

## THE PILGRIM CHILD.

A STRANGER child, one winter eve,  
Knocked at a cottage maiden's door ;  
"A pilgrim at your hearth receive—  
Hark ! how the mountain-torrents roar !"  
But ere the latch was raised, "Forbear !"  
Cried the pale parent from above ;  
"The pilgrim child, that's weeping there,  
Is Love !"

The spring-tide came, and once again,  
With garlands crown'd, a laughing child  
Knock'd at the maiden's casement pane,  
And whispered "Let me in," and smiled.  
The casement soon was opened wide—  
The stars shone bright the bower above ;  
And lo ! the maiden's couch beside  
Stood Love !

And smiles, and sighs, and kisses sweet,  
Beguiled brief Summer's careless hours ;  
And Autumn, Labour's sons to greet,  
Came forth, with corn, and fruit, and flowers,  
But why grew pale her cheek with grief ?  
Why watched she the bright stars above ?  
Some one had stole her heart—the thief  
Was Love !

And Winter came, and hopes, and fears,  
Alternate swelled her virgin breast ;  
But none were there to dry her tears,  
Or hush her anxious cares to rest.  
And often as she opened the door,  
Roared the wild torrent from above ;  
But never to her cottage more  
Came Love !

From Minstrel Melodies.

## THE EMPRESS CATHERINE.

At the time of Jegor's embassy at the Russian imperial court, in the reign of Catherine II., a stranger of the name of Suderland filled the office of treasurer to the empress. One morning he was informed that his house was surrounded by soldiers, and that the commanding officer requested an audience.

This officer, whose name was Relieu, came in then with an appearance of the utmost consternation ; "Mr. Suderland," said he, "it is with indescribable grief that I see myself called upon to perform on you an execution of a most horrible nature, oh ! horrible in the extreme ! and I am totally ignorant of what crime you can have been guilty, to have incurred the mighty displeasure of her most gracious majesty." "I ! what have I done ?" replied the treasurer, in amazement, "What in the world do you mean ? I know no more than you do, what I can have done. And what is that dreadful execution you speak of ?" "Sir," answered the officer, fetching his breath, "I really have not courage to mention it—is fearful."

"Have I then lost the confidence her majesty trusted in me ?"

"Oh, if that were all, you would not see me so afflicted. Confidence may be regained : an office may be restored."

"Well," asked Suderland, "am I to be banished—banished to Siberia ; oh, tell me, is that my dreadful fate ?"

"It might be possible for you to return from there. That is not it."

"Am I then to be cast in a dungeon ?"

"That were preferable."

"Gracious Heavens ! am I then to suffer the knout ?"

"It is a dreadful torture ; but you might recover—it is not that."

"Oh ! for the mercy of heaven, no longer keep me in doubt—am I then to die ?"

"My gracious sovereign," replied the officer, trembling with emotion, "ordered me to have you—good heavens ! how dreadful—to have you—stuffed !"

"To be stuffed !" exclaimed the astonished treasurer, "to be stuffed ! Either you must have lost your senses, or her majesty must be in a dream. Surely you never received this order without remonstrating on its barbarity ?"

"Alas ! my poor friend, it was all to no purpose, 'Go,' said her majesty, 'and recollect that it is your duty to execute what orders I deign to give you !'"

It would be impossible to depict the amazement, the anger, the fear, the despair of the poor treasurer, that one short quarter of an hour was granted him to put his affairs in order ; and it was with extreme difficulty that permission was given him to write a short note to Earl Bruce. His lordship having read this note, stood transfixed, as may be supposed, with astonishment ; he lost no time in requesting an audience of the empress, to whom he revealed the contents of Suderland's note.

Catherine, hearing this strange recital, was at a loss to imagine

what it could be that could have given rise to this extraordinary circumstance. "Good heavens she exclaimed, "run, run, my lord, and be in time to deliver my poor treasurer from his terror."

The earl hastened to Suderland's house, fortunately, in time to save him ; and on his return found the empress laughing to her heart's content ; her majesty had discovered the cause of this estrangement. "I see now," said she, "how it is : my poor little favourite dog, that I had christened *Suderland*, after my treasurer, who had made me a present of it, lately died, and I gave orders to have it stuffed this morning."

## SUBTERRANEOUS CHAPELS,

IN THE CHURCH OF SANTA CHIARA.

"I YESTERDAY," says Lady Blessington, "witnessed an exhibition of an extraordinary nature, one to be seen only in a country like this, where superstition mingles in even the most sacred and solemn things. A community is formed at Naples, each member of which, during his life, subscribes an annual sum, in order that, after death, his remains should be deposited in one of certain vaults, the earth conveyed into which has the peculiar quality of preventing decomposition, and of preserving bodies as if dried by some chemical process. But the preservation of what was intended to decay, is not the only object of this institution, nor the only mode of applying its funds. The exposure, on a certain day of the year, of the frail wreck of mortality, thus strangely rescued from corruption, attired in the habiliments worn by the deceased when living, is secured by the subscription ; the number of annual exhibitions being dependent on the amount of the sums received. Can anything more preposterous be imagined?—nothing, I am quite sure, more disgusting can be beheld. Three or four subterraneous chapels, in the Church of Santa Chiara, divided only by partitions, are dedicated to this extraordinary exhibition, which presents one of the most ghastly scenes ever disclosed. All the sublimity of death disappears, when the poor remains of his victims are thus exposed ; and instead of an appalling sight, they offer only so grotesque a one, that it is difficult to believe that the figures before one ever were instinct with life, or that they are not images formed of brown paper, or Russia leather, dressed up to imitate humanity. The subterraneous chapels are guarded by soldiers. The altars are arranged in the usual style of those in Catholic chapels ; innumerable torches illuminate the place ; and an abundance of flowers and religious emblems decorate it. Ranged around the walls, stand the deceased, unhappily disinterred for the occasion, and clothed in dresses so little suited to their present appearance, that they render death still more hideous. Their bodies are supported round the waist by cords, concealed beneath the outward dress ; but this partial support, while it precludes the corpse from falling to the earth, does not prevent its assuming the most grotesque attitudes. Old and young, male and female, are here brought in juxtaposition. The octogenarian, with his white locks still flowing from his temples, stands next a boy of six years old, whose ringlets have been curled for the occasion, and whose embroidered shirt-collar, and jacket with well-polished buttons, indicates the pains bestowed on his toilette. Those ringlets twine round a face resembling nothing human, a sort of mask or discoloured leather, with fallen jaws and distended lips ; and the embroidered collar leaves disclosed the shrunken dark brown chest, once fair and full, where, perhaps, a fond mother's lips often were impressed, but which now looks fearful, contrasted with the snowy texture of this bit of finery. This faded image of what was once a fair child, has tied to its skeleton fingers a top, probably the last gift of affection ; the hand, fallen on one side, leans towards the next disinterred corpse, whose head also, no longer capable of maintaining a perpendicular position, is turned, as if to ogle a female figure, whose ghastly and withered brow, wreathed with roses, looks still more fearful from the contrast with their bright hue. Here the mature matron, her once voluminous person reduced to a sylph-like slightness, stands enveloped in the ample folds of the gaudy garb she wore in life. The youthful wife is attired in the delicate tinted drapery put on in happy days, to charm a husband's eye ; the virgin wears the robe of pure white, leaving only her throat bare : and the young men are clothed in the holiday suits of which they were vain in life ; some with riding whips, and others with canes attached to their bony hands. A figure I shall never forget, was that of a young woman, who died on the day of her wedding. Robed in her bridal vest, with the chaplet of orange flowers still twined round her head, her hair fell in masses over her face and shadowy form, half veiling the discoloured hue of the visage and neck, and sweeping over her, as if to conceal the fearful triumph of death over beauty. Each figure had a large card placed on the wall above the places they occupied ; on which was inscribed the names, date of their ages, and death, with some affectionate epigraph, written by surviving friends. It would be impossible to convey the impression produced by this scene : the glare of the torches falling on the hideous faces of the dead, who seemed to grin, as if in derision of the living, who were passing and repassing in groups round them. Not a single face among the ghastly crew presented the solemn

countenance we behold in the departed, during the first days of death ; a countenance more teaching and eloquent than life ever possessed : no, here every face owing to the work of time, wore a grin that was appalling ; and which, combined with the postures into which the bodies had fallen, presented a mixture of the horrible and the grotesque, never to be forgotten. Around several of the defunct, knelt friends, to whom in life they were dear, offering up prayers for the repose of their souls : while groups of persons, attracted merely by curiosity, sauntered through this motley assemblage of the deceased, pausing to comment on the appearance they presented."—From Lady Blessington's "Idler in Italy."

## GLEANINGS.

*Celebrated Oaks.*—The oldest oak in England is supposed to be the Parliament Oak (so called from the tradition of Edward I. holding a Parliament under its branches), in Clipstone-park, belonging to the Duke of Portland, this park being also the most ancient in the island : it was a park before the conquest, and was seized as such by the conqueror. The tree is supposed to be 1,500 years old. The tallest oak in England was the property of the same nobleman ; it was called the "Duke's walking-stick," was higher than Westminster Abbey, and stood till of late years. The largest oak in England is called the Calthorpe Oak, Yorkshire ; it measures 78 feet in circumference where the trunk meets the ground. The "Three Shire Oak," at Worksop, was so called from covering parts of the counties of York, Nottingham, and Derby. It had the greatest expanse of any recorded in this island, dropping over 777 square yards. The most productive oak was that of Gelonos, in Monmouthshire, felled in 1810. Its bark brought £200, and its timber £670. In the mansion of Tredegar-park, Monmouthshire, there is said to be a room 42 feet long and 27 feet broad, the floor and wainscot of which were the produce of a single oak tree grown on the estate.

A curious and remarkably rare case of complete transposition of the organs of respiration, circulation, and digestion, was recently witnessed at the School of Medicine at Nancy. On opening the body of a patient about 38 years of age, who died in the establishment, of consumption, it was found that his heart was on the right side, and that the whole system of circulation corresponded with this extraordinary disposition ; the lungs presenting but one lobe, instead of three on the right and two on the left ; the liver being on the left, the spleen on the right, the cardiac or entrance of the stomach, on the right, and its lower orifice or pylorus, the duodenum and cæcum, on the left.—*Galignani*—March, 1839.

*Remarkable Longevity.*—In a small town in Massachusetts, containing less than 1,000 inhabitants, there are living almost within a stone's throw of each other, no less than 13 persons whose united ages amount to 1,071 years, making an average of 82 years, to each person, the youngest 79, the oldest 92. For a series of years a very large proportion of the deaths in this town has been of persons whose ages averaged about 83 years. In one year there were 14 deaths in the town, and of those 11 were of persons whose ages averaged over 83 years.

The first Greek musicians were gods ; the second heroes ; the third bards ; and the fourth beggars.—*Dr. Burney.*

*Wisdom of Candour.*—A man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong, which is but saying, in other words, that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday.—*Pope.*

If any one can convince me of an error, I shall be very glad to change my opinion, for truth is my business ; and right information hurts nobody. No : he that continues in ignorance and mistake, 'tis he that receives the mischief.—*Marcus Antoninus.*

The earliest herbal was printed for Peter Treveris, in Southwark, 1529—a thin folio : the next, printed by John King, 1561 : but there was a book called "The vertuose Boke of Distillation," by Jerom of Brunswick, containing a large herbal, printed by Laurence Andrew, 1527.

*EPICRAMS.*—An epigram should never be extended to eight lines. Four lines ought to be the *ne plus ultra* ; if only two so much the better. Here is one uttered by an old gentleman, whose daughter Arabella importuned him for money :

"Dear Bell, to gain money, sure silence is best,  
For dumb Bells are fittest to open the chest."

Another, on a lady wearing the miniature of an unworthy person around her neck :

"What, hang from the neck of a lady ?" cries Bill,  
"Were ever such folly and impudence known ?  
As to hanging, indeed, he may hang where he will,  
But as to the neck, let it be by his own."

Another by Dr. Jenner, sent with a couple of ducks to a patient :

"I've despatched my dear madam, this scrap of a letter,  
To say that Miss — is very much better :  
A regular doctor no longer she lacks,  
And therefore I've sent her a couple of quacks."

\* To impale and to stuff are expressed by the same word in the Russian.