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Poetry.

ON THE BLUFF.

O grandly flowing River!
O silver gliding River!
Thy springing willows shiver
In the sunset as of old,
Thy shiver in the silence
Of the willow-whitened islands,
While the sun-bars and the sand-bars
Fill air and wave with gold.

O gay, oblivious River!
O sunset kindled River!
Do you remember ever
The eyes and skies so blue,
On a summer day that alone here,
When we were all alone here,
And the blue eyes were too wise
To speak the love they knew!

O stern impassive River!
O still unanswering River!
The shivering willows quiver
As the night winds moan and rave,
From the past a voice is calling,
From Heaven a star is falling,
And dew swells in the bluebell
Above a hillside grave.

Interesting Tale.

THE ASSASSIN.

A Tale in Five Chapters.

CHAPTER I.

A DEED OF HORROR.

Before we enter upon these details we must state that our narrative commences in the summer of 1822.

The scene of the first chapter is a fine estate in the vicinity of the episcopal town of Arras, in France.

The time—evening.
It was, then, the hour of sunset. The heavens were irradiated with the departing glory of the god of day; not a breeze agitated the leaves of the trees; not a dark cloud sullied the expanse of purple and gold above.

Amidst the neighboring trees were seen the gables and antique pinnacles of the old mansion upon the estate above alluded to; and in another direction the gothic towers of the Cathedral of Arras lifted their mighty heads above the town which appeared to slumber at their feet.

In the midst of a verdant grove upon the estate, which belonged to a gentleman of the name of Durantal, two persons were conversing together. One was a handsome young man, of five-and-twenty, with one black eye and a pale countenance—the other, a lovely woman of thirty.

They walked slowly up and down in the shaded avenue; and their conversation was as excited as their manner was agitated.

You ask me if I love you, said the young man in an impassioned tone; how can I prove my affection? Alas! I was poor, wretched, and friendless when you took me by the hand; your charms obtained my love.

Oh, if I only thought that this passion of yours was permanent! exclaimed the lady—if I could buoy myself up with the hope that your heart would never change, I would make for you the sacrifice which you demand—I would quit the house of that brother who is so devotedly attached to me—I would accompany you whithersoever you go—I would be to you more than I ever was to my deceased husband!

Can I believe you? may I put faith in your words? cried the young man; and seizing the lady's hand, he pressed it to his lips.

You may believe me, replied the charming widow; I will dare the wrath of that brother who has sworn that if I ever contract a marriage with any one who is not my equal in birth and fortune, he will avenge upon us both that which he terms the dishonor of his name—that wrath—that vengeance will I dare for you!

It is not enough that you have snatched me from misery! cried the young man; you have given me your heart—and you promise me your hand!

All that I have in the world shall be yours, answered the widow. And oh! you must never forget the extent of the sacrifice which I thus make for your love. My brother Jacques Durantal, has remained single for my sake. When I lost my husband some six years ago, my brother declared that I should henceforth dwell with him—that I should be the mistress of his abode and his estate—and that he would abjure all thoughts of marriage in order that there might be no one to interfere with me, or stand between me and him. Ah, this was a noble sacrifice on the part of a brother so much older than myself, and who regarded me rather as his daughter than his sister!

And the sacrifice that you make for me is greater still; because—

Because it involves ingratitude towards my brother, added the lady, a dark cloud passing over her countenance.

Ah! your brother, Mr. Durantal, has commanded you not to think of the obscure and unknown young man whose affection your kindness has secured!

Yes; I do not conceal from you that my brother has suspected our attachment; and that he has sworn a terrible oath—Oh! it makes me shudder to think of it! for although in his calm hours he is all gentleness, goodness and kindness, in his moments of passion he is so violent that all around him fly from his presence in affright!

And it is the vengeance of such a man that you will care for me?

Yes; and if I mention all this, it is only to prove to you the extent of my love; for were you, in after years, to repent the union which you will have contracted, what would become of me?

Do you think me capable—

I know that I am older—much older than you; and when I will be an elderly woman you will be a young man still; and it is this which makes me tremble!

Reassure yourself—tranquillize yourself on this head! I love you—I adore you—and not for your beauty—but for your mental qualification, your noble heart, and your amiable disposition!

To-morrow, then—to-morrow, said the lady, casting a glance of the most languishing and devoted tenderness upon that handsome youth to whose arm she clung—to-morrow, she murmured, we will leave this neighborhood—we will depart together!

The young man caught that lovely and confident woman to his bosom, and kissed her rapturously.

At that moment a gentle rustling among the trees fell upon his ear.

Did you hear anything? he said, stepping hastily back, and glancing anxiously around him.

No—nothing, was the reply.

I could have made certain that there was some one—

We are doing wrong—are guilty of deep ingratitude, said the lady impressively; and it is conscience that thus creates alarm.

No—that is impossible! exclaimed the youth; we are not weak-minded—we are not children to be frightened at a shadow.

Oh! this ought to be a warning, said the lady, glancing towards her lover, with intense anxiety upon her handsome countenance. Let us part—let us separate for ever!

No, this is childish, cried the young man, evidently alarmed at the turn which the conversation had taken; and he accordingly exerted all his power to soothe and console her.

This task was not a hopeless one; and the lovers resumed their walk.

To-morrow, said the young man, I will make every necessary arrangement for our flight; and at one o'clock precisely a postchaise will be waiting in the road at the corner of this grove.

You may rely upon me, returned the lady, in a subdued tone.

And remember, dearest one, resumed the young man that never in after life, must you reproach me wholly and solely for any consequences which may attend this step; you must leave all and unite your fortunes to mine, by your own free will—or at once let us separate for ever.

I will never reproach you—I will never blame you for the evils that may be entailed upon you by this opposition to my brother's will.

You know with whom you link your fate—you are aware of my position before hand, proceeded the young man; you yourself have made me what I am—you are not ignorant of my present resources and my future prospects—how mean, how miserable they are!

When I married M. de Versac returned the lady, my own fortune was settled upon myself—I shall have enough to enable us to live happily, if not sumptuously; and then the proceeds of your pen—for, oh, I know you will become a great poet!

May God so will it! ejaculated the young man, enthusiastically; and at that moment he was absolutely radiant with angelic loveliness.

Yes—you shall be a great poet, continued his adoring mistress; and my hands shall place the laurels and twine the bays around thy brow.

None other ever shall! answered the ardent youth, pressing the fair hands of his companion. But—heavens! that noise again—we are watched! we are discovered!

There—there! cried the lady, pointing in a certain direction, while her countenance became ably pale.

The lover cast his eyes towards the spot thus indicated; and he plainly beheld the black cassock of a priest moving among the trees.

It is of no consequence, he said, after a moment's reflection. A priest would be the last person on the earth to take the trouble to watch us.

And the first to betray us, answered the lady, ready to sink with alarm.

The young man consoled her as well as he could; and smiles returned to her countenance.

The hour had now arrived when her absence was calculated to engender suspicion at the mansion; she accordingly bade her lover a tender farewell; and having renewed their appointment for one o'clock on the following day, they separated.

The lady proceeded hastily towards the mansion; the young man hurried in the opposite direction towards Arras.

Is it love—is it really love that I feel for this woman? he said to himself, as he wandered his way through the grove; or, is it gratitude, mingled with a selfish desire to possess her, that I may use her fortune for my own aggrandizement?

Yet she is very beautiful—and she loves me so tenderly and so well! A poor orphan—or worse, a foundling reared by the charity of a humble cottager and his wife—I had no hope of ever breaking these bonds which confined me to the sphere of the lower orders. I struggled—ah, how strenuously I struggled to rise above my condition, none can tell save myself: the knowledge which I now possess is at least one proof! Then came this good genius and raised me from the dust! She told me that I had talent—I expressed my gratitude to her in the language of poetry; she loved me—and I have believed until this moment that I have loved her in return! And now what doubts oppress me! If I love her tenderly and fondly, I can forgive myself for taking her away from the home where she dwells with a person who adores her; but if I love her not, I shall be acting as a coward—a villain—an execrable scoundrel! And yet to resign her—to assume once more a rustic garb—oh! that would be to abandon the path which leads to distinction—to reject the advances of fortune—to quit the shrine of poetry forever!

As he uttered these words he turned an angle in the pathway that led through the grove, and came in contact with an individual advancing from the opposite direction.

M. Durantal, he exclaimed.

Wretch—villain! cried that gentleman;—our meeting is most opportune; I have a blog and set to settle with you!

With me! cried the young man. Why what harm have I done you?

Harm! thundered the incensed brother; and you coolly ask me this? Does your countenance remain without a blush while you thus stand and regard me face to face?

M. Durantal, I have received too much kindness at your hands to be readily offended at anything you may address to me; but either a joke can be carried too far, or a supposition may become too outrageous—

Silence, wretch! Your miserable attempt to conceal your infamy beneath the cloak of a calmness which you cannot feel within, shall not deceive me. I have discovered your villainy—I have found out, when too late, the venous nature of the serpent which I have allowed to—

M. Durantal, this is past bearing. Of what do you accuse me?

And striving to invigilate my sister away from her home, and aspiring to a connection far above your reach. And now you shall give me satisfaction.

Do you dare to impute selfish and dishonorable motives to me? demanded the young man, scarcely able to restrain his alarm; for he was a coward and afraid of death.

I dared to state the truth, answered the outraged brother. This day I have discarded all. A note from you to the woman whom I still no longer call my sister, and which she doubtless dropped by accident, fell into my hand. Will you deny your own handwriting?

The young man was astounded, stupefied by this announcement. He made no reply, but glanced anxiously around him.

Ah! you meditate an escape from my vengeance! ejaculated the infuriated man. Do you think I have been seeking for you the whole of the afternoon to suffer you to depart scathless, when I have the good fortune at length to encounter you? No, villain! Here—here upon this spot, and at this moment—shall you render me satisfaction!

With these words he drew a pair of pistols from his pocket, and advancing to the young man, said, in a hoarse and hollow tone,—they are both loaded—choose which you prefer.

The young man started back in dismay. A duel—and without witnesses, he exclaimed. The survivor would be accused of murder.

True—true said M. Durantal; then he placed the pistols upon the ground, tore a leaf from his memorandum book, and wrote upon it with pencil. There, he added, passing the paper to his foe, copy that, and sign your name.

The young man received the leaf mechanically, and read these words:

Tired of my life, I have adopted the only means to relieve myself of a burden that has become intolerable. Let no one be accused of my assassination.

The young man copied the words, signed the paper, and then put it into his pocket.

M. Durantal followed this example. He then presented the pistols once more to his foe and said, choose!

The youth took it.

Durantal was at that moment standing within a yard of him.

All evil mustered in the bosom of that young man; he trembled at the idea of death; and he saw but one means of avoiding the duel.

Quick as thought he raised the pistol, and fired it point blank at his opponent.

M. Durantal fell dead.

At that moment a violent rustling of the bushes was heard close by, and an elderly man, attired in the black garb of a priest, rushed forth from the grove.

Murderer! he exclaimed, hastening towards the young man, whom he caught violently by the arm.

The assassin hesitated what to do; but his indignation, lasted only for a moment. Furi—ously dashing the priest aside, he bounded into the grove with the speed of the wind, and disappeared.

CHAPTER II.

The scene now changes to Paris; and the reader will have the kindness to suppose that a year has flown since the incidents which occupied the last chapter.

There still exists in the Rue Neuve des Mathurins a large house looking upon the street, with a garden behind it, and another large house at the extremity of this garden.

Thus the back windows of the first mentioned house commanded a view of the front of the other.

The first house was inhabited by M. de Morency; the latter by M. Chamblé.

M. de Morency (who called himself the Count de Morency, but with no very great right) was a man of about sixty. He was a furious partisan of the Bourbons, and received at the epoch of the indemnification, after the fall of Napoleon, a sum equal to sixteen thousand pounds sterling, as an indemnity for a fortune which he proved to have lost—but which he had never had to lose! He was how the chief editor of a red hot monarchist and anti-parliamentary journal, and was much esteemed by the aristocracy and clergy.

M. de Morency was married to a very beautiful woman. But who was his wife, and whence did she come? No one knew. Some said she was a German; but one of M. de Morency's friends remarked that Madame Morency spoke French admirably but German not at all. Nevertheless, as the lady was very handsome, very amiable, and very hospitable, no attention was paid to her ignorance of the maternal tongue.

At the period when we introduce Madame de Morency to the reader, she was thirty-nine years of age, and endowed with that enlivening point which invests women at that time of life with that freshness which supplies the place of youth. Moreover, she had beautiful teeth, fine hair, handsome eyes, and feet and hands small to a fault. She had been married to M. de Morency nineteen years.

The chief house was occupied by a Monsieur Chamblé. This M. Chamblé was a young man whose age appeared to be about three or four, and twenty. He had just published a poem, which had experienced great success. He was tall, handsome and well formed; but his countenance was somewhat downcast, and wore an expression which his friends called pleasantly melancholy, and his enemies ominously sombre.

Pierre Chamblé was married; and his wife was the muse who inspired all the love poems in his volume. Laura was a few years older than her husband. She was of a determined and proud disposition, and exercised an entire influence over Pierre Chamblé; for he himself was irresolute, and in many instances, even weak-minded. He could utter the most sublime thoughts in his poems, but he was incapable of adopting them as the ruling maxims of his life.

It was about two months after the publication of his book that Chamblé took up his abode in the Rue Neuve des Mathurins; and it was only a fortnight after his arrival at that dwelling that the following scene took place at the residence of M. de Morency.

It was eight o'clock in the evening and Madame de Morency was reading a novel in the parlor of her abode; M. de Morency was lounging upon the sofa. A servant entered and announced the Abbé. This ecclesiastic was a Jesuit, and the proprietor of the journal of which M. de Morency was the editor. He was a man of sixty, and had once been handsome; but the influence of a stormy life had bowed him down, and altered his countenance.

The Abbé seated himself next to M. de Morency (who had now risen to sitting posture), and handing him a book, said, have you read this volume?

The editor replied in the negative.

And yet I require an article in favor of it in tomorrow's journal.

M. de Morency took the volume, and glancing over it, while the Abbé continued thus:—You must understand my object. The gentleman who manages our literary department is about to leave us as you well know. The

author of this vol. of poems is the man whom I should desire to replace him; for his work gives evidence of immense talent. You must give him an excellent review, to which you will sign your name; he will call upon you to thank you; you can then find some excuse to send him to me. I will arrange the rest.

Very good, said M. de Morency; and he seated himself at the table to write the critique. 'The Aurora Borealis,' he continued speaking to himself as he wrote down the title of the volume. By Pierre Chamblé.

With these words he went on writing like a perfect automaton, re-writing a book of which he had not read a dozen lines, with ease and haste.

Madame de Morency had paid no attention to what passed between her husband and the Abbé, until the latter read the title of the work. She then laid aside her novel and took up the volume of poems.

This is very strange, said she. The author of these poems is the occupant of the house at the other extremity of the garden.

Is he a young man? demanded the Abbé. About three or four and twenty.

Married?

I believe so. But is there real merit in the book?

The Abbé regarded Madame de Morency attentively; but he cast down his eyes the moment she glanced towards him, and answered affirmatively with tone and manner of a man who had neither seen nor suspected anything.

M. de Morency terminated his article, which he handed to the Abbé, who perused it, while Madame de Morency thus mused within herself:—M. Chamblé must call to thank my husband for his critique; and I shall have an opportunity of obtaining a close view of that handsome young man, with fine large black eyes, and who has gazed at me so long and so attentively at times, when I have been walking in the garden.

The Abbé Norton withdrew; M. de Morency returned to his lounging position upon the sofa; and Madame de Morency affected to resume her occupation of reading, while in reality she was the prey to profound emotions. And those emotions were produced by the trivial incident just related.

CHAPTER III.

THE VISIT—THE PRIEST.

The famous article appeared; but several days passed ere M. Chamblé learnt that the journal, in which it was published, had noticed his book. At length, however, Chamblé's publisher showed him the critique, and the young poet hastened home to impart the good news to his wife. Laura perused the article, and when she reached the termination where the name of M. de Morency appeared, exclaimed—But this writer who has praised you so highly is a man of keen perception, and possessed of a due appreciation of merit!

The M. de Morency who has written that article is our neighbor, answered Pierre.

Our neighbor! ejaculated Laura.

Yes, that is his residence in the adjoining garden.

And that lady whom I have seen sometimes in the garden, coiffured Madame Chamblé, must be Madame de Morency.

You are right, said her husband. They have been married nineteen years and have no children.

Chamblé went out, and his wife mused thus within herself:—How came he to know all these particulars? He must have made enquiries. And if so, why? With what aim?

For what object?

A vague and undefined suspicion had suddenly found refuge in the breast of Laura. But she could not command this impression, although she endeavored to banish it.

In the meantime Chamblé had been introduced into the drawing room of his neighbor's abode. He was received with a courtesy and kindness which might have equally flattered his vanity as an author or a handsome young man. M. de Morency paid him the highest compliments upon his poems, and Madame de Morency charmed him with the most tender glances. Chamblé's joy was at its height when M. de Morency announced to him that the Abbé Norton desired to form his acquaintance.

To be continued.

John Billings says in his "Lectures"—Rate originally came from Norway and nobody would have cared if they had originally staid there. A lady friend remarked that they still show their gnaw-away origin.

Although poets in all ages have sung the praises of May, June is in reality, the most pleasant month of the year. The day reaches its full length; flowers appear in their richest bloom; birds are in song; earth, air, and water teem with life, and all nature is gay and joyous.

The foundation of domestic happiness is faith in the virtue of woman. The foundation of political happiness is faith in the integrity of man. The foundation of all happiness, temporal and eternal, is faith in the goodness, the righteousness, the mercy and the love of God.