

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

EVENING HOURS.

BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

THE human heart has hidden treasures
In secret kept, in silence sealed;
The thoughts, the hopes, the dreams the pleasures,

Whose charms were broken if revealed,
And days may pass in dull confusion,
And nights in noisy routs may fly,
While, lost in fame's or wealth's illusion,
The memory of the past may die.

But there are hours of lonely musing,
Such as in evening silence come,
When soft as birds their pinions closing,
The heart's best feeling gather home.
Then, in our souls there seems to languish
A tender grief that is not woe;
And thoughts that once wrung groans of anguish,
Now cause some milder tears to flow.

And feelings once as strong as passions,
Float softly back—a faded dream;
Our own sharp griefs and wild sensations,
The taste of others' sufferings seem;
O! when the heart is freely bleeding,
How it longs for that time to be,
When through the mist of years receding,
It woe but lives in reverie.

And it can dwell on moonlight glimmer,
On evening shades and loneliness,
And while the sky grows dim and dimmer,
Heed no untold woe's and distress—
Only a deeper impress given
By lonely hour and darkened room,
To solemn thoughts that soar to heaven,
Seeking a life and world to come.

From Chambers's Journal for December.

THE PARIAH'S REVENGE.

THE rain continued, and the travellers did not come. Mrs Jackson hoped they had stopped for that day with some of the many friends they had on the road, and the family retired to rest at the usual hour. But the dry season makes crevices in roofs as well as in partitions; the rain had found one just above my bed, and poured in such a torrent, that before it was discovered, the chamber was perfectly uninhabitable. My good hostess, however, requested that I would occupy the children's room for the night, and I had installed myself there with candle and writing case, in order to write some letters which were justly due to sundry correspondents, for I was not much inclined to sleep.

The whole house was silent. It was near midnight; and I was half-way in a letter to Armandine—we were friends then—when a slight rustle made me look up, and there stood Zelle as erect and composed as if she had now come for one of the oft-mentioned tracts.

'Saib,' said she, 'there's a cobra in your bed; I smelled it as I passed your door, for my family were serpent-charmers. What will you give me if I take it away?'

'How did it come there?' said I, pretending to write on, though my pen was making cobras on the paper, for the green ball I had seen taken out of the basket recurred to my memory, and I knew the said serpent to be one of the most deadly of its kind. The Portuguese settlers call it the capella or hooded snake, by which name it is known in Europe; but it had obviously not been placed under the bolster for me; and as Zelle replied quite innocently—

'I don't know, saib,' my resolution was taken, though it certainly was not the best policy.

'I'll give you half a rupee,' said I; and with a quiet gesture of assent to the bargain, Zelle approached the bed, turned up the bolster, and, without haste or fear, lifted out the deadly thing, coiled up exactly as she had laid it in; and, may I be forgiven, but I half wished it might bite her. Nothing of the kind happened to Mrs Jackson's maid: she laid the cobra carefully in her muslin apron, opened the window, and stepped out into the garden. The rain had ceased, and the moon was shining. I saw her go down the walk straight to the outer gate. She opened it too, and I followed her; but long before I could reach the gate, it was locked behind her, and the girl was out of sight. I returned to my writing-table, certain that she would come back for the half-rupee. In less than half an hour, back Zelle came by the very way she went, and calmly closed the window, saying:

'Now, Saib, the cobra's at home with his friends, and has promised never to come near your bed again.'

'Very well, Zelle,' said I, getting between her and the door, 'I have promised you a half-rupee, and I will give it to you, but I saw you put that cobra in the bed this evening. If you tell me why you did so, I will not mention it to any of the family until you are two days safe out of the house; and if you do not, I will rouse them all, and tell them this instant.'

Zelle looked to see whether there was any

way of escape, but I had my eye on the window; then her face took the fixed, stony look of the Eastern, who knows his destiny is not propitious.

'Saib,' said she, 'I put it there to kill the judge's children. My mother sent it to me, to be revenged on this family for all the evil they have done to ours. Listen, and I will tell you the truth, for you do not come from England. My father was a Brahmin and a Zemindar; he inherited his land by adoption into the family of our ancient Guzroo, and the Saib Lester, who then gave law in Agra, took it from him, saying he had no right, and it belonged to the Company. It had always been the custom to rear but one daughter in our house, and in due time that daughter was wedded, with a marriage feast becoming a family of high caste; but the Saib Jackson found out this custom, and so frightened our people with his law, that all our girls grew up. When my father's soul departed, my mother determined to become a suttee, according to the custom of her ancestors, that the family might have honour in this world and in paradise; but the preaching Saib, who is also one of the Jacksons, talked so much, that fear came upon her when the pile was ready, and she could not perform the ceremony. Now, see what the doings of these hogs, who eat everything, have brought upon my people. By the loss of his land, my father could not make the accustomed offerings; he therefore lost his standing in the temples, and in the favour of the gods. By the loss of their inheritance, my brothers were brought down to trades beneath their castes. There was no means to make marriage-feasts for five daughters; all my sisters are therefore married to low-caste men, and I am a Pariah, drinking out of common vessels, and going abroad with an unveiled face. My mother was so despised by her neighbours and at the holy places, that she would not live, but threw herself into the Jumna, an offering to the goddess Durgā, who will not refuse even the polluted. By her favour, she has reached the transmigration of the serpent, and sent the cobra to me that we might be avenged on this family, who worship nothing but rāpees, and think to buy heaven and earth with them. Now, Saib, give me my wages, I have taken away the cobra and told you the truth.'

'I did not venture to reason with the maid of whom the missionaries had hopes. She took her half-rupee, and glided away to her own room. My own sleep was not sound that night, and in the morning Zelle was nowhere to be found. Neither mistress nor servants could give any account of her, but that she had performed her accustomed duties, and retired to rest as usual; that her room was all in order, and her trinkets and best clothes gone with her. I resolved to keep my promise, and let the two days elapse; but in the interim, I could not resist telling the story to a countryman and a confidential friend of mine, who had been for fifteen years a silk-merchant in Agra.

'Take my advice,' said he, 'and say nothing about it. I know something of the English; they'll wonder why you did not immediately tell her master—what business you had to look through chinks—in short, they won't believe you; and if the girl's disappearance produces no worse effect on your reputation, you will be set down as a Jesuit in disguise, and I understand the Jacksons are stiff Protestants; yet it might be as well to warn the family by an anonymous letter.'

I took his advice, the letter was sent; but not being in their confidence, the Jacksons never mentioned it to me.

The lady deeply regretted the absence of her handy maid. Mr Jackson made diligent enquiries after her, but all to no purpose; but some time after, the part of her doings which most puzzled me was cleared up. Why, do you think, did she come to remove the cobra? Not for the half-rupee alone; but her brother, the merchant at Agra, happened to be the very man from whom I was in the habit of purchasing trifles for myself, and presents for my friends at home, and the bill I owed him just then saved my life.

The children arrived a week after, and I painted the family group. I saw Zelle dancing as a nautch-girl at one of the festivals at Delhi. I heard in the following summer that the twins had died from the bite of a serpent received in the garden of their father's country-house near Calcutta; and since then I never went to bed in India without looking narrowly under the bolster.

AN ADVENTURE IN ARRAN.

It was early on a lovely autumnal morning, in the year 1850, that Roland McBride, a small sheep farmer in the northern district of the island of Arran, in the Western Highlands, left his home, attended by two faithful collie dogs for the purpose of collecting some sheep, which were pasturing on a secluded hill, at the distance of several miles from the farmstead. As he stepped sturdily on to his destination, he absolutely revelled in the cheering sights and sounds around him. While in the full enjoyment of this state of pleasurable and healthy excitement, he heard that one of his coolies had started a very large rabbit, and the other dog joining in the chase, it seemed to Ronald (who could not

help feeling a little interest in the result) that they must soon run it down, particularly as they had headed it down hill, where the long hinder legs of the rabbit told decidedly against it. They gained upon it every moment, and at last seemed just about to seize their prey, when it suddenly slipped beneath one of the huge masses of granite lying thickly scattered on the hillside, and disappeared from view. Ronald felt more disappointed than he cared to confess even to himself; for, in the first place, he had become considerably excited during the short chase and in the second, he had made up his mind that a savoury addition to his morrow's dinner should have been supplied by the rabbit which had so vexatiously vanished. Going up to the rock, he found it to consist of an immense mass of granite, seemingly some tons in weight, and apparently resting on some smaller fragments of the same formation. Convinced that the rabbit lay concealed between some of these fragments and that he might yet recover it, he stretched himself, face downward, on the ground close to the foot of the rock, and thrusting in his arm beneath it as far as he could reach, proceeded to rummage for the object of his search. While so engaged, what was his horror and amazement to feel the huge rock suddenly slip down several inches, and, with irresistible and remorseless pressure, fix his arm, just above the elbow, between its own base and one of the underlying fragments. The enormous mass had been so nicely poised, that the smallest disturbance was sufficient to destroy its equilibrium—a circumstance, as is well known to geologists, of not unfrequent occurrence—and hence the frightful result. Ronald's first instinctive impulse was to endeavour to withdraw his arm—for the pressure, though severe, was not sufficient to crush the limb; a moment's consideration convinced him of the hopelessness of the attempt—he was immovably fixed as though a part of the rock itself. And now how bitter were his reflections, how dreadful the revulsion from his previous state of cheerful buoyancy! The contrast was too cruel, and manly as he was in character, the big tears rolled from his eyes, as he thought of the terrible doom which might be in store for him. And, in truth, his situation was sufficiently awful to justify the most depressing presages as to his fate. He was at a distance of several miles from the nearest habitation, and the spot was so lonely and sequestered, that he might die of starvation ere any chance wayfarer was likely to take that direction, and so discover his position. His mind filled and confused by these fearful anticipations, he found himself unable to collect his faculties sufficiently to reflect with calmness on the misfortunes which had befallen him, and to estimate the prospects of relief which a cool review of the circumstances might have suggested. The prolonged pressure on his arm, too, was becoming more and more intolerable; and, as time passed on, the pain, combined with the continued want of sustenance, gradually told upon his system, and he sank into a species of stupor or syncope which happily relieved him for a space from his state of suffering. How long he remained in this condition he could only guess by the position of the sun, which, when he recovered his consciousness, gave indication that several hours had elapsed. As he looked round him in the vague hope of describing some means which might lead to his release, nothing met his eye save the desolate granite-dotted heath, of which he was the solitary occupant, and the expanse of sky, now becoming overcast with heavy clouds, portending a mountain storm. Indeed, occasional large drops of rain already began to fall, and the wind swept in fitful gusts along the course of the ravine. The only exception to the utter loneliness of his prospect, consisted in the presence of some marsh loving bitterns and curlews, whose heavy flapping flight and wild 'cree' cries, rather added to than relieved the dreary aspect of the whole scene, and, combined with the threatened inclemency of the weather, increased the depression and misery of the unfortunate prisoner. But it was no time to indulge in unavailing regrets or impotent despair. He resolved at least to make an effort towards his release. The first thought that flashed across his mind was to amputate his arm with his clasp knife. Finding himself foiled, however, in his endeavour to reach the pocket in which it was deposited, reflection came to his aid, and convinced him that even should he succeed in severing the limb, he must inevitably sink by exhaustion from loss of blood before he could hope to reach a place where assistance could be procured. Dismissing this idea from his mind, therefore, he bethought him of his faithful collies as the only feasible means of effecting his deliverance. These poor animals had manifested the utmost distress and solicitude when they perceived their master's misfortune. They ran whining and sniffing round the rock as if seeking for some means of relieving him, returning every now and then to fawn upon him and lick his face, in token of their affection and sympathy. Calling them to him now, he endeavoured to make them comprehend that he wished them to set off for home, hoping that their arrival there would serve as a means of alarming his family as to the cause of his continued absence. For a long time his efforts were unsuccessful. Their very affection for him proved the greatest obstacle in his endeavours to render their services effectual. Though when scolded away they retreated for a short distance, they return-

ed time after time, crouching fawningly at his side, as if humbly deprecating his displeasure. Almost despairing, at length it occurred to him that his youngest boy was the constant playmate, and consequently special favourite, of the eldest collie, Laddie, which had been reared on the farm from a puppy. Addressing him, therefore, in shepherd phrase, he exclaimed, 'Hie away wide, good Laddie, hie away wide; seek Allister, good dog, seek Allister;' and his heart throbbed with renewed hope when he saw the sagacious animal's eyes light up with a look of pleased intelligence, and at the same moment pricking up his ears, with a joyful bark and a bound he set off at the top of his speed. Left thus alone, Ronald hopefully reflected that 'man's extremity is God's opportunity.' Arrived at the farmstead, honest Laddie found his master's small household busily engaged conveying home and stacking the last portion of the season's peats—the Highlanders staple fuel—which, having been cast about the month of June, are allowed to dry and harden on the surface of the peat moss until a later period of the year brings sufficient leisure to have them carted home and secured in stacks for winter's use. The sagacious collie soon found out his young master, busied like the rest; and having paid his respects in his own way by leaping upon him, and licking his face and hands, began to conduct himself in so singular a manner as at once to attract the attention of all. Running a short distance along the road which led to the hills, he looked back anxiously at the young lad, and gave a piteous whine; and seeing that he was not followed, repeated the manoeuvre again and again, till at length, coupling his strange behaviour with the fact of his presence without his master, a suspicion began to be aroused that some accident had befallen the latter—an idea which was confirmed by the vehement symptoms of joy the dog displayed when Allister offered to follow him. Convinced that something was wrong, and fearing they knew not what, the members of the family sent in all haste for a number of their nearest neighbours, and after a hurried consultation, having provided themselves with ropes and other implements which might be useful in any species of accident, and a few simple restoratives, set out on the route which Ronald had followed in the morning, to the manifest delight of the faithful Laddie. That sagacious quadruped immediately constituted himself leader, and trotted sedately in the van, turning every now and then with the greatest gravity to see that his followers were keeping proper rank and order in their line of march. My story is nearly told. In due time they arrived at the spot where the poor prisoner, much exhausted, still lay in wearisome inaction in his strange durance. Amidst many expressions of surprise at the singularity of the accident, and commiseration of his sufferings the party proceeded with the utmost caution to effect his release; an achievement which they found much more difficult than they had anticipated, owing to the ponderous size of the rock, and the dread of inflicting further injury upon their unfortunate friend. At length, however, chiefly by attending to his own directions, this object was happily accomplished, and, placing the patient upon a litter, he was carefully carried home and put to bed, where he lay many days under medical attendance before he was sufficiently recovered to resume the active duties of life.

AFOOT.

NATURE first set man afoot. He began as a walker on the earth, but soon thought contact with the sods unworthy of him as a master in creation, and aspired to raise himself out of the dust of the mire. His first assertion of lordship over the beasts of the field was in lifting himself off the ground, and making them carry him whither he would. Horses, asses, camels, elephants, dogs, mules, reindeers, have all in turn been made subject to his will of locomotion. Chariots, biga and quadriga, waggons, coaches, carts, diligences, tartans, vans, sleighs, and all the possible combination of wood and iron, in the shape of carriages, have attested through all times his struggle to escape from the destiny of going afoot.

There is evidently a native pride in man's heart at being carried or drawn. To bestride anything on four legs, however wretched, small, or humble, however slow-paced or rough-paced, he deems better than walking on two; to be drawn in a vehicle—to be jolted, jammed, or suffocated in anything on wheels, more dignified than clod-hopping. The Roman matrons, as the reward of their patriotism, demanded the privilege of riding in a carriage up and down a steep short street. The Spanish hidalgo rolls along in a slumbering old coach drawn at a snail's pace by four black long-tailed horses, and conceives that he thereby upholds the dignity of the first noble of the earth. The Blue-nose will run for two hours to catch a horse, that he may ride the distance of three miles; and the peasant of any country will sit on the tail-board of his cart and be shaken within an inch of dislocation, or endure the creaking and jolting of a bullock-wagon or hang on as one of sixteen to a calisina, rather than trust to his own legs. The world, by general consent, not only rejects the destiny of walking the earth, but contends, those who continue from choice or necessity to fulfil it.

No! the world, as a world, has little sympathy