

# THE LITERARY GARLAND.

VOL. IV.

MARCH, 1842.

No. 4.

(ORIGINAL.)

## THE MISER'S GRANDAUGHTER.

BY E. L. C.

How quickly nature falls into revolt,  
When gold becomes her object!

*Shakspeare.*

The spirit's beauty met you there, in every line and shade,  
The light that sorrow touches not when the rosier blossoms fade;  
But there dwell not with her, sparkling looks, such as the careless know,  
The very smiles in their sweetness told, life's cup had been of woe.

*Mrs. L. P. Smith.*

THESE may sometimes be noticed, in the very heart of a large and populous city, a habitation, which, without being detached from the mass of surrounding dwellings, wears an air of utter solitude and isolation, conveying to the mind of the observer a sentiment of gloom and melancholy, which, if it stood alone, amid the serene and beautiful objects of nature, would not be associated with it.

A house of this description, many years since, stood in a crowded street in one of the most ancient cities of the United States,—if indeed, it be permitted to make so anomalous an application of that word. But there it then stood, one of the earliest dwellings erected by the first English possessors of the soil—perhaps it stands there still, a venerable memento of the past, with its dark, time-stained walls, its sloping gable roof, green with vegetable mould, and its small casements of diamond-shaped glass, scarcely discernible through the clustering foliage of the Virginia creeper, that hung its long tendrils in many a fantastic wreath around them. It had a small court in front, enclosed by a crazy board fence, the top of which was defended by formidable iron spikes; and above it, towered a majestic elm, drooping its green arms around the domicile, and seeming to shelter it in their kind embrace. But though a beautiful object in itself, yet from the confined space in which it grew, the tree cast so dim and damp a shadow over the place, and created such a twilight obscurity beneath its boughs, that it rather added to, than relieved the gloom that brooded over the little domain—a gloom, which, by the dwellers in its vicinity, and the passers by of every day, had ceased to be felt; but a stranger seldom viewed the spot, without pausing to marvel at the dismal and desolate aspect which it wore, and which contrasted with the busy life and

motion, that flowed on around it, made it the more striking and remarkable.

The occupants of this uninviting abode were four in number,—an old man, who had well nigh fulfilled his threescore years and ten, his widowed daughter in law, his grand-daughter, and a serving woman of nearly the same age with himself. They held no intercourse with the neighbourhood, for it is in cities that man may indulge his selfish wish of living to, and for himself. Amid the beneficent influences of the country, hearts are warmer, kind sympathies more diffusive, and individual suffering becomes a source of interest to the whole community. Let the hermit seek the city, for in the country he may vainly hope to dwell without the fellowship of his kind.

The old man was known by the name of Miser Dorival, a soubriquet which his sordid and avaricious habits had justly earned for him. He belonged to a family of respectability, had been bred a merchant, and in early life married an amiable woman of small fortune, who died shortly after the birth of her first child, a son. Some asserted, that she died of a broken heart; others, that her death was occasioned by want and privation, her penurious husband denying her, even in illness, the common necessaries of life. At all events, he betrayed no grief at her loss, but from that time, abandoned himself to the entire sway of his ruling passion, the love of gold; and to increase what he already possessed, by usury, and persimony, became at once his employment and delight. He disposed of every superfluous article in his house, reserving only the barest necessaries for use, and besides depriving himself of every comfort, left his poor child, half clothed and scantily fed, to the charge of an ignorant and simple woman, of whom he knew nothing, except that she