

A RAINY EVENING.

The twilight shadows darkling fall:
Oh, memories dear! against thy thrall
My heart strives all in vain.
Yet wherefore strive against my mood?
I cannot silence, if I would,
The softly falling rain.

At such an hour, on such an eve,
Bright hopes, that yet I only grieve,
Sprang up, to fade and wane.
Ah, never more, hand clasped in hand,
Shall we within the doorway stand,
And watch the falling rain.

Yet still the sweetness of that hour
Returns, with all its wonted power
Of mingled joy and pain.
When, dropping down from the window-eaves,
Or gently falling on the leaves,
I hear the summer rain.

Oh, cruel memory! thus to bring
That glad, brief hour, with bitter sting,
Back to my heart again;
Those parting words of fond regret:
With glad pretext, love lingering yet,
Unmindful of the rain.

Ah! brief, indeed, poor aching heart,
The joy those fickle hopes impart:
Grief follows in their train.
Nay, nay, my heart; take upward wing.
Oh, cruel memory! thy sting
Shall vanish with the rain.

Though sadder seem the songs I trill;
Yet sorrow, with its plaintive thrill,
Adds sweetness to the strain;
As fragrant perfumes softly flow
From hawthorn blossoms bending low,
Beaten down by wind and rain.

LOUIS VII. OF FRANCE.

Kings and queens, though they stand, as it were, upon a pedestal which renders both their faults and their virtues conspicuous, are not always remarkable people in themselves, and yet as links in the chain of history each one must possess a certain kind of importance.

Louis VII. of France, as a private individual, would in all probability have been one of those very ordinary men whose lives are moulded by their circumstances. Even as a king, he, perhaps, figures most largely as the unfortunate husband of Eleanor of Aquitaine, and his whole life seems but a sad illustration of the evils that may—may must—result from ill-assorted unions among the highest as well as the lowest, and the prolonged woes which are often brought upon a nation by the domestic disturbances of royalty; for many of the wars and jealousies between England and France in after years may be clearly traced to this period and cause.

France was not in those days as we see it now on the maps, nor as it had been in the days of Charlemagne, but only a small half of it, and out of that came several large independent provinces. Nor was this all. Even the part called the kingdom of France was subverted by petty princes scarcely less powerful than the sovereign himself, the management and control of whom required a vast amount of wisdom and discretion. The father of our present sketch is most highly spoken of as possessing these needful qualities. He was called at that time Louis the "Wide Awake," and had been brought up in the monastery of St. Denis where he had for his fellow-student the learned Suger, his own and his son's life-long counsellor. This monarch did not direct to a distance from home his ambition and his efforts; "it was within his own dominions, to check the violence of the strong against the weak, to put a stop to the quarrels of the strong amongst themselves, to make an end, in France at least, of unrighteousness and devastation, and to establish there some sort of order and justice, that he displayed his energy and perseverance."

Such was the father of Louis VII., and we can easily imagine the tender, anxious care he would bestow upon the son who was to succeed him on the throne. How little he dreamed that one of the last acts of his life would be the cause of that son's greatest misery and misfortune.

Louis le Jeune was one day summoned into his father's private audience hall, some ambassadors from the Duke of Aquitaine having just departed. He was surprised to find the old gentleman in a most jocular humor. After a cordial paternal greeting, he bade him sit beside him and hear the good news in store for him and France. "Knowest thou, fair son, the goodly domain of Aquitaine? What thinkest thou of adding it to thine own possessions by no greater sacrifice than accepting a lovely young bride?"

A startled look of surprise passed over the young man's face. Among royal personages whose marriages are almost governed in great measure if not entirely by policy, it must ever be a dreaded subject.

"Duke William has wisdom worthy of his years," the king continued. "He would fain, he says, before his death bestow the hand of his granddaughter and heiress on one worthy of her, and thou wilt, as her husband, unite once more under one head, poor dismembered France."

"But Father," the prince questioned with slow uncertainty, "will they submit to a foreign ruler even though he be husband to their lady?"

The king gazed steadily into his son's eyes for a moment and turned away with a shade of disappointment. Not much of his own self-reliant, determined spirit he saw there; would he indeed be able to win and hold the rich acquisition? If such a golden opportunity had but come a

generation sooner, but—Louis was a dutiful son and a most devout Christian; when he himself no longer lived, the boy must depend on the help of the Lord and the faithful Suger. Thinking thus the father answered slowly, "The Barons of Aquitaine agree to the marriage on condition that the consent of the princess be obtained, and now it rests with you to win the maiden who brings so pleasant a dower."

"And suppose she please me not," quoth the prince still doubtfully, "must I needs wed her nevertheless, for the good of France?"

"What more canst thou ask, man?" demanded the sire a little impatiently; "they say there is none more beautiful in all the realm than this same southern-born maid. However, we will take counsel with Suger; he may be able to settle thy doubtful mind. But know, when thou art ready to go and bring back thy bride, thou shalt command the best of my kingdom for thy retinue."

Louis might truly have said, "the half was not told me," when he stood in presence of the lady of Aquitaine. Under the severe rule of St. Bernard, and the rigid tutorship of Suger, the young prince had grown up in the palace as in a convent, turning away with a monk's asceticism from the very thought of woman. But few proved callous to the charms of Eleanor of Aquitaine, when she chose to exert them. Young in years, scarce fifteen, but marvelously beautiful, and with that almost magical gift of fascination that gave her such power all through life, no wonder the young Louis showed no further reluctance in carrying out his father's wishes.

And what of Eleanor? With the hot southern blood in her veins, born and raised in the land of the troubadours, idolized by her gay pleasure-loving people, was she too, satisfied with the husband chosen for her? Was there any thing in the simply attired, self-repressed, grave looking young man to attract the poetic fancy of the maiden? Or, had ambition already begun to stir her young heart? Was it simple acquiescence, because nothing more desirable presented itself at the moment; or was it the desire to be queen of all fair France that induced her to profess herself pleased with the interview? Who can tell! Suffer the future to be still a sealed book, and let the old grandfather, Duke William of Aquitaine, and the brave, discreet king of France die in peace, hugging to their patriotic souls the bright dream—France is one, no more strife and division, the glory of Charlemagne has dawned again.

The father of the young prince kept his promise, and a brilliant embassy, composed of more than five hundred lords and noble knights, with the king's own intimate adviser, Suger, at their head, accompanied him to Aquitaine, where the ceremony was to take place. At the moment of departure his father gave him his blessing, little recking he would see his face no more. "May the strong hand of God Almighty, by whom kings reign, protect thee, my dear son, both thee and thine." And so young Louis went on his way to meet his fate.

The rejoicing of the marriage-feasts, the ducal crowning of the youthful bridegroom with all its attendant gayeties, in that land where every thing was made the master of pleasure, and above all, the irresistible effect of intercourse with his gay, pleasure-loving bride, had well nigh made a different man of Louis. When, on the way back to his own capital, he met at Poitiers the messenger who brought him the dying words of his now deceased sire: "Tell him," he said, "to remember that royalty is a public trust, for the exercise of which a rigorous account will be exacted by Him who has the sole disposal of crowns and scepters."

On the morbidly conscientious mind of Louis VII., these words made a deep impression. His young queen could not again tempt him into the gay frivolities she so dearly loved, and he returned to his palace steadily purposed to carry out all his father's good works, and to maintain the strict regime which that monarch had established at court. Of the year that followed in their wedded life we know but little. We can easily imagine that Eleanor sorely fretted against the enforced dullness and irksome severity of her palace home, and it may be, Louis did not show the forbearance he should to her so different temperament. At any rate, we know she must gladly have welcomed the time of her yearly visits to her hereditary domains. There, among her own people, she could be her natural self, and accept the homage all were ready to give. From all accounts, Louis really gave her his young heart's first affection, and though he would not, to please her, relax one iota in the austerity by which he regulated his own life, some historians attribute to her influence his disagreement with the Pope in 1142, and the war with Theobald II, Count of Champagne. This war resulted in the siege and burning of Vitry, and led to more far-reaching consequences than any anticipated, for the fire unfortunately reaching the church, it was entirely consumed, with thirteen hundred men, women, and children who had taken refuge there.

For this accident King Louis felt a most lively sorrow and sincere repentance. Yet all his penances appeared to bring no comfort to his soul, and his longing desire to find something to do, whereby he might expiate his sin and make his peace with Heaven, prepared him for the second Crusade, which soon after began to be preached in France and Germany.

"You will come with me and hear the Abbot of Clairvaux to-day, will you not?" Louis said to the Queen, looking at her with an anxious,

deprecating expression. He could not but know she had small love for these things, but she generally complied with his openly expressed wishes. So she sat beside him when the reverend St. Bernard took his place to address the assembled grandees and people. A careless listener she promised to be, but none could remain careless under this most eloquent man of his time. Scarcely conscious of her fixed attention, her mind took fire from his burning zeal, and suddenly possessed with the romantic idea of a female crusader, to the surprise of all, she knelt beside the king while St. Bernard bestowed on each the sacred cross.

It was an evil hour for France and for Louis when he and Eleanor listened to the irresistible eloquence of St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux. He must have felt this himself when his honest friend, Suger, so strongly opposed his going. Not that the abbot did not believe, as every body did in those days, that the holy war was a needful and meritorious work, but he felt that the king was needed at home, while some one else might lead the crusading army. And Louis must have felt still more apprehensive when he saw to what lengths the queen's intemperate zeal was leading her, appearing in public with the ladies of her court all attired in Amazonian costume.

But every thing gave way before the resistless fervor of a new crusade, and they started on the expedition, leaving Suger in charge of the government.

It is needless to follow them through their various adventures. Although apparently planned with the greatest deliberation and judgment, and though there was no lack of bravery in leaders or soldiers, the crusade was an utter failure. The fair Eleanor and her bevy of Amazons, were no doubt responsible in part for Louis's share of it, as they were a continual hindrance, with their inconvenient abundance of baggage, their need of protection and care, and their willful fancies, and Louis was not one of those indomitable men who sweep all difficulties out of the way, and carry their point in spite of obstacles. One incident may serve as illustrative. At one point of their journey, as night approached, Louis sent forward the queen and her ladies escorted by his choicest troops, to select a camping ground for the night, bidding them be careful to choose the high positions above the valley. The king not finding them where he expected, was thrown into the greatest consternation and immediately started with the rest of the army in search of the missing party. Marching hither and thither, they were attacked by swarms of Arabs, lost all their baggage and provisions and seven thousand lives, only escaping with his own by almost incredible feats of bravery, and all because Eleanor, instead of obeying his injunctions, had insisted upon halting in a lovely romantic valley. At any rate, they were not thereafter so much encumbered with baggage, but all these disasters which she had brought upon her husband do not seem, very greatly, to have disturbed Queen Eleanor. Her frivolities reached a climax at Antioch, where her unseemly conduct exasperated the king beyond endurance. "She was," says William of Tyre, "a very inconsiderate woman, caring little for royal dignity or conjugal fidelity; she took great pleasure in the court of Antioch, where she also conferred much pleasure, even upon Musselmans, and when the king, her husband, spoke to her of her approaching departure, she emphatically refused to go."

There is scarcely a doubt that her handsome uncle, Raymond of Poitiers, at that time Prince of Antioch, encouraged her in this rebellion for selfish purposes. He wanted the assistance of Louis in some of his own ambitious designs before he proceeded on his way, and when persuasion failed, tried this method of detaining him. Great, indeed, was the surprise of the imperious beauty, when her irate lord took the matter in his own hand. Hurrying her out of Antioch one night "with slight leave-taking," he decamped for Jerusalem, the goal of all his hopes, whence he had received most urgent messages.

From that time, all affection seems to have been at an end between the royal pair. As the chronicler says, "They both hid their wrath as much as possible, but at heart they had ever this outrage." Eleanor was burning with indignation at her husband's unmounted severity, and it would appear never made any effort at reconciliation.

If it was true, as William of Nangis says, that Louis loved his beautiful queen "with an almost excessive love," we can better understand how he had no heart for any thing afterward. And though loth to return with so little accomplished for the holy land, he at length yielded to the earnest entreaties of Suger, and turned his face homeward.

Letters written by Louis during the absence from France, declare his intention of procuring a divorce immediately on his return, but he was probably deterred from it by those who coveted for France the queen's fair dower. And so they seem to have lived two or three years of dreary estrangement. The queen, although treated with all due honor, was kept in considerable personal restraint, and not allowed to visit her hereditary dominions. But when his jealousy was again aroused by her too evident partiality for Henry Plantagenet, no considerations of self-interest or country's weal could weigh with him. He accepted the plea of consanguinity suggested by herself, and almost at the very moment when Suger, the faithful friend and adviser lay dying, the marriage of Louis and

Eleanor of Aquitaine was annulled. Eleanor, in a very short time, married Henry of Normandy, afterward King of England, and transferred to him the rich provinces of her possession.

Louis himself married twice afterward, first Constance of Castile, and after her death, Alice, sister to the Earl of Champagne.

From this time we find but little to record in the life of Louis VII. Most of his after life was occupied with unprofitable wars, pacifications and wars again with Henry II of England.

No doubt King Louis deeply felt the death of Suger, and must have sadly missed his counsels always. His son, Philip Augustus, although only fifteen at the time of his father's death, had already been crowned and married, and early gave unmistakable evidence of a vigorous reign.

SOME OTHER FELLOW'S SISTER.

"You seem to think a great deal of your sister," said one of Jack's chums to him the other day, as if the fact was rather surprising.

"Why, yes, I do," responded Jack, heartily, "Kit and I are great friends."

"You always," continued the other, "seem to have such a good time when you are out together."

"Well," laughed Jack, "the fact is that when I have Kit I keep all the while forgetting that she isn't some other fellow's sister."

I pondered somewhat over this conversation, wishing that all the brothers and sisters in the world were as good friends as Jack and Kate Hazell, and wondering why they were not. It struck me that the answer to my query was contained in Jack's last sentence. Boys don't usually treat their sisters as they would if they were "some other fellow's sister." Jack is a shining exception. He kneels to put on Kate's skates as gallantly as if she were Bessie Dare, and Bessie Dare is at present Jack's ideal of all that is loveliest in girlhood. He keeps his engagements with Kate punctiliously; for instance, when Jack has Kate at a company, he takes her to supper, and cares for her in all ways as an escort should; and Kate knows what to expect of him, and what to do herself, and is not in dread of desertion, or of being left to the tender mercies of any one who notices her forlorn condition. And I don't wonder, when I see how nicely he treats her, that Kate declares she would rather have her brother Jack for an escort than almost any one else in the world.

At home, too, Jack is a pattern. Though there is a constant merry war between brother and sister, and jokes and repartees fly thick and fast, yet it is always fair cut and thrust between them, all for sport, and naught for malice; the wit never degenerates into rudeness. Then, too, if Kate does any thing for him, her kindness is always acknowledged. Does she take the trouble to make for him his favorite rice griddle-cakes, and then stay in the kitchen to bake them herself, that they may acquire that delicate golden brown which is so dear to the taste of all who love them truly, Jack never fails to assure her that her efforts are appreciated.

Does she paint him a tea-cup and saucer, or embroider him a hat band, he is as delighted as possible.

He does not take all these things as a matter of course. On Saturday nights he is apt to remember her by a box of candy, a bunch of flowers, or a bottle of her favorite violet perfume. Best of all, he talks to her. He tells her his thoughts, his hopes and fears, his disappointments, and his plans for the future. In short, they are, as he said, "great friends."

Some of Jack's comrades rather envy him his good fortune in possessing so devoted a sister as Kate, and they have been heard to say frankly, that they wish their sisters were as Kate Hazell. If those boys would pursue the same course of action toward their sisters that Jack does toward his, they might, perhaps, be rewarded with as delightful a result; for it is by little acts of kindness and courtesy and consideration, that Jack has made of his sister a friend whose love will never grow cold, whose devotion will never falter, and whose loyalty will never fail while life shall last.

HOME ITEMS.

"—All your own fault
If you remain sick when you can
Got hop bitters that never—Fail.

The weakest woman, smallest child, and sickest invalid can use hop bitters with safety and great good.

—Old men tottering around from Rheumatism, kidney trouble or any weakness will be almost new by using hop bitters.

—My wife and daughter were made healthy by the use of hop bitters and I recommend them to my people.—Methodist Clergyman.

Ask any good doctor if hop
Bitters are not the best family medicine
On earth.

—Malarial fever, Ague and Biliousness, will leave every neighborhood as soon as hop bitters arrive.

"My mother drove the paralysis and neuralgia all out of her system with hop bitters."—Ed. Oswego Sun.

—Keep the kidneys healthy with hop bitters and you need not fear sickness.

—Ice water is rendered harmless and more refreshing and reviving with hop bitters in each draught.

—The vigor of youth for the aged and infirm in hop bitters.