

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

CHILDREN.

Come to me, O ye children!
For I hear you at your play,
And the questions that perplexed me
Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows,
That look toward the sun,
Where thoughts are singing swallows
And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow,
But in mine is the wind of Autumn
And the first fall of the snow.

Ah! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,
With light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood,

That to the world are children;
Through them it feels the glow
Of a brighter and sunnier climate
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with our caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

From Tait's Magazine.

THE HEAD OF THE FIRM.

A CITY SKETCH.

THERE are few faces to be met with, that in spite of care anxiety, and the stern battle with the world never lose entirely an expression of sympathy for the sorrows and sufferings of others. Such was the case with the face I was looking at now. Instinct supplied the knowledge that a study of Lavater might have given of men, and in a moment I felt that a friend was beside me.

'We want an errand boy at our firm,' said the man, 'they will give you a trial I dare say if you go to them in the morning—but hang the boys! we have had a dozen within these two months, they are more plague than profit—I dare say you have got a good suit of clothes and a shilling or two in your pocket you will turn out like all the rest.'

It was in vain for me to assure him that I would study to the utmost to please anybody who would employ me.

'Ah, they all talk so at first,' he interrupted, 'but what are you going to do with yourself to-night?'

'I don't know indeed, sir,' I replied, 'perhaps you could tell me of some place where they would let me stay for the night, said I timidly, and I put my last shilling into his hand.'

'God bless the boy, take back your money,' said he, patting me on the back with a rough kindness in his manner. 'I have children of my own or I should never have taken any notice of you sitting alone on the door-step here; come along with me, you are only a little chap and can't do much harm any more.'

I went home with my friend and staid at his house all night. They were only considered poor people, but to me then it seemed that they were gentlefolks. The next day I went with him to the city, and was accepted. In this very house Bloxham repeated emphatically, 'I began life as an errand boy, and I am not ashamed to own it.'

Time passed and I gradually made way in the house. I got up in the morning hours before the business began, and studied with the help of books I had picked up cheaply at an old stall. Bye-and-bye one of the clerks was taken ill, and as we were unusually busy I volunteered to supply his place. I tried and succeeded so well, that I kept the situation permanently.

As I rose higher in the house and my salary was increased, my parents were not forgotten; every year I was allowed a few days to visit them, and I had my happiness in being able to assist them a little as they grew older. I rose higher in the business, till at length one of the partners dying, I was taken into the firm as junior partner. I was then thirty-seven years of age, a bachelor still. Indeed I had been so engrossed with business and the desire of raising myself in the world, that I had only given marriage a casual thought, and then it had been dismissed with a smile as I thought how very unlikely it was that any one should fancy such a quiet old-fashioned fellow as myself. But circumstances occur when least expected that alter our habits and feelings through life.

The principal partner in the firm had just then taken an orphan niece of his to live with him, and oftentimes she came with her uncle to the city and staid in my room for a time while he transacted business, and then rode home again. I lived in these very rooms then. It was my first introduction to cultivated female society, and I can hardly describe what a charm it had for me. I thought her a divinity—she was a dashing showy girl with bright blue eyes, and an extremely fair complexion, brilliant teeth, while her hair fell in clustering ringlets round her cheeks. It was not long before her uncle perceived how charmed I was, and he encouraged me as much as possible. My attention became more urgent and she listened to my vows. In a short time we were recognised lovers. I never felt that her love for me was very strong, and there was a decided difference in our ages, while I was thirty-seven she was thirteen or fourteen years younger. I believe there is truth in the saying that a man of middle age loves more passionately than a mere youth. In the latter case there may be more imagination and sentiment, but in the former case it is a much more comprehensive and absorbing feeling. An early period had been arranged for our marriage, and what pleasure it was to me to furnish our house with every thing that was likely to increase her comfort.

But as the time drew near for our marriage, I remarked with great concern that instead of growing more affectionate, and taking greater interest in me, Alice became more distant and reserved, not coming to town so often as she used to do, and very seldom writing. I was extremely concerned; and, at length, after some days had passed without my seeing or hearing anything of her, I determined to go down to her uncle's, and ascertain the cause of the coldness and estrangement.

Her uncle had a beautiful house and grounds in the neighbourhood of Finchley, and in the summer time came but little to the business. I went down one evening quite unexpectedly. I would not go to the house first, for I knew a beautiful walk which Alice had told me she was very fond of, and I made for the spot, feeling almost certain I should find her there.

The place seemed to have been formed by Nature on purpose for lovers. The sun was sinking, and every thing seemed more beautiful in the twilight. All breathed of peace and tranquility. No sound could be heard in the quiet lane but the chirp of the birds, and the mysterious voice of the whispering summer wind, as it rustled gently through the leaves. I had often been deceived by this sound into the belief that she was coming, and had looked up expecting to see her standing before me.

At length she came; and as she stood still a moment to look at the glorious sunset, I thought I had never beheld a more exquisite figure.

Suddenly she turned, and was stepping lightly forward to cross the well-known stile when a tall, dark figure emerged from the shade of some trees near at hand. The moment Alice saw him she changed color. The blood rushed to her cheeks, and she was confused, and seemed half inclined to turn back again. Yet, in her secret heart, I fancied she was glad to see him there. The trembling lip, the furtive glance, the unconscious blush, the downcast eye, told too plainly that the heart was traitor to the will. I had stepped back behind a tree, and hardly knowing what I did, I listened to language that sealed my fate for ever.

The new comer was a handsome, impetuous looking young man, with an expression, however, with which the physiognomist would not have been quite satisfied. He greeted Alice in the most rapturous manner; but as he did so, I could not help fancying there was something exaggerated in his look and language, and it was with difficulty I could restrain myself from interrupting them, and cautioning Alice; but would she have believed me—would she not rather have thought it the revengeful feeling of an injured lover. I staid a little longer—the intense misery that was falling upon me was sufficient excuse for paying the eavesdropper.

Alice did not appear to be quite at her ease—a shade of remorse, it might be, stung her, and prevented her giving way to any show of affection. She was silent for a moment; then looking earnestly in his face, said, 'I fear you will not always act thus.'

'Do not fear me, Alice,' he replied; 'as yet, perhaps, you have not seen me in the most favourable light. My life has been a stormy one, without any guiding hand to counsel and direct me. But I feel an impulse towards higher things. Many failings I have, and regret to own it is so; but when I first saw you, a change came over me, and I feel that the self-denial, the unflinching battle with circumstance, was worthy of a trial when such a prize was the reward. I will not to-night, or for some nights to come, ask for an avowal of love,' continued he; 'only give me some hope—something to look forward to in the future. But what of your uncle?'

'Oh, do not speak of him,' said Alice trembling; he would never hear of it. I will think of what you have said, in the meantime; it is growing late,' she said, with forced calmness, 'my uncle will be anxious.'

They parted, my brain seemed on fire; an old

I follow him, and denounce him as an imposter a villain? I could hardly do that, even in my present excited state of mind, for there was an appearance of candor and faithfulness in his manner. Yet I could not but believe that much of this was assumed.

While I hesitated he was gone, and Alice passed within a yard of me on her way home. I advanced towards her.

'Farewell, Alice,' I whispered rather than spoke, for the intense excitement had made me quite hoarse. Farewell; my old city rooms will look very dreary after this. Do not tell your uncle I am here; I shall go back at once. May you be happy, but never can I.'

What I said or did for hours afterwards I can only recall as a faint and indistinct dream. I only remember that it was very late when I got back to the city, and that the house-keeper made some remark about my not staying all night at Finchley. From that day winter or summer, I have never slept one night away from this house.

For some days her uncle was unwell, and did not come to the city; but one morning I was surprised to see him in a state of great agitation. The moment he saw me he burst into tears, and putting his hand affectionately on my shoulder, exclaimed, 'My poor fellow you are deceived—you have built your hopes on a rotten foundation. My niece—'

I could only utter mechanically his last words—'your niece.'

'Has left me—has gone I know not where; but pray don't take it to heart,' said he kindly, as he observed my look of blank despair; 'she was not worthy of you. It matters little what has become of her,' said the old man, passionately. 'she shall never darken my doors again.'

All the soothing words the kind old man lavished on me might as well have been bestowed on a statue. Although I knew that no affection remained for me in Alice's heart the blow seemed as severe as though it had been unexpected.

'Some play actor fellow,' the old gentleman broke in, 'who having no engagement, had been lodging at Finchley, has induced her to break faith with you.'

Leaving the old gentleman to attend to the business, I wandered about for some days in search of her.

One evening, some weeks afterwards, I learned from the stage door-keeper of one of the East-end theatres, that an actor answering to the description I gave, was engaged there. I asked his address, and instantly started off in the direction given me. It was in one of those shabby genteel streets in the neighborhood of Mile-end, where half-starved clerks and maiden ladies with very small annuities, make a desperate endeavour to appear stylish in the eyes of their neighbour—streets I could never pass through without a sad feeling as I thought of the daily trials and struggles of the inhabitants.

With a trembling hand I knocked at the door. It was opened instantly by a slatternly girl, who with a jug in her hand, was going to the public house close at hand.

'You will find Mrs Fitzgerald on the first floor,' said the girl; but he is gone to the theater; missis is at home.'

The girl was evidently unused to ceremony with the class of visitors who came to see Mr Fitzgerald. I walked gently upstairs.

There were only two rooms on each floor; the front was a sitting room, the back room a bed-room. As I stepped forward to tap at the sitting-room door, I perceived through the bedroom door, which was half open, a female figure kneeling by the bedside, as if in prayer.

She seemed to have lifted her soul above all earthly objects; and as she prayed her voice rose from a whisper to full, clear appealing tones. I listened spell-bound, moved to the very depths of my heart, for my own name was murmured in her prayers.

'I need not tell you how she had been deceived,' said the old man, and stopping in his narrative, he seemed to be musing over the incidents he had just related.

There was a pause, no one seemed inclined to break the silence, or to question him further; yet every one was anxious to know the fate of Alice. After a time he continued, in trembling accents, 'She died in giving birth to her first child; and it has always been a source of comfort to me that she did not have longer to deplore her unfortunate step. Her son grew up to manhood, and is the gentleman whom you have known for years as my partner. Those drawings, the piano—that music were hers, and have never been touched by another hand. In the long years that I have lived alone, those dumb relics have cheered and consoled me.'

A few weeks ago old Bloxham was found dead in his easy chair, of an apoplectic fit, and Alice's son is now the head of the Firm.

LONDON IVY.

IVY is one of the few shrubs which will bear without injury the smoke of London, and this property renders it exceedingly valuable for street houses. About London it is raised in immense quantities in pots, and trained the height of from six to twelve feet on stakes, so that at any season of the year a hedge may be formed of it, by training it over an iron railing or wire fence, or wooden railing, or lattice work; or a

wall may be covered with it at an incredibly short notice. One valuable use to which ivy may be applied, in street houses in towns, is to form external framings to the windows instead of architraves. In the interminable lines of naked windows in the monotonous brick houses built about fifty years ago, which form the majority of the London streets at the West end of the town, the ivy affords a resource which any householder of taste may turn to very good account. He has only to form projecting architraves of wire to his windows, and to place a pot of ivy on his window sill, or in a small balcony, at the base of each jamb, taking care to fix the pots securely, and to make a provision for supplying them regularly with water. In rooms, ivy, when planted in boxes, and properly trained, may be made to form a rustic screen, either to soften the light, or to exclude a disagreeable view; and in very large drawing rooms, plants in boxes or vases, trained on wire parasols, or other overhanging framework, will form a rustic canopy for small groups of parties, who may seat themselves under its shade, in the same manner as parties sit under orange trees in the public rooms of Berlin, and other cities on the Continent.—*Plants and Shrubs.*

FEMALE COINER.

NOW I am telling you odd events, I must relate one of the strangest I ever heard. Last week an elderly woman gave information against her maid for coining, and the trial came on at the Old Bailey. The mistress deposed that, having been left a widow several years ago, without children, and no possibility of maintaining them, she had taken to coining; that she used to buy old pewter pots, out of each of which she made as many shillings, &c., as she could put on for £3, and that by this practice she had bred up her children, bound them out apprentices, and set herself up in a little shop, by which she got a comfortable livelihood; that she had now given over coining, and indicted her maid as an accomplice. The maid in her defence said, 'That when her mistress hired her, she told her that she did something in a garret, into which she must never inquire; that all she knew of the matter was, that her mistress had often given her moulds to clean, which she did, as it was her duty; that, indeed, she had sometimes seen pieces of pewter pots cut, and did not suspect her mistress of coining; but that she never had had, or put off, one single piece of bad money.' The judge asked the mistress if this was true. She answered 'Yes; and that she believed her maid was as honest a creature as ever lived; but that knowing herself in her power, she never could be at peace. That she knew, by informing, she should secure herself; and, not doubting but the maid's real innocence would appear, she concluded the poor girl would come to no harm.' The judge flew into the greatest rage, told her he wished he could stretch the law to hang her, and feared he could not bring off the maid for having concealed the crime; but however, the jury did bring her in 'Not Guilty.' I think I never heard a more particular instance of parts and villany.—*Horace Walpole.*

A WELSH TRAGEDY.

I have heard my wife's mother relate the following incident, which occurred in her own neighbourhood. About sixty-five years ago there lived at Llanllyth-bally, midway between Llandillo and Llandovery, a gentleman of fortune of the name of Powell. He had separated from his wife, by whom he had two daughters—and his brother, Captain Bowen, inflamed by the animosity which naturally arises out of such family divisions, and supposed to be instigated by a paramour of the lady's of the name of Williams, engaged, in concert with this Williams, a band of men to accompany him on a pretended smuggling expedition; and having plied them well with promises of ample payment and plenty of liquor—a bottle of brandy and a pair of new shoes for the day—marched up to Powell's house at twelve o'clock at noon, and at the time of Llandillo fair, when the conspirators knew that Powell's servants would be absent. The only persons actually left in the house with him were an old woman, and a daughter of this very Bowen. The conspirators advanced to the front door, and entered the hall, where the old woman met them. Her they seized and bound to the leg of an old mussy oak table. Powell, attracted to the hall by the noise, was immediately seized and literally hewn to pieces in the most horrible manner in the presence of the old woman, and of the murderer's own daughter, who alarmed at the entrance of so grim a band, had concealed herself under this table. The girl from that hour lost her senses, and wandered about the country a confirmed maniac. My informant often saw the girl at her mother's who was kind to her, and where she often therefore came, having a particular seat by the fire always left for her. In a lucid interval they once ventured to ask her what she recollected of this shocking event. She said that she believed she had fainted, and on coming to herself, saw her father standing with a hatchet over her uncle in the act of giving him another blow, and that she actually saw her uncle's face hanging over his shoulder. At this point of the recital, the recollection of the horrors of it came upon her so strongly, that she fell into one of her most violent fits of madness, and they never dared to mention the subject afterwards in