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THE OLD VAGRANT.

WEARY and old, here let me die—
Here, in this ditch—I care not how.
"He's drunk!" the passing crowd may cry;
I do not want their pity now;
'Tis so, save when, with shudd'ring glance
And scarce a pause, their sons are thrown,
Why stop to lose the play, the dance?
Pass on! for I can die alone.

Yes, here to Time I yield at last,
Since hunger can no longer kill.
I once did hope, when youth was past,
My age some shelter'd nook might fill;
But in no Refuge was there room,
So many wretches houseless roam!
The streets through life have been my doom;
So, after all, I die at home.

When young, to those who earned their bread
"Teach me your trade," I used to say.
"We scarce find work ourselves," they said;
"Go beg, my lad"—and turned away.
Ye rich, who bade me work, nor saw
How hard I strove, ye gave, 'tis true,
My crust of bread, my couch of straw;
I dare not lay my curse on you.

I might have robbed—I begged instead;
The greatest theft I can recall
Was but an apple o'er my head
That overhung some garden wall.
Yet want has such an evil look
That into jail I oft was thrown;
The only wealth I had they took:
At least the sunshine was my own.

If we, indeed, mere vermin are,
'Twere wise to crush us ere we sting;
If men, oh! teach us—wiser far—
How from our lives some good may spring.
Worn that I am, had human aid
Or guidance reached me, even I
Might here have labored, loved, and prayed,
Where now I leave my curse, and die.

THE FRIENDS.

Forget thee! in the banquet halls,
Go ask my fellow-men;
Or ask the tear that secret falls,
If I forget thee then.

AT a lively pleasant party, toward the close of the Fall of 18—, I was introduced to Charles N——. It was at the house of an intimate friend of mine, some little distance out of town. We had a ball in the evening, and I recollect were uncommonly gay. I never was in better spirits than in moving through a cotilion with the pretty Miss T——; we both betrayed our ignorance of one part of the figure. There is something very agreeable, at times, in these mutual mistakes. When we had sat down after the first cotilion, my wandering attention was arrested by a young gentleman whose entrance I had not observed. He was apparently about twenty-seven years of age; his figure was thin, but fine; his features were regular; his eye dark and expressive; and but for the gloom that rested on his pale countenace when I first beheld him, I should have called him eminently handsome. But in that gloom there was so much of mental suffering, and so much of absolute wretchedness—such an absence of all hope, and such a shade of settled despair—that you became uneasy while you contemplated it, and turned away as from an inspirer of painful thoughts. I felt the melancholy to be contagious, and began to chat and laugh with a group near me to draw off my attention from that gloomy brow and compressed and sunken lip; but in vain. My eyes involuntary returned, as under the influence of fascination; and even while I talked with some appearance of earnestness to the lady who sat next to me, I could not avoid giving a stealthy glance at the young stranger. There he sat as I first remarked him—near a window, and somewhat retired from the rest of the company; his head resting on his hand, which he now and then passed through his rich, dark hair—from habit, as it were, for he was evidently in a revery, far from the present scene and its hilarity. The bright eyes of beautiful women, sparkling with animation and joyous excitement, attracted him not. The soft, half wanton whisper, and the louder tone of festal mirth, were equally unheeded. A lady was called upon to entertain the company with music. I was delighted to see her sit down to the harp—the loveliest of instruments—it shows off a fine voice and a fine arm so well. She commenced a sweet and plaintive air. It was an old-fashioned strain that I was fond of when a boy. The deep swell of the music appeared to have a powerful effect upon the young stranger. He started from his revery, roused himself, and seemed determined to make up for his former unsociability by striving to be agreeable. I never saw a more sudden change in an individual. I would scarcely have recognized him, so altered was his countenance and manner. He began a gay conversation with a smiling, rosy-lipped little girl he had not before condescended to notice; offered her his arm, and they joined a group around the fair harper. I observed him. It appeared to me that his gayety was unnatural, unhealthy, forced. It was not the free flow of heartfelt joy. Probably it appeared the more so to me from contrasting it with the gloomy expression that first caught my notice. His deportment was now elegant and graceful; and his attentions were evidently by no means unacceptable to the lovely creature who was hanging on his arm, nor to those who joined her for a share of the handsome young gentleman's conversation. This person had deeply interested me, and when the music was over I desired my friend to introduce me. He immediately complied; and the stranger was introduced to me as Charles N——, an English gentleman, who had just arrived from a tour through our country. Young men are soon acquainted, especially where there is a congeniality of sentiment and feeling; and it was not long before we were engaged in an interesting conversation. His language was correct and polished, his address easy and gentlemanly; he had travelled over the greater part of Europe, and his mind was well stored with information; his observations displayed a knowledge of the world, and on literary subjects a refined elegance of taste. I was much pleased with him, for he was decidedly a superior man. When he grew animated on some subject that particularly interested him, and his eyes kindled, and his countenance shone with a transient enthusiasm, I thought him one of the most captivating beings I had ever beheld. But then there was that return of melancholy depression; and when he had been wrought up to an excitement on any favorite effusion of poetry or romance, his countenance would settle down into an expression of exhaustion a repose of gloom, which seemed natural to it, and the necessary reaction of an unusual excitement; then, by a painful effort, he would endeavor to keep up his share of the spirit of the conversation, and beam forth with some brilliant stroke of wit or lively sarcasm, and be mirthful for a moment; and I could perceive that he possessed a keen sense of the ridiculous, and that at a time when his mind was freer and his heart calmer, he must have been a most entertaining companion. I was convinced that there was some hidden grief that lay like an incubus on his soul, and shut out all enjoyment. I felt a powerful sympathy for him; a desire to alleviate his melancholy, not unmingled with a curiosity as to the cause. I kept near him the remainder of the evening; I exerted myself to appear cheerful; I endeavored to lead him into conversation on topics in which I thought he would feel an interest, and to prevent the mind from reverting upon itself, and feeding on its own dark thoughts; I tried to draw him into the dance, but without effect. "I will enjoy it more by looking on," said he, with a faint smile; "I am afraid," added he, "my dancing days are over." He sighed. I rallied him about such a bachelor declaration in a fine-looking young fellow to whom the girls were waiting to be gracious; but I saw it gave pain, and ceased.

We stole off before the company broke up, and as it was a beautiful moonlight night, with a fresh, bracing air, we agreed to walk home. He took my arm, and I accompanied him to his lodgings. Our conversation was on different topics; the persons we had met; the current news of the day; and there were long pauses; and each one appeared to be absorbed in his own meditations. Once we engaged on the subject of youthful hopes and attachments; but as I perceived it occasioned some painful emotion on his part, I began to chat about the beauty of the evening, and the pretty lady who had listened to his honeyed flatteries, nothing loth.

An acquaintance was formed, and we frequently met. Sometimes he was gay, and would give loose to his powers of wit and playful satire; sometimes he was reserved, moody, sad. On all occasions he was unequal and restless and fitful in his mirth. His vivacity would be crossed by that continually returning depth of gloom; and his laugh would subside into an indescribable expression of internal suffering. There was a sadness that could not be removed; and there was clearly remorse in it. I could perceive this in his start; his secret shudder, almost imperceptible in his troubled eye; and the slight perspiration on his fine manly brow. The vulture might be scared away for a moment, but was sure to return with a keener glance and a whetted beak. Still he was anxious to amuse, and would open his portfolio of engravings, some of which were very beautifully executed. He would describe such of the scenes as he had himself visited, and would now and then forget his griefs over some wild and beautiful landscape of Switzerland or Italy. He possessed a talent for drawing, and showed me a number of sketches he had made of our own scenery; two of which I recognized, as they were views of scenery in my native State with which I was familiar. One of them was a romantic view on the Hudson near Catskill, the mountains in the distance; the other, a lovely, picturesque landscape near the Mohawk, with an extensive prospect of the river gracefully meandering through a fertile and varied country. He had a true feeling for the beauties of nature, and it was delightful to listen to the remarks that fell from him.

One Winter evening, about a month after our acquaintance had commenced, we were sitting together in his room before a low fire. Candles had not yet been called; and we sat for some time in silence, gazing upon the fire, that would kindle up into a bright flame, and then subside, in playful wantonness, as it were. N—— was in one of his gloomiest reveries, and I did not feel inclined to disturb him. He turned abruptly; "S——," said he, "have you not observed a strange inconsistency of conduct about me?" I knew not what to reply, and hesitated. "You must—you must," added he, in a mournful tone, "you must have remarked it; but you want to spare my feelings. Alas! it is not worth while." He passed his hand over his brow. "Where is the medicine can minister to a mind diseased; pluck from the heart a rooted sorrow?" His voice was tremulous, and his eye was filling.

"S——, you have no doubt wondered at the cause of my depression. Listen to me. It is this day a year and six months since Edward G—— and myself crossed the Atlantic together." He stopped a moment. "We were schoolfellows—classmates—companions in the same sports—as fond and as intimate as boys can be. Oh! those days of joy and disinterested kindness! Gone, gone, forever gone! Well, sir, Edward went into mercantile life, and I to the studies of a profession. He was high-spirited and rather irascible, but a generous, noble-hearted fellow. Our affection was ardent, and I believe natural." N—— paused, and then went on. "He called on me one morning, and told me that he had an excellent offer to go to America as an agent for a very respectable house, and if I would accompany him he would accept of it. I had frequently expressed a desire of visiting America, and we both thought the opportunity a good one. We bade adieu to our relatives and friends, and set sail; we shared the same bed; we nursed each other; poor Ned was uncommonly sea-sick; we were as brothers." His voice trembled, and there was a convulsive motion of the lip. "But I must get over this." He drew his chair closer toward the fire. "I will get on with my story with more firmness—I am almost ashamed of myself, S——. We arrived safely in Baltimore, the place of our destination, and like most other young men in the heyday of life, mingled occasionally in scenes of dissipation. Edward had often spoken of his skill in a difficult and somewhat antiquated game of cards, and I thought with something of boasting and elation. I knew nothing of the game; but for the purpose of tormenting him a little for his vanity, and from a love of mischief, I resolved to apply myself secretly to it, and obtained a pretty good insight into the game without his knowing anything of the matter. One evening we were sitting together with some acquaintances we had picked up, and to Edward's surprise, I defied him to his favorite game at cards.

"'Edward,' said I, 'you are always boasting of your skill. I know but little about the game, yet I lay you a wager I'll beat you.'

"Edward smiled with conscious superiority at my badinage, and produced the cards. We played—Edward was skilful. I exerted myself to the utmost, and succeeded. Edward was surprised and chagrined. I did not bear my victory meekly; on the contrary, I openly exulted, and gave free scope to my bantering humor. Edward demanded another game—he again lost. He became flushed, and drank several glasses of wine. He still persisted in the contest; cursed his cards; and was still unsuccessful. I was too deeply occupied in the game to observe his countenance; and in my merriment at an uncommon turn of good luck, I let out an unfortunate wittieism—it was the drop in the full cup. Edward rose in a passion, dashed the cards from him, struck his clenched hand upon the table, and with eyes flashing fire, accused me of dealing unfairly. I was astonished, and replied in what I thought a conciliating tone. But it was only adding fuel to the flame. He repeated his charges with vehement rapidity, and my temper began to rise. I told him he behaved like a child; that he was heated with wine; and that in the morning, when he had slept off the effects of it, he would be ashamed of his present conduct. He rushed across the table, almost overturning it, and aimed a blow at my face. I received it on my arm. The gentlemen present rose, and insisted on his leaving the room. He did so, breathing threats and vengeance against me. As I expected, a challenge was handed me that night; and I must confess that, feeling indignant at his behavior, I received it without reluctance. I arranged my papers, disposed of the little property I had, and wrote a letter to my parents. If the duel took place I considered that the chances were against me; and I endeavored to prepare my mind for a fatal result. I had no experience with the pistol, having only fired a few times in my life, at a mark, in sport. I requested a friend to act as my second, and appeared on the ground a little before the appointed time. Edward was not yet there. He shortly arrived, accompanied by a second. When I beheld my old school-fellow—the friend of my youth—and considered the purpose of our meeting, I felt a pang at my heart; and I believe the tears were in my eyes when I went up to him.

"'Edward,' said I, 'has it come to this; must we fight, we, who have known each other so long, loved each other so dearly; and for such a cause? Is there no way of settling this unhappy difference?'

"Edward's countenace was fixed and unrelenting.

"'Sir,' said he, coldly, 'if you choose to apologize for your unhandsome conduct last evening, I may receive your apology, and let the business go no farther.'

"I felt provoked, but kept down the angry reply that rose to my lips.

"'Edward,' said I, 'you have grossly insulted me, struck me; if you will ask pardon for that outrage I will willingly apologize for any provocation I may have given you.'

"He interrupted me—

"'The blow was deserved, sir, deserved by your insolent sneering and mean conduct. I will not apologize for that.'

"'Edward,' said I, 'you wrong me. You encroach too far—by Heaven! too far—the crushed worm will turn. And yet I cannot—I cannot make up my mind to fire at my old companion.'

"'Damn it,' said Edward, with a sneer, turning to his second, 'I believe the man's afraid.'

"This was enough.

"'Take your stand,' said I sternly, 'and you shall see.'

"The ground was measured; we took our places, back to back; the word was given—'Wheel and fire!' I obeyed mechanically, raised my pistol—I am sure I took no aim—but my hand was firm; I fired, and the next moment beheld Edward spring from the ground, quiver, and fall. The ball had entered his side. I went up to him. He had just time to falter out:

"'I am dying; I have brought this on myself. Charles—my dear Charles—make your escape.'

"He gasped, and died. I stood over him till I was urged off. I saw his body conveyed to the next inn, when the seconds thought me riding off with speed. I secreted myself to give one last look at the remains of my friend. But self-preservation impelled me, and I went away. I travelled through the country; I visited every place of note; I have been in every metropolis in the United States; I have been in the best and gayest society; I have entered into scenes of high dissipation; I have made one of every festive celebration of any importance; but I never can forget my friend's last look; the impression will never wear off; in the festal hour, the figure of Edward G—— bleeding, with his countenance of agony, will rise before me. I hear his last words; I behold him stiffening in death. He is with me when alone; he is with me in my dreams; I fly to company and amusement, but he is with me there; he follows me with equal step; I cannot fly from myself, and his image is a part of my being—no—no—no—I never shall forget him."

He stopped and leaned his head on the table.

"Now," said he, "now can you wonder at my deportment?"

I was too much affected to reply. He continued:

"I lead a wretched, wandering, unsettled life. I have no spirits to enjoy anything. I feel an unwillingness to engage in any active employment; and I take morbid satisfaction in resigning myself with perfect inertness to the vagaries of my own gloomy fancy. My mind cannot exert itself, even upon those subjects of which it was most fond, and with which it has been most familiar. I am in a mental lethargy. My mind has lost its grasp. I read without pleasure, I think without improvement. My nerves are unstrung, and I sometimes think my memory fails—on all subjects but one—one, stamped with indelible, with burning characters on my heart and brain. I ought to return home, to my parents, to my profession. But as yet I cannot."

He ceased. I sat a few minutes; I could not conceal my agitation. I was grieved to see him thus, but knew that the voice of consolation or any cold reasoning would only prove offensive to him in his present state of mind. I took out my watch; it was near ten. I pleaded that I had some papers to attend to before I went to bed, and rose to depart. He took my hand.

"Farewell," said he, "if I can, I will make up my mind to return home in the next packet."

I whispered something of the soothing influence of time, and the solace of home, sweet home, and friends most dear to the wounded heart. He sighed, and wrung my hand.

"Farewell," said he, "come and see me often. Do not wait for the ceremony of a return of visits. Between you and me that ceremony may now, I think, be well spared."

I bade him good-night, and departed. I saw him but twice afterward. He engaged a passage to the East Indies, and from thence he was to return to his native land. By this time I hope he is with his family, and happier than he was when I took leave of him on board the *Achilles*, bound for Canton.

A LEGEND OF PROVENCE.

"I AM yet a king!" exclaimed Francis the First, vaulting into his saddle after the disastrous battle of Pavia had consigned him to a year's captivity, whose last month had more gall than honey, through his marriage with the Dowager Queen of Portugal, sister to his imperial and imperious captor Charles the Fifth. From the Iser to the Rhone whispers had crept forth that he returned to France a crest-fallen man, who, after chafling his proud spirit in bondage, had no means of breaking his chains, but by accepting a bride for whom he had small regard.

However this may have been, he rode through Provence, where his subjects received him with every demonstration of joy, although, as he approached their gray old towns, he thought their giant gates looked down upon him with derision. He was wont to rally, and set spurs to his steed, and leave his retinue far behind; but on one occasion the townsmen, who had timely apprisal of his route, met him outside their walls, and he could do no less than rein up, and bow from his stirrups, which he courteously did, to the admiration of all who beheld him; for he who could wrestle with Henry the Eighth, and throw him in lusty falls, was no more deficient in grace than in strength. They besought him to honor their tilt-yard with his presence, where, in festivity of mimic fight, they might celebrate his enfranchisement from the prison in Madrid.

"By our faith, good liegemen!" quoth his Majesty, "we have had such hard knocks on the battle-field that we are none in love of the shadows of tourney." And he waved his hand by way of adieu, when his horse started at an old Castellan whose hair was silver white, and beside whom stood his daughter, incomparably fair.

Never had Francis seen beauty so rare, and so modest withal. She bore a massy salver, on which lay a bunch of rusted keys, and with a downcast look she said, "My Lord will please to accept the keys of this brave old town," and she held them toward him with such gracefulness that in amaze he stooped from his saddle, stroked her dark tresses with his mailed hand, and inquired who she was.

"My name, my Lord, is Ellen, and this is my father, Peter Ingleverre," said she.

"And your age, sweet damsel?" asked he.

"Sixteen last Candlemas," rejoined the little maid, who looked a perfect woman, so innocent and yet so heroic, as she ventured to raise her head, that the King forgot his disasters of war in suddenly inspired love; and while he indulged in a pleasure he could ill conceal, between their hands the keys fell to the ground. This gave him a pretext to alight; and surrendering the bridle to a courtier, he graciously received her father, and between him and her walked into town.

By this time the sun was on the wane, and Peter, who was governor, besought his Majesty to sojourn for the night, and he would soon have fifty prime cooks to prepare a royal feast.

To this Francis, who nothing more desired than an invitation, consented; and he accompanied Ellen home to her father's house, where some time after a band of trained violars arrived to commemorate with songs the happy visit.

Ellen entertained the King with artless talk so interspersed with sense that her conquest over her suitor became complete. And when placed by her side at dinner, he forgot venison and pasty, and beakers of wine; for though so many other ladies shared the honor of his presence, to none were his attentions so refinedly pointed as to the daughter of his venerable host. Perhaps some envied her the distinction, of which she appeared unconscious; and some of the envyers were surprised to see her retire from the hall, observing, as she passed, that this was a feint to draw the King more deeply in her coils.

Ellen merely said she had arrangements to make for the morrow.

"And why not for to-night, cousin?" asked the King, who, when the wine bowls had passed more than once, had followed her from table, and discovered her reading in a little oratory alone. "And why not to-night, fair Ellen?" reiterated he, suasively withdrawing the book from her hand. She did not reply, while he tossed over the illuminated leaves, where pictured saints seemed to frown upon him chidingly. The silence evidently disconcerted him, but he evaded his chagrin in smiles.

"We come, charming cousin, to breathe unalterable fidelity in thy ear," said he.

"What's a charmed portal, my Lord?" said she, interrupting him, and drawing back.

"We swear by thy mild blue eyes that none whom Francis ever loved shall be so beloved as Ellen," said he.

"My Lord," said she, "I've heard of holy books bursting their clasps when perjured mouths come nigh. Beware of robbing my poor eyes of modesty, their only clasping-seal. Toward me, I warn you, practise neither falsehood nor inconstancy.

"By our knighthood, we shall be true to thee, girl, till our heart hath no throb for any living creature."

"Will you love me till my hair be gray?"

"Enchantress! we shall love thee wert thou a withered crone from which hideousness itself might recoil," cried he so affectionately that she paused.

"And for what am I so vastly inestimable?" said she hesitatingly. "It cannot be my tresses—a few clips of the shears, and farewell my pride in ringlets to the winds. It may not be my brow, for care shall soon furrow it and blanch my cheek, which now seems bloomingly. Care, too, shall more peak my chin, and charms, if I have any, be most perishable."

"Lady, we love thee more for thy good sense than for thy beauty," said he; and in stepping closer toward her his spur struck the door, which closed with a spring. He rubbed his hands together, and expressed delight at an incident which created in her a considerable trepidation, that soon subsided into a calm.

"I was childish enough to be alarmed; but I have nothing to fear from a true knight. His most Christian Majesty would not oppress the meanest of his subjects, or betray confidence where he is an honored guest," observed she, drawing a chair before her, and leaning in an easy posture over its tall carved back.

"Not for a diadem would we harm thee, dearest," said he. "Yet by our sword we would sooner forfeit every acre of old Navarre, and leave Italy the brightest jewel in our rival's crown, than forego thy love. Thou must be ours;" and the enraptured monarch disengaged her from the bulwark, and embraced her ere she could extricate herself from his arms.

"Hist! heard you no noise?" breathed she softly, and she held her finger toward the door. He heard none, nor had she; and she twined her small fingers round her wrist. "In two hours hence it shall be midnight. Meet me here when the town clocks chime. Pray, my Liege, till then retire," said she, and she opened the door.

"Dost mock us, Ellen? Say wilt thou keep thy promise?"

"Assuredly my Lord does not doubt me when I say, yes? Yes, I shall meet your Majesty. See the revellers from the hall seek you as one lost. Join them, and remember the appointed hour."

Francis retired abashed, when with gentle force he had been expelled from the oratory; and Ellen quietly resumed her devotions for the night.

Tranquilly she arose, and her manner betrayed neither excitement nor emotion, though from repeated efforts she made to trim the chamber lamp, and furtive glances she cast often at a mirror, dull must one be who could not distinguish that she was ill at ease. She paced round the apartment, which was small and meanly furnished, its only ornament being a few pictures in embroidery on Scripture subjects. In one corner were suspended loose sheets of vellum, parts of a missal for festival purposes, and in another seemed a perch to have been erected, upon which perched a hawk, but so in the shade that it was difficult to determine whether it was part of the ravelled tapestry or a real bird.

At length she sat on a low stool and encompassed her knees between her hands, rocking to and fro as if engaged in unravelling some painful train of reflections. "If inward beauty can be nowise retained except by outward injury, better the body know scath than that the soul be defiled," said she, reviewing herself in the grotesque mirror with a pensive expression which soon cleared into cheerfulness. "Now, vanity aside," continued she," Nell, did you ever think you were so pretty as to make conquest of a king? Never, Nell, never! Nell must be lovely to have accomplished that. La, what a toyshop of charms are temptingly piled in yonder glass;" and she shook the oil so that wavy light fell on the mirror. "Blue eyes and black hair are peculiarities not often found together. Yet here I have them in Milesian perfection, albeit the average spirit of my eyes is half merriment, half melancholy. And cheeks are here, though they may not shame the rose, they never knew the blush of counterfeit. Teeth, likewise, which, though passing white, any elephant-hunter would at one glance discover were no ivory; and lips which a truer wooer than my Lord Francis told Ellen were gushing ripe, any wild bird would know at first pecking were not worth sweet strawberries. Well, and as I was thinking, it's a pity all this toyshop should be in an hour or two as sad to look on as a sepulchre."

She called her maid, and bade her bring a chafing-dish, which done the maid retired, and Ellen sat once more alone. Suspending the basin of a spirit-lamp over the dish, she dropped in the sulphur, and as it fused into liquid, a yellow flame flickered up, and cast a dull halo around the chamber. She shook out her hair from the golden pins that bound it, and it fell luxuriantly to the floor, before she combed it with the greatest care, as if she intended to rebrush it again. Redressing, her tresses never had more; for with scissors she clipped round and round till her head was negress bare, but not half so picturesque, for it had no curls!

Smearing her forehead and cheeks with oil, the sulphuric vapor arose in poisonous influence as she leaned over the fatal dish. Her eyelashes were the first sacrifices to the fume; and her pained eyeballs rolled in their sockets as if they were driven inward by gusts of fire. The fairness of her forehead at first became a dark olive hue, and assuming a charred blackness, the skin burst over the quivering veins. Her cheeks soon were bereaved of all blush and beauty, and her lips, if they had any similitude of fruit, partook less of the rowan than the sloe. She endeavored to allay the pain by averting her head from the vapor; but the evasion only increased her agony, for her neck, upon which drops of the sulphur crystallized, became acutely sensitive to the weight of a string of pearls. One by one she removed them from the smarting flesh; but the clasp behind had sunk so deep that its withdrawal gave her torture intensely severe.

With inconceivable effort she preserved herself from insensibility, and with copious draughts of water allayed the burning fever in her throat. Her voice lost its sweetness, and she expressed her grief in such harshness and monotony that she started from her seat as the clock struck twelve. As peal after peal swept dismally along she tottered to the door, which she opened, and groping her way along the walls, for her eyes were dim, searched for hood and bells, which she shook. The perch in the corner rocked backward and forward, as the hawk on it flapped its wings and screamed so loudly at the sounds of its favorite emblems of chase that the chamber rang.

The King, who had been walking in the corridor, approached, bearing in one hand a small chamber lamp, and in the other a scabbardless sword. Ellen mustered sufficient strength to speak, for obscurely he saw that something was amiss, and he inquired the cause.

"I will tell my Lord most willingly," said she, and the screaming hawk pounced at divers shadows as if they were its prey. Alas! there was now no occasion to cast down her eyes, for little of their lustre remained.

"My Lord, had I hearkened to your suit, my father's welcome had been paid with wrong, and your Majesty's chivalry been more eclipsed than my charms could brighten. Happily a brief pain has preserved your honor."

"O infatuated, yet noble-minded girl, what hast thou done?" exclaimed he, casting down the lamp and sword, and covering his face with his hands. "Why didst thou not intimate thy heroic resolve, and the possession of worlds would not have made us ruin that loveliness which kingdoms cannot repair."

"You would have called it maid-sick martyrdom, or coquetry run mad, or epithets equally fantastical," said she, pressing her hand to her bosom.

"Stay, there yet is hope. The injury thou hast inflicted is not irreparable," cried he, rushing to arouse the household, when she beckoned him back.

"I pray your Majesty be calm," said she; "the worst is past."

"O heavens, how heartless! we seem to be the cause of all this wreck. O, Ellen, canst thou forgive thy destroyer?"

"Indeed I can; far better be thus than be a tarnished thing cast away, for maids to loath and men to scorn me. Now the worst they can say of me is, that I spoiled myself of a questionable good to escape an evil."

"And what will they say of me, Ellen?"

"That the good King Francis once upon a time, meeting a poor, plain girl in an obscure town, was so blinded with strange love that she saw no way to restore him to sight than to lose her own."

"Gracious and all mysterious God!" exclaimed he, appalled, "thou dost not say thou art blind?"

"In sooth, such is my fear. Give me your hand, and I'll determine whether there is water in the well-spring of the brain," said she, with touching tenderness; and she shed a tear, which he kissed away as she endeavored to examine his palm.

"Ellen, Ellen, say thou canst see, and make me happy!" exclaimed the agonized monarch, falling on his knees, and resting his head heavily against her breast.

"All's dark, my Liege."

"All, Ellen?"

"Yes, my Liege."

"O, say not so. Say there's yet a little light."

"And so there is, Lord Francis; a little light that misled me into—?"

"Love, Ellen."

"'Tis so, Lord Francis."

"For whom, Ellen? Thou tremblest. I know all."

"Then if you do, why do you ask? why do you ask, Lord Francis?"

"Ellen, thou lovest him who would have been thy base undoer."

"'Tis so, my Lord."

"O, torture worst of all; and Ellen's blind!" and her tears fell plentously on his upturned face, while he continued to ejaculate, "And she is blind! O, who will love her now, when she is blind?"

"Won't you, my sweet Lord Francis, love me as though I were a dear sister long since dead?"

"Dearest sister, I will," said he, kissing her hands fervently. "Sister Ellen, I will; and never till now knew Francis love so pure, so lasting."

"Eh! yon keen crucible hath burned away all drossiness," said she, moving her hand over the chafing-dish. "'Tis with life as with this short episode of an hour. Nothing in the way of virtue was ever accomplished without pain. To horse, Lord Francis, and whenever you pray, remember Ellen Ingleverre."

"And must we part thus, more dearly loved and doubly fair?"

"Yes, and rejoice that no guilty blush crimson my cheek, nor criminal throb upbraid my heart for beating," replied she, as the hawk uttered such a piercing series of screams that first her attendant, and then others, and finally retainers and revellers, rushed into or surrounded the room, where they discovered the sovereign surnamed "The Restorer of Learning, and the Great," deprived of forethought and firmness of mind.

The most skilful leeches the town or court could afford were summoned; but their aid was only of partial avail. Facial beauty had forever bade farewell to her whose self-control was worthy the best days of chivalry. Eyebrightness had not, however, departed; and in the gray mists of the morn she saw her royal lover depart never more to return.

In after life he was wont to say that throughout his glorious career of war and peace he had met only two human beings eminently great—one the famous Bayard, the poor captain of a few lances, the chevalier *sans* reproach, from whose sword King Francis sought and received knighthood as earth's greatest honor, and the other the humble and lovely Ellen, who had taught him that love without purity is dishonor, and charms without virtue is shame.

BOYS USING TOBACCO.

A STRONG and sensible writer says a good sharp thing, and a true one too, for boys who use tobacco. It has truly spoiled and utterly ruined thousands of boys; it induces a dangerous precocity; it tends to a softening and weakening of the bones; and it greatly injures the brain, the spinal marrow, and the whole nervous fluid. A boy who smokes early and frequently, or in any way uses large quantities of tobacco, is never known to make a man of much energy, and generally lacks muscular and physical as well as mental power. We would particularly warn boys who want to be anything in the world to shun tobacco as a most baleful poison. It injures the teeth. It produces an unhealthy state of the throat and lungs, hurts the stomach, and blasts the brain and nerve.