

A TALE.

From the Saturday Evening Post.

THE DREAM OF LOVE.
How like a dream our life appears,
A varying scene of joys and tears—
Of bliss and woe, from which we wake,
Our last fond retrospect to take;
Oh, Love! how like a dream thou art,
Of blasted hope and broken vow.

Some years since, there resided in one of our large cities, a gentleman by the name of Morland, who, by industrious habits in a mechanical business, had acquired a competence, and had removed to a pleasant seat in the environs of the town. He had one son and a daughter. The son had been educated at West Point, and afterwards entered the Navy, where he, at the time I speak of, had risen to the honorable title of Lieutenant. The daughter, Madeline, in her seventeenth summer, was considered beautiful, possessing a mild and amiable disposition, connected with winning, or even bewitching manners; though excessive praise and adoration had made her vain and coquettish, which feelings her mirror had no tendency to suppress. Her form was slender; her features of the Grecian, or rather of the Circassian mould; lips, red as the lotus, and eyes, dark, large, and liquid. Yet the greatest charm Madeline possessed, and they were not few, was the heavenly expression, which was the very moon-light of her soul, that beamed upon her face. Her heart was pure, gentle, and refined. She was one of those, who, in the language of Moore,

"Would blush when you praised her,
And weep when you blamed."

It cannot be strange then that she should captivate many. Among those who bowed down before her charms, was a young man of high pretensions, who used every means in his power to obtain the key of her heart.—His name was Brown; he was of an enthusiastic nature, and was often heard to say, that he loved her to distraction, and would yield up his life, if she were seriously to demand it, to prove the sincerity of his passion. But Madeline appeared cold and insensible to all the warmth of his protestations, though her father was pleased with the prospect of the alliance. Brown endured his ill success with calmness, until he discovered that a rival was winding himself into the affections of his own heart's idol. He then became distressed and impatient. Wakefield, the rival, had been an apprentice, a few years before, to Morland, and was far inferior in point of fortune, talents, and high respectability, to Brown. This, both knew; and the knowledge mutually made them the greater enemies. Such are the mysteries of love, that no power can bind, and no laws regulate it.—Madeline had long esteemed the accomplished Brown, and had seriously striven to love him; but in vain. Hence, Brown had been alternately encouraged and disengaged.—She had loved Wakefield without a single effort.

So perfectly fascinated was Brown, that he could not rest when absent from her; and a single smile from her fair lips, was sufficient to chase away all his cares, and call back to the dark chamber of his heart the brilliant hopes of former days. One morning in June, just as Wakefield left the house, he sought her presence, to solicit, for the last time perhaps, her hand and heart. He found her reclining on a sofa, in a splendid dress, reading the Sorrows of Werter. This he thought was a happy opportunity, and pressed her with eloquent language to tell him for the last time, what he was to depend upon.

"My fate," said he, "is in your hands. You are the mistress of my destiny, and on your lips depends my future happiness, or my eternal ruin. If I am to live in your presence, I shall be the happiest of men, but if you determine otherwise, I am a doomed wretch, and life will no longer be desirable. Dearest Madeline, I have loved you—I now love you, even to distraction," and it remains only for you to pronounce whether I shall live in hope, or die in despair. I await your determination."

As the last words escaped from his lips he sunk upon one knee before her; and grasping her hand with a kind of distracted air, gazed with intense anxiety into her heavenly countenance. Madeline was startled at the quickness of his movements, but the sincerity of his manner, and the earnestness of his gaze recalled her scattered senses, and aroused her sensitive feelings.

"I have ever esteemed you as a gentleman," said Madeline, blushing to her temples "but to be candid with you, that esteem has never been merged in that more devoted feeling, which is ever necessary to render the union of hearts happy. From my heart I desire, and would fain contribute to your happiness, in any manner that would not have a tendency to render us both miserable. I am perfectly convinced that without mutual affection, there is no permanent good in the marriage state. I, therefore, conjure you to think no more of the past, and to be assured that my warmest friendship shall ever be yours."

"Oh! Madeline!" said the distracted youth, "I had rather this moment die in your arms, than resign you forever; yet if fate will have it so, death alone will be the soother of my miseries. Long, long has hope supported me, and must it now fly from my desolate heart, even at the command of her whom, most of all others, I love. To secure your happiness, Madeline, I would resign my own; but—farewell—forever!"

Madeline wept, and the unhappy young man seized his hat and escaped from the room. Distraction fixed upon him, and every night he paced the yard before the building to catch a glimpse of her who was his viliest. Late on a beautiful

summer evening he approached the house, and saw from a window the usual light of Madeline, where he had so often silly strolled to gaze upon her charms. He now put silently aside the shrubbery, and advanced to gaze again upon her, to possess whose heart he would have given the wealth of worlds. Softly he put aside the curtain, and beheld Madeline, sitting with her face towards the window, gaily smiling and talking. The glance showed him the hated form of Wakefield, and his hand involuntarily grasped one of the pistols in his pocket. The arm of Wakefield rested on the chair of Madeline, and Brown bit his lips as he saw him take her small white hand in his, and press her to his bosom. He saw that she resisted not, and he gnashed his teeth with rage and anguish. The next moment he beheld his favored rival impress upon her balmy lips a kiss, and his heart boiled with jealousy and revenge. He drew the pistol from his pocket, and aimed at the heart of Wakefield; but at that moment they both rose to leave the room, and Madeline's form was interposed between him and his victim.

With a heart full of bitterness, Brown left the spot, and awaited the coming forth of Wakefield. In a few minutes he appeared at the door, and from behind a tree in front of the building, he saw the elegant form of Madeline advance, her hand clasped in that of the happy Wakefield. He saw her lean upon his arm, and gaze up in his face; he saw his arm enfold the delicate waist of the charming girl; he saw him again affectionately press her lips, and madness fired his soul. The next moment the warm adieu was uttered, softly—the hand pressed and relinquished, and Wakefield left the house. He had advanced but a few steps, musing upon the luxury and the sweet delirium of love, when the form of Brown emerged from the shade of the shrubbery, and he startled.—They gazed for a moment, with surprise and bitterness upon each other.

"Well met, sir, in such an hour and place as this," muttered Brown, with bitter sternness.

"To peep and listen, at such an hour and place as this, but ill befits a gentleman," retorted Wakefield, the fact flashing upon his mind, that Brown had been a witness to all that had passed.

"It matters not," returned the other; "we will not quarrel over trifles. I demand, sir, whether you are serious in your attentions to the lady you have just left? Answer me without equivocation."

"I recognize not your right, sir, to demand any thing of me," returned Wakefield, coolly.

"Then you or I must die," said Brown, suddenly drawing a pair of pistols from his pockets. "I have made up my mind, sir, irreversibly that if Madeline Morland will not be mine, she shall not be another's. Take your choice, and let us here decide the matter at once and forever."

"I decline your offer, sir, until you are placed in a similar situation to my own," said Wakefield.

"I demand to know, then on what score we are not equal?" interrogated Brown.

"You are entitled to that knowledge," returned Wakefield. "Then know, sir, that I am this night betrothed to the amiable lady I have just left, and that, should I fall, my own misery would not be the only consequence, but an innocent being would suffer for my folly."

At these fatal words Brown gasped for breath, and fell back against the tree, in apparent agony. Wakefield thought this a proper opportunity to escape from the man who he knew to be maddened with love and jealousy, and who might do him some injury. With the promise to see him again, which Brown, however, did not hear, he departed, leaving him to his reverie, and to indulge his misery.

From his situation, Brown perceived that Madeline had retired to the same room, and was reading. A desperate resolve seized him—to enter if possible—to endeavor to break off the engagement which had been formed, and if unsuccessful, to die in her presence. He advanced—found the door open and entered without apprising her, for his mind was in a state, bordering on distraction. Madeline started with surprise and anger at the appearance in her room at that hour, of a man, without announcement.

The expression of his countenance alarmed her, and she sternly demanded his business, for so haggard was he, that she did not at first recognise his features?

"I come," said Brown, with a melancholy look, "to snatch you from the arms of Wakefield, or to perish in the attempt. You have pledged your heart and hand to a villian, and if you persist in claiming him, you must be content to see one expire at your feet, in this room."

"And thou too shalt die," exclaimed Brown, with a wild demoniac look.

She saw the dagger descending, and struggled to escape it, but in vain; she felt the cold steel penetrate her heart. She saw the red current of life issuing from the wound, and shuddered at death.

Madeline, my dear what is the matter?" exclaimed Lucy Blakely, the bridemaid; wake up, child, the bridegroom, priest, and all, have arrived. You must be ready to go down."

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

keep me in the agony of suspense. Speak! tell me all, that I may escape the snare ere it is forever too late."

"Have you then never heard the dreadful act which he committed, when returning from his travels? Has no suspicion ever crossed your mind of his real character?"

"Never," said the trembling Madeline.—"Oh! tell me—and yet I dread to hear the fatal tale. It will be death to all my hopes, and all my happiness—but let me hear it."

"I will tell you the truth," said Lindley Brown, his countenance brightening with hope. "You must then know, dearest Madeline, that when Wakefield was travelling from Orleans, through the forest, on his way to Ohio, he stopped for the night at the house, of a man, by the name of Loxley, who made him welcome, and introduced him with confidence to his wife and daughter. Loxley had just married, the second time, a young and most beautiful girl, upon whom he lavished all the affections of his heart. His daughter was but sixteen years of age. Wakefield remained, partaking of their hospitality, all which time he assiduously devoted to the hellish purpose of ensnaring the hearts of the young wife and daughter. Loxley was often absent; his wife and daughter knew not the villainy of man, and ere they were aware of it, found that the presence of the stranger was necessary to their happiness. Lucy, the daughter, first fell a victim, to this villainy, and he then sought every opportunity to persuade the wife to follow him home. In the simplicity of innocence, she listened to him, but refused him, until her heart became completely ensnared by his blandishments and estranged from her husband. At last, when Loxley was absent, she consented, and they set off through the wilderness. The distracted husband, suspecting villainy, set off in pursuit, and in the depth of the forest overtook them, and demanded his wife of the man who had partaken of his hospitality. Wakefield answered the language of his wounded heart with scorn, and refused to yield the beautiful creature whom he had rudely torn from a virtuous, affectionate, and happy home. A contest ensued, and the next moment the hand of Wakefield was reeking with the blood of the injured husband, who was expiring at the feet of the murderer.

As these last words escaped from the lips of Brown, Madeline feebly shrieked, and as he turned he saw her falling from her chair. He caught her in his arms, pressed her pale lips to his, and for a moment exulted in the triumph he had achieved. Slowly consciousness returned; she gazed a minute upon the face of the narrator in pity, then darted from his arms and hastily rescued herself in her chair. Some moments passed in musing silence.

"Oh! I will not believe it," exclaimed Madeline. "You wrong him, you seek to blast his fame, because he has been more fortunate than yourself. Oh! say that you wrong him, and I will forgive you."

"Nay, then, if you believe me not, I here produce the fatal, damning evidence," said Brown, and he drew from his pocket a letter, and held it full in the gaze of the agonized girl. The same fatal story was there recounted, and Madeline's heart became sick, her head swam round, and she was near falling. The next moment the door opened, and Wakefield entered.

"Villian," cried Brown, "you come again to insult me with your pretensions, but sir—"

"Dare not repeat that word again," interrupted Wakefield, "or your life may be the forfeit of your insult. Know, sir, that I am now prepared to meet you, and to know who has a claim to—"

"A claim!" retorted Brown, in a bitter accent; "what claim have you, whose hands have been dyed in the blood of an injured, unoffending man?"

"I defy your lies and your forgeries," exclaimed Wakefield. "The letter you have

produced is in your own handwriting; and the secret you confided to another, has been disclosed. Who, sir, is the villain now? Whose hands are now imbrued in the blood of an injured man?"

"Liar!" shouted Brown, "come on; your blood shall atone for this. Strike for your life."

Erre the words had expired upon his lips, he snatched a dagger from his bosom and held it glittering in the terrified gaze of Madeline; and as the beautiful girl was near fainting, he exclaimed,

"Let Madeline then declare which of us her heart accepts, and we will settle the difficulty."

Madeline faintly breathed the name of Wakefield, and in an instant the dagger which Brown held was buried to the hilt in the bosom of Wakefield. He staggered and fell at her feet.

"And thou too shalt die," exclaimed Brown, with a wild demoniac look.

She saw the dagger descending, and struggled to escape it, but in vain; she felt the cold steel penetrate her heart. She saw the red current of life issuing from the wound, and shuddered at death.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline, my dear what is the matter?" exclaimed Lucy Blakely, the bridemaid; wake up, child, the bridegroom, priest, and all, have arrived. You must be ready to go down."

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.

Madeline awoke from her dream of terror, happy to find herself alive, and on the very eve of being married to Wakefield, who had long possessed her heart. The idle report, that Brown was about to challenge Wakefield, had given origin to her long dream of love. She had fallen asleep in her chair, dressed in her wedding garb.