

POETRY.

THE DROUGHT.

DR. M. MATHESON, of Australia, the donor of the Gold Medal awarded in the final year in Medicine, sends us the following description of the fearful drought that prevails in the region where he resides. Scarcely any rain has fallen there for three years :

Oh, what is worse than that dread curse, a long continued drought?
The rich will fail, the brave will quail, and thinner grow the stout ;
In vain the strong their work prolong—in vain they early rise ;
It will not rain—then all in vain the wisdom of the wise ;
And far on high from earth doth fly Pallas, Jove's great daughter.
Pleasure is dead, and hope hath fled, now there is no water,
Some men blaspheme the God supreme and loud their curses yell ;
Some in prayers their toils and cares to Him on high they tell,
And all cry out ; but still the drought—the awful demon strides
O'er all the land, by dry winds fanned, roughshod he fiendish rides ;
His breath doth scorch like burning torch and slay the harmless stock ;
His awful gaze the ground doth blaze and harden it like rock ;
Before his eye the waters dry—all nature trembling kneels ;
His dreadful strength grows with his length and every creature feels ;
But few, I ween, save those who've seen, can ever understand
The fearful sight, the dreadful blight, that deserts all the land.
The valleys green no more are seen—no more the waters bright ;
The mountains brown with sterile frown are painful to the sight ;
Cattle and sheep but slowly creep with low and piteous moan,
While some down lie, waiting to die, and most heart-rending groan,
Hope deferred, as you have heard, it maketh the heart sick,
But prolonged drought, there is no doubt, doth turn it almost brick ;
But some there are, though few and far, whose hearts can ne'er grow cold,
Till still in death from want of breath they crumble into mould.

'Tis hard for man the skies to scan and see the clouds on high,
Like spirits, fly o'er his head, and taunting leave him dry,
With mocking sneer the wind doth veer to every point that's known
And makes it plain that signs in vain in times of drought are shown,
Yes ; man will in fear tremble ; 'tis little that he knows
Of e'en what's done beneath the sun and what the skies disclose,
The more he learns, and knowledge earns, it only tends to show
That some at least, are from the beast, but a degree or so.

M. M.

VARNO THE BRAVE :

A TALE OF THE

PICTS AND SCOTS.

BY THE LATE D. M., PERTH, N. B.

CALMLY the yellow sun sunk behind the blue distant Grampians, as if smiling a blessing, and conscious that it left the fair earth in peace ; and slowly the clouds began to crest the hills and the mist to spread its downy drapery o'er the landscape. Varno and Spoldanka sat on the western rampart of the castle and enjoyed in silence the beauties spread out before their eyes. So wistfully and long did the fair lady gaze on everything around that her spirit seemed to mingle with the elements. But Varno's eyes looked as if they recognized not what they gazed on, save when the note of a horn sounded at times in the direction of Abernethy. Then would he start with a half-formed smile, and a sudden flush would pass over his countenance, which vanished as he recollected that such sounds were common, and told of nothing save the pleasure of the homeward herdsman.

At length Spoldanka, breaking the silence, asked, "Did Varno ever see a night so lovely?"

"So lovely !" was the unconscious reply.

"Yes," said she ; "see what a gorgeous gate the palace of the sun has. Oh, I think I should like to enter it ; and look at the dark clouds that top the Grampians, and these little ones, like boats, floating on a sea of gold, along the summits of the blue Sidlaws. See the silvery Tay, gliding like a dream along its dark banks. Come now, say to what you could compare it? Nay, do not smile ; is it not like—" she said playfully, at the same time imprinting a kiss on his forehead ; "now, tell me, is it not like a silver belt shining among the raven ringlets of Spoldanka?"

She attempted to laugh, but could not, for a faint, aimless smile only passed like a shadow across the face of her lord.

"Nay, now," she continued, "what means my husband? Must Spoldanka's wit not have its due reward?"