

THE TRYST.

BY LAUCHLAN WATT.

O the way is sometimes low,
And the waters dark and deep,
And I stumble as I go.

But I have a tryst to keep;
It was plighted long ago
With some who lie asleep.

And though days go dragging slow,
And the sad hours gravewards creep,
And the world is hush'd in woe,

I neither wail nor weep,
For He would not have it so,
And I have a tryst to keep.

The New-York Tribune.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1907.

A new edition of a "great literary success" of a former day, Walpole's "Castle of Otranto," is presently coming out. Possibly the author himself, could he speak, would deprecate the republication of this "attempt to blend the marvellous of old story with the natural of modern novels." Writing of it—"a frantic thing"—to Hannah More, he adds: "It was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written; an age in which much was known, that required only to be amused, nor cared whether its amusements were conformable to truth and the models of good sense; that could not be spoiled, was in no danger of being too credulous; and rather wanted to be brought back to imagination than to be led astray by it." The cynical Horace was in reality not half so modest in regard to his novel as he would fain have been thought. He certainly liked to tell his correspondents it had been much read and much commended. The fortune it is likely to enjoy in the forthcoming new edition is easily enough foretold. The book will be read for a little while, talked about for a little while, and then allowed to subside into that corner of the library which is only visited by the man of letters and the connoisseur in literary curiosities. But "The Castle of Otranto" cannot die utterly. In all the fantastical fiction of that period—in which it played so unexpectedly conspicuous a part—you find a spark of life, the instinct for romance which is part and parcel of human nature.

The attributes of a competent critic are thus described by Mr. Augustine Birrell in "The Contemporary": "Good sense, good temper, a love of modesty and truth, with a high standard of excellence, gained by an affectionate study of the works of illustrious authors, ancient and modern, and a *quantum suff.*, of mother-wit." Apropos of the knowledge and sympathy necessary to the critic, Mr. Birrell tells this anecdote:

A young Oxonian once complacently announced to Mark Pattison his intention of editing an edition of Selden's "Table-Talk." The learned man warmly congratulated the would-be editor upon his choice, remarking how easy it would be for him to read every printed book it was possible for Selden to have read, and thus to qualify himself within the compass of a dozen studious years to add a few really explanatory notes to the "Table-Talk." The young man shuddered and at once abandoned the idea, and generously made a present of it to a quick-witted friend who, not knowing Mark Pattison, was able, without a pang, to produce his edition in three months. The reviewers all spoke well of his labors, and as the majority of them were probably reading the "Table-Talk" for the first time, it was only decent of them to do so.

This discussion of the critic and his ways is going forward at a brisk pace in London just now. We like the comments of "An Old Reviewer," in the columns of our English namesake. Alluding to that question of "literary courtesy," on which Mr. A. C. Benson was, quite unconsciously, so droll the other day, this shrewd observer points out that the true critic must regard the point as irrelevant. "For him a book is either a work of art or it is nothing. . . . Courtesy would be a ridiculously cold way of describing the reverence and love which the genuine critic cherishes for genuine literature."

It is a great thing for the lover of literature to preserve the illusions in which literature abounds. But just how far should he go in the comfortable process of preserving them? Should he merely exercise special prudence when listening to the iconoclast, or should he "go for" that restless busy-body with joyous prejudice and contempt? One complainant asserts that "there is hardly a beautiful incident or character in the history of the world that has not been challenged during our generation by some ignorant or other," and he expresses the belief that these enemies of legend go about their business simply so that they may enjoy "the sort of vicious happiness that mental degenerates are said to experience by destroying anything that is generally prized or beloved." Mr. Lang cannot accept this view of the matter. "The historian is pleased," he says, "when a supposed romance turns out to possess an authentic basis; and he is sorry when a good old crusted fable has to be relegated to the land of legendary fiction. But if he finds [for example] that Dorothy Vernon did not elope—if he *does* make that discovery—he must say so firmly, even if his reward be public suppression by the galleys or the executioner's axe." Of course; but there is something to be said on the other side of the argument.

A BOOK OF GOSSIP.

Glimpses of French and English Royalties, 1815-1819.

MEMOIRS OF THE COMTESSE DE BOIGNE, 1815-1819. Edited from the original MS. by M. Charles Nicoullaud. Vol. II. 8vo, pp. 375. Charles Scribner's Sons.

This new volume of the clever Adèle de Boigne's memoirs is as fascinating as was the first volume published a few months ago, and reviewed in this place. Her pictures of Court life and society during the Restoration are as vivid as were those earlier reminiscences of the France of Louis XVI and of the Revolution. They are set forth with equal frankness and shrewdness, sometimes with prejudice, always with a sure grasp on what was interesting in experience and character.

Charles, ordered the absentee marquis to buy one side of the square and build an arcade along it, then to erect, according to the royal plans, a magnificent residence. When finished he had to decorate and furnish it in the most luxurious fashion, and then he was commanded to live in it. The angry marquis had to obey, but he flouted the tyrant by establishing himself in a servant's room and never condescending even to look at his splendid reception rooms. The rule of parents in Piedmont at that period was as imperious as that of the King. The father of a family allowed even his grown and married children no independence whatever. They had no money, no freedom of movement—all the bills were sent to papa and paid by him. Loyalist as she was, Madame de Boigne did not maintain many illusions in respect to the Bourbon princes. She lays stress on their ignorance of popular feeling, their indifference to interests which had grown up during their exile, their inability to understand that their posi-



ELEONORE DILLON, MARQUISE D'OSMOND.
(From the miniature by Isabey)

The greater part of the five years described in this volume were spent by Adèle's father, the Marquis d'Osmond, as French Ambassador, first to the Court of the King of Sardinia and then to that of England. Much of the time his devoted daughter was with him, often, it is apparent, as an efficient aid. There is humor in her notes on life in Turin in 1815 under King Victor Emmanuel I, newly returned from the exile into which he had been driven in 1798 by Napoleon's soldiers. He came back determined to restore all the absurdities of the pre-Revolutionary system, acquiescing in only one feature of the French occupation—the trebling of taxes. In his passion for restoring the system of what he called "Norant-ott" (98) the King, says Madame de Boigne, wished to destroy all that the French had created, including several scientific collections. He was asked one day to spare the ornithological collections which he had visited the evening before and with which he seemed delighted. He flew into a passion and said that all these innovations were works of Satan; that these collections did not exist in *Norant-ott*; that they got along very well without them; that there was no need to be cleverer than one's ancestors. His anger being exhausted, he added that he would make an exception only of the birds, as they pleased him, and he wished that great care should be taken of them. The Sardinian party in the council approved the King's resolution. Count Valesse and Count Balbe looked upon the ground and were silent; the destruction of the ornithological collection and the preservation of the collection of birds was resolved by an immense majority. King and courtiers looked on any sort of liberal idea with horror and the former indulged in a despotic rule which seems almost incredible in these days. A noble could not go abroad except with his sovereign's permission, and if he stayed away longer than the time set he ran the risk of having all his property sequestered. He spent his income as the government directed and built castles or chapels, and gave balls or concerts in obedience to orders not to be questioned. One of the wealthiest of Piedmontese nobles in the time of Victor Amadeus was so tormented by rheumatism in the Turin climate that he went to live in Pisa. Presently the King, beginning to build the square of St.

tion meant responsibility for things to be done. Callous and selfish still, they had learned a little from misfortune. One of the least pleasant of these portraits is that of "Madame," the prisoner of the Temple, that Duchess of Angoulême who was the daughter of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. She was a good woman, but without kindness and graciousness. Madame de Boigne says that the princess was devoted to the memory of her father but cared little for that of her mother. She gives the impression that Louis XVIII led a far from easy life with his family, who, on one occasion indeed, drove him by their violence into an attack of gout on the stomach which nearly killed him. It was not an engaging group down to the young Duc de Berry, of whom our chronicler does not hesitate to set down this remembrance:

Shall I tell the story of the Camp d'Alost under the command of the Duc de Berry, which was so unfortunately broken up at the moment when the battle of Waterloo had begun? The Duke of Wellington expounded his views with cruel publicity to the Prince, whom he reproached with breaking down the bridge. The Duc de Berry excused himself upon the ground that false rumors had made him believe the battle was lost. "The worse for you, sir. When you run away you should not place obstacles in the way of brave men who may be obliged to make an honorable retreat."

By way of contrast Madame de Boigne recalls the "fierce energy" of a soldier of the Imperial Guard whose arm had been shattered at Waterloo. The agent whom Louis XVIII had sent to the hospital to look after the French wounded came to the man's bed with offers of help. The shattered arm had just been amputated; on the instant the guardsman threw the bleeding member at the civilian. "Tell the man who sends you here," he said, "that I still have an arm left for the service of the Emperor."

Louis XVIII maintained as far as he could the arrogant formalities of the ancient regime. We wonder with Madame de Boigne how foreign sovereigns endured with equanimity the treatment which their Ambassadors received in Paris. There is a quaint story here of a dinner given to the new English Ambassador, Stuart de Rothesay, and his wife. Instead of being received at the King's table in the fashion of other countries, they were summoned to the residence of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, where they were fed among a company of courtiers presided over

by a major-domo and a lady of honor. King, Princes and Princesses were all absent, but from behind a screen "Madame" and her husband the Duke took a brief, amused glance at the scene before they went to their own dinner at the royal table. They did these things better in England, as Madame de Boigne discovered during her long visits at her father's house in London. The French Ambassador's daughter had nothing to complain of in her treatment at Court and she even has pleasant things to say of the Prince Regent. She notes particularly what most writers have denied, his consideration for his mother. "In private life his care and tenderness was extreme, and he overwhelmed her with respect in public. I was much struck upon the evening of this concert to see a footman bring a little tray with a cup of tea, sugar basin and cream jug, and hand it to the Prince Regent, who carried it himself to his mother. He remained standing before her while she helped herself to sugar and cream, without rising or hurrying or interrupting her conversation. She was accustomed to say to him in English, whatever language she might be speaking at the time, 'Thank you, George.' She repeated the thanks in the same terms when the Prince Regent took the tray again from the footman to take her empty cup. This was a regular custom and the ceremony was repeated two or three times during the evening." The Prince Regent in the character of devoted an affectionate son is a figure new to the reader; historical gossip, but in such a light the French woman seems to have seen him. She quotes his account, given to her and other guests at Brighton one evening, of his last visit to his father, King George III. The picture of the blind old man, bereft of reason and unable to hear without frenzy the sound of a human voice, is as tragic as that painted for us by Thackeray:

As the Queen was ill and unable to pay her visit the Regent undertook this pious duty. He told us that he had been shown into a large drawing room where, separated from him by a row of chairs, he had seen his venerable father, neatly dressed, his head entirely bald, with a long white beard which fell down upon his breast. He was holding a council of state at that moment and addressing Mr. Pitt in language entirely lucid. Some objection had apparently been offered, for he seemed to listen, and after a few moments' silence resumed his argument, advancing his own opinion. He then called upon another member to speak, to whom he listened in the same way; and then to a third.

At length he announced in official language that the council was adjourned, called his page and went to pay a visit to his children, with whom he talked a long time, especially his favorite, Princess Amelia, whose unexpected death had contributed to bring about the last phase of his malady. As he left her he said: "I must go away, for the Queen, you know, does not like me to be absent too long. This idea, in fact, he pursued, and went back to the Queen. All these excursions were carried out leaning upon the arm of a page, and without going out of the same drawing room. After a short conversation with the Queen he rose and went alone, though closely followed, to a piano, where he sat down and began to play some pieces of Handel from memory, singing in a voice both sonorous and touching. His musical talent, and of music he was always passionately fond, had increased in an extraordinary degree during the progress of his cruel malady.

I must do the Regent the justice to say that he had tears in his eyes when he told us this story, which he did very late one evening when only four or five of us were with him; and the tears ran down his cheeks as he spoke to us of this voice-singing the beautiful motets of Handel and of the constraint which he was obliged to put upon himself to refrain from chafing the venerable musician in his arms.

Of the Prince Regent's daughter Charlotte, then living with her young husband, Leopold, at Claremont, Madame de Boigne writes with picturesque detail. The French Ambassador and his family were invited to dine with the young couple and were both vexed and amused by the Princess's rudeness—a rudeness which the judicious Leopold tried hard to gloss over. His wife had eyes only for him, and her neighbors at table extracted but few words from her. The French guest describes her as tall and strongly built. "Her hair was fair, almost to the point of whiteness, and her eyes were porcelain blue; eyelashes and eyebrows were invisible and her complexion was uniformly white, without color. The reader may cry, 'What insipidity! It must have been a very inexpressive face.' Nothing of the kind. I have rarely observed a face of greater alertness and mobility; her look was most expressive. Her red lips, showing teeth white as pearls, formed a mouth which was the most delightful that I have ever seen, while the extreme youth of her features compensated for the want of color in her complexion, and gave her an appearance of remarkable freshness." The most astonishing bit of description in this volume deals with Princess Charlotte's mother Caroline of Brunswick, dating back to the day when d'Osmond was Ambassador in Piedmont and the then Princess of Wales was wandering fantastically about the Continent. Says Madame de Boigne:

The next day we saw in the streets of Genoa a sight which I shall never forget. There was a kind of phaeton constructed like a sea-shell, covered with gilding and mother of pearl, colored outside, lined with blue velvet and decorated with silver fringes; this was drawn by two very small pinto horses driven by a child who was dressed like an operatic cherub with spangles and these colored tights, and within it lounged a fat woman of fifty years of age, short, plump and high-colored. She wore a pink hat with seven or eight pink feathers floating in the wind, a pink bodice cut very low, and a short white skirt which barely came below her knees, showing two stout legs in pink top-boots; a rose-colored sash which she was continually draping completed this costume. The carriage was preceded by a tall and handsome man, mounted upon a little horse like those which drew the carriage; he was dressed precisely like King Murat, whose gestures and attitude he attempted to imitate. The carriage was followed by two grooms in English livery and upon horses of the same kind.

Wherever this extraordinary Princess went might be seen the curious sight of ambassadors and attachés fleeing before her; for never was there a more troublesome, bad tempered and unmanageable piece of royalty. Madame d'Osmond and her daughter, and the Marquis himself, full of tact as they all were, had no better