

THE DYING CHILD.

BY JOHN CLARE.

He could not die when trees were green,
For he loved the time too well.
His little hands, when flowers were seen,
Were held for the blue bell,
As he was carried o'er the green.

His eye glanced at the white-nosed bee;
He knew those children of the spring:
When he was well and on the lee
He held one in his hands to sing,
Which filled his heart with glee.

Infants, the children of the spring!
How can an infant die
When butterflies are on the wing,
Green grass, and such a sky?
How can they die at spring?

He held his hands for daisies white,
And then for violets blue,
And took them all to bed at night
That in the green fields grew,
As childhood's sweet delight.

And then he shut his little eyes,
And flowers would notice not;
Birds' nests and eggs caused no surprise,
He now no blossoms got:
They met with plaintive sighs.

When winter came and blasts did sigh,
And bare were plain and tree,
As he for ease in bed did lie,
His soul seemed with the free,
He died so quietly.

DESMORO;

OR,

THE RED HAND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWENTY STRAWS," "VOICES
FROM THE LUMBER-ROOM," "THE HUMMING
BIRD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

There was a dense fog in the Channel, and the captain of the Dover packet was standing on the deck of his vessel, carefully directing her course as she slowly made her way towards the English shore.

In one of the state-rooms of the boat a lady, expensively attired, but with a certain boldness of demeanor, was questioning a woman in the garb of a dependant.

"You are assured, Klara, that the gentleman whom I have described to you is not on board here?"

"Yes, gracious madame, I am quite assured of the fact; for I have made it my especial business to see all the male passengers in the boat, and not one of them at all answers Madame the Baroness's description of the gentleman she seeks."

The Baroness Kielmansegge gnawed her lips in silence, feeling much disappointed and enraged.

She had expected to pounce upon her victim, and secure him, and, lo, he was not here to be found! She had reckoned that he would quit France by the first and most convenient means that he could find; and she had acted according to her reckoning, and met with defeat.

Frustrated in her plans, the Baroness vented her angry feelings upon her throwman, who bore her lady's ill-temper most patiently, never uttering a single word in reply. Klara was fretting over the loss of her fellow-servant, Matsford; and her mind being full of her own sorrow, she paid but little attention to her mistress's ill-humor.

The Baroness left her cabin, and went on deck, where she was amazed and terrified to discover the whole scene wrapped in a thick and impenetrable mist, through which the vessel was proceeding at a very slow rate indeed.

The captain looked anxious, and the bell was being struck continuously, in order to warn other vessels of the boat's approach.

The fog was getting thicker and thicker each succeeding moment. Those in the fore part of the boat could not now perceive those in the stern. The bell all this while was being struck louder than ever. There was no wind, and the waters lay still and calm, undisturbed by a single wave.

The air was chilly. The Baroness drew her mantle closely around her, and leant against the bulwarks. She had no thought of approaching danger; she was thinking only of Desmoro, and regretting that she had suffered him to elude her grasp.

Klara was sitting close by, feeling slightly seasick, and miserable as well.

Presently Olympia started and shuddered. Through the vapour surrounding her she saw the form and face of one long since dead—the form and face of old Captain Volderbond!

Uttering a subdued cry, she staggered away from the spot, and dropped on the seat already half-occupied by her domestic.

Klara roused herself, and respectfully rose, leaving her mistress in sole possession of the seat.

Olympia then shut her eyes, and for some seconds buried her face in the folds of her mantle. But, presently looking up again, the same

remembered face, the same pale, reproachful countenance, met her view.

The brain of the Baroness Kielmansegge began to swim, and her heart was palpitating fast and painfully.

"Begone!" she cried, in low, husky tones—"begone! Why dost thou haunt me thus?"

At this instant, receiving a blow across her bows, the boat swerved suddenly round; and, amid agonized cries and shouts, the hapless vessel disappeared, run down by a large ship which the outgoing tide was bearing rapidly along.

"Heaven have mercy on us all!" exclaimed the commander of the ship. "Some unhappy craft has just gone down under our bows!"

And the big ship was still borne onwards, unable to resist the strong current, doomed probably to sweep down other helpless vessels in her course.

A woman's form now rose to the surface of the water, and struggled to keep itself afloat. Presently, she grasped at an arm at a short distance from her; but the arm refused her grip, and her fingers only clutched the air.

Olympia sank again, and the bubbling waters closed over her sinful head.

By-and-by she showed herself once more, and, as before, she endeavored to catch hold of an arm near her. But nothing met her wild clutch—nothing but emptiness.

Olympia battled with the waters, and for a time contrived to keep herself on their surface. She was well acquainted with the art of swimming; but, on the present occasion, her clothes, her numerous skirts, clinging around her limbs, prevented her from assisting herself as she might otherwise have done.

Instead of the arm, Olympia now saw before her the spectral figure of the late Captain Volderbond.

"Save me!—save me!" she cried out, appealingly.

The apparition looked vengefully, and pointed to below.

Olympia cried out again, in frenzied accents, but the spectre only shook his head, and laughed derisively.

Olympia was growing exhausted, and she entreated once more to be saved.

"Miserable woman!" spoke the shade, "traitress and poisoner, meet thy deserved doom! Away, away; the fiends are waiting for thee! Away!"

So saying, the shadowy form melted into air, and the wretched Olympia sank beneath the waters—sank, to rise no more.

CHAPTER LXIX.

As you may conceive, the unexpected death of Marguerite d'Auvergne shocked Desmoro greatly, and he gave himself up to grief, heedless of what became of him, now that she was gone, gone never to return.

Alarmed for his son's safety, Colonel Symure strove all he could strive in order to arouse him from his sorrow.

"Fly, fly, Desmoro!" urged the Colonel. "This is no time to give way to useless lamentations. You cannot recall the dead; cease, then, to regret the wise decrees of heaven!"

"Whither would you have me fly, sir? Speak, and I will at once obey you," returned Desmoro, feeling little interested about the matter; at this moment almost regardless whether he lived or died.

"London, busy London, I think, will afford you the safest refuge," said the Colonel; "and thither it is advisable we proceed without further delay."

"As you will, sir," rejoined Desmoro, quite indifferently. "Since I cannot call her back to life again, I may as well go hence as stay."

"That is precisely my idea," answered the Colonel, rejoiced to hear his son so readily agree to his proposals. "Anticipating your willing acquiescence to my wishes, I have already given all the necessary orders concerning our immediate departure hence."

Desmoro bowed his head. He was nearly unconscious of the purport of his father's words, but he was prepared to do everything that that father wished.

So Desmoro sought the chamber of the dead, and in the silence reigning there, knelt and prayed for a time. Then he rose, pressed his lips upon those of the corpse, and bade it an eternal farewell.

The Count d'Auvergne parted from the Colonel and his son with feelings of great regret. He was a lonely old man now, for his daughter, and likewise his dearly-prized friends had left him.

Just as Desmoro and his father were about to step into a railway train, Matsford appeared before them.

"A word with you, sir, if you please," said the man, accosting our hero. "Have you heard of the loss of the Dover packet and her passengers?"

"No," answered Desmoro, amazed at the man's question.

"She went down in the fog yesterday, sir; she was run down by some large vessel. One man only was left to report the sad fate of the hapless boat, and he I have just seen and spoken with. His escape was a truly miraculous one."

"I am sorry to hear of the loss of the boat," returned Desmoro, wondering wherefore Matsford had reported the event to him.

"You would not say so, I think, sir, did you know who perished in her?"

"Who perished in her?" repeated Desmoro, wholly bewildered at the man's words. "I do not comprehend you."

"Your enemy, the Baroness Kielmansegge, is no more. The lady was one of the passengers of the Swan, bound for Dover."

"The Baroness Kielmansegge!" repeated Desmoro, in increasing surprise and bewilderment. "Pray, explain."

"Firstly, sir, you need not trouble yourself to go hence, since you can now safely remain in Paris. The Baroness Kielmansegge and her female attendant are both at the bottom of the English Channel. But see, sir, yonder fellow, who was a waiter on board of the ill-fated packet, will tell you all."

At this instant the railway whistle sounded, and Desmoro and his father sprang into the carriage, and took their seats. The man whom Matsford had just pointed out as having escaped from the recent wreck was Desmoro's old foe, the rascal Pidgers.

Our hero had only time to wave an adieu to Matsford, before the train was in motion. Desmoro did not know whether Pidgers were a passenger in the train, or otherwise, and it was now too late to ascertain the fact.

All was confusion in Desmoro's mind, for he had but half-comprehended the tale told him just now by Matsford, and the sight of Pidgers had unnerved him quite. He repeated to the Colonel all that had passed between himself and Matsford a short moment ago, not forgetting to inform him concerning the glimpse he had caught of the villain Pidgers.

"Did he see you, think you?" asked the Colonel.

"I cannot say for certain," Desmoro answered, with a slight shrug, and in mournful tones. "It is almost useless for me to contend longer against what appears to be my fate. Let this fiend in mortal shape do his worst, then; I care not now what become of me."

So saying, Desmoro leaned back in the carriage, and for some minutes there was silence.

"If this villain Pidgers has not yet seen you, we may yet avoid his recognition, and all may be well with us," observed the Colonel.

Desmoro made no reply. In mind and body both he was quite weary, and he was longing to be at rest. Marguerite was gone, and with her he deemed his every earthly happiness had departed, and that the future would bring him only a fresh amount of wretchedness—only fresh trials and fresh shame.

Desmoro saw that the Colonel was harassed on his account, and he felt distressed to see him so. But what could Desmoro do, since, at every turn he took, he encountered nothing but misfortunes—which misfortunes lay upon his shoulders with double weight now that another was taking an affectionate interest in all his doings.

When Desmoro was an outlaw, living in his cavern-home, he defied all sorrow; but matters were altered with him now, and that which he would once have set at naught, he was allowing to oppress and fairly crush him.

The train reached Calais in due time; and in order to avoid encountering Pidgers, our hero and his father made the best of their way out of the railway station, and repaired to a neighboring hotel, where they supposed they would be safe from all sorts of molestation.

For three days our friends had abided in this hotel, never going abroad in the daylight, and keeping entirely aloof from every one about them.

They felt at a loss how to act. The Baroness Kielmansegge was no more; that fact had been ascertained beyond all doubt, and Desmoro had nothing to apprehend at her hands now. No; the wicked Olympia would no more threaten or persecute him; she was lying at the bottom of the sea, unregretted and almost forgotten.

Desmoro had now only one enemy to contend against, and that enemy was the wretch Pidgers, who seemed to start up before him at nearly every turn.

At the expiration of the fourth day, Desmoro and his father sailed for London, where they arrived without any adventure worthy of recording here.

Having settled themselves once more in a suburban home, Neddy, who had been left in Paris in order to arrange some domestic matters, then rejoined them; and, for the present, Desmoro had some slight cessation of his anxieties—some little repose of mind.

One day, the Colonel, meeting Captain Williams, brought him home to dine with them, and to detail to them how he had progressed in the late trial, when the mutineers of the Mary Ann had been condemned to a deserved punishment—to transportation for life.

The Captain, as you may well understand, had had many difficulties to contend against, during the progress of the trial, for several important witnesses were lacking—namely, the Count d'Auvergne, Colonel and Mr. Symure.

But Captain Williams had some interest in certain influential quarters, and that interest being exerted on this occasion, he got through the business far better than he had expected.

"And what of the villain, Pidgers?" asked the Colonel, before he mentioned that Desmoro had lately seen that individual.

"Ah, what of him, indeed!" returned the Captain, shaking his head. "The rascal slipped out of my fingers, heaven alone knows how. But the police are at his heels, he will not long escape the hands of justice, depend upon it."

Desmoro then related how and where he had seen Pidgers, and the terrors which he had endured through seeing him.

Desmoro's life was, indeed, a most monotonous and weary one now. He had wealth, 'tis true; but he had no positive object to live for, no earthly joy to gladden his days. His bush career had been full of excitement, and that excitement had ever prevented him from feeling the isolation of his position. Now there was no excitement whatever in his life; his every-day ex-

istence was as commonplace as it could possibly be.

Desmoro, who was young and full of adventurous spirit, was yearning for something more than he really had. His was not the nature to live unloving and unloved; he could not rest content, bereft of sympathy, without a woman's smile to pour sunshine upon his soul. He remembered Marguerite with unceasing regret, and sometimes he could not help wishing that he had died along with her.

But time generally blunts the edge of the keenest sorrow; and so it was with Desmoro, whom the Colonel had partly succeeded in drawing out of his melancholy and unhappiness, and had led back into some of the harmless pleasures of the world; and our Desmoro, who still entertained his old love for the drama, began to visit the various theatres, and to watch the performances of the different actors and actresses, whose representations he nightly witnessed, and felt much amused thereby.

And months rolled on.

One night, Desmoro and the Colonel paid a visit to Drury Lane theatre, which they found beset with crowds of people, who were all craning and struggling to obtain an entrance into the building.

After some difficulty, our hero and his father gained their box.

Desmoro looked around him in great surprise; the house was already nearly filled with well-dressed people; boxes, pit, and gallery, and every place in the theatre, presented a bright appearance, as if the folks had assembled there to do honour to some illustrious personage who was expected to grace this temple of the drama on this particular night.

"Whatever has attracted such a housefull of people?" cried the Colonel.

"I know not," answered Desmoro, carelessly enough.

"We are to have a new piece to-night, probably," suggested the Colonel.

"Probably," rejoined Desmoro, in the same manner as before, hanging up his hat and overcoat as he spoke.

The Colonel seated himself, and took up the programme of the night's performance.

"Oho! the mystery is solved!" he exclaimed.

"How?"

"A favorite actress is announced to re-appear to-night."

"Ah, indeed! Who is she?"

"A Miss Chavring."

"Chavring—Chavring!" repeated Desmoro, in some perplexity. "Surely I have heard that name before!"

"I never did," said the Colonel.

"Chavring!" once more repeated Desmoro.

"Allow me to look at the programme."

The Colonel passed the sheet of paper, upon which Desmoro at once eagerly fastened his eyes.

"Chavring!—where, where have I heard that name before?"

The Colonel laughed; Desmoro looked so deeply interested and perplexed about the matter.

The overture had now commenced, and Desmoro was still sitting with that programme in his hands, at a loss to remember where he had heard the name of Chavring.

The evening performance commenced with Tobin's comedy of the "Honeymoon," in which the lady above mentioned was to enact the character of Juliana.

Desmoro was watching the stage with peculiar interest, as if expecting to have his perplexity soon resolved.

The first scene of the comedy was over, and Balhazar and Volante had entered.

Juliana would soon appear now.

At this moment there was a universal rustle and buzz in the house; every one seemed to be on the tip-toe of expectation.

Presently, a female form glided from the side-wing, and stood before the footlights, where she paused long, bowing to the audience, who received her with a perfect torrent of applause; the ladies waving their handkerchiefs and fans, the gentlemen clapping their hands loudly, and uttering shouts of welcome.

During all this, Desmoro sat transfixed with amazement. Who was this beautiful woman before him? Was it possible that she was Comfort Shavings, the young girl who had once been his dearest and best-beloved companion and friend? Though far more beautiful than she had promised to be, he recognised her face, her soft, gentle smile, and her pretty dimpled cheeks. Yes, Miss Chavring was none other than the clown's daughter, once known as Comfort Shavings.

Desmoro's heart beat fast and strangely at the sight of that well-remembered countenance; and a score of recollections, alike sweet and painful, came rushing in full flood upon him.

He did not speak. His amazement seemed to have robbed him of all faculty of speech. He sat gazing at the actress, his ears drinking in the musical tones of her voice—of that voice, each cadence of which was awaking fresh memories in his heart.

Had she forgotten him? It was most likely that she had done so, he thought, a sharp spasm shooting through his bosom the while.

How he was longing to speak to her, to touch once more her hand, that hand which had so often laid caressingly in his.

How all the old time was flowing back upon him. Comfort's accents were recalling to him all the past. His innocence, his poverty, and his many trials, struggles, and privations were all in memory rising up before him.

At length, unable to keep his new feelings longer to himself, Desmoro spoke.