

POETRY.

FROM THE LITERARY SOUVENIR.

You ask me for a pledge, love! but gaze upon my cheek,
 And let its hues, when thou art near, my heart's devotion speak;
 Look on my dim and tearful eye, my pale and rigid brow,
 And list my wild, unbidden sigh—what need of pledge or vow?

You ask me for a pledge, love! some token of my truth;
 Take then this flower, an emblem meet of woman's blighted youth:—
 The perfume of its withered leaves, triumphant o'er decay,
 May whisper of my changeless love, when I have passed away!

What! yet another pledge, love? then mark me while I vow,
 By all this heart hath borne for thee, by all it suffers now,
 In grief or gladness—hope—despair, in bliss or misery,
 I'll be—what I have ever been—to thee—to only thee!

(Continued from first page.)

Mr. Birkbeck being himself a widower, apparently about fifty years of age. Another circumstance was thought to have added much to the mortification produced by the failure of his projects, being no other than a disappointment in love, which, even at that late period of his life, had affected him in a remarkable degree. The object of this strange occurrence was a Miss A—, a lady of the Jewish persuasion, who had accompanied his family from England. She possessed very brilliant conversational talents; and whether specially engaged to the patriarch of the party, it is certain, that when the lady announced her intention to enter into a matrimonial connection with Mr. F—, the companion and co-partner of his journey, the most inveterate hostility, which time appeared in no wise to abate, was the consequence upon the part of the elder rival. In due time, however, the bright-eyed Jewess consigned her charms to the younger of these competitors,—maigre his wife in England. This affair contributed very greatly to the disadvantages of the settlement, substituting the most inveterate hostility for that co-operation of plan, which, in so retired a situation, was essentially required for success. In this state of things, about five years wore on, the settlement becoming gradually more deserted and impoverished, until at length the instalments due upon the extensive lands of Mr. Birkbeck, being unable to be paid, the entire property reverted to the government of the United States; the ruin of his family was the consequence of this too sanguine speculation; and his own unfortunate end, in the waters of the Wabash, completed what Mr. Cobbett has too truly called "the melancholy history of Mr. Birkbeck."

About two miles from Wanborough was the skeleton of another town, called Albion, in the centre of the lands of Mr. Flower.—This town consisted of a few straggling log-huts, with two or three houses built of stone, a brick tavern and two well supplied stores, with several inferior whiskey shops. Beyond this the place did not appear to advance, and a deficiency of water, none being found at a depth of one hundred and twenty feet, rendered its progress extremely dubious. This town, however, was otherwise in a well chosen situation, being upon an elevated ridge, and the spot healthy in the highest degree. Mr. Flower had the misfortune to become very unpopular amongst the back-woodsmen of that neighbourhood, for which there appeared certainly to be no foundation, other than the anomaly of a wealthy proprietor, living in some appearance of refinement, amongst a lawless and Tartar population.—In any of the older settlements of the Union, this gentleman would have been much respected for his intelligence, enterprise, and wealth; but here the most lawless outrages were committed upon his property. Various were the attempts to burn down his dwelling-house. At length, the murder of his younger son completed the list of his misfortunes, and his death occurred in circumstances little less lamentable than that of his unfortunate neighbour.

About two miles westward from Albion, is the village Prairie, the property of another wealthy speculator from the city of London. This gentleman had been a merchant tailor in the city, who, being known to the family of Mr. B., and an admirer of one of his accomplished daughters, conceived the romantic notion of going out with the party to America, in hopes of being rendered happy in her possession, in the tranquil solitudes of the Illinois. For some time after his arrival upon the Prairies, the worthy man prosecuted his enclosures of land and his suit with the fair lady with uncommon perseverance, not perceiving how common it is for weak-minded men to be led about the world in triumph by feeble-minded women. After some months, an accidental circumstance opened the eyes of the astonished gentleman from London. A party had been formed for

the purpose of visiting Vincennes, an ancient French settlement, about twenty-five miles from the English Prairie, in which we included Mr. L— and the lady of his love. During the ride, the usual course of indifferent civility had been manifested by the lady, when, upon arriving at the tavern at Vincennes, and the party being dispersed into the different departments of the house, L. overheard the damsel of his heart inquiring from another lady of the party, "I wonder what that tailor follows me about so for?" And oh! what a thunderbolt was that! In three days poor L. disappeared from the Prairies, travelled with all haste to New-York, and embarked for England, where he is cutting cloth to this day in the city of London. His enclosures, garden, and frame-buildings were all deserted, and left to the wolves and the back-woodsmen, and the cause of the disappearance of L. from the Prairies was long a secret of state. It was afterwards maintained that L. was a greater man than Lord Byron, for when Byron, upon a similar occasion, overheard the contemptuous expression about "the lame boy," it appears that he only ran to Newstead, whilst L. ran a thousand miles across the continent of America, and clear across the great Atlantic Ocean.

Scattered round the various Prairies, were many other English settlers of note, amongst whom was Mr. Hunt, brother to the member for Preston. Unlike his brother, he had the misfortune to be *dumb* from his infancy, but was a man of tremendous muscular power, and a scientific bruiser. Among the back-woodsmen, the superiority of the system of boxing, over their ferocious method of gouging and biting, was much disputed, and a trial with Mr. Hunt was very eagerly coveted by "the best men" amongst these worthies. One day, a very famous man of this description, in passing near the cabin of Mr. Hunt, perceived him in the act of ploughing in a neighbouring field, and thereupon he got across the fence, for the purpose of provoking a quarrel. As he advanced, it happened that some derangement in the tackle of his plough, compelled Hunt to stop the team, and being a man of very passionate temper, he was seen to level one of the horses with a blow of his fist. Upon this, the back-woodsman hastily turned back, and re-crossed the fence; and from that time it was observed, that nothing more was said upon the superiority of the gougers.—Hunt soon afterwards died at this settlement.

About nine miles from Albion, and upon the Wabash river, was the town of Harmony, a German settlement, under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Rapp. The settlers consisted of many hundreds of persons, of every variety of age, trade, and profession; and, by an excellent system of management, and the artful manner in which the people were kept in ignorance of the language and free institutions of the people around them, wonders were here effected in the way of agricultural improvements, and the usual manufactures. It resembled a scene in Germany, to view the church, the dwelling-houses, and the mill, with the dress, manners, and boorish Teniers-like appearance of the people at Harmony. It is, indeed, one of the most desirable peculiarities of the United States, that the traveller, in his rout, occasionally views the transplanted people, scenery, and manners, of all the European countries. As Harmony is a miniature picture in Germany, the vine-growers at Venay, upon the Ohio river, exhibit the simplicity of Switzerland; and, descending to the lower region of the Mississippi, for a hundred miles, the sugar district of Louisiana preserves the language and manners of France. Harmony was, at length, purchased by Mr. Owen, of New-Lanark, a gentleman whose schemes, for the welfare of his fellow-men, appear to embrace all the hemispheres. He purchased the lands, towns, mills, and other appurtenances of the place, for the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand dollars; the two bells in the church alone being estimated at the sum of six thousand dollars; and here this worthy man commenced his plan of labour co-operation. He did not, however, calculate sufficiently upon the difference of the habits and manners of the people of whom his settlement was composed, from those of his German predecessors at Harmony; for high-spirited and unsettled republicans were soon found to be very different materials from German beasts of burthen. Discontent and discord soon became the prevailing characteristic of the place; and Mr. Owen, having abandoned his injudicious purchase at Harmony, has returned to the sphere where the efforts of the man of philanthropy are a thousand times more required.

It was the greatest disadvantage of the prairie settlements to be filled with a class of persons altogether unsuited, from previous habits of life, to undergo the privations and labours peculiar to a new country. The glowing descriptions of the prairies of the Illinois, when read in a drawing-room in Bond-street or the Regent's Park, are certainly calculated to excite the most rapturous anticipations, and numbers of persons who were already in possession of elegance and luxury at home, yet encountered the toils and privations of the sea and land to reach the El Dorado of the Illinois. These

adventurers forgot that these conveniences of life are altogether unattainable in a new country, and that the charms of the finest natural scenery disappear in a few days or weeks; whilst toil and hunger, and repining after home, endure to the end of the days of man. Thus amongst the settlers in these wilds were Londoners of every grade, publishers, painters, stock-brokers, lawyers, bankers, cousins to a lord, and every variety of men who could least be expected to be found in the land of labour. The greater proportion of these persons soon found themselves with exhausted means, the illusion wearing away, and themselves disappointed and dejected at the prospect of perpetual continuance in this, now to them a Siberian exile. Others, more prudent and wealthy, returned, disgusted and disappointed, to their native country, convinced that there is a time and place for all things, and that transitory causes of discontent ought not to induce the man, possessed of a luxurious native home, to abandon his position in society, and fly to the wilds and solitudes of a foreign land.

Still the scenery of these prairies is most sublime and impressive, and to a traveller who has journeyed for days through the monotonous and gloomy roads of a woodland country, the first view of these wide extending meadows is enchanting in the highest degree. The scene is picturesque and magnificent: the prairies, undulating and rolling away for miles, combining the grandeur of the ocean with the beauty of an English park. The prairies are of various extent; three of the largest class being upwards of fifty miles in circumference; but these, from the deficiency of timber, are uninhabitable, excepting at the edges of the woods, by which they are surrounded; and from this circumstance, great bodies of land, comprising a considerable portion of the state of Illinois, will for ages remain uncultivated.—The land is generally fertile and water is invariably found a few feet below the surface of the ground. And thus a settler, who pitches his tent at the edge of the woods, possesses the convenience of timber for fencing, building, and firewood, and enjoys a ready made farm upon the prairie. The origin of these singular meadows is an object of much controversy; some naturalists having conjectured them to be the bottom of lakes of the antediluvian world; but this opinion is not supported by appearances, there being no deposit of marine remains, nor is there any appearance of the banks, which to enclose the water, must have risen many feet above the surface of the lake, whereas the woods are usually upon a level with the prairie. The more common conjecture assigns as their origin the annual burning of the woods by the Indians for the purpose of enclosing the deer; but many striking objections occur to this theory, for it is still the custom of the Indians to burn other tracts of country for similar purposes without any material injury to the woods, nor is it easy to determine upon this ground why other tracts are not found to be divested of their natural timber, there being no prairies in all the great regions of the continent, eastward of the Ohio river. It is, therefore, difficult to assign any satisfactory conjecture for the origin of these natural meadows, and they have probably existed in their present condition since the creation of the world, a variation in the works of nature similar to the oasis of the deserts of Arabia. They are covered with a rough natural grass, which grows to the height of six feet, and matted roots of this grass make the first ploughing of the prairies a most difficult operation, but the soil is afterwards remarkably easy of cultivation, being invariably a rich vegetable mould. The productions consist of Indian corn, wheat, cotton, and tobacco; but owing to the deficiency of negro labour, Illinois being amongst the free states of the Union, cotton and tobacco is only partially cultivated, and corn and wheat form the staple productions of the state. The fields of Indian corn present a magnificent appearance, this invaluable plant is the pride and glory of the continent of America, and the first of the gifts of providence in every country, the climate of which favours its production. The atmosphere of the Illinois is remarkably pure and salubrious, being free from moisture and the variations of temperature so common in the states to the eastward of the Alleghany mountains. To natives of England the effect of this dry and equable climate is observed to be very salubrious, old persons being here very rapidly freed from long affections of rheumatism, paralysis, and other disorders incident to our damp and unwholesome climate. The remarkable clearness of the atmosphere adds much to the beauty of the scenery upon these wide extended prairies, and nothing even in the mixed landscapes of England, can compare with the splendour and solemnity of the scene when the descending sun mantles these vast meadows with a crimson light, and the belt of the woods is darkening in the shades of evening.

The presence of human society and labors of a dense population alone are wanting to render these regions a paradise—the garden of the western world. In the recollections of a chequered life there are few scenes and times to which my memory reverts with

more satisfaction than to the years which I have spent upon the magnificent prairies and in the Italian climate of the Illinois.

A SKETCH OF CHINON.—Chinon, by the river, is grand and picturesque. It is on the right bank of the Vienne, and is sheltered between craggy hills, on the top of the loftiest of which are the remains of the once formidable castle, which, for a thousand years, held the surrounding country in awe. It was the favorite residence of Henry the Second of England, and the scene of his last moments, in 1189, when broken hearted by the undutiful conduct of his children, he left the world with a malediction upon them upon his lips. And here, ten years afterwards, his son, the lion-hearted Richard, closed his valiant career, and his giant-like ambition, in the narrow precincts of the grave. This castle was the chosen abode of Charles the Seventh. The apartments he inhabited are still in tolerable preservation, as is also the room in which Joan of Arc was introduced into his presence, and selecting him, in his assumed disguise, from the nobles by whom he was surrounded, declared to him her divine mission. Here, likewise, it is that his unnatural son, Louis the Eleventh, whilst yet dauphin, dared to propose the assassination of his parent, to the Comte de Chabannes, the favorite minister, who had virtue enough to shrink from the horrible crime, and revealed the intention to his royal master. The dismal 'oubliettes' may still be traced, close behind the fireplace, in the principal sitting-room; so that the haughty prince might be stretching his legs over the fire, with the utmost nonchalance, at the moment that the unfortunate wretch who had offended him might be precipitated, at his very side, into his horrid grave! Alas! that history should have recorded this to have actually been the case with that mirror of chivalrous honor, Francis the First, in company with one of his mistresses; but having seen such incontrovertible proof of the monstrous cruelty of the ages of despotism, I can now believe almost any thing that is told of them; and amongst others, the account of a French writer, which, before, I thought only adapted to the pages of romance. 'The chamber which this monarch occupied,' says he, speaking of Louis the Eleventh, at the Chateau des Loches, 'was exactly over the frightful dungeons in which the unfortunates, cast in by his orders, languished. What reflections could a king make, thus taking up his abode above the horrible vaults from which the last sighs of his expiring victims were breathed! what hope of pardon for these despairing wretches when he who alone had the power of granting it, could thus unfeelingly repose immediately over the spot where they were suffering! A considerable time after the death of Louis the Eleventh, a captain of the name of Pontbriant, governor of the chateau, discovered an iron door, which he caused to be opened, and traced by the light of flambeaus the subterranean passages, the entrance to which its purport was to close. After advancing a little way, he perceived a second iron door, as the first—he then penetrated into a vast dungeon, at the extremity of which he beheld, exactly under the apartments of Louis the Eleventh, a man sitting on a stone bench, leaning his head on his hands. No doubt the unhappy wretch had died in this position of famine and despair! There was nothing near him excepting some linen in a small trunk. Pontbriant approached and touched him; but only a hideous skeleton, of large proportions, remained beneath his hand, at the pressure of which, slight as it must have been, the flesh and garments had instantly fallen to the earth, a heap of dust! It is natural enough that tyrants should be cowards: the Castle of Chinon, like most of the same period, has several subterranean passages, to favour escape in case of any sudden attack. One, in the corner of the king's dormitory, ran not only to the river, but under the bed of it, to a chateau on the other side, within sight of the castle; and thence to another, it is said at twelve miles distance. What a picture might the imagination draw of a blood-stained, conscience-stricken monarch, thus flying by torch-light, through the very bowels of the earth; his glittering robe and trembling diadem impeding his coward flight; fear leading the way—hate pursuing him! whilst above, in the blessed sunshine, and pure breezes of heaven, the shepherd throws himself on the enamelled turf, careless alike of the troubles and crimes of the great!—But enough of horrors.—Six weeks on the Loire.

"What are you thrashing the poor boy for?" said we to a sweep of some twelve years of age, who was laying it on thick upon one much younger; "Vy 'cause he insulted me; he called me a Tory," was the reply of the "son of the clergy." "Vell," cried the other, still holding up his little fist, in the attitude of defence, as the tears washed two white streaks down his sable cheeks, "he first called me a *Vig*, sir.—*Metropolitan*."

Printed and Published by D. E. GILMOUR, at the Star Office, Carbonar, Newfoundland, to whom all Communications must be addressed.—Subscription, ONE GUINRA PER ANNUM payable half-yearly.