

LITERATURE.

THE LIGHT IN THE WINDOW.

BY CHARLES MACKAY, L.L.D.

Late or early home returning,
In the starlight or the rain,
I beheld that lonely candle
Shining from his window-pane.
Ever o'er his tattered curtain
Nightly looking, I could scan,
Aye inditing—
Writing—writing,
The pale figure of a man;
Still discern behind him fall
The same shadow on the wall.

Far beyond the murky midnight,
By dim burning of his oil,
Filling eye his rapid leaflets,
I have watched him at his toil;
Watched his broad and sunny forehead,
Watched his white industrious hand,
Ever passing
And repassing;
Watched, and strove to understand
What impelled it—gold or fame—
Bread, or bubble of a name.

Of I've asked, debating vainly
In the silence of my mind,
What the services he rendered
To his country or his kind;
Whether tones of ancient music,
Or the sound of modern song,
Wisdom holy,
Humors lowly,
Sermon, essay, novel, song,
Or philosophy sublime,
Filled the measure of his time.

Of the mighty world at London,
He was portion unto me,
Portion of my life's experience,
Fused into my memory.
Twilight saw him at his folios,
Morning saw his fingers run,
Laboring ever,
Wearying never
Of the task he had begun!
Placid and content he seemed,
Like a man that toiled and dreamed.

No one sought him, no one knew him,
Undistinguished was his name!
Never had his praise been uttered
By the oracles of fame.
Scanty fare and decent raiment,
Humble lodging, and a fire—
These he sought for,
These he wrought for,
And he gained his meek desire;
Teaching men by written word—
Clinging to a hope deferred.

So he lived. At last I missed him;
Still might evening twilight fall,
But no taper lit his lattice—
Lay no shadow on his wall.
In the winter of his seasons,
In the midnight of his day,
'Mid his writing,
And inditing,
Death had beckoned him away—
Ere the sentence he had planned
Found completion at his hand.

But this man, so old and nameless,
Left behind him projects large,
Schemes of progress undeveloped,
Worthy of a nation's charge;
Noble fancies uncompleted,
Germs of beauty immatured,
Only needing
Kindly feeding
To have flourished and endured:
Meet reward in golden store
To have lived forever more.

Who shall tell what schemes majestic
Perish in the active brain?
What humanity is robbed of,
Ne'er to be restored again?
What we lose, because we honor
Overmuch the mighty dead,
And dissipate
Living merit,
Heaping scorn upon its head?
Or perchance, when kinder grown,
Leaving it to die—alone!

FIRST LOVE.—The first conversation at Holland House turned upon first love. Tom Moore compared it to a potato, "because it shoots from the eyes." "Or rather," exclaimed Byron, "because it becomes all the less by paring."

Thrilling Tale of Circumstantial Evidence.

[From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, January 13, 1849.]

EXPERIENCES OF A BARRISTER.

THE MARCH ASSIZE.

SOMETHING more than half a century ago, a person, in going along Holborn, might have seen, near the corner of one of the thoroughfares which diverge towards Russell Square, the respectable-looking shop of a glover and haberdasher named James Harvey, a man generally esteemed by his neighbours, and who was usually considered well to do in the world. Like many London tradesmen, Harvey was originally from the country.—He had come up to town when a poor lad to push his fortune, and by dint of steadiness and civility, and a small property left him by a distant relation he had been able to get into business on his own account, and to attain that most important element of success in London—a connection. Shortly after setting up in the world, he married a young woman from his native town, to whom he had been engaged ever since his school-days; and at the time our narrative commenced he was the father of three children.

James Harvey's establishment was one of the best frequented of its class in the street. You could never pass without seeing customers going in or out. There was evidently not a little business going forward. But although, to all appearance, a flourishing concern, the proprietor of the establishment was surprised to find that he was continually pinched in his circumstances. No matter what was the amount of business transacted over the counter, he never got any richer.

At the period referred to, shopkeeping had not attained that degree of organisation, with respect to counter-men and cashiers, which now distinguishes the great houses of trade. The primitive till was not yet superseded. This was the weak point in Harvey's arrangements; and not to make a needless number of words about it, the poor man was regularly robbed by a shopman, whose dexterity in pitching a guinea into the drawer, so as to make it jump, unseen, with a jerk into his hand, was worthy of Herr Dobler, or any other master of the sublime art of jugglery.

Good-natured and unsuspecting, perhaps also not sufficiently vigilant, Harvey was long in discovering how he was pillaged. Cartwright, the name of the person who was preying on his employer, was not a young man. He was between forty and fifty years of age, and had been in various situations, where he had always given satisfaction, except on the score of being somewhat gay and somewhat irritable. Privately, he was a man of loose habits, and for years his extravagances had been paid for by property clandestinely abstracted from his too-confiding master. Slow to believe in the reality of such wickedness, Mr. Harvey could with difficulty entertain the suspicions which began to dawn on his mind. At length all doubt was at an end. He detected Cartwright in the very act of carrying off goods to a considerable amount. The man was tried at the Old Bailey for the offence; but through a technical informality in the indictment, acquitted.

Unable to find employment, and with a character gone, the liberated thief became savage, revengeful, and desperate. Instead of imputing his fall to his own irregularities, he considered his late unfortunate employer as the cause of his ruin; and now he bent all the energies of his dark nature to destroy the reputation of the man whom he had betrayed and plundered. Of all the beings self-delivered to the rule of unscrupulous malignity, with whom it has been my fate to come professionally in contact, I never knew one so utterly fiendish as this discomfited pilferer. Frenzied with his imaginary wrongs, he formed the determination to labour, even if it were for years, to ruin his victim. Nothing short of death should divert him from this the darling object of his existence.

Animated by those diabolical passions, Cartwright proceeded to his work. Harvey, he had too good reason to know, was in debt to persons who had made him advances; and by means of artfully-concocted anonymous letters, evidently written by some one conversant with the matters on which he wrote, he succeeded in alarming the haberdasher's creditors. The consequences were—demands of immediate payment, and, in spite of the debtor's explanations and promises, writs, heavy law expenses, ruinous sacrifices, and ultimate bankruptcy. It may seem almost too marvellous for belief, but the story of this terrible revenge and its consequences is no fiction. Every incident in my narrative is true, and the whole may be found in hard outline in the records of the courts with which a few years ago I was familiar.

The humiliated and distressed feeling of Harvey and his family may be left to the imagination. When he found himself a ruined man, I daresay his mental sufferings were sufficiently acute. Yet he did not sit down in despair. To re-establish himself in business in England appeared hopeless; but America presented itself as a scene where industry might find a reward; and by the kindness of some friends, he was enabled to make preparations to emigrate with his wife and children.—Towards the end of February he quitted London for one of the great seaports, where he was to embark for Boston. On arriving there with his family, Mr. Harvey took up his abode at the principal hotel. This, in a man of straitened means, was doubtless imprudent; but he afterwards attempted to explain the circumstances

by saying, that as the ship in which he had engaged his passage was to sail on the day after his arrival, he preferred incurring a slight additional expense rather than that his wife—who was now, with failing spirits, nursing an infant—should be exposed to coarse associations and personal discomfort. In the expectation, however, of being only one night in the hotel, Harvey was unfortunately disappointed. Shipmasters, especially those commanding emigrant vessels, were then, as now, habitual promise-breakers; and although each succeeding sun was to light them on their way, it was fully a fortnight before the ship stood out to sea. By that time a second and more dire reverse had occurred in the fortunes of the luckless Harvey.

Cartwright whose appetite for vengeance was but whetted by his first success, had never lost sight of the movements of his victim; and now he had followed him to the place of his embarkation, with an eager but undefined purpose of working him some further and more deadly mischief. Stealthily he hovered about the house which sheltered the unconscious object of his malicious hate, plotting, as he afterwards confessed, the wildest schemes for satisfying his revenge. Several times he made excuses for calling at the hotel, in the hope of observing the nature of the premises, taking care, however, to avoid being seen by Mr. Harvey or his family. A fortnight passed away, and the day of departure of the emigrants arrived without the slightest opportunity occurring for the gratification of his purposes. The ship was leaving her berth; most of the passengers were on board; Mrs. Harvey and the children, with nearly the whole of the luggage, were already safely in the vessel; Mr. Harvey only remained on shore to purchase some trifling article, and to settle his bill at the hotel on removing his last trunk. Cartwright had tracked him all day; he could not attack him in the street; and he finally followed him to the hotel, in order to wreak his vengeance on him in his private apartment, of the situation of which he had informed himself.

Harvey entered the hotel first, and before Cartwright came up, he had gone down a passage into the bar to settle the bill which he had incurred for the last two days. Not aware of the circumstance, Cartwright, in the bustle which prevailed, went up stairs to Mr. Harvey's bedroom and parlour, in neither of which, to his surprise, did he find the occupant; and he turned away discomfited. Passing along towards the chief staircase, he perceived a room of which the door was open, and that on the table there lay a gold watch and appendages. Nobody was in the apartment; the gentleman who occupied it had only a few moments before gone to his bedchamber for a brief space. Quick as lightning a diabolical thought flashed through the brain of the villain, who had been baffled in his original intentions.—He recollected that he had seen a trunk in Harvey's room, and that the keys hung in the lock. An inconceivably short space of time served for him to seize the watch, to deposit it at the bottom of Harvey's trunk, and to quit the hotel by a back stair, which led by a short cut to the harbour. The whole transaction was done unperceived, and the wretch at least departed unnoticed.

Having finished his business at the bar, Mr. Harvey repaired to his room, locked his trunk, which, being of a small and handy size, he mounted on his shoulder, and proceeded to leave the house by the back stair, in order to get as quickly as possible to the vessel. Little recked he of the interruption which was to be presented to his departure. He had got as far as the foot of the stair with his burden, when he was overtaken by a waiter, who declared that he was going to leave the house clandestinely without settling accounts. It is proper to mention that Mr. Harvey had incurred the enmity of this particular waiter in consequence of having out of his slender resources, given him too small a gratuity on the occasion of paying a former bill, and not aware of the second bill being settled, the waiter was rather glad to have an opportunity of charging him with a fraudulent design. In vain Mr. Harvey remonstrated, saying he had paid for everything. The waiter would not believe his statement, and detained him 'till he should hear better about it.'

'Let me go, fellow; I insist upon it,' said Mr. Harvey, burning with indignation. 'I am already too late.'

'Not a step, till I ask master if accounts are squared.'

At this moment, while the altercation was at the hottest, a terrible ringing of bells was heard, and above stairs was a loud noise of voices, and of feet running to and fro. A chambermaid came hurriedly down the stair, exclaiming that some one had stolen a gold watch from No. 17, and that nobody ought to leave the house till it was found. The landlord also, moved by the hurricane which had been raised, made his appearance at the spot where Harvey was interrupted in his exit.

'What on earth is all this noise about, John?' inquired the landlord of the waiter.

'Why, sir, I thought it rather strange for any gentleman to leave the house by the back way, carrying his own portmanteau, and so I was making a little breeze about it, fearing he had not paid his bill, when all of a sudden Sally rushes down the stair and says as how No. 17 has missed his gold watch, and that no one should quit the hotel.'

No. 17, an old, dry-looking military gentleman, in a particularly high passion, now showed himself on the scene, uttering terrible threats of legal proceedings against the house for the loss he had sustained.

Harvey was astonished and indignant, yet he could