

POETRY.

FROM THE U. STATES LITERARY GAZETTE.

THE OLD MAN'S FUNERAL.

I saw an aged man upon his bier:
His hair was thin and white, and on his brow
A record of the cares of many a year—
Cares that were ended and forgotten now.
And there was sadness round, and faces bowed,
And woman's tears fell fast, and children wailed
aloud.

Then rose another hoary man, and said,
In faltering accents, to that weeping train:
Why mourn ye that our aged friend is dead?
Ye are not sad to see the gathered grain:
Nor when their mellow fruits the orchards cast;
Nor when the yellow woods shake down the ripened mast.

Ye sigh not when the Sun, his course fulfill'd—
His glorious course, rejoicing earth and sky,
In the soft evening, when the winds are stilled,
Sinks where his islands of refreshment lie,
And leaves the smile of his departure spread
O'er the warm colored Heaven and ruddy mountain head.

Why weep ye then for him, who, having run
The bounds of man's appointed time, at last—
Life's blessings all enjoyed—life's labors done—
Serenely to his final rest has past;
While the soft memory of his virtues yet
Lingers, like twilight hues, when the bright sun
is set!

VARIETY.

All pleasure consists in Variety.

From the Dumfries and Galloway Courier.

THE DIVING BELL.

This unquestionably is the greatest curiosity at Portpatrick; and that not so much from the defiance it seems to bid to the laws of nature, as from the submarine marvels it so triumphantly performs. Previous to the time of the late Mr. Rennie, the Diving Bell, even as improved by Mr. Spalding, was little more than an ingenious toy; but in our days it has become an instrument of great practical utility, by which one or more workmen can descend to the depth of 36 feet, and in that unwonted situation level sand, blast rocks, clear away rubbish, and guide to their places huge blocks of hewn freestone, with all the precision and nearly with all the ease of masonry conducted above ground. Mr. Spalding's machine enabled individuals to take a peep at ships, which the waves had prostrated "many fathoms down," and snatch from them, peradventure, a stray ingot or a bag of dollars; Mr. Rennie's does what is far better—removes bars, deepens harbours, lengthens piers, and in this way not only goes far to avert almost the greatest of human calamities, but aggrandises whole districts and waits commerce to shores previously unapproached and unapproachable.

On a former occasion I attempted to describe the Diving Bell, (although I had not then been at the bottom of the sea;) and as my acquaintance with the instrument has been since enlarged, I shall again recur to the same subject, in the hope of enlightening divers of my friends, who still seem at a loss to comprehend its powers, or rather the mode and manner of applying them. With such persons it is quite common to ask, "how do the men breathe? how, when the bell is open below, is the water it cleaves through, prevented from rising?" With regard to the latter question, let any man invert a tumbler in a bowl of water, and if the experiment is conducted with any thing like dexterity, he will find that the air within has prevented the water from rising above the rim. This, then, is simply the principle of the diving Bell. A light machine, of sufficient volume, might be let down and drawn up and still remain dry in the inside; but it is quite another thing when it incloses two or more human beings, whose lungs are as constantly acting on the air, as the gills of fishes act upon the water, and who possess alike the singular faculty of extracting and consuming whatever oxygen it is found to contain. And here I may mention a curious fact, first observed and established by Mr. Spalding, namely, that such Divers as live on vegetables, suffer the least annoyance from working long under water; and hence it is inferred that the lungs of head-cutters require an extra supply of oxygen. But to proceed methodically. Connected with the Bell is a dismantled vessel of some 50 or 60 tons burthen, in the centre of which, a pretty strong crane (worked as usual with tooth and pinion) is sunk to the very keel, and by the help of which the instrument is let down or taken up, with the greatest ease and regularity. When not in use, it rests upon the deck; but when the weather is favorable, the vessel is moved to whatever station the diver directs, and then down go the aquatic quarrymen.

The Bell is neither more nor less than a strong cast metal frame, four inches thick in the side, 5 feet 3 inches high,

4 feet 5 inches wide, tapering towards the top, and weighing exactly 3 tons 15 cwt. The tube of the air pump, 3 inches in diameter, is inserted at the top, and is covered in the inside by a leather valve, with a view to the equal distribution of the air. The pump, which is a double one, is placed on the deck, and constantly worked by four men whenever the divers are at any great depth. In the top are riveted two strong iron bolts, formed into rings at the extremities; the upper rings connect the Bell with the chain of the crane, and the under ones are used for an important purpose, which I shall by and bye explain. In casting the Bell, ten different holes had been purposely left, which are filled with as many circular windows, thoroughly cemented or puttied in—exactly such as you sometimes see used on board of ships, and which the country people call *jokes of glass*. In the inside are seats *vis a vis*, with a cross spar to rest the feet on, and sundry knobs around the top, from which are suspended the workmen's tools. When I was about to descend (accompanied by the chief diver, Mr. Foote, a very civil, intelligent man,) the Bell was gradually raised and lowered over the vessel's side, where it hung dangling for a few minutes. We then descended into an ordinary small boat, and from it clambered into the bell in a crouching attitude, the best way we could. If at any time a stranger feels a little squeamish, it is probably when he first takes his seat in the Bell; he sees himself pent in a narrow house (not very unlike the mortars used in church yards to cheat the resurrection-men;) he hears the air-valve whizzing above; around are nothing but iron walls; below is the level or slightly agitated sea, and he knows not exactly what may be his sensations when he actually comes in contact with an element which has proved the grave of so many brave men. None of these feelings, however, troubled me; the air-pump blew, the crane wheel revolved, and down—down—down we went, until the gurgling of the water over the glass windows, proved that we were fairly under cover. At this stage of the descent, many persons feel a slight pain in their ears, and Mr. Foote mentioned to me that Mr. Saddler, the Acronaut, who once dived with him at Holyhead, described his sensations as similar to those he experiences when descending in his balloon. I cannot say that I was sensible of this or any other feeling, excepting that of heat, after we had remained nearly an hour below, and which is occasioned by the *non* or rather slow escape of the heated air, particularly when the bell rests on a level surface. Unfortunately the water was rather muddy, but the diver assured me that this seldom happens, that in general he sees distinctly the bottom, the moment the machine begins to dip. On these occasions it is very amusing to observe the motion of the fishes, which appear in a tremendous hurry to get out of the way, and what with wonderment and fear, cross and recross as frequently as if they were engaged in dancing a "foursome reel." Sometimes he succeeds in spearing very large flounders, and lately he caught a most gigantic crab, the claws of which could not be spanned by a man's hand. Sea urchins are frequently found, and Mr. F. was kind enough to present me with the shell of the largest he had ever seen.

Arrived at the bottom, the diver gave the usual signal, by striking with a hammer on the side of the bell, and in a minute or so, the iron ship was safely moored. I then produced a bottle which I had taken care to fill with Gordon's best, drank the diver's health, and every body else I care much about, or could think of at the time. I next exhibited my writing materials, indicted a sonnet and two or three epigrams, chaunted a stave, and last of all, entered into a serious conversation with my friend, in the course of which, I endeavored to worm from him as well as I could, the mysteries of his craft. The surface on which we rested being nearly level, the water was so ebb that it would not have covered the half of your shoe, and alluding to this circumstance I asked what he would first proceed to do? "All I could here do," he replied, "would be to make a level," and exhibiting a mason's plummet, he applied it to both sides of the surface. "But," continued he, "this is nothing; you saw the black rocks jutting out of the harbor; well, sometimes the spot we land on is equally uneven. The bell in that case is nearly capsized; the one end resting on a ledge of rock, the other on sand; and between them a pool of standing water three or four feet deep. Our boots protect us so far, and we must just work away with the pick, jamper, &c. the best way we can. When the stuff is loose, and the rubbish accumulates, I give the signal for the bucket to be lowered, and by shifting a little up or

across—throw it out of the way. If it be found necessary to blast, the jumper is sent home; and a tin tube inserted, filled with upwards of a pound of gunpowder. This we can lengthen at pleasure by screwing different pieces together and securing them by a little grease; and in doing this it is necessary to ascend yard by yard until we come to the surface, when a small piece of heated iron is dropped down the tube and then off goes the shot—at least it very seldom if ever misses." This is literally the mode of proceeding under water; but there are other obstacles to encounter besides precipitous and jagged rocks: for sometimes the bell descends into a grove of sea tangle, so tall, thick and umbrageous that the lights are completely darkened, and which it requires no slight effort to fell and otherwise clear away. But perhaps the most remarkable thing of all, is the mode of placing the huge masses of freestone, which form the foundation of the pier, and each of which weighs from five to seven tons. When the bed is prepared and a stone is meant to be laid, it is first of all placed on a punt, and from it lowered to the proper situation—or as nearly so as the driver can direct. He then descends, and by shifting about gets the Bell suspended right above the stone, and forthwith disengaging the original tackle, he attaches to it an ingenious apparatus of his own, the chain of which is fastened to the rings mentioned above, and in this way he drags the stone wherever he pleases. Nay, so easily are the stones moved while afloat in the water, that the slightest touch sends them this way or that—as a proof of which Mr. Foote declares that when every thing is prepared, it is easier to build below than above water. Already he has laid 24 feet of the new pier, and when tier comes to be placed above tier, the work will be seen peering above the tide as if raised by magic. At Holyhead, he constructed a pier 400 yards long, and 15 feet high in a similar manner. No cement nor fastenings are used to connect the stones. From their great gravity and the slightness of the motion felt at such depths, there is no danger whatever of their shifting, while the heavy superstructure that is to be erected above, will tend equally to keep them firm.

I should here mention that independently of the pumps and hands that work the vessel, there is another individual, whose sole duty is to watch the signals. These are reduced to a perfect system and may be explained in half a dozen words. When the diver requires more air and wishes the motion of the pump to be quickened, he strikes *one* on the inside of the Bell, which is easily heard above even at the greatest depths. *Two* means the bell has come in contact with something and you must therefore stop, or turn the windlass; *Three* is the signal for pulling up; *Four* means let the Bell lower down; *Five* is the signal for hawling to the eastward; *Six* to the westward; *Seven* to the southward; *Eight* to the northward; and *Nine* means let down the working bucket. Besides these there is a *Tenth* signal, but which as yet there has been almost no occasion to give at Portpatrick.

Throughout the season the weather has been exceedingly favorable for submarine operations; so much so that Mr. Foote has done as much work in months as he expected to do in years. On certain days he has been below 13 hours out of the 24, though not without ascending to take refreshment. He is still a young man, and although he has plied his vocation for nine years, as he pleases to enjoy perfect health. He admits, however, that the employment is unfavorable to the proper play of the lungs; his first instructor, Mr. Fisher, became not a little asthmatic, and were he to attempt to run a race, or engage in any other violent exercise, we believe he would be found to be a little broken-winded. With regard to danger, the only thing he ever dreaded was the possibility of the rope giving way before the bell has had time to float. In that case it would go down like a shot, and that so rapidly, that the men would be choked to a moral certainty. Formerly the machine was worked by a rope, in place of a chain, which on one occasion got so entangled with the crane that for two hours and a half it could neither be let down nor brought up, to the great terror and alarm of the divers. Often and again Mr. Foote thought of getting out and saving his life by swimming to the top, and was only deterred by the idea that there might be numerous boats about, on which he would be very apt to knock his head. Such a mode of escape is quite possible, and it has been suggested that it would be well to attach a false rope to the bell, strong enough to capsize it in case any thing should go wrong with the chain.

The idea is plausible; but Franklin, in speaking of the possibility of a swimmer crossing from Dover to Calais by

the assistance of a paper kite, remarks, that the packet boat would be a safer conveyance, and on a similar principle we think the diver should rather look well to the strength of his tackle, than trust to any such device.

OLD TIMES.

Some 40 years since, a Selkirkshire farmer, a great original in his way, and remarkable for his fondness for a 'big price' for every thing, attended at Langholm fair, and notwithstanding his parsimonious habits, actually sold his lambs to a perfect stranger upon his simply promising to pay him punctually at the next market. On his return home, the farmer's servants, who regularly messaged at the same table, and seldom honored him with the name of master, inquired 'Weel Sandy, hae ye sel't the lambs?' 'Atweel hae I, and I gat sixpence mair a head for them than any body in the market.' 'And a'weel paid siller?' 'Na, the siller's no paid yet, but its sure enouch.' 'What's your merchant, and what's your security?' 'Troth, I never spiered, but he's a decent lookin' man wi' tap boots and a bottle green coat.' The servants, at this, laughed outright, and tauntingly told him he would never get a farthing. Sandy, however, tho't differently, and having accidentally hurt his leg so as to prevent him from travelling, he sent a shepherd to Langholm, with instructions to look out for a man with a bottle green coat, whom he was sure, he said, to find standing at a certain sign. The shepherd did as he was bid, and, strange to say, discovered a person standing at the identical spot, who, on learning his errand, inquired kindly for his master, and paid him the money to the uttermost farthing. Sandy, who piqued himself on his skill in physiognomy, heard the news without any emotion, and merely said, 'I wad at any time trust mair to looks than words, and when I saw Colley smelling about him sae kindly, I ken't well enouch he could na be a scoundrel.'

On another occasion Sandy, who had a brother settled as a respectable merchant in Edinburgh, conceived the whim of presenting him with a very fine fat tup, the flesh of which, at certain seasons, is known to make most excellent hams. Early one morning, therefore, the ram, with its legs tied, was tumbled into the cart, and, on arriving at his quarters in the Candlemaker-row, the eccentric driver far from committing the extravagance of hiring a porter, hoisted the animal on his own brawny shoulders, and hied him away to his brother's residence. On the door being opened by a good looking maiden, he briefly inquired 'hinny is my Billy in?' 'Your Billy?' said the lass, 'wha is t'ye want, sir?' 'I want my Billy, or my brither, I tell ye, gif ye ken that oay better.' The girl retreated a few paces, and told her master that there was a *daft* man at the door, inquiring for his Billy, with a great big sheep on his back. The merchant guessed in an instant the quality of his visitor, but being engaged at the time, he desired that the stranger might be shown into the parlor. The waiting woman, however, looked so sulky and suspicious, that Sandy determined to 'hae nae comings and gangings wi' her;' so that in place of leaving his burden in the kitchen, he edged it through the lobby into a very handsome sitting room. Here he rested for a few minutes, and wishing to show his present to the best advantage, he set about unloosening the fetters of the ram, muttering to himself, 'pair beast, I see warrad your legs are gye tired—for this is no like scampering about among the hills.' Thus emancipated, the astonished tup began to make a survey of the apartment, and fixing his kindling eyes on a large antique mirror, he made a sudden bolt at the woolly antagonist who glared at him from within, as if equally anxious to come to the scratch. The crash was dreadful—the glass was shivered in a thousand pieces, not a few of which, as they escaped from the frame, rattled about the ears of the astonished farmer, who, *swearing* for fear, seemed the very counterpart of the messenger who

"Drew Priam's curtain at the dead of night,
And told him half his Troy was burned."

Not content with this exploit, the tup turned suddenly round and again spying his shadow in the glass facings of the chimney, he executed a second assault with all the fury and success of the first. The noise of these explosions brought the merchant to the room sooner than he intended, and aware as he was that something had happened, he was scarcely prepared for the singular scene that presented itself; his chairs upset, and tables covered with a shower of glass, his brother trembling like a condemned criminal, and a gigantic ram striding in all the pride of victory over every part of his fine Brussels carpet. At first he damned the ram and every one connected with him; but speedily

recovering his good humor, he gave his hand to his Billy, exclaiming, 'Well, well, Sandy, it can't be helped now, but you'll admit that I've paid for my present, and that the value of my mirrors, thirty good guineas, is no bad price for a moorland tup.—Dumfries Cour.

AURORA BOREALIS.

The most interesting description of this beautiful phenomenon which we now member to have seen, is contained in the Private Journal of Capt. Lyon, who commanded the ship *Hecla*, in the Polar Expedition under Capt. Parry. It was the month of December, and in lat. 69° 11' N. lon. 83° 10' W.—*Bos. Tel.*

To describe the colors of these cloudless heavens would be impossible; but the delicacy and pureness of the various blendid tints excelled any thing I ever saw, even in Italy. The sun shined with a diminished lustre, so that it was possible to contemplate it without a painful feeling to the eyes; yet, the bluish color, which, in severe frost, always accompanies it, is, in my opinion, far more pleasing than the glittering borders which are so profusely seen on the clouds in warmer climates. The nights are no less lovely, in consequence of the clearness of the sky. The moon and stars shine with wonderful lustre, and almost persuade one to be pleased with the surrounding desolation. The aurora borealis does not appear affected by the brilliancy even of the full moon, but its light continues still the same. The first appearance of this phenomenon is generally in showers of falling rays, like those thrown from a rocket, although not so bright. These being in constant and agitated motion, have the appearance of trickling down the sky. Large masses of light succeed next in order, alternating from a faint glow resembling the milky way, to the most vivid flashes, which stream and shoot in every direction with the effect of sheet lightning, except that, after the flash, the aurora still continues to be seen. The sudden glare and rapid bursts of these wondrous showers of fire, render it impossible to observe them, without fancying that they produce a rushing sound; but I am confident that there is no actual noise attending the changes, and that the idea is erroneous. I frequently stood for hours together on the ice, to ascertain this fact, at a distance from any noise but my own breathing, and thus I formed my opinion. Neither did I observe any variety of color in the flashes, which were to my eye always of the same shade as the milky way and vivid sheet lightning. The stars which gleam through the aurora, certainly emit a milder ray, as a curtain of the finest gauze were interposed. It is remarkable that whenever the weather is calm, the aurora has a tendency to form an arch, at whatever position it may occupy in the heavens. On the 29th of this month, we were particularly gratified by a beautiful exhibition of this kind at near midnight. A perfect arch was formed at the southward, stretching from east to west; its centre elevated about two degrees above the horizon. The night was serene and dark, which added considerably to its effect, and the appearance continued unchanged for about a quarter of an hour; but on a slight breeze springing up small rays shot occasionally to the zenith, and the arch became agitated with a gentle and undulating motion, after which it spread irregularly, and separating itself into the usual streamers, soon diffused itself over the whole sky. In stormy weather, the northern lights fly with the rapidity of lightning, and with a corresponding wildness in the gale which is blowing, giving an indescribable air of magic to the whole scene.

I have never contemplated the aurora without experiencing the most aweful sensations, and can readily excuse the poor untutored Indians for supposing that, in the restless motions of the northern lights, they beheld the spirits of their fathers roaming in freedom through the land of souls.

A VIRTUOUS LIFE.

At the great day it will not be inquired how logically any man has reasoned, or only how virtuously he has acted; and we have possessed that love to God, the fruits of which were benevolence and good will to men, will then be of more importance to us than to have acquired all knowledge, and to have understood all mysteries.

There are no greater objects of pity in the world, than men who are admired all around for their nice discernment and fine taste in every thing of a worldly nature, but have no taste for the riches that endure forever—no love for God or his will—no love for Christ or their souls. In such a state, however admired or respected, they cannot see the kingdom of God.