

Variety.

Mixing together profit and delight.

From the (London) Literary Souvenir.

THE LOVERS' QUARREL.

[CONCLUDED.]

"Time rolled on very disagreeably. The Childe grew every day paler and more popular: the old ladies gave him more advice, and the old lord gave him more wine, and Sibyl grew mortified at his mistrust, and Sir Lubin grew afraid of his frown, and one half of the hall could not help being sorry, and the other half were obliged to be civil. Ajax and Ulysses had stepped into each other's shoes, and Sibyl, to keep the peace, was obliged to accede to an interview in her little boudoir.

"It was a fine honey-dropping afternoon. The sweet south was murmuring through the lattice amongst the strings of the guitar, and the golden fish were sporting till they almost flung themselves out of their crystal globe: it was just the hour for every thing to be sweet and harmonious,—but Sibyl was somewhat vexed, and the Childe was somewhat angry. He was much obliged to her for meeting him, but he feared that he was taking her from more agreeable occupation; and he was moreover alarmed lest her other visitors wanted some one to amuse them. He merely wished to ask if she had any command to his family, for whom it was time that he should think of setting out; and when he had obtained them, he would no longer trespass upon her condescension. Sibyl leant her cheek upon her hand, and regarded him patiently till he had done.

"My commands," she gravely said, "are of a confidential nature, and I cannot speak them if you sit so far off."

"As she tendered her little hand, her features broke through their mock ceremony into a half smile, and there was an enchantment about her which could not be withstood.

"Sibyl," he exclaimed, "why have you taken such pains to torment me?"

"And why have you so ill attended to the injunctions which I gave you?"

"H!—Heaven and earth! Have I not laboured to be agreeable till my head is turned topsy-turvy?"

"Oh yes; and hind side before as well, for it is any thing but right. But did I tell you to pursue this laudable work with fuming and frowning, and doubting and desperation, till I was in an agony lest you should die of your exertions, and leave me to wear the willow?"

The cavalier stated his provocation with much eloquence.

"Dear Sibyl," he continued, "I have passed a sufficient ordeal. If I really possess your love, let me declare mine at once, and send these barbarians about their business."

"Or rather be sent about your own, if you have any; for you cannot suppose that the specimen which you have given of your patient disposition, is likely to have told very much in your favour."

"Then why not teach them the presumption of their hopes, and tell them that you despise them?"

"Because they are my father's friends, and because, whatever their hopes may be, they will probably wait for encouragement before they afford me an opportunity of giving my opinion thereupon."

"But has there been any necessity to give them so much more of your time, so many more of your smiles than you have bestowed upon me?"

"And is it you who ask this question?—Oh!—is it possible to mete out attentions to those we love with the same indifference which we use towards the rest of the world?—Would nothing, do you think,—no tell-tale countenance,—no treacherous accent betray the secret which it is our interest to maintain? Unkind, to make poor Sibyl's pride confess so much!"

"The cavalier did not know whether he ought to feel quite convinced. He counted the rings upon the fingers, which were still locked in his own, three times over.

"Sibyl," he at last said, "I cannot bear them to triumph over me even in their own bright fancies. If you are sincere with me, let us anticipate the slow events of time,—let us seek happiness by the readiest means, and, trust me, if it is difficult to obtain consent to our wishes, you are too dear to despair of pardon for having acted without it."

"And you would have me fly with you?" Sibyl shrank from the idea;—her pride was no longer assumed in sport. "You do well," she resumed, "to reproach me with the duplicity which I have practised. It is but just to suppose that she who has gone so far, would not scruple to make the love which has been lavished upon her the inducement for her disobedience; that the pride which has yielded to much, would be content to be pursued as a fugitive, and to return as a penitent."

"Then, Sibyl, you do not love me?"

"I am not used to make assurances of that kind, any more than I am inclined to submit to the charge of deceit."

"Merthinks, Lady Sibyl," he replied, "with somewhat of bitterness, 'you very easily take offence to night. It certainly is better to be free from one engagement before we enter upon another.'"

"Sibyl's heart beat high, but she did not speak.

"It is possible you may have mistaken your reasons for enjoining me to silence; for it is, no doubt, advisable that your more eligible friends should have the opportunity of speaking first."

"Sibyl's heart beat higher, and the tears sprang to her eyes, but her head was turned away.

"We have staid too long," she said, with an effort at composure.

"I thank you, Lady Sibyl," he replied, rising haughtily to depart, "for allowing me to come to a right understanding. And now—"

"Her anger never had been more than a flash,—she could hardly believe him serious, and if he was he would soon repent.

"And now," she interrupted him, relapsing into her loveliest look of raiery, "Childe Willful would be glad of his picture again?"

"You certainly will oblige me by restoring it."

"Why do you not ask Sir Lubin for it?"

"Lady Sibyl, I am serious; and I must beg to remark, that it can be but an unworthy satisfaction to retain it for a boast to your new lovers."

"I do not see that there is any thing to boast of in it. The face is not a particularly handsome one, and as for him for whom it is meant, he has never made a figure in any history excepting his own letters. Here is one in my dressing-case,—I pray you stand still now while I read over the wondrous exploits which you performed in your last battle, for I think you must have looked just as you do now."

"There is no saying whether his resolution would have been firm enough to persist in his dire demand, had not the Lady Sibyl's attendant at that moment entered with Sir Lubin's compliments, and it was past the hour when she engaged to ride with him. Childe Willful's heart was armed with a thicker coat of mail than ever, and his lips writhed into a bitter smile.

"Do not let me detain you, Lady Sibyl," he said, "perhaps your gentleman will be good enough to find me the picture amongst your cast-off ornaments."

"This was rather too much, to be exposed in her weakest point to the impertinent surprise of her servant.

"Nay—nay," she replied in confusion, "have done for the present;—if you ask me for it to-morrow I will return it."

"I shall not be here to-morrow, and it is hardly compatible with Lady Sibyl's pride to detain presents which the donor would resume."

"Her answer was a little indignant,—his rejoinder was a little more provoking,—the maid began to laugh in her sleeve,—and Sibyl felt herself humiliated. It is but a short step, in mighty spirits, from humiliation to discord; and Sibyl soon called in the whole force of her dignity, and conjured up a smile of as much asperity as the Childe's.

"No!" she exclaimed, "it is not amongst my cast-off ornaments. I mistook it for the similitude of true affection, of generosity and manliness, and have worn it where those qualities deserve to be treasured up."

"The picture was produced from its pretty hiding place, and carelessly tendered to him.

"You will, perhaps, remember," she continued, "that there was a fellow to this picture, and that the original of it has as little inclination as other people to be made a boast of."

"Undoubtedly, Lady Sibyl,—it was my intention to make you perfectly easy on that point."

"The little jewel was removed coldly from his breast, and seemed to reproach him as it parted, for it had the same mournful smile with which Sibyl sat for it when he was preparing for the wars. He gave it to her and received his own in return. It was yet warm from its sweet depository, and the touch of it thrilled to his soul;—but he was determined for once to act with consistency. As he closed the door he distinguished a faint sob, and a feeling of self-reproach seemed fast coming over him; but then his honour! Was he to endure the possibility of being triumphed over by such an eternal blockhead as Sir Lubin of the Golden Dell?"

"Sibyl made her appearance in the drawing-room soon after him, in her riding-dress. Her manner was cold and distant, and she heard him feign business at home without condescending to notice it, only that there was a fever upon her cheek which spoke an unwonted tumult of feeling. Her horse was at the door, and Sir Lubin was ready to escort her down. As she took leave of her cousin, they were both haughty, and both their hands trembled. In a minute she was seen winding through the old avenue. Sir Lubin, who was observed poking his head from his shoulders with all the grace of a goose in a basket, was evidently saying tender things, and, altogether, looking cruelly like a dangerous rival. The Childe drew his breath through his teeth as though they had been set on edge, and moved from the window like a spirit turned out of paradise.

"Sir Lubin did not find his ride very satisfactory. He discovered that it was a fine evening;—made a clever simile about Lady Sibyl's cheek and a poppy, and another about her cruelty and a bram-

ble; but they had little or no effect. She answered 'no,' when she ought to have said 'yes,' looked bewildered when he asked her opinion, and, in fact, as he poetically expressed it, was extracting honey from the flowers of her own imagination.

"Will he indeed have the heart to leave me thus?" said Sibyl to herself. "Unkind—ungrateful—to take my little treasure from me,—the sole companion of my bosom,—the witness of all the tears I have shed for him, the comforter of all my doubts of his fidelity;—I can never stoop to receive it back,—I never will forgive him,—no, never,—that is, if he be gone."

"And really, when she returned, he was gone. Sibyl, however, would not persuade herself that it was not his intention to return; and every night had to take her pride to task for having looked out upon the road all the day. Perhaps he would write; and she stole away, as here before, alone, to meet the tardy post a mile off. There were letters for my lord,—for Sir Lubin,—for the Lady Jemima.

"No—no!—I want not them. For the Lady Sibyl—what for the Lady Sibyl?" The letters were turned over and over, and still the same deadening sound fell like a knell upon her heart.—Nothing for the Lady Sibyl.

"She returned unwillingly to her company, and retired, at the first opportunity, to wonder if her cousin was really in earnest,—if he had really deserted her, and whether she had ever given him cause so to do. Her pride would seldom suffer her to weep, and the tears seemed swelling at her heart till each throb was a throb of pain. Sometimes she would bewilder herself with suggesting other reasons than want of inclination for his absence. Might he not wish to return, and be prevented by his family, who had not seen him for so long, and would naturally be importune? Might he not be fearful of writing, lest the letter should fall into hands for which it was not intended, & betray the secret which she had desired him to keep? It surely might be her own over-weening caution that was afflicting her, and he might be as impatient as herself. Her imagination would begin to occupy itself in ideal scenes, until she forgot those which had really occurred, and her hand would rise fondly to her bosom to draw forth the semblance of her suffering cavalier. Alas! it was then that the poor Sibyl's deceptive dreams were dispersed. The picture was gone,—was even now, perhaps, the bosom companion of another, who pitied her with smiles, and gaily upbraided him for his falsehood. Then again would the flash of shame rush over her cheek, her maiden indignation determine to forget him, and her wildered wits busy themselves upon plans of teaching him that she had done so.

"In the mean time Sir Lubin began to congratulate himself that he had made an impression. Sibyl had lost the spirit to repel his advances as she had done before, and the little she afforded him of her company, was clearly a pretty stratagem to bring him to an explanation. He had a great mind to be cruel in his turn, and lead her heart the dance, as he expressed it, which she had led his,—but then she was very pale, and might have a fit of illness. On the evening when he had resolved to make her happy, Sibyl indeed received a letter, but it was from her lover's sister. It was full of the gay rattle which usually characterises the correspondence of hearts which have never known sorrow, but it was other news that Sibyl looked for. She toiled through lively descriptions of fetes and finery, and flirtations, scarcely knowing what she read, till, at last her eyes glanced upon the name she sought. She stopped to breathe ere she proceeded, and then Childe Willful was gone to—, and was paying violent attentions to the Lady Blanche.

"She tore the letter calmly into little strips;—her lips were compressed with beautiful, but stern and desperate determination. That night Sir Lubin made his proposals, and, in the delirium of fancied vengeance, Sibyl answered—she knew not what.

"It was not long after that the Childe was returning sadly home from the Lady Blanche. She was very beautiful,—but, oh, she had not the speaking glance of Sibyl. She was lofty and high minded; but it was not the sweet pride that fascinated whilst it awed,—it was the aspiring woman, and not the playful and condescending scaph. She was accomplished; but they were the accomplishments approved by the understanding rather than the heart,—the methodical work of education, and stored up for display. But Sibyl was accomplished by Heaven; her gifts were like the summer breezes which sported about him,—wild, exquisite, and mysterious, which were the same whether wasted on the desert, or wafted delight to the multitude. She was a lovely line of poetry in a world of prose.—She was a blossom dropped from Paradise to shame all the flowers of the earth. Oh, but Sibyl was false! and oh, again, it was just possible that he might be mistaken. He was sadly bewildered, had another bad headache, and was strongly of opinion that it was not the way to forget Sibyl to put her in competition with other people. He hardly liked to confess it to himself, but he was not quite sure that, if he had any excuse

which would not compromise his dignity, he would not turn his horse's head towards the hall, and suffer the fiends which were tormenting him to drive him at their own pace.

"It happened that such excuse was not far distant. He had no sooner alighted at home than he was presented with a hasty note, which had been some days awaiting him, from Sibyl's father, inviting him,—a film came over his eyes, and the pulsation of his heart was paralysed, inviting him to what he knew would give him great pleasure, to Sibyl's wedding!

"Should he send an excuse, and stay at home, and prove that he did not care about it; or should he plunge headlong into their revelry, and spare neither age nor sex of the whole party? No matter, he would consider of it on his way. He gave his steed the spur as though the good animal had been Sir Lubin himself, and set out to cool his blood, and shake his wits into their places, by a moonlight gallop of a hundred miles.

"The morning was far advanced when he came within sight of the hall. He was almost exhausted; and the preparations for festivity, upon the fine slope of the chase, came over his soul with sickness and dismay. The high blood of his poor animal was barely sufficient to answer the feeble urging of its rider; and the slow stride, which was accompanied by a deeper sob, seemed fast flagging to a stand still. The Childe felt that he was too late. He inquired of a troop of merry-makers round a roasting ox, and found that the wedding cavalcade had set off for the church. He looked down upon the hilt of his sword,—he was still in time for vengeance,—still in time to cut short the bridegroom's triumph,—to disappoint the anticipations of—

"Spirits of fury! were there none to inspire a few minutes' vigour into his fainting steed. The steed toiled on as though he had possessed the burning heart of his master;—troops of peasant girls, dressed fantastically, and waving garlands on either side of the road, soon told him that he was near the scene of the sacrifice. They had received a sheep-face duck from the head of the blushing Sir Lubin,—a sprawling wave of his long arm, thrust, in all the pride of silver and satin, from the window of his coach and six. They had beheld the fevered and bewildered loveliness of the Lady Sibyl, looking, amongst her bride's maids, intense as a planet amidst its satellites, and they were all in ecstasies, which, if possible, increased his agony. Another lash, another bound, and he turned the corner which brought him full upon the old embowered church, surrounded by the main body of the May-day multitude, and a string of coaches which displayed all the arms in the county. He sprang from his horse, and dashed through them like a meteor. The party were still standing before the altar; and he staggered and restrained his steps to hear how far the ceremony had proceeded.—There was a dead silence, and all eyes were fixed upon Sibyl, who trembled, as it seemed, too much to articulate.

"More water," said some one in a low voice; "she is going to faint again."

"Water was handed to her, and the clergyman repeated,—Wilt thou take this man for thy wedded husband?"

"Sibyl said nothing, but gasped audibly: her father looked more troubled, and Sir Lubin opened his mouth wider and wider.

"The question was repeated, but still Sibyl spoke not.

"It was pronounced a third time,—Sibyl shook more violently, and uttered an hysterical scream.

"Oh merciful heaven!" she exclaimed, "it is impossible!—I cannot!—I cannot!"

"Her astonished lover sprang forward, and received her fainting form in his arms. A glance at each other's countenance was sufficient to explain all their sufferings,—to dissipate all their resentment. Concealment was now out of the question, and their words broke forth at the same instant.

"Oh, faithless! how could you drive me to this dreadful extremity?"

"Sweet Sibyl, forgive—forgive me! I will atone for it by such penitence, such devotion, as the world never saw."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the bridegroom, "but I do not like this!"

"By my word!" added the Lady Jemima, "but here is a new lover!"

"By mine honour!" responded the Lady Bridget, "but he is an old one!"

"By my word and honour too," continued the Lady something else, "I suspected it long ago!"

"And by my grey beard," concluded the old Lord, "I wish I had done so too!"

"Look you, Sir Lubin, Sibyl is my only child, and must be made happy her own way. I really thought she had been pining and dying for you, but since it appears I was mistaken, why let us make the best of it. You can be bridegroom, and who knows but in our revels to-night, you may find a lady less liable to change her mind?"

"Sir Lubin did not understand this mode of proceeding, and would have come to high words but for the peculiar expression of Childe Willful's eye, which kept them babbling in his throat. He could by no means decide upon what to say. He gave two or three pretty com-
pliments, but he cleared the road

in vain, for nothing was coming; and so at last, he made up his mind to treat the matter with contempt. He bowed to the company with a haughty dive, kicked his long sword, as he turned, between his legs, and strode, or rather rode, out of the church as fast as his dignity would permit. The crowd on the outside, not being aware of what had passed within, and taking it for granted that it was all right that the bridegroom, on such great occasions, should go home alone, wished him joy very heartily and clamorously; and the six horses went off at a long trot, which was quite grand.

"Sibyl and her cavalier looked breathlessly for what was to come next.

"The wedding feast must not be lost," said the old Lord; "will nobody be married?"

"Sibyl was again placed at the altar, and in the room of Sir Lubin, was handed the Cavalier Willful.

"Wilt thou take this man for thy wedded husband?" demanded the priest.

"Sibyl blushed, and still trembled, but her faintings did not return; and if her voice was low when she spoke the words 'I will,' it was distinct and musical as the clearest note of the nightingale."

Noah Webster, Esq. author of the Spelling Book, has given notice in the Eastern newspapers, that he has completed a Dictionary of our language "at the expense of twenty years of labor, and thirty thousand dollars in money." He mentions that he made a visit to England, partly with a view to ascertain the real state of the language, and there discovered that no book whatever was considered and received in that country as a standard of orthoepy. He observes incidentally, that no less than seven millions of copies of his Spelling Book have been sold. He thinks the English dictionaries are, all of them, half a century behind the state of science, and hopes that his fellow citizens will be furnished with something better in the one which he is about to publish. Nat. Gazette.

There are at present building in the several naval arsenals in Great Britain, the following vessels of war, viz: nine three-decked ships, from 100 to 120 guns; six from 80 to 84 guns; twenty-six frigates, to mount 46 guns each; five smaller frigates, of 28 guns each; eight sloops of 18 guns; thirty-one sloops of 10 guns; one cutter; and seven bomb vessels.—in all ninety-six.

A gentleman of the name of Marble has been married to Miss Moss, in defiance of the proverb,—“A rolling stone will never gather moss.”

Moderate Accomplishments.—A French paper states that the famous CLARA WISPEL, chief of a band of robbers in Switzerland, is one of the phenomena of the age. She is twenty years old; and a great beauty, of rare acquirements—has been the cause of, or an agent in 20 assassinations, fourteen burglaries, 1588 robberies.

AFFECTIONATE PREACHING.

"A preacher ought to speak to his audience as a father would talk to his children, with an affectionate tenderness. In the most awful denunciations of the Divine displeasure, an air of unaffected meekness should be preserved, that while, with unsparing fidelity, we declare the whole counsel of God, it may appear we are actuated by a genuine spirit of compassion. A hard and unfeeling manner of denouncing the threatenings of the word of God, is not only barbarous and inhuman, but calculated, by inspiring disgust, to rob them of all their efficacy. If the awful part of our message, which may be styled the burden of the Lord, ever fall with due weight on our hearers, it will be when it is delivered with a trembling hand and faltering lips; & we may then expect them to realize its solemn import, when they perceive that we ourselves are ready to sink under it. "Of whom I have told you before," said St. Paul, "and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." What force does that affecting declaration derive from these tears? An affectionate manner insinuates itself into the heart, renders it soft and pliable, and disposes it to imbibe the sentiments and follow the impulse of the speaker. Whoever has attended to the effect of addresses from the pulpit, must have perceived how much of their impression depends upon this quality, which gives to sentiments comparatively trite, a power over the mind, beyond what the most striking and original conceptions possess without it."—Hall.

Eternity.—The following beautiful answer by a pupil of the Deaf and Dumb School at Paris contains a sublimity of conception scarcely to be equalled:—"What is eternity?" was the question to which he immediately answered, "The life time of the Almighty."