

LITERATURE.

THE TRUEST FRIEND.

There is a friend, a secret friend,
In every trial, every grief,
To cheer, to counsel, and defend,—
Of all we ever had the chief!—
A friend, who watching from above,
Whene'er in Error's path we trod,
Still sought us with reproving love;
That friend, that secret friend, is God!

There is a friend, a faithful friend,
In every chance and change of fate,
Whose boundless love doth solace send,
When other friendships come too late!
A friend, that when the world deceives,
And wearily we onward plod,
Still comforts every heart that grieves;
That true, that faithful friend, is God!

How blest the years of life might flow,
If one unchanged, unshaken trust;
If man this truth would only know,
And love his Maker, and be just!
Yes, there's a friend, a constant friend,
Who ne'er forsakes the lowliest sod,
But in each need, His hand doth lend;
That friend, that truest friend, is God!

CHAS. SWAIN.

SORROW.

Sorrow—sorrow—full of sorrow;
Not a stone within the street
But—if it could accents borrow—
Would the self-same strain repeat!
Youth of struggle and endurance;
Weary manhood downward hurled;
Age, but with one last assurance
Centered in another world!

Sorrow—sorrow—full of sorrow
Year to year we onward go;
Seeking hope in that to-morrow—
Which, when sought, deceives us so!
Oh, affection, friendship, kindness,
Often are ye found asleep;
Often pass ye by in blindness
Wretches that but live to weep.

CHAS. SWAIN.

THE FATAL BRIDE.

BEING A CONTRIBUTION FROM THE REMINISCENCES
OF A BACHELOR.

(Founded on an event which actually occurred.)

The story which I am about to relate, carries me back somewhere about half a century; at which time, it is needless to say, Dublin was, in point of society, a very different city from what it now is. It had then a resident aristocracy, and one whose equipages and house-keeping were maintained upon a scale which put plebeian competition out of the question. I do not mean to offer any ungracious reflections upon the existing state of Dublin society. We have now, alas! more tuft-hunters than tufts to boast of; magnificent pretensions based, like the Brahmin's world, nobody can exactly say upon what, strive and strain to fill the void, which a legitimate aristocracy have left; and men, whose grandfathers—but what matters it? the thing is after all but natural. What was a metropolis, is a capital no longer; and it is but lost time sighing after the things that once were, or snarling at those that are.

At the time of which I speak, there resided in Dublin a certain worthy baronet, whom I shall call Sir Arthur Chadleigh. He was then considerably past sixty, and was a venerable monument of what was called hard living, in all its departments. He had been, until gout disabled him, a knowing gentleman on the turf; he was a deep player and a deep drinker, and covered, with an exterior of boisterous jollity, a very cold and selfish heart. He was thoroughly a man of the world, and what was then an essential ingredient in that amiable character, whenever occasion prompted, a very determined duellist. Whatever good nature he was possessed of, was expended on society at large. In his dealings with his own family, he was arbitrary and severe; and if he did possess any natural affections, he had managed to get them all admirably under control, and never was known, under any circumstances, to suffer from their over-indulgence. This old gentleman had been blessed, in his prime, with an helpmate; but Lady Chadleigh, having been, in her own way, about as domestic a person as Sir Arthur, one fine morning, at three o'clock precisely, when her spouse was entering upon his fourth bottle of claret in the parlour, absconded with young Lord Kildalkin. The happy pair were overtaken at Havre by the baronet, who, at ten paces, duly measured, shot off Kildalkin's thumb—a feat which satisfied his honour, as some of the sterner brethren of the hair-trigger averred, at much too reasonable a rate. The worthy baronet, however, on his return, explained satisfactorily to a select circle of friends. 'For,' said he, 'had I shot him through the head, I should not have known what the —to do with Lady C.' As it was, he left his wife in

the hands of his rival, as a moderate equivalent for the joint.

Lady Chadleigh had not been cruel enough to leave her lord without some objects on which to exercise those domestic virtues, for which he was so justly celebrated. She had been just five years married, when she took her departure, as I have stated; and she left behind her, for the consolation of her spouse, along with an extensive assortment of macaws, avadavats, lapdogs, and other sundries, three children—two sons and a girl. The macaws, &c., were easily disposed of, but there was no getting rid of the children; so Sir Arthur called in a grim old spinster sister, who, for fourteen years, dating from that day, presided at the baronet's tea-table, and ruled his little flock. At the end of that period she died, and much about the same time died also the unfortunate Lady Chadleigh, forsaken and heart-broken, in some obscure town in France.

Lady Chadleigh's name had been proscribed—in Sir Arthur's presence none dared mention it, and, with the exception of little Mary, the daughter who, since infancy, had never seen her, no human being appeared to feel the smallest concern about the event. Little Mary Chadleigh, however, felt it deeply; with yearnings of unavailing affection, she had always clung to the idea, that some time or other her mother would come back, and be fond of her. The reasons of the separation were unknown to her, and her childish eagerness to learn something of her mother, had been systematically repulsed with a mysterious discouragement, in which she had come gradually to acquiesce. But though she had long learned to look upon her mother's absence as in some way a necessary and unavoidable privation, and even as a natural thing, and as a matter of course, which scarcely required to be accounted for, yet her mind had been constantly busied with one thought, that at last she would return, and love her as she wished to be loved. And now came these strange tidings, never looked for in her childish dreams, and these black dresses, to tell her that all the little plans and hopes that had silently fluttered her innocent heart so many a time for many years, must end for ever; that the being for whose return she had been watching and wishing ever since she could remember, was never to come again. This was a sore shock to the poor girl, and she wept, in the solitude of her chamber, with a vehemence of grief and a sense of desolation, which, to one unacquainted with the cherished reveries, the castle building of the heart, which had been her secret happiness from earliest childhood, would have been unaccountable.

Years passed on—new objects and associations began to fill her reveries; her secret sorrow wore away, and this early grief became but a sad, and scarcely unpleasant remembrance. I was a very young man when first I saw Miss Chadleigh, and I have seldom been so much struck by any combination of beauty, grace and expression, as when she entered the room at one of Lady's balls. She was at this time about nineteen, beautifully formed, and with the bearing of natural nobility; her eyes dark and lustrous; and her features, as I thought, exquisitely beautiful. The prevailing expression of her face was melancholy, with perhaps some slight character of haughtiness; but when she smiled, there was such a rippling of dimples, such an arch merriment in her lovely eyes, and such a revelation of little, even, pearly teeth, as made her perfectly enchanting. 'Well,' thought I, as I watched with absolute fascination the movements of this lovely being, 'if beauty the most enchanting be any longer the potent influence it once was, there is no scheme of ambition to whose realization such loveliness as yours may not aspire. How little did I dream of what was coming!

I was so much attracted—my interest and attention so irresistibly engaged, by this beautiful girl, that I observed her with scarcely any intermission, during the entire evening. It would be ridiculous to say that I was actually in love; I was not absurd or romantic enough (which you will) to get up a sentimental and hopeless passion, at a moment's notice, and that too, without having exchanged one word with the object of my aspirations. No such thing. The feeling with which I gazed on Miss Chadleigh, was one of the profoundest admiration, I admit, yet untinged with any, the least admixture of actual tenderness. I observed her with the deep and silent pleasure with which beauty of the highest order may be contemplated, without the slightest danger to the heart; and indeed, of the philosophical nature of my admiration, I had full assurance in the fact, that I remarked with hardly one flutter of jealousy, the attentions, evidently not ill received, which were devoutly paid her by a singularly handsome young officer, in a perfectly irresistible cavalry uniform. This gentleman was the afterwards too-celebrated Captain Jennings.

That evening remains impressed upon my memory with the vividness—what do I say?—with fifty times the vividness of yesterday. I think I see old Sir Arthur now, as he sat at the whist table, with his crutch beside him—for gout had claimed him as its own—his fiery face and heavy brows, overcast with the profound calculations of his favourite game, and his massive frame, shaking all over with the stentorian chuckle with which he greeted the conclusion of each successful rubber, while he slowly pocketed the guineas, and rallied and quizzed his discomfited opponent, with ferocious good humour. I looked at this old man with some curiosity. I had never seen him before, and in his past life were not a few passages of daring, and adventure, such as might warrant that qualified degree of interest which,

as a young man, I not unnaturally felt in him. As I observed this hero of a hundred stories in the gossip of the day, his massive, but not crippled form—his bloated face, in which few could have traced the vestige of the handsome traits which rumour assigned to his early youth, and upon which, in the intervals of his tempestuous good humour, I thought I could clearly discover the stamp of those sterner and imperious attributes with which general report had invested him;—as I looked on this fierce, crafty, intemperate, but at the same time, strangely enough, by no means unpopular man of the world, it was impossible to avoid the trite but natural contrast which, in a thousand such cases, is forced upon the mind, as often as, turning from him, my eye rested upon his beautiful child. How could a creature so exquisitely lovely, so accomplished in every natural grace—and, if expression might be trusted, at once so refined, so noble, and so sensitive—have ever sprung from a root so gnarled, bitter and unsightly! Yet his child she doubtless was; for the world, with all its jealous and censorious curiosity, had never once questioned the parentage of Sir Arthur's children, and in this the world was right. For poor Lady Chadleigh had begun her married life a good and faithful wife, and under circumstances less unhappy, might have been pure and honoured to the last. But the insults of callous profligacy had alienated and exasperated a heart at once proud and impetuous. She had been a spoiled child, and became a ruined woman. Habitually ungoverned, she was incapable of forbearance. With little principle and less prudence, she suffered a restless sense of wrong to hurry her into extravagance of conduct—intended, but without effect, to pique Sir Arthur, and wound at least his pride into jealousy; and in this mad enterprise the unhappy woman had at last effectually compromised herself, and was forced to the terrible necessity of flight. Her fall was not that of an impure, but of a vengeful spirit. It was the act of a bitter and passionless suicide, who would squander fifty lives to bring home one pang of remorse, or any other feeling to the heart of callous indifference. Poor thing! the world understood her character and despised her; for want of a due contempt for Sir Arthur's apathy, and a proper acquiescence in his profligate courses, she had given herself to ruin.

'Who is that officer,' I asked a friend, whom accident brought close to me in the crowded room—'that good looking fellow who has been so marked in his devotions to Miss Chadleigh all the evening?'

'Oh! that—don't you know?' he replied. 'Why that is Captain Jennings—Jennings the aid-de-camp—a devilish handsome fellow; the women are quite mad about him, and he knows it.'

'Miss Chadleigh appears intimate with him,' I observed.

'Yes, so she is; he was a friend of young Chadleigh's, who died, or was taken in some battle in India,' he answered.

'So, one of her brothers is dead then?' I interrupted. 'Yes; I believe the native army made him a prisoner, and treated him in the usual way,' replied he. 'I heard the particulars; they were deuced horrid; but I don't quite recollect them now.'

'And, Miss Chadleigh—has not she a second brother?' I inquired.

'A second brother! Yes,' he answered. 'A pleasant fellow: but a perfect devil for wildness. She was fond of the other brother, and in a sad way I believe, when the news came; but that is a year and a half since. There, now, you can see young Chadleigh—the young man going to take Miss Chadleigh away.'

He nodded to indicate the party, and I followed the direction of his eye.

Young Chadleigh was a decidedly well looking man, with a frank and rather distinguished air, and dressed with an almost foppish attention to the prevailing fashion. I had just time to observe that he and Jennings chatted familiarly for a minute or two, and appeared to be on the friendliest terms of intimacy.

'Well,' thought I, 'after all, he may be but a friend.'

Whether it be impossible to contemplate such beauty as Miss Chadleigh's with perfect stoicism, and that, without knowing it, I was really a little jealous, I can't say; but I certainly had watched the young captain's attentions with a slight but disagreeable sense of restlessness, and experienced, I know not how, a certain relief in the reflection I had just made. It had, however, hardly visited my mind, when it was again disturbed.

Miss Chadleigh, leaning on her brother's arm, was passing so close as almost to touch me, whom she had unconsciously inspired with so much admiration, when Jennings, following, presented her with her fan, accidentally forgotten. As she took it with a gracious smile, she blushed. Yes, I could not be mistaken, for a more beautiful blush I never beheld in my existence; and, to make the matter worse, I thought I perceived that, as he placed the light weapon of coquetry in her hand, his own rested upon her's for a second longer than was strictly necessary, and in doing so conveyed the slightest possible pressure to her little ivory fingers. I felt, I know not how, disposed to be affronted and incensed, and actually stared, with no very inviting expression, full upon Captain Jennings, as he made his retreat, with a lurking smile of vanity and triumph on his lip. My ill-bred stare was unobserved, and I could, on reflection, scarcely help laughing at the absurdity of the emotion which had inspired it. But, after all, why should I?—the nature of the beast pervades us all. The presence of beauty is a woeful stimulus to unprovoked