

POETRY

LINES ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

I lov'd thee, daughter of my heart,
Mary, I lov'd thee dearly;
And though we only meet to part,
How severely—how severely!—
Nor life, nor death can sever
My soul from thine for ever.

Thy days, my little one, were few,—
An angel's morning visit,
That came, and vanished with the dew—
'Twas here—'tis gone, where is it?
Yet didst thou leave behind thee,
A clue for love to find thee.

The eye, the lip, the cheek, the brow,
The hands stretch'd forth with gladness,
All life, joy, rapture, beauty now,—
Then dash'd with infant sadness,
Till, bright'ning with transition,
Returned the fairy vision.

Where are they now? those smiles those
tears,
Thy mother's darling treasure?
She sees thee still, and still she hears
Thy tears of pain or pleasure,
To her quick pulse revealing
Unutterable feeling.

Hush'd in a moment, on her breast,
Life, at the well spring drinking,
Then cradled in her lap to rest,
In rosy slumbers sinking,
Thy dreams, no thought can guess them,
And mine, no tongue express them.

For then this waking eye could see,
In many a vain vagary,
The things that never were to be,
Imaginations airy:
Fond hopes, which mothers cherish,
Like still-born babes to perish.

Mine perished on thy early bier,
No! changed to forms more glorious,
Thy flourish in a higher sphere,
O'er time and death victorious,
Yet would these arms have chain'd thee
And long from heaven detain'd thee.

Mary, my first, my well-beloved,
The crown of every other,
Though thou art born again above,
I am thine only mother:
Nor will affection let me
Believe thou canst forget me.

Then, thou in heaven and I on earth,
May this one hope delight us,
That thou wilt hail my second birth,
When death shall re-unite us,
Where world no more can sever,
Parent and child for ever.

THE DUEL.—A TRUE STORY.—FROM THE FRENCH.

During the few years which immediately preceded the insurrection of the negroes of St. Domingo, who were aided and abetted by England, merely because France had yielded some service to America during the war of independence, this fine French colony had reached the summit of prosperity. Perseverance and industry had amassed within the Island more gold than the mines had ever yielded to the Spaniards; but in its train the burning tropical sun, men's passions, by nature ardent, become violent and ungovernable, when wealth gives them unbounded opportunities of indulging them.

At the time to which I refer, 1788, the prevailing passion among the rich inhabitants of St. Domingo, was that of gambling. But those games which require either skill or calculation, did not suit these modern Sardanapaluses. They required for their amusement, games, the success of which depended on chance alone; games where one bet will swallow a large sum—games at which men lose, or gain fortunes, by the throw of a die.

These professed gamblers had recourse to dice to stimulate their slumbering energies, and it was not an uncommon thing to see a whole plantation, or princely dwelling put up at a stake. A dozen dice would be thrown on the table, the gambler would select three, which decided his fate.

In 1788 then, if my memory be a true one, the son of a rich sugar planter held the rank of captain in the regiment of Port au Prince. Captain Severy was about twenty-six or seven years of age, and, though heir to an immense fortune, he had entered the army for choice. He had no rivals in the colony, in all manly and athletic exercises, and was a particularly good swordsman and marksman, but though brave unto rashness, he never abused his skill. But high-spirited and impetuous, he had already been engaged in several duels, in which he had received few scratches; while his better directed aim had made a fearful and bloody chasm in the society of St. Domingo. Though possessing many good qualities, Severy was more

feared than liked, for all his frankness and manliness could not always obliterate the remembrance of his impetuosity, and unfortunate propensity for fighting. It is hardly necessary, I presume, after this account, to say that he was a gambler.

One evening, a few persons were assembled in the chief gambling house of Port au Prince, and were amusing themselves for a few dollars, until the gamblers collected in sufficient numbers to animate the game. A French naval officer, commanding a frigate then in the port, entered the tavern, and walking directly towards the bar, to get some lemonade. As he passed by the table where they were playing, he glanced at it, and perceived a few pieces of money before some of the players. "Who will throw?" exclaimed Severy. "I will," replied the naval officer. He approached the table, carelessly threw the dice, and without watching to see the result of his efforts, he returned to the bar to finish his glass of lemonade. "Captain Montford," cried Severy, "you have won;" and he immediately pushed towards his fortunate adversary a large piece of gold. At the sight of this enormous sum, Captain Montford, who thought he had only risked a dollar or two, looked perfectly amazed, and pushing aside a heap of gold, he said, "Gentlemen, I should be greatly wanting in delicacy, if I appropriated this sum as if I had honestly won it. I assure you, that when I joined the game, I thought I was only playing for the very moderate sum I saw on the table. Therefore I cannot, I will not take this money." "Take it, take it, Captain," said Severy. "It is assuredly yours; and if you had lost, instead of winning, you would have paid it." "Indeed, Severy," replied Montford, "you are much mistaken, if you suppose so. I should not have thought myself bound to pay such a sum, had I lost, and therefore it is, that having won, I will not take it." "You would have paid it, Captain Montford, had you lost," exclaimed Severy imperiously; "I—I tell you, you would." There was something in the tone and manner, even more than in the language of Severy, which displeased the naval officer, and which prompted him to answer tartly. This produced another more imperious reply from Severy; and when their friends would have interfered to part them, they found it was too late. Each party considered himself so insulted, so aggrieved, that a duel was inevitable.

"Captain Montford," said Severy, "I do not wish to take any undue advantage of you, and I know that with the sword and pistol, I am your superior. Therefore to make all fair, I propose to you, that a pistol be loaded by a third person, and that we should toss up for the first fire, and let the winner blow out his adversary's brains." "Agreed," replied Montford, in a low, firm tone.

The whole company shuddered at this horrible proposal. Some of the players left the house, unwilling to witness this bloody scene; others filled with brutal curiosity, gathered round the two gamblers, who, seated facing each other, divided only by a table about four feet long, were patiently waiting the preparations for the duel.

While a third person was loading the fatal pistol, in the presence of Severy and Montford, a death-like silence pervaded the whole assembly, and this awful stillness was unbroken, save by a few calm words, exchanged between the adversaries, who alone, in this dreadful moment, seemed to retain their self-possession. When the pistol was loaded, Severy and Montford, each took it, and examined it in turn, to see that all was right, and then it was put on the table by the dice. It was decided that the highest number should be the winning one; each man took the three dice, and it fell to the lot of the naval officer to throw first.

He shook with the utmost calmness, the dice which were to decide a matter of life and death, and then threw them upon the carpet. The spectators sprang eagerly to the place where they fell, and proclaimed the number ELEVEN.

"Captain," said Severy, "you have thrown skillfully, and the chances, I think are in your favour. Now listen to me. If, as I think it likely, you should be the winner, show me no mercy; for I declare to you, on my honour, that if I am the favoured one, you need expect no quarters at my hands. If either of us show mercy to the other he is a coward." "Go on, Sir," said Montford, "and spare your impertinence.—I require no man to teach me my duty."

Severy smiled ironically, and shook his dice, as if preparing to play. The next moment the dice were rolling on the carpet, and in a faltering voice one of the bystanders called out, "FIFTEEN."

The circle which had formed round the two officers, gave way involuntarily, and clustered round Severy; while Captain Montford, finding himself alone, still fancying his enemy, rose instantly, and calmly and firmly waiting Severy's approach.

"Your life is in my hands, Montford," exclaimed Severy, seizing the pistol.—"Commend your soul to God, for your hour has come."

"Fire, Sir," replied the manly sailor, putting his hand upon his heart; "an honest man is ever ready to die." He had not time

to say another word; the ball from Severy's pistol had fractured his skull, and covered with his blood, the spectators of this tragedy.

After this horrible duel, the whole blame of which was by common consent cast upon Severy, this young officer, already dreaded by his fellow citizens, became the object of disgust and abhorrence to them. Finding himself avoided by his best friends he made no efforts to conciliate their favour, but returned contempt for contempt; hatred for hatred. When the insurrection broke out in St. Domingo, he enlisted in the ranks of the enemy, and fought under the orders of the English General Maitland. He there exhibited great personal courage, and great military ability. The insurgents were indebted to him for all their victories, until the battle Des Ivis, when a ball killed him on the spot, just as his troops were gaining their most brilliant victory.

DANGER FROM COMETS.

As the comets traverse the planetary regions in all directions, it is natural to inquire whether there is not a possibility that some one of them may approach so near to the earth as greatly to disturb its motion, or by an actual contact to produce the most disastrous effects. Upon this subject there is no reasonable ground for fear. If it is not absolutely impossible that a comet may come in contact with the earth, the probabilities against such an event happening are millions to one. Among bodies so small in comparison with the immense space in which they move; and moving with all velocities, and in orbits that are inclined in all directions, and are of all dimensions, how small must be the probability that any two shall come in contact! Small, however, as this probability is for any one age, if we take into account a long series of ages, the probability may be increased. If we suppose the earth actually to receive such a shock, it is easy to imagine the calamitous consequences which must follow. The axis and motion of rotation being changed, the waters of the ocean would leave their ancient position, and would be precipitated towards the new equator. A great part of the human race, and of lower animals, would be drowned by this universal deluge, or destroyed by the most violent shock impressed on the terrestrial globe.—Whole species of animals might be annihilated. All the monuments of human industry and invention would be overthrown. In such a catastrophe we find, too, a cause adequate to account for the ocean having overflowed lofty mountains, on which it has left incontestable evidence of its presence; and to explain how the animals and plants of the south may have existed in the climates of the north, where we find the remains and impressions of them. Lastly, such an event accounts for the recentness of the moral world, the monuments of which go back scarcely three thousand years. The human race, reduced to a small number of individuals, and to the most miserable condition, would for a long time be mainly occupied in providing for their preservation, amidst the wreck which surrounded them, and would lose all remembrance of arts and sciences; and when, by the progress of civilization, they at length became sensible of the want of these, they would find it necessary to recommence, as if man had been newly placed upon the earth. It seems impossible to contemplate the picture of calamity here drawn, without being forcibly struck with this singular coincidence; that if we suppose the period of the comet of 1830 (which in that year made a considerably near approach to the earth's orbit) to be 575½ years; and count back, from the year 1680, seven revolutions, or a period of 4028 years, we reach the 2349 before Christ—the year of the deluge, as fixed by chronologists.

GIN PALACES.

We rode on for some time in silence; at last, when we had proceeded a little distance, we came before a house, the front of which displayed, in all their architectural magnificence, pillars of the Corinthian: a large clock, which could be illuminated at night, showed the hour in a manner peculiarly attractive, from an elevated part of the building; and a lamp of immense size, profusely decorated, was suspended over the entrance. A crowd of the lower orders had congregated round the door. "This," said my companion, "is one of the many instances which abound in this metropolis of the taste for display in the humbler classes. This is a gin shop. While the rich man is sipping his claret in one of the splendid apartments in his princely club, the poor man is enjoying his gin in a room, the fittings-up of which cost several thousand pounds. Refinement has made such rapid progress in every direction, that the beggar who sweeps the crossing thinks it vulgar to be seen in a common tap-room; and so he goes to the gin palace, and gets drunk in style, at the expense of three halfpence farthing." "I cannot see," I observed, "how the purveyors of this favourite liquor, with his immense expense, can gain any profit." "They realise a large fortune in a few years," replied he. "But I will tell you how they manage

to do so. In some obscure part of the town, upon an unoccupied piece of ground, several houses of the smallest kind are built. One of these the retailer of gin purchases as soon as it is erected, fits it up as a small distillery, and there secretly manufactures an immense quantity of illicit spirits, which is conveyed by his agents into the gin palace. By defrauding his Majesty of the duties, he is enabled to under-sell others in the trade.—Some gin-sellers are more honest. They purchase the raw spirit from the distiller, paying all the duties, then adulterates it more than one half with the most poisonous materials. They do not cheat the King's revenue, they only destroy the King's subjects. The profit arises from the extent to which they can adulterate the raw spirit, or procure an illicit distillation, and from the immense quantity drunk by the lower orders. The man who first invented gin deserves immortality, and I will take very good care he shall have it, though not in this world.—Gunpowder has not produced half the effect of this intoxicating spirit; steam is not to be compared to its power. The discovery of Friar Bacon may kill a few thousands occasionally, but gin is destroying nine-tenths of the poor population of this vast metropolis.—*Mephistophiles in London.*

MAGNANIMITY AND GRATITUDE OF A LION.—Prince, a tame lion on board his Majesty's ship Ariadne, had a keeper to whom he was much attached; the keeper got drunk one day, and as the Captain never forgave this crime, the keeper was ordered to be flogged; the grating was rigged on the main deck opposite Prince's den a large barred up place, the pillars very strong and cased with iron. When the keeper began to strip, Prince rose gloomily from his couch and got as near to his friend as possible.—On beholding his bare back he walked hastily round the den, and when he saw the boatswain inflict the first lash, his eyes sparkled with fire, and his sides resounded with the strong and quick beating of his tail; at last, when the blood began to flow from the unfortunate man's back, and the clotted cats jerked their gory knots close to the lion's den, his fury became tremendous, he roared with a voice of thunder, shook the strong bars of his prison as if they had been osiers, and finding his efforts to break loose unavailing, he rolled and shrieked in a manner the most terrific that it is possible to conceive. The Captain fearing he might break loose, ordered the Marines to load and present at Prince; this threat redoubled his rage, and at last the captain desired the keeper to be cast off and go into his friend. It is impossible to describe the joy evinced by the lion—he licked with care the mangled and bleeding back of the cruelly treated seaman; caressed him with his paws, which he folded around the keeper as if to defy any one renewing a similar treatment; and it was after several hours that Prince would allow the keeper to quit his protection, and return among those who had so ill-used him.—*Martin's history of the British Colonies, Vol. 4.*

AN EXECUTION.

Amid the varied scenes in this vast metropolis, there is probably none so striking as an interior view of an execution at the Old Bailey. Being desirous to witness the effect of the punishment or death, I once accompanied one of the Sheriffs on a cold winter's morning, to see three men executed. We arrived between seven and eight o'clock, and were shown into the press room, a low gloomy chamber. Two of the men, having attempted to escape, were heavily ironed.—Each placed his foot upon an anvil, whilst a smith with a large hammer and great force, drove the rivets out. The sound was awful. One of the criminals, who had confessed to a hundred burglaries, I had myself committed for trial. He was a fine looking man of nine and twenty, but so altered that I could scarcely trace his former features; and I was informed that, even in the most hardened, nature generally gives way in the last four and twenty hours. When the three were pinioned, the procession moved slowly forward along the dark and narrow passages, a bell dismally knolling, and the Ordinary reading portions of the burial services. A few minutes after the drop fell, we retired, as is the custom, to breakfast in what is called the Lord Mayor's parlour. The Ordinary presided in full canonicals, and kept our attention alive by anecdotes connected with the occasion. On his right sat the City Marshal in military uniform. The Sheriffs wore their massive gold chains, and two Under Sheriffs were in Court dresses, contrasted with whom was a gentleman of peculiarly primitive appearance and attire—a constant attendant. The group, the time of day, the occasion, formed a combination altogether singular. After the lapse of an hour, the Sheriffs were summoned to see the bodies cut down, and I was surprised to find the countenance as placid as after natural death.

Lieutenant Drummond, R. N. the newly appointed Under Secretary for Ireland, enjoys a pension of £300 a-year on the Irish Civil List.