

POETRY.

THE NEGRO'S PRAYER.

Twas night, and o'er the rippled sea
A gentle breeze arose,
More welcome than the scorching sun,
That here in no day glows.

The balmy dew-drops heavy fell,
And dimly shone the moon;
No sound disturbed, save wind and wave
The soul inspiring gloom.

Not long the awful silence reign'd;
For straight from Negro shed,
Along the beach with hasty step,
The captive Gambia fled.

Thro' well known paths from thence he
flew,
And 'neath a lime's dark shade,
The narciss'd slave, o'er Leah's tomb,
The ardent tribute paid.

Then turning from the ballow'd spot,
Weak, pensive, and oppress'd,
To heaven he rais'd his weeping eyes,
And thus relieved his breast:

O Alla! say, most Afric's tribe
Sink fetter'd to the grave?
And when the spirit takes its flight,
Will shackles load the slave?

If not, this ever ready dirk,
Shall gore my injured breast,
And tho' to hell my soul repairs,
My aching limbs will.

I rave, for sure it cannot be,
That one like thee so good,
Would banish me and cherish those
Who traffic in my blood.

Resigned, in thee my hopes I'll fix,
Nor fear the bawling wave,
Which foams in every frightful form,
With torment to the slave.

I'll bear the worst, with patience bear,
Nor once shall sorrow's sigh
Escape my breast; and silenc'd thus
Will Gambia live and die.

WINTER IN THE LAP OF MAY.

Still art thou chilling Winter, here,
Thou wilt not from us pass away,
Thy blasts are sounding in my ear
Amid the naked groves of May.

In vain my favourite bower I seek,
The fresh blown flowers no fragrance
shed,
The young rose feels the north wind
bleak,
And closes still her beauteous head.

I watch the clouds sail o'er the sky,
And veil the pure ethereal blue,
I watch the dark storm spread, and sigh,
I sigh the cheerful sun to view.

Come May with thy bright skies again,
Come as of old, illumine the streams,
Light up the groves, the sylvan glen,
Come to my view like fairy dreams.

Come in thy pride, in blossoms drest,
Tav balmy airs breathe and inspire,
Oh! bid me rove with glowing breast,
And with thy flowers enwreath my lyre.

ANECDOTES OF THE LATE MR. WOOD.

His father was lying dangerously ill at Cheltenham, and at length "Jemmy," for that was the name by which he was generally known, mustered up courage and went to Dr. Cheston, who resided at Gloucester, and asked him to come to Cheltenham, to see his dying parent. Dr. Cheston having fixed a period, and a post chaise having been procured, they went together to Cheltenham. On their arrival, however, they found the old gentleman had breathed his last. Jemmy, after having shed a tear, said to the physician, "Well, doctor, we must take him home with us." "Take him home with us," replied the doctor; "in what way?" "How can we take him home with us?" "Oh!" said the rich banker, "we can put 'em between us in the chaise, and no one will know but what he's alive." The Doctor, although having a great and proper regard for his patients during their lifetime was not so much at-

tached to them in death, and therefore was puzzled to find out some mode by which he might get rid of the companion intended for him. He however hit upon this expedient. The road between Gloucester and Cheltenham was at that period very bad, and he therefore said to the devoted son, "I shall have no objection at all, Mr. Wood; but as the road is very rough, the probability is, if we put the body in an upright position, that your father, by the shaking of the carriage, will come to life again." "Oh," said Jemmy, "let 'em stay doctor, let 'em stay; I'll send a hearse for 'em."

On another occasion, as he was returning from Cheltenham, whether he had been footing it, a violent storm came on. Jemmy was fearful that his venerable coat which was so old that according to the Gloucestershire song "it would keep out no rain," would be injured, looked about for some house to shelter himself. No friendly cottage was visible, but in a short time he espied a hearse coming. Jemmy rubbed his hands with almost as much glee as if he had earned a penny, and hailed the driver with whom he struck a bargain, and who allowed him to ride inside his vehicle, Jemmy giving him especial directions to put him down before they entered Gloucester. The driver of course acceded to this request, but he knew well who his passenger was, and as no chaise or hearse driver in the city ever had occasion to be thankful to the rich banker for any favours conferred on them, he thought, at all events, he would have a joke, so driving quietly into the city, he gave all the persons he saw in the street to understand that he had something rich within, and induced them to follow in his train. On arriving opposite the shop of Mr. Wood he drew up in due form, and a crowd having assembled he requested some one to open the door of the hearse, when to the astonishment and merriment of all present, who should get out but Mr. Wood himself. The banker was a little annoyed at first to find himself opposite his own door, yet recollecting that the ride had cost him a mere nothing his countenance soon recovered its wonted complacency at having had a QUID SIXE QUOR.

There were three banking establishments at Gloucester, and many years since there chanced to be a run upon one of them. Mr. Wood in high glee at the idea of his neighbour being likely to be ruined, observed that there would be but two banks in Gloucester. This came to the ears of one of the partners of the other bank, who after having weathered the storm, went to Mr. Wood to threaten with legal proceedings against him. With that degree of low cunning, however, which avaricious persons possess, Mr. Wood at once admitted having made the observation, but added that he was at the time fully justified in so doing, as he himself had some thoughts of retiring from business, and then there would be only two banks in Gloucester. Of course Mr. ——— could not contradict this, though at the same time he was well aware of the mean subterfuge resorted to.

It has been for a long time said, that whenever Mr. Wood was coming to London, he invariably took an outside place; and at all times when an inside was vacant, after they had got some miles on the road, he made friends with the guard who on receipt of one shilling or so, allowed the banker to supply such vacancy. The regularity of the old gentleman's at length became an object of remark at the coach office, and the next time he went to book as usual, the clerk said, "No Sir, we must have the inside fare if you please." Mr. Wood finding that he had been found out, after a few ineffectual attempts to demand an explanation, handed over the larger sum and walked off.

It was likewise a matter of frequent remark some years since, that Jemmy rarely dined at home on a Sunday. He was often told by persons that they would dine with him on that day, it being a leisure day; but he generally made an excuse on the ground that he himself was engaged out. The continuance of these prior engagements, all the residents in the city being well acquainted with the fact that he visited no one, led to his being watched and to inquiries, when it

was discovered that Mr. Wood the rich banker, and by general repute one of the wealthiest commoners within the British dominions, was in the habit of putting some cold meat into his pocket on the Sunday morning, and walking off some distance into the country, where he went into some roadside public house and had half a pint of beer, to moisten the throat become parched with the walk and the dryness of the victuals he had eaten during the day.

MILITARY PUNISHMENTS.

The Commissioners for enquiring into the system of military punishment in the army have made their report.—The document however is of such great length that we are compelled to confine ourselves to the following brief summary which the Commissioners supply of the results of the evidence before them.

1. That the opinion of almost every witness whom we have examined is, that the substitution of other punishments for corporal punishments in the British army, upon actual service in the field, is impracticable, and if practicable, would be insufficient for the maintenance of proper discipline in your Majesty's army.

2. That the abolition of the power of awarding corporal punishment, by sentence of court martial in the British Islands and the Colonies, and during peace and the retention of the power of inflicting that punishment when the army is on service and in the field, appears to us, for the reasons we have stated manifestly unjust.

3. That it does not appear to us, that the punishments which have been resorted to as substitutes have hitherto had such an effect as to render it safe to abolish altogether that power in Great Britain or the Colonies, nor have any other punishments been suggested to us that appear to promise a more favourable result.

4. That it appears to us, that even supposing that some effectual substitute might be devised, or that those now in use might be made more effectual, so as to render corporal punishment ultimately unnecessary it would be unsafe to proceed at once to abolish it entirely, and that even in that case, its abolition should be gradual.

5. That in order to give full effect to the punishments now in use as substitutes for corporal punishment, considerable alterations must be made in the means of rendering solitary confinement in the several barracks more effective, and that a certain number of prisons exclusively for military offenders should be provided as soon as possible.

6. That although we have been unwillingly convinced of the necessity of still retaining the power of corporal punishment and in proportion to our conviction of that necessity, we earnestly recommend that no pains may be spared to endeavour to make its infliction less frequent.

7. That with the view of diminishing the frequency of this punishment, the offences to which it is limited and the occasions upon which it should be resorted to, should be more clearly defined.

8. That with the same view, more discretion should be vested in commanding officers as to the power of making use of minor punishments, and in determining on the offences which shall under their orders be tried by a regimental court-martial.

9. That it appears to us that the extent of the sentences is the power of the several descriptions of courts-martial to award may, without danger, be a more limited than at present.

10. That encouragement should be given in the way of honorary reward and distinction, both to the gallant and to the well conducted soldier.

11. That no consideration of expense within reasonable bounds should be allowed to stand in the way of attending to the comforts of the soldier while in the service, and of a sufficient pension for the good and deserving man after that service has been performed.

We cannot close our report without assuring your Majesty that we find ample evidence of the earnest desire and the most strenuous efforts upon the part of

not only the superior officers but of officers of all ranks so to conduct the discipline of the army as to render corporal punishment as rare as possible; and more especially we observe that the commanding officers are fully aware of your Majesty's gracious wishes in that respect and we are satisfied that they will persevere in giving the fullest effect, by the strictest attention to the moral discipline of their regiments, to those wishes.

How far the result of the inquiry in which we have, by your Majesty's command been so long engaged, will tend to remove or mitigate the feeling which now prevails against the use of corporal punishment in the army, we know not, but we can assure your Majesty, that we have endeavoured to sift the questions submitted to our inquiry fully and fairly and without prejudice, and that we have formed our opinions upon the result of the very best evidence that could have been obtained upon the question.

Finally, we feel it to be our duty to your Majesty to state our conviction, that if it were possible to introduce such a system of discipline as that of France into your Majesty's army (a system which in its effects we believe to be far from being as successful as that of Great Britain, it could only be by the establishment of such a rigorous conscription of all ranks as we believe would not be endured, and by a change in the whole tone of this country, as to the military service, such as we have no expectation of seeing effected.

We humbly submit this our unanimous report to your Majesty's royal consideration.

Wharnccliffe,
James Kempt
Sandon
E. Hyde East
R. C. Fergusson
E. Barnes, Lt.-General
T. Reynell

India Board,
March 15th 1839.

There are three curious marriages announced in the last Leicester paper.—The first is that of a master Elijah Brown, to a Miss Eliza Stevenson, whose ages together make only thirty one years.

The second is that of Samuel Bateman Esq., a man of considerable property, of Dudley, surveyor and land agent to the Earl of Dudley to a young woman of humble birth, named Matchett, of Leicester; the bride and bridesmaid were profusely laden with satins, veils and plumes; two carriages and four were put in requisition, and every attendant,—whether post-boy, ostler, or what not—had his palm crossed with gold after the matrimonial knot had been tied.

The third is a young fellow aged seventeen, to a buxom widow of thirty-three with a family of seven children after a whole months widowhood.

The Prussians appear even to excel the Irish in their fondness for potatoes, as well as in the various modes of preparing them for use. A recent traveller states that he has frequently on one occasion seen them served in six different forms—the bread made from them—the soup thickened with them—fried potatoes—potatoe salad, and potatoe dumplings; and lastly potatoe cheese, which besides being extremely palatable will keep some years.

A dissertation on the age of the world having been read before the Queen of Sweden, she said,—“I believe it is with the world as with women, it hides its age.”

It is computed that the proceedings before the committee appointed to try the merits of the Dublin election will be attended with an expense of not less than £100,000; but the expense incurred before the commissioners appointed to hear evidence in Dublin will be paid by the public.

The Cheltenham Journal says that 90 coaches pass through that town daily.

A shipmaster in the north of Scotland having recently been asked his opinion of a "future state," sagely answered, that he "didna fash himself wi' o'ny state affairs."