

The Muse I shall for the Muse inspire,
My soul the lute of strain address—scorn.



ON LEAVING HOME.

God bless thee! 'twas the last endearing word
The lip could utter, or the heart could feel!
But there was one from whom was only heard
God bless thee!—and it was affection's knell
For many a lonely day—

The very phrase
Was oft repeated by the parting voice
Of youthful friendship, and the last farewell
Of some who lov'd me in my boyish days,
Was warm and tearful—

Yet there was but one
Whose heart beat quicker than her eyes ran o'er,
Whose trembling lips refus'd to whisper more,
Than that warm prayer.

It was a hallow'd tone!

Literary Extracts, &c.

Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavor.

From "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life."

THE LOVER'S LAST VISIT.

The window of the lonely cottage of Hiltop was beaming far above the highest birch-wood, seeming to travelers at a distance, in the long valley below, who knew it not, to be a star in the sky. A bright fire was in the kitchen of that small tenement; the floor was washed, swept, and sanded, and not a footstep had marked its perfect neatness; a small table was covered, near the ingle, with a snow white cloth, on which was placed a frugal evening meal; and in happy, but pensive mood sat there all alone the Woodcutter's daughter, a comely and gentle creature, if not beautiful! such an one as diffuses pleasure round her in the hay field, and serenity over the seat in which she sits intently on the Sabbath, listening to the word of God, or joining with mellow voice in his praise and worship. On this night she expected a visit from her lover, that they might fix their marriage day; and her parents, satisfied and happy that their child was about to be wedded to a respectable shepherd, had gone to pay a visit to their nearest neighbor in the glen.

A feeble and hesitating knock was heard at the door, not like the glad and joyful touch of a lover's hand; and cautiously opening it, Mary Robison beheld a female figure wrapped up in a shawl, with her face concealed in a black bonnet. This stranger, whoever she might be, seemed wearied and worn out, and her feet bore witness to a long day's travel across the marshy mountains. Although she could scarcely help considering her an unwelcome visitor at such an hour, yet Mary had too much sweetness of disposition—too much humanity, not to request her to step forward into the hut; for it seemed as if the wearied woman had lost her way, and had come towards the shining window to be put right upon her journey, to the low country.

The stranger took off her bonnet on reaching the fire; and Mary Robison beheld the face of one whom, in youth, she had tenderly loved—although for some years past, the distance at which they lived from each other had kept them from meeting, and only a letter or two, written in their simple way, had given them a few notices of each other's existence. And now Mary had an opportunity, in the first speechless gaze of recognition, to mark the altered face of her friend—and her heart was touched with an inquisitive compassion. "For mercy's sake! sit down, Sarah! and tell me what evil has befallen you; for you are as white as a ghost. Fear not to confide any thing to my bosom, we have herded sheep together on the lonesome braes—we have stripped the bark together in the more lonesome woods—we have played, laughed, sung, danced together—we have talked merrily and gaily, but innocently enough, surely, of sweet-hearts together—and Sarah, graver thoughts, too, have we shared, for when your poor brother died away like a frosted flower, I wept as if I had been his sister; nor can I ever be so happy in this world as to forget him. Tell me, my friend, why are you here? and why is your sweet face so ghastly?"

The heart of this unexpected visitor did within her at these kind and affectionate inquiries. For she had come on an errand that was likely to dash

the joy from that happy countenance. Her heart upbraided her with the meanness of the purpose for which she had paid this visit; but that was only a passing thought; for was she, innocent and free from sin, to submit, not only to desertion, but to disgrace, and not trust herself and her wrongs, and her hopes of redress, to her whom she loved as a sister, and whose generous nature she well knew; not even love, the changer of so many things, could change utterly; though, indeed, it might render it colder than of old to the anguish of a female friend?

"O! Mary, I must speak—yet must my words make you grieve, far less for me than for yourself. Wretch, that I am—I bring evil tidings into the dwelling of my dearest friend! These ribbons—they are worn for his sake—they become well, as he thinks, the auburn of your bonny hair—that blue gown is worn to night because he likes it—but, Mary, will you curse me to my face, when I declare before the God that made us, that the man is pledged unto me by all that is sacred between mortal creatures, and that I have here in my bosom written promises and oaths of love from him who, I was this morning told, is in a few days to be thy husband. Turn out of the hut now if you choose, and meet me, if you choose, die of hunger and fatigue, in the woods where we have so often walked together; for such death would be mercy to me, in comparison with your marriage with him who is mine forever, if there be a God who heeds the oath of the creatures he has made."

Mary Robison had led a happy life, but a life of quiet thoughts, tranquil hopes, and meek desires. Tenderly and truly did she love the man to whom she was now betrothed; but it was because she had thought him gentle, manly, upright, sincere, and one that feared God. His character was unimpeached—to her his behavior had always been fond, affectionate, and respectful; that he was a fine looking man, and could shew himself among the best of the country round the church, and market, and fair day, she saw and felt with pleasure and with pride. But in the heart of this poor, humble, contented and pious girl, love was not a violent passion, but an affection sweet and profound. She looked forward to her marriage with a joyful sedateness, knowing that she would have to toil for her family, if blest with children; but happy in the thought of keeping her husband's house clean—of preparing his frugal meals, and welcoming him when wearied at night, to her faithful and affectionate, and grateful bosom.

At first, perhaps, a slight flush of anger towards Sarah tinged her cheek; then followed in quick succession, or all blended together in one sickening pang, fear, disappointment, the sense of wrong, and the cruel pain of disesteeming and despising one on whom her heart had rested with all its best and purest affection. But though there was a keen struggle between many feelings in her heart, her resolution was formed during that very conflict; and she said within herself, "if it be even so, neither will I be so unjust to deprive poor Sarah of the man who ought to marry her, nor will I be so mean and low spirited, poor as I am, and dear as he has been unto me, as to become his wife."

While these thoughts were calmly passing in the soul of this magnanimous girl, all her former affection for Sarah revived; and, as she sighed for herself, she wept aloud for her friend. "Be quiet, Sarah, and sob not so as if your heart were breaking. It need not to be thus with you. Oh! sob not so sair! You surely have not walked in this one day from the heart of the parish of Monrath?" "I have indeed done so, and I am as weak as the watched snaw. God knows, little matter if I should die away; for, after all, I fear he will never think of me for his wife, and you, Mary, will lose a husband with whom you would have been happy. I feel, after all, that I must appear a mean wretch in your eyes."

There was silence between them; and Mary Robison looking at the clock, saw that it wanted only about a quarter of an hour from the time of tryst. "Give me the oaths and promises you mentioned out of your bosom, Sarah, that I may shew them to Gabriel when he comes. And once more I promise, by all the sunny and the snowy days we have sat together, in the same plaid on the hillside, or in the lonesome charcoal pits and nests of green in the woods, that if my Ga-

riel—did I say my Gabriel?—Has forsaken you and deceived me thus, never shall his lips touch mine again—never shall he put ring on my finger—never shall this head lie in his bosom—no, never, never, notwithstanding all the happy, too happy hours and days I have been with him, near or at a distance—on the corn rig—among the meadow hay—in the singing school—at harvest home—in this room and in God's own house. So help me God, but I will keep this vow!"

Poor Sarah told, in a few hurried words, the story of her love and desertion—how Gabriel, whose business as a shepherd often took him into Monrath parish, had wooed her, and fixed every thing about their marriage, nearly a year ago. But that he had become ceaselessly jealous of a young man whom she scarcely knew; had accused her of want of virtue, and for many months had never once come to see her. "This morning, for the first time, I heard, for a certainty, from one who knew Gabriel well, and all his concerns, that the banns had been proclaimed in the church between him and you; and that, in a day or two, you were to be married. And though I felt like drowning, I determined to make a struggle for my life—for oh! Mary, Mary, my heart is not like your heart; it wants your wisdom, your meekness, your piety; and if I am to lose Gabriel, will I destroy my miserable life, and face the wrath of God sitting in judgment upon sinners."

At this burst of passion Sarah hid her face with her hands, as if sensible that she had committed blasphemy.—Mary seeing her wearied, hungry, thirsty and feverish, spoke to her in the most soothing manner; led her into the little parlour called the Spence, then removed into it the table, with the oaten cake, butter and milk; and telling her to take some refreshment, and then lie down on the bed, but on no account to leave the room until called for, gave her a sisterly kiss and left her. In a few minutes, the outer door opened, and Gabriel entered.

The lover said, "how is my sweet Mary?" With a beaming countenance, and gently drawing her to his bosom, he kissed her cheek—Mary did not—could not—wished not—at once to release herself from his enfolding arms. Gabriel had always treated her as the woman who was to be his wife; and though at this time her heart knew its own bitterness, yet she repelled not endearments that were so lately delightful, and suffered him to take her almost in his arms to their accustomed seat. He held her hand in his, and began to speak in his usual kind and affectionate language. Kind and affectionate it was, for though he ought not to have done so, he loved her, as she thought, better than his life. Her heart could not in one small short hour, forget a whole year of bliss. She could not yet fling away with her own hand what, only a few minutes ago, seemed to her the hope of paradise. Her soul sickened within her, and she wished that she were dead, or never had been born.

"Gabriel! Gabriel! well indeed have I loved you; nor will I say, after all that has passed between us, that you are not deserving, after all, of a better love than mine. Vain were it to deny my love either to you, or to my own soul. But look me in the face—be not wrathful—think not to hide the truth either from yourself or me, for that now is impossible—but tell me solemnly, as you shall answer to God at the judgment day, if you know any reason why I must not be your wedded wife?" She kept her mild, moist eyes fixed upon him; but he hung down his head and uttered not a word, for he was guilty before her, before his own soul, and before God.

"Gabriel, never could we have been happy, for you often told me, that all the secrets of your heart were known to me, yet never did ye tell me this. How could you desert the poor innocent creature that loved you; and how could you use me so, who loved you perhaps as well as she, but whose heart God will teach, not to forget you. For that I may never do, but to think of you, with that friendship and affection which innocently I can bestow upon you, when you are Sarah's husband."

For, Gabriel, I have this night sworn not in anger or passion—no, no—but in sorrow and pity for another's wrong, in sorrow also, deny it will I not, for my own, to look on you from this hour, as one whose life is to be less apart from my life, and whose love must never more meet with my love. Speak not unto me, look not on me

with beseeching eyes. Duty and religion forbid us ever to be man and wife. But you know there is one, besides me, whom you loved before you loved me, and, therefore, it may be better too; and that she loves you, and is faithful, as if God had made you one, I say without fear, I who have known her since she was a child, altho' fatally for the peace of us both, we have long lived apart. Sarah is in the house, and I will bring her unto you in tears, but not tears of penitence, for she is as innocent of that sin as I am who now speak."

Mary went into the little parlour, and led Sarah forward in her hand.—Despairing as she had been, yet when she had heard from poor Mary's speaking so fervently that Gabriel had come, and that her friend was interceding in her behalf—the poor girl had arranged her hair in a small looking glass—tied it up with a ribbon which Gabriel had given her, and put into the breast of her gown a little gilt brooch that contained locks of their blended hair. Pale but beautiful, for Sarah Pringle was the fairest girl in all the country; she advanced with a flush on that paleness of reviving hope, injured pride, and love that was ready to forgive all and forget all, so that once again she could be restored to the place in his heart that she had lost. "What have I ever done, Gabriel, that you should fling me from you? May my soul never live by the atonement of my Saviour, if I am not innocent of that sin, yea, of all distant thought of that sin with which you, even you, have in your hard-heartedness charged me. Look me in the face, Gabriel, and think of all I have been unto you, and if you say that before God, and in your own soul, you believe me guilty, then will I go away out in the dark night, and, long before morning, my troubles will be at an end."

Truth was not only in her fervent and simple words, but in the tone of her voice, the color of her face and the light of her eyes. Gabriel had long shut up his heart against her. At first he had doubted her virtue, and that doubt gradually weakened his affection. At last, he tried to believe her guilty or to forget her altogether, when his heart turned to Mary Robison, and he thought of making her his wife. His injustice, his wickedness, his baseness, which he had so long concealed, in some measure, from himself, by a dim feeling of wrong done him, and afterwards by the pleasure of a new love, now appeared to him as they were and without disguise. Mary took Sarah's hand and placed it within that of her contrite lover, for had the tumult of conflicting passions allowed him to know his own soul, such, at that moment he surely was, saying with a voice as composed as the eyes with which she looked upon them, "I restore you to each other, and I already feel the comfort of being able to do my duty. I will be bride's maid. And I now implore the blessing of God upon your marriage; Gabriel, your betrothed will sleep this night in my bosom. We will think of you better, perhaps, than you deserve. It is not for me to tell you what you have to repent of. Let us all three pray for each other this night, and evermore when we are on our knees before our Maker. The old people will soon be at home. Good night Gabriel." He kissed Sarah—and, giving Mary a look of shame, humility and reverence, he went home to meditation and repentance.

It was now mid-summer, and before the harvest had been gathered in throughout the higher valleys, or the sheep brought from the mountain fold, Gabriel and Sarah were man and wife. Time past on, and a blooming family cheered their board and fireside. Nor did Mary Robison, the flower of the forest, (for so the woodcutter's daughter was often called,) pass her life in single blessedness. She, too, became a wife and mother; and the two families, who lived at last on adjacent farms, were remarkable for mutual affection, throughout all the parish; and more than one intermarriage took place between them, at a time, when the worthy parents had almost entirely forgotten the trying incident of their youth.

FEMALE CHARACTER.

The critics on the fair sex tell us they are vain, frivolous, ignorant, coquettish, capricious, and what not. Unjust that we are! It is the fable of the lion and the man—but since the ladies have become authors, they can take their revenge, were they not so generous to indulge the passion. Though they have learnt to paint, their sketches of man are gentle and kind.

But if the ladies were what surly misanthropes call them, who is to blame them? Is it not we who spoil, who corrupt, who seduce them? Is it surprising that a pretty woman should be vain, when we daily praise to her face her charms—her taste—her wit? Can we blame her vanity, when we tell her that nothing can resist her attractions—that there is nothing so barbarous which she cannot soften—noting so elevated that she cannot subdue? when we tell her that her eyes are brighter than day—that her form is fairer than summer—more refreshing than spring—that her lips are vermilion—that her skin combines the whiteness of the lily with the carnation of the rose? Do we censure a fine woman as frivolous, when we unceasingly tell her that no other study becomes her but that of varying her pleasures—that she requires no talent but that of the arrangement of parties—no ideas beyond the thought of an afternoon's amusement? Can we blame her frivolity, when we tell her that her hands were not made to touch the needle, or to soil their whiteness in domestic employments? Can we blame her frivolity, when we tell her the look of seriousness chases from her cheek the dimple, in which the loves and the graces wanton—that reflection crowns her brow with care, and she who thinks, sacrifices the smile that makes beauty charm, and the gaiety that renders wit attractive? How can a pretty woman fail to be ignorant, when the first lesson she is taught, is that beauty supersedes and dispenses with every other quality—that all she need to know is, that she is pretty—that to be intelligent is to be pedantic, and that to be more learned than one's neighbor, is to incur the reproach of absurdity and affectation? Shall we blame her for being a coquette, when the indiscriminate flattery of every man teaches her that the homage of one is as good as that of another? It is the same darts, the same flames, the same beaux, the same coxcombs. The man of sense, when he attempts to compliment, recommends the art of beaus, since he condescends to do with awkwardness what the monkey can do with grace. With all, she is a goddess, and to her, all men are equally mortal. How can she prefer when there is no merit, or be constant when there is no superiority? Is she capricious? Can she be otherwise, when she hears the universe must be proud to wait on her commands—that the utmost of a lover's hopes is to be the humblest of her slaves—that to fulfil the least of her commands is the highest ambition of her adorers? And are men so unjust as to censure the idols made by their own hands? Let us be just; let us begin the work of reformation: when men cease to flatter, women will cease to deceive; when men are wise, women will be wise to please. The ladies do not force the taste of men—they only adapt themselves to it. They may corrupt, and be corrupted—they may improve and be improved.

FROM SARAH'S REPLY.

"Employ a sensible christian to reconcile two enemies, and you will admire the wise and equitable manner in which he would refute every sophism that passion could invent. If the ground of complaint should be exaggerated, he would instantly hold the balance of equity, and retrench what anger may have added to truth. If the offended should say he had received grievous injury, he would instantly answer, that between two jarring christians it is immaterial to inquire in this case, the degree of irrationality in the offence; the immediate business he would say, is the reasonableness of forgiveness. If the offended should allege, that he hath often forgiven, he would reply, this is exactly in the case, between the Judge of the world and his offended creatures, and yet he would add, the resulting of a thousand perfections, the forgetting of a thousand favors, the violation of a thousand resolutions, do not prevent God from opening the treasures of his mercy to us. If the complainant should have recourse to the ordinary subterfuge, and should protest that he had no animosity in heart, only that he resolved to have no future intimacy with one that had so grievously injured him; he would dissipate the gross illusion, by bringing the example of a merciful God who does not content himself with merely forgiving us, but in spite of our faults, uniteth himself to us by the tenderest relations. Lovely morality, my brethren—Admirable effort of a mind contemplating truth without prejudice or passion!"

Never magnify the faults of any, not even of enemies, but on the contrary always palliate their errors as much as a regard to truth and equity will permit.