

SISTE VIATOR.

What is it that is dead?
Somewhere there is a grave, and something lies
Cold in the ground, and stirs not for my sighs,
Nor songs that I can make, nor smiles from me,
Nor tenderest foolish words that I have said:
Something there was has hushed and will not be.

Did it go yesterday,
Or did it wane away with the old years?
There hath not been farewell, nor watchers' tears,
Nor hopes, nor vain reprieves, nor strife with death,
Nor lingering in a mated-out delay:
None closed the eyes, nor felt the latest breath.

But, be there joyous skies,
It is not in their sunshine; in the night
It is not in the silence, and the light
Of all the silver stars; the flowers asleep
Dream no more of it, nor their morning eyes
Betray the secrets it has bidden them keep.

Birds that go singing now
Forget it and leave sweetness meaningless;
The fiftal nightingale, that feigns distress
To sing it all away, flows on by rote;
The seeking lark, in very Heaven I trow,
Shall find no memory to inform her note.

The voices of the shore
Chime not with it for burden; in the wood,
Where it was soul of the vast solitude,
It hath forsook the stillness; dawn and day
And the deep-thoughted dusk know it no more:
It is no more the freshness of the May.

Joy hath it not for heart;
Nor music for its second subtler tongue.
Sounding what music's self hath never sung:
Not very sorrow needs it help her weep,
Vanished from everywhere! what was a part
Of all and everywhere! lost into sleep!

What was it ere it went?
Whence had it birth? What is its name to call.
That gone unmissed has left a want in all!
Or shall I cry on Youth, in June-time still?
Or cry on Hope, who long since am content!
Or Love, who held him ready at my will!

What is it that is dead?
Breath of a flower? sea-freshness on a wind?
Oh, dearest, what is that that we should find,
If you and I at length could win it back?
What have we lost, and know not it hath fled?
Heart of my heart, could it be love we lack?

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

THE FEMININE COMEDY.

AN IDYL.

The Cemetery of Montparnasse. Day sinks;
the avenues grow lonesome. Along a path be-
tween the tombs glides a young girl—like a sha-
dow; through the twilight her face is seen to be
charming.

Where is she going? Is it not to kneel beside
the grave of some relative?

No.
The young girl, after looking behind her as if
to make sure that she was not followed, makes a
sudden detour, approaches a vault, and raps
cautiously on the door, which instantly opens.

He who opens it is a young man of about four-
and twenty—a broad-shouldered, good-natured
fellow with his sleeves rolled up, who has stood
his spade in a corner.

The girl says hastily:
"Shut the door! Quick! No one must see
me."

"Don't be afraid, Miss Julie." "I certainly thought I shouldn't be able to
come."

"Really?" "At the very last minute a fat old lady came
who had to be shown some marble for her dear
departed. She finished by not buying any."

"Perhaps she thought it wasn't solid enough,
and he'd get out. Ha, ha!" (He laughs.)

"Gracious!" (She laughs too.) "The fact is, I was beginning to despair of
seeing you at all this evening."

"I had to work awful hard, you see, to get
the old woman to let me out at all."

"How pretty you are!" "To-day, I made eight 'eternal regrets' of
flowers. All of full size."

"What fairy fingers!" (Kisses her hand.) "Ah! Some one is passing."

"This nothing! A child's funeral; it was
delayed! There is no one following. The
mourners have all gone to supper, and there is
no danger of anybody strolling about."

"As you see, Monsieur Joseph, if my parents
knew that I give you rendezvous they would
whip me. My! how they'd give it to me!"

"Don't you think they would accept me if I
should declare my intentions?" "Look what you are about! Papa has ambi-
tious notions."

"I know that very well." "He wants me to marry—he's crazy over it—
M. Bardin's son—the man who made so much
money from his patent plaster angels with ena-
mel eyes, like dolls."

"I know; they look very well on a tomb-
stone."

"The old woman has other views." "Ah! your mother."

"She told me as much while I was making
my 'eternal regrets.' 'You see, Minnie,' says
she, 'in our station of life a girl may aspire to
anything. Death brings us into contact with
the very best society.'"

"That is very true." "For the rest," she went on, "nothing pre-
vents you from becoming a countess or—any-
thing. It will happen that some rich gentleman
comes to the shop to buy. Why, I know a
marble-worker not half as good as we who mar-
ried his daughter to a rich banker who had come
to order a monument for his niece."

"Ah! your mother said that!" "Yes, and she added, 'It is a great thing to
be looked at through tears.'"

"And what did you say, Julie?" "I! I said nothing. What good is there in
being obstinate?"

"You said nothing. You do not love me,
then?" (Pinches her.) "Ingrate!"

"Listen, sometimes I have doubts. The
other day, for instance, as I went by you were
chatting with a little fellow."

"Business!" "I know, but his head was mighty close to
yours."

"I was showing him some specimen inscrip-
tions for his uncle's tombstone."

"That is possible; but he touched you too
much—to say nothing of his coming again next
day!"

"That was because somebody told him that
Gothic letters would be more *comme il faut*."

"That's possible, too; but the fact remains
that you are open to temptations every day of
your life. There's that author who brings you
tickets for the show every time he visits his
wife's grave in the second lot, first section."

"I can't live shut up like a nun all the time!"
"Oh! Julie, sometimes when I'm digging,
sad thoughts go through my brain, and I some-
times envy those whose skeletons I turn up."

"I wish you wouldn't speak of such things."
"Then you love me?"

"Would I be here if I didn't?" "Dearest! Hold!—here are some camellias I
saved for you from the coffin of a marquise who
was buried this morning!"

"You imprudent fellow! Suppose some one
had seen you?" "Aren't they beautiful? Oh!"

"I have a whole collection of flowers you have
given me. I have them in a little basket with
some immortelles."

"Really?" "Hark! I hear somebody."

"It is nothing; it is those cursed rats in the
vault. The other day, one of them climbed up
and ate a whole candle—only the wick was left.
Julienne!"

"What?" "Tell me again you love me."

"It is too late. I must go." "No. Ah! you love exhumations; there
will certainly be one to-morrow."

"Ah!" "For a law case—a poisoning. There is to be
an autopsy."

"At what time?" "Seven in the morning."

"I'll tell mamma that I want to see it." "I'll place you in the very first rank."

"Thanks." "And afterwards?"

"Afterwards?" "Won't you find one little quarter of an hour
for me?"

"It is dangerous." "I pray you!"

"No." "I supplicate!"

"I cannot compromise myself." "Because you do not love me."

"Monsieur Joseph, that is not true." "Ah, yes... I am not rich enough. But I
work well. What would you have? Business
is slow. Since they took it into their heads to
attend to sanitary matters in Paris there has
been no cholera in ten years. How could I be
well off?"

"There goes somebody." "Yes."

"Ah! Mon Dieu!" "It is Paul, the big grave-digger; he is a little
tipsy. Hear him sing."

"I am afraid of him—I won't come here again
more."

"Julienne!" "If—let go of me!"

"Will you not, dear?" (Embraces her.) "It is almost night."

"Adieu!" "Adieu!"

"To-morrow!" "To-morrow!" (From a distance.) "Don't
forget the exhumation at seven o'clock."

"No." She throws a kiss to him, and disappears in
the darkness.

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

ON DIT.

How much "they" have to answer for in these
days (I was going to say "degenerate" days but
that I think the belief that the world is any
worse now than it was in the days of our grand-
fathers is only a popular fallacy,) what probable
and improbable, possible and impossible stories
are laid upon their shoulders! From the people
who betray confidences from an utter incapability
to keep secrets to cloak their faults by "they say
such and such a thing is going to happen," the
members of some political party who inadver-
tently let out some words of coming events, so
that it gets into the paper under the above head-
ing, to the sonny Scotch landlady who prefaces
her news of the day, by, "I dinna ken, but
some person was sayin the day," they are all
alike, none probably thinking of how far stories
may go started in such an apparently innocent
way. Stories with little or no foundation as-
sume such gigantic proportions in a few days
travel, often indeed returning to their origina-
tors in such new guises, that they hear them with
astonishment and, unconsciously, repeat them
with such unintentional exaggeration that they
are given fresh impetus to travel their rounds,
gathering proportions on the way.

Stories started from a partially heard remark
made by a neighbour, a dimly visible figure seen
in the gloaming, or the dusk of early day, a
slightly outré proceeding of some known or
unknown individual, which is interpreted by
some gossip loving beholder who rather prides
himself or herself on their cleverness at putting
two and two together (often making six or more),
—who would be aghast if you hinted that some
miserable scandal was the end of such an inno-
cent beginning, never dreaming of such a thing
when they told their conjectures to the next
person they met. Such results are generally
laid to woman's charge, but my experience is
that among women they scarcely ever get be-
yond gossip, while among men they don't stop
short of scandal. Were one to hear the conver-
sation in a smoking room at a club, one might go
out from amongst its occupants, with little faith
in women and none in men. It's "I say Jones
they say that" &c., &c., and forth there pours a
scandal that warps one's finer feelings, like
broken strings played upon by rude untaught
hands. Characters taken away in the puff of a
cigar, lives cruelly shattered while they draw up
a chair to rest their legs on, society bemired
and vilified while waiting for a light. No fear of
prosecutions for libel disturbs them, for are they
not merely repeating what "they say?"

This is not exaggeration, for I can recall
instances in proof of such; of one fair delicate
girl who was dealt her death blow, from the
similarity of a Christian name being enlarged
upon, her name and fame banded about by men
who, had they thought of the mischief they were
doing, would have hesitated, and when months
afterwards the mistake was discovered, their
sorrow, if any, was useless, for their victim was
dying on a foreign shore, the only child of a
widowed mother, whose cup of sorrow was full
to overflowing before. Of the fate of a prom-
ising young man scarcely in the prime of early
manhood talked by the rumours that float about
of his doings, goaded almost to madness by the
cold looks and studied avoidance of former
friends, too proud to do or say anything to stem
the current or explain his actions, thinking in
the arrogance of youth and strength that he
cares not what "they say," he will live it down,
philosophizing that everyone has something to
live down be it great or small. But where one
succeeds how many, finding the battle too strong,
give it up, take to drinking, and sinking into a
premature grave, leave a lonely wife and small
children to fight the world unaided.

In the latter case "they" go to his funeral,
shake their heads sadly over his fate and often
as not remark to each other, that after all "they
say," those stories about him were not true—
thus rendering tardy justice where they had no
right to judge, go back untaught by experience
to listen again to what "they say." But what
matters such justice, could it bring the spirit back
to earth, could it dry the widow's tears, or
smooth rough roads and stormy paths for the
toddling beings left in the darkened house—it
were well. In either of these cases which alas!
are but types of thousands, are "they" not
murderers?—murderers untouched by the laws of
man; but what of those of God?

Men are not alone, however in this. There is
a class of women whose sharp tongues spare none
in whose lives there is a single flaw, fancied or
true! They flock to it as crows to carrion, gloat
over it, sharpen their wits on it, glorying in the
possession of the latest thing "they say." How
many poor creatures have been hunted over the
globe in search of some place where they could
begin a new life, by the cruel "they say."

Some there are, thank heaven! who have lived
down their slanders, more have lived to punish
the cruel tongues through their owner's defeat
and chagrin. As I write, the memory comes to
me of a beautiful girl who knowing of their
slanders and leaving the room where she knew
they waited but her exit to hold forth, turned
and with a curtsy so graceful none could
imitate, said, "Good-night ladies, I go, but
leave my character behind me!" That speech
was long remembered, for she lived to become of
high rank and to see her slanders cringing for
her smiles.

It is true that the balance of society could not
be kept were it not for the gauntlet all must
run, that the fear of what "they say" is the
greatest safeguard the well-being of society has.
Still in nine cases out of ten "they say" is un-
charitable and if their lives were looked into, it
would be found very often that "they say" only
judge others by themselves, though fortunately
for their future, it is more frequently done unin-
tentionally, thoughtless speeches, looks or deeds
as thoughtlessly repeated or construed, the re-
sults undreamt of and unwished. Let us think
then that in the future some of the harm done
by "they say" may be laid to our charge and be
charitable, for "Charity, suffereth long and is
kind."

THE COMPOSER OF "LA FILLE DE
MME. ANGOT."

A Paris correspondent writes of Lecocq: "He
is an original genius; a native-born musician,
as you express it in America; but he was long in
finding it out himself. His birth occurred in
Paris on the 3rd day of June, 1834; and poverty,
which is no bad thing for a boy who has the
wit to go with it, was the companion of his ear-
ly years. He found means, however, in 1850 to
enter the Conservatory of Music, which has sent
forth so many distinguished artists; and here he
studied faithfully until 1855, when he discovered,
as hundreds of other young musicians here,

that he had no means to utilize his talent or to
obtain his daily bread. He happened, however,
to understand the art of book-keeping, and, by
giving a few lessons in this, preserved himself
from utter want. While in this low condition
he noticed one day in a public journal a proposal
made by Offenbach to give the proceeds of the
first representation of 'Docteur Miracle' to the
composer who should write for it the most accept-
able score, the merit of the music to be decided
by a large and competent committee. Lecocq
seated himself at the piano, and, spurred on by
necessity, resolved to do his 'level best.' On
completing his task he, as a hundred other
aspirants for the prize, called on the *concierge* of
the theatre, and awaited the decision of the
committee. After long deliberation it appeared
to the examiners that two compositions out of
the number laid before them had very great and
nearly equal merit. They then unsealed the
envelopes and found that one of them contained
the name of George Bizet and the other that of
Charles Lecocq, the future author of the
'Perruque Blonde.' His work was received with
much applause; he was encouraged to proceed;
but his reputation was by no means made. He
then composed 'L'Amour et son Carquois,' and
soon afterwards the 'Fleur de Thé,' which was
rapturously received, and which the musicians
considered the prettiest piece of the kind ever
written. His head was now above water, and
his shabby coat exchanged for one of fine broad-
cloth. 'Who is this new composer? He has
good points, *verve*, and originality; who is he?'
cried the friends of Rossini, Auber, and Offen-
bach. *Nous verrons.* When the late war came
on Lecocq retired to Brussels, where he was for
a while forgotten; but he was not idle; and as
the smoke of battle rolled away they began to
hear the charming airs of 'Cent Vierges,' and
then the fresh and sparkling 'Fille de Madame
Angot' came, which has now made the tour of
the world and the composer's reputation. In
one theatre alone—the Folies Dramatiques—it
has had five hundred representations. This
opéra has been followed by the 'Girofle-
Girofla' and the 'Près de Saint Gervais,' which
have, as well as that, the ring of original genius.
These works have raised the composer from
poverty and obscurity to the front rank of the
musical authors of the present age, and the
prominent airs are played, sung and whistled,
as those of 'Tancredi,' 'Norma,' and the 'Fille
du Régiment' were a generation ago, all over the
world."

FANCY DRESS.

A Paris fashion correspondent thus unburdens
herself on the subject of dresses worn at the re-
cent Opera masked ball: "Here is one. It is
a Sphinx, a perfect Sphinx costume. It is grace-
ful and rich, and the head-dress was entirely of
some new inexplicable gold tissue, very pretty,
and very effective indeed. Another dress (this a
simple ball costume, worn by an inmate of one
of the first tier boxes) was of pink silk (bodice
and skirt to match), with white moire bows on
shoulders, and on the back point of the bodice.
A double scarf of pink gauze, edged with white
silk fringe, surrounded the skirt, and fell in long
ends at the back. These scarfs were held to-
gether on the right side by bows of white moire
and on the left side by a chatelaine of flowers and
foliage which reached nearly to the hem of the
skirt. A wreath to match the chatelaine was
worn at the back of the head. Pink satin shoes,
very pointed at the toes, and pink fan, (signed
Gueslin). There was another dress, of pale-blue
silk, covered in front with an apron of tea-roses.
At the back a train of white matelasse, with
bodice to match. Another dress was of light
mauve, covered with a black lace tunic, embroi-
dered with silver. Another of green satin, with
a tunic and cuirasse of silver filigree. Still
another, a long black velvet skirt, trimmed at
back with a deep flounce of velvet, and a cuirasse
and apron tunic of white mother-of-pearl or
white tulle. The tunic was tied at the back by
bows of white moire ribbon. Mlle. de R—
was in white velvet, with cuirasse and apron of
white crepe de chine. Square body—sleeves to
elbow. Being very fair, almost white, her hair
looked as if it were powdered, and altogether she
herself looked like a 'marquise' of the last cen-
tury. Finally, there was a white satin dress,
covered by ruchings of white tulle. The novelty
of this dress was a bouquet of roses which was
placed on the left shoulder, whilst the foliage,
falling back, looped up a tunic of white tulle on
the right side of the skirt. Roses in the hair."

HUMOUROUS.

A Miss Gilmore was courted by a man whose
name was Haddock, who told her that he wanted only
one gill more to make him a perfect fish.

A POSTAL card picked up in the street at Nor-
wich, Conn., the other day bore this solemn appeal:
"Deer Mary for lov of God send me a pare of pants."

TEACHER—"Who was the first man?" Head
scholar—"Washington; he was the first in war, first in
peace." Teacher—"No, do; Adam was the first man." Head
scholar—"Oh, if you are talking of foreigners, I
suppose he was."

"RICHELIEU" was being played in Corlinda,
Pa. In the fifth act, at the point where the Cardinal
takes the writ from De Baradas and reclaims his power,
a man in the audience shouted, "Thank God! there's
a change in that administration."

A KENTUCKY paper thinks that a country
which is eat out by grasshoppers in the summer, and
where whiskey freezes solid in the winter, might be ad-
vantageously left for the exclusive occupation of the
noble red man and the prairie dog.