

Portfolio of Select Literature.

ELOQUENCE AND POWER OF DR. THOMAS GUTHRIE.

DR. GUTHRIE in the pulpit is wonderful to the eye as well as to the ear. He is tall, with a face quite peculiar—a face that attracts, you cannot tell why; full of earnestness, as you look upon it: every feature eloquent with the message he is delivering, yet withal full of shrewdness and sagacity; the face of a man who could be consulted with advantage on the matters of this world, as well as on those of the next; and beneath all that, you can trace a fund of kindest humor, flashes of which escape inadvertently now and then, and disport themselves amid the solemnities of his theme, strangely heightening the effect. Than his action and elocution nothing could be more monotonous. He sways backwards and forwards in his pulpit, he speaks in an undulating sing-song, not without a certain melody and rude rhythmic cadence of its own; and while you sit puzzled with his peculiarities, and inwardly asking yourself if this is the orator of whom you have heard so much, there is suddenly a strange excitation on the speaker, his arm waves, his eye flashes, his voice rises clear up out of its level, and a startling thought or illustration hurries your blood like a trumpet's clang. Dr. Guthrie does not argue save through images. He does not throw out new thoughts, but he illustrates and enforces old ones. He reads his Bible with a marvelously vivifying glance; and expressions, and little points of narration, which his hearer has been accustomed to pass over with indifference, or accept as matters of course, are to him of the profoundest significance. His illustrations drawn from the Old Testament histories, are remarkable for freshness and life. He speaks of the bulrushes bending over the ark of Moses, as if he had beheld the scene yesterday. He sees David sling down the boaster of Gath, and in the silence of the two armies he hears Goliath fall like a tower. Professor Blackie has called him a "preaching Homer." After sermon in the evening you feel yourself a better man; your aspirations are quickened, your desires after goodness stimulated, although you cannot, on examination, find that you have been taught any thing, that a single new thought has been received into your mind, or that an oppressive doubt has been dissipated. You find that no local change has been wrought, so to speak; but that the general health has been improved as by a change of air.

With all his fame, it may be doubted whether Dr. Guthrie's greatest triumphs have been won in the pulpit. Perhaps he is greater on the platform. He is really worth seeing and hearing *there*. He rises and begins to speak in an uncertain and listless manner, having apparently given the subject no previous consideration. The tall swaying figure seems ill at ease; the words pause on the tongue. He seems to feel speechmaking a very difficult business. The road clears however before him, getting less stony every step. Then the eyes kindle in the shrewd swarthy face; a telling anecdote is introduced, and the audience is in a roar. When he gets thoroughly into his subject he plays with it like a kitten with a ball of worsted; he turns it round and round, surveys it from