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ORIGINAL POETRY.

[For the Literary Transcript.]

THE DEAD SEA.

Behold the dark and sullen wave
That rolls above fair Siddim's grave!
In silent awe we gaze upon
The waters, where oblivious
Hath her sable mantle spread
O'er the cities of the dead.

Glad and bright the morning lark,
When Siddim's myriads awake
On that judgment-dealing day
That saw them swept like chaff away.
The sun arose with his woful stare,
And gave no sign of forth coming fair!
Each flower peeped forth from the golden vale
To meet the kiss of the early gale,
Like a maiden shy, when her lover is near,
Half in pleasure, and half in fear;
The drowsy hum of the insect-kind
Came like music on the wind,
And bird and flower, in gorgeous throng,
Wooded the sun with bloom and song.

Sudden all was hushed and dumb,—
God's avenging hour had come!
Every knee with fear was quaking,
Every knee with terror shaking,
When, amid the darkened air,
They saw the arm of Vengeance bare!
Swift, that pause of wonder o'er
Came the hurricane's roar!
Rose the force, blasphemous howl,
Blended with the thunder's growl;
The virgin's shriek of horror wild,
The mother's wailing o'er her child,
The sinner's hoarse and gasping prayer
For life, the ravings of despair,
And many a quick convulsive cry
Of nature's parting agony!

Still, down and down, increasing came
The stifling deluge of smoke and flame,
And when it ceased, a lurid cloud
Hung, enveloping, like a shroud,
That reeking spot of guilt and woe,
Whose glory thus was levelled low.

And now, though high four thousand years
Have rolled along, with their smiles and tears,
At times, in the depths of that lonely sea,
The smiling palaces still we may see;
But the weeds o'er column and capital climb,
The glass of the marble is hidden with slime,
And their former tenants have passed away,
And their beauty is gone for ever and aye!

- A peal of gloom is on the strand,
- The haggard rocks, the desert sand,
- And the dry and barren sod,
- A mighty voice the place has hushed,
- A mighty breath the ruin fanned,
- A mighty curse is on the land—
- The voice, the breath, the curse of God!

TABITHA.

THE SOLDIER'S RETURN.

Seven or eight years ago, I was travelling between Berwick and Selkirk, and, having started at the crowing of the cock, I had left Melrose before four in the afternoon. On arriving at Abbotford, I perceived a Highland soldier, apparently fatigued as myself, leaning upon a walking-stick, and gazing intently on the fairy palace of the magician whose wand is since broken, but whose magic still remains. I am no particular disciple of Lavater's, yet the man carried his soul upon his face, and we were friends at the first glance. He wore a plain Highland bonnet and a coarse grey great coat, buttoned to the throat. His dress bespoke him to belong only to the ranks; but there was a dignity in his manner, and a fire, a glowing language, in his eyes, worthy of a chieftain. His height might exceed five feet nine, and his age be about thirty. The tresses of manly beauty were still upon his cheeks; but the sun of a western hemisphere had tinged them with a sorrow hue and imparted untimely furrows.

Our conversation related chiefly to the classic scenery around us; and we had pleasantly journeyed together for two or three miles when we arrived at a little sequestered burial-ground by the way-side, near which there was neither church nor dwelling. Its low wall was thinly covered with turf, and we sat down

upon it to rest. My companion became silent and melancholy, and his eyes wandered anxiously among the graves.

"Here," said he, "sleep some of my father's children, who died in infancy."

He picked up a small stone from the ground, and, throwing it gently a-out ten yards, "That added he," is the weary poet. But, think God! no grave-stone has been raised during my absence! It is a token I shall find my parents living—and!" continued he, with a sigh, "may I also find their love!" "It is hard, Sir; when the heart of a parent is turned against his own child."

He dropped his head upon his breast for a few moments and was silent, and, hastily raising his forefinger to his eyes, seemed to dash away a solitary tear. Then turning to me, he continued: "You may think, Sir, this is weakness in a soldier; but human hearts beat beneath a red coat. My father, whose name is Campbell, and who was brought from Argyleshire while young, is a wealthy farmer in this neighbourhood. Twelve years ago, I loved a being gentle as the light of a summer moon. We were children together, and she grew in beauty on my sight, as the star of evening steals into glory through the twilight. But she was poor and portionless, the daughter of a near shepherd. Our attachment offended my father. He commanded me to leave her forever, a cold act, and he turned me from his house. I wandered, I know not, and I cared not, whether. But I will not detain you with my history. In my utmost need I met a gentleman of the forty-second, who was then upon the recruiting service, and in a few weeks I joined that regiment of proud hearts. I was at Brussels when the invitation to the wolf and the raven rang at midnight through the streets. It was the herald of a day of glory and of death. There were three Highland regiments of us—three joined in one—joined in rivalry, in love, and in purpose; and, thank Fate! I was present when the Scots Greys, flying to our aid, raised the electric shout, "Scotland for ever!" "Scotland for ever!" returned our tartan'd clansmen; "Scotland for ever!" reverberated as from the hearts we had left behind us; and "Scotland for ever!" re-echoed! "Victory!" "Heavens!" added he, starting to his feet, and grasping his staff, as the enthusiasm of the poet gushed back upon his soul, "to have joined in that shout was to live an eternity in the situation of a pendulum!"

In a few moments the animated soul that gave eloquence to his tongue drew itself back into the chambers of humanity, and resuming his seat upon the low wall, he continued, "I left my old regiment with the prospect of promotion, and have since served in the West Indies; but I have heard nothing of my father—nothing of my mother—nothing of her I love."

While he was yet speaking, the grave-digger, with a pick-axe and spade over his shoulder, entered the ground. He approached within a few yards of where we sat. He measured off a narrow piece of earth—it encircled the little stone which the soldier had thrown to mark out the burial-place of his family. Convulsion rushed over the features of my companion; he shivered—he grasped my arm—his lips quivered—his breathing became short and loud—the cold sweat trickled from his temples. He sprung over the wall—he rushed towards the spot.

"Man!" he exclaimed in agony, "whose grave is that?"

"Hoot! awa' wi' ye," said the grave-digger, starting back at his manner; "whatta way is that to gliff a body!—are ye datt?"

"Answer me," cried the soldier, seizing his hand; "whose grave—whose grave is that?"

"Marcy me!" replied the man of death, "ye are surely out o' your head—it's an auld body they ca'd Adam Campbell's grave—now are you any thing the wiser for spierin'?"

"My father?" cried my comrade as I approached him; and, clasping his hand together, he bent his head upon my shoulder, and wept aloud.

I will not dwell upon the painful scene. During his absence, adversity had given the fortunes of his father to the wind; and he had died in an humble cottage unlamented and unnoticed by the friends of his prosperity.

At the request of my fellow-traveller, I accompanied him to the house of mourning. Two or three poor cottagers sat around the fire. The coffin, with the lid open, lay across a table near the window. A few white hairs fell over the whiter face of the deceased which seemed to indicate that he died from sorrow rather than from age. The son pressed his lips to his father's cheek. He groaned in spirit, and was troubled. He raised his head in agony, and, with a voice almost inarticulate with grief, exclaimed, inquiringly, "My mother?"

The wretched peasants started to their feet, and in silence pointed to a lowly bed. He hastened forward—he fell upon his knees by the bed-side.

"My mother!—O my mother!" he exclaimed, "do not you, too, leave me! Look at me—I am your own son—you own Willie—have you, too, forget me, mother?"

She, too, lay upon her death-bed, and the tide of life was fast ebbing; but the remembrance of her beloved son drove it back for a moment. She opened her eyes—she attempted to raise her feeble hand, and it fell upon his head. She spoke, but she alone knew the words that she uttered; they seemed accents of mingled anguish, of joy, and of blessing. For several minutes he bent over the bed, and wept bitterly. He held her withered hand in his; he started; and, as we approached him, the hand he held was stiff and lifeless. He wept no longer—he gazed from the dead body of his father to that of his mother—his eyes wandered wildly from one to the other—he smote his hand upon his brow, and threw himself upon a chair, while misery transfixed him, as if a thunderbolt had entered his soul.

I will not give a description of the melancholy funeral, and the solitary mourner. The father's obsequies were delayed, and the son laid both his parents in the same grave.

Several months passed away before I gained information respecting the sequel of my little story. After his parents were laid in the dust William Campbell, with a sad and anxious heart, made inquiries after Jeanie Leslie, the object of his early affections, to whom we have already alluded. For several weeks his search was fruitless; but at length he learned that considerable property had been left to her father by a distant relative, and that he now resided somewhere in Dumfriesshire.

In the same garb which I have already described, the soldier set out upon his journey. With little difficulty he discovered the house. It resembled such as are occupied by the higher class of farmers. The front door stood open. He knocked, but no one answered. He proceeded along the passage—he heard voices in an apartment on his right—again he knocked, but was unheeded. He entered uninvited. A group were standing in the middle of the floor, and amongst them a minister commencing the marriage-service of the Church of Scotland. The bride hung her head sorrowfully, and tears were stealing down her cheeks—she was his own Jeanie Leslie. The clergyman paused. The bride's father stepped forward angrily, and inquired, "What do ye want Sir?" but instantly recognising his features, he seized him by the breast, and, in a voice hushed with passion, continued, "Sorrow tak' ye for a scorn! what's brought ye here—an' the mair especially at a time like this? Get out o' my house, Sir! I say, Willie Campbell, get out o' my house an' never daigen my door again wi' your ne'er-do-weel countenance!"

A sudden shriek followed mention of his name, and Jeanie Leslie fell into the arms of her bridegroom.

"Peace, Mr Leslie!" said the soldier, pushing the old man aside; since matters are thus I will only stop to say farewell—for auld lang syne—you can deny me that?"

He passed towards the object of his young love. She spoke not—she moved not—she took her hand, but she seemed unconscious of what he did. And, as she again gazed upon her beautiful countenance, absence became as a dream upon her face. The very language he had acquired during their separation was laid aside. Nature triumphed over art, and he addressed her in the accents in which he had first breathed love, and won her heart.

"Jeanie!" said he, pressing her hand between his, "it's a sair thing to say 'forever, but at present I maun say it. This is a scene I never expected to see, for oh, Jeanie! I could have trusted to your truth and to your love, as the farmer trusts to seed-time and to harvest, and is not disappointed. Oh! Jeanie, woman! this is like separating the flesh from the bones, and burning the marrow! but ye maun be aither's now—farewell—farewell!"

"No! no!—my ain Willie!" she exclaimed, recovering from the agony of stupefaction: "my hand is still free, and my heart has ay been yours—save, Willie! save me!" and she threw herself into his arms.

The bridegroom looked from one to another, implying them to commence an attack upon the intruder, but he looked in vain. The father again seized the old grey coat of the soldier, and, almost rushing to the astonished company the richly laced uniform of a British officer. He dropped the fragment of the outer garment in wonder, and at the same time dropping his wrath, exclaimed, "Mr. Campbell!—or what are ye?—will ye explain yourself?"

A few words explained all. The bridegroom, a wealthy, middle-aged man without a heart, left the house, gauding his teeth. Badly as our military honours are conferred, merit is not always overlooked even in this country, were money is everything, and the Scottish soldier had obtained the promotion he deserved. Jeanie's joy was like a dream of heaven. In a few weeks she gave her hand to Captain Campbell of his Majesty's ————regiment of infantry, to whom long years before she had given her young heart.

DEVOTION.—True devotion, like the Being whom we worship, is visible only in its effects—in the activity which it prompts us to develop, or the benevolent affections it urges us to exercise. Its existence is proved, not by its being brought forward in its own shape, but by the diligence and uprightiness that it aids us to exhibit. Like the rain that cometh down from heaven, which first hides itself in the bosom of the earth, and then is seen no more, until verdure springs up where it had fallen, the fresh and beautiful witness of its influence, religious feeling proves its genuineness and vitality, not by a direct demonstration, but by the beauty in which it clothes the life, the purity it imparts to the will, the energy and usefulness it gives to the whole character. To carry the illustration still further, it is not those religious emotions that are the most violent, that, rushing down with the transient fury of a summer's shower, pass off and evaporate without satisfying the parched soil: it is not this kind that is the most acceptable; it is rather that species of religious sensibility that is gentle but uniform—that like the faithful dews of every morning, refreshes wherever it is found.

ANECDOTE OF THE LATE SIR EDWIN NAEL.—When a young man, travelling in a post-chaise up Slieeter's hill, a highway man rode up, presented a pistol into the window, and demanded his money or life. Sir Edmund, then a very athletic man, seized the arm of the ruffian, twisted the pistol from it, dragged him through the window, and, placing him beside him to keep him quiet, ordered the post-boy to drive on. The humble supplications of the highwayman were answered with, "Be easy, boy, be easy, I won't hurt ye." Still, the conscious-stricken robber kept pleading, till, at length, the chaise reached the captain's lodgings, when he hurried the fellow out of the coach, walked him up to the garret and locked the gates in. He then took off his own coat and said, "Now, sir, I neither mean