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Miscellaneous.

From the (Conn.) New Havener.
GERTRUDE DALTON.

A TALE OF TRUTH.

Ask, what is human life! The sage replies,
With disappointment low'ring in his eyes:
A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good."

Couper.

Out, out brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow!"
Shakespeare.

William Melbourne was a merchant of the city of New York, who possessed a princely fortune, and an unblemished character. He traced his lineage through the blood of heroes, to a German prince; and rarely neglected the memory of his fathers, when occasion offered. The revolution, which gave us a national existence, had so far impaired his fortune as to induce him to embark in the mercantile life, in which he had been highly successful, and accumulated wealth "beyond desire." Possessing naturally a kind and generous heart, he might have been the "orphan's father and the wanderer's friend," but the pride of family and wealth, the power to move in pomp and state amid those by fortune less favored than himself, had chilled and dried the once gushing fountains of his heart—and turned back the natural current of his soul, and gave selfishness the empire. His wife was an accomplished and amiable woman. Mistress of all the bright virtues that adorn her sex, she breathed hope into the bosom of affliction, and scattered smiles and joy on all around her.

Alonzo was their only son; and though not brilliant, he had a firmness and energy of character, upon which his anxious parents built their future hopes. Unfortunately for man, talents and genius, without exalted virtues to light them onward, are not unfrequently a curse to their possessor and the world. Alonzo had listened to an unwise father's precepts, and drank in his deeply rooted prejudices; and conscious of being sole heir to a magnificent fortune, he quenched the incipient efforts of his native powers—while pride, selfishness and the darker passions, ruled his fortune with a rod of iron.

Though Mr. Melbourne esteemed the mercantile as one of the most honorable professions, he nevertheless designed that his son should never embark in it, but live at ease upon that wealth he should leave him. Alas! what a stranger to real happiness must that father be, who would bid his son seek it in a life of idleness and pleasure. Alonzo had recently returned from the University, sapiens in nomine, si non de facto.

The first thoughts of the anxious parents were directed to the choice of a partner for their son, who might curb his fiery passions—charm him away from the dangers which beset him—and, like a guardian angel, watch over his future destiny.—Gertrude Dalton, the niece of Mr. and Mrs. Melbourne, was left an orphan by the premature death of both her parents, when but three years of age; and from that tender and helpless period, she had found the Melbournes kind and affectionate parents. They had spared no expense to adorn a character, rich in every native excellence, with all the higher accomplishments of the age. Gertrude was well worthy of their tenderest care—for heaven had given her commanding talents, combined with a sweetness of temper, which won the involuntary prayers and smiles of all who knew her. You could not gaze upon her polished brow, the large blue interpreter of her soul, or hear the soft full tones of her rich and thrilling voice, and pass unheeding onward to forget. We need not, therefore, wonder if the Melbournes hoped a day might come, when a still tenderer tie would bind to their hearts this noble scion of a kindred stock. Though they well knew how unlike were the proud and fiery spirit of Alonzo, and the gentle being with whom they would unite him—yet hope whispered to their anxious hearts that Alonzo might reform—Gertrude would make the sacrifice to seal the happiness of her adopted parents. The heart of Alonzo approved

of the choice, as he had long since learned it was not brother's love he bore the sweet companion of his childhood's sports. Of Gertrude's feelings, we may further learn, from a brief conversation, which at this time took place between her and Alonzo.

It was a bright luxurious night in August, when by Alonzo's wish, they sallied forth to breathe the garden air, and banquet on the beauties of the bright queen, that in the "stilly night," holds over the world her vaunted empire. 'Tis then.

"There is a dungeon silence in the hour,
A stillness, which leaves room for the full soul
To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control." Byron.

They walked for some time in silence, one trying to breathe the feelings of his heart, the other breathing a declaration, the consequences of which must mark her destiny for weal or woe. This was a bitter hour for Gertrude. She had loved Alonzo as a playmate—but, since she could read his character, her gentle nature shrank from his lowering brow, his haughty glance and unshooled passions. After running over events during their last separation, Alonzo observed—

"But, my fair cousin, you seem quite altered since last we rambled through these flowery walks; you are silent—thoughtful—and seem less joyed at my return than I could wish. Has time dimmed the memory of our childhood hours?"

"Time! the corrector where our judgments err,
The test of truth—love—sole philosopher,
For all beside are sophists."—Byron.

"Time," said Gertrude, "has doubtless brought its wonted change; I am older, perhaps less gay and thoughtless than when last you saw me—but, think not, cousin, I am forgetful of the past, or regardless of the future—for, when memory steals not back to other days, hope cheers, and points our pathway onward."

"I rejoice," said Alonzo, "that the contemplation of the future gives us pleasure."
"Hope and fear, Alonzo, are generally united; that those upon whom fortune and happiness has smiled, may so bear them as if mindful that a storm might wreck their tinsel barque, and leave them hopeless wanderers."

"May no ripple, dearest Gertrude, break the surface of that stream which bears thee onward; but let us now speak of other things. I would fain dwell upon a topic near and dear to my own heart, which will influence deeply the future happiness of my parents. I will not remind you of your past or present situation, nor name the care devoted to your childhood; but plead the wishes of my parents, and my own fond hopes. My parents saw and loved your gentle nature, and as they dwelt upon your budding virtues, longed only for the hour when they might call you daughter, by a new and holy tie. But, sweet cousin, you will spare the story of my love; you have seen its progress, and cannot doubt its truth—then briefly, may I hope? Shall my dreams of bliss be realized? Oh! speak fair tyrant, and dispell the doubt that like a dark cloud mantles me!"

Gertrude was surprised and alarmed at the earnestness of his manner—she dared not bear the lion by an open declaration that she could never yield—she was too generous to give assurances that would flatter or deceive. Her solicitude and fear was so great as scarcely to allow her utterance, and she faltered.

"Give me time, Alonzo—I am so agitated—I know not—but let us go in."

At that trying moment, the unhappy Gertrude was relieved by the voice of Mr. Melbourne, requiring her presence in the parlor.

Alonzo felt a bitter disappointment at this sudden interruption, but fearing to excite curiosity, smoothed his brow, and led his fair charge home. Gertrude sought her chamber early, and throwing herself upon a couch, wept long and bitterly over the gloomy fate, apparently awaiting her. How could she blast the long cherished hopes of her generous benefactors, and repay the caresses of her early years by indifference or ingratitude? She could cheerfully have given life to spare their bosoms a solitary pang—but, could she bear a living death, and mate for life with one from whose very glance she shrank. Such were the unwelcome thoughts that preyed upon her gentle nature, till

"The iron tongue of midnight had told twelve,"
when "nature's soft nurse" embraced her, and her sorrows were forgotten. The next day Gertrude avoided as much as possible the presence of Alonzo, fearing the renewal of a subject which gave her so much anxiety and pain. Towards eve a note was handed her by a servant, who immediately retired without exciting any general notice. Gertrude retired to her own room with a fluttering heart, (for she knew the seal) and read this brief, but meaning sentence:—

"At nine, beneath the old elm."

A tear of joy beamed in her eye as she pressed the welcome token to her lips, and placed it next her heart. Let us now briefly introduce our new acquaintance.

Alfred Melton had brought letters from Norfolk, Va., and obtained a situation in Mr. Melbourne's counting house, at the head of whose business he was soon placed by his probity and talents. He possessed an easy and commanding person, a cultivated mind, generous sentiments, and an exalted sense of probity and honor, which won him universal esteem and confidence.

Alfred and Gertrude had met and loved—loved for the noble qualities each saw mirrored in the other—they had no mercenary views or feelings, for heaven had left both without parents of fortune, but they were rich in generous sympathies and sincere affections. Gertrude had never dared to inform Mrs. Melbourne of her attachment, for she could hope little mercy in the imperious character of her uncle. The interviews between the lovers had of late, therefore, been stolen—and truly "sweeter for the theft."

Beneath the "old elm," Gertrude had wandered ere the appointed hour, and seating herself on the verge of a bubbling little brook, that glided past its base, she gave loose rein to her anxious thoughts. Her reverie was soon broken by a footfall, and the next moment she hung upon the bosom of her lover.

"What an eternity it has seemed, dear Gertrude, since last we met. But, knowing that your cousin had returned, I forbore to ask this kindness longer than I am wont; but now, dearest, like a true knight, I promise to reform, and henceforth you shall ever find me at the post of love and duty.—But why so gloomy? What has disturbed thee, dearest Gertrude?"

"Alas! Alfred, my fears were true. Alonzo has avowed his attachment, and the wishes of his parents. I knew not how to act. I dared neither to excite his hopes or fears. I have obtained leisure to make up my mind, and now how can, how shall I answer him?"

"I see," said Alfred, "one safe, though perhaps painful course—but Gertrude, are you ready for the sacrifice? Can you prefer poverty and Alfred, to being mistress of this stately mansion, and a boundless fortune? If you are prepared for this, make known at once your attachment, and plead for their approval. If they are obstinate or cruel, then trust to your Alfred, and the orphan's God."

"And do you think," she replied, "that you can make me waver for a moment? No, Alfred! I loved you, and still do love you for yourself; and let come weal or woe, henceforth I am thine own."

He clasped her to his heart, and kissed the fever from her burning lips, while joy too pure for utterance, kept them long silent. At length, knowing the impatient spirit of Alonzo, and the unbending prejudices of Mr. Melbourne, he assured Gertrude that a moment's warning would enable him to place her under the protection of an aged lady, where she could remain in safety until a brighter day should dawn upon them. They embraced and parted; but their last words had fallen upon the ears, and aroused the jealousy of a man, ripe, when aroused, for desperate deeds.

Alonzo, observing the absence of Gertrude, and hoping to meet her in the garden, had strayed thither, and seen the close of an interview which gave a death blow to his dreams of happiness. The cause of Gertrude's coldness flashed in a moment over his mind—the veil was rent. Alfred Melton was his rival. He had seen enough; and turning, hastened away, while hate and jealousy swelled his bosom, and all the dark thoughts of his gloomy soul were coursing through his maddened brain. He could have sacrificed his love—but thus to give place to a poor nameless clerk, was too humiliating to his pride—and, in the chambers of a mind capacious for desperate thoughts, he willed the ruin of that fair being to whom he had so recently avowed an inviolable love.

Gertrude now saw the madness of further delay, and she determined at once to kneel, and plead with the generous spirit of her aunt. Mrs. Melbourne was a woman of keen sensibility; and when she had learned the history of Gertrude's love, though disappointed and dissatisfied at this unexpected shipwreck of her projects—yet she felt it not only foolish, but cruel, to war with the affections of the heart. She therefore bade the weeping Gertrude be comforted, and expect in her a mother's tenderness and truth. But, when Mrs. Melbourne told Gertrude's story to her husband, all his family pride awoke. It was too humiliating that his son should be rejected for a beggar, and he manly resolved at once to discharge and disgrace Alfred—and if Gertrude persisted in her attachment, to refuse her even the shelter of his roof.

Meantime, Alonzo thought by a bold game to intimidate his rival. He therefore wrote Alfred a note, reminding him of his boldness in daring to become his rival for the affections of his cousin, and called him either to relinquish his pretensions, or appoint a time and place to meet and end the contest, ab ultima ratiōne.

To this Alfred simply replied: "When Miss Dalton bids me cease my pretensions,

I shall obey, but not till then. Your threats and impudence I equally despise; and being unambitious for a bravo's glory, I shall not comply with your last request."

This answer only added fuel to the flames, and Alonzo threatened to post the cowardice of Alfred in the public prints. It must be remembered that as yet, reason had not complete dominion over the passions, and "honorable murder" was still sanctioned by public sentiment. After consulting with his friends, Alfred yielded with a beating heart to what he thought the tyranny of custom.

They met. Alfred fired into the air, and received the ball of his antagonist in the left side. His physicians entertained hopes that he would soon recover. Alonzo hastened from the scene, and journeyed South, until immediate excitement should cease.

When Mr. Melbourne heard of his son's guilt and flight, and the danger of Alfred—so far from being moved to pity for the sufferer, he called down new curses upon his head, and commanded his weeping niece never more to behold him. But a woman's love shrinks from neither toil or danger; and Gertrude, despite her uncle, stole time to watch by the couch of her lover, with the devoted tenderness of a ministering angel. Ah! who shall tell the unalloyed joy of two young hearts, rich in each other's love, when thus communing and feeding their imaginations on dreams of future bliss! Their intercourses were brief and sweet; and every passing hour seemed to mould their spirits into one. Says the "wizard of the North."

"Love is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind."

At length the vigilance of Mr. Melbourne discovered the visits of Gertrude, and with brutal cruelty he charged her with ingratitude to him treachery to his son; and warned her that if she ever again beheld this destroyer of his peace, she must leave his house forever. It was in vain that Mrs. Melbourne plead for the devoted girl. His callous bosom heard not love nor pity, and the voice so soothing to his troubled spirit in the hour of gloom, was now repulsed with cold indifference. Truly, "there is no passion more spectral and fantastical than hate."

In this dark day of trial, the timid Gertrude rose above herself and played the heroine. She heeded not the whispers of a heartless word. Buoyed up by the purity of her own thoughts, and trusting for protection to the orphan's God, she bade a sad farewell to the home of her childhood. Gertrude knew well the delicacy of her situation, but felt firm in her purity of purpose, and implicit confidence in the honor of the man she loved. I will not name the surprise, the sorrow, and yet the rapturous joy with which Alfred listened to the generous sacrifice of this confiding girl. But let a veil protect this scene. I will not desecrate by utterance, the hallowed thoughts that reigned in their bosoms at this eventful period.

But sorrow had now stricken a virtuous heart. The conduct of her son—her only child—was a barbed arrow in the bosom of Mrs. Melbourne, and seemed to sap the life-blood from her heart. It needed but this last sap stroke—the desertion of her adopted daughter—to bow her to the tomb. Mr. Melbourne saw, when now too late, the ruin he had wrought. Alas! nor son, nor daughter, nor beloved wife, would long remain to cheer him. He had made a solitude around him, but found no peace. Sorrow never comes single handed, nor did it now; for at this unwelcome moment he received the painful intelligence of his son's death. Alonzo had taken ship at Baltimore for Charleston. They were wrecked in a storm, and every soul but the captain and four seamen were lost. This filled the measure of the old man's grief; he bowed his head and wept, while his injured wife sank to the very verge of the grave.

The day after they had learned Alonzo's death, Mr. Melbourne received a roll of papers from the hands of a stranger, who briefly said "they are thine," and hastily withdrew. He broke the seal and began to read, but ere a moment had elapsed a deadly paleness mantled his features—his hand trembled—a cold sweat stood upon his brow—he groaned, and fell senseless to the floor. He was soon restored from this melancholy shock, and pointing to the parcel he had let fall, bade them read and know all. The mystery is soon told. Melbourne, when young, had been sent to an uncle in the South to receive his education. He there became enamored of a beautiful young lady, who rewarded his attachment by the fervid love of her own mellow clime. Being too young to hope for liberty to marry, he had won his love to a secret union. Scarce six months had elapsed before he received letters commanding his immediate return. His father was peremptory—he could not take his lovely bride—he dared not avow his union. He struggled for a time with his feelings, but interest finally triumphed over honor, and he hastily fled from his once loved Mary,

and left her to sorrow and dishonor. The news of his sudden departure had well nigh bereft her of reason; for she "found herself as all wives wish to be who love their lords." She finally threw herself upon the mercy of her parents, and was forgiven; and in a short time became the mother of a son. But yet she could not dissipate the gloom which preyed upon her spirits, and she suddenly resolved to seek her husband in the north. Leaving letters of explanation and apology to her parents, she took ship for New York, but by stress of weather, was driven into Norfolk, Va., where, worn down by fatigue, and broken hearted, she sank into an early grave. To a gentleman in Norfolk, who seemed interested in her fate, she committed her infant, with this packet containing his history and name. She left money and jewels for his support and education. Her dying requests were religiously observed.

I need scarcely say that Alfred is this orphan. From the moment he learned his real situation, he had disclaimed his father's name. He had sought a situation in his father's establishment that he might learn his character; and, if it suited his pleasure, to claim a portion of his fortune. As soon, therefore, as he heard of his brother's death, and saw the bereavement and desolation of his house, he had thrown off the mask that he might cheer the last hours of his unhappy parent. Mr. Melbourne had supposed that his wife and child had both perished; we can only imagine, therefore, with what transport he embraced his long lost boy.

Alfred and Gertrude were soon united by the "silken tie," that bound their willing hearts together for many blissful years. Mrs. Melbourne blessed her new children, and slumbered with her fathers—while her husband lingered to rejoice in the happiness of triumphant virtue.

INGENUITY IN MINIATURE.—Among the articles to be sent for exhibition at the Fair of the Mechanic Association, by an ingenious mechanic in Hampshire county, as we learn from the Gazette, are a fancy miniature railway and a miniature steam engine, weighing a little over an ounce, which puts it in motion by a spirit lamp. The railway is 21 feet in circumference, upon which is placed a locomotive, propelled by the springs, and followed by a beautiful train of cars—the automaton engineer of which will ring the bell at the word of command—pull a lever with the other hand, and set the train in motion; he will also stop upon the route, the baggage car door open, and an automaton will place itself at the door and take in baggage: immediately, the bell will ring and the train be put in motion again. When in motion if any obstacle is placed upon the track, (in different places) the engineer will ring the bell, and the train will stop, &c. All of which is done with machinery apparently without the aid of any person.—[Boston Herald.]

PEACH TREES.
A subscriber informs us and wishes the fact made public, that MARL put around the trunk of Peach Trees, say a bushel or half that measure to each tree, protects them from the attack of worms, preserves the trees in health, continues them in life beyond the time of their ordinary existence, promotes growth of the fruit to almost double its former size, and increases the richness of its flavor in like proportion. This is valuable information indeed and our friend assures us it is not less true than valuable.—[Salem (N. Y.) Banner.]

(A young man named Bender, at Albany, according to the Daily Advertiser of that city, has produced an Automaton Trumpeter, which is as large as life, and surpasses so far any thing of the nature of flesh and blood, that it is enabled to conduct an orchestra! The Daily says—By means of machinery connected with its own body and without any external aid except that of occasionally winding up the machinery, it performs on the trumpet every piece of music, consisting of a single part, within the compass of the chromatic scale, however difficult and however complex, and in a style of accuracy which cannot be equalled by human breath and human lips on the same instrument.)

"Do you snore Abel Adams?"
"No, Seth Jefferson, I do never snore." How do you know, Abel?
Because the other day I laid away the whole night on purpose to see.