

in verse, for the sake of the play of fancy which that form peculiarly admits of (a sort of game of romps of the imagination through bars and wickets), so it is ordinarily understood that poetry comes out upon us in this mode and fashion of versification. Verse once adopted, there is no end of its fantastic varieties—the modifications being, as all the world knows, innumerable throughout past ages; and, as all the world may reasonably conjecture, infinite in ages to come. Yet notwithstanding this inexhaustible capacity, in the production of forms, it is in poetry as in architecture, music, and painting,—a few striking kinds or classes have become gradually supreme over the confusion of a multitude; and the assent of mankind seems to have recognized these, as containing within themselves all the Shapes of Verse that are essential to the expression of beauty, of power, thought, character, and the rest of the human and intellectual aims that are embraced by the Art throughout all its wide and diversified regions and influences.

The present period of time is said not to be poetical, and, no doubt, with truth in one sense. Steam and cast iron, and, above all, an active progress in the practical business of life, which at intervals shuts out the day dreams of the soul, have intercepted the frequent enjoyment, and still more the frequent production, of the higher kinds of poetry. But if we have less of the higher kinds, we have more of the central level of verse, between excellence and mediocrity (for there is nothing below mediocrity)—a sort of middle current, that runs on freshly and fluently; while the upper stream seems to flow languidly, like a wave hushed in the still meridian. This sort of mid-living poetry is not much esteemed, because it falls short of those great examples which are within every body's reach; and because men, when their judgments become educated in such lofty schools, often affect, in the very pride of their knowledge, to despise more than it deserves that which is confessedly inferior to the models with which they believe they possess a sort of exclusive acquaintance. But this is mere bigotry of the mind, and want of sympathy. It is not because the poems that come within the description to which we have referred are not equal to the elevation of the subjects they attempt that they do not contain a deep, a healthy germ of feeling, out of which high aspirations and noble tendencies flower, like sweet blossoms gushing into the air from a rich and warm soil; it is not that the poet does not feel and long for that far-off and unrevealed glory which he vainly struggles after, but that he wants the power to give force and vitality to his emotions. But we are, nevertheless, required to note the amount of incapable enthusiasm, if we must so call it, that is thus for ever labouring in vain—the zeal that eats in upon itself—the passion that is nourished by its own heart—the energy blind in the depths of its action, and bringing out no visible signs of its strength, but a thousand tokens of a lost strenuousness working against despair! These men are poets in their internal nature, in the mystery of their lives and toils, who, wanting the art to develop their desires, still struggle on in hope and demonstration. We would call old Christopher North to bear testimony to this, but that we are afraid he would break down in his evidence.—*Monthly Chronicle*

WATERLOO.

At five o'clock in the morning of the 18th of June, 1815, the English army arrived at its destined position, at the end of the forest of Soigny. It occupied a rising ground, having in its front a gentle declivity. The extremity of the right wing was stationed at Merbe Braine. The enclosed country and deep ravines round the village protected the right flank, and rendered it impossible for the enemy to turn it. In the centre of the right was a country-house called Hougomont, or Goumont (*Le Chateau de Goumont*.) The house was loop-holed and strongly occupied; the garden and orchard were lined with light troops, and the wood before the house was maintained by some companies of the guards. The front of the right was thrown back to avoid a ravine which would have exposed it, and was nearly at right angles with the centre. It consisted of the second and fourth English divisions, the third and sixth Hanoverians, and the first of the Netherlands, and was commanded by Lord Hill. The centre was composed of the corps of the Prince of Orange, supported by the Brunswick and Nassau regiments, with the guards under General Cooke on the right, and the divisions of General Alten on the left. In front was the farm of La Haye Sainte, which was occupied in great force. The road from Genappe to Brussels ran through the middle of the centre. The left wing, consisting of the divisions of Generals Picton, Lambert, and Kempt, extended to the left of La Haye, which it occupied, and the defiles of which protected the extremity of the left, and prevented it from being turned. The cavalry was principally posted in the rear of the left of the centre.

Separated by a valley varying from half to three-fourths of a mile in breadth, were other heights following the bending of those on which the British army was posted. The advanced guard of the French reached these heights in the evening of the 17th, and some skirmishes took place between the out-posts.

The night was dreadful. An incessant rain fell in torrents.

The soldiers were up to their knees in mud, and many of them, particularly of the officers, who had not yet been able to change their ball dresses on leaving Brussels, laid themselves down on this comfortless bed, to rise no more. In the morning their limbs were stiffened by cold and wet, and they were unable to move. Few places could be found sufficiently free from mud to light a fire, and when the fire was lighted, the storm, which continued to pour pitilessly down, immediately extinguished it. Both armies equally suffered; but the day soon broke, and the soldiers sprung on their feet eager for the combat.

If the night was terrible to the soldiers who were inured to the inclemency of the weather, it was far more dreadful to the wretched inhabitants of the villages in the rear of the French army. It had always been the policy of Napoleon at those critical times, when so much depended on the heroism of his troops, to relax the severity of his discipline, and to permit them to indulge in the most shameful excesses. They now abandoned themselves to more than usual atrocities. Every house was pillaged. The property which could not be carried away was wantonly destroyed, and the inhabitants fled in despair to the woods.

Notwithstanding the torrents of rain and the depth of the roads, Napoleon succeeded in bringing up his whole army, in the course of the night, and his numerous artillery, consisting of more than three hundred pieces. He had feared that the British would retire in the night, and when he saw them at the dawn of day occupying the position of the preceding evening, he could not contain his joy. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I have them, then, these English."

A farmer, who lived near the house called Belle Alliance, was seized by the French, and carried to Napoleon, who, mounting him on horseback, tying him to the saddle, and giving the bridle into the hands of a trooper, compelled him to act as guide. Before any of the French troops were placed in the position which they were to occupy, Napoleon ascended a neighbouring eminence, and acquainted himself with every feature of the surrounding country. His inquisitiveness knew no bounds. Not an inequality of the ground, not an hedge escaped him. He was employed in this preparation during four or five hours, and every observation was carefully noted in a map, which he carried in his hand.

The ground occupied by the two armies was the smallest in extent of front, compared with the numbers engaged, in the recollection of military men. The English line did not extend more than a mile and a-half in length, and the French line about two miles. This will partly account for the unparalleled losses which each party sustained, and particularly for the destruction caused by the artillery.

About nine o'clock the rain began to abate, and at eleven the French were in full position, and ready to advance to the attack. The left wing was commanded by Jerome Buonaparte; the centre by Generals Reilly and Erlon, and the right by Count Lobau. The imperial guard was in reserve. The French army consisted of eighty thousand men; the Duke of Wellington had not more than sixty-five thousand. The French regiments were the very élite of the army; but this was the first campaign which many of Wellington's troops had seen.—*London Mirror*.

LIBRARY OF CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

Within the walls of Chelsea Hospital there is an apartment, which, without possessing any attractive feature, either as to form or ornament, is yet well worth a moment's inspection by the intelligent visiter. It is the old men's library,—a pleasant and a comfortable chamber—set round here and there with bookcases and rendered as convenient as possible, by means of a strong cross-light, for the decayed powers of vision of those who frequent it. Four long tables, each flanked by its own forms, occupy the centre of the room, and are usually overspread with newspapers, magazines, and other materials of light reading; while a blazing fire sheds in winter an air of comfort over the whole, to which no living man can be more alive than the pensioners. Then, again, there are half-a-dozen stout arm-chairs, rendered moveable by means of castors; a cupboard into which the newspapers, when sufficiently thumbed, are stowed away; a stiff horse-hair mat at the door, of which the students ere they enter are presumed to make use; and patent wire blinds, which, covering the lower panes in each window, preserve for the little coterie, when assembled, their privacy. As to the ornamental portion of the furniture it is described in few words. A ceiling neatly whitewashed; walls wainscotted to their full elevation; a few engravings, such as represent London in the olden time; good old George the Third, one of the best of England's monarchs; a French grenadier, and the likeness of two well-known characters who have quitted this our stage only a few years,—these make up the sum total of what the hand of taste has accomplished for the edification and amusement of the Chelsea Pensioners: for, sooth to say, we are in this our land of liberty exceedingly neglectful of the humanizing influence of the arts; else would this very chamber—or, possibly, some other both larger and more commodious erected for the purpose,—have long ago contained well-executed representations of the triumphs of British arms in all parts of the world.

The Pensioners' Library is under the immediate charge of one who appears not a little proud of his office. A fine old veteran he is; slow of speech, and exceedingly methodical doubtless; yet tender of the treasures which have been committed to his trust, and absent from his post never.

The old men's library, like more costly institutions of the sort is, of course, managed by rules; but the rules are of the simplest and most comprehensive kind. The door stands open, not literally but metaphorically, from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon, so that all among the pensioners whose humours lead them in that direction may enter. Formerly tickets were issued, without production of one of which no man might reap the benefit of the institution; but the practice was found to operate as a check upon the taste which more than all others ought to be encouraged in such a place, and it has been tacitly intermitted. Still, however, the books are fixtures, except under very peculiar circumstances. Nobody may carry a volume to his ward, for example, without written leave from the chaplain, and such leave is rarely granted except in sickness. The consequence is, that the reading-room can boast of a large and respectable occupancy all the year round. In summer, to be sure, the bright warm sun, and the balmy breezes, lure the old fellows abroad, and the quiet gardens, which were a few years ago prepared for them, and the little rustic temple, that looks down upon these gardens, become their favourite haunts; but at other seasons the shelter of a roof, and the warmth of a snug fire-side, are found more congenial than any other position to the worn-out frames of our inmates. Accordingly, it is during the winter months,—that is, from October to the end of May,—that our library is best frequented. Moreover, there are certain periods in each day—the Lord's-day of course excepted—when our people usually congregate here; and certain limits to their zeal in the search after knowledge. The visiter who may chance to look in upon them any time between half-past nine and half-past ten in the morning, is sure to find a dozen and a half or two dozen congregated together; while, by and by—in other words, from two till four—they generally meet again.

It is not, however, to be imagined that the old fellows frequent the reading-room for the mere purpose of holding converse either with the matured wisdom of the mighty dead, or with the crudities of the passing day. The reading-room is to them a place of pleasant rendezvous, where they gather themselves round the fire in little knots, and hold that sort of conversation which among old men who have mixed much with their kind is most in favour; for here we are not only garrulous but entertaining. We have all seen a good deal of the world; we have had in our own persons, and witnessed in those of others, ups and downs, triumphs, and our memories are stored with legends of the good and the bad, of the brave and the coward, of the youth and the maiden, of the true and the false-hearted.—*Bentley's Miscellany*.

YOUTH AND AGE.

We said to thee an hour ago—that youth is reverent, and age garrulous—but for garrulous read eloquent—else how could thou and thy like often come to listen—more than willingly—to our continuous discourse? To-morrow thou art to leave town for a month.

Art thou going to the Highlands? If so, 'tis well.—for another week they will be beginning to be beautiful—and by the end of May to leave them, in their perfection, will sadden the heart. In their perfection! Ay—verily, even so—for the tenderness of Spring will then be blending with the boldness of Summer—while something will still be wanting to the strength of the year. And the joy of the soul is brightest in the fullness of hope, when the future is almost instant as the present, and the present tinged with a gentle rainbow-like resemblance of the past.

Would we were to be thy guide! There—let us lean our left shoulder on thine—our right on THE CRUTCH. The time will come when thou wilt be! Son of the Morning! even like unto the shadow by thy side—Christopher North. No chamois hunter fleetier than once was he—Mont Blanc, speaks he not the truth? If he be a vain-glorious boaster, give him the lie, Beney-Glow and thy Brotherhood—who heard our shouts—mixed with the red deer's belling—tossed back in exultation by Echo the omnipresent Auditress on youth's golden hills.

The world is all before thee—the world is all behind us; hope is thy angel—memory is ours; but both are considerate spirits—and they bid the young and the old, the joyful and the sorrowful—as thus we lean on one another—think that time is but the threshold of eternity and that the shadow may survive the light, on "this dim spot men call earth."

The central sun art thou of thine own bright world! Ours is broken into fragments—and we are on the edge of an abyss. But once we were like thee, a victorious Echo—and illumined nature all around her farthest horizon with the bliss of our own soul. Fear, awe, and superstition were ministers to our imagination among the midnight mountains—in the dreadful blank we worshipped the thunder and adored the cataract—but joy was then our element; peace now, 'tis time—and in spite of such visitations that made us quake and tremble, fresh is our spirit as a rising star, and strong as a flowing sea.—*Professor Wilson*.