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Poetry.

THERE'S NOTHING IN VAIN.

BY ELIZA COOK.

Oh! prize not the essence of beauty alone,
And disdain not the weak and the mean in our way,
For the world is an empire, the Arcities town,
Where the wheels of least might turn the larger in play
We love the late vail, with bloom in the strain,
We sing of green hills, of the grape and the grain:
But be sure the Creator did well when he made
The dark desert and marais for there's nothing in vain.
We may question the fox us that lurks in the bush,
And the snake, flinging arrows of death from his eye:
But remember they came from the Infinite Hand,
And shall man, in his littleness, dare to ask why?
Oh! let us speak of the "useless" or "idle";
They may seem so to us, but he slow to arraign:
From the savage wolf's cry to the happy child's smile,
From the mite to the mammoth, there's nothing in vain.
There's a mission, no doubt, for the worm in the dust,
As there is for the charger with nostrils of pride
The stoat and the owl have their places assigned,
And the agents are needed, for that has supplied.
Oh! could we but trace the great meaning of all,
And what delicate link forms the ponderous chain,
From the dew-drops that rise to the star-drops that fall,
We should see but one purpose, and nothing in vain.

SONGS OF THE FLOWER SPIRITS.

VIOLETS.

The skies are weeping to behold us,
Hark, how the zephyrs call!
Feel how the sunbeams yearn to fold us,
Hear the sweet dew-drops fall!
We are not dead, but are sleeping late
On our mother's breast below,
Without us the Spring seems desolate,
She loveth her violets so.
Wake, asleep, wake! for the moss is green,
And our herald-leaves have spread
Up to the day, and the young bee-queen
Is singing songs near by.

PRIMROSES.

Well may the pretty stars look down,
And wonder to see us here,
As if we had dropped from their purple crown,
To spangle the earth's green sphere:
But we are pale by their burning ray—
We wear not their gorgeous hue—
Pale with the knowledge of a sick decay,
And pale with our labours, too:
For long we wrestled with storm and breeze,
And the glad dawn looked on our eyes,
And taught us the might of those forest trees,
The glory of yonder skies.

Literature.

THE MAIDEN'S CHOICE.

A TALK OF FILIAL AFFECTION.

Alice Dempster was what is called a pretty, comely girl. She was not beautiful; but she still could have scarcely passed along the streets—even in England, where beauty is perhaps less rare than in any country—without being noticed. She was the daughter of a poor widow, in a village in Devonshire—a picturesque and charming county.

Mrs. Dempster had been the wife of a sailor, who, out of his earnings, had bought a cottage in his native hamlet, in which his widow resided after his death. She had little else save this cottage, if we except her daughter, who was indeed a treasure of affection and love. But then, Alice was one of those frail and delicate beings who give pain while they do pleasure to a parent's heart. From about twelve to eighteen, her mother was her devoted nurse. Never was pale face, or hectic cough, or meagre form, or constant languor,

watched with more intense anxiety by a parent's eye; it seemed never off the young girl's face.

Mrs. Dempster had a lodger, and he came off rather badly; but he never grumbled or complained; he would, on the contrary, sit with the poor widow, and comfort her under her affliction, with a rude kindness of manner which soon won her heart.

John Morrison was a railway clerk, with a small salary, at a station about a mile off. He had lived with Mrs. Dempster for six years, and had mainly directed the education of little Alice. Of a studious and serious man of thought, he spent all his leisure hours in reading.

Mrs. Dempster had sent Alice to school when a more child; but a village education establishment is not usually the place to learn much in, and that of Dame Potter was not an exception. But John Morrison took a fancy to the little Alice, and, finding her fond of study and her book, took great pains with her.

About the age of eighteen, Alice outgrew her ailments. Her cheeks filled out; her eyes became lustrous and clear; her cheeks were rosy and blooming; but Mrs. Dempster began to feel the effects of her long vigils and constant watching. She moved about with the tread of an old woman; her appetite began to fail her, and, before three months, a cozy arm-chair, in the bright sun, by an open window, was the usual place of the mother; while Alice bustled about, did the work of the house, and attend to the invalid.

Mrs. Dempster had no particular illness; she was simply worn out with anxiety and fatigue. But if she suffered, she had also her reward, for Alice was now her devoted nurse.

But Alice was eighteen, and pretty, I have said; and the man made the discovery as well as her mother. John Morrison, a sedate and grave young man of eight-and-twenty, himself remarked it to Mrs. Dempster, as did soon many others.

In the neighborhood were several extensive farms, and, amongst others, one belonging to Mr. Clifton. Mr. Clifton was very rich, and had two sons, Walter and Edward. Walter was a very handsome, lively, pleasant fellow, full of generous impulses, but somewhat too fond of riotous pleasures, of the bottle, and of cards. With plenty of money at his disposal, he was the centre of a group of frolickers that were on many occasions the alarm of the whole country, and Walter Clifton was the wildest of the lot. It is true that he was generous; if he broke a head or damaged a field, he paid the expense; and if he broke a heart, he was sorry for it.

One hot summer's day, Alice was sitting sewing by her mother's side; the window was open, and the warm air poured in upon the face of the invalid. Her eyes were pleasantly fixed on the honey-suckle, jasmine and clematis, that twined round the window, and the moss trees that filled the strip of garden before the house, but more pleasantly still on

the innocent, sweet face of her child. Suddenly two horsemen pulled up before the window, they had often been noticed before, but this was the first time they had ever halted.

"Mrs. Dempster," said a dark hand-some young man, while the other, a fair youth, held back and blushed, "we have come up to ask for a drink of milk, or beer, or any thing you can give us. It is a long time since we have drunk any thing in your house, but it will be with pleasure we shall receive the custom."

"Welcome, welcome, Master Clifton," replied Mrs. Dempster, without rising; "it is a long time since you used to come and listen to my poor husband's stories, and drink his goat's milk."

"A long time; when your daughter Alice, there, was six years old," replied Clifton, "and Ned and I were sprigs. Poor Mr. Dempster, we missed him very much when we came home from school."

"He often talked of you when he came home from his voyages," said Mrs. Dempster as the young men were shown in by Alice.

"I suppose you have forgotten us," continued Walter, addressing Alice, by whom he had sat down.

"No," exclaimed the young girl, blushing; "I have forgotten neither of my old friends—Wally nor Ned."

Meanwhile Alice was bustling about, pre- and cheese, to which the gentlemen did ample justice. This done, they remained an hour in conversation; Alice chiefly addressing herself to Alice, Edward to the mother.

From that day, Walter was a regular, Edward an occasional visitor. Walter soon allowed his admiration of Alice to peep forth; he lost no opportunity of speaking with his eyes, and soon began to whisper words of affection. Alice listened with downcast looks, but made scarcely any reply.

After about a month, Mrs. Dempster asked him to take tea and spend the evening. She perceived the dawning passion which was rising on both sides; and as she saw no disproportion, except in fortune, between a rich farmer and a merchant captain's daughter, she was inclined to foster the feeling for her child's sake.

John Morrison was to be of the party; Mrs. Dempster had confided to him her secret, and, after one or two objections to the character of the young man, he consented to be present. It was about an hour before tea time when he came to this resolution; and as soon as he had done so, he went into the garden.

John Morrison was a pale, good looking man, of moderate stature. He had no pretensions to be handsome, but no one would have looked at him without noticing his marked and speaking countenance—to admire, not its beauty, but its power and intellect. But why is he now so overcast and sad? Let us listen, and we may hear.

"And is it for this I have trained her up? Is it for this I have devoted my existence to her for seven years—for, in the girl I saw the dawning woman—to be the victim of this