

Clippings.

THE following very ingenious and elegant letter is said to have been written to a friend in London by an Irish Baronet in 1782 :—

MY DEAR SIR,—Enjoying now a little peace and quietness, I sit down to inform you of the dreadful bustle and confusion we are in from those blood-thirsty rebels, most of whom are, thank goodness, killed or despatched. We are in a pretty mess—can get nothing to eat and no wine to drink except whiskey. When we sit down to dinner, we are obliged to keep both hands armed, and while I write this letter I hold a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other. I concluded in the beginning that this would be the end of it, and I see I was right, for it is not half over yet; at present there are such goings on that every thing is at a stand. I would have answered your letter a fortnight ago but I only received it this morning; indeed, hardly a mail arrives safe, without being robbed. No longer than yesterday the coach with the mail for Dublin was robbed near this town; the bags had judiciously been left behind for fear of accident, and by good luck there was nobody in the coach but two outside passengers, and they had nothing for the thieves to take. Last Thursday, notice was given that a gang of rebels was advancing hither under the French standard, but they had no colors, nor any drums except bagpipes. Immediately every man in the place, including women and boys, ran out to meet them. We soon found our forces much too little, and they were far too many for us to think of retreating. Death was in every face, but to it we went. Fortunately the rebels had no guns but pistols, cutlasses and pikes, and as we had plenty of muskets and ammunition, we put them all to the sword; not a sole of them escaped, except some that were drowned in an adjoining bog. Their uniform was all of different colors, but mostly green. After the action we went to rummage a sort of camp they left behind them, but all we found was a few pikes without any heads. Troops are placed everywhere round the country, which exactly squares with my ideas. I have only time to add, that I am in haste,

Yours truly,

V. P.

TORU DUTT.

THE name at the head of this article is that of a woman who died at Bhowanipore, India, on the 30th August, 1877. She was a Hindoo of pure blood, who never set foot outside of her native country, and yet had done literary work in French and English which would have secured her fame had either of those languages been her own. At a very early age she discovered her strong literary bent, and becoming convinced that Hindostanee was not a medium through which she could address a wide circle of readers, she commenced the study of the European tongues. In 1874, when she was eighteen years old she made her first appearance in print as the author of a paper in English on the writings of Leconte de Lisle, exhibiting a minute knowledge of French literature, and illustrating her subject by excellent translations into English verse.

In 1876 she published at Bhowanipore a volume bearing the title, "A sheaf gleaned in French fields," consisting of English translations from Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset, Bandelaire Gautier, and many other French poets of the present century. The *Saturday Review* states that her selections were carefully made by a refined taste, and that "the 'Sheaf gleaned in French fields' would have been an extraordinary feat had it been performed by an English lady of high education; from a Hindoo girl it was little short of miraculous. There were occasional mistakes in the English that only served to make the merits of the writing more conspicuous by proving that the work was genuine. There was sometimes words of which the quantity was unknown to the poetess, and lines that from this and similar errors were erratic in the matter of scansion. But as a whole, the vigor of versification and the poetic freedom of diction in a foreign language were quite marvellous."

At the time the volume appeared the translations were highly praised by a competent English critic, merely as translations, and not as a *tour de force*. Her mastery of English is indicated to some slight degree by the following original verses, which are not only melodious, but show that she had conceived a clear idea of residence in England on its poetic side:—