

From Bentley's Miscellany for May.

TO LEONORA.

"Quand un lis verginal penche et se décolore,
Par un ciel brûlant desséché,
Sur l'urne qui l'arrose il peut renaitre encore ;
Mais quand un ver rougeur dans son sein est caché,
Quel remède essayer contre un mal qu'on ignore."

DE LA VIGNE.

More dear, Leonora, more loved art thou now
Than thou wert in thy happiest years,
Though the paleness of death overshadows thy brow,
And I gaze on thy beauty with tears.

I feel thou art stealing away from my arms
To the cold silent rest of the tomb;
Yet I know not what grief has thus prey'd on thy charms,
And wither'd their brightness and bloom.

My white dove lies bleeding and torn at my feet,
But no trace of the arrow is seen !
My lily is broken,—but where can I meet
With a proof who the spoiler has been ?

Whate'er be thy sorrow, oh ! turn from the thought,
And repose on a heart that is thine ;—
With falsehood and peril if others are fraught,
Come, dear one ! for shelter to mine.

In grief or in gladness, in shame or in pride,
Unchanged my devotion will be.—
I ask not the secret thou wilt not confide ;
But in silence I suffer with thee.

M. T. H.

Translated from French Works.

ANECDOTES OF CELEBRATED PERSONS.

Henri IV.—As his majesty was one day hunting in the Vendomois, he lost sight of his retinue, and was about to return alone, when he saw a peasant seated under a tree ; "Well, and what are you doing here, my good man ?" said the king. "Faith, I am waiting to see the king go by, sir."—"Oh, is that all," replied Henri, "then get up behind me, and I will take you somewhere where you will be able to see the king at your ease." The bear mounted, and held himself on the horse, by twining his arms round the monarch. "But I say, sir, how shall I be able to know the king from the others ?"—"Very easily ; he will be the only one who will not take his hat off." Presently they were discovered by the gentlemen of the suite, who all uncovered themselves, and paid their respects to the monarch. "Well, and who now is the king ?" said Henri, mildly. "Why," replied the peasant, "it must be either you or I ; for I don't see any but we two with our hats on."

At the time of the war with Spain, Henri thus wrote to Sally : "I am close upon the enemy, and yet I have not a horse worth mounting. My shirts are all gone to rags, and my doublets are out at elbows. For the last four or five days, I have dined here and there, for I have nothing wherewith to purchase food."

Gibbon.—This celebrated man's prodigious bulkiness was no hindrance to his gallantry. One day, as he sat enjoying a most comfortable tete-a-tete with Mad. de Cronzas, it suddenly occurred to him, that the opportunity was one of the most favourable he could ever meet with, to make a declaration. Acting accordingly, the historian threw himself on his knees before the lady, and expressed his feelings in most glowing language. Mad. de Cronzas somewhat surprised, replied in such terms as were, she thought, calculated at once to put an end to a scene so ridiculous. But no, 'twas unavailing ; and Gibbon remained on his knees, regardless of all injunctions. "Sir," said the baffled lady, "I beg you will rise." "Alas ! madam," replied the unwieldy suitor, "I cannot." His corpulency utterly prevented him from rising without assistance ; Mad. de Cronzas, therefore, rang the bell, and upon its being answered, said, "Lift up Mr. Gibbon !"

Voltaire.—The philosopher was exceedingly disagreeable at table. He seemed to be in a continual passion, and called out to the servants at the top of his voice, which was so loud as to repeatedly startle his guests.—An Englishman, who was on his way to Italy, could in no wise prevail upon himself to pass Ferney without visiting him. He luckily chose a fortunate moment, and was received by the philosopher with every possible demonstration of respect and pleasure. This reception so highly delighted our Englishman, that in his exultation next day, he declared his intention to spend six weeks at the castle. "You are not quite like Don Quixote," remarked Voltaire, "he mistook inns for castles, you mistake castles for inns."

Klopstock.—The celebrated author of the "Messiah" desired to be introduced to me, and came. I was alone with my niece, when in came a little, lame, ugly man ; I rose, and conducted him to a chair, in which he sat at first as if absorbed in deep thought ; he then thrust himself comfortably into it, and assumed the appearance of one who was determined to make a stay of no short duration. With a loud, high-pitched voice, he then suddenly put me the question, "Which, madam, in your opinion, is the best prose writer, Voltaire or Dufrenoy ?"

Scarron.—The wit thus addressed the king, in his preface to Don Japhet : "I will prove to your majesty, that far from doing yourself any injury by doing me more good, you will, on the contrary, much conduce to your happiness, likewise to that of the country at large. For then I should be a deal more light-hearted, and consequently write better plays. And if I wrote good plays, your majesty would be well entertained ; so that, by being entertained, your majesty's money will not be wasted. By good plays, too, the people's admiration will be excited, and cause hosts of them to frequent the theatres ; money will thus circulate, and there is no telling where the matter may not end."

Mezeray.—This celebrated old French historian was excessively susceptible of cold. A friend meeting him on a very frosty day, asked him how he fared in this weather. "I am come to L," answered Mezeray, running home as fast as his legs could well carry him, that he might enjoy the delights of his fire-side. This riddle was for a long time inexplicable ; till at last it was one day solved by a friend, who lived on the most intimate terms with the eccentric historian. It appears that Mezeray had always a dozen pairs of stockings behind his chair, severally labelled from A. to M. According to the number of degrees indicated by the thermometer, he put on a corresponding number of pairs of stockings ; so that having this key to the enigma, it was evident that on the day above mentioned, the poor chilly Mezeray had come to the last degree.

Louis XIV.—A robber, who had managed to effect his way into one of the royal apartments of Versailles, was in the act of placing a small ladder against the wall, to possess himself of a beautiful time-piece, when the king came in and disturbed his plans. The robber, however, undaunted, made a low bow, saying, "I was going to take that time-piece down, but I am afraid the ladder will slip." His majesty, thinking the man had orders to repair the clock, offered his assistance, and held the foot of the ladder, while the fellow took it down. A few hours afterwards the general talk was of a most beautiful time-piece having been stolen, which the king happening to overhear, said, "Hush ! I am one of the parties, I held the ladder to help the man to get it."

Napoleon.—He was in the habit of playing with his son as childishly as if he himself were no more than a mere child six or seven years of age. Sometimes he would take the young king under the arms, and toss him up in the air, exciting his little majesty's delight to such a degree as to make him shed tears. Then he would carry him before a glass, making the most ridiculous grimaces imaginable ; often, too, the poor little fellow would shed tears of actual pain, for the game became sometimes too rough ; the emperor would then exclaim : "Oh ! oh ! a king crying ! he, he ! that is very ugly, very ugly !"

One day, when the prince was but a twelvemonth old, the emperor took off his sword, and fastened it on his son, completing the child's toilette by placing his three-cornered hat on its head ; thus equipped, it may be supposed it found no little difficulty in keeping itself on its legs, and the care with which the emperor watched his every step, would have delighted any one to witness.

At breakfast, the emperor made it a practice to dip his finger in wine and make his son suck it ; sometimes he would dip his finger in sauce, and spot the young king's chin and nose with it ; this amusement was among the most pleasing to the child.

THE BRIDEGROOM'S STAR.

In nights calm and clear, 'mid the bright orbs I try
To trace her bright home in the beautiful sky ;
And I gaze on some star, till in fancy I see
The far-shining Spirit still smiling on me.—MIRIAM. AXON.

*** It is the fifth, and on the fifteenth I shall be the happiest of mortal men. Ten short days !—no, ten long, long days ! must fade into longer nights, before I can call my Marion mine. Ten days !—why, there are more than two hundred,—almost three hundred hours to be passed ; but will not hope lighten them, will not gentle Sleep enclose some of them within her forgetful curtains, and every moment of time bring me nearer and nearer to the goal of all my wishes and all my prayers ? Yet I am wretched with the excess of Joy,—the excess of Joy, at whose approach Fear has grown into excess greater still. Ah ! how like to far travel is the journey of life ! While distant from its object and its home, the mind feels but languid longings for their attainment, shadowy and unabiding presentiments of possible evil ; but as we near them, as the intervening space diminishes, as the thousand miles shorten into one, how beats the pulse as the blood rushes through every vein ! how throbs the heart to bursting ! how weary seems the way ! how dreadfully arise the spectres of unheard-of change or fatal accident ! The last brief tide is the voyage round the world,—the last few hours is the sum and history of human existence.

*** And well might Henry Sturmond thus dwell on the date of his appointed union ; for if ever angel were embodied in an earthly form, it was in the idol of his devoted affections. Marion was the loveliest of the lovely, the sweetest of the sweet : so bright, and yet so soft ; so wise, and yet so simple ; so noble, and yet so tender ; that whilst ardent passion bent in holy warmth before the blooming girl, a feeling allied to adoration hallowed the

presence of the perfect woman. What a countenance was hers,—the model fixed, but the expression ever varying ! On her ample brow sat Intellect enthroned ; and round that throne what radiance of auburn gold. In her deep hazel eye now lightened the glance of spiritual essence, now swam the dewy moisture of pity, now rose and fell the indescribable meanings of love. On her rosy lips the smile of playful innocence was cradled ; nor did the suckling leave its treasure-bed unless exiled for a moment by the advent of sympathy for sorrow, or of sorrow for misery. Such was Marion Delmar in face, nor was she in person less admirable. Nature had set her seal upon the most precious casket that ever enshrined an immortal gem—the setting the proudest and most glorious production of earth, the brightness within an emanation of Heaven.

*** And old Time wore on ; wore on, as from the creation, regardless alike of the sighs of love, the pangs of disappointment, the delights of pleasure, the shrieks of pain, the shouts of mirth, the groans of woe, the revels of sport, the terrors of death.

*** Of the ten days, eight were flown ; and whither had they flown, laden with all these millions of blessings and curses ? They had flown back in mystery while they seemed to hurry onward,—they had returned to that abyss of eternity from which they sprung, and darkness covered them.

*** "To-morrow, Henry," said Marion, clasping his hand in hers, and looking with measureless confiding into his watchful eye, "to-morrow I would be alone." To a glance that seemed of the kindest reproach, she replied, "Yes, my dearest Henry, on the next morn I will be yours for life and unto death. It is a solemn act—an act I will fulfil with a devotedness of heart and soul that would satisfy the most avaricious miser of love ; but let me only have this one day to prepare myself to be worthy of you, to seek that aid which alone can truly make our fate what every human promise tells us it will be,—a fate of lasting affection, and peace and joy. Indeed, my dearest Henry, I would to-morrow be alone !"

"Then give me now, for my consent, one more, one last eve of wandering bliss : let us visit together the spots sacred to our loves,—the grove ringing with the song of birds ere they seek their downy nests, the bank redolent of flowers, and the stream gurgling its music in requital for their odours, the romantic fall where first I breathed my vows of eternal truth, and the ruined abbey that o'ertops the scene where these vows were accepted and ratified by her to whom I owe life—more than life ; all that can make life acceptable, what life can never repay."

*** The dawn of morning ! On a bed of sickness, of agony, lay Marion Delmar. Writhing in the torture of that fell disease before whose appalling might youth and strength were swept away as grass before the scythe of the mower. Alas, for Henry ! the stern commands of skill forbade him even to approach that bed of infection and of death. Brief was its awful struggle. Distorted were the ghastly features of matchless loveliness, but last night beaming with intelligence and hope ; the rosy tints of health were gone, and that pure colour which had marked the streams of vital principle, like violets strewed among roses on a wreath of snow, no longer natural in motion, had usurped the livid corpse.

*** The tenth day arrived. The village church was decked with boughs and blossoms ; for the dismal tidings had not reached the aged sexton, and he was surveying his cheerful work with an approving glance, when, lo ! the summons came to prepare an immediate grave. In that grave, within an hour, was deposited the remains of Marion Delmar, hardly attended to their final abode by the dead-stricken living, whom terror kept from the plague-spotted couch, and whom terror slew in their flight from the danger.

*** Not even Henry Sturmond was there to see laid in the cold clay, her whom at that very hour he was to have led to the bridal altar. But it was not fear that detained him ; it was not despair. The blow had stunned him into utter insensibility ; and to have embraced, and kissed, and endeared the horrible wreck of all he loved, or to have witnessed it hurriedly shrouded and tossed into the foul ground, had been the same to him. Reason was dead.

*** But not for ever. She gradually resumed her empire, and with her came images of Marion, full of life and warmth, and perception, and thought, and grace, and love—of Marion struck with disease, tormented, dying, passive, dead,—dead even to his love. "To-morrow is here," he exclaimed, "to-morrow is here, and she is alone !"

*** The shades of the evening had descended upon the jocund grove, the enamelled bank, the murmuring river, the splashing fall, the mouldering ruin, and Henry trod the paths of yesterday, but he trod them alone.

"Oh, God ! oh, God !" he cried aloud in his agony, "is there another and a better world ?"

He flung himself upon the broken stones, once the tomb of a warrior knight, and scattered near the shrine where kings and abbots had knelt in splendid worship—he flung himself down, and he essayed to pray. But his lips were parched and powerless, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. If he prayed, it was the voiceless aspiration of the crushed and overburthened soul.

*** As if awaking from a hideous dream, he cast a look to-