

IDLE WORDS.

Oh! say not idle words are like
A zephyr on the sea;
For oft a wandering chord will strike
The heart's deep mystery.
And tears that prayers could not call up
Flow as if strangely stirred,
The waters in the heart's full cup
Gush over with the word.

And idle words that fell unwatched
May rise, in after years,
With feeling speech hath never matched,
And eloquence of tears—
May breathe a thought whose lightest tone
From coldness or the grave
Wins one whose life or love alone
We would have died to save.

Then think not idle words are lost;
For oh! they may return
With feeling Xirne bath-guarded most
Within her sacred urn;
They fall like Undine's careless tears
Among the Danube's whirled,
To be regained in after years
A diadem of pearls.

WILL WALLACE HARNKY.

SARITA.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER FRASER.

(Continued from our last.)

PART II.

Sarita saw them as she lay under the spreading branches of her favourite tree; but absorbed in themselves, Estcourt and Millicent passed the slight figure robed in black unnoticed, and paused within a short distance of it.

Sarita tried to move, but an irresistible impulse riveted her to the spot, trembling in limb and sick with supreme dread.

She did not need to wait long before she knew that Estcourt—her affianced husband, and the man to whom she had given her whole heart—was a suppliant for another woman's love.

"You are deluding yourself, Mr. Eyre; it is impossible that you can care for me," Millicent murmured softly and pathetically, as though the love he had avowed was too great and blest a boon to fall to her lot. "Only six weeks ago, and you loved Sarita," she added reproachfully. "True."

The little word thrilled through Sarita's frame imparting a curious joy in the midst of her pain. It was inexpressible comfort to know that Estcourt, notwithstanding his dire infidelity, had loved her and acknowledged it.

"True" was a little word, but it was an immense drop of solace in the bitter cup she had to swallow.

"But a day, an hour, even a moment, may change the whole current of a man's life; and the love I bore Sarita in comparison with my feeling for you was water to wine; a mere taint, insipid, colourless semblance of love, instead of the wild burning passion I have for you, Millicent broke off a glowing rose and fastened it coquettishly into her bodice while she listened, and the slender white fingers that performed the task were steady enough. No inward emotion caused them to tremble, but she lifted up a radiant face, glowing like the rose she wore, towards her companion.

"Millicent, tell me, do you love me—love me as I do you, with no reservation, with your whole soul?" he questioned passionately. She did not answer him, only a pair of dreamy gray eyes looked into his own, and a pair of scarlet lips fired his brain.

Estcourt bent his head, and Sarita saw him press a long and ardent kiss on those lips. It was a death-knell of hope and happiness, but with an almost superhuman effort she crushed down the sob that seemed as if it must rise or break her heart in its struggle for utterance, and she remained quite still, only her heart beat in a tumult of misery.

"Millicent, my darling!"

The shadows of evening had closed in: a few stars shone out with a tender chastened light, and under it Millicent's russet-brown tresses gleamed up like gold. Estcourt's eyes feasted unrebuked on the beautiful upturned face of his Circe, and her white arm encircled his neck.

"You will not tell any one of this—at least not yet? My heart is full of you, Estcourt, and I could not bear that other than your own should read all that is in it," she whispered.

Estcourt assented to her wish.

Before him lay the ungrateful task of telling Sarita of his falsity, and he shrank from it, right willing to defer the revelation as long as it lay in his power to do so. But it was beyond him to control the passionate words that rushed to his lips, to hide the passionate feelings that surged up whenever Millicent was near him.

Strive as he would, the outward and terrible signs of an inward vehement love would appear; yet it was only a love bred and fostered by the senses, but which, while it existed, lived and flourished far more strongly than perhaps a better and worthier feeling would have done.

A fortnight had elapsed since his first confession to Millicent, when Estcourt came unawares on Sarita in a distant part of the grounds. She had gone there nominally to read, and a volume lay on her knee; but her eyes, full of tears, looked out wistfully on vacancy, and she started visibly when his figure stood beside her.

But with the nerve that the weaker sex often possesses in such cases, she looked steadily at him, and asked him to sit down on the rustic bench.

Estcourt obeyed, but he flinched inwardly at the ordeal before him, though his demeanour was calm and even heartless in appearance.

"I have been anxious for an opportunity of speaking to you, Estcourt, but it was difficult to find one," she said quietly, with a faint smile;

and then paused to gain strength, for her courage did not wear a very long crest, and the firmness of her voice was unsatisfactory. "I wanted to say that we have made a mistake—that it is better we should both be free," she hurried over at last.

Estcourt stared at her in amazement. The thought that this girl, who had given him unconcealed devotion—who had seemed to live on the crumbs of love he had dealt out to her—had grown indifferent to him, was perhaps caring for another, inflicted a terrible wound to his vanity.

A jealous pang seized him, and for a moment the image of Millicent faded from his memory.

"And why should you desire freedom?" he asked, with a curl of the lip and unmistakable vexation in his look.

Sarita glanced at him; she forgave him the littleness of the sentiment that prompted the sneer. It was pleasant to her that he was jealous, for jealousy argued yet a remnant of love. The scales had not yet fallen from her eyes, the glamour of Estcourt's actual presence kept them there; and, notwithstanding his deceit and fickleness, she felt as if her heart would break in parting from him. Still it must be done; the existing state of things harrowed her very soul—to be constantly with Estcourt, near Estcourt, and yet so unutterably far from him. She determined to end the matter at once and for ever.

"No one has superseded you, Estcourt—no one could; but it is better that we should be no longer as we have been," she said softly. She loved him too well to hurl reproaches at his head.

But Estcourt was a consummate egotist. He never guessed that Sarita had been a witness to his startit scene with Millicent, or the knowledge would have given him the key to her conduct and a salve to his *amour propre*. He had purposed when it pleased him to have broken with her, but he had never intended that her hand should be the one to fling the glove; and her rejection galled his spirit, while he put down her behaviour to a lurking liking for his brother—a feeling which he had once or twice fancied existed in her breast. The recollection of it now vexed him unspeakably.

"Arthur has a hand in this," he muttered savagely.

"No one has even an idea of it, Estcourt. And now let us say good bye to the past, though we can be excellent friends," she said, with a little tremor she could not control in her tone, holding out her hand.

Estcourt clasped it for a moment, and seemed irresolute whether to speak or not; but after a moment he turned away.

"I have lost him," the girl murmured pitifully to herself, as through blinding tears she watched his receding figure; while, with the thought of his new-born freedom, he walked briskly back to the house and into Millicent's presence.

"Sarita has given me my *congé*, and I am a free man," he exclaimed.

Millicent looked at him, while her face expressed far more of surprise than of gratification.

"Have you forgotten your promise, and told about me?"

"Not a word."

"Why, then, has she broken with you?"

"Sarita's conduct has nothing to do with you. I fancy she has arrived at the knowledge that she prefers my brother, Arthur has a double advantage over me, you know—the title and money," he replied, with disguised scorn and bitterness.

Millicent was silent for a little; various expressions flitted across her features.

"And does Sir Arthur care for Sarita?" she asked, with assumed indifference; but any ear save Estcourt's, who was completely occupied with his own feelings, could not have failed to discern a strange earnestness and anxiety in her voice.

"He has always admired her, and if Sarita had not been engaged to me, I believe he would have confessed his admiration long ago. He says her eyes are the most beautiful things in creation."

His listener bit her lips, and a frown puckered up her fair brow, but she bent over her work to hide her face.

Sarita's eyes—large, black, and passionate—were the exact reverse of her own languid gray orbs; and yet of late Sir Arthur had looked into hers with a new intensity that had made her heart flutter, and the thought flashed through her brain that the position of Lady Eyre, suzerain of Milton Towers—the grand old pile that she could see looming in the distance—would be far from an unpleasant one.

"You are sure that you did not tell Sarita, that you have told no one, that I love you, Estcourt?" Millicent asked again with a bright blush, called up a mixture of emotions that she would not have cared to have analysed, but which Estcourt put down to maidenly shyness and delicacy.

"Quite sure, darling. But now that Sarita has thrown me over of her own accord it is no longer necessary to keep up our concealment. It is so terribly hard for me to hide my feelings for you," he cried impetuously.

Millicent looked at him aghast. Estcourt's impatience would foil all her plans, and level with the dust the glittering castle her fancy had begun to build up.

"Still for my sake you will be silent and discreet. I shall be forced to leave this if my aunt resents the rupture between you and Sarita, and believes me to be the cause. Besides, Estcourt, stolen sweets are doubly sweet, you know," she

said, with a soft laugh, holding up her mouth to him.

The notion of her having to leave Milton was enough to silence him; so he gave her his promise again, and contented himself with the stolen sweets she offered him.

PART III.

"My prophecy is fulfilled, and Arthur has fallen a prey to Miss Charlville's charms," Estcourt said angrily as he strode up to the window where Sarita had ensconced herself.

She glanced up in his face. A pained expression sat on his features that grieved her, for in spite of his inconsistency she loved still.

"Perhaps; but the feeling may not be mutual," she suggested, with a true woman's desire to soothe and comfort.

"Feeling has mighty little to do with the matter. You forget that Arthur has other things to back him up besides his own attractions," he sneered.

"Yes; but Millicent would not surely think of title or position if she does not care for him."

"Why not? You would let money and rank weigh with you."

"Estcourt!" Sarita exclaimed in a wounded tone, with tears in her eyes.

It was hard for her, not only to lose the man she loved, but to know that he credited her with base and interested motives.

"Well," he replied roughly, "and is it not true? Did you not throw me over in hope of becoming Lady Eyre?"

The blood rushed to Sarita's face in indignation at his injustice.

"I broke with you because you love Millicent," she said out impetuously.

"How do you know that?" he asked, and at the moment that he put the query he felt as if he hated Millicent and her fair false face.

"I was in the grounds when you told her of your love the first time."

Estcourt changed colour as he recollected the kiss under the stars, and knew that Sarita must have witnessed it.

"Why do you not tell Arthur that you are engaged to Millicent, Estcourt?"

"Because she has bound me down by a promise not to do so."

Sarita was silent. A light broke in upon her. Women are keener than men in *affaires du cœur*.

"If I were you, Estcourt, I would act openly, and avow the engagement."

He looked at her, and read in her face that she was true, that she spoke for his good.

"I will do so at once," he exclaimed. "It is high time."

It was high time, for to all appearance Millicent was on the fair way to winning the position she coveted—mistress of Milton Towers. Sir Arthur had constituted himself her *preux chevalier* on all occasions, entirely ignoring the beetling brows and grim glances of his brother. And Millicent herself was not only the gracious recipient of his assiduity, but she lost no opportunity of displaying a marked preference for his society. Sarita meanwhile, feeling a little neglected, looked on at the feverish game of cross purposes that was being played in the crevice peaceful glades and dells of Milton. The serpent had in truth entered among the Eden flowers.

"Both!" she said to herself sadly as she watched the ill-assorted trio—Sir Arthur apparently engrossed in Millicent's animated converse; while Estcourt, with angry frowns, hovered near, determined to get in a word. But if Sarita had caught one of the furtive glances shot in her direction from under Sir Arthur's lids, she might have felt herself less deserted and disconsolate.

It was a game of cross purposes in truth. Estcourt, in spite of his smouldering jealousy and the aggravation he received, had religiously preserved his promise of secrecy; and Sir Arthur, surmising that his brother's fancy for Millicent was only an ephemeral one, had set himself the unpleasant task of weaning her attention to himself, in the hope that by doing so Estcourt would return at once to his proper allegiance to Sarita.

(To be continued.)

BRELOQUES POUR DAMES.

WHY, asks a correspondent, is a fashionable belle at her toilet like a species of the Euphorbia? Because she flours before she leaves.

SEVEN Brooklyn girls have formed a "leap year club," and pledged themselves to help each other to get husbands.

WHEN two women in a family are trying to tell the same thing at the same time, it is an auspicious opportunity for the men folks to vanish.

A recent marriage notice ends with the singular expression, probably added by a waggish friend: "May their future troubles be little ones."

IF a young lady wishes a young gentleman to kiss her, what papers should she mention? No Spectator, no Observer, but as many Times as you please.

MISS SUSAN ANTHONY remarks: "Babies are the coupons attached to the bonds of matrimony." They don't run at first, you know, but they draw all the more interest.

"PROBABLY one of the most trying times in a man's life," says one who has experienced it, "is when he introduces his second wife, 17 years old, to his daughter, who is past 20."

"SHE must be crazy to try to sing that," was remarked of an avenue belle at the piano at a

party the other night. "Ah, you don't believe that cracked belles make music, then," was the response.

A Yonkers girl who refused to marry a respectable young man because he was a mechanic is now the wife of a janitor in New York, and cleans out eight offices after four o'clock in the afternoon.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

LOTTA now owns a villa at Oakland, opposite San Francisco.

VERDI, the eminent composer, it is stated, has refused an offer of 200,000 fr. in gold to conduct a series of concerts in July and August at Philadelphia.

THE music for the forthcoming stage version of Mr. Tennyson's "Queen Mary" has, it is stated, been written by Mr. C. V. Stanford, organist of Trinity College.

THERE are 350 music teachers in London, and co-operating with them are 280 piano makers, 50 organ builders, 12 flute makers, 10 violin makers, 3 harp makers, and one maker of guitars.

JUDIC now reigns in Paris in place of Schneider, who fifteen years ago was queen of opera bouffe. The actress who once drew princes to her side now condescends to play at the Folies Dramatiques.

MILLE CHAPUY, whose *début* in "La Traviata" in London created such a sensation, and whose voice and execution are alike commended as faultless, is said to be about to retire from the stage. She is about to be married.

CASTLE, the tenor, was a trifle too realistic as *Edgar* in "Lucia" recently. Instead of jabbing his dagger under his arm, or slapping it up against his breast, according to the approved stage manner, he really stabbed himself, the blade penetrating his breast nearly an inch.

THE poet Laureate and Mr. Irving have recently had frequent consultations as to alterations necessary in the drama of "Queen Mary," in order to adapt it to the stage. Most of Cranmer's speeches have been, it is stated, considerably curtailed, and some of them will probably be omitted altogether.

THE Wagner Theatre at Baireuth is almost completed, and it is announced that the first rehearsal will take place in the beginning of June, the general rehearsals in August, and the three grand performances will be given on the 13th to 16th, the 20th to 23rd, and the 27th to 30th of August, lasting four days each.

EFFORTS are being made in the United States to induce Mr. Mapleson to take up his abode in New York, in charge of the "National Academy of Music," or Metropolitan Opera House. Capitalists of the United States have offered Mr. Mapleson a subscription of \$30,000 to start a grand opera "on such a scale in New York as to make it the model of opera in the world."

THERE is an association in England for the erection of a Shakespeare memorial at Stratford-on-Avon. The plan of the projectors includes not only a small theatre but also a gallery to contain pictures and statues of Shakespearean interest, as well as a library of Shakespearean literature; and contemplates the ultimate establishment of a training school for young actors. In furtherance of this worthy scheme application is made to the managers of the principal theatres in Europe and America to hold special performances in aid of the memorial fund on Saturday, April 22nd; Sunday, the 23rd, being the 312th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth.

ROUND THE WORLD.

Servia and Montenegro have made an alliance.

A revolution is reported to be progressing in Hayti.

THE difficulty between Japan and Corea has been settled.

AUSTRALIA sends 300 cases to the Centennial Exhibition.

ALFONSO entered Madrid on Monday at the head of 25,000 troops.

MAINE is the fifth State that has abolished the death penalty.

MOUNT VESUVIUS is in a state of eruption; the lava is flowing towards Pompeii.

A revolution has broken out in San Domingo, under the leadership of General Canal.

THERE were 42,000 exhibitors at the Paris Exposition of 1867, and 23,000 at Vienna.

GREECE has offered to form an offensive and defensive alliance with Servia and Roumania.

THE Berlin High Court of State has decided to indict Count Von Arnim for treason.

A Russian army is said to have entered Korean territory, under the pretext of pursuing brigands.

THE Italian Government has been defeated on the question of the grist tax, and has resigned.

A subscription fund is being raised in Paris for the relief of the sufferers in the different quarters by the floods.

THE Prince of Wales is on his return to England. He is expected to reach Portsmouth about April the 20th.

TREATIES between the Argentine Republic and Brazil have been ratified, and all difficulties are now terminated.

VICTOR HUGO intends proposing in the French Senate that an amnesty be granted to political prisoners since 1870. This would include the Communists.

MONS. VILLET, a director of a department in the French treasury, has been appointed to assist in the re-organization of Egyptian finance.

THE Italian Minister of Public Instruction has ordered the closure of the Vatican University at Rome, as being an illegal establishment.

DANIEL DREW, of New York, has suspended payment. His liabilities exceed \$1,500,000. He lately endowed two colleges to the extent of \$350,000, but this money has not been secured to them.

LETTERS from the Gordon expedition in Africa have been received up to the end of last December. The explorers expect to finish their researches in July or August, when they will return home to England.

THE Republicans are confident that they have made a clean sweep in the State of New Hampshire. There is no doubt that they have elected a majority of Senators, and they claim a majority in the House of fifteen.

A telegram from the Khedive's private secretary, confirms the defeat of the Abyssinians. The despatch says their losses are irreparable. The Abyssinian King has written, asking for peace. Hostilities have therefore been suspended, and negotiations commenced with every hope of success.