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BY SLEIGHT AND TUCKER.

THE REPOSITORY.

The editor of the New-York Commercial Advertiser, in speaking of the following interesting tale, says, "we remark, once for all, that we have written it ourselves, and that it is true in all the material particulars. We knew the deceased, and we know all the parties but one. How the facts in the latter and affecting part of the story came to our knowledge, is a matter of our own. No blame can rest any where, because no names are mentioned."

A TALE, BUT NO FICTION.

She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,
Feed on her damask cheek: she pin'd in thought;
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat like Patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief.—Shakspeare.

Although tales from real life are usually considered too tame and insipid for those whose element is the airy regions of romance, yet it sometimes happens that the actual occurrences of this old-fashioned world, if embodied and described in the rich and glowing language of some of our living masters of fiction, would be considered too improbable and wonderful to be true, without drawing upon the imagination for additional facts by way of embellishment. Such, we believe, would be the case with respect to the following narrative, were the writing of it not confided to a pen which seldom aspires to bolder flights than are called for in the discharge of the dull and monotonous labours incident with the publication of a daily newspaper.

M— and B— were friends. Their friendship commenced in boyhood—the season in which are sown in the unconscious and susceptible bosom, seeds which spring into vivid impressions in youth, and ripen into stronger feelings in after life. As they grew up to manhood, the bent of their inclinations was widely different, though their common feelings of attachment grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength. Our country had drawn the sword to vindicate our national rights, and avenge her wrongs; and while the exhilarating notes of the life, and the wild blasts of the bugle, fell on the ear of M— like music—while his bosom swelled with enthusiasm as his mind dwelt on martial employments, and he longed to participate in the glories acquired by the soldier, in showing how fields are won, the other preferred to travel the smoother road of domestic and civil life. Through the influence of friends, M— obtained a commission in the army, and was ordered upon the recruiting service in the interior. There was a simplicity, and a confidence of mutual affection which marked this first separation, and which young and ingenuous minds can only appreciate. They had heard of false friends, and supposed that such might exist. But such was their confidence in each other, that the remotest suspicion of treachery never darted across the mind of either. They felt as secure as the mariner when safely moored, who listens with pleasure in his hammock to the din of the elements, and the dash of the waves without. With the ardour of youthful imaginations, they drew glowing pictures of the future, and rejoiced in the anticipated advancement and prosperity of each other. Or if, perchance, an idea of the waywardness of fate or fortune for a moment awakened an unpleasant sensation in the bosom of one, it was speedily dissipated by the assurance of ready relief from the other. Protestations of friendship were neither reiterated nor multiplied; there was a mutual confidence that their bosoms beat in unison; and an indescribable feeling of regret came over them, as they grasped each other's hands, when M— stepped on board of the steam-boat, and with faltering voices, they pronounced the word "farewell." At this moment with what indignation would either have received and resented the least suspicion of his fidelity to his

friend. And could a being endowed with a knowledge of things to come, have predicted in the hearing of either, what would be his future course towards his bosom friend, with the same ignorance of his own heart he would probably have exclaimed with Hazeel, "is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"

Whoever has visited * * * * *—and who in this fashionable and travelling age has not—will have been struck with the singular beauty of the irregular valley into which the traveller descends a few miles before reaching the fountain, in the bottom of which * * * * * creek silently winds its way among fields and meadows of the richest verdure, now lost in the thick foliage of willows and other shrubbery, whose pendant branches dip in the stream, and now bursting upon the view like a silver stream skirted with grassy banks, sprinkled with meadow lilies and clusters of wild honeysuckles. It was at the old village in the broadest sweep of this delightful vale that M— was stationed for the purpose of obtaining recruits for the feeble ranks of our army. Here he became acquainted with a young lady, the daughter of a respectable and worthy farmer, for whom he soon felt a growing attachment of that tender description which warms the bosom of the young soldier. Though a native of this tranquil valley, yet her education had not been unattended to, and she had received that cultivation of mind, and those personal accomplishments, which, when tempered with good-sense, and mingled with the innocence and sweet simplicity of country life, impart such a charm to the female character. It was in the spring; that happy and delightful season, when, as the poet tells us—

From the virgin's cheek a fresher bloom
Shoots less and less, the live carnation round.
Her lips blush deeper sweets
The shining moisture swells into her eyes,
—her wishing bosom heaves
With palpitations wild, kind tumults seize
Her veins,—and all her yielding soul is love."

It is sufficient to say, therefore, without lifting the veil and exposing to the vulgar gaze all those little refined endearments which constitute the lover's bliss, that the attachment was mutual. But a few months of happiness, however, glided away, seeming to the youthful lovers but so many hours, before the sullen sounds of war rolled along our frontiers, and M— received orders to join his regiment, and repair to the field. Their loves were plighted anew, vows of constancy interchanged, and they parted—he to share in the fatigues and perils of war, and she to count the days and hours of his absence, rear the plants in her parterre, weave garlands of wild flowers carelessly plucked as she strayed among the fields and meadows of her father's domain, and watch the post and catch the first glance of the bulletins from the army.

He was ordered upon distant service, acquitted himself bravely in various actions, and the peace found his shoulders graced with two epaulettes instead of one. But it was his fortune to be kept in such active service, and to be transferred from post to post, even to the remotest stations upon the western and southwestern borders of our country, that he was unable to visit the object of his early affections, and fulfil his vows, until the summer of 18—, when he came to this city, and was transported with delight to find her on a visit to an elder sister, married and settled in New-York. We will not attempt to describe the joy of their meeting, after so long a separation, during which the countenance and elastic frame of the young soldier had been changed by the toils of the camp, to the more grave and muscular appearance of the experienced soldier, while the slender form and features of —, had attained to the graceful and womanly proportions of four and twenty. But a few days of preparation intervened, and he clasped her in his arms as his bride.

His return to New-York was welcomed by B—, with all the warmth which could be expected from an endeared friend of his youth, the ardour of whose feelings, it was but natural to suppose, had been tempered by the maturity of manhood. Both had been prospered. While M— had regularly passed through several grades of promotion, B— had been honoured with various profitable civil appointments. They were together from day to day for several weeks, while the joyous period of the honey-moon rolled swiftly away. Now and then, however, M— appeared ab-

sorbed in a momentary abstraction, and a dark cloud would flit over his brow. But like the mist of a summer's morning, it was suddenly dissipated by the sunshine of present happiness—leaving the landscape fairer and brighter than before. These moments of depression were too transient to excite particular observation; and although the compressed lip and unconscious sigh did, as he feared, once or twice betray more of the troubled bosom than he could have wished, still the round of pleasures, the variety of occupations and amusements, and the charms of society in a city like this, added to the unremitted and disinterested exertions of his friend B— to contribute all in his power to his gratification, caused the stream of happiness apparently, to glide on without a ripple upon its surface.

But there was a cause for these occasional moments of gloom deeply seated. Nor could the possession of a lovely bride, the nuptial festivities, or the gaieties of the metropolis "pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow," or lighten the oppressed bosom of the load which weighed upon the heart. When he left New-York a few years before, he parted from a dearly beloved orphan sister, living with her guardians, young, innocent, and beautiful. If there be any emblem on earth of that spotless innocence and purity which we are taught to expect in the regions of the skies, it is a young and artless female into whose bosom an impure thought has never entered, whose cheek has never been suffused but with the bloom of health, or when listening to the accents of merited commendation, and whose every word, look, and action, speak the unpolluted mind within. Such in the eyes of M—, was his affectionate sister. How oft had she hung upon his arm with fraternal affection, as they visited together the principal places of attraction in town, or rambled among the green fields and delightful groves in the suburbs, gathering daisies, cowslips, and blue-bells, or listening to the carols of the birds as they skipped cheerily from spray to spray, during his former visits. And with what tenderness did she cling to him, as he kissed the falling tear from her cheek, at the moment of their last separation. And with what fondness too, did he anticipate the happy moment of their meeting, after so long a separation, when, as he might suppose, the tender bud which he had left, must have expanded to the full blown flower. Tarrying a few days at Philadelphia, however, while on his way to New-York, among his friends in that staid metropolis, dark suspicions were occasionally whispered in his ear, that his sister was no better than she should be. He would have avenged the imputation promptly, could he have been perfectly satisfied that it was groundless; but before he left, his agony was completed by such declaration and proofs of her guilt, that he verily believed the child whom he left pure and unsullied as the driven snow, was now a loathsome prostitute, and the kept mistress of some gentleman in New-York. It was even intimated that for his own credit, and the happiness of his intended bride, it would be better for him not to speak of one who had rendered herself so utterly unworthy of his happiness and protection. And having thus been made to believe that

—she had fallen
Into a pit of ink; that the wide sea
Had drops too few to wash her clean again,"

he yielded to this advice. M— was a soldier; and although the struggle was a severe one, still after his arrival in New-York, having command over his feelings, he subdued them so effectually, that the few faint and transient evidences of the secret workings of his soul, before related, were all that escaped him.

After remaining a few weeks in the city, the happy couple made the fashionable tour of the several watering places in this state, visited the romantic regions of Lake George, listened to the deafening roar of Niagara, and then returned. And having resigned his situation in the army, and obtained an appointment in a distant territory, in the autumn of 182—, after taking leave of his friends, and parting with great reluctance from his still more endeared friend and companion B—, he departed with his wife for the station where his new duties required his residence. Hitherto their matrimonial path had been strewn with flowers, and not a cloud had for a moment obscured the sun of their happiness. The brightest mornings, however, sometimes lead

on the darkest days, and it is but too true that—

"Life's fairest views are but an airy dream,
Frail as the transient cloud, or bubble on the stream."

An endemical fever, often so fatal to strangers in that climate, arrested his progress at Natchez, which baffled the skill of his physicians. He received every attention from the strangers among whom he was cast, and all the endearing attentions of his wife—but in vain. It was decreed that the cup of bliss, which had but just been tasted, was to be dashed suddenly from her lips; and so rapid was the progress of the disease, that in five short days from the commencement of his illness, she found herself a widow in a strange land—desolate—alone. But the measure of her affliction being not yet full, she in turn was seized by the dire contagion; and it was not until after the lapse of several months that she was able to return with the messenger sent to conduct her back to her friends, and the scenes of her recent enjoyments.

Many of her husband's affairs were left in an unsettled state; and after the poignancy of her grief had somewhat subsided, it became necessary for her to look after them. Fortunately B— was a professional man, and to whom could she better apply for assistance in her forlorn situation, than to her husband's most intimate and confidential friend. She did so; and he attended to her requests with all the readiness and kindness that she could have expected. A year rolled away, and the affairs, though not yet settled, were in a train of adjustment. Meantime another year passed away with those beyond the flood, during which his visits had gradually become more and more frequent, and his attentions to her more marked and particular. He was her husband's dearest friend, and she therefore the more readily confided in him. During this intercourse with her, his conduct was uniformly marked by the most scrupulous propriety and delicacy. And when with honourable frankness, he formally avowed himself as a suitor for her heart and hand, he was accepted. An engagement for marriage soon succeeded, and the time fixed for the wedding was not remote. The engagement was known and approved by her friends; but ere the time for the celebration of the nuptials arrived, it was postponed—again, again, and again—by various plausible pretences, so artfully devised as to leave nothing to excite any well-grounded suspicions to his faith, and the rectitude of his intentions. He was a grave and an honourable man, not likely to be fickle in his mind, or flexible in his purposes.

In this situation affairs stood until a few months since when, as it was supposed, an irrevocable determination was made that the wedding should take place during the present spring; and the lady went upon a winter's visit to her friends in the country—to the dear delightful spot of her infancy—where she first dreamed of love—and where those bright visions of happiness had first danced in her youthful imagination, the reality of which had as it were but just dawned upon her for a moment, as if to render the storm of adversity which followed still more gloomy and afflictive—but which now bid fair to return again soon, if not with their primitive brightness, at least with a mellow light which promised to cheer her through the remainder of her life. A constant correspondence was kept up between herself and B—, and he continued his visits to the family of her sister, with whom she had resided while in this city. And here our tale must begin to unfold itself. A few weeks since the bell rang feebly at the door of this lady's residence, the initial of whose husband's name we omit; and the servant ushered in a lady whose fragile form, pallid cheek and sunken lustreless eyes, bore ample testimony to decaying health; and there was a deep-settled melancholy upon her countenance, yet so handsome as to proclaim that her features had once been beautiful, which told but too plainly that her heart-strings had been torn with anguish, and that there was a canker in her bosom "eating into her soul," and wasting away her thin light form, which had apparently been formed in the finest mould. She hesitatingly and timidly inquired for Mrs. M—, but on learning that she was in the country, and that the lady of the house was her sister, she pulled from her bosom the miniature of the deceased Major M—, avowing herself to have been his sister. She said at the

same time, that it was a treasure which she had highly prized, though on his last visit to the city, of which she was unapprized until by accident she had received the sad tidings of his death, he had treated her with a degree of neglect, which had grieved her to the soul, but for which she could never account. And as she believed now that she could not long survive, she thought her husband's widow had the best claim to the picture, and she had inquired her out and brought it. Mrs. —, having never before heard that her deceased brother-in-law had a sister living in the city, was incredulous to the story of her relationship, but took the picture and promised to write to her sister. The stranger then departed, reaffirming with earnestness and a gleam of woman's pride her near consanguinity with the deceased, and promising shortly to return.

The lady wrote to her sister the particulars of this interview, with her belief that the stranger was an impostor. The return of the mail brought a reply, in which Mrs. M— for the first time imparted to her sister the melancholy tale respecting her deceased husband's sister, which we have given above, and which he had communicated to her only after they had left Philadelphia for the west.—Shortly after the receipt of this letter, the strange lady called again, apparently, as before, oppressed by the bitterness of grief, and pining away under the pangs of her burthened bosom. But the lady now shrunk from her as from the touch of pollution. The stranger perceived this alteration in her demeanour, and truly apprehended the cause. The colour which had been a stranger to her cheek, again partially returned, and her dark blue eyes were for the moment lighted up, as she exclaimed with sudden and unwonted energy—"Yes! I am his sister, and your suspicions, which I well understand, are groundless! I am an unfortunate, an injured, but an innocent woman: I am the lawful wife of?"—but checking herself, she proceeded in a subdued tone, "alas! I cannot speak further." For a time

"Her lips moved not, but quivering,
Nor would they ought betray;
Yet more there spoke, her flashing eye,
Than words could ever say,
Yes there was meaning in her glance."

Having in a measure composed her troubled feelings, some further conversation ensued, in which the blighted fair one renewed her protestations of innocence, and intimated that while she had been deserted by her former friends, though lawfully married, and the mother of several children, yet she had been compelled silently to bear the reproach that had been cast upon her—in the daily hope that all the mystery in which her case was involved, would soon be cleared up. But her heart was now fast withering under the disappointments of hope long deferred. Indeed she had hoped until no hope was left; and she was now determined, ere she dropped into the tomb, which must soon open for her reception, to rescue her fame and virtue from the cruel imputations under which she was suffering. She then informed the lady, that if her husband would call at No. —, in — street, on a certain day, she would convince him of the truth of her assertions. Yet she gave not the remotest intimation as to who was the husband who had thus contrived to keep her in seclusion, with but a doubtful reputation. The doubts of the lady and her husband were not removed, but their interest and curiosity to penetrate the veil which appeared to hang over the fate of the unhappy female, were powerfully awakened.

Meanwhile, and before the appointed time for the promised explanation had arrived, B— called as usual, to inquire after the family, and the health of his intended bride. He had never been more cheerful, and talked with his wonted frankness and seeming sincerity, of his approaching nuptials. While the evening was passing thus pleasantly away, the lady handed him the miniature of his deceased friend, to inquire of him whether it was a good likeness. He took the picture, but had no sooner cast his eyes upon it, than it dropped from his hands. For an instant his countenance was pale as ashes. Every drop of blood seemed to have rushed back upon his heart. His lips quivered, and he trembled in every joint. But he recovered his self-possession in a moment, picked up the picture, as though it had fallen by a common accident, and after a few commonplace re-