed and incensed
 him, for it was at this period of our little history
 that his rage against his preserver had been in-
 flamed to its highest pitch, by the artless admis-
 sion of Adele to her master of the mutual affec-
 tion which existed between her and Louis, and
 of his intention to ask his consent to the
 union on the approaching birthday, which be-
 sides being a 'regular holiday' on the estate—
 at least it had been so for five-and-thirty years,
 before the present master came into possession—
 was always considered a day of grace, on
 which boons were conferred, indulgence granted,
 faults forgiven.

Poor Adele—little did she think how impor-
 tant to her, and to him she loved, would be
 this ingenious confession. Dupres had all
 along fancied the girl could not, would not,
 dare not, refuse his advances. He knew that
 Louis was attached to her—he saw them al-