

A SEA-SIDE IDYLL.

A summer day. The morning breeze
Blows freshly o'er the weary land,
A stretch of sea beach. Here and there
A white tent dots the expanse of sand.

A maiden tall and slight of form,
Glancing hair on her white neck lies,
Slim ungloved fingers warm and brown,
And eyelids veiling dark grey eyes.

Her nervous fingers vaguely trace
Unmeaning letters on the sand,
Her dreaming eyes intently watch
Each movement of the restless hand.

"And this your answer?" Angrily
Come the words from his set white lips.
His blue eyes flash with sudden fire,
Her's are fixed on the distant ships.

Silence falls on the little group,
The wavelets lap the thirsty shore,
His handsome face grows hard with pain,
Pain that he ne'er endured before.

"Yes, you know it could never be"—
As his passion shows revival,
"I never dreamt of—why, I thought
It was but a sea-side idyll."

DAVID BRECON.

A VERY OLD ANECDOTE OF A LAW SUIT.

The following curious anecdote was many years ago printed by a Staffordshire gentleman for private circulation:—

A gentleman of about £500 a year estate, in the eastern part of England, had two sons. The eldest had a rambling disposition; he took a place in a ship, and went abroad; and after several years, his father died. The younger son destroyed his father's will, and seized upon the estate; he gave out that his eldest brother was dead, and bribed some false witnesses to attest the truth of it. In course of time, the eldest brother returned; he came home in miserable circumstances; his youngest brother repulsed him with scorn, told him he was an imposter and a cheat, and asserted that his real brother was dead long ago, and that he could bring witnesses to prove it. The poor fellow having neither money nor friends was in a most dismal situation. He went round the parish making bitter complaints, and at last he came to a lawyer, who, when he heard the poor man's mournful story, replied to him in this manner: "You have nothing to give me; if I undertake your cause, and lose it, it will bring me into very foul disgrace, as all the wealth and evidence is on your brother's side. But, however, I will undertake your cause upon this condition: you shall enter into obligations to pay me a thousand guineas if I gain the estate for you. If I lose it, I know the consequence, and I venture upon it with my eyes open." Accordingly, he brought an action against the younger brother, and it was agreed to be tried at the next general assizes at Chelmsford, in Essex. The lawyer having engaged in the cause of the poor man, and stimulated by the prospect of a thousand guineas, set his wits to work to contrive the best methods to gain his end. At last he hit upon this happy thought—that he would consult the first of all judges, Lord Chief Justice Hale. Accordingly he flew up to London, and laid open the case in all its circumstances. The judge, who was the greatest lover of justice of any man in the world, heard the case patiently and attentively, and promised him all the assistance in his power. (It is very probable that he opened his whole scheme and method of proceeding, enjoining the utmost secrecy.) The judge contrived matters in such a manner as to have finished all his business at the King's Bench before the assizes began at Chelmsford, and ordered either his carriage or his horses to convey him down very near the seat of the assizes. He dismissed his man and his horses, and sought out for a single house, and found one occupied by a miller. After some conversation, and making himself quite agreeable, he proposed to the miller to change clothes with him. As the judge had a very good suit on, the man had no reason to object. Accordingly the judge shifted himself from top to toe, and put on a complete suit of the miller's best. Armed with the miller's hat, shoes, and stick, away he marches to Chelmsford. He had procured lodgings to his liking, and waited for the assizes that should come on next day. When the trials came on, he walked like an ignorant country-fellow backwards and forwards along the county hall. He had a thousand eyes within him, and when the court began to fill, he soon found out the poor fellow that was the plaintiff. As soon as he came into the hall, the miller drew up to him. "Honest friend," said he, "how is your cause like to go to-day?" "Why," said the plaintiff, "my cause is in a very precarious situation, and if I lose it I am ruined for life." "Well, honest friend," replied the miller, "will you take my advice? I'll let you into a secret that perhaps you don't know; every Englishman has the right and privilege to except against any one jurymen through the whole twelve. Now do you insist upon your privilege, without giving a reason why; and, if possible, get me chosen in his room, and I'll do you all the service in my power." Accordingly, when the clerk of the court had called over the jurymen, the plaintiff excepted to one of them by name. The judge on the Bench was highly offended with this liberty. "What do you mean," said he, "by excepting against that gentleman?" "I mean, my lord, to assert my privilege as an Englishman, without giving a reason why." The judge, who had been deeply bribed in order to conceal it by a show of candour, and having confidence in the superiority of his party, said, "Well, sir, as you claim your privilege in one instance, I grant you a favour. Who would you wish to have in the place of that man excepted against?" After a small time taken in consideration: "My lord," says he, "I wish to have an honest man chose in; and, looking round the court, 'My lord, there's that miller in the court, we'll have him in if you please.' Accordingly the miller was chosen in. As soon as the clerk of the court had given them all their oaths, a little dexterous fellow came into the department, and slipped ten golden Carolus into the hands of eleven jurymen, and gave the miller but five. He saw that they were all bribed as well as himself, and said to his next neighbour in a whisper, 'How much have you got?' 'Ten pieces,' said he. He concealed what he had himself. The cause was opened by the plaintiff's counsel; and all the scraps of evidence they could pick up were adduced in his favour. The younger brother was provided with a great number of evidences and pleaders, and all plentifully bribed as well as the judge. The evidence deposed that they were in the self-same country where the brother died, and saw him buried. The counsellors pleaded upon this accumulated evidence, and everything went with a full tide in favour of the younger brother. The judge summed up the evidence with great gravity and deliberation. "And now, gentlemen of the jury," said he, "lay your heads together, and bring in your verdict as you shall deem most just." They waited but a few minutes before they determined in favour of the younger brother. The judge said, "Gentlemen, are you agreed, and who shall speak for you?" "We are agreed, my lord," replied one, "and our foreman shall speak for us." "Hold, my lord," replied the miller, "we are not all agreed." "Why," says the judge, in a very surly manner, "what's the matter with you; what reason have you for disagreeing?" "I have several reasons, my lord," replied the miller. "The first is, they have given all these gentlemen of the jury ten broad pieces of gold, and to me but five; besides, I have many objections to make to the false reasonings of the pleaders, and the contradictory evidence of the witnesses." Upon this the miller began a discourse that discovered such vast penetration of understanding, such extensive knowledge of the law, and expressed such energetic and manly eloquence, that astonished the judge and the whole court. As he was going on with his powerful demonstrations, the judge in surprise of soul stopped him. "Where do you come from, and who are you?" "I came from Westminster Hall," replied the miller. "My name is Matthew Hale, I am Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench. I have observed the iniquity of your proceedings this day, and therefore came down from a seat which you are no ways worthy to hold. You are one of the corrupt parties in this iniquitous business, and I'll come up this moment and try the cause over again." Accordingly Sir Matthew went with his miller's dress and hat on, began the trial from its very origin, searching every circumstance of truth and falsehood; evinced the eldest brother's title to the estate, from the many contradictory evidences of the witnesses and false reasonings of the pleaders, unravelled all the sophistry to the very bottom, and gained a complete victory in favour of Truth and Justice.

MY PARTNER AT A MASQUERADE.

The following extraordinary story was published in a contemporary shortly after the terrible disaster at the Ring Theatre, Vienna:

My name is Emil Niklas. I came to England from Australia some ten years ago. Before I left my home I was betrothed to a young lady named Bertha Ripka. Her brother, Theodore Ripka, came with me to London. He was a good fellow, and is still my closest friend. But though I adored Bertha, and thought of nothing but the time when I should return to bring her to the land of my adoption, where we should live out our lives together—I and my well beloved—she was not what I thought her.

One day Theodore Ripka came to me, with a letter in his hand. His face was pale, he looked at me with a strange expression.

"How shall I tell you, Emil?" he said, "Bertha, whom I know you love so well, has been false to you. She has married the rich retired merchant, Klauber."

From that day I hated women, and believed them all to be false and vile.

How I came to attend the masquerade ball of the Madrigal Club I scarcely know. My friend John Smith gave me a ticket, to be sure, but I have had numbers of tickets which I have not used. I think that it was because it was a masquerade that I went.

It was a splendid ball; the costumes were gorgeous, the music exquisite, and I love to dance. A great deal of my old feeling returned as I glided through the waltzes or dashed through the galops.

I had chosen for my partner a beautiful figure in a domino of white silk and a white silk mask. As the sleeves fell back from her arms, I saw that all her bracelets were chains of pearls, and pearl drops shone in the ears, whose pink tips were just visible.

I had taken the liberty possible at a masquerade, and had asked her to dance without any introduction.

My partner danced beautifully—exactly as my little betrothed, Bertha Ripka, used to dance. Her voice seemed to me to be like hers. A strange spell fell upon me.

At last I began to fancy that all the past was blotted out, and that I was again in Australia, and that Bertha Ripka was my betrothed, and we were at a great ball I so well remembered.

"I do not know your name. May I call you Bertha?" I asked.

My partner laughed. "My name is really Bertha," said she.

"I knew it—I knew it!" I cried.

I held her more firmly. Her little chin rested on my shoulder.

She was lighter than a fairy, sweeter than a rose.

"Bertha—Bertha!" I sighed. "Oh, this is bliss. We are both dead and in Heaven, Bertha! When these people about us unmask, we shall see a company of angels, with white wings, Bertha, my beloved! Bertha, my sweetest! Bertha, my own!"

She did not shrink from me as I uttered these wild words; she only clung the closer, and I almost believed that what I said was true.

The evening passed like a dream. At last supper was announced. This was the time at which all unmasked.

"Bertha," I sighed, "let us be quite alone when you show me your face. Come here behind this screen of flowers, into this little corner, where no one can see us. I know what face I shall see—I know, I know!"

The voice that answered me was very, very sad.

"Emil," it said, "be in no haste. When I unmask I must go."

"Do not say that," I answered.

"I must say it," she sighed. "I must do it."

Oh, Emil! Emil! Emil!"

She laid her hand in mine, and I led her into the little nook, sheltered by the flowers.

"Let me unmask you," said I.

She lifted up her face.

I took the white mask softly between my fingers and threw back the white hood. For a moment I looked into her face. I swear to you into her face—the sweet pale face of Bertha Ripka, my beloved, my betrothed of the olden time. By what magic she came there I did not ask. I stooped to kiss her, and suddenly a flame sprang up before my eyes. She stood before me in a light blaze, and shrieked for help. I saw her golden hair catch in the flames and crisp and shrivel. I screamed for help. A crowd gathered. In a minute or more some men stood holding the remnants of a white domino, and laughing at me.

"Come back to your senses," they cried. "No great harm is done." Only a domino burnt at the end of the hall.

"The lady! the lady!" I cried. "Bertha—where is she? I saw her. She was on fire! I saw her hair burn!"

"My dear sir," said a gentleman, taking my hand kindly, "I assure you no one has been hurt! This is simply a domino which some one has cast aside. A cigar—the flame of the gas—something has set it on fire. Be calm. You fancied you had set a lady on fire? Is it not that?"

I was calm now. I knew that no human being could have been burned in that place, and without the knowledge of the crowd, and I apologized for myself, and took my way home. I heard them say that I had been drinking, and laugh at me as I left them and went out into the grey dawn.

I took the first carriage, and reached my rooms as speedily as possible. Without undressing, I flung myself on my bed, and slept long and heavily. It was late the next day when I awoke. Some one was knocking at my door. Staggering to my feet, I opened it.

Theodore Ripka stood there, pallid and horror-stricken, holding in his hand a yellow envelope.

"Great heavens! what news I have!" he cried. "Oh, Emil, what horrible news! I have received a telegram from Vienna. The Ring Theatre is burned. My sister Bertha was among the audience, and she has perished in the flames!"

"When did this happen?" I gasped, as I supported him in my arms.

He had only sufficient strength left to answer—"Last night."

ECHOES FROM PARIS.

PARIS, Sept. 16.

It is curious to notice that invitations are now to a "Garden party," the English words having been taken into French fashionable language.

THE famous and fatal duel has called forth a host of journalistic challengers, who desire to meet in deadly combat a host of opponents. As it has been wittily said, this would be too professional, for they would be merely two regiments de lignes.

THE dramatist and romancer, Erckmann, has been on the point of death. His numerous friends and admirers pointed out the inconvenience and loss it would be to the French stage and French literature if he carried things to extremes, and he has consequently reconsidered the situation and consented to be a little better if, as yet, far from well.

AFTER considerable procrastination, the monument now being erected, as a specimen, upon the

summit of the Arc de Triomphe, in order that the final effect may be judged of, is being gradually completed. The scaffolding which has disfigured the arch for several months past will shortly be removed, and the Statue of Liberty at last appear, the head and hands being nearly completed. It is exceedingly doubtful whether the splendid monument in the Avenue des Champs Elyées will be at all improved by the addition of M. Falguière's group, the acceptance of which, fortunately, has not yet been definitely decided upon.

THURSDAY last was marked by a momentous event, namely, nothing less than the ascension of Mlle. Lea d'Asco, a well-known Parisian actress, in a balloon directed by the accomplished aeronaut, M. Jovis. The third participant in the dangers of this singular excursion was the friend of the lady, a very wealthy gentleman. A numerous company, male and female, belonging to those circles of life denominated "fast," were present last Thursday evening at La Villette, in order to behold Mlle. d'Asco depart upon her aerial trip. This she did, with every appearance of gaiety, wearing a costume devised for the occasion and having provided herself with a revolver, the use of which weapon, under circumstances such as those we are describing, is not very easy to imagine. The revolver did not come into play during the trip; but excitement was not, it appears, lacking, for the travellers were obliged to throw away the provisions they had brought with them, and even a portion of their clothing. There were, however, no more serious consequences than these, and the balloon party, after coming to the ground at Mériel, near Pontoise, returned to Paris the next day.

THE gracious Countess de Malden has given a fête at her country residence on an unexampled scale of magnitude, by converting the whole of the superb and extensive grounds into a fair, not a fancy fair, but a country fair of the true old-fashioned type, with all the attractions that couried and won the bucolic taste and fancy, and the coin out of the pockets of the rustics. The Countess flung wide the gates of the park and gardens, and invited all the world to enter—upon payment; the whole proceeding being on behalf of the poor of the Commune. Everything, indeed, had to be paid for, and everything could be had for paying—even a public-house was improvised in one of the shady retreats, and the take there was not the most slender contribution to the day's receipts. For all classes, however, there was something, and, indeed, much—a dramatic entertainment of exceeding refinement being one item. It was given in a large theatre built *ad fresco*, at which most distinguished professionals, and almost as clever amateurs, gave their services, the Marquis de Masa having written one of his brilliant comedie-vaudevilles for the occasion, the other piece being *L'Homme en habit noir*. All the games of these times, and of "those" times, were being played in every direction; shooting galleries, fencing saloons, acts of horsemanship, acrobats, Punch and Judy, being among the attractions, while the Countess received her country friends and acquaintances in the chateau with a charm—with a charm which is her birthright, as the domain which she owns is called *Le Charme*.

THE spirit of practical joking has broken loose again in Paris, no sooner are the "boys" back again from their brief holiday, yet painful separation from their *Parigi a Cara*. The first to receive a taste has been a Polish lady of nobility who has resolved to make the gay capital her future home. She deemed herself well remembered by kind friends when, on the first day of her arrival, she received a large hamper of game, on the opening of which however a selection of objects met her gaze which can better be imagined than described, and made her recoil with indignation—her maids, however, to choke with irrepressible laughter. Another victim has been the Marquis —, who is enamoured of a lady who is not a fortress to many others, but to the marquis a veritable Gibraltar. The marquis has to thank himself for this, being as like Don Quixote in every respect as if he were a twin brother. The lady is an admirer of Spanish dancing, and a friend to whom he recounted plaintively the ill-success of his love affairs, advised him to win the affections of the unwilling one by appearing before her as a Spanish dancer. The Marquis flattered himself, and it was agreed that the kind adviser should acquaint the damsel with the intentions of the Marquis. This was done, and at the given hour the forlorn counterpart of the Don presented himself before the lady as the Baladin Espagnol, in tights that reduced his extremities to broom-sticks, but made beautiful in his own conceit nevertheless by an abundance of many-colored ribbons. He advanced to the centre of the room playing the tambourine, essaying to dance and perform agile pantomime and wreath himself in smiles, which resulted in terrific contortions of his sallow physiognomy. The lady was gracious, and the Marquis triumphant, but in the moment of his extreme joy, the roomfull of hidden friends, who had been enjoying the scene most mightily from behind the curtain, burst into uproarious hilarity, and emerged from their ambushade. Needless to say that the Marquis swore not a little, and left precipitately, and in such a humor that the friends jumped on one side and left him free passage, fearing to become the victims of a blow from the tambourine whirling in all directions.