

THE PEARL.

HALIFAX, FRIDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18, 1839.

LEISURE HOURS; A collection of Original Poems, etc. By John K. Laskey. Printed for the Author, by Durant & Co. St. John, N. B. It has been a high gratification to us to perceive the favourable terms in which our contemporaries have commended the above unassuming little volume. As a provincial work and invested with so many of the graces of poetry, it merits a more extended notice at our hands than our limited space will permit. Two or three features of the work, however, we feel bound to notice, and with the hope that our recommendation of these qualities, will tend to assist its circulation. Many of the subjects introduced are scriptural—thus we have Abraham offering his son Isaac, the birth of the Saviour, the sleep of death, the land beyond the tomb; and in most of the descriptive poems, we have sentiments brought forward which are well calculated to produce a salutary impression on the mind of the reader. Here is an instance to the point—after eulogizing Byron for his commanding talents, our poet sums up all in the following words,—

“Though one should sweep the Muses’ Lyre,
With all Apollo’s charm and fire,
Without a heart that angels love
To worship Him enthroned above
The loftiest flight of seraph’s wing,
Mean is the harp he tunes to sing!”

Many such instances might be pointed out, but we now proceed to remark that in the ‘Leisure Hours,’ we have the mark of condemnation stamped upon some most vicious practices. How popular has it been for poets to employ their talents in favour of the votaries of Bacchus! What are many of the Songs of Burns and Moore, and a hundred others, but invitations to foolish men to cast down the throne of reason within themselves, and to become more stupid than irrational creatures? Not so with our author—in a paraphrase from the Greek, he says

“Then shame to the bard, who would mingle his strains
With the mirth-stirring bowl, where Bacchus now reigns!
With its red sparkling wine, and its banqueting loud,
To join in the songs of the Bacchic crowd!
Forsake the vain wassail, the feasting of glee,
The board spread with dainties, where the full Bowl is free,
For too sacred the Lyre, and too sweet is its song,
Which the children of Psyche profanely prolong!!”

We do not find in one of Mr. Laskey’s poems any thing in the character of the martial spirit, and this fact with us, is no small praise. No person from reading the ‘Leisure Hours’ will long to figure in connection with the foul and bloody deeds of war. And indeed a number of the smaller pieces are fitted to teach the value and sacredness of man, the pleasures of domestic life, the importance of the cultivation of the social affections, etc. and in this manner tend to strip battle fields of their false glory and ambition. Our author finds no music in the dying groans of besotted men who have rushed into the arms of death at the command of earthly rulers, nor does he once lift up the ‘Battle Cry’ to urge senseless mortals to pursue a course which is productive of the greatest curses which can possibly inflict mankind. Poets have often done incalculable injury by clothing the pomp and the heroic achievements of war in the enchantments of verse, and thereby encouraging a military spirit; happy will it be, when their lyre, so full of delight and so potent in its influence, shall be attuned to the celebration of the arts of benevolence and peace; and happier will it be than it now is, when they paint the sufferings and blighting influences, rather than the factitious charms and glories of international strife. Military glory, however, at present is held forth, in our most valued literature, as the noblest object of ambition. To kindle desire, and excite respect for the warrior’s excellence, have been employed all the powers of the mind,—has been prostituted the genius of the world. Who can estimate the influence of one single poem, the Iliad, that immortal, transcendent epic? Alas! how many Alexanders has it called into being! In how many bosoms, for nearly three thousand years, has it enkindled the fires of wrong ambition! What mighty effect has it had in turning the esteem of mankind from the humble, the beneficent, and the good, to the turbulent, the rash, and the un pitying! And of nearly all the Greek and Roman classics, the influence is similar. They generally create sympathy for deeds of military prowess. They are directly opposed to the mild, benignant spirit of Christianity. So it is with the popular literature of all countries. That which has come into existence even in the present century, often excites the love of warlike distinction. The imperishable works of Hume and Zenoophon do not set forth the glory of the warrior in a more exciting manner, and are not more calculated to produce a martial ardor in the mind, than Scott’s Marmion, or Southey’s Nelson. Every thing which pertains to heroic action is still, as in ancient times, received with popular enthusiasm. Who is not familiar with Ivanhoe? What nation does not prize its heroic poems, its martial airs and ballads? To this day the Spanish peasant loves to repeat the exploits of the Cid. Even the Venetian gondoliers sing with the same enthusiasm the ‘Jerusalem Delivered,’ as the countrymen of Burns do his ‘Scots, wha ha’ wi’ Wallace bled.” In every country poetry chants the glory of the warrior. He is

exalted to the pinnacle of renown. His glories screen from the public eye the noblest and the best. He is styled the ‘patron of mankind.’ He lives the fond object of popular idolatry; and when he dies, we are told that “his intrepid spirit rises triumphantly from the field of glory to its kindred heavens!” Then his image is handed down to posterity in the animated marble, and his virtues in the poet’s immortal lay. The volume before us, we are glad to say, does not furnish one such lay. ‘It is issued,’ we are informed ‘as a precursor of something less concise.’ We hope the author will receive such encouragement in the extensive sale of his first attempt as will induce him to put forth the larger work.

GREAT BRITAIN.—London dates to the 14th of December have been received at New York, by the Steamer Royal William. We give such news as we conceive will be most interesting to our readers.—Sir John Colborne has been appointed Governor General of the Canadas, with the same powers which had been exercised by Lord Durham.—Mention is made of the unpopularity of the British naval service—we wish that it and all other services of blood might become a thousand times more unpopular, until not a man could be found upon the earth who at the command of an earthly government would lift up his hand to kill his brother.—The state of England is represented as having become most alarming. ‘The recommendations,’ it is said, ‘of the men of violence are producing their natural effects. At Ashton-under-line a factory, in which nearly four hundred people were employed, has been totally destroyed by fire, and the circumstances leave no room for doubting that the conflagration is the work of incendiaries. Torch light meetings have been held in many places by the populace, with banners, music, and tumultuous proceedings—and the Queen had issued a proclamation against them.’ When will men learn that more is gained by suffering in the cause of right, than by any deeds of violence, and that it is better to suffer than to sin. NEVER, we fear, while nations set them the example of vengeance, and teach by their warring and vengeful conduct that it is right to resist evil rather than suffer wrong.—Lord Durham has been presented with an address from the Westminster Reform Association. The address makes no allusion to the affairs of Canada but merely invites Lord Durham to take the lead in measures of reform.—A compensation has been made upon the government of Texas for a claim of £1500, but the Texan government although admitting the justice of the claim has not sufficient funds to make the payment.—Of the two millions of protested bills against the United States, sent out for collection by the Bank of England, all has been paid except £400.—The Countess of Durham has resigned her place of lady in waiting to the Queen, and the resignation has been accepted. All parties are agreed that the resignation was tendered on account of the marks of disfavor shown to Lord Durham.—An item for the ladies! ‘The ladies of Paris are introducing the old fashion of the times of Louis the XVI, in the hoop petticoats, which are creating quite a sensation.’ Nova Scotia should take the advantage of the trade of hoops which must result from this beautiful fashion.—An expedition of British troops was preparing to leave Bengal, to go against Cabul and Herat. British rule in the East Indies has been connected with such monstrous injustice, (and which we shall take occasion at some future time to develop,) that any movement of troops etc. makes us fear that it is only for the purpose of extending the reign of misrule and wrong.

CANADA.—A shameful outrage has been committed on the Rouville frontier. A party of ten or twelve armed men, headed by a rebel named Gorgan, have set fire to several houses and barns. Seven buildings were totally destroyed. Gorgan’s neighbours followed his wicked example, and set fire to his house, outbuildings etc. Sir John Colborne, it is said, has demanded the invaders from the Governor of Vermont, on the charge of arson, but we have nothing official on the subject.—The sum of two thousand dollars has been subscribed, by the inhabitants of Detroit, as a premium to any person or persons, who will take Col. Prince alive and bring him over to that city, or fifteen hundred for his dead body. Col. Prince is the person who shot down four prisoners like so many hogs, without trial or any thing of the kind, and for which un-british conduct, he has received the plaudits of most of the Canadian papers. This summary punishment, or rather lynching has enraged the Americans on the frontier, and hence their diabolical offer to any men of blood.—Some of the papers state that the sum subscribed for the invasion of Canada amounts to \$70,000, but we can give no credence to so high an estimate.—The Sandwich Herald notices in a very affecting manner the burial of Dr. Hume who was shot and mutilated at Sandwich. The mutilation of his corpse is placed beyond doubt, and it furnishes a sad proof of the savage lengths to which men are led when they appeal to steel and gunpowder.—The Brentford Sentinel says that a detachment of artillery men of the 73rd. who have been engaged in the suppression of the rebellion in Lower Canada, “give painful accounts of the atrocious conduct of the Glengarrys in plundering and firing the houses of all whom they imagined were either engaged in or were favorable to the rebellion. In some instances whole families were driven out of their homes to see them plundered and burnt.” One of the Cavalry stationed on the Chateauguay river was severely beaten and disarmed by six Canadians who were

“Silence there!” cried the jailer.
“What is this?” inquired one of the magistrates.
“A pick-pocketing case, your worship.”
“Has that boy ever been here before?”
“He ought to have been a many times,” replied the jailer.
“He has been pretty well everywhere else. I know him well, your worship.”

“Oh! you know me, do you?” cried the Artful, making a note of the statement. “Very good. That’s a case of deformation of character, any way.”

Here there was another laugh, and another cry of silence.

“Now then, where are the witnesses?” said the clerk.

“Ah! that’s right,” added the Dodger. “Where are they?—I should like to see ‘em.”

This wish was immediately gratified, for a policeman stepped forward who had seen the prisoner attempt the pocket of an unknown gentleman in a crowd, and indeed take a handkerchief therefrom, which being a very old one, he deliberately put back again after trying it on his own countenance. For this reason he took the Dodger into custody as soon as he could get near him, and the said Dodger being searched had upon his person a silver snuff-box, with the owner’s name engraved upon the lid. This gentleman had been discovered on reference to the Court Guide, and being then and there present, swore that the snuff-box was his, and that he had missed it on the previous day, the moment he had disengaged himself from the crowd before referred to. He had also remarked a young gentleman in the throng particularly making his way about, and that young gentleman was the prisoner before him.

“Have you anything to ask this witness, boy?” said the magistrate.

“I wouldn’t abase myself by descending to hold any conversation with him,” replied the Dodger.

“Have you anything to say at all?”

“Do you hear his worship ask if you’ve anything to say?” inquired the jailer, nudging the silent Dodger with his elbow.

“I beg your pardon,” said the Dodger, looking up with an air of abstraction. “Did you address yourself to me, my man?”

“I never see such an out-and-out young wagsabond, your worship,” observed the officer with a grin. “Do you mean to say anything, you young shaver?”

“No,” replied the Dodger, “not here, for this ain’t the shop for justice; besides which, my attorney is a-breakfasting this morning with the Vice President of the House of Commons, but I shall have something to say elsewhere, and so will he, and so will a werry numerous and respectable circle of acquaintance as’ll make them beaks wish they’d never been born, or that they’d got their footman to hang ‘em up to their own hat-pegs afore they let ‘em come out this morning to try it on upon me. I’ll be ‘ere!”

“There, he’s fully committed?” interposed the clerk. “Take him away.”

“Come on,” said the jailer.

“Oh, ah! I’ll come on,” replied the Dodger, brushing his hat with the palm of his hand. “Ah! (to the Bench) it’s no use your looking frightened; I won’t show you no mercy, not a hair’s breadth of it. You’ll pay for this, my fine fellers; I wouldn’t be you for something. I wouldn’t go free now, if you wos to fall down on your knees and ask me. Here, carry me off to prison. Take me away.”

With these last words the Dodger suffered himself to be led off by the collar, threatening till he got into the yard to make a parliamentary business of it, and then grinning in the officer’s face with great glee and self-approval.

Having seen him locked by himself in a little cell, Noah made the best of his way back to where he had left Master Bates. After waiting here some time, he was joined by that young gentleman, who had prudently abstained from showing himself until he had looked carefully abroad from a snug retreat, and ascertained that his new friend had not been followed by any impertinent person.

The two hastened back together, to bear to Mr. Fagin the animating news that the Dodger was doing full justice to his bringing-up, and establishing for himself a glorious reputation.

[The above chapter we have introduced to the notice of our readers as a specimen of the process of hardening which must be continually going on amongst thieves and pickpockets. The Jew tries to make the case of the Dodger one of great triumph, but though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished. What a perversity of our nature to make that which should prove a warning to felons, a cause of congratulation and an inducement to proceed in a career of vice.—Ed. Pearl.]

The sensitive mind discovers poetry everywhere. As it is touched with whatever is affecting in the chances of life, so does it taste whatever is picturesque in the objects of nature. All that is majestic and lovely here, is to it a source of delight, and helps it to form a more just conception of Him who is the author of so much beauty. It is thus that in the images of earth may be recognized the tokens of eternity,—in the canopy of heaven, and the expanse of the ocean,—in the setting glories of the sun, and the melting colours of the rainbow,—visions and emblems of a brighter world.—Mrs. John Sanford.