

The Torch-Light.

DAVIS & ROBINSON, Prop'rs.

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For the Torch-Light.

Scraps from my Unpublished Manuscripts.

Impromptu lines to a lady on the eve of the civil commotion through which we passed:

Miss — in the flight of coming years,
Thine anxious eyes suffused with tears,
May trace thy country's woes;
History's page perchance may tell
Of heroes brave that nobly fell,
In conflict fierce with foes.

Tho' victory's peans loud may swell
The praises high of those that fell;
A mother's heart will bleed—
The hearthstone where the heroes stood
In youthful gayety and boyhood,
Their feet no more will tread.

Tho' in each morning sacrifice
A mother's songs of praise may rise,
And fervent be her prayer;
The saddening thought her heart will
swell,

And on her cheek in paleness tell,
Her much lov'd boy's not there.

Tho' deep her sorrows and her tears,
Her mind may run to other years,
And catch a gleam of light;
Tho' low beneath some forest pine,
The fallen soldier may recline,
She taught his heart aright.

OXFORD.

For the Torch-Light.

THE BROKEN VOW.

A Story of the Olden Time.

BY JAMES A. DAVIS,

Of Flat River, North Carolina.

CHAPTER II.

Life, spirit, vivacity, were all fled from the home of Edward; he continued melancholy, and his depression spread a gloom over every countenance. No longer did the sports of the field yield him any amusement, even the playfulness of his sister called not forth a smile. Mary occupied every idea, Mary filled every scene, his sighs, his hopes, his wishes, were breathed alone for her. Often with the inconsistency of a lover was he for hastening to the college, but a moment's reflection restored him to his duty, and was obliged to be contented with the full consolation that their correspondence procured.

"Oh, Mary!" he would exclaim, "seen but to be admired, known but to be adored. Should the span of my existence linger into years, never will thy tenderness, thy innocence, thy virtue, be effaced from my memory. I will cherish them deep in my heart in pleasant contemplation for the few months yet to come, when I shall have the dear opportunity of gazing on your exquisite beauty once more."

But, alas! the future, what a mystery is contained therein. The brilliant anticipations of man are blackened in despair by the terrors of disappointment. Time demolishes the bright air castles we have erected for our habitations. And a fate almost unendurable envelopes all in impenetrable inextricable darkness.

The wind mournfully whistled through the clustering ivy. And the spiry heads of the lofty cypress waved in sad accordance with the breeze. No flowers perfumed the

air; no feathered warblers strained their little throats. The owl dismally hooted from the branches and every surrounding object was stamped to desolation. There is to a contemplative mind something uncommonly soothing in the autumn of the year. A gloomy stillness which steals upon the senses, carries our thoughts far beyond the perishable possessions of this world. In the discolored and falling leaves of the loftiest trees of the forest we may trace the decay of powers, of honors and boasted triumphs. The fading blossoms of the field whisper to the ear of beauty, how transient and short-lived is their pride. Every individual blade of grass; every iota of vegetation proclaims the insignificance of man and the goodness of our creator.

Edward's heart beat high with the expectation of soon seeing his affianced bride, as her father and mother had already repaired thither to bring her home to spend the vacation. But, ah! Edward, your doom is sealed.

A few weeks previous to the commencement, a cousin of Mary, the son of the brother of Mr. Howardton, had arrived in New York, and hearing that she was there attending college, he called to see her. On meeting him all thoughts of Edward fled from her mind, and very soon they had arranged things so as to marry at the vacation. Her parents arrived in time to witness the marriage, which was celebrated with all the splendor and magnificence for which the great metropolis is historical. They resolved to go on a bridal tour to Europe. Mary sat down and penned a few lines to Edward. The missive ran thus:

EDWARD:
I can no longer call you dear for I have married Eugene Howardton and to-morrow we start on a bridal tour to Europe. I hope an all-wise Providence will enable you to become reconciled, and to banish all thoughts of me from your mind. I am aware that I have broken my vow, but I trust it will be for the best. I shall think of the days we have spent together as numbered with the things of the past and shall remember them as such and such only. Good-bye. Your friend,
MARY.

Edward was seated in his reading room when the letter was handed him. He recognized the hand at a glance. He eagerly broke the seal and read. He tottered, he would have fallen had not the servant rushed forward and supported him in his arms. He had not fainted but a sensation even worse had suspended his faculties. His eyes were fixed on heaven while broken and convulsed sighs burst from his bosom. "Heaven has sanctioned the sacrifice. Fate has placed an impenetrable bar to our union," repeated the almost distracted man.

"Oh! woman! woman! false, deceitful sex," he continued. "Laden with death you tempt us to destruction; but for you innocence would have reigned; but for you sorrow would have never wounded. Married, oh! that heartrending sound. False one! perdition lurks beneath the mask of your matchless beauty, and poison more deadly than the venomous adder hangs around you."

Oh! ruined man what a part in life is yours. Sorrow is visible in

your looks and actions, and it will eventually carry you to the grave.

Life is exposed to a thousand casualties; a thousands dangers; a thousand troubles; our best laid schemes are frequently rendered abortive, but yet we must remember the being who leads us in safety, upon whose rod our health, our happiness, our very existence hangs; we must remember that misfortune acquaints us with our own infirmities; that the intricate path of adversity is the ordeal of virtue.

After the marriage they proceeded on their tour to Europe and there remained until spring and then returned to New York and took up their abode in a fine mansion. Six months had not elapsed before Mary began to regret her choice. The man who she had taken for perfection turned out the reverse. He began drinking and card playing. Her tearful supplications proved inefficient to reformation. In two years he had spent his entire fortune. And one day while Mary sat at her sewing he was brought home mortally wounded. He did not survive but a short time. Dying he left behind a poor widowed woman upon whom affliction had exercised her severest facilities.—the rose had faded from her cheeks. Her eyes had lost their brilliant lustre. She repaired to her father's house and spent the remainder of her days in obscurity. Often with a bleeding heart did she enumerate the events of her life, and thought of the man she had so greatly wronged. Time is the only specific to heal the anguish of a sorrowing heart, for sublunary misery shrinks before it, as does the foggy vapor at the rays of the all cheering sun. By it remembrance is weakened; by it our feelings become insensibly less acute, and pain and uneasiness gradually diminish. In the moments of affliction the dictates of reason, the maxims of philosophy, are alike inefficacious, for time the balm of despair, the medium of woes, can alone yield us comfort, and soothe our murmurs into peace.

Upon the little hill before described are two graves. The flowers of spring burst up and decorate them. The burning heat of summer warms the hallowed earth. The boughs of the great oaks majestically waving to and fro seem to murmur, farewell. Side by side are implanted a couple of tombstones, inscribed upon each is the epitaph:

"THE VICTIMS OF SORROW."

"Had the 'whiskey crusade' never began, we might have lived on in ignorance and died without the knowledge of the important fact that 'red-rum' was murder spelled backwards."

"Husband, I must have some change, to-day." "Well stay at home and take care of the children—that will be change enough."

"What was the name of Herod's great grand father's shoemaker? Nobody knows to this day."

For the Torch-Light.

MARDI GRAS.

Messrs Editors:

A kind friend recently sent me a copy of the Memphis Daily Appeal, containing a long and interesting account of the masquerade celebration in Memphis, called Mardi Gras. I propose noticing a few things mentioned by the writer, who certainly knows how to handle the quill. He says, "This happy day of joy and gladness smoothed the wrinkles from many an anxious brow, and made the corroding influence of care inoperative, giving the weary heart a respite in the midst of trouble." If Mardi Gras really exerts such a wonderful influence in brightening up the countenance and smoothing the wrinkles on the brow of time-worn faces, and making them sweeter and more attractive, don't you reckon some friends of Mardi Gras might be found among the wrinkled and rather ancient looking bachelors and widowers (I won't say anything about any other class of persons) in our midst? If it really makes a decided improvement in the appearance of time-worn, neglected faces, some who are making ineffectual efforts to make an impression, might be benefited by either getting in the Mardi Gras region, or getting up a masquerade face-improver here.

The writer proceeds thus: "The devil himself could not find a flaw upon which he could concoct an indictment against the celebration." Perhaps his satanic majesty could not find it in his heart to interpose obstacles in the way of a matter so much in consonance with his views of propriety. If Mardi Gras so much improved the morals of Memphis that nothing of an immoral nature was left, on that occasion, on which to hang an "indictment," such celebrations ought to be highly prized by the people, for I am pretty well convinced that an indictment upon good evidence could be gotten up in Memphis, or in other cities of its size on any other day. If Mardi Gras revelry has the wonderful power of quelling the disorders of cities, and inaugurating a festive scene of pure delight, who does not feel like joining in the exclamation "hurra for Mardi Gras!"

After speaking of the failure of his satanic majesty, who "appeared in the garb of an angel of light, among the sons of God, accusing Job the patient," to bring the celebration into disrepute by exciting a disturbance, he makes a liek at puritanical self-righteousness. Hear him: "He has so thoroughly innoculated the souls of some with his own ideas that they regard an unusually broad smile upon the face as a sure prognostic of inevitable perdition." He seems to be a strong advocate for the cachinatory joys of life. If I should go to Memphis I should not be surprised to find him a fat, jovial sort of a fellow, who had enjoyed the luxury of many a side-shaking laugh with his numerous friends. Whether or not he carries his fun too far I cannot say; but he tells one truth when he says, "People

ought also to be prepared with a little mantle of charity with which to cover the foibles of their neighbors, and not be ready, like the devil, to prefer charges and swear away their good names." As this article is long enough, I will close by asking is it not wrong to commingle in scenes of an immoral nature and tendency, as well as to take up a reproach against ones neighbors? AMICUS.

AN UNWELCOME GUEST.

Our young friend Parker went round the other evening to visit the two Miss Smiths. After conversing awhile, Miss Susan excused herself awhile and went up stairs. Presently Parker thought he heard her coming and slipped behind the door, suggested that the other Miss Smith should tell Miss Susan he had gone. But it wasn't Susan; it was old Mr Smith in his slippers. As he entered he looked around and said to his daughter:

"Ah! So Parker's gone. Good riddance. I was just coming down to keep my eye on him. I hope he hasn't proposed to you. I didn't want any such lantern-jawed, red-headed idiot around here. He hasn't got the sense of a ruta-baga turnip, or money enough to buy a clean shirt. He gets none of my daughters. I'll shake the life out of him if I catch him here again, mind me."

Just as he concluded, Susan came down, and not perceiving Parker, she said:

"Thank goodness he's gone. That man is enough to provoke a saint, I was awfully afraid he was going to stay and spend the evening. Mary Jane, I hope you didn't ask him to come again?"

Then Parker didn't know whether to stay or bolt, while Mary looked like she wanted to drop into the cellar. But Parker finally walked out, and rushed to the entry, seized his hat, shot down the front steps and went home meditating upon the emptiness of human happiness, and the uncertainty of Smith. He has not called since, and his life thus far has been un-molested by the head of the Smith family.

NEW LITANY.

Here is a litany which, although not orthodox, will pass among sinners:

From tailors' bills, doctors' pills, western chills, and other ills—deliver us,

From want of gold, wives that scold, maidens old, and by sharpers 'sold'—deliver us,

From seedy coats, protested notes, sinking boats, and illegal votes—deliver us,

From creaking doors, a wife that snores, 'confounded' bores, and dry good stores—protect us,

From modest girls, with waving curls, and teeth of pearl—never mind.

From stinging flies, coal black eyes, bakers pies, and babies cries—deliver us.—Exchange.

Persons subscribing for this—or any other—paper, find it like matrimony, they take it for better or worse.