

What though we shun War's bloody plain,
And the hoarse surges of Adria's main;
What though in Autumn's sultry hour
We dread the south wind's blighting power:

To black Coertus, oozing slow,
And the vile Danaiids we must go;
Him we must see, who rolls the stone,
Con-tinned eternally to groan.

Earth, home, and charming wife must be
Abandoned, and no cherished tie
Save, only expressus abhorred,
Shall follow thee, thy short-lived lord!

An heir thy Coenban shall seize,
Close guarded with a hundred keys;
And reverly the floor shall stain
With choicer wine than Pontiff's drain.

Geo. MURRAY.

Contributions.

A STORY OF THE MOONLIGHT.

BY H. D'ALTONA.

Translated from the German by Gowen Lea.

He was ill—ill in body and soul; ill in luck and money; ill in joy and love.

What a long time had elapsed since it all happened! Exactly ten years ago to-day began the high tide of his happiness.

Exactly ten years ago to-day began the ebb-tide whose waves at last carried him to the shores of death.

The only adornment of the plaster walls, with the exception of some pen-and-ink sketches, was a dried myrtle wreath, and a framed letter written in a pretty lady-like hand.

To-day, ten years ago, had he, the talented, but penniless artist, led to the altar the maiden of his choice,—the beautiful and only daughter of the counsellor of finance.

To-day, five years ago, as he returned from the birthday fest of prima donna of the opera, had he been struck speechless by reading that letter which now hung on the wall beside the myrtle wreath.

"Thou hast deceived thyself in thy love!" so ran the letter. "The five years of our married life have convinced me, that what the respect of a wife imperatively demands that she shall be to her husband, I cannot be to thee. I am too proud longer to play the humiliating rôle of silent endurance, and I know you will be thankful to me for releasing you from the matrimonial bond. In three weeks the broad ocean will be between us. No power on earth can make me retract this step."

Eight days later the husband found her name in the passenger-list of those having sailed for New York.

He had made no attempt to alter her decision; there was no farewell letter, no last greeting.

With almost too great precipitation he gave up his house; and likewise all engagements, social and professional, and sought an asylum in a modest little hamlet far away in the suburbs of the city.

"Leave me alone, I pray you!" he had said to the inquiring neighbours. "I want no comforting; I am not unhappy."

And they left him alone. At the same time in the drawing-rooms the words of the wife of the counsellor-of-finance were being handed around: "Abominable! Not content with driving my daughter to America, he hires himself out as a penny-a-lince!"

The life of this pale silent man soon began to have the appearance of that of an outlaw, or ever did he seek to intensify the isolation of his position.

His intercourse with the world was at length comprised with going round with the lawyers' letters which he copied, and in the occasional exchange of a few remarks with his landlady.

Only once again did he bring his artistic talent into play; that was to make the pen-and-ink sketches upon the wall. Then were easel and pellet, pens and pencils, thrown into the fire; and as he gazed at the last sparks of the destroyed utensils, he said to himself, "The bridge is broken. No more happiness, no art, no world. Only one thing remains: Renunciation!"

All had come now to avoid his deserted locking dwelling; all seemed to have been repulsed by his silent manner: all but one. To this one had the lonely man withdrawn the curtain of his being.

This one was—the Moon. Often had it as if with crossing hand touched his pale cheeks and not infrequently had that solemn earnestness in his features given place to an expression of calmness, and then the firmly-closed lips had moved as if to invite social converse.

He lay this evening upon his couch among the debris of his wrecked life. An invalid sofa, a table, a chair, a broken spindle—these remained as fragments of his former happiness; and, among these, after the delirium that followed a wild carousal, he came to consciousness, to listen, as he thought, to the gnawing of the death-worms within his hollow breast.

The moon seemed to be pointing to the myrtle-wreath upon the wall.

"Yes, yes, you are right, old friend!" muttered the feverish man, "show me the pictures for the last time! You are right! To-day, ten years ago, that wreath crowned the pinnach of my happiness. I had means, honour, love, and (the moonlight fell upon the framed farewell letter)—to-day, five years ago, the proud structure broke under me and fell in ruins. I awoke from my mad dream to face an awful reality."

"Five years have gone! Five years! Oh my God, —and not to be able to forget! Five years struggle with my heart to drive love out of it, and to find that the conflict ever ends in defeat! Why must one love when to hate or to forget were a greater, yes, a worse punishment!"

A ray of moonlight now showed in relief the drawing of a woman's head—a head it seemed of quite ideal beauty.

"I understand thy address to my guilt," said he. "But are we not all erring men, and am I the only one whose soul burns itself out from a consciousness of guilt? Did the siren not take me in her net and ensnare me with her eyes, and was not her love at times as if fixed in ice? O moon,—she had such a cold heart!"

Then the moonlight fell upon a picture of a totally