

# THE MIRROR

AND COLCHESTER COUNTY ADVERTISER.

VOL II.

## Select Poetry.

For the Mirror.

"Life is real, life is earnest."

—LONGFELLOW.

Idle loiterer! vainly dreaming on the golden shores of time,  
Wasting all the precious moments in this life of thine.  
Pearls of price they are, these moments, of untold, unvalued wealth,  
Given to us, oh! how freely, by the God of love Himself.

He hath given them in his mercy. He hath given them; but for what? Surely not to waste and trifle in nothing else but idio thought;

But hath given them for action, fraught with feelings pure and true—

For in this world of sin and sorrow we each and all have work to do.

Work to do! and time is flying—passing out beyond recall;

And we're dreaming, idly dreaming, heeding not the warning call.

That should waken us from our slumbers to take in life an active part—

To ease the aching, bind the broken, soothe and calm the troubled heart.

If we would help to bear the burden; if to lightened up the path

Of some weary care-worn mortal, to whom the world seems always dark;

If to speak a word of kindness, if to dissipate the gloom

That hangs around the life of others, as we journey to the tomb,

Why, methinks, 'twould be a mission fraught with blessings from above,

Guiding us to seek more truly for our Heavenly Father's love;

Bringing joy and peace and gladness to our hearts to know that we

Let us then be "up and doing." May we labor not in vain,

For very soon the Reaper cometh, ready for the ripe grain.

May he find the seed God hath planted, not by weeds and brambles choked,

But standing in the golden harvest, ripened into beauteous growth.

EMMA

Bayside, Onslow, Jan. 16, 1868.

## Select Cal.

EXTRAORDINARY STORY.

THE DEAD MAN'S HAND.

I was looking over some family papers in my library one winter's night, some years ago, when I met with the following strange story. I well remember the circumstance, for it was the last night of the old year, and there was a deep snow on the ground. After a snug dinner in the library, all alone, I had the fire made up, put my feet on the fender, and was fast going off in a doze, when I remembered that I had left unfinished a box of family papers which my lawyer had brought up for my inspection a week ago.

I drew the tin box well up on the hearth-rug, made a dive, and fetched up a packet of yellow papers tied up with red tape. Expecting some old deed or other, I was somewhat surprised when my eyes fell on the following words: 'The Dead Man's Hand; or, Truth is Stranger than Fiction.'

I have since ascertained that the papers in question were the property of my grandfather, who was a barrister. I believe he had a large practice at the bar before he retired on coming into his property. The only other fact I knew about him was that the place is still shown in the hall, where, after a hard run with the Downshire hounds, he was thrown from his horse, and carried home to rise no more.

'Dead Man's Hand' was not a lively subject on a dark December night, with two feet of snow on the ground, and the winter wind howling wildly through the trees, and dying away in a sultry roar in the distant chase. However, I snuffed the candle, stirred up the fire, and cast a ruddy glow in the dark corner where the old bookcase stands, and read as follows:

Truth is indeed stranger than fiction. Some years ago I was engaged in a very singular case, the leading points of which I will endeavor to recall. I remember it made a deep impression on me at the time; and even now, some of the circumstances and persons come to my memory painfully distinct. The face of one old woman often haunts me—there—I see her now, in the witness-box, haggard and withered as a witch; a malevolent smile playing round her face, and her eye—what an evil eye it was—gleaming with a wild light; the whole countenance indicative of suppressed cunning. I was a young man

then, and had not at that time met with the success that afterwards fell to my lot. Briefs, in those days, were godsends indeed. I remember very well that I had sat all day in my dull lonely chambers, and my small boy, dignified with the name of clerk, had sat all day in his duller and lonelier room, when creak, creak, creak, came a footstep on the old stairs. Few steps ever got past the second floor, so I listened anxiously at that critical juncture—yes—no, on it came past the capacious maw of Mr. Deedes, that eminent conveyancer, whose table is covered with hundred guineas abstracts, and twenty guineas settlements.

Rat-tat came a knock at the door; or

rushed the clerk in such a hurry that he upset

the ink over my 'Reports,' for which he was threatened with instant dismissal on the next provocation, my wrath being only appeased by the extremity of penitence and humility to which he was thereby reduced. I believe we should really have parted shortly afterwards, when I caught the young scamp in my wig and gown, pantomiming out of the back window, had I not remembered his wretched home in Serjeant's Court, Fetter Lane, and his mother, who plaintively said she was a lone lorn widow, with thirteen children.'

But that by the way. My quick ear caught

the word 'Brief,' muttered by a strange voice in

the passage, and I waited in some anxiety, ap-

parently plunged in a mass of papers—Vines's Abridgement, the Statutes at Large, and other works of the same light nature, forming a sort of breastwork round me. My clerk, who seemed suddenly to have increased in height and self-importance, and to be a clerk in high practice, inquired in a sufficiently loud voice if I could see Mr. —— from Messrs. ——, a large and wealthy firm—their very name made my mouth water—or should he wait till, &c.

The attorney's clerk was shown in. Why and how had it been given to me? Had Messrs. —— observed my indefatigable manner in court—doing nothing? Or was legal success written in my countenance?

But I was too anxious for much speculation,

But I was too anxious for much speculation,