

Poets' Company.

THE ELEMENTS.

A TRAGIC CHORUS WRITTEN AT SEA—BY THE VERY REV. J. H. NEWMAN, D.D.

Man is permitted much
To scan and learn
In nature's frame;
Till he well-nigh can tame
Brute mischief, and can touch
Invisible things, and turn
All warring ills to purposes of good.
Thus, as god below,
He can control,
And harmonise, what seems amiss to flow,
As severed from the whole,
And dimly understood.
But o'er the elements
One hand alone,
One hand has sway.
What influence day by day
In straighter belt prevents
The impious Ocean, thrown
Alternate o'er the ever-sounding shore?
Or who has eyes to trace
How the plague came?
Forerun the doublings of the Tempest's race?
Or the Air's weight and flame
On a set scale explore?
Thus God has willed
That man, when fully skilled,
Still gropes in twilight dim;
Encompassed all his hours
By fearfulest powers,
Inflexible to him.
That so he may discern
His feebleness,
And e'en for earth's successes
To Him in wisdom turn,
Who holds for us the key for either home,
Earth and the world to come.

TO THE AUTHOR OF "GRAFFITI D'ITALIA."

More precious than the learning thou shalt gain,
Thy father's name, thy wealth of youth's bright morn,
Anew in thee thy mother's genius born,
Is the soul's yearning that doth form thy pain.
O true philosopher! who not in vain
Hast heard the voice of wisdom, nor with scorn
Stiflest the sighs, thine intellect that warn
Of things most high which for its search remain.
If "steep" to thee the way, arousing fears,
Know heavier feet than thine have gained its end,
That all the pangs of travel puts to flight.
Trust not the doubtful promptings of the years,
Nor full assurance on each point attend.
"Who doth the truth cometh unto the light."

H A W T H O R N D E A N.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SISTERS.

"O, MARION! my dear, my only sister, don't say that. I was only thinking if it were right for me to talk, even to you, of other people's affairs."

"How supremely silly!" replied Marion. "You worry yourself about trifles with an intensity worthy of Dr. Nelson. He was scrupulous to a degree; tormenting himself about little atoms of conduct, and would hardly trust himself to look at me, or speak to me, after my engagement; ceased his visits almost entirely, and made himself observed by every one; underwent all kinds of self-imposed penance, to punish himself for falling in love with me."

"Mamma writes as if papa were very fond of him," said Rosine.

"Mercy! yes," replied Marion; "I never saw him take to any one as he did to him. I suppose he was the means of saving his life, and I think he would have been glad if I could have looked at him with his eyes; but dear me! a country doctor's wife! there's only one thing worse—a country minister's wife. One might like to be the lady of a notable city physician," she added, pinching Rosine, "the first of the faculty; and I can imagine a position worthy of effort, were I a Protestant, as the wife of a popular preacher or a bishop, but a country doctor's or country minister's companion!—one must be devoid of ambition, surely!"

Rosine did not reply, her mind was wandering back through the two years of separation, and the reflection, "How changed!" seemed to strike her dumb; she feared they could never come together again as when they were children. In Marion's breast was something of the same thought, "How changed!" but they were both mistaken; time had not changed, but only developed their natural traits of character. They were preparing to retire for the night, and as Rosine did not begin the reading of the note, Marion took the pins from her luxuriant mass of chestnut hair, and commenced her toilet, saying very indifferently, "You may do

as you please about reading me the note, or telling me anything of your new friends."

Rosine was willing to do anything but do wrong to soothe her sister, and she commenced slowly, without looking up:

"Navy Yard, December 18—.

"My Sweet Young Friend:

"I must congratulate you on your reunion with your sister, of which I heard to-day from Sister Agnes. I hope I may yet have a little place in your thoughts. Come and see me with your sister, you know you are always welcome. Mrs. Laura Hartland was with me yesterday, she misses you constantly, but your friends are right, your young fresh heart should not be made the recipient of sorrows like hers. I wish I could comfort her, but naturally she is very anxious about the Lieutenant just now"—she hesitated.

"Go on," said Marion eagerly, "I have been wishing to ask an explanation of some expressions I heard the Doctor use yesterday; it seems that she had desired to go to her husband, and the Colonel prevented it."

"I knew nothing of it!" replied Rosine, with surprise.

"Well, I picked it up from the end of a conversation; but go on," she added, impatiently.

"There is nothing more of Laura here," said Rosine, and continued her reading—"We hear from Harry almost every steamer; he is getting on finely, is at present at Strasburg, working hard at his profession."

"Profession!" cried Marion, looking around from the glass, "I thought he was in the navy!"

"He was in the service," replied Rosine, "but resigned on account of the war with Mexico, which he could not justify to his conscience."

"Very foolish of him!" said the sister, in a tone slightly contemptuous. "What had he to do with the right or wrong of the matter? If he obeyed orders, the responsibility rested with the government."

"You reason like the Commodore," said Rosine, laughing. "He was mortally angry with his son."

"I don't wonder," replied the sister; "it is a great hinderance to the rise of a man to change his profession after being established. Does he live on his father in the meantime?"

Rosine's face flushed with indignation as she replied, "You don't know Harry Greenwood. He is above all meanness."

"He has a warm advocate in you, at least," said Marion, looking keenly at Rosine, who blushed painfully; "but go on, let's hear what his sister says of him."

More reluctantly than ever, Rosine continued her reading, still loath to offend her sister by seeming to want confidence—"He thinks to stay in Europe two or three years. Father is a shade more reconciled, at least he does not speak of my brother with the severity that so distressed me. Come to me soon, my dear one, and I will tell you more of his daily life. You will find a loving welcome from your attached,

"DORA GREENWOOD."

It was true, as Marion had surmised from what she had overheard, that Laura had desired to go to her husband. Since Le Compte's departure, her anxieties for Aleck had redoubled, and she had even gone so far as to secure a passage in a steamer bound for the Gulf of Mexico.

Sister Agnes could not persuade her to the contrary; with all the energy of her former days, she was determined; there was but one thing to be done, Colonel Hartland must be informed of her intentions. The good Sister performed the painful task as a matter of plain duty. No sooner was he aware of her plan, than he called upon her, and used every argument to dissuade her from her purpose, begged her to consider that Aleck was in the midst of preparations for carnage and blood. Finding that he made no impression, he changed his tactics, and told her plainly that under the circumstances the world would say, and not without reason, that she followed Le Compte. This was "the unkindest cut of all," but it kept her where she was.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BEFORE THE CASTLE OF VERA CRUZ.

WE must carry our readers to the Gulf of Mexico, where, before the Castle of Vera Cruz, the X— was anchored, preparing for the siege that was to make so many bleeding hearts. The spirit of conquest of people and territory was the spirit of the Mexican war; not to subdue enemies, or to defend one's own, but to attack a harmless population. Of course there could be but little true patriotism in such a war; there was but small heart in it, as many of the officers themselves acknowledged. We can compare it to nothing but a fight between a bull-dog and a small terrier; but with the moral or political aspects of the war our narrative has but little to do. Lieutenant Alexander Hartland was at Vera Cruz, foremost in that terrible siege of five days, and bore his part so well that he was promoted to the "Captaincy," with the addition of a ball in his thigh, which threatened to lame him for life. Either care, or the sickly climate, or some nameless wear of the soul, had told on his lithe and vigorous frame, and he was ill prepared to bear his wound. It was at this juncture that the new surgeon arrived. From that time Captain Hartland grew almost dumb, and the lines about his mouth and chin deepened daily; he became stern with his men, and reticent with his brother officers, treating Le Compte with chilling coldness, cutting off every effort of the surgeon to draw him into conversation, repelling all inquiries as to the condition of his wound, and savagely hoping Le Compte might become amenable, by some infringement of rule, to a court-martial. But the surgeon was too wise for him; through all his icy coldness he was as courteous to the Captain as possible, always saluting him in a deferential and kindly way, returning his gruffness with forbearance, and a certain kind of humility, which said, "I know I have injured you, and I will do all I can to repair it in your person."