

THE HAPPIEST TIME.

BY M. A. BROWNE.

When are we happiest? When the light of morn
Wakes the young roses from their crimson rest;
When cheerful sounds upon the fresh wind borne,
Tell man resumes his work with blither zest;
While the bright waters leap from rock to glen:
Are we the happiest then?

Alas, those roses! they will fade away,
And thunder-tempests will deform the sky;
And summer-heats bid the spring buds decay,
And the clear sparkling fountain may be dry;
And nothing beautiful adorn the scene,
To tell what it hath been.

When are we happiest? In the crowded hall,
When fortune smiles, and flatterers bend the knee?
How soon, how very soon, such pleasures fall!
How fast must falsehood's rainbow colouring flee!
It's poison flow'rets brave the sting of care:
We are not happy there.

Are we the happiest when the evening hearth
Is circled with its crown of living flowers;
When goeth round the laugh of heartless mirth,
And when affection from her bright urn showers
Her richest balm on the dilating heart?
Bliss! is it there thou art?

Oh, no! not there. It would be happiness
Almost like heaven's, if it might always be;
Those brows without one shading of distress,
And wanting nothing but eternity;
But they are things of earth and pass away—
They must, they must decay!

Those voices must grow tremulous with years;
Those smiling brows must wear a tinge of gloom;
Those sparkling eyes be quenched in bitter tears,
And, at the last, close darkly in the tomb;
If happiness depends on them alone,
How quickly is it gone!

When are we happiest then? O, when resigned
To whatsoever our cup of life may brim;
When we can know ourselves but weak and blind,
Creatures of earth; and trust alone in Him
Who giveth, in his mercy, joy or pain:
Oh! we are happiest then.

From the Lady's Book.

THE SMUGGLER'S DAUGHTER.*

BY J. S. HOUGHTON.

Time passed on and nothing was heard of Ricardo. De Vere gradually forgot his fears, and occasionally appeared in public with his beautiful wife, and introduced her to that society which she was so well fitted to enjoy and adorn. Wherever they appeared, at ball or party, or in the social circle, their society was courted, and Francesca, by her native vivacity and grace, reigned "the bright particular star" of the hour. De Vere was alike dazzled and surprised by these attentions. He was too modest to believe he deserved them, and possessed too much firmness and sagacity to be deceived into extravagance by these fashionable flatteries. His success in his occupation was equally gratifying. His ready talents, and vigorous style of composition, soon attracted notice, and he was offered the sub-editorship of the journal on which he had been employed, which he immediately accepted. This proved a very lucrative situation, and raised him greatly in the estimation of his friends and acquaintance. He was now on the broad road to prosperity and honour.

One evening, soon after this change in his business, which of course brought him more directly before the public, De Vere appeared at the theatre with Francesca, to witness the performance of a new celebrated opera, which required a critical notice. On taking his seat he observed that a person in the next box, who was apparently attempting to conceal his own features, eyed him very sharply, and then retired. De Vere mentioned this incident to Francesca, who was about to reply, when the overture ceased, the curtain rose, and the circumstance was forgotten.

The new play was eminently successful. The scenery was magnificent beyond description—the actors performed their parts admirably—the music and singing introduced were excellent—the curtain fell amidst thunders of applause, and the audience retired highly delighted with the entertainment. A performance of this character combines the highest efforts of poetry and painting, of music and eloquence. De Vere was happily fitted, by nature and education to enjoy and appreciate these efforts, and during the progress of the piece, he frequently joined in the applause with the utmost enthusiasm. He left the theatre with the mass, and pursued his way, by the dim light of the expiring lamps, to his humble lodgings. He had not yet left this place, for fear of discovery, although his income was amply sufficient to support a house worthy of his station. Just as he reached the corner of the obscure lane, by which he entered his dwelling, a man armed with a stout club sprung from the thick darkness, and with a single blow felled him to the earth. Francesca uttered a shriek and leaped to the opposite side of the lane. Her cries alarmed the

city watch, and three of them immediately came to her assistance. The villain, perceiving his danger, groped about in search of his victim, gave him another blow and disappeared. De Vere was immediately taken to his lodgings where his wounds were examined by a surgeon. He was found to be much bruised, but not dangerously injured. He was soon able to sit up, and in a few days pushed his profession as usual.

This incident gave rise to much fearful speculation. De Vere had little doubt but that the villain who attacked him was Ricardo or one of his emissaries. The object of the attack could not have been plunder, for there was no demand made, nor any attempt to rifle his pockets. When the watchmen appeared, instead of making his escape, the villain stopped, at the hazard of his life, to give his victim another blow. The vengeance of the Spaniard undoubtedly followed in his path, and he feared that he should yet fall a victim to his bloody purpose.

De Vere therefore immediately procured a suite of apartments in a more public and eligible part of the city, presuming that an assassin would not be so likely to assail him, where thousands were constantly passing, as in the dark and unfrequented lane where he first resided. He rarely ventured abroad in the evening without the protection of a friend, and never without being suitably armed. No further attack was made, however, and the circumstance of the first assault gradually died away upon his mind, or were ranked with the thousand singular affairs that daily occur in that great commercial city.

At this time an incident occurred, which opened upon De Vere in still bolder colours, the fiendish character of Ricardo, and in its consequences brought the eventful history of that monster to a close, unveiled a dark chain of events, and rendered the life of our hero and his amiable and accomplished partner peaceful and happy.

"Francesca!" exclaimed De Vere, as he entered the apartment where his wife was sitting, his countenance blanched with fear, "Francesca, the paper which I hold in my hand contains bad news—Ricardo or his confederates are still I fear at their cursed work—your father has been arrested as a smuggler!"

"My father!" cried Francesca, catching the paper in her hands, and bending eagerly over its contents.

"Yes—arrested, imprisoned, and awaiting his trial. The old man, it is evident, was betrayed—he will die beneath the blow."

Francesca raised her eyes from the paper, and looked steadfastly at Frederick, while her lips quivered, and her whole frame trembled with emotion.

"He was betrayed, beyond all doubt," continued Frederick, pacing the apartment, "and he will die beneath the blow, unless some kind friend can snatch him from the power of the Spanish fiend."

"Will not justice and the laws save him?"

"I fear not—justice may be blinded."

It was no time to waste words. The trial of old Marlow came on in a few days. Frederick decided upon his measures promptly.

"I will go," said he, "I will go and plead his cause myself. I will unveil the character of his accusers and their witnesses—I will save him from their secret arts, and trust to Providence for protection!"

It was a noble resolution, and characteristic of the speaker. Francesca made no reply. She approved her husband's spirit, but dreaded its consequences. De Vere was resolute. He prepared for the journey that very day, and the following morning, leaving his wife in the family of an intimate acquaintance, and inwardly recommending her to the protection of Heaven, started on his perilous enterprise.

A week passed away, and no tidings of her absent husband reached Francesca. He promised to write, and inform her of the progress of the trial; but no letters arrived. Were they intercepted? Or had he been murdered on his journey? The worst was apprehended.

It was evening. Francesca and a little group of friends were seated in the family parlor, earnestly discussing the atrocities of Ricardo, and the probable fate of De Vere. A loud rap was heard at the door.

"Hark!" exclaimed Francesca, rising from her chair.

A servant answered the call, and in a few minutes returned with a note addressed to Francesca. She hastily broke the seal and read as follows:

"Dearest—Your father is safe. The trial has terminated in his favour. I shall be detained here a few weeks adjusting his affairs, when we shall both return to New York. I shall be happy to have you join us, and visit once more the scene of your early days. Danger is passed. Come, and you shall know all. A private carriage is the best conveyance. Ask Ellen to bear you company. Yours, affectionately. F. DE VERE."

The contents of this letter brought welcome relief to the troubled mind of Francesca. As soon as its import was made known, a murmur of satisfaction burst from the little assembly of friends present, who awaited the announcement in breathless silence. Francesca was happy—and she lost no time in complying with the request of her husband. A carriage and driver were obtained, and with her friend Ellen, who received the proposal with

pleasure, she left the city full of anticipation, to join her husband, to meet her kind but injured father, and to visit those rude scenes which early associations and simple happiness had endeared to her heart.

The next day after her departure, De Vere arrived in the city, with her father, and unconscious of her absence, hastened to meet her embrace, and to make her acquainted with the happy issue of his efforts. When informed that she had gone to meet him, at his own request, (as she supposed) he sunk into a chair, speechless. The history of the villainous stratagem by which she was decoyed from home—the letter, which it is needless to say was a forgery—overwhelmed him with astonishment and the deepest concern for her welfare. This was the unkindest cut of all.

But his usual energy and self-possession soon returned, and calling a post-chaise to the door, he sprung into it, and pursued the route to New Jersey, which Francesca had probably taken, determined, if possible, by relays of horses, and constant driving, to overtake her, or at least to learn something of her fate.

This task he soon accomplished—too soon, alas! for his own peace. On the evening of the first day he stopped at an obscure public house, to make inquiries respecting Francesca and her attendants. A crowd of people, collected in the traveller's room, were engaged in earnest and noisy conversation about an outrage recently committed in those parts. The hot blood darted through his veins, as De Vere inquired of the landlord what the outrage spoke of. It was a high-way robbery; a carriage containing two ladies had been attacked the previous evening, a few miles from that place; every thing of value was taken, and the ladies forced from the carriage and carried, no one knew whither! The driver, who escaped with a slight wound, was then in the house. He was called, at De Vere's request, and confirmed the melancholy story. Francesca and Ellen had fallen victims to the hellish arts of the Spaniard! Thwarted in love—disappointed in his attempts upon the life of his rival—cheated of revenge in the case of the father—and now, with the dear object of all his toils, the precious prize for which he had laboured so long and so desperately, fairly in his power, what would not Ricardo attempt! The thought was distraction.

But De Vere had seen too much of misfortune, to be utterly disheartened at her approach, even in this fearful shape. Indeed, adversity seemed to inspire him with new energy. On the present occasion he followed Ricardo and his unprincipled crew to their den of infamy with a suddenness that the monster little expected.

As soon as the crowd at the inn understood that De Vere was the husband of one of the ladies carried off by the confederates of the famous smuggler, they all, with one accord, begged to be led in pursuit of the villains. Warrants for their apprehension were issued by a neighbouring justice, the services of several officers were obtained, carriages were provided, and the party, which was constantly increasing, was soon ready to start. Popular indignation was excited to the highest point. Every body, far and near, knew and feared or despised the villain Ricardo, and they longed to revenge the wrongs he had committed.

Just as De Vere was about to step into his carriage with an officer, a tall, swarthy looking man, in a coarse fisherman's dress, tapped him upon the shoulder, and begged to whisper a word with him.

"I am a ruined, desperate man," said he, in a low sorrowful tone, "and I seek revenge. Take me with you—I can lead you to the den you seek. The monster is now there, and his death shall soon end a life of infamy and crime, without a parallel. Lead on—lead on."

De Vere was not reluctant to receive the assistance of an old confederate of the Spanish villain, although inclined to believe that he might still be in the service of that arch enemy. This was no time for inquiry, however, and they mounted the carriage together. The subject was mentioned to the officer of the law, who thought best to make the most of the assistance offered, if the man should prove honest, but if otherwise, to arrest him as an accomplice. The word was then given, and the party started off amidst the cheers of a crowd of spectators.

The retreat which the robbers had probably chosen, if they were the agents of Ricardo, was suspected by many. But few, unless assisted by a strong force, as on the present occasion, would have dared to approach it, upon such an errand. Death to invaders, was the fearful motto of the wretched men who followed the fortunes of the Spaniard. Their guide led the way, and about midnight announced, that they were in the vicinity of the "Smuggler's Cave." It was a dismal place. On one side, a range of unbroken hills, covered with tall vines and rocky precipices extended as far as the eye could reach. On the other, a barren heath with here and there a bush or bunch of moss, spread itself to the very verge of the ocean. At the entrance of a dark ravine which it was impossible to pass with carriages, the party halted, and leaving their horses in the care of a select body of men, who possessed stout hearts and strong arms, they followed their guide, with silence and caution along a rugged and winding pathway to the summit of the nearest hill. The dim twinkling of a light, seen at intervals through the trees of the forest, assured them that the den of the smugglers was not entirely desolate.