

## THE SEASON OF FLOWERS.

DR MRS. HARRISON SMITH.

GLAD Earth a verdant altar rears,  
Where Spring and all her train appears:  
Her balmy airs—her sunny hours—  
Her freshening dews—her od'rous flowers;  
Thence, fragrant exhalations rise,  
Like holy incense, to the skies.

The early birds in choral lay,  
By love attuned, their homage pay,  
Soft winds harmoniously unite  
To breathe forth accents of delight;  
While streamlets, bursting Winter's chain,  
Seek their far way, o'er mead and plain,  
Murmuring, as they glide along,  
A cheerful and melodious song.

Shall things material thus proclaim  
The wise Creator's gracious aim,  
And man be mute—nor fervent raise  
His voice in gratitude and praise?  
Oh, shall not human bosoms swell,  
With raptures, language cannot tell;  
In sympathetic ardour glow,  
With all above and all below,  
And in this gladsome season vie,  
With water, air, and earth and sky?

Say, shall not intellectual powers  
A purer incense waft, than flowers?  
And pour forth tones of holier love,  
Than warbling songsters of the grove?  
Shall lowing herds and bleating flocks,  
Echoes from the hills and rocks,  
Flowing streams and gushing fountains,  
Winds among the woods and mountains,  
Make music of a sweeter kind,  
Than the rich melodies of mind?

Forbid it every noble power  
That constitutes the immortal dower,  
Which to mortals has been given  
For highest purposes, by heaven.  
Let ardent souls, on wing sublime,  
Soar far beyond the bounds of time,  
With universal nature join  
In hymning goodness so divine,  
Leaving created things behind,  
To adore the uncreated Mind!

## THE WIFE.

FROM "TALES, BALLADS, ETC."

By Mrs. Gilman.

I had been married about four years, when I received a letter from my friend Eliza Somers, saying she would accept my invitation to pass a few weeks with me at ——. Five years previous we parted with mutual vows of unchanging friendship. She was my beloved companion in a boarding school, when I was in a land of strangers, and had sympathized with me in all my childish troubles. Although we had been so long separated, our affection and sympathy remained unchanged, and our letters were records of cherished friendship and esteem. She had just returned from Europe, where a residence of some years had added to her accomplishments and intelligence, while I remained at home cultivating domestic virtues.

As the time drew near for her to arrive, I heard such accounts of her surpassing beauty and grace, that I almost regretted having invited her. I had an undefined fear that she might be too attractive in the eyes of him who engrossed all my affection and all my solicitude; but it was too late to retract, and I felt a feverish anxiety when I thought of her coming.

I was not naturally prone to jealousy, but it was the weakness of my husband's mind, that he could never see an interesting young girl without seeking to excite in her an admiration of himself. I was ashamed to let him know that I suffered from these flirtations, and often wept in secret after an evening spent in the society of young girls by whom he seemed fascinated for the time. I was frequently mortified to see him waste his time and talents in such trifling, but feared to make any suggestions, lest he should think I wished to check harmless indulgence.

The eventful day at length arrived; it was a beautiful sunny morning when the carriage stopped at the door, and my dear Eliza, with the bounding step of youthful grace, sprang to my arms. We wept with un subdued emotion, but our's were tears of joy. I forgot my incipient jealousy, and looked on this gifted being as one who was to fill up my sum of earthly happiness. She was dressed in a drab-colored riding habit, with a black velvet hat and feathers. Her hair clustered in beautiful ringlets about her face, and her transparent complexion was tinged with the bloom of health. With the most perfect beauty she seemed to have an entire unconsciousness of her attractions.

Nature had been bountiful to this beautiful creature in mind as well as in person, and I soon saw our gravest statesmen listen to her graceful conversation with delighted attention. In the enchantment of her society, I was happy beyond all my former experience. She made no effort to captivate my Henry's imagination, or to flatter his vanity, but looked on him as a being set apart and consecrated to her friend; and the thought did not enter her

mind that there could be any rivalry between us. I also felt a confidence in her integrity, and in those religious influences of her mind.

My husband, like her, was gifted with every imaginable grace of mind and person, but not like her blessed with such strict integrity or singleness of heart. It was, as I have remarked, the weak point of his character, to be very susceptible to the influence of female beauty. Although his responsibility as a married man and as a father, prevented him from expressing his admiration openly, yet many a fair girl has felt the pressure of his hand, and many an innocent eye glistened at the tale of flattery he poured into her ear under the insidious guise of friendship. His voice was soft and melting, and his manners so refined and delicate as to inspire immediate confidence.

He could not long resist the temptation of trying to excite in the mind of my friend an admiration of himself; but while he sought to captivate her, he became unconsciously fascinated by her charms. Eliza was gratified by his attentions, because he was the husband of her friend; she was proud of his friendship, because his talents and his high place in society made it an honour to her. But although she listened to his conversation with gratified attention, and talked with him with animation and truth, she never flattered him. Thus was the seal placed on our youthful friendship, and although I might wonder how she could be insensible of his admiration whom all the world admired, yet I had consolation in the belief that she would not willingly become my rival.

The affection between Henry and myself was not impaired by these inconsistencies. He loved and respected me more than all the world beside, and he was a most devoted parent. It is true that he often made me unhappy, and he was sometimes on the verge of danger, but I could not fail to perceive that his impression was evanescent, and that it did not interfere with his real affection for me. He laboured in his profession, he sought honour and distinction for my sake, and it seemed his greatest pleasure to meet my approbation. It is possible that if I had represented to him the folly as well as danger of his conduct he would have been influenced by my counsel; but the fear of being considered that degraded being, a *jealous wife*, kept me silent, and I trusted to the redeeming power of his own principles. Some time after the arrival of Eliza we attended a fancy ball, and Henry with animated looks asked her to dance. They both danced exquisitely, and with great spirit and animation. The exercise gave a glow to her countenance, and my husband looked at her as if he was surprised and bewildered by her beauty. I was sorry I had not confided to my friend the history of my husband's excitability, because she was too generous to have interfered with my happiness, and her own excellent principles would have led her to check the first indication of an undue prepossession. He was evidently dazzled by the beauty and eclat attending her; but this was not the moment to allow me to make the humiliating confession that I feared her as my rival.

After the dance was ended, he brought her to me and said—

"My dear Laura, I shall thank you forever for the pleasure I have enjoyed this evening. Do entreat your friend to waltz with me, for she has refused my solicitation."

While he was speaking I was so agitated that I could not reply, and I only gave him a grave and cold bow. But he heeded not my abstraction. My hands and feet were cold as marble, and my lips dry and motionless. He stood by my side, unconscious that I was near, while he poured forth to her strains of the sweetest flattery. She looked at him with surprise, but soon left us to join the dance. My husband followed her with his gaze, but she heeded him not, and he became as abstracted as myself.

My agitation soon passed away; the frequency of these trials had at length given me power to control my emotions after the first shock, and when Eliza returned to me, I was as serene and tranquil as usual. She was now an object of great admiration and attention, surrounded by our most distinguished gentlemen, who listened with delighted attention to her graceful and intelligent remarks. Henry seemed studying her character, from the manner in which she received the homage now paid her. With the selfishness of man's heart, he wished she should look cold on others and listen with pleasure only to him. His pride would not allow him to love, unless it were to conquer,—but at a single look of encouragement he was at her side, and I began to be seriously alarmed lest his allegiance to me should be forgotten in his admiration of my friend. Thus I was kept in a state of agitation and dread, as I saw her power over him. But she was unconscious of the impression she had made, and I was supported by the hope that her sensibility would soon awaken in favour of one of the numerous candidates for her regard.

It is fortunate for the happiness of married life that there are interests and sympathies which bind husband and wife together, beyond the reach of external circumstances! Who could believe that he who was often quietly seated by the fire in my dressing room, alternately caressing my lovely children and their mother, could be the same being, who, perhaps a few hours before, would almost have sacrificed their happiness and affection, to obtain the transient admiration of some favourite young girl! When fatigued with the world, the ease and comfort of his own fireside was a luxury to him. He took my hand in his one evening, and said, tenderly—

"You look pale, my dearest Laura. I wish I had spent the afternoon with you, rather than those silly girls."

The tears started to my eyes, and I was on the point of telling him how much he made me suffer. He kissed away my tears, and said that no man living had so delightful and lovely a wife, and that it should be the study of his whole life to make me happy. Our little girl passed her fingers through his curls and felt his cheeks, and looking up in his face, said—

"Don't you love mamma now, dear papa, better than you do cousin Eliza?"

This simple little question awakened all the sensibility of his character, and he seemed at once to comprehend why I looked pale, and why the tears came into my eyes. He redoubled his assiduity and caresses; he said I was more dear to him than in our days of early love; and that if he trifled with others it was through mere vanity and love of admiration. This was a moment of happiness to us all; and thus the bonds of affection were renewed which had been in danger of being broken.

Some weeks passed away in all the alternations of amusement and weariness, happiness and discontent. He was proud of my beauty and accomplishments, and there were times when his attentions to me were almost exclusive and lover-like. At others they were shared by Eliza, and frequently she engrossed him wholly. I believe at this time I was the only object of his love, though to others he appeared to live but in her presence. She was often censured, while the apparently neglected wife was pitied.

Eliza was more admired than any lady who had appeared at — for a long period, and she might have formed a most delightful connexion which would have satisfied even the ambition of her mother, and have secured her own happiness; but I believe that at this time my husband began to have an undue influence over her. My little Henry had been quite sick; I was confined almost exclusively to the nursery; and in my anxiety for him, I forgot every other interest. From this cause my husband and Eliza were thrown much into each other's society. They read together,—they wrote poetry for each other,—they were both fond of music, and they were very sentimental. She lost her interest in the amusements of society, and by degrees her acquaintances and even her admirers ceased to inquire after her.

One day when my little boy was nearly recovered, Henry proposed to take me to ride. As I had not enjoyed much of Eliza's society of late, and she seemed dispirited, I asked her to accompany us. It was a delightful morning, and the pleasure of getting into the fresh air, with the delight of knowing that little Henry was relieved from danger, exhilarated my spirits and I was as gay as a bird. Henry was all attention and tenderness towards me, and we were both animated and happy.

Eliza seemed less amiable and less happy than usual, while I was like a child just released from captivity. The country, in the early spring, looked delightfully, and I proposed to get out and take a ramble in the fields. The proposition was agreeable to all, and we sallied forth. By degrees Eliza recovered her gaiety, and we were a happy, careless two. Suddenly we heard the crash of a fence, and on the opposite side of the field saw a tremendous bull coming furiously towards us. For an instant Henry hesitated which he should save, but in the next he had me in his arms and set me over the fence; he was then in hopes of being in time to save Eliza, but the coachman, seeing our peril, rushed to our assistance and arrived just in time to place Eliza over the fence by my side. Henry jumped over and joined us, and I threw my arms round his neck and kissed him in an agony of joy and terror. Eliza had fainted on the ground. She, however, soon recovered, and as she opened her eyes Henry gave her, as I thought, an impassioned kiss. But I ascribed it to the agitation of the moment: and would not allow it to embitter the joy and gratitude I felt for deliverance from such a peril. I was satisfied that in a moment of danger Henry had given me the preference, when one equally helpless was by his side.

The coachman procured her a glass of water, and as she took it, she said—

"Thomas, I am glad it was you who saved my life, because I can reward you. But if it had been you, sir, reward had been out of my power, and my obligation would have been perpetual."

I thought she spoke with a tone of resentment, and Henry looked distressed.

As we rode home I made an effort to recover the cheerfulness of the party by entering into conversation; but after a few ineffectual attempts we all relapsed into silence. My apprehensions for the happiness of Eliza were now seriously awakened. I feared that Henry had not been ingenuous with her. I thought that few men were so formed to dazzle the imagination of an unsuspecting young girl; and I had seen him, when he would sometimes seem willing to sacrifice his lofty ambition and aspiring hopes to gain the fleeting regard of some new being of fashion. I feared that my dear friend was deluding herself into the belief that she might cherish an innocent though romantic attachment for the husband of her friend; a delusion that would be fatal not only to her own happiness, but to mine.

I did not see her after our ride until she came down arrayed for a dinner party. She was splendidly dressed, and looked radiant in beauty; she had recovered her cheerfulness and self-pos-