

crept over the land—the last night of his earthly pilgrimage: but if the shades of death were upon the body, the starlight of the intellect—the meteoric soul—gleamed out in undiminished brilliance. His physician lay on a neighbouring couch, and Mirabeau spoke with wondrous continuity till the morning; his words pouring forth too rapidly and too impetuously, in an unbroken fire-flood, as in the Assembly in his days of strength. Slowly also the curtains of night were in their turn drawn aside, and daylight began to dawn upon the world. His last day on earth! Think what lies in that! the past curling back like an indistinct and confused battle-picture, the present wavering like an empty vapor, and before, the dim immensity of the unknown To-Come looming up in hazy distance; unknown and dubious to the best of us Christians: but alas! doubly so to the dying Mirabeau; for he properly had no belief whatever, and in the world to come he knew not the consoling sublimity of a universal tribunal and an everlasting reward: but he looked forward unto death simply as a rest and an annihilation. And it is this that renders his death all the more heroic; for it is comparatively easy to die when death is regarded as the portal to a happier kingdom; but when an ignoble rest is the highest expectation, it is not so easy.

His first act on this last day was one of humane consideration. The wife of a faithful retainer, named Legrain, had scarcely ever left his chamber since his illness, although her son was ill of a fever, and she herself very far advanced in pregnancy; and scarcely had the day dawned ere Mirabeau addressed her thus:—

“Henrietta, you are a good creature. You are about to have a child, and are risking the life of another, and yet you never quit me. You owe yourself to your family; go, therefore, I desire it.”

As soon as day had broken thoroughly, the windows were flung open, and the mild spring breeze stole in and fanned his feverish temples.

“My friend,” he said to Cabanis, “I shall die to-day. When one is in that situation, there remains but one thing more to do; and that is to perfume me, to crown me with flowers, to environ me with music, so that I may enter sweetly into that slumber wherefrom there is no awaking.”

His mention of flowers was one of the ruling passions asserting itself at the hour of death. In his little garden he had many trees and shrubs then greenly verdant, and here and there, in tuft or border, the earlier flowers were bursting into bud, and the later ones peeping from the brown earth; and that his eye might behold them once again, they wheeled his bed to the opened window, and he looked forth into the expanse of heaven. Just then, as though to greet him, the round and lustrous sun emerged from behind the clouds, and rayed forth upon him; and as he basked in the beams, and gazed upon dazzled and delighted, to its broad circle, he cried:—

“If that is not God, it is at the least his cousin-german!”

He then informed Cabanis that he felt he should not live many hours, and begged him to promise not to leave him till his death; and when in promising, Cabanis burst into tears, he said, “No weakness, unworthy yourself and me! This is a moment when we ought to know how to make the most of each other. Pledge me your word that you will not make me suffer useless pain. I wish to be able to enjoy, without draw-backs, the presence of all dear to me.”

He then had de Lamarck brought to him, and having placed him on one side of him on his bed, and Cabanis on the other, for three-quarters of an hour he spoke to them of private and public affairs; “gliding rapidly over the former, but dwelling upon the latter:” in mentioning which he uttered his memorable words—

“*I carry in my heart the dirge of the monarchy, the ruins thereof will be the prey of the factious.*”

Almost immediately after this he lost his power of speech, in which state he lay for an hour, apparently devoid of pain; but at about eight, the *coup-de-grâce* of death was being given: his body convulsed and writhed as though in frightful and agonizing pain, and in dumb torture he signed for drink; water, wine, lemonade, jelly, were offered, but refusing them all, he signed again for paper; which being given, in hot rapidity he scrawled his wants and wishes in the words TO SLEEP! (*dormir.*) Then, when that wish was not complied with, he wrote more at length, praying, for common humanity's sake, that they would give him opium. Just at that time, Dr. Petit arrived, and decided upon giving him a composing draught; and the prescription was immediately dispatched to the nearest druggist. Meanwhile his aggravated death-pangs had burst the very chains of death, and he recovered speech, to give a reproach to his friend.

“The doctors, the doctors!” he cried.—“Were not you (to Cabanis) my doctor, and my friend? Have you not promised me that I should be spared the anguish of a death like this? Do you wish me to die regretting having given you my confidence?”

Having said which, he sank into a kind of asphyxia, and lay motionless, and to all appearance insensible; but cannon firing in the distance aroused him, and he said, in a dreamy surpris:—

“*Are those already the Achilles' funeral?*”

And immediately after, as the chimes rang half-past eight, he opened his eyes slowly, and gazing heavenward, died!

So fails, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,
All that this world is proud of. From their spheres
The stars of human glory are cast down,
Perish the greatness and the pride of kings!

He was forty-two years and twenty days old; and as he lay there a corpse, the beholders remarked that—“Except one single trace of physical suffering, one perceives with emotion the most noble calm, and the sweetest smile upon that face, which seemed enwrapped in a living sleep, and occupied with an agreeable dream.”

So closes the most wonderful death-bed scene whereof we yet have annals: we call it wonderful; and not beautiful, and yet we would not have had it otherwise, for it is altogether in keeping with the man, and completes the character.

LOVE.—Love throws a magic veil over all things; and, seen by the softening influence of affection, tyranny is but superiority, and coldness self-control. God's blessing on the woman's heart! for it is a fearfully beautiful thing; so unselfish, so devoted, so patient, so forbearing, and so loving, like a rill of the clearest water which fertilises a whole plain, nourishing giant trees and young flowers together, giving all life and loveliness heedless of itself, save serene in its own deep joy. Let women be as nature made them, and then Olympus itself holds no more glorious beings than they. Let them be simple, natural, and loving, and they pass through the cycle of their virtues, for all others depend on these.