

THE EPITAPH.

Here rest, in dust, far from life's flame,
Old garments and a perish'd name.
Press hard, lean hand of Time, cast down
The greenest garland, brightest crown.

A rose-tipped, beckoning finger leads
The man himself o'er new world meads,
Where, ardent-soul'd, he hies along
With fresher robes and newer song.

Creep towards him, Time: perchance, shall fall
This fine dress also to thy thrall,
Press on at speed—naught canst thou sack.
Save cast-off cloaks and lamps burnt black.

KENINGALE COOK.

DISPROPORTIONED MARRIAGES.

BY JOHN HOWARD PAYNE.

"Sua quisque exempla debet æquo animo pati."

—PHÆDRUS.

Julian was born in a village, but Julian was no rustic. He had the suavity, though none of the dazzling frailties, of the city. He was adopted when very young by a rich merchant of Toucy, in Auxerrois. He lived in comfort and independence with his benefactor till the age of eighteen, and it never occurred to him that this state of happiness might not endure for ever.

But the fluctuations of commerce produced their too frequent consequences. The patron of Julian was ruined, and fled to a foreign clime. Julian was now thrown upon the world. The altered looks of those who had basked in the better fortunes of his friend, and who best knew how little his reverses had been merited—the reproachful mutterings of the epithet "bankrupt" which he heard from many, who were themselves far better entitled to the fate, disgusted him with the city. He thought of his paternal cottage and departed; and as he went on his way through the village of Quaine, of which the Marquis de Vaudon was the lord, he saw all the cottagers, with glad faces and in their holiday suits, assembled before the church. They were celebrating the betrothal of Aglaë, the daughter of the marquis, to the Count de Vermanton. By the established privilege of the occasion, Aglaë reigned supreme that day. She was the dispenser of justice and the bestower of benefactions. Julian, with noble humility, appeared before her. Aglaë received him graciously. True, he knew nothing of plants and flowers and trees—how should he? His life had passed in the counting house. Aglaë thought not of qualifications. The youth wanted employment, and she could offer him a place. Julian was immediately invested with the superintendence of the parks and gardens at Vaudon.

The generous mind cannot rest inactive under the sense of kindness. With Julian the ardor to return the obligation grew into a passion which absorbed every other. It was his aim by day, his dream by night. He watched young Aglaë as she roved; if she paused to dwell upon the beauty of any flower, or to rejoice in its perfume, the favorite flower was sure presently to meet her view at every turn.

In rambling through the park one evening, Julian heard Aglaë shriek. He darted to the spot. A brier had torn his lovely benefactress, and Julian saw blood streaming from her foot. Ere three days it was all over with the briers; not one remained in the park of Vaudon; and as Julian was no more blest than others with the power of curbing the spirit of destruction when once on the wing, no plant or bush which bore a thorn, not even the holly itself, escaped the general proscription.

The Count de Vermanton was certainly concerned at the accident of his betrothed; but he was almost as much so at the change which it had wrought in the park of Vaudon, and felt highly incensed at Julian as the cause. The fact is, the young lord, like most lords, young and old, held it vulgar not to be passionately enamored of all sports of the field. Indeed, at that time, they were universally looked upon as the most salutary of exercises, the most rational of pleasures; and salutary, indeed, it must be to butcher the defenseless, and most rational to delight in scenes of cold-blooded carnage. Oh! 'tis a recreation worthy of heroes! So thought the count; but it did not seem to him so heroic to course through a park without underwood. "It were as good sport to shoot the boar in a cage or the rabbit in the poultry-yard!" exclaimed he, with chagrin, and he could not forgive Julian for the gratitude which marred his pleasures.

The grievance was consequently laid before the marquis; Aglaë was present. In her Julian found an earnest defender. This was as it should be. They who have brought us into a world ought to be the most eager to help us out of it, but such an idea never came into the mind of the count. He, on the contrary, thought it passing strange that the daughter of a marquis should degrade herself by pleading for a menial. Aglaë explained her reasons. They were unanswerable. But the count lost his temper in the discussion, especially when he found he was about losing his cause, and in his fury flung so insolent a glance at Aglaë and Julian, that tears filled the kind girl's eyes and choked her utterance, and she left the room.

Aglaë was no sooner in her chamber, whither she had flown to weep unheeded and unobserved, than she began to weigh the merits of the quarrel. Now, for the first time, and entirely through the intemperate conduct of the count, to whom she was really attached, she thought of

the assiduities of Julian ever since his coming to the château. From merely thinking of them she presently began to think of them with pleasure. She now called to mind his countenance. "None more interesting." His temper—"gentleness itself! What a pity the count's is not more like it!" She wondered how he should have so little of the rustic in his manners, and would fain hear his story. She was sure it must be romantic, and that he was better than he seemed. Certain soft glances she had never remembered before next came upon her recollection, and then she would think no more about him. "Why should she trouble herself about Julian, of all people in the world!" And yet, so incomprehensible is a woman's heart, if the count had come in at that moment to renew the quarrel about Julian, there is no knowing what might have happened. But he did not, and he was fortunate.

Some time passed over, and things resumed their usual course. On a treeless eminence in the park there was a little pavilion to which Aglaë was very partial. It was her darling retreat. Thither she frequently withdrew with her books, or her drawings, or her guitar; but it was so open and exposed to the Summer sun, that she could not enjoy her seclusion half the time she wished. The glare made it unendurable, except in the morning or towards night. This could not escape Julian. He secretly assembled numbers of gardeners and villagers. In a single night trenches were dug round the pavilion. The linden and acacia were torn from their native soils and planted there in silence. On the morrow Julian found more than his reward in the delighted surprise of Aglaë, to see her favorite pavilion thus, as it by magic, encircled with shade and flowers. To the count this was a fresh source of complaint. He thought the trees entirely spoiled one of the best views from at least a dozen points about the grounds, and even more from the château itself. The height had been left bare expressly for the prospect. It was bad taste as well as bad manners for the clown to shut it out thus. This time the marquis thought so too; nay, more, he thought it exceedingly presuming in the superintendent of his grounds to turn things topsy-turvy in this extraordinary way without saying a word about it. To make bad worse, a week was not over before all the new plantation died. Julian received his dismissal, and she for whom he had labored, and was now cast once more upon the world, did not dare to speak for him. A sad perplexity for a female heart; but one which you, reader, if you have loved, will find no difficulty in accounting for.

The dismissal of Julian was conveyed to him by the Count de Vermanton. It must be owned there was little delicacy or prudence in the selection. The consequence was what might have been expected. The count was insolent, and Julian became angry. The hot blood of the young count boiled at the idea of being answered by a menial, and he so far forgot himself as to reply with a blow. In frenzy Julian caught up the weapon of a gamekeeper which chanced to lie within his grasp. The insulter, recoiling from its fury, fell backwards into the vast canal which crossed the park of Vaudon, and into which the Quaine had just discharged its waters. A lock had that moment been opened below, and the broad sheet was dashing towards it like a cataract. The count was already lost to view. Now, does not Julian exult? Now he will have ample vengeance! No. His desire of vengeance vanished when he saw his provoker helpless and perishing. He plunges after him. He is torn by a jagged rock as he plunges, yet wrestles with a giant's vigor against the whirl. For a while his blood upon the surface is the only clew to where he gropes beneath. At length his head is seen to burst through the hurrying waters. With one hand he sustains the unconscious count, and clings with the other to the slippery beam of a flood-gate, awaiting the boat which bears towards him; but his courage and his strength are no longer of avail. His vision becomes confused; he wildly grasps at some fancied object, and then he ceases to see or understand, and all his limbs turned numb. The next thing he knew he was in some gloomy place, but where, he could not conjecture, nor how he got there. At first his sight was dim and doubting, and could distinguish nothing. Had he awakened in another world? Where had he ever existed before? He had no memory of the past; his feelings were equally vacant; there was neither love nor anger in his breast. By degrees his perceptions returned—his curiosity was awakened. What was this place in which he laid? He attempted to rise, and now felt weak and could not move without difficulty. At last he succeeded in getting from his bed. He pulled apart the curtains. Astonishment! A bright and splendid apartment burst upon his view! Can it be? He remembers the apartment; it belongs to the château of Vaudon. It looks less brilliant now than it did at first, and now seems almost obscure, and only a dim lamp is standing in the corner, with women grouped around it. Who can those women be? Rapture! 'Tis Aglaë with her attendants, and they are preparing rags to dress some wounded person. The eyes of Aglaë seem yet swollen with tears. At this moment Julian feels his wounds in their intensest anguish, but he feels most happy, spite of all he suffers, as the thought flashes o'er his mind that he himself might be the object of their touching kindness, and that some of those sweet tears, perhaps, have fallen for him.

The Count de Vermanton soon got about. The first visit he made was to his preserver. But Julian's hurts were much more serious. He was sometimes in so high a fever that fears were entertained for his life. Aglaë was unwearied in her kindness. The feelings of Julian towards her, which at first did not dare presume beyond gratitude, became daily more intense. Whenever the poor sufferer seemed to enjoy a momentary pause from pain, Aglaë would come and talk to him, for she was sure it did him good; every time this happened she made a sort of promise to herself as she went back to her chamber that she would indulge him in no more such conversations.

In one of these gentle but dangerous visits, Julian, forgetting the distance which the distinctions of society had interposed between him and his benefactress, freely poured out his whole soul to Aglaë. He told her the hopes and sorrows of his youth. His *amour-propre* (and that we ever feel with those we love) made his voice falter in some parts of his narrative, and Aglaë liked him all the better for it. But when he came to the dreadful reverses which had deprived him of his second father; when he reminded Aglaë that but for her he might have been left a homeless and unfriended wanderer, his voice was choked, and he could not proceed. Aglaë was moved, and unconsciously held out her hand to him. He caught it eagerly. Their eyes met, and both were filled with tears.

We must leave the sick chamber a while, and turn to what is passing outside. Extraordinary events had now changed the political complexion of France. Two mighty parties were standing in a threatening attitude. They seemed only waiting for a signal to come to blows. The Constituent Assembly had abolished titles and their privileges. The Marquis de Vaudon had taken side with the levelers. He had just renounced his distinctions, and removed the escutcheon from his gate when the Count de Vermanton entered.

"Marquis—" exclaimed the count.
"Praised be the age of reason," interrupted the father of Aglaë. "No marquis now, dear Vermanton."

"In that case, sir, replied the count, 'our arrangements are null; I withdraw my promise. The daughter of the citizen Vaudon cannot aspire to an alliance with the noble race of the Counts de Vermanton.'"

"Be it as you will, sir; but remember, conduct like yours will create in the state a crisis of which men like you will be the victims. Farewell, sir."

"Come, hither, my daughter!" cried the ex-marquis, as he saw Aglaë crossing the apartment.
"Sit down, my child; I have ill-tidings for you, but I trust your affection for your father, and a sense of your own dignity will sustain you under them, and make you despise the fool who treats you so contemptuously."

"What is it you mean?"
"Your betrothed, the Count de Vermanton, disclaims his vows, and renounces your hand."

"Does he, indeed?" exclaimed the delighted girl, darting from her chair and springing into her father's arms. "Does he indeed renounce? Oh! blessed, blessed news!"

"How is this, child? I do not understand you. You loved him, did you not?"

"Y-y-yes, I for a long while thought I did, but when I saw what violent passions he flew into against you whenever you and he got into your arguments about politics—"

"Good girl!"
And she instantly hurried back to her patient.

"A terrible business has just happened," said she to him, the smile still on her lip, and her eyes still exulting. He learned all, and with sympathetic rapture he also exclaimed:

"Oh, blessed news!"

Meanwhile the illness of Julian took an alarming turn. Such frequent excitement irritated his wounds; his blood became more and more inflamed, the intervals of repose from fever diminished daily, and at length ceased altogether. Till then the doctor, with the customary prudence of his profession, had abstained from giving any decided opinion; but when everybody saw how the case stood, he ventured to tell what everybody knew—that Julian was in danger. Aglaë was wrought up to the extreme of woe. Nothing will induce her to quit Julian's bedside. Her tears at once taught him her condition and his own. In one of his severest nights, as he started from his sleep with agony, the lover of Aglaë saw her in a passion of tears, kneeling at the foot of his bed and praying.

"I am aware now how it is with me," said he to her. "All hope is over. Dry up your tears. Happiness was not to be my lot on earth. Even had I recovered I should have speedily been forced to a greater sacrifice than life—I should have been required to—" Then checking himself, he cried: "Ah! if death indeed makes all equal, Aglaë, I die—no—you shall not be left untold."

"Hush!" said she, placing her trembling finger on his lips—"hush! I know it all." And then taking his hands and pressing them, the innocent, the good, the affectionate Aglaë, with an air almost solemn, bent down her brow towards that of the sufferer, and placing the first kiss of love on cheeks already cold in death, "Lo! we are united!" she exclaimed, and fainted.

But Julian had only been condemned to death by the doctor, and nature reversed the sentence. The return of his health, the certainty of being loved, the republican notions of the father of

Aglaë, the departure of the Count de Vermanton, all seemed to encourage him to hope, and to promise him success. Yet still he failed. Citizen Vaudon received the proposals of Julian very ill. In vain was the father told by the lover:

"Our principles are the same. I think as you do, that all men are equal; and I have a far deeper interest than you in thinking so. Then let me have your daughter. Where is the difference between us? You have sundry heaps of gold, which I have not; there is no other difference. Is so paltry a consideration to be weighed against the happiness of your child and a brother citizen? You were unworthy to be called a man if you could think so. In the name of humanity, or in that which you prize beyond all others, the name of reason—"

He was pursuing his eloquent persuasion, when, in the name of reason and humanity, the citizen ex-marquis had him taken by the shoulders and thrust out of the château. Julian, stung to the soul, wrote thus to Aglaë:

"Your father is a barbarian. Am I, then, less than he, that he should scorn me thus? You have my love, and you return it—what more can reason expect? I censured the conduct of the Count de Vermanton. His own is worse. The count did not profess one principle and practice another. Your father does. Woe to the parents whom rank and riches can render deaf to the appeals of love and nature!"

Aglaë was pretty much of the same opinion; but what good did that do? To crown all, her father caught her with the letter. He saw what it might lead to, and having just received orders from the municipal authorities to impress his quota of volunteers for the defense of the country, he began with Julian.

"Will ye, nil ye, poor Julian, is! you are a soldier! What became of him after that? That is more than I can tell. No doubt he did his duty, behaved gallantly, turned out a hero, and got himself killed; so we'll trouble ourselves no more about him, but return to Aglaë, the main object of our narrative."

Time, that great comforter, that great destroyer, that great magician, brought about many a change in the château of Vaudon. The revolution was afoot, and in its course of carnage trod down even its parents. The ex-marquis found himself beset by unsleeping espionage. He was reproached as a lukewarm republican. The story of Julian was brought up against him. His conduct to the youth was branded as treachery to the common cause, and insult to the universal people. To avert the rising storm he must find some way to conciliate the mob. None offered but the sacrifice of his daughter. Aglaë was an obedient victim. Her father's life was at stake. She became the wife of a man resembling Julian in the humbleness of his birth, and the Count de Vermanton in the ungovernableness of his temper, but here the likeness ceased. Still he was at the head of the ruling party, and Aglaë was sure that her husband would not let any harm come to her father. Alas! the daughter and the father were equally mistaken. The citizen found no defender in his son-in-law. Unfortunately for Vaudon, his patriotism was sincere, and these were no times for the honest. He had dreamed of a republic, but could see no republicanism in anarchy. He was cast into a dungeon. By his side on the straw there groaned another victim.

"What! is it indeed you, marquis?" cried the Count de Vermanton. "What unaccountable change of fortune or opinion brings you here! I sought to save the republic."

"And I the monarchy."

The same day saw the blood of republican and monarchist mingled on the scaffold.

Reader! close your eyes on this disastrous epoch. Let twenty years of turmoil, of glory and of suffering pass, and follow me within the walls of Paris. See you not beneath the lowly roof that faces that splendid mansion, a tender mother listening to the complaints and sharing the anguish of a son, an only son, the sole friend now left to her on earth! This excellent mother is Aglaë—this exemplary son the gentle offspring of her ill-fated marriage. Aglaë has now no means of subsistence, but from the labors of her son. True, his success in the arts holds out a fair promise of much better days, but his mother's joy on this account gives way to her bitter apprehension for him on another. Theodore is in love with the only child of one whose fortune and rank render the attachment hopeless. The Duke de Stralsund derived his wealth and title from his military achievements. His retirement was devoted to the education of his daughter. The best masters France could afford were obtained for Pauline, and the Empire could produce no teacher of drawing and painting equal to Theodore. But the instructor soon became the lover. When this reached the duke's knowledge his pride revolted. It was not enough that their doors should be closed against the youth. The duke employed every expedient to root from Pauline's heart a dawning tenderness, which brought a blush of shame on his brow. Aglaë, by those gentle arts with which a woman, and, above all, a mother, so well knows how to dress up the words of consolation, was endeavoring to calm the tempest in the boiling bosom of the young artist.

"My friend, my dearest Theodore, what can you ever expect from such a rash attachment? The son of a poor, nameless widow, marry the heiress of the Duke of Stralsund! Oh! my dear, it is the thought of a child, and quite unworthy of your years. You say she loves you, and if she fancies that she does, what then? Will it excuse your exciting her to rebel against one