

## LITERATURE.

## SHAKSPEARE'S VIOLETS.

"Like the sweet south,  
That breathes upon a bank of violets  
Stealing and giving odour."

Sweets Violets—the morning bids  
Ye ope your silken eyes,  
And shake the moisture from your lids,  
That thus as sparkling lies  
As star of dew  
On heaven's blue,  
Or atom of the skies!—

Unclose those velvet lids, and see,  
Who comes by Avon's stream;  
The light of whose divinity  
Would break an angel's dream!  
'Tis Shakspeare dips  
Your purple lips,  
In inspiration's beam!

Oh! gifted flowers, oh! glorious hues,—  
The golden morning saith—  
Oh! magic of the poet's muse  
That triumphs over death,  
And keeps the mind  
Of all mankind  
Still listening to his breath!

The altars of great Jove are gone  
So earthly idols bend:—  
The pyramids shall one by one  
Beneath the sands descend;—  
But ye, sweet flowers,  
Shall wreath the hours  
Of man—till Nature end!

Wake, violets, ye virgin throng!  
Awake, renown to claim;—  
New married to immortal song  
New linked to Shakspeare's fame;  
The world shall bless  
That loveliness,  
Which shrines so dear a name!

CHARLES SWAIN.

## THE FATAL BRIDE.

BEING A CONTRIBUTION FROM THE REMINISCENCES  
OF A BACHELOR.

(Founded on an event which actually occurred.)

(Continued.)

While those emotions agitated me, Captain Jennings continued lost in thought, and at last he said:—

'Ay, it is better to write,' and tearing off the outer leaf of the note which lay before him, he traced a line or two with his pencil, but checking himself, again paused, crumpled the note he had just commenced, and that he had received, together, applied them to the candle and dropped them blazing into the grate.

'Say that I will be with her as soon as I can possibly get away,' said he; 'but where is the house—where is she?' he added suddenly.

I described by the land-marks with which he was acquainted, exactly the spot where the poor young lady was to be found.

'Then, just say as I told you, that I will be there without one moment's avoidable delay.'

Thus speaking, he hastily led the way to the hall-door; for some of his half-tipsy guests were beginning to call for him, and, as it seemed, were about making an exploratory excursion from the drawing-room. Muttering a broken curse upon them all, he opened the door, and I heard him, as I walked down the stone steps, respond in tones of affected gaiety to their clamorous challenge. With the rapid pace, which indicates an excited mind, I retraced my steps; the bells were chiming, and the watchman drowsily calling four o'clock, as I approached the scene of my strange adventure.

'Thank God, at all events,' I fervently murmured—'thank God, the poor creature is not disgraced and ruined: a strange perplexing, and, I fear, a most imprudent affair it unquestionably is; but after all, what an escape!—how much to be thankful for!'

I had now reached my destination, and was admitted. The young lady, I was told, was doing well; so I delivered my message, and took my place in the parlour as before, resolved to await the departure of Doctor Robertson, who was still up stairs, and to explain, as was my intention, the foolish accident which had involved me in the affair; acquaint him with my name and address, and assure him of my secrecy.

I had not waited very long, when I heard him, with creaking steps, slowly descending the stairs, issuing, as he did, some parting directions to the woman who attended him with the candle.

'I shall look in in the evening, after dark,' he said; 'everything promises fairly,—so that will do; I'll make my own way out; never mind—good morning.'

As the worthy man uttered these gruff civilities, I presented myself at the foot of the stairs, and requested a word with him in the parlour. Merely directing me to be brief, and with a prodigious yawn, he accompanied

me thither. I then proceeded to lay before him a full statement concerning myself, and the cause of my participation in the business. He was at first disposed to be angry; but my own frankness, and perhaps an old acquaintance with my inmate of his youth, disarmed him, and my explanation ended by shaking me good-naturedly by the hand.

'Egad, I believe I have been in greater fault of the two, young gentleman, in this affair,' he said; 'for I undertook my part with my eyes open; and a troublesome and an awkward part it must e'en prove, at the best. But,' he added, in a changed tone, 'with all its trouble and awkwardness, I would not have declined it for a thousand pounds; poor little thing; no, no, this was a matter of life or death; the poor child reposed confidence in me, and trusted me with the secret of her situation, under the seal of silence. I could not honourably divulge it; nor could I, with one particle of common humanity; refuse my aid, her life was in the balance; she would have had none to attend her but me, and without proper assistance must have died; to have declined that aid, through any consideration of consequences affecting myself, would have been the act of a respectable scoundrel; it would have been to perpetrate a prudential murder.'

As he spoke, there came a hurried knocking at the hall-door.

'This must be Captain Jennings, I said.

'Umph! he must not go up suddenly: they must prepare her for the meeting,' said he; and opening the chamber door, he said to the attendant—

'Show Captain Jennings, if this be he, into this chamber; and as soon as you think the lady sufficient recovered to see him, you can tell him so.'

With this direction, he re-entered the room, and walked up and down once or twice, with rather an inauspicious expression of countenance while he awaited the appearance of the new visitor; he had not long to wait; the door opened, and Captain Jennings, muffled in a cloak, entered the comfortless apartment.

Doctor Robertson received him with a stiff nod. After a few brief inquiries, rather drily answered, the physician said, in reply to a significant glance which Jennings had directed towards me—

'You need have no apprehension on account of his presence. Captain Jennings, whatever you have to say to me, may be said before him; he already knows all that is of moment in this affair, and his honour may be relied on.'

'Honour?' repeated Jennings; 'so then he's a gentleman, as I suspected.'

'Permit me, Captain Jennings,' said Doctor Robertson, 'to recommend to you, what I conceived honour and common sense alike indicate, as the proper course to be pursued in this painful affair. I have not had until this moment, it is true, an opportunity of so much as even speaking to you upon this subject, and do not know, even if I had, that I was at liberty to introduce it. I can have now, however, no scruple in fully telling you my mind; and I must say, that the extreme imprudence into which you have led an inexperienced and fondly-attached girl, threatens seriously to compromise her, not only with her own relatives but in the eyes of the world. You have placed her in a situation calculated, unless it be at once explained, to prejudice her reputation fatally; and I am bound to say, as an old friend of the family, that unless you come forward frankly, and put Sir Arthur in possession of the real state of facts, I shall feel it my duty to do so myself.'

'There is no need of any disclosure—at least immediately,' said the young man, hurriedly. 'Everything is arranged. No one but her old attendant has access to her chamber at home, and Sir Arthur and young Chadleigh don't see her once in five weeks. They don't suspect anything, and need not. Is it not clear that an explosion—a scene—just now, would be about the worst thing in the world for her?'

'Very true,' said Doctor Robertson, drily; 'all very true; but if there be an explosion, there is no need it should reach her ears. No, no, sir. Believe me, the only honourable course now open before you, is that of promptitude and candour. You ought, without the delay of an hour, to acquaint Sir Arthur with the fact of your marriage.'

'And who the devil—' began Jennings, with a look which partook at once of rage and terror. The expression remained fixed for a time, but the sentence died away unfinished; and muttering some incoherent words, he walked, with a sort of half-agitated, half-defiant air, twice across the floor, and stopping at an empty fireplace, planted his foot upon the bar, and stood looking vacantly into the inhospitable grate, with an aspect as black and cheerless as its own.

'Well, sir,' said Doctor Robertson, somewhat sternly, 'you will, of course, act as you think proper; but I again advise you to be the first to open this affair to Sir Arthur; for, as I have already told you, he shall otherwise learn it all from myself. I have a very strong opinion about it.'

'Of course, of course,' said Jennings, petulantly; and continued, in a haughtier tone, perhaps intended to show Doctor Robertson that his further pursuing the subject would be considered impertinent—'By the way, sir, I ought to have thanked you before this for your able professional assistance.'

'Sir, I intended no obligation whatever to you. My interest is naturally strongly engaged on the poor young lady's account,' replied Doctor Robertson, gruffly, as he

buttoned up his great-coat to his chin, and then drew on his warm gloves; 'for her I would, if need were, do a great deal more.'

He turned, stiffly and grimly, from the young man, shook me again by the hand and took his departure.

At the same moment, in obedience to an intimation from the attendant, Captain Jennings proceeded up the stairs, to the chamber where the young lady lay. As he followed the matron up stairs, the wailing of a newborn baby reached his ears. This feeble and plaintive appeal to his paternal sympathies, was probably far from welcome; for he looked as if, but for very shame, he would have cursed the helpless little creature; and now he stood at the chamber-door. Perhaps some touch of better feelings moved him, for his look grew sadder and softened. He entered. Faint, and with eyes half-closed, the fair young mother—her sore trial over—lay in the hushed and darkened room. Weak and exhausted as she was, a faint cry of joy broke from her pale lips; and such a look of ecstasy welcomed his appearance, as must have moved a heart of stone,

'Oh! Richard, Richard—oh! Richard,' was all the poor creature could say as he stooped over the bed and kissed her, with at least a show of fondness; while her feeble arm was clasped round his neck with an agony of delight, as if she had never hoped to have seen him again.

'Oh! Richard—Richard, darling!—it is you—darling, it is you!'

She clung to him, sobbing, and smiling, and softly repeated words of endearment, till gently disengaging himself, he kissed her again, clasped her hand in his, and pressed it, and wrung it fondly, as he sat by the bed-side. Thus silently testifying his affection, he leaned back, so that the curtain interposed between his face and hers. Two or three bitter tears started down his cheeks, and such a look of unutterable anguish darkened his countenance, as might have shadowed the eternal despair of the damned. Thus some minutes passed, while he pressed the feeble hand he held with a feverish grasp.

This interview was prolonged to more than an hour; and at length Jennings, warned by approach of the dawn, took his departure, in sore disorder and dismay—his heart agitated with a tumult of terrible passions and sensations, his brain burning with a thousand wild and irreconcilable plans and projects—a thoroughly miserable man.

Meanwhile, I returned to my lodgings, and had thrown myself into bed, not to awaken to the remembrance of my last night's strange adventure until late in the day. It is, of course, unnecessary to say, that I felt the intensest curiosity respecting the progress and final denouement of this extraordinary affair. The conclusion was not long suspended.

Jennings had returned to his chamber in Kildare-street; but repose for him was out of the question. He had spent hours of agonized uncertainty; but at last his mind was made up, and his resolution taken.

'I have but one course to take—necessity controls me—I have no choice left,' he muttered. 'What infernal influence could have possessed me!—what accursed witchcraft can have blinded and infatuated me!—Great God! what a serious, what a frightful business it has turned out. Well, I suppose it was my destiny. I wonder if the old fellow had any inkling of my real situation when he forbade me his house? Merciful Heaven! if I had but acted then like a man of common sense; but some accursed delusion was over me. I had got interested and piqued in the pursuit. I did not dream of mischief. I could swear, with my dying breath, I never meant harm, until accident and the devil—and poor, poor Mary herself—put that accursed piece of madness into my head. Curse my folly! It is a desperate, a frightful situation; but self-preservation is, they say, the first law of nature; and were I even to sacrifice myself, I don't see that she would be essentially the better.' He consulted his watch, and continued—'My measures must be taken promptly; that meddling doctor-fellow will be on the fidgets till he does mischief. I can't be too prompt.'

He rang the bell, directed the servant peremptorily to deny him to all visitors, drew the window-blinds, bolted the door, and then, seating himself before his desk, wrote, with painful attention and assiduity, for full two hours, without rising. This task completed, he carefully read the manuscript, making various erasures and interpolations, and at last, folded it carefully, sealed it, and placing it in his waistcoat pocket (in those days a tolerably capacious receptacle), he buttoned his coat across it.

'Will he do it?' he muttered doubtfully; 'we'll see—we'll see. In the first place, he may never be called on to say a word, *pro or con*; in the second, even if he be, this is as easily said as anything else; and, in the third, we will gild the pill pretty thickly.'

So saying, he opened a drawer in the desk, and took out a handful of guineas and a bundle of bank notes, the spoils of his last night's successful play.

'Let me see what have I got in bank,' he reflected; 'I must leave enough for my part of the business; it would not do to be money-bound just now. Ay, ay, he may have the three hundred. I think three hundred will be strong enough for him. Poor Mary—poor Mary!'

Having counted out, in notes and guineas, the sum he had named, he rolled them up, and stuffed them into his pocket; then muffling his face in a shawl, and put-