

LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

THE WIFE.

I have been with thee in thy hour
Of glory and of bliss—
Doubt not its memory's living power
To strengthen me, through this!

MRS. HEMANS.

She was a beautiful girl when I first saw her. She was standing up at the side of her lover at the marriage altar. She was slightly pale—yet ever and anon, as the ceremony proceeded, a faint tinge of crimson crossed her beautiful cheek, like the reflection of a sunset cloud upon the clear waters of a quiet lake. Her lover, as he clasped her delicate hand within his own, gazed on her for a moment with unmingled admiration, and the warm and eicquent blood played upon his cheek, shadowing at intervals his manly forehead and 'melting into beauty upon his lip.'

'He stood in the pride of his youth—a fair form,

With his feelings yet noble, his spirit yet warm—

An eagle, to shelter the dove with his wing—
An elm, where the light twining tendrils
might cling.'

And they gave themselves to one another; and every heart blessed them as they went their way rejoicing in their love.

Years passed on, and again I saw those lovers. They were seated together where the light of a summer sunset stole through the half closed and crimson curtains, lending a richer tint to the delicate carpeting, and the exquisite embellishments of the rich and gorgeous apartment. Time had slightly changed them in outward appearance. The girlish buoyancy of the young wife had indeed given place to the grace of perfected womanhood, and her lip was somewhat paler, and a faint line of care was slightly perceptible upon her beautiful brow. Her husband's brow, too, was marked somewhat more deeply than his years might warrant—*anxiety, ambition and pride* had gone over it, and left their traces upon it—a silver hue was mingling with the darkness of his hair, which had become thinned around his temples almost to baldness. He was reclining on the splendid ottoman with his face half hidden by his hand, as if he feared that the deep and troubled thoughts which oppressed him were visible upon his features.

'Edward, you are ill to-night,' said his wife in a low, sweet, and half inquiring voice, as she laid her hand upon his own.

The husband roused himself from his attitude slowly, and a slight frown knit his brow. 'I am NOT ill,' he said, somewhat abruptly, and he folded his arms upon his bosom, as if he wished no interruption of his evidently bitter thoughts.

Indifference from those we love is terrible to the sensitive bosom. It is as if the sun of heaven refused his wonted cheerfulness, and glared down upon us with a cold, dim and forbidding glance. It is dreadful to feel that the only being of our love refuses to ask our sympathy—that he broods over feelings which he scorns, or fears, to reveal—dreadful to watch the convulsing feature and the gloomy brow—the indefinable shadows of hidden emotions—the involuntary signs of a sorrow in which we are forbidden to participate, and whose character we cannot know.

The wife essayed once more. 'Edward,' she said slowly, mildly and affectionately, 'the time has been, when you were willing to confide your secret joys and sorrows to one, who has never, I trust, betrayed your confidence. Why, then, my dear Edward, is this cruel reserve. You are troubled, and yet you refuse to tell me the cause.'

Something of returning tenderness softened for an instant the cold severity of the husband's features, but it passed away, and a bitter smile was his only reply.

Time passed on, and the twain were separated from each other. The husband sat gloomily and alone in the damp cell of a dungeon. He had followed ambition as his god, and had failed in the high career. He had mingled with men whom his heart loathed—he had sought out the fierce and wronged spirits of his land, and had breathed into them the madness of revenge. He had drawn his sword against his country—he had fanned rebellion to a flame, which had been quenched in human blood. He had fallen—miserably fallen—and had been doomed to die the death of a traitor.

It was his last night of life. The morrow was the day appointed for his execution: He saw the sun sink behind the green hills of the west, as he sat by the dim grate of his dungeon, with unutterable horror. He felt that it was the last sun that would set to him. It would