

For the Pearl.

THE UNSEEN BABE.

God's blessing on the Baby Boy
Its Father ne'er caress'd—
How much of sadness and alloy
Are bleat with every thrill of joy
That agitates my breast,

While o'er earth's fairest scenes I roam,
And feast my raptur'd eyes—
As thoughts of thee, unbidden, come,
To win me to my quiet home,
In which the New Born lyes.

What would I give, at this still hour,
For but a glance at thee?
Hast thou a spell of magic power,
Thou delicate and fragile flower,
That sleeps't beyond the sea?

That thus my waking thoughts you share,
And mingle in my dreams?
For, like a spirit of the air,
O'er all that's rich, or grand, or rare,
Some fancied feature beams.

I stood on Snowdon's topmost height,
And far beneath me lay
A thousand hills, in all their might,
Tinged with the rosy sunset's light,
A fair and proud array—

But by thy cradle then to kneel,
And gaze upon thy face,
Thy little hand in mine to feel,
To make a father's first appeal,
Thy answering smile to trace;

Could I have turn'd such bliss to know,
To spend an hour with thee,
The splendid scene that lay below—
Loch, vale, and stream, and sunset's glow,
Had wanted charms for me.

O'er sweet Killarney's placid breast
My Bark this moment roves,
And never did my spirit rest
On scene by Heav'n more richly blest
With all the Trav'ler loves.

But there's a chamber, far away,
A Mother's glance of pride—
Familiar forms, that, wondering, pray
That they with "Brother" still may play,
That haunt me as I glide.

And thus it is, go where I will,
By storied brae or burn,
A cherub face is with me still,
Mingling with rapture's wildest thrill,
And bidding me return.

Killarney, 1838.

For the Pearl.

MAY AND MAY-FLOWERS.

May, in the Old World, is a time honoured month. It is ushered in with sylvan sports,—early rambles and junketings in the woods—or in the fields, if no woods are convenient;—an ostentatious display of delicately tinted, sweet-smelling flowers;—a dance round the May pole, and processions of men and maidens, decorated fantastically, overflowing with rustic jollity, bearing garlands, and marching to the sound of tabor and pipe.

In the country parts of England, all this, and bands of morris dancers beside, usher in the first of May. The morris dance consists in a number of waying positions, a graceful systematic intricacy, made to the sound of rural music. We do not profess to know much of the movement, as our readers may perceive, but we never see the term without thinking of the illustration which Milton affords, in his use of it. In his *Comus*, we think, referring to the undulation of the waves, when a full moon makes old Ocean smile, he describes them as keeping graceful morris under the influence of the attracting orb. The advancing and retiring of the dancers, the interspersion of swarthy youth and fair girls, in the flowery maze,—seem sublimely pictured by the rise and fall of summer billows, now dark in the deep shade, and now sparkling in the moonlight, and laughing, as it were, as the gentle spray-burst runs along the ridge.

In London, some very odd exhibitions accompany, or did, some ten years ago, the opening of the season. The sweeps! of all the world!—the sweeps, bedizen themselves out in strangely contrasting tinsel, and ribbons and flowers, and beneath masses of green

boughs, and pay annual visits;—they also dance, as if to show that cheerfulness may visit the most lowly,—and, with partners of the fair sex, to prove, if nothing more, that every "Jack has his Jill." On that day, it is customary for these operatives, and others of like ilk, to have merry makings in the public dinner, or supper line;—and Lambe, if we mistake not, in his essays of *Elia*, gives some unctuous descriptions of the mock airs, and hearty jollity, which annually attended a feast, given in a Smithfield Tavern, to these sons of darkness.

In Ireland, also, May-day has, or had, its peculiar festivities. "Oh! the days when we went gypsying, long time ago." We recollect, as it were yesterday, the processions of various "professions,"—the butchers! and chair-men, and weavers, for instance,—the men divested of coats, and their milk-white *linen* decorated with ribbons and flowers, of every hue. These, with a sprinkling of colleens, "like angel visits, few and far between," marched in procession through the town, and waited at the houses of those who were married within the year. The fantastic band would then dance before the bride's door, and lowering the garland on the May pole, to the window, where she stood blushing, before the multitude, enable her to fasten her favours amid the flowers. These favours were, a "May Ball," beautifully wrought, decorated with gold and silver and ribbons, and accompanied by two or more bank notes. What joyous shouts hailed this consummation,—and what exultation was experienced by the party of "May boys" who exhibited the greatest number of these precious tokens, dangling triumphantly within their garlands. And then, towards the close of the day, the visits of ceremony, by the different bands, to the respective May poles, erected in various districts; the quarrel about some point of honour, and the wild melee, in the midst of the city, as if the rights of the Lord of Misrule were again fully recognized! Time would fail to tell of these and other "May-day sports," of the juvenile bands, emulous of the gaiety and gallantry of their elders,—and all the customs which used to strew the dull ways of the city with "daffy down dilleys," "cowslips," "primroses," and the numerous flowers, wild and cultivated, which in that temperate climate enrich May day.

In our land, here, (native or adopted) much-favoured Nova-Scotia, a very creditable affection is connected with the season,—although the feeling is not exhibited with much force. It is like the early love of a gentle swain, delicate, and unobtrusive, but constant; shewing itself in many tender looks and acts of attention,—but not making much noise or parade. The May-flower, the elegant emblem of the country, is generally in bloom on May-day-morning, except the season happens to be very backward,—and lads and lasses stroll from the town into the woods, and looking carefully on the southern side of moss banks, and root clumps, gather the little beauties, and bear them in triumph to their city homes. This is pretty much the amount of May-day observance in Nova Scotia, and it is not without its peculiar merits. There is a gentle love for the gentle beauties of nature, exhibited,—and no more. The little flower is delicately tinted,—white, with touches of pink, something like the blooming apple blossom, and about the same size. The perfume is in accordance with its appearance and its habits;—a denizen of the forest, having a home amid moss, and violets, and juniper leaves, and shoots of the balsamic spruce,—it contracts an atmosphere, in which the spicy, and the lusciously sweet, and the simple air of young verdure, are delightfully blended.—To gather this first of flowerets, and bear it to bless the town mansion with feelings of spring life and loveliness, form the unpretending observance of the First of May in Nova Scotia.

The man or the maiden who chose the May-flower as the emblem of the country, deserves honour. Much delight and innocent exultation, and feeling of beauty, has to be set down to his, or her, credit. Not ten years ago, the dandelion! we believe, was not far from becoming the emblem! The dandelion! yes,—some adopted the notion, it was mentioned as a matter of course, and we knew an instance when it was a question whether it should be engraved among other emblematic devices, as a fixed matter. Some patriot or poet prevented that,—or perhaps the feeling of patriotism and poetry too, impregnated many hearts at the one-time, and caused the exaltation of the little herald of Spring, from the sward to the bosom, as "the chosen leaf of bard and chief."

Little May since then is indeed a great favourite, and the poets, accordingly, pay fitting tribute. As contributions to an Original Pearl, we have three or four love favors, which we may as well weave into this rhapsody. That nearest to hand runs thus:

TO A MAY-FLOWER.

"Wild, modest, solitary flower!
Sweet herald of returning Spring!
Why bloom in this lone forest bower
Beneath Oblivion's darkling wing?

Has Fate decreed that thou, sweet flower!
In desert wild alone shouldst bloom,
That scenes so drear may boast their power
To charm mankind amidst their gloom?

Alas! sweet flower—I ne'er shall know
Why thine so dark a fate should be;—
But long sad Pity's tears shall flow
For her who so resembles thee!"

[T. W. BURKE.—Brookfield, 1840.]

Poets are very prone to ask questions, which may be arranged into two classes; one class, very easily answered,—and the other, not to be answered at all. Our author's interrogative, in his first stanza, may be said to be somewhat of both classes,—if such an expression does not involve that figure of speech called a "bull." Supposing the question to be directed to the flower,—the answer of the little beauty would, very readily, be, "Because it is my destiny." If the reason for such destiny be sought, then "Oblivion's darkling wing" settles over the matter. Reading farther on, we find that we have written too rapidly, for in the poet's second stanza he intimates an answer, and a good one;—he suggests, as the cause of the location, the desire of nature to show that scenes of gloom and loneliness may have some features potent to soothe and to charm. The moral is correct, and of wide application;—solitude and silence, and even temporary sadness, have their good effects,—their honey drops, where a casual observer would suppose that all was bitterness. We cannot, however, agree with what appears to be the poet's estimate of the May-flower's place of residence. The "green-wood" has any thing but a cast of dreariness over its character, in most poets' opinion. Yet, perhaps,—taking into account the remains of winter, which envelope the May-flower's birth, and the contrast which the forest sward presents to the garden and the green-house, and the flower vase—the terms used, above, may be in good keeping.—What a story seems condensed in the two closing lines—some neglected, circumstance-oppressed beauty, struggling in virtuous obscurity, with the ills for which no remedy appears:

"But long sad Pity's tears shall flow
For her who so resembles thee."

The next of the poetic wreath, presented to the little Queen of Spring flowers, runs thus:

TO AN EARLY MAY-FLOWER.

Soft pearly flow'r, on wintry bed,
What sun-beam cheer'd thy fragile head?
Or genial dew, or balmy air,
Has nurs'd thee with a tender care?

The snow flake crests thy mossy dome,
And ice drops glisten 'round thy home,
The hoar frost spangles bush and tree,
And ling'ring winter threatens thee.

Pale o'er thy rip'ning flow'ret pass'd
The cold winds rude unfriendly blast,
But graceful 'mid the storms and snows
Thy perfum'd bud in triumph blows.

So Virtue's meek and faithful child
Is blooming on life's chilly wild,
Mid Evil's rude and ruthless guile
Unsollied wears her pristine smile.

And sweetly o'er his wayward fate
The Poet sings, in soul elate,—
Wakes the bold theme or plaintive lay,
And wins the Muse's blooming bay.

[WERAND.—Halifax.]

We might hazard one or two remarks on the questions in the opening stanza of this contribution also,—but they are not essential. The snow flake, the ice drops, and the hoar frost, too keen indications of lingering winter, are well introduced,—and are not exaggerations. An "early May Flower" might be beset by these difficulties; for winter, we know to our cost, frequently, does not altogether resign his command, when the *Spring* months, so called, give him notice to strike his camp. The references to Virtue's and Fancy's child, are well made,—the "pristine smile" may be preserved in scenes of difficulty,—and the Poet, often, rising above "his wayward fate," enjoys his lute, and his fancied honours, independent, for the moment, of the world and fortune.

Here is another of Apollo's offerings to Flora,—and, although not exclusively, it belongs to our theme, for it includes the season's favourite, and all the flowers. It is from a sweet poet also, and addressed to a sweet painter. "The Wild Flowers," which form the theme of our correspondent, are pictured representations now flowing periodically on the public, and which will "live when summer's bloom is past;" but let our friend speak for himself:

"THE WILD FLOWERS."

Touched by Maria's forming hand,
In all their varied dyes,
Thine own sweet flowers, my native Land!
In all their beauty rise.

Frail lovely things!—the sacred spell
That round our hearts they cast,
Shall live when Summer sighs—"Farewell!"
And all her bloom is past.

Their light shall now through all the year
About our haunts be shed;
And e'en their pictured forms be dear
When all their sweets have fled.

When Sol to southern climes retires,
And wintry tempests roar,
Beside our cheerful evening fires
Their smiles shall please the more.