

The Examiner.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY WHEN FREE-BORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC—MAY SPEAK FREELY."—MILTON'S EURIPIDES.

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LITERATURE.

THE LOVE SECRET.

Edward is to be in London next week, said Mrs. Ravensworth; and I trust, Ellen, that you will meet him with the frankness he is entitled to receive.

Ellen Hamilton, who stood behind the chair of her aunt, did not make any answer.

Edward's father, continued Mrs. Ravensworth, was your father's own brother. A man of nobler spirit never moved on English soil; and I hear that Edward is the worthy son of a worthy sire.

If he were as pure and perfect as an angel, aunt, replied Ellen, it would be all the same to me. I have never seen him, and cannot therefore meet him as one who has a right to claim my hand.

Your father gave you away when you were a child, Ellen; and Edward comes now to claim you by virtue of this betrothal.

While I love the memory of my father, and honour him as a child should honour a parent, said Ellen, with much seriousness, I do not admit his right to give me away in marriage while I was yet a child. And moreover I do not think the man who would seek to consummate such a marriage contract worthy of any maiden's love. Only the heart that yields a free consent is worthy having, and the man who would take any other is utterly unworthy of any woman's regard. By this rule I judge Edward to be unworthy, no matter what his father may have been.

Then you mean, said Mrs. Ravensworth, deliberately to violate the solemn contract made by your father with the father of Edward?

I cannot receive Edward as anything but a stranger, replied Ellen. It will not mend the error of my father for me to commit a still greater one.

How commit a still greater one? inquired Mrs. Ravensworth.

Destroy the very foundation of a true marriage—freedom of choice and consent. There would be no freedom of choice on his part, and no privilege of consent on mine. Happiness could not follow such a union, and to enter into it would be doing a great wrong. No, aunt, I cannot receive Edward in any other way, than as a stranger—for such he is.

There is a clause in your father's will that you may have forgotten, Ellen, said her aunt.

That which makes me penniless, if I do not marry Edward Hamden?—I have not forgotten it, aunt.

And you mean to brave that consequence?

In a choice of evils we always take the least, Ellen's voice trembled.

Mrs. Ravensworth did not reply for some moments. While she sat silent, the half-closed door near which Ellen stood, and towards which her aunt's back was turned, softly opened, and a handsome youth, between whom and Ellen glances of intelligence instantly passed presented the startled maiden with a beautiful white rose, and then noiselessly retired.

It was nearly a minute before Mrs. Ravensworth resumed the light employment in which she was engaged, and as she did so she said—Many a foolish young girl gets her head turned with those gay gallants at our fashionable watering-places, and imagines that she won a heart, when the object of her vain regard never felt the throbs of a truly unselfish and noble impulse.

The crimson deepened on Ellen's cheeks and brow, and as she lifted her eyes, she saw herself in a large mirror opposite, with her aunt's calm eyes steady-

ly fixed upon her. To turn her face partly away, so that it could no longer be reflected from the mirror, was the work of an instant. In a few moments she said—Let youth and foolish girls get their heads turned if they will; but I trust I am in no danger.

I am not sure of that! Those who think themselves most secure, are generally in the greatest danger. Who is the youth with whom you danced last evening? I don't remember to have seen him here before.

His name is Evelyn. There was a slight tremor in Ellen's voice.

How came you to know him?

I met him here last season, and I danced with him last night. Was there any harm in that? The maiden's voice had regained its firmness.

I didn't say there was, returned Mrs. Ravensworth, who again relapsed into silence. Not long after she said—I think we shall return to London on Thursday.

So soon! Ellen spoke in a disappointed voice.

Do you find it so very pleasant here? said the aunt, a little ironically.

I have not complained of its being dull, aunt, replied Ellen; but if you wish to return on Thursday, I will be ready to accompany you.

Soon after this, Ellen Hamilton left her aunt's room, and went to one of the drawing rooms of the hotel at which they were staying, where she sat near the bow-window that overlooked the beautiful promenade. She had been here only a few minutes, when she was joined by a handsome youth, to whom Ellen said—How could you venture to the door of my aunt's parlour? I'm half afraid she detected your presence; for she said, immediately afterwards, that we should return to London on the day after to-morrow.

So soon? Well, I'll be there next week, and it will be strange if, with your consent, we don't meet often.

Edward Hamden is expected in a few days, replied Ellen, her voice slightly faltering.

Her companion looked at her searchingly for a few moments, and then said, You have never met him!

Never!

But when you do meet him, the repugnance you now feel may instantly vanish.

A shadow passed over Ellen's face, and she answered in a voice that showed the remark—the tone of which conveyed more than the words themselves—to have been felt as a question of her constancy.

Can one whose heart is all unknown to me, one who must think of me with a feeling of dislike because of bonds, and, prove a nearer or dearer friend than

?

Ellen did not finish the sentence. But that was not needed. The glances of rebuking tenderness cast upon her companion, expressed all that her lips had failed to utter.

But do you not know me, Ellen, said the young man.

My heart says differently, was Ellen's lowly spoken reply.

Evelyn pressed the maiden's hand, and looked into her face with an earnest loving expression.

Mrs. Ravensworth, to whose care Ellen had been consigned, on the death of her father, had never been pleased with the unwise contract made by the parents of her niece and Edward Hamden. The latter had been for ten years in Paris and Italy, travelling and pursuing his studies. These being completed, in obedience to the will of a deceased parent, he was about returning to London to meet his future wife. No correspondence had taken place between the parties to this un-

natural contract; and from the time of Edward's letter, which announced to Mrs. Ravensworth his proposed visit, it was plain that his feelings were as little interested in his future partner as were hers in him.

During the two or three days that Mrs. Ravensworth and her niece remained at the watering place, Ellen and young Evelyn met frequently; but, as far as possible, at times when they supposed the particular attention of the aunt would not be drawn towards them in such a manner as to penetrate their love-secret. When at length they parted, it was with an understanding that they were to meet in London.

On arriving there the thoughts of Ellen reverted more directly to the fact of Edward Hamden's approaching visit, and, in spite of all her efforts to remain undisturbed in her feelings, the near approach of this event agitated her. Mrs. Ravensworth frequently alluded to the subject, and earnestly pressed upon Ellen the consideration of her duty to her parent, as well as the consequences that must follow her disregard of the contract which had been made. But the more she talked on this subject, the more firm was Ellen in expressing her determination not to do violence to her feelings in a matter so vital to her happiness.

The day at length came upon which Edward Hamden was to arrive. Ellen appeared in the morning with a disturbed air. It was plain to the closely observing eyes of her aunt, that she had not passed a night of refreshing sleep.

I trust, my dear niece, she said, after they had retired from the breakfast table, where but little food had been taken, that you will not exhibit towards Edward, on meeting him, any of the pre-conceived and unjust antipathy you entertain. Let your feelings at least remain uncommitted for or against him.

Aunt Hannah, it is useless to talk to me in this way, Ellen replied, with unusual warmth. The simple fact of an obligation to love puts a gulf between us. My heart turns from him as from an enemy. I will meet him with politeness; but it must be cold and formal. To ask of me more, is to ask what I cannot give. I wish that he possessed the manliness I should have had, if similarly situated. Were this so I should now be free by his act, not my own.

Seeing that all she urged made Ellen more strongly opposed to the young man, Mrs. Ravensworth ceased to speak upon the subject, and the former was left to brood with a deeply disturbed heart over the approaching interview with one who had come to claim a hand that she resolutely determined not to yield.

About twelve o'clock Mrs. Ravensworth came into Ellen's room, and announced the arrival of Edward Hamden. The maiden's face became pale, and her lips quivered.

If I could but be spared the interview! she murmured: but that is more than I can ask.

How weak you are, Ellen, replied her aunt, in a tone of reproof.

I will join you in the drawing room in half an hour, said Ellen, speaking more calmly.

Mrs. Ravensworth retired and left Ellen again to her own thoughts. She sat nearly the whole time she had mentioned. Then rising hurriedly, she made a few changes in her attire, after which she descended to the drawing-room with a step that was far from being firm.

So noiselessly did she enter the apartment where Hamden awaited her, that neither her aunt nor the young man perceived her presence for some moments;

and she had time to examine his appearance, and to read the lineaments of his half-averted face. While she stood thus observing him, her countenance suddenly flushed, and she bent forward with a look of surprise and eagerness. At this moment the young man became aware that she had entered, and rising up quickly advanced to meet her.

Evelyn exclaimed Ellen, striking her hands together, the moment he turned towards her.

Ellen! my own Ellen! returned the young man as he grasped her hand, and ventured a warm kiss on her beautiful lips. Not Evelyn, but Hamden. Our parents betrothed us while we were yet too young to give or withhold consent. Both as we grew older, felt this pledge as a heart-sickening constraint. But we met as strangers, and I saw that you were all my soul could desire. I sought your affection, and won it. No obligation but love now binds us.

The young man then turned to Mrs. Ravensworth, and said—You see, madam, that we are not strangers.

Instead of looking surprised, Mrs. Ravensworth smiled calmly, and answered—No—it would be singular if you were. Love-tokens don't generally pass, nor familiar meetings take place, between strangers.

Love-tokens, Aunt Hannah? fell from the lips of Ellen, as she turned partly away from Hamden, and looked inquiringly at her relative.

Yes dear! returned Mrs. Ravensworth. White roses, for instance! You saw your own blushing face in the mirror, did you not?

The mirror! Then you saw Edward present the rose?

And did you know me? inquired the young man.

One who knew your father as well as I did, could not fail to know the son. I penetrated your love secret as soon as it was known to yourselves.

Aunt Hannah! exclaimed Ellen, hiding her face on the neck of her kind relative, how have I been deceived!

Happily, I trust, love! returned Mrs. Ravensworth tenderly.

Most happily! My heart swells with gladness almost to bursting, came murmuring from the lips of the joyful maiden.

ALEXANDER DUMAS.

There is a certain noted author, whose pen is worth a California placer, so prolific is it, whose extravagance would exhaust the Pactolus if it flowed through his house. Now this literary Hercules was early one morning visited by an hussar and two assistants, who avowed their purpose of seeing him safely to Prison, on account of a certain debt, they being in fact only deputies of the *guard de commerce*. He attempted to discuss, to negotiate, to entreat—but all to no purpose; the officer was polite and inexorable, the orders were formal, the writ regularly issued; 1200 francs must be forthcoming, or the door of the prison Chilly would close upon him. How was he to extricate himself?

"You will at least go with me to my bookseller?" said the author, perceiving a ray of hope.

"Certainly, Monsieur, any where you please, I am at your service until sunset."

The whole entered a coach, were speedily conveyed to the bookseller's, where the debtor alighted, and, accompanied by his three satellites, made known his object, which was to procure an advance of 1200 francs on his forthcoming work.

"Sorry to refuse, my dear Dumas, but the fact is you know our express terms may bring the cost in advance. In exchange,