

POETICAL.



DAYS OF ABSENCE.

Days of absence sad and dreary,
Cloyed in sorrow's dark array,
Days of absence I am weary,
For I love is far away.

Hours of bliss too quickly vanish,
When will I see you return,
When this heavy sigh be banished,
When this bosom cease to mourn.

Not till that low voice can greet me,
Which so oft hath charmed mine ear,
Not till that sweet eye can meet me,
Telling that I still am dear.

Days of absence, then will vanish,
Joy will all my pangs repay,
Soon my bosom's idols banish
Gloom but felt when he's away.

All my love is turned to sadness,
Absence pays the tender vow,
Hopes that fill the heart with gladness,
Memory turns to anguish now.

Love may yet return to greet me,
Hope may take the place of pain,
And one I love with kisses greet me,
Breathing love and peace again.

ON THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

'Tis midnight—from the dark blue sky,
The stars, which now look down on earth,
Have seen ten thousand centuries fly,
And give to countless changes birth.

And when the pyramids shall fall,
And, mouldering in dust and air,
The dwellers on this altered ball
May still behold them glorious there.

Shine on! shine on! with you I tread
The march of ages, orbs of light;
A last eclipse may o'er you read;
To me, to me, there comes no light.

O, what concerns it him, whose way
Lies upward to the immortal dead,
That a few hairs are turning gray,
Or one more year of life has fled?

Swift years, but teach me how to bear,
To feel, and act with strength and skill,
To reason wisely, nobly dare,
And speed your courses as you will.

When life's meridian toils are done,
How calm, how rich, the twilight glow!
The morning twilight of a sun,
That shines not here—on things below.

But sorrow, sickness, death—the pain
To leave, or lose, wife, children, friends—
What then? Shall we not meet again,
Where parting comes not, sorrow ends?

The fondness of a parent's care,
The changeless trust that woman gives,
The smile of childhood—it is there,
That all we love in them still lives.

Press onward through each varying hour;
Let no weak fears thy course delay;
Immortal being, feel thy power;
Pursue thy bright and endless way.

From the Charleston Courier.

THE CONVICT.

The turnkey stood irresolute—"Here is gold for you," said the veiled stranger—"it shall be doubled before I quit the prison, if you but admit me to a half hour's conference with Alice Merton." The man still hesitated, "Are you a father?" "Yes," "I come to revoke the curse of one, gray-haired and broken-hearted. I bear a delegated blessing from the death-stricken to the doomed. Will you suffer me to depart without accomplishing this mission of mercy?" "Pass on," said the jailer in a husky voice—and placing a taper in her hand, he silently ushered her into the convict's cell. And who was she, that in her tranquil grace appeared incarnation of benevolence, and whose voice was like a "vesper melody," when she sought to take the fetter from the filial spirit? It was a being whose lofty destiny had kindled envy in the bosom of a dark dissembler. It was the once confiding friend, whose holiest affections had been made the savage sport of a perfidious rival. It was the proud, the high-souled Adelaide Latimer, who lately bent before a vengeful father, and besought him not to withhold the sacrament of nature from his suffering child. She it was that now stood weeping at a little distance from the criminal, who, unconscious of her presence, clasped her sleeping infant to her bosom, while she mournfully exclaimed, "Oh! Wake no more, my poor, my helpless babe!—Why will not Heaven take my innocent, while yet undreaming of its mother's fate! Alas! Upon what callous bosom will my orphan couch to-morrow eve? Would it not be well, (added she wildly,) would it not be well if I should dash my tender limbs against those iron bars that shut out hope? She arose suddenly, as if intending to pursue her horrid purpose—but Adelaide sprang forward, and arresting her uplifted arm, prevented its execution. Alice, transfixed with horror, glared like a maniac upon the form before her. A strange delusion seemed to possess her senses—she called feebly and fearfully on her departed mother, whose shade she fancied had been conjured from the tomb to rescue the desperate offender from this last iniquity. The little Clarence had fallen unharmed upon her bed of straw, and though terrified on being first awakened, had again sunk quietly to rest. "Is it thus we meet, Alice Merton?" faltered out the gentle visitor, raising the taper and throwing back her veil. The prisoner started—for in those sweet tones she heard again the harmonies of childhood—they had then summoned her to fairy sports and flowery scenes. All the piteous images time leaves undimmed upon the mirror of remembrance, now floated before her fancy in torturing contrast with her present state.

But alas! that voice had power also over the more turbulent associations of a less buoyant period—and they came thronging like the passions to the magic call of music. She riveted her dark eye sternly upon the speaker—its lightning glance was gone—and it now resembled the blackened corse, on which the subtle fire has spent its fury. Adelaide fixed her's unshrinkingly upon the felon. There was an infant's purity in its clear blue concave—its beam seemed but a reflection caught from the Heaven to which it had so often been upturned. "What brings thee here, Adelaide Latimer? By what caprice of taste hast thou resigned the luxury of adulation for a descendant on depravity? But I bethink me now, thou hast a saintly reputation, and perhaps in some ecstatic vision mayst have dreamed thy pious rhetoric would move the malefactor, although the man of God had failed to do it. Superfluous condescension!—The seed of righteousness can never vegetate within a bosom seared as mine has been. My father's curse, like the red desert blast, prostrated me in my pilgrimage, and shed a desolating influence over every human feeling. Away! No whining valedictory, no mockery of up contrition awaits the hawking, hireling, scandal mongers. The bride of Clement Dela Mere scorns to abuse herself before her haughty rival." A blush, that brilliant traitor that o'er master's pride rushed to the cheek of Adelaide, but recoiled as suddenly to the heart, whose guarded secret it had thus betrayed.

With a powerful effort, however, she regained her composure, and thus addressed the delinquent, "Alice, thou art no longer the accused? The dreadful interdiction that barred thee from communion with the holy, exist no more. My purpose here was not to taunt thee for thy past transgressions, but to bestow a blessing in thy father's name." The criminal uttered a convulsive cry, and sunk at the feet of her injured and magnanimous friend. Adelaide knelt beside her, and applied the restoratives with which she had come provided. She soon revived and burying her face in her hands, wept long and bitterly. Those tears seemed to dispel the mists that veiled the light of another world from her view. She threw her fettered arms around Adelaide's neck, and in an agony of remorse repeatedly exclaimed—"My God! my gracious God! bless her, and pardon me! But oh! why came he not to his condemned and erring child?—Would not his gray hairs have been far more touching orators than all the ghostly counsellors that ever preached a crusade against evil morals? Why on the eve of execution, comes he not to mitigate its horrors, and foretoken, by his presence, that my Heavenly Father will not exclude the felon from his kingdom?" "Perhaps," answered Adelaide, "perhaps his spirit is even now pleading for thee before the last tribunal—it was but fluttering on the verge of eternity when I left him." "My father dead!" shrieked the unfortunate convict—"Oh God! endue me now with strength to burst my chains, that I may cling one moment to his corpse, and gasp out my repentance. My child," continued she, straining him to her breast—"the brand no longer darkens the young brow; the curse revoked effaces the hereditary blight that would have marred thy future bold aspirations. But thou hast lost the only one on earth whose kind adoption might have redeemed thy tarnished name from my transmitted ignominy." Adelaide bent down to soothe the affrighted infant, whose fingers becoming entangled in her ringlets, were so tenacious of their grasp, that she could not release herself without leaving some of the hair in his hand. The benign enthusiast regarded this little incident as a token that destiny designed to intermingle, through her means, some golden threads in his dark web of fate. She caught him in her arms, and exclaimed with energy—"there is no orphanage for thee sweet boy, while Adelaide has power to shield and cherish thee. Yes! thou shalt be a substitute for every severed bond—and never shalt thou know thy parent was aught else than guiltless." "Stay!" said Alice, with drawing her son, while her whole frame quivered with emotion, "You are yet ignorant of the flagrant wrong inflicted by this mother. Your noble conduct has subdued the fiend within me—it cannot long wrestle with an angel. Necessity demands that in reverting to the past I must be brief. Know, then, that when your love for Clement de la Mere was confided to me, I was aware that you were idolized by him; for, observing our friendship, he had been unreserved in his communications on that subject. You little dreamt, however, how far beyond the bounds of female delicacy my unsolicited affection went for that fatal being. Neither was he suspicious of my feelings. Under these circumstances, I determined to supplant you, if possible. For this purpose, I assumed the mask of frankness; feigned even to violate your confidence, that he might be spared the mortification of a rejection; assured him your heart was preoccupied, and finally succeeded in convincing him, that his pursuit was hopeless. The sympathy I manifested for his sufferings (for he was almost frantic,) insensibly increased his esteem for me, and as it imposed upon himself the necessity of forgetting you, in a moment of grateful excitement he offered me his hand. We married. We married. But alas! my imperious temper, so artfully suppressed before my triumph was achieved, now boldly shook off all restraint. Our hapless union was constantly clouded by domestic tempests. It was during one of these, more violent than usual, that I sarcastically imputed his infidelity to his un-

mastered affection for you; and tauntingly upbraided him with his want of penetration in not discovering that his tenderness had been amply requited. Never shall I forget the look with which he sought to read my soul at that moment. "Swear by your hope of salvation that this is true," shouted he, stung to madness by implied treachery. Unprepared for such a result, I trembled and hesitated. "Woman, trifle not with me," added he fiercely; "swear that you are now playing me false, or by my hopes of salvation, I'll cast you from my door as portionless as you entered it." I verified my assertion by the desired oath. He walked rapidly and frequently across the hall—at length, turning suddenly upon me, he said in a voice half stifled with anguish: "Farewell! between us now there is an eternal barrier; my banker must henceforth become the guardian of your comfort." He then rushed from the house, to which he never more returned." Adelaide's sobs now became audible. "Has no trace of him been since discovered?" enquired she. After the birth of my child, a fellow officer from the field of Waterloo, sought me out to deliver a watch, which he said was De la Mere's dying bequest to his innocent offspring. A faintness now seized Adelaide, but she roused herself, and continued to listen with an intense interest. "Retribution overtook me from that hour," resumed the delinquent, "the banker with whom he had deposited a liberal sum for my support, failed soon after. His desertion had aroused all the furies in my bosom; I resolved on what I conceived the most refined species of vengeance; I dishonored his name, and leagued myself with the most degraded of my sex. Then it was that my father's curse rendered me reckless, and I passed insanely through every degradation of guilt, until I became an incendiary. For this enormity it is that justice decreed the scaffold. My heart would have remained stony and impenitent, had not your merciful interposition gained the paternal benediction. Can you forgive me now, Adelaide Latimer?" The noble sufferer replied to this appeal by pressing the little Clarence to her heart, and firmly pronouncing a solemn vow that in weal and woe, then and forever, the child of Alice Merton should be unto her as dear as if nature herself had established the strongest links of affinity between them. The entrance of the turnkey reminded them that they must now separate. For some minutes, they remained locked in each others embrace; then kissing the eyes, forehead and lips of her unconscious babe, Alice surrendered it to her noble friend.

A short paragraph in the newspaper of the ensuing evening announced that the mortal course of the convict had been terminated in the most impressive manner, and that the sympathies of the multitude assembled on that occasion had been powerfully elicited by the fortitude and meekness with which she expiated her crime.

THE LESSON OF FRUGALITY.

A short time ago, a venerable old Dutch gentleman, who had gained great riches without reproach, resolved to retire for the remainder of his days to his country seat in Holland. In order to take leave of his friends and acquaintances in a handsome manner, he invited the young and the old of both sexes (persons of the first fashion of the place) to an entertainment at his own house. They assembled with great expectations, but to their no small surprise, saw a long oak table, on which were placed platters of butter-milk, pickled herring, and cheese. The rest of the cheer was made up with butter and rye bread—and cans of table beer at hand for those who chose to drink. The company secretly cursed the gentleman's humor, but on account of his great age, and still greater merit, they restrained their resentment, and appeared contented with the homely fare. The old gentleman seeing the joke taken, was unwilling to carry it too far; and, at a signal given to the servants, cleared the table, and produced a second course. The rye bread was changed to household brown, the table beer into strong ale, and the mean food into good salted beef and boiled fish. The guests now grew better pleased, and the master of the feast more pressing in his invitations. After he had given them time to taste the second course, a third was served up in due form, followed by half a dozen servants in gaudy liveries, whilst a profusion of soups, tams and wild fowl—in a word, all that the art of a modern cook could produce, courted the taste and renewed the appetite of the whole company. To this were added generous Burgundy, sparkling Champagne, &c. and that nothing might be wanting that could please the sense, as soon as a desert was brought in, a concert of a variety of instruments was heard in the next room. Healths went round, mirth increased, and the old gentleman seeing nothing but the departure of him and the gravest of the company was waited for to give a loose to joy and pleasure, rose up and thus addressed the company: "Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for the favor you have done me by honoring me with your company. It is time for one of my age to withdraw, but I hope those who are disposed for dancing will accept of a ball which I have ordered to be prepared for you. Before the fiddles strike up give me leave to make a short reflection on this entertainment, which might otherwise appear whimsical and even foolish. By living after the penurious manner exhibited by the first course, our ancestors raised their infant State, and acquired liberty, wealth and power. These were preserved by our fathers, who lived in that plain

way exemplified in the second course—But if an old man may be permitted, before he leaves you, to speak his thoughts freely, I am really afraid that the profusion which you have witnessed in the last course will, if we continue it, deprive us of those advantages which our ancestors earned by the sweat of their brows, and which our fathers by their industry and good management, have transmitted to us. Young people I advise you to be merry this evening, but to think seriously to-morrow on the lesson I have given you to day."

VANITY OF DRESS.

The ridiculous and ruinous passion for over-dressing or dressing beyond their station, which now universally prevails, especially among females, and which has been for many years an increasing mania, never received a better rebuke than was once bestowed by the celebrated Dean Swift. It would be well for society at large if the folly and vanity so generally displayed in regard to apparel, were continually exposed to similar sarcasms; the consequences would be that individuals would return to the exercise of common sense, and would appear in such attire only as becomes their respective stations; a proper distinction would be visible between the grades of the community, every one would receive that respect and attention due to their true and known designation—the hateful, ruinous seeds of pride and vanity, naturally inherent in human minds, would not, in the young, be incited to that disgusting expansiveness and visible development, which now so generally appear; and persons of the middle and lower ranks of society would no longer be urged to that absurd imitator of the follies or extravagances that distinguish their wealthier fellow-creatures, (in whom such things are excusable and even beneficial to the community, which now renders them ridiculous and even obnoxious to the severest censure. May the time speedily arrive when, with every individual of both sexes, the question respecting apparel shall no longer be, "What is fashionable?" but, "What will become my station, age, and character? moreover, what will become me as a meek and lowly follower of Jesus Christ the righteous?" The following is the anecdote referred to:

The Dean having once honored a Mr. Reilly, a tradesman, with his company to dinner, and observing that person's wife dressed in a very expensive manner for the occasion, he pretended not to know her; and, after having conversed for some time with Reilly, he inquired, with great gravity when he should have the pleasure of seeing his wife? Being informed that she was in the room and sitting opposite to him, he said, "That Mrs. Reilly! impossible!—I have heard that she is a prudent woman, and as such would never dress herself in silks, and ornaments, fit only for fashionable. No! Mrs. Reilly, the tradesman's wife, would never wear any thing better than plain stuff, with other things suitable to it." Mrs. Reilly happening to be a woman of sense, and taking the hint, immediately withdrew, changed her dress as speedily as possible, and, in a short time, returned to the parlor in her common apparel. The Dean then saluted her in the most friendly manner, taking her by the hand and saying, "I am heartily glad to see you, Mrs. Reilly. This husband of yours would fain have palmed a lady upon me dressed in silks, &c. for his wife, but I was not to be taken in so."

A JOKER.

A topping Yankee, who is proverbial for getting his living by his wit, dropped in at Knight's Hotel, in this borough, on Tuesday last, when the following dialogue passed between the host and his profitable customer:—"Captain Knight, I guess I'll take a small glass of that good old rye of your'n. I've got another real good joke to tell ye." "My dear sir," replied the landlord, "I love a good joke; but my butcher won't take jokes in payment for beef; nor will my grocer accept jokes in exchange for whiskey. I find it high time to block your game." "Well," said the Yankee, finding the old game blocked in good earnest "as you've been pretty clever all along, I'll just tell ye the joke, whether I get any thing for it or not; but it's one that I never told you afore, and it shall cost you a treat any how." "No it won't," said the landlord, "Your jokes have cost me too much already. But as you have promised it, I'll listen to it." "There," said the Yankee, triumphantly placing 3 cents on the counter, "there's the chuck for a glass of whiskey. Did I ever play that trick on you afore?" "No indeed, that's a new one," said the Captain, as he handed down the bottle.

The joker very deliberately helped himself to a bumper with one hand, while with the other he re-conveyed the pennies to his pocket; exclaiming, as he walked from the bar, "I told you my new joke should cost ye a treat."

Liverpool Mercury.

A shopkeeper in Dorchester has for some time past, for his virtues, obtained the name of Little Rascal. A friend asked him the other day, why such an appellation had been given him. "To distinguish me from the rest of my trade," said he, "who are all great rascals!"

A gentleman having given a quantity of peaches to the laborers on a railroad in the vicinity of Boston, one of them was asked how he liked them—he said the fruit was very good, but the seeds scratched his throat a little as he swallowed them.

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