

POETRY.

HUMAN LIFE.

BY BERNARD BARTON.

I walk'd the fields at morning's prime,
The grass was ripe for mowing;
The skylark sang his matin chime,
And all was brightly glowing.

"And thus," I cried, "the ardent boy,
His pulse with rapture beating,
Deems life's inheritance his joy—
The future proudly greeting."

I wandered forth at noon,—alas!
On earth's maternal bosom
The scythe had left the withering grass,
And stretched the fading blossom.

And thus, I thought, with many a sigh,
The hopes we fondly cherish,
Like flowers which blossom but to die,
Seem only born to perish.

Once more, at eve, abroad I stray'd,
Through lonely hay-fields musing,
While every breeze that round me play'd
Rich fragrance was diffusing.

The perfumed air, the hush of eve,
To purer hopes appealing,
O'er thoughts perchance too prone to grieve,
Scatter'd the balm of healing.

For thus "the actions of the just,"
When Memory hath enshrined them,
Even from the dark and silent dust
Their odour leave behind them.

MISCELLANY.

From the Edinburgh Scotsman, September 19.

MR. O'CONNELL.—Though we had read much about O'Connell, we had entirely misconceived the style and character of his eloquence. We expected a stentorian voice, a manner untutored, coarse, stormy, and denouncing. Instead of this we found a thorough bred speaker, who seems to have studied the art of elocution with great care. His voice is soft, but of great compass, and better fitted, we would say, to persuade than testify. His person is tall and somewhat corpulent, and his round full face gives an impression of jolly good humour. We speak, however, on this point with diffidence, as we were not near enough to him in the hall to catch the expression of his eye. His general manner is easy, yet the ease speaks of early study; his action striking, but seldom overcharged. The charm of his oratory, however lies in its infinite flexibility. He knows how to touch every cord with the hand of a master: He is gay and grave, sarcastic, humorous, pathetic, and indignant by turns; and his voice and gesture adapt themselves most happily to the hue of his thoughts. The matter of his speeches seems perfectly unstudied, as if it were the spontaneous produce of his feelings at the instant. There are no traces of pre-arrangement; no high wrought passages snuffling of the lamp, and forced in for effect. He passes from one key to another, and from the calm to the vehement, from humorous sketches to bursts of passion, the auditor hardly knows how, yet the transition seems natural. When his health was drunk he spoke an hour and ten minutes—the length of two fashionable sermons—yet his auditors hung on his words with intense and uniring interest to the last sentence. In his printed speeches the tropes often appear misplaced or unnatural; but printed speeches are always less or more abridged, and then the fascination of his voice, manner, and gesture, are wanting. Our impression was before we saw him, and is still, that his speeches are all, in substance, extemporaneous effusions. He satisfies himself with thinking over the subject beforehand on which he is to speak, but he

trusts entirely to the moment of delivery for the succession of topics, and for arrangement and expression. Orators of this kind seldom or never say exactly what they intended. They commit mistakes which better preparation would have prevented; but they strike out felicities of thought and language which previous study could not have reached; and their good things have that unpremeditated air which is in itself a mighty charm. Upon the topics with which he is familiar, and these embrace a pretty wide range, O'Connell is absolutely inexhaustible; and hence we believe he could take dinners and make speeches every day for a month to come, without appearing to repeat himself. His language is generally careless and familiar, but full of native and happy turns; and at times it is abrupt, forcible, and boldly figurative. Nature and art, in short, have made him an orator of a very high rank: His eloquence is essentially Irish, stronger in its passion than its logic; and better suited to the forum than the senate. He is not great as a statesman and still less as a philosopher; but as an agitator, as a speaker to wield at will the passions of a mixed multitude, he is without a rival in Europe. His faults and deficiencies are those of his countrymen, and they have perhaps contributed to gain him that wonderful ascendancy over their minds which is without parallel in modern times. It was said of Voltaire, that his genius was a power in Europe; and it may be said with as much truth, that O'Connell's influence is a power in the British Empire. We must do him the justice to say also, that his speeches on Thursday evening, though over-Radical, were in other respects well calculated to unite Reformers of all classes.

Apart from O'Connell's personal merits, this dinner is an event of some importance. It is the first striking demonstration of popular regard and affection, witnessed in Scotland, towards a Catholic; and that Catholic a man who has gained his celebrity by contending for the religious rights of his own sect. Bigotry is the master-failing of our countrymen. Our ancestors fought a hard battle for the establishment of their faith; and their posterity have held it with a tenacity which had no small taint of intolerance. We consider the dinner as a great public tribute by the mass of our population to the principle of religious liberty. On this point, O'Connell occupies high ground. He has never said—"we Catholics are the majority of the Irish people; and therefore our Church ought to be the endowed Church of the State," though he has the authority of Protestant writers for holding this language. From first to last he has merely contended for the abolition of religious distinction, and preferences, and the civil equality of all sects. It is plain to us, that the complete establishment of this principle would work immense good, in promoting the growth of Christianity, and securing the peace of the world. The two dissenting clergymen who officiated at the dinner, and the others who were present, will probably be abused for assisting at a fete in honour of a Catholic. In our opinion, if they were satisfied on the score of politics, they may be at ease as regards religion. A few bigots, and many hypocrites may condemn them, but all who rightly understand and properly value the great cause of religious liberty, will approve of their conduct.

A NEWSPAPER is a flying omnibus, licensed to carry the opinions of the world. Time and space are compromised by its velocity and power; for it has the regularity of the ocean's tides, besides that they are turned into steam, and work at high pressure. It is an ephemeral giant, whose birth is renewed every morning, and issues forth to the field with all its

"arms and appointments," as though it had only slept like the rest of us, instead of having had human brains and hands, and wonder-working machinery, under heavy contribution for its recreation. In its oft replenished grasp it holds the passions, prejudices, interests, reasons, virtues, and vices of the time, with the opinions that result from the complex mixture, and it strives forward on seven mile boots—to speak moderately—strawing them on every side. It is a voice that will be heard; for if it fail in its desperate effort to have its own way, and produce a desired effect, it gives up attempting to make the mountain come to it, and wisely sides with the collected mass. It is the mirror of public opinion, not the original or fundamental creator, but the munificent distributor.—You may be heartily sick of politics, commerce, and the rest of the perverse present; but the newspaper claims your ear as its prey, and remorselessly pursues you forever. Dart away by the mail to escape some detested news of Bourbon or St. Nicholas, and take shipping at the Lands' End, the paper goes with you; hide yourself where you will, it finds you out, it is the bellman of your social existence, your shadow, your familiar; in short, there is no evading it. The first house we set our foot in on arriving at Mexico in 1825—a time of war, trouble, and yellow fever, and before speculators and travelers had ventured their lives and fortunes to work mines or write a book—there sat the Vice Consul's Clerk, blowing swift clouds from a much excited segar, behind a copy of the incorrigible omnipresent Times newspaper! By gar! here's Monsieur Tonson come again! East, west, north, south, you are haunted by a newspaper.—*Tait's Magazine.*

STORM IN A SEA OF ICE.—More than I among us had witnessed similar scenes, and, in some manner or other, we had been extricated: but, with all this we could not but feel astonishment, as well as gratitude at our escape here without material damage. For readers, it is unfortunate that no description can convey an idea of a scene of this nature; and, as to the pencil, it cannot represent motion or noise. And to those who have not seen a northern ocean in winter—who have not seen it, I should say in a winter's storm—the term ice, exciting but the recollection of what they only knew at rest, in an inland lake or canal, conveys no idea of what it is the fate of an Arctic navigator to witness and to feel. But let them remember that ice is stone: a floating rock in the stream, a promontory or an island when aground not less solid than if it were a land of granite. Then let them imagine, if they can, these mountains of crystal hurled through a narrow strait by a rapid tide; meeting, as mountains in motion would meet, with the noise of thunder, breaking from each other's precipices huge fragments, or rending each other asunder till, losing their former equilibrium, they fall over headlong, lifting the sea around in breakers, and whirling it in eddies; while the floating fields of ice forced against these masses, or against the rocks, by the wind and the stream, rise out of the sea till they fall back on themselves, adding to the indescribable commotion and noise which attend these occurrences.—*Capt. Ross' Second Voyage.*

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