

# THE LITERARY TRANSCRIPT.

## POETRY.

### A REAL OCCURRENCE IN A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS.

When is the happiest death to die?  
 "Oh!" said one, "if I might choose,  
 Long at the gate of bliss would I lie,  
 And as my spirit rose to fly,  
 With bright celestial views.  
 None were a lingering death, without pain,  
 A death which all might love to see,  
 And mark how bright and sweet should be  
 The victory I should gain.  
 "Fain would I catch a hymn of love  
 From the angel-songs when ring above:  
 And sing it, as my parting breath  
 Quivered and expired in death—  
 So that those on earth might hear  
 The harmonies of another sphere,  
 And track, when nature flames and dies,  
 What sprang from heavenly life above,  
 And grieve from the death they view,  
 A ray of hope to light them through,  
 When they should be departing too.  
 "No," said another, "so not I:  
 Sudden as thought is the death I would die;  
 I would suddenly pay my snivels by,  
 Nor bear a single pang at parting,  
 Nor see the tear of sorrow starting,  
 Nor hear the quivering lips that bless me,  
 Nor feel the hands of love that press me,  
 Nor the frames, with moral terror shoking,  
 Nor the tears, where love's soft bands are break-  
 ing.  
 So would I die!  
 "All times, without a pang to cloud it!  
 All joy, without a pain to shroud it!  
 No stain, but caught up as I were,  
 To meet my Saviour in the air!  
 So would I die!  
 Oh! how bright  
 Were the beams of light  
 Breaking at once upon his sight.  
 Even so  
 I long to go,  
 These parting hours, how sad and slow!  
 His voice grows faint, and fain'd was his eye,  
 As if gazing in rapturous ecstasy:  
 The hands of his cheek and lips decayed,  
 Around his mouth a rictus smile played—  
 They look'd—he was dead!  
 His spirit had fled:  
 Paleless and cold as his own dovre,  
 The soul and soul,  
 From her mortal veils,  
 Hath step'd to her car of heavenly fire:  
 And proved how bright  
 Were the beams of light  
 Bursting at once upon his sight!

### MISCELLANEOUS SELECTIONS.

#### SMALL TALK.

It is no easy matter to talk well. A man may read many books, and have a tenacious memory, and a sound judgement, and no small portion of critical acumen. He may express his thoughts in elegant language; he may reason his discourse with wit, and be a living lexicon, and a walking encyclopaedia; and yet, after all, he but a dull every-day companion. All the world don't read books, and all who do read do not care about them; but every body loves to talk. There is something very pleasant in hearing the sound of one's own voice; and when we are wearied with talk, or tired with thought, we love to chat, to set the tongue in motion, to relieve the sense of weariness.  
 There seems to be a great deal of wisdom in speaking contemptuously of common-place talk; but it is all seeming. Real wisdom makes a man a most agreeable companion; but mock wisdom, the affectation of profundity, the pretence of learning, makes him quite the reverse. If a man of great learning be an agreeable man, it is not his learning that makes him so, but his dexterity in managing it. If he be above small talk, he may, for nine-tenths of the world, keep his learning to himself. It is an admirable counsel for profound critics in the ancient languages of Greece and Rome to spend years upon settling the reading of an old song, and write volumes upon a cadence, and bury themselves in dust till their souls are as dry as a stuffed alligator, and then give themselves airs upon the insignificance and nothingness of small talk.  
 The mistake is common, though not for that reason less a mistake, to imagine that it is the easiest matter in the world to talk about nothing, or every-day occurrences. It requires an active mind, an observant mind, and no small share of that invaluable quality of good humour and almost unobtainable quality of good nature to say something on every thing to any body. It has been sometimes noticed, as a remarkable and amiable trait in the characters of some men, of very superior minds, that they have been able and willing to make themselves

agreeable to children, and not unfrequently it has been observed of great monarchs, that had something to say to every body.

If a man must never open his lips, but for the enunciation of an aphorism, or never say any thing which has not been, or may not be in print; if he must be everlastingly talking volumes, or discussing knotty points of casuistry, politics or metaphysics, he will find a death of speech rather burdensome, and but few of his audience willing to hear him out.

But I am not wishing to vindicate nonsense, or extol trifling. I am only putting in a claim for due honours of that species of talk, which must, more or less, be at times the occupation of us all. We have heard of *conversations* where common place is studiously avoided, where politics and weather are never discussed, but where criticisms on metaphysics, or antiquities, and matters of taste, form the sole subjects of discourse. This sounds mightily edifying; but the most egregious common-place is not unfrequently heard in these parties. Let but the topics of the day be known, the last novel, or picture, or public singer, and all the conversation may be anticipated. In order to shine, the mind puts itself into the most strained and unnatural attitudes, and displays its possessions instead of exerting its powers; and many a poor soul dares hardly open its lips for want of having read certain books, or seen certain pictures or statues, or opera dancers.

Small talk obviates these evils; the mind is at ease; there is no intention of saying any thing profound; there is no fear of disappointing expectation; and in this delightful recreation we often

"Stretch a grace beyond the reach of art.

It is very pleasant to pass time agreeably, to keep the mind active without wearying it, to have all our hours engaged in some form or other; we cannot do this without some share of small talk.

Perhaps, if this art were a little more studied, we might find our account in it. The French are said to shine in this particular; they can thus make themselves agreeable at very little expense of time or thought; and if our own countrymen, without sacrificing their solidity of character and compromising their sincerity, could take a lesson from their continental neighbours, they would render English society, in grace as well as substance, the best society in the world.

**THE FRENZY OF GENTILITY.**—Moralists, whose efforts are directed to the elucidation of the causes of those vices and disorders which affect society, and whose main object is the improvement of our social condition, seem, in a great measure, blind to what should justly be considered the basis of a vast deal of the mischief which they deplore, and hope to amend, namely, the *frenzy of gentility*—of aspiring not only to live in a style decidedly beyond the means for its support, but of affecting to despise every thing in nature or art which it is not fashionable to admire; thus often sacrificing health and mental quietude during a whole lifetime in the vain pursuit of an imaginary good. Thirty years ago this species of fanaticism was adverted to in the following terms by that philanthropic authoress, Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton:—"An epidemic frenzy has spread through the country—the desire of shining in a sphere above our own. People who labour under this disease mistake show for splendour, and splendour for happiness; and while their pulses throbb with the fever of vanity, think no sacrifice too great, for procuring gratification to its insatiable thirst. From the palace to the cottage, the fever rages with equal force, sweeping before it every worthy feeling, and every solid virtue. Could we but look into the interior of all the families in the kingdom what scenes of domestic misery would present themselves to our view, all originating in this senseless passion for gentility, or the silly ambition of figuring in a higher station, which destroys all notions of right and wrong, rendering vice and folly, if guided by fashion, the objects of preference, nay, of high and first regard!"

In these words, however, only one department of the frenzy is touched upon. Less mischief is, perhaps done by extravagant living and spending, than by the practice of contenting all things whatever which are not deemed within the pale of fashion. Physiologists tell people that they should walk in the open air for the sake of their health, going out for so many hours daily, for that purpose, to fields and gardens; but, if they are not able to find a promenade which is not exclu-

sively used by their own class or caste, they will by many degrees rather incur the danger arising from the neglect of natural laws, than expose themselves to the risk of coming in contact with a person of inferior grade. Physicians further tell people, that if they wish to enjoy health and long life, they should abstain from lunches, and never defer dinner beyond one or two o'clock in the afternoon; but as gentile society has got into a habit of calling that part of the day the morning, and employing it in making calls, it might be just as rational to expect a revival of miracles, as to hope that any individual would adopt such a maxim, even if assured, that, by following his present course, his life will be shortened ten years. It is the same in a thousand other particulars. The dread of doing that which is not strictly fashionable or genteel, is a disease of universal influence. And divines and moralists may preach till they are hoarse before they will be able to amend the evils they lament, unless this prevailing mania be in the first place cured. Let us hope that the means now almost every where in progress for furthering rational education—for calling things by their right names—will in time assist in modifying so contemptible a folly.

**TEARS.**—It is sad to see a child weep, thus proving that it has already begun its mortal race, that the curse of sin is upon it, sorrow and trouble, weariness and woe. But then those sobs are quickly hushed, and the bright eyes look through their long lashes, and the pouting lips uncurl with a brilliant smile; the whole face is lighted up again into beauty, the beauty of an April day when the sun shines forth from behind a cloud, and we love it more from its transient shadowing, and think it never shone so radiantly before. The child forgets its grief, laughs childhood's own light, winking laugh, as though it had never known sorrow and goes on its course, happy in its blindness to the future. We cannot deeply mourn, for what we see is so soon forgotten; we look on a child's tears with real transcendent sadness. It is more sad to look on the tears of the young and gentle girl, just bursting into womanhood. The spell of youthful hope is no longer perfect, experience bounds its power. She has scarcely crossed the threshold of life, and yet we feel that reality has come upon her in its bitterness. She struggles with her destiny, and we know too well that it is what her life must hereafter be, a struggle and a warfare; but her young heart sinks from the truth, and she still clings to hopes that woo her to fresh sorrow.

The tears of the matron are sadder still to look upon; for we feel that they flow from a deeper, sterner cause. She weeps no longer for a feeling or a thought; she has learned there is no luxury in grief, for she has felt its agony; she shrinks from sorrow, for she knows its reality. If her tears flow, it is because she cannot keep them back. Yet to women those tears are a relief; she feels them to be such, and those who see them feel them so too, and the sadness of their sympathy is lightened. But it is not so when we look on the tears which fall from man; not the tears of boyhood or of dotage, but those wrung from the heart of bold and hardy manhood; such as are wrung forth only by the very intensity of agony. It is against his habits and his pride, it is thought a shame to his manhood that tears should fall; and when they do fall their falling is not only a proof, but an aggravation of his suffering.—(Merchant's Daughter.)

**MOURNING.**—The colours of the dress of habit worn to signify grief are different in different countries. In Europe, the ordinary colour for mourning is black; in China, it is white, a colour that was the mourning of the ancient Spartan and Roman ladies; in Turkey, it is blue, or violet; in Egypt, yellow; in Ethiopia, brown; and kings and cardinals mourn in purple. Every nation and country gave a reason for their wearing the particular colour of their mourning; black, which is the privation of light, is supposed to denote the privation of life; white is an emblem of purity; yellow is to represent, that death is the end of all human hopes, because this is the colour of leaves when they fall, and flowers when they fade; brown denotes the earth, to which the dead return; blue is an emblem of the happiness which it is hoped the deceased enjoys; and purple, or violet, is supposed to express a mixture of sorrow and hope.

Britain is derived from Prydan, the name given to it by the Britons upwards of two thousand years ago, and which signifies "the fair or beautiful isle."

[From the New-York Gazette.]

**TO ACTUAL SETTLERS.**—A land office has been of late opened at Buffalo, for the purpose of apportioning the bounty lands to the "patriots," who have performed such unheard of feats of valour on Navy Island. We have not heard who is to be placed at the head of the bureau in this department of the Mackenzian Government, but it has been hinted that there is a prominent applicant in the lower part of Wall Street. This, however, we hope is premature, as such an appointment would be improper, since it is understood that this individual is entitled to some seven or eight of Mackenzie's patents, of three hundred and fifty acres each, and it would savour of injustice to allow the Commissioner of the Land Office to "locate" his own grants. It might at least breed jealousy among the patentees, and set patriotism by the ears.

We understand that it is the intention of the "Chairman pro. tem." of the kingdom of Upper Canada, to sit himself on these cases, as soon as he can get ground enough in his own dominions, to place his chair, and, as soon as he can borrow money enough at Buffalo, to pay the bounty for the body of Sir F. Bond Head—at present he is minus of money, either for that purpose, or for replacing the funds he took when he robbed the Canada mail. It is said, too, that he hasn't paid up for the stolen poultry with which he replenished the commissariat. The lands, however, with which he has determined to enrich his compatriots, is "just where it was," and is considered good security for any amount of patriotism that has been expended in this most praiseworthy campaign. The "land lies" precisely where it did—the muddy acres are in statu quo ante bellum, and the enemies of the pretence "Chairman" do say, likely still to remain there, upon the principle of the uti possidetis. This, however, is a slander, we take it, for it is quite impossible for Captain. Paresis not to capture his drum. The valiant General Van Rensselaer will, of course, overrun and conquer at least a farm a piece for his gallant followers, and a few hundred extra townships for his friends in this city—every one of whom spilt more ink than there has been patriot blood shed in the whole of his most sensible and excellent effort of "glorious liberty." The land is all of it of excellent quality, being, as the New England adjectives express it, suitably divided into arable, pasture, wood land and bog-meadow. The patriots themselves finding it inconvenient to settle in Lower Canada, have determined, we believe, to dispose of it upon the most eligible terms to "actual settlers"—giving undisputed titles, subject to no other incumbrance than the title deeds and possession of the actual owners—all which it is the intention of Mackenzie and his "Major General Commanding," to annul by proclamation, as soon as they can succeed in reaching New-York, where the royal printing office can strike off the document. It offers a fine opportunity to enterprising young men, with "growing families," to settle on these lands, and offer this early notice gratuitously for their benefit. For further particulars, enquire of either of Vice Presidents of the O'Callaghan meeting.

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#### AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

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