

LAST WORDS.

BY T. J. OUSELEY.

When the receding shore
Of dearest home dims on the anxious sight;
The bravest hearts deplore
The parting of the soul—the farewell blight;
Still hope will peace restore,
As midnight mourners yearn for morning's light.

The garden flow'rets die,
Leaves fade—the rippling rivulets are still;
Darkness o'erveils the sky;
E'en birds have ceased their sweet melodious trill;
Yet spring will beautify,
And they return; for such is Nature's will.

These will again renew,
The birds their songs,—the trees their leaves,—the flowers
Bloom in their rainbow hue;
And silver streams, fed by the summer showers,
Sing to the heaven's calm blue;
But these are not of us,—they are not ours.

Ours are the dearest ties:
Once fled, what voice the lost one can recal?
In climes beyond the skies
The spirit soars too purified to fall:
Memory alone can rise
Upon the wings of Love;—yes, that is all.

The last, the tristful scene,
When friends are gathered round the silent bed;
When she, alone serene,
Smiles while their tears in agony are shed;
Shall we not comfort glean,
To know eternal bliss awaits the dead?

The kind familiar face
Yet miss we from our own domestic hearth;
We mourn the vacant space,
And all the sunshine of past joyous mirth:
No more can we replace
Her our hearts loved—above all things of earth.

The faint LAST WORDS we hear,
From the fond lips of the departing one,
Whisper "She is not here,"
Assure us that for ever she is gone:
Still will we hold them dear,
When semblance fades, they're left to dwell upon.

Metropolitan for July.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.—No. 4.

A STREET LOVE SCENE.

"Well, Fanny," said the miller's daughter, "you see I have come to see you, although we had some words last night."

"I pity your bad passions," Tilda, replied Miss Squeers; "but I bear no malice. I am above it."

"Don't be cross, Fanny," said Miss Price. "I have come to tell you something that I know will please you."

"What may that be, Tilda?" demanded Miss Squeers; screwing up her lips, and looking as if nothing in earth, air, fire, or water, could afford her the slightest gleam of satisfaction.

"This," rejoined Miss Price, "After we left here last night, John and I had a dreadful quarrel."

"That doesn't please me," said Miss Squeers—relaxing into a smile though.

"Lor! I wouldn't think so bad of you as to suppose it did," rejoined her companion. "That's not it."

"Oh!" said Miss Squeers, relapsing into melancholy. "Go on."

"After a great deal of wrangling and saying we would never see each other any more," continued Miss Price, "we made it up and this morning John went and wrote our names down to be put up for the first time next Sunday, so we shall be married in three weeks, and I give you notice to get your frock made."

There was mingled gall and honey in this intelligence. The prospect of the friend's being married so soon was the gall, and the certainty of her not entertaining serious designs upon Nicholas was the honey. Upon the whole, the sweet greatly preponderated over the bitter, so Miss Squeers said she would get the frock made, and that she hoped Tilda might be happy, though at the same time she didn't know, and would not have her build too much upon it, for men were strange creatures, and a great many married women were very miserable, and wished themselves single again with all their hearts; to which condolences Miss Squeers added others equally calculated to raise her friend's spirits and promote her cheerfulness of mind.

"But come now Fanny," said Miss Price, "I want to have a word or two with you about young Mr. Nickleby."

"He is nothing to me," interrupted Miss Squeers, with hysterical symptoms. "I despise him too much!"

"Oh, you don't mean that, I am sure?" replied her friend. "Confess, Fanny; don't you like him now?"

Without returning any direct reply, Miss Squeers all at once fell into a paroxysm of spiteful tears, and exclaimed that she was a wretched, neglected, miserable, castaway.

"I hate everybody," said Miss Squeers, "and I wish that everybody was dead—that I do."

"Dear, dear!" said Miss Price, quite moved by this avowal

of misanthropical sentiments. "You are not serious, I am sure."

"Yes, I am," rejoined Miss Squeers, tying tight knots in her pocket-handkerchief and clenching her teeth. "And I wish I was dead too. There."

"Oh! you'll think very differently in another five minutes," said Matilda. "How much better to take him into favour again, than to hurt yourself by going on in that way; wouldn't it be much nicer now to have him all to yourself on good terms, in a company-keeping, love-making, pleasant sort of manner?"

"I don't know but what it would," sobbed Miss Squeers. "Oh! Tilda, how could you have acted so mean and dishonourable! I wouldn't have believed it of you if anybody had told me."

"Heyday!" exclaimed Miss Price, giggling. "One would suppose I had been murdering somebody at least."

"Very nigh as bad," said Miss Squeers passionately.

"And all this because I happen to have enough of good looks to make people civil to me," cried Miss Price. "Persons don't make their own faces, and it's no more my fault if mine is a good one than it is other people's fault if theirs is a bad one."

"Hold your tongue," shrieked Miss Squeers, in her shrillest tone; "or you'll make me slap you," Tilda, and afterwards I should be sorry for it."

It is needless to say that by this time the temper of each young lady was in some slight degree affected by the tone of the conversation, and that a dash of personality was infused into the altercation in consequence. Indeed the quarrel, from slight beginnings rose to a considerable height, and was assuming a very violent complexion, when both parties, falling into a great passion of tears, exclaimed simultaneously, that they had never thought of being spoken to in that way, which exclamation, leading to a remonstrance, gradually brought on an explanation, and the upshot was that they fell into each other's arms and vowed eternal friendship; the occasion in question, making the fifty-second time of repeating the same impressive ceremony within a twelvemonth.

Perfect amicability being thus restored, a dialogue naturally ensued upon the number and nature of the garments which would be indispensable for Miss Price's entrance into the holy state of matrimony, when Miss Squeers clearly showed that a great many more than the miller could, or would afford, were absolutely necessary, and could not decently be dispensed with. The young lady then, by an easy digression, led the discourse to her own wardrobe, and after recounting its principal beauties at some length, took her friend up stairs to make inspection thereof. The treasures of two drawers and a closet having been displayed, and all the smaller articles tried on, it was time for Miss Price to return home, and as she had been in raptures with all the frocks, and had been stricken quite dumb with admiration of a new pink scarf, Miss Squeers said in high good humour, that she would walk part of the way with her for the pleasure of her company, and off they went together, Miss Squeers dilating, as they walked along, upon her father's accomplishments, and multiplying his income by ten, to give her friend some faint notion of the vast importance and superiority of her family.

It happened that that particular time, comprising the short daily interval which was suffered to elapse between what was pleasantly called the dinner of Mr. Squeer's pupils and their return to the pursuit of useful knowledge, was precisely the hour when Nicholas was accustomed to issue forth for a melancholy walk, and to brood, as he sauntered listlessly through the village, upon his miserable lot. Miss Squeers knew this perfectly well, but had perhaps forgotten it, for when she caught sight of that young gentleman advancing towards them, she evinced many symptoms of surprise and consternation, and assured her friend that she "felt fit to drop into the earth."

"Shall we turn back, or run into a cottage?" asked Miss Price. "He don't see us yet."

"No, Tilda," replied Miss Squeers, "it is my duty to go through with it, and I will."

As Miss Squeers said this in the tone of one who has made a high moral resolution, and was besides taken with one or two chokes and catchings of breath, indicative of feelings at a high pressure, her friend made no farther remark, and they bore straight down upon Nicholas, who, walking with his eyes bent upon the ground, was not aware of their approach until they were close upon him; otherwise he might perhaps have taken shelter himself.

"Good morning," said Nicholas, bowing and passing by.

"He is going," murmured Miss Squeers. "I shall choke, Tilda."

"Come back, Mr. Nickleby, do," cried Miss Price, affecting alarm at her friend's threat, but really actuated by a malicious wish to hear what Nicholas would say; "come back, Mr. Nickleby."

Mr. Nickleby came back, and looked as confused as might be, as he inquired whether the ladies had any commands for him.

"Don't stop to talk," urged Miss Price, hastily; "but support her on the other side. How do you feel now, dear?"

"Better," sighed Miss Squeers, laying a beaver bonnet of

reddish brown with a green veil attached, on Mr. Nickleby's shoulder. "This foolish faintness!"

"Don't call it foolish, dear," said Miss Price, her bright eye dancing with merriment as she saw the perplexity of Nicholas; "you have no reason to be ashamed of it. It's those who are too proud to come round again without all this to-do, that ought to be ashamed."

"You are resolved to fix it upon me, I see," said Nicholas, smiling, "although I told you last night it was not my fault."

"There; he says it was not his fault, my dear," remarked the wicked Miss Price. "Perhaps you were too jealous or too hasty with him? He says it was not his fault, you hear; I think that's apology enough."

"You will not understand me," said Nicholas. "Pray dispense with this jesting, for I have no time, and really no inclination, to be the subject or promoter of mirth just now."

"What do you mean?" asked Miss Price, affecting amazement.

"Don't ask him, Tilda," cried Miss Squeers; "I forgive him."

"Dear me," said Nicholas, as the brown bonnet went down on his shoulder again, "this is more serious than I supposed; allow me. Will you have the goodness to hear me speak?"

Here he raised up the brown bonnet, and regarding with most unfeigned astonishment a look of tender reproach from Miss Squeers, shrunk back a few paces to be out of the reach of the fair burden, and went on to say—

"I am very sorry—truly and sincerely sorry—for having been the cause of any difference among you last night. I reproach myself most bitterly for having been so unfortunate as to cause the dissension that occurred, although I did so, I assure you, most unwittingly and heedlessly."

"Well; that's not all you have got to say surely," exclaimed Miss Price as Nicholas paused.

"I fear there is something more," stammered Nicholas with a half smile, and looking towards Miss Squeers, "it is a most awkward thing to say—but—the very mention of such a supposition makes one look like a puppy—still—may I ask if that lady supposes that I entertain any—in short does she think that I am in love with her?"

"Delightful embarrassment," thought Miss Squeers, "I have brought him to it at last. Answer for me dear," she whispered to her friend.

"Does she think so?" rejoined Miss Price; "of course she does."

"She does!" exclaimed Nicholas with such energy of utterance as might have been for the moment mistaken for rapture.

"Certainly," replied Miss Price.

"If Mr. Nickleby has doubted that, Tilda," said the blushing Miss Squeers in soft accents, "he may set his mind at rest. His sentiments are reciprocal."

"Stop," cried Nicholas hurriedly; "pray hear me. This is the grossest and wildest delusion, the completest and most signal mistake, that ever human being laboured under or committed. I have scarcely seen the young lady half a dozen times, but if I had seen her sixty times, or am destined to see her sixty thousand, it would be and will be precisely the same. I have not one thought, wish, or hope, connected with her unless it be—and I say this, not to hurt her feelings, but to impress her with the real state of my own—unless it be the one object dear to my heart as life itself, of being one day able to turn my back upon this accursed place, never to set foot in it again or to think of it—even think of it—but with loathing and disgust."

With this particularly plain and straight-forward declaration, which he made with all the vehemence that his indignant and excited feelings could bring to bear upon it, Nicholas slightly bowed, and waiting to hear no more, retreated.

But poor Miss Squeers! Her anger, rage, and vexation; the rapid succession of bitter and passionate feelings that whirled through her mind, are not to be described. Refused! refused by a teacher picked up by advertisement at an annual salary of five pounds payable at indefinite periods, and "found" in food and lodging like the very boys themselves; and this too in the presence of a little chit of a miller's daughter of eighteen, who was going to be married in three weeks' time to a man who had gone down on his very knees to ask her! She could have choked in right good earnest at the thought of being so humbled.

But there was one thing clear in the midst of her mortification, and that was that she hated and detested Nicholas with all the narrowness of mind and littleness of purpose worthy a descendant of the house of Squeers. And there was one comfort too; and that was, that every hour in every day she could wound his pride and goad him with the infliction of some slight, or insult, or deprivation, which could not but have some effect on the most insensible person, and must be acutely felt by one so sensitive as Nicholas. With these two reflections uppermost in her mind, Miss Squeers made the best of the matter to her friend by observing, that Mr. Nickleby was such an odd creature, and of such a violent temper, that she feared she should be obliged to give him up; and parted from her.

And here it may be remarked, that Miss Squeers having bestowed her affections (or whatever it might be that in the absence