

departing soul, or if thou wert merely led there by some undefined instinct.

"Take her home!" said Mary sorrowfully, "take her home!—alas! my sister! how fully have thy dark presentiments been realized!"

Mary Newburk survived these fatal occurrences several years, but she never recovered the shock they had given her! What though she inherited the fortune of her brother? What though her society was incessantly courted? She never emerged from her retirement, but lived and died a lonely and melancholy woman. The Newburk family expired with her, and strangers now enjoy their estates.

### MAY.

THE beauties of May are so manifold and obvious, and so congenial with the kindlier feelings of our nature, that there are few hearts which do not feel her influence, and few men of imagination, who have not offered up a *Holocaust* at her sylvan shrine. April is doubtless a pleasant month—"far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,"—for then come the buds and wild flowers and singing birds—but her skies, though clear, are cold—her trees are almost as leafless as December's, with the exception of a few wilding shoots and sunny hedgerows, and her southern breezes, though they may chance to breathe o'er beds of violets, are somewhat too keen and searching for susceptible nerves. Now May, fresh May, possesses all the charms of April, with the addition of her own rich store of "undefiled sweets,"—her fruit trees all in bloom—her choicest flowers in blow—her hawthorns, vocal with the song of birds—her love-tales—her long bright dewy mornings, sacred to the Muses and to gentle pious thoughts, and her mild evenings, ushered in by vernal showers, and made melodious by the "wakeful nightingale." Our old poets and dramatists had a clearer insight into these things, and a deeper sense of their power, than we of this degenerate day. The world had not then grown old in its iniquity. The early worshippers of nature were not dismayed by the sappings of periodical criticism, or the political drams with which we are now drugged to satiety. They looked round on the world, and marked the coming year with an eye of unqualified delight, and the signs and sounds which were imaged vividly in their minds, they expressed freely, without fear, favour, or fastidiousness. Chaucer lived in the reign of Richard II., and is supposed to have written his *Canterbury Tales* in the year 1389. Yet what modern poet has excelled the following pure and natural description? True genius, it may be remarked, never becomes unintelligible from a change of national idioms:—

Thus passeth yere by yere, and day by day,  
Till it fell once on a morrow of May,  
That Emille, who fairer was to sene,  
Than is the lile upon his stalke green,  
And fresher than the May with flowers new,  
For with the rose colour strove her hue—  
I wot not which was finer of them two.

The latter simile may challenge a comparison with Milton's far-famed

"Proserpine gathering flowers, herself a fairer flower."

Having introduced this gentle heroine, the poet proceeds to describe her dress and occupation:—

—To don honour to May,  
Yclothed was she fresh for to devise;  
Her yellow hair was braided in a tresse,  
Behind her back, a yarde long I guess;  
And in the garden as the sun uprist,  
She walketh up and down where as she list.  
She gathereth flowers, partie white and red,  
To make a sotel<sup>e</sup> garland for her head;  
And as an angel heavenly she sang.

But we must not stop to pursue the thread of the tale. Emily was espied in the garden by Palamon, a "woful knight," who from the barred window of the "castle donjon," in which he was confined, cast "his eyen" downwards upon the fair songstress, and was "stung to the heart." In like manner James I., king of Scotland, as he was listening on a May morning from the window of his chamber in Windsor Tower, which also looked forth into a garden, heard a female singing "hymnis of love," and looking down, saw (for the first time) the Lady Jane Beaufort, with whom he was instantly captivated. But James was happier in his love than the fabled knight of Chaucer. Dunbar, a Scottish poet of the fourteenth century, thus felicitously describes a morning in May:—

Full-angel like the birds sang their hours,  
Within their curtains green into their bowers;  
Apparelled with white and red with bloomis sweet.  
Enamelled was the field with all colours;  
The pearly drops shook as in silver showers;  
While all in balm did branch and leavis flet; †  
To part frae Phoebus did Aurora greet.  
Her crystal tears I saw hing on the flowers,  
Which he for love all drank up with his heat.

Time, as he rolls on, works many changes, obliterating the old land-marks as the coming tide effaces the prints on the shore, or as the mind of man varies from year to year, and retains at last scarcely a trace of its early impressions. But the woods are now as green—the skies as clear—the May-garlands as fresh and fair, as when they could boast so many happy followers, and filled the vales of Merry England with jubilee shouts of mirth and gladness.

\* Suitable.

† Float—undulate.