

THE SNOWFLAKE :

MIRAMICHI, MARCH, 1879.

[Written for the Snowflake.]
PERSEVERANCE.

The power of perseverance can scarcely be overrated. It is the soul of success in every line of life. Many a man, from being destitute of this quality by which its possessor exacts continued activity in reference to his purposes and performances, has made shipwreck of the finest faculties; dreaming away existence amid airy speculations and impracticable designs. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his discourses on painting says: "you must have no dependence on your own genius. If you have great talents, industry will improve them, if you have but moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiency. Nothing is denied to well directed labour: nothing is to be obtained without it. Not to enter into metaphysical discussions on the nature or essence of genius, I will venture to assert that assiduity unabated by difficulty, and a disposition eagerly directed to the object of its pursuit, will produce effects similar to those which some call the result of natural powers."

A man of perseverance will continue his efforts, though, to a certain extent, he may have been unsuccessful. "Perseverance overcomes difficulties," was a copy at School. Now want of success is one of those difficulties that perseverance overcomes. There are various other obstacles to perseverance besides this, but these as existing not in the agent, but as mere circumstances, are not so much to be dreaded as the antagonist mental qualities, indolence and carelessness. Perseverance cannot exist in alliance with either of these. Indolence is the negative of perseverance. A love for ease destroys continued activity. The lazy man whiles away precious time in doing nothing. Nor is indolence more opposed to perseverance than carelessness which is generally the characteristic of feeble minds. A careless man is one who does not attend to life's duties and responsibilities, because he does not think it worth his while, or who employs his faculties about trifles. The indolent and the careless, however, may by impulsive effort, exert much activity. There may be great intensity of application, without the faculty of perseverance and this very intensity of application, becoming overstrained, activity is itself an antagonistic force to perseverance, and thus may be a cause of inactivity and unsteadiness, terms which come near to the true opposites of what is implied in perseverance, and which are almost identical with indolence and carelessness. As the poet says:-

"We have not wings—we cannot soar,
But we have feet to scale and climb,
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.
The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight
But they, while their companions slept
Were toiling upward in the night."

To attain to perseverance, indolence and carelessness must be especially guarded against, and the habits that induce them. In order to this there ought to be impressed on the mind the importance of the pursuits in reference to which perseverance is to be exercised, and also the necessity of perseverance as the right means by which

success is to be obtained. Perseverance, it ought to be borne in mind is the law of progress in the spiritual and the temporal. True it is that life spiritual and temporal is to many rather a fight than a peaceful journey. Be it then a fight; let there be neither irresolution nor want of exertion in waging it. Does not the inferior creation, living but soulless, teach man a striking lesson in regard to this quality? There are few who do not know the anecdote of King Robert Bruce and the spider. With what untiring perseverance, does the ant construct its heap, and the bee lay up its store, and the spider weave its web! How perseveringly does the bird build its nest and feed its young and warble its notes of melody! with what restless activity does the horse perform his work for man, till old age makes him cease his labours! Strange it is that man with noble faculties of understanding, conscience, will and heart, should too often be devoid of that quality which instinct teaches the beasts that perish! But in reference to what ought perseverance to be exercised?

1st. In reference to acquiring truth.

2nd. In reference to fulfilling duty.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FINGAL'S CAVE—STAFFA.

"We visited Staffa and Iona. The former is one of the most extraordinary places I ever beheld. It is a cathedral arch, scooped by the hand of nature, equal in dimensions and in regularity to the most magnificent aisle of a Gothic cathedral. The sea rolls up to the extremity in most tremendous majesty, and with a voice like ten thousand giants shouting at once. It exceeded, in my mind, every description I had heard of it; or rather, the appearance of the cavern, composed entirely of basaltic pillars as high as the roof of a cathedral, and running deep into the rock, eternally swept by a deep and swelling sea, and paved as it were with ruddy marble, baffles all description. You can walk along the broken pillars, with some difficulty, and in some places with a little danger, as far as the farthest extremity. Boats also can come in below when the sea is placid,—which is seldom the case. I had become a sort of favourite with the Hebridean boatman, I suppose from my anxiety about their old customs, and they were much pleased to see me get over the obstacles which stopped some of the party. So they took the whim of solemnly christening a great stone seat at the mouth of the cavern, Clachan-an-Bairbh, or the Poet's Stone. It was consecrated with a pibroch, which the echoes rendered tremendous, and a glass of whisky, not poured forth in the ancient mode of libation, but turned over the throats of the assistants. The head boatman, whose father had been himself a bard, made me a speech on the occasion, but as it was in Gaelic, I could only receive it as a silly beauty does a fine-spun compliment—bow, and say nothing.

"When this fun was over (in which, strange as it may seem, the men were quite serious), we went to Iona, where there are some ancient and curious

monuments. From this remote island the light of Christianity shone forth on Scotland and Ireland. The ruins, are of a rude architecture, but curious to the antiquary. Our return was less comfortable, we had to row twenty miles against an Atlantic tide and some wind, besides the pleasure of seeing occasional squalls gathering to windward. The ladies were sick, and none of the gentlemen escaped except Staffa and myself. The men, however, cheered by the pipes, and by their own interesting boat-songs, which were uncommonly wild and beautiful, one man leading and the others answering in chorus, kept pulling away without apparently the least sense of fatigue, and we reached Ulva at ten at night, tolerably wet, and well disposed for bed."—*Scott's letter to Joanna Baillie.*

MUCKLE-MOUD MEG.

Everybody is familiar with the mode of life practised some two or three hundred years ago on the Scottish borders. When a housewife ran out of butcher-meat, she either presented a pair of spurs under cover at dinner, as a hint that her sons and husband should ride out to obtain a supply, or, if inclined to be a little more provident, informed them, in the afternoon, that the "hough was in the pot," thereby insinuating that her beef-barrel was reduced to its last and worst fragment. It is told that Scott of Harden, the ancestor of a very respectable family which still flourishes on the border, was one day coming home with a large drove of cattle, which he had "lifted," as the phrase went, in some of the dales of Cumberland, when he happened to espy a large haystack in a farm-yard by the wayside, which appeared to him as if it could have foddered his prey for half the winter. Vexed to think that this could not also be "lifted," the chieftain looked at it very earnestly, and said, with bitter and emphatic expression—

"By my soul, if ye had four feet, ye should gang too."

A member of his family was what might have then been called *unfortunate* in one of his enterprises. Having invaded the territories of Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank, ancestor of the noble family of that name and title, he was inveigled by the latter into an ambuscade, and taken, as it were, in the very act. Murray, being an officer of state, thought himself bound to make an example of the offender, and he accordingly gave orders to the unfortunate Harden to prepare for immediate execution. Elated with his victory he went home and communicated his intention to his wife.

"Are you mad!" said her ladyship, "would you hang the young Laird of Harden, you that has six mony unmarried daughters! Na, na, it'll be a hantle mair wiselike to mak the young laird marry ane o' them."

The eloquence of the lady prevailed, and, as young Harden was in perilous circumstances, and was expected

gladly to accept of any alternative to avoid an ignominious death, it was resolved that he should wed "Muckle-Mou'd Meg," the third daughter of the family, who was distinguished by what, in modern phraseology, is termed an "open countenance," that is, in less metaphorical language, her mouth extended from ear to ear. The alternative was accordingly proposed to the culprit, but, to the astonishment of all concerned, it was at once rejected.

"Weel, weel, young man," said the Laird of Elibank, "ye's get till the morn's mornin' to think about it;" and so saying, he left the young laird in his dungeon to his own agreeable reflections.

In the morning Harden, after a sleepless night, looked out from the window, or rather hole of his cell, and saw the gallows erected in the yard, and all the apparatus of death prepared. His heart failed him, and he began to think that life, even though spent in the society of "Muckle-Mou'd Meg," was not a thing to be rashly thrown away. He declared his willingness, therefore, to accept of the maiden's hand. There were no marriage laws in those days—no proclamation of banns—no session-clerk's fees. The priest was sent for, and the indissoluble knot was tied. Nor did Harden ever repent of his bargain; for Meg, notwithstanding the deformity from which she took her name, was, in fact, one of the best creatures in existence, possessed of a great fund of excellent sense, and with all a handsome *personable* woman. She turned out an admirable wife, and managed the household of Harden with the utmost propriety; and a union which had taken place under such extraordinary circumstances, and with such very unpromising auspices, was in the highest degree cordial and constant.

CLARET AND PORT.

Home, the author of *Douglas*, was very partial to claret, and could not bear port. He was exceedingly indignant when the government laid a tax upon claret, having previously long commiserated its introduction into Scotland under very mitigated duties. He embodied his anger in the following epigram, which, by the way, was a favourite one of Sir Walter Scott's:—

"Firm and erect the Caledonian stood,
Old was his mutton, and his claret good;
'Let him drink port,' the English statesman cried;
He drank the poison, and his spirit died."

VELOCITY v. RESISTANCE.

A remarkable result has recently been obtained at the works of Brown & Co., Sheffield. A revolving disc, made from a rail saw, with all its teeth cut off, was mounted on a spindle and driven at nearly 3,000 revolutions a minute; this was,—the disc being three feet in diameter,—a circumferential velocity of over five miles a minute. Steel rails forced against this disc, were most rapidly cut through, appearing to melt before the revolving disc, giving off an abundance of sparks, while after cutting five rails it was itself not sensibly warm.