

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

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SELECT TALES.

From Graham's Magazine.

STORIES FROM THE OLD DRAMATISTS.—FORD THE BROKEN HEART.

BY ENNA DUVAL.

"OAR EGGO IS SPARTA. Ho whose best of art Hath drawn this piece, calls it the Broken Heart."

What may be here thought Fiction, when Time's youth Wanted some riper years, was known a Truth; In which, if words hath clothed the subject right, You may partake a pity with delight."

AMYCLAS, king of Laconia; had but one child, a beautiful daughter, the Princess Calantha, heiress of his kingdom; next to this child, the young and brave Lord Ithocles, sat nearest to his heart. This young nobleman merited the king's favor well, for he was a model of courage and virtue. As his friend, Propylus, said of him, in the firmament of honor in which his sovereign's love had placed him, he stood like a fixed star, not moved with any thunder of popular applause, or sudden lightning of opinion.

A war broke out with the neighboring state of Messene, and King Amyclas, was threatened with the loss of his kingdom; but Ithocles, at the head of the army, trod under foot Messene's pride, and bowed her neck to Lacedemon's royalty. On his return the king greeted him with outstretched arms, calling him, delight of Sparta! treasure of his heart! his own Ithocles; and the Princess Calantha crowned him in open court with a garland wrought by her own royal hands. But the young man received these greetings with such graceful modesty, that not only charmed his friends, but won the fair Calantha's heart.

"Let me blush," he said, when the beautiful princess bestowed upon him the chaplet, "acknowledging how poorly I have served, what notions I have done, compared with the honors heaped upon me; moreover, it is the duty of a subject to serve the state. But with him whom Heaven is pleased to style victorious, applause runs maddening, like the drunken priests in Bacchus' sacrifices, without reason voicing the leader as a demi-god; while every common soldier's blood, is as current coin in the hard purchase of victory, as his whose much more delicate condition hath sucked the milk of ease—judgment it is true commands, but resolution executes. I do not mean, when saying this before this royal presence, contempt of such as can direct, but that all praise should not be given to one man's fortune, which has been strengthened by many hands."

Whereupon he recommended his friend Propylus and other officers to the king's favor. This noble generosity won all hearts, and over Ithocles' future seemed beaming the bright sun rays of prosperity. But though Ithocles merited so well his royal master's favor and the noble maiden's love, already the retribution that follows evil was stalking fast behind him. Few faults had the young Spartan, it was true, but revenge and pride had made him in the first flush of manhood commit a grievous wrong. His father, Thrasus, had had a deadly feud for many years with one of the king's counsellors, the old Lord Crotolon. Just before old Thrasus' death, this quarrel, at the king's request, was adjusted, and in order to render the bond of friendship stronger, Thrasus' only daughter, the young tender Penthea, was betrothed to Orgilus, the only son of Crotolon. Soon after this betrothal, Thrasus died, and Ithocles, proud of youth, and still prouder of his power with the king, cherishing also a memory of the old discontent, broke off the marriage, and forced his sister to wed with another. This had resulted badly, and was secretly working trouble for the rash young man, and at a time, too, when calmed by maturity he was bitterly repenting the past, and striving to make amends by every work and thought of honorable good.

Bassanes, the husband of Penthea, loved his wife with adoration, but knowing that her marriage with him had been one of constraint, and being moreover suspicious by nature, became a prey to the fiercest jealousy, which, though he vainly endeavored to hide, and bitterly repented every outburst of passion, rendered his poor broken-hearted wife's existence miserable. Of Orgilus, her lover, he was most especially jealous, though entirely without reason, for Penthea was good and pure, and though her innocent young love had been fairly given to young Orgilus, after her marriage with Bassanes, she would shrink with horror at the thought of wronging him even by a look.

Orgilus, though driven almost to madness by his grievous disappointment, in order to secure peace for Penthea, had after her marriage absented himself for a while from his home; but all in vain,

Bassanes jealousy raged just as violently, and daily he saw his dearly loved Penthea bowed down under the weight of the cruellest suspicions and constraints, without power to help her to soothe her grief. A fierce and burning hatred against Ithocles took possession of his heart, but in every way his feelings seemed to be exasperated.

Ithocles' dear friend, Propylus, loved Euphranea, the only sister of Orgilus, a young, beautiful girl, maid of honor to the princess; and after the Messenian war, Propylus, after being assured that his love was returned, demanded her in marriage of her father. As he was the friend of the king's favorite, and his suit preferred not only by Ithocles, but almost commanded by the king, Euphranea's father, old Crotolon, thought it madness to refuse. Such a marriage, to his old courtier wisdom, seemed to open before his family, a path shining with honors flowing from royal favor. But Orgilus, his son; hated Propylus because he was Ithocles' friend, and bitterly opposed his suit. At last, when his father represented that refusal would work ruin to his family, he yielded an unwilling consent, and with the secretiveness peculiar to unsettled minds, veiled his hatred for Ithocles under a spacious show of friendship, and received with apparent forgiveness Ithocles' penitent, sincere regrets for the past, in order that he might be able at some future time to avenge Penthea's sufferings, and his own great wrong. Accordingly the wedding of the young maid-of-honor took place.

During the preparations the court was thrown into commotion by the arrival of a royal suitor for the hand of the princess. This caused great trouble to young Ithocles. He had already discovered that he loved the daughter of his royal master; which discovery had filled his breast with sorrow, for it seemed like ingratitude; but hourly he hung upon her words and lived only in her presence. She was a noble and beautiful woman; Heaven had bestowed the highest gifts of mind and person upon her; and even in distant countries were accounts related of the great Calantha's beauty, virtue, sweetness, and singular perfections. She loved Ithocles also, but was not conscious of her love until the suit of another betrayed it to her.

This royal lover was her cousin Nearchus, prince of Argos. His application for Calantha's hand pleased old king Amyclas, for, as he said, it would be a marriage of great benefit to both kingdoms, and as the Prince Nearchus was the next heir after Calantha to the throne of Laconia, their union would be most suitable.

"But," added the good old king, "Calantha shall decide. I have always vowed never to enforce her affection by my will. She shall marry no one unless her own choice confirms mine gladly."

King Amyclas at his last visit to the Temple at Delphos, had received a scroll clothed in the mystic language of the oracle, and after hearing Prince Nearchus' suit, and seeing his daughter undecided, sent this scroll to the philosopher Teucides, who resided in the court, requiring from the sage an explanation of it. The oracle ran thus—

The plot in which the Vine takes root, Begins to dry from head to foot; The stock, soon withering, want of sap Doth cause to quail the budding grape; But from the neighboring Elm, a dew Shall drop, and feed the plot anew.

Old Teucides studied this oracle with reverential awe, secluding himself still more from all the court. Then he came to Armotes, the king's confidential counsellor, and uncle to Ithocles, and gave him a sealed box, containing the scroll and his explanation of it, which he desired should be given to the king, and announced with a countenance and tone of voice expressive of great grief, his immediate departure for Delphos.

"Tell the king," he said in broken accents, "he must no more inquire after my aged head. Apollo wills it so, and I must go to Delphos, never more to see my king again—a great prince commands me!" Then turning to Ithocles who was present, he said in a solemn, awe-struck voice, as if moved by prophetic fire, and scarcely conscious of his words—"Ithocles,

"When Youth is ripe, and Age from time doth part,
The Lifeless Trunk shall wed the Broken-Heart!"

Then with muttered, broken exclamations, as if apprehensive of some approaching trouble, he departed.

The box was carried to the king, who, when it was unsealed, read the following exposition of the philosopher:

"The plot is Sparta, the dried Vine the king; The quailing grape his daughter; but the thing Of most importance, not to be revealed, Is a near prince, the Elm; the rest concealed."

The poor old king, who felt himself fast failing, was sadly perplexed at the unsatisfactory explanation, but his old counsellor soothed him with the assurance, that the Princess Calantha's marriage with her cousin of Argos, would fulfill the oracle;

he was that neighboring Elm, whose dew of love would strengthen the young grape his daughter, when her father's death would bow her down with grief. But though this marriage seemed so certain, and was so much desired, it was not to take place—the Parcae had ordered other things, which though slowly and noiselessly approaching, would most surely come to pass! Young Ithocles drooped daily—he saw so many advantages for the kingdom in this offer of the prince of Argos, that the marriage seemed unavoidable to him. Again was his repentant heart filled with sorrow for the deep injustice he had done his sister, and his new friend Orgilus; his love for Calantha taught him the extent of the great and irrevocable wrong he had done them; and sick at heart, both for his own sorrows and theirs, he sent for the poor lady Penthea, and told her all his trouble. His sister, though sinking fast into the grave, under the weight of the burden imposed by him upon her life, forgave his wrong to her, and cheered him in his love for Calantha; promising him at parting, to invent some means to relieve his grief.

She went to Calantha, and a beautiful scene took place between them; the poor, pale, suffering Penthea, whose face already bore the prints of Death's icy finger-touch, demanded of her royal lady a private audience, which was granted, for Calantha loved her for her own gentle sake, as well as for the love she bore secretly for Ithocles. When they were alone, Penthea said in broken accents—

"My glass of life, sweet princess, hath few minutes remaining to run down; the sands are spent; for by an inward messenger I feel the summons of departure, short and certain."

Calantha tenderly caressed her, saying—"You need too much your melancholy, Penthea, the future will have much for you, cheer up and throw aside this heavy grief, who knows what happiness and greatness may yet be yours!"

"Glories of human greatness are but pleasing dreams and shadows soon decaying," replied the already dying Penthea. "Sweet royal lady, on the stage of my mortality my youth hath acted some scenes of vanity, drawn out at length by varied pleasures, sweetened in the mixture, but with every sensuality our giddiness doth frame an idol, are inconsistent friends when a troubled passion makes assault upon the unguarded castle of the mind."

"What mean these moral texts?" Calantha asked; "what end do you propose, dear lady?"

"To place before you, royal madam," replied Penthea, "a perfect mirror, wherein you may see how weary I am of this lingering life. No remedy remains for me but a winding sheet, a fold of lead, and some untrod on corner of the earth. But before I go, my princess, I have an humble suit, a favor to ask of you. Vouchsafe to be my executrix, and take the trouble on you to dispose some legacies as I bequeath them."

The princess assured her with tears that she would do all that she required.

"I have but three poor jewels to bequeath," said Penthea, with a faint smile. "The first is my Youth; for though so old in griefs, in years I'm but a child; this I bestow upon all betrothed maids and honest wives; the second jewel is my Fame, which I bequeath to Memory, and Time's old daughter, Truth."

"Nay, you jest, dear Penthea," Calantha replied, "and yet how handsomely you play with harmless sport of mere imagination. You spoke of three jewels—tell me of the last, for in truth I like your Will."

"The third jewel, royal lady," answered Penthea more solemnly, "is dearly precious to me, and you must use the best of your discretion to employ the gift as I direct. This third jewel should have been my own heart, but that was lost long ago; but instead of it I do solemnly bequeath to great Calantha in holiest rights of love, my only brother Ithocles, who loves you, lady, dearly. Look on him with an eye of pity; be a princess in sweetness in blood, give him his doom or raise him up to comfort!"

Maiden shyness and surprise took possession of Calantha. The prince of Argos' suit had proved to her she loved another, and that other was the brave Ithocles; but his sister's strange request presented in this sudden manner, filled her with embarrassment; then the thought of her father's possible objection presented itself before her, but she soothed and comforted the poor dying lady, who was already sinking under exhaustion caused by the excitement of her conversation, and after parting tenderly with her, made her own ladies wait on her with all distinction to her home.

For days Calantha felt perplexed; she knew not how to act, for though each day convinced her that she loved Ithocles too

well to wed another, yet he had over since the arrival of the prince of Argos held himself aloof from her, giving her no chance to assure herself of his love. Penthea could no longer aid her, for she was stretched upon her dying bed, poor lady, and silently refused all food, as if her spirit had already left her.

At last one morning Calantha was walking with the Prince Nearchus, surrounded by the court, among whom was Ithocles, silent and dispirited, sad at his sister's fate, and hopeless for his own. The prince with gallant courtliness begged his royal cousin to bestow upon him some mark of her favor.

"This little spark," he said, playfully attempting to take a ring from her finger.

"Nay, that is a toy," replied the princess smiling.

"Love feasts on toys, dear lady," said Nearchus, "for Cupid is a child."
"You shall not value, cousin, at a price what I count cheap," answered Calantha; then added with an assumed air of indifference, and a tone of voice a little louder than those around might hear—"So cheap, that let him take it who dares to stoop for it, and give it at his next meeting to his mistress, who'll thank him for it, perhaps."

Whereupon she drew the ring from her finger, and threw it on the ground before Ithocles, who, despite the angry, jealous glances of Nearchus, and murmured remonstrances of the courtiers, took it up, and kneeling, presented it to the princess. She was embarrassed for an instant, scarce knew what to say, but answered with a light laugh, that it was pretty, wondrous pretty, his taking her for a mistress, but he might keep the ring since he had found it; and taking her cousin's arm passed on, leaving Ithocles almost blinded with the sudden light of Love's scarce risen sun. His friends remonstrated with him, and the prince returning, treated him with contempt for his presumption as he termed it; but Ithocles bore it all with quiet grace; the favor of his noble lady was so sweet a happiness to him, he cared for nothing else, not even if destruction's gulf should yawn before him. Soon after the princess sent for him, saying that she wished him to render to her in private an account for taking up the ring; but well he knew her real reason, his own heart gave him wisdom, and gladly he hastened to the audience, which ended in that perfect understanding true love alone can give.

Nearchus, when he saw the state of Calantha's heart, nobly withdrew his claim, saying, that though at first he was angered, Ithocles was a man most nobly fashioned in honor and in person, and worthy of a noble lady's love, and when his friend, Amelus, in private asked him how he could brook to yield up to an inferior in rank, not only love but right, he answered—

"I tell you, Amelus, the sight of poor, life spent Penthea, and unhappy Orgilus, has proved to me that affections injured by tyranny, or rigor of compulsion, like tempest-threatened trees uniformly rooted, ne'er spring to timely growth. I urge no claim that chance of birth may give me, on Calantha; willing love I ask—no other would have value for me."

The old king gladly bestowed his daughter on young Ithocles, for his desire to secure the happiness of his daughter and his favorite, far outweighed the fear he had felt after reading the mysterious warning of the oracle—now he fondly thought the budding grape sheltered under the warm shade of Love, would not quail when Death, which he felt fast approaching, should take him from her.

At the time the princess told her father of her love for Ithocles, the old king, after joining their hands with loving consent, gave orders that a splendid banquet should be given in honor of the bride Euphranea, who had been wedded with Propylus a short while before; and notwithstanding his increasing infirmities forbade his presence at the feast, he earnestly insisted that all merriment should go on without him.

While they were making gorgeous preparations for the feast, news came to Ithocles, whose heart was filled with so much happiness, that his sister was dead; without stopping to acquaint the princess who was with her royal father, he hastened to Bassanes' house; Orgilus accompanied him; for this half-frenzied young man still covered his cherished hatred with pretended friendship. Together they stood beside the wasted form of the dead Penthea—the repentant brother and the wronged lover. The woful sight caused Orgilus' long pent up hatred to burst out, and drawing a dagger he plunged it into the heart of his enemy and killed him.

"You dream of kingdoms, did you!" he exclaimed—"how with this nod to grace that subtle courtier—how with that frown to make this noble tremble, and so forth; while Penthea's groans and torments her agonies; her miseries, and afflictions ne'er touched upon your thoughts! As for my injuries, that were beneath your

royal pity. But yet they lived, proud man, to confound you, and behold your fate is come at last!"

The banquet commenced, but all observed that Orgilus and Ithocles were absent. The old courtier, Crotolon, answered the princess' inquiries, saying his son had told him he had gone to prepare some new device of pleasure for the princess, and he supposed Lord Ithocles was with him, as they had been seen together. The dance commenced, but as Calantha finished the first movement, old Armotes came out from the king's sick-chamber, and with a countenance of woe, whispered to the princess that her father had just breathed his last breath.

"On to the other movement of the dance," said Calantha, without heeding the sad news. As they finished the second change, poor Bassanes entered, and in low, tearful tones told the princess that his poor Penthea had just died of starvation.

"Lead on to the next measure," exclaimed the princess, and they did so; but while she danced, the fearful news was brought her of her loved Ithocles' cruel murder at his sister's death-bed.

"How dull the music sounds," she said. "Strike up more sprightly strains!" The courtiers all looked amazed at this apparently unnatural conduct of the princess, and thought it strange such fearful tragedies should not arouse the woman in her. After the dance was over she received with stately pride the congratulations of her courtiers, and the acknowledgments of her queenly right; heard calmly the self-condemnation of Orgilus, replying to it that she would begin her reign with an act of justice; and ordered him to instant execution; then gave directions for her coronation, which she requested should be speedily attended to.

The temple was prepared for the great ceremony forthwith; the altar clothed in white, with burning tapers of virgin wax. The people and the courtiers assembled there, awaiting the arrival of the new queen; but all started with surprise when they saw brought in, and placed on one side of the altar, a hearse bearing the dead Ithocles clothed in royal robes, with a glittering crown upon his head; then came the beautiful Calantha surrounded by her maidens, cold, pale and tearless, clothed in white and also crowned. She knelt before the altar for awhile; after concluding her devotions, she stood up and said in a calm and quiet voice, that as it was necessary she would for the weal of her kingdom choose a husband, she should do so; and as her cousin of Argos stood next in right of succession to the throne, she would select him for her lord; but before wedding him she would first make some requests. The prince with tenderness begged her to name them. She then portioned out offices; asked that her father's old counsellor Armotes should be vicar of Argos; and Crotolon, Orgilus' father, should govern Messene; and Bassanes, poor Penthea's husband, be Sparta's marshal. Then she bestowed pensions and arranged some marriages of her maid-of-honor, and lastly, requested that Propylus should be speedily invested with all the honors, titles and preferments belonging to his dear friend and her neglected husband.

All murmured to each other that these requests sounded like a testament, rather than conditions of marriage, and Prince Nearchus asked of the princess half-reproachfully, what meant the word "neglected husband?"

Calantha looked sadly at him, and replied—"Forgive me, Nearchus." Then turning toward the hearse on which the dead Ithocles was placed, took his cold hand, and removing from her own a ring, placed it on one of his fingers, saying—

"Bear witness all, I put my mother's wedding-ring upon the finger of Ithocles; it was my father's last bequest. Thus I new-married him whose wife I am. Death shall not separate us. Oh! my lords, I but deceived your eyes with antic gesture, when one news straight came huddling on another, of death! and death! and death! Still I danced forward, but it struck home and here—and in an instant. Some women can with shrieks and outcries vow a present end to all their sorrows, yet live to court new pleasures and outlive their troubles; but there are silent griefs which cut the heart-strings."

She then gave orders for the voices at the altar to sing the dirge she had prepared. The music swelled out in mournful harmonies, and low, sweet voices chanted—

"Glories, pleasures, pomps, delights and ease,
Can but please
The outward senses, when the mind
Is untroubled, or by peace refined.
Crowns may flourish and decay,
Beauties shine, but fade away.
Youth may revel, yet it must
Lie down in a bed of dust.
Earthly honors flow and waste,
Time alone doth change and last."

Sorrows mingled with contents, prepare
Rest for care,
Lovely only reigns in death; though art
Can find no comfort for a Broken Heart."

While the chant continued, Calantha bent over her lover's body and kissed him; as the music ceased the courtiers seeing that she remained leaning over the hearse, went toward her, and when they lifted her up, found her noble spirit had fled, though her beautiful lips smiled, as though the first step through the portal of Death had led to happiness.

"O, wise Teucides!" exclaimed Armotes, "thou didst utter prophecy! My king, the old philosopher's parting words to Ithocles are now made truth, for he said to this poor young lord when he set out for Delphos—

"When Youth is ripe, and Age from time doth part,
The Lifeless Trunk shall wed the Broken-Heart."

From Slack's Ministry of the Beautiful, just published by A. Hart, Philadelphia.

THE FOUNTAIN IN THE WOOD.

A LITTLE way apart from a great city was a fountain in a wood. The water gushed from a rock and ran in a little crystal stream to a mossy basin below; the wild-flowers nodded their heads to catch its tiny spray; tall trees overarched it, and through the interspaces of their moving leaves the sunlight came and danced with rainbow feet upon its sparkling surface.

There was a young girl who managed every day to escape a little while from the turmoil of the city, and went like a pilgrim to the fountain in the wood. The water was sparkling, the moss and fern looked very lovely in the gentle moisture which the fountain cast upon them, and the trees waved their branches and rustled their green leaves in happy concert with the summer breeze. The girl loved the beauty of the scene and it grew upon her. Every day the fountain had a fresh tale to tell, and the whispering murmur of the leaves was ever new. By-and-by she came to know something of the language in which the fountain, the ferns, the mosses, and the trees held converse. She listened very patiently, full of wonder and of love. She heard them often regret that man would not learn their language, that they might tell him the beautiful things they had to say. At last the maiden ventured to tell them that she knew their tongue, and with what exquisite delight she heard them talk. The fountain flowed faster, more sunbeams danced on its waters, the leaves sang a new song, and the ferns and mosses grew greener before her eyes. They all told her what joy thrilled through them at her words. Human beings had passed them in abundance, they said, and as there was a tradition among the flowers that men once spoke, they hoped one day to hear them do so again. The maiden told them that all men spoke, at which they were astonished, but said that making articulate noises was not speaking, many such they had heard, but never till now real human speech; for that, they said, could come alone from the mind and heart. It was the voice of the body which men usually talked with, and that they did not understand, but only the voice of the soul, which was rare to hear. Then there was great joy through all the wood, and there went forth a report that at length a maiden was found whose soul could speak, and who knew the language of the flowers and the fountain. And the trees and the stream said one to another, "Even so did our old prophets teach, and now hath it been fulfilled." Then the maiden tried to tell her friends in the city what she had heard at the fountain, but could explain very little, for although they knew her words, they felt not her meaning. And certain young men came and begged her to take them to the wood that they might hear the voices. So she took one after another, but nothing came of it, for to them the fountain and the trees were mute. Many thought the maiden mad, and laughed at her belief, but they could not take the sweet voices away from her. Now the maidens wished her to take them also, and she did, but with little better success. A few thought they heard something, but knew not what, and on their return to the city its bustle obliterated the small remembrance they had carried away. At length a young man begged the maiden to give him a trial, and she did so. They went hand in hand to the fountain, and he heard the language, although not so well as the maidens; but she helped him, and found that when both heard the words together they were more beautiful than ever. She let go his hand, and much of the beauty was gone; the fountain told them to join hands and lips also, and they did it. Then arose sweeter sounds than they had ever heard, and soft voices encompassed them saying, "Henceforth be united; for the spirit of truth and beauty hath made you one."