

The Muse! what'er the Muse inspires,  
My soul the tuneful strain admires, ...



SONG.

FROM THE EDINBURGH MAGAZINE.

The stars are out; the moon is bright,  
Through depths of azure wading;  
The waters sparkle in its light,  
Their banks the owls are slading;  
A placid calm o'erhangs the scene;  
'Tis wildly sweet; and only  
Were one but present, now, I ween,  
It would not seem so lonely!  
She was the star whose glorious ray  
My journey did enlighten;  
No cloud obscur'd my mental day,  
Whose gloom she did not brighten;  
But from the bird that ushers spring,  
Her emblem we may borrow,  
To-day we hark and hear it sing,  
And where is it to-morrow?  
Oh! why in such an hour as this,  
Should thoughts so sad awaken?  
Why was I doom'd to dream of bliss,  
And thus to be forsaken!—  
Since life no balsam can impart  
To keep remembrance under;  
The lengthen'd sigh that swells my heart,  
Shall burst its bands asunder.

BONIE DOON. BY BURNS.

Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,  
How can ye blume sae fair;  
How can ye chant, ye little birds,  
And I see fu' o' care!  
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,  
That sings upon the bough;  
Thou minds me o' the happy days  
When my fause love was true.  
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,  
That sings beside thy mate;  
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,  
And wist na o' my fate.  
Aft hae I roved by bonie Doon,  
To see the woodbine twine,  
And lika bird sang o' its love,  
And sae did I o' mine.  
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose  
Frae aff its thorny tree,  
And my fause lover staw the rose,  
But left the thorn wi' me.

Literary Extracts, &c.

Variety's the very spice of life,  
That gives it all its flavor.

HAPPINESS.

Messrs. KNIDER & BINGHAM:

In as much as the possession of happiness is evidently the pursuit of all mankind, the following extract from a very valuable production may, if strictly adhered to, yield some salutary lessons on the subject. If you deem it worthy a place in your valuable paper, it is at your service. S. F. P.

Wilkesborough, Jan. 13th, 1821.

"The natural disposition of every person is to find happiness as he moves through life, the pleasures of which are so beautiful, and of so short a duration, that he can hardly enjoy them, before they are gone. There is nothing which persons generally form so incorrect an idea of, as HAPPINESS. They suppose, that to taste of the enjoyments of life, they must be in the midst of fashion and amusements, and court pleasure on the 'light fantastic toe;' this is inconsistently called, sipping the sweets of life from 'pleasure's sparkling bowl.' The only retreat for happiness is solitude, where, divested of all the false glare which 'gleams but to allure,' we can throw off every vagrant thought, and cherish the purest affections of the soul. We can there look into the recesses of the heart, and find existing only an ideal affection for the vanities of the world. The first and most necessary step towards enjoyment, is to be happy within ourselves. 'Contentment needs but little;' and those who cannot feel themselves contented when undisturbed by the clamour of high life, would not feel themselves more so, though they should bask in pleasure's brightest beam. Is it all the trifling pleasures the world is capable of bestowing, which gives one hour of tranquil happiness to the mind? Is it every enjoyment we can possibly imagine, that can give us one moment's consolation in the trying hour of our dissolution? It is not possible that we can expect to be perfectly happy in this life; nor is it living completely secluded from all society, that makes us feel more contented. There must be a certain sunshine within the breast, which no cloud of fate, however dark it may appear, can wholly hide its genial light. The married man, who is blest with the soft endearing smile, and affectionate look from

"Heaven's best best gift to man,"

a kind wife—and whose image he sees reflected in each softened feature of his child—feels himself far more happy than the devotee of worldly

pleasures, who conceives himself lost, if he is deprived of visiting a fashionable assembly, of attending a favorite club, of seeing a new play, or of admiring some foreign novelty, which the hand-bills of the day have announced.

"The man who feels contented within himself, though the pitiless storm of fate should beat against him, still he can, with a pleasing satisfaction, recollect that 'our God, in the midst of punishment, has remembered mercy;' and though he should be 'bereft of almost every stay, save innocence and Heaven,' if he will look up to Him with the same confidence that a child looks up to its earthly parents, all his 'darkness and distress will vanish like the mist of the dawn before the solar ray,' and he may exclaim with Ossian, that 'there is a joy even in grief, when peace dwells in the breasts of the sad.'"

FROM THE (LONDON) QUARTERLY REVIEW.

THE HOLY VEHM.

Every castle on the Rhine has its peculiar tradition, and many of the mountains and rocks along its banks have some romantic story connected with them. The castle at Baden is remarkable for its subterraneous vaults, to which are ascribed an interest arising from a different source. They are said to have been the seat of one of those terrific institutions—the Secret Tribunal—a species of Inquisition which it is difficult to imagine should ever have existed in any country, but which was allowed to execute the tremendous powers which it assumed to itself throughout Germany, until its cruelties and injustice provoked a combination to repress its enormities; and on the introduction by Charles V. of a new criminal code, the court gradually fell into disuse.

The Holy Vehm, or Bloody League, was a mysterious tribunal which existed, originally, in Westphalia, and from thence spread itself throughout Germany. It was also called *Frei Gericht*, (Free Tribunal,) and the place of its sittings, *Frei Stuhl*, (Free Chair,)—and it is not uncommon in Germany to meet with a district which still bears the name of *Frei Gericht*, derived from this source. The greatest secrecy pervaded their proceedings; all that was known of them was arbitrary, bloody, and terrific. The members of a tribunal consisted of a supreme Judge, or *Stuhlgraf*, and at least fourteen assistants, or free assessors, (*Frei sheffer*), composed of all ranks, princes, nobility, and citizens—every one being eager to shield himself from the terrors of the tribunal by becoming a member. In the fifteenth century, when the tribunal was in its most daring power, there were about 100,000 free judges in Germany. The judges, who ordinarily went by the name of the *wissenden*, (the knowing or initiated,) recognized each other by a sign, discovered by none but the fraternity. The court was thus the powerful instrument of ambition, private malice, and oppression. No one knew his accuser or his judge—both might be his neighbour or seeming friend. On their initiation, the members bound themselves by the most solemn oaths to bring all before the tribunals that deserved punishment, respecting neither friends nor relations; or, in the words of their terrible oath, to "uphold and conceal the Holy Vehm, before wife and child, before father and mother, before sister and brother, before fire and wind, all that the sun shineth on and the rain wetteth, before all that floats between heaven and earth."

The proceedings, as may be supposed, were very summary.—The officers of the tribunal stole in the night to a castle or a town, and affixed on the gates a judicial summons to this prince or that citizen to appear at the *Frei Stuhl*, at a given time and place, to be examined on a given matter. If the summons was repeated three times, without effect, the accused was condemned *par contumace*, once more summoned—and if that proved fruitless, outlawed and hanged by the road side whenever caught. If he resisted, he was bored through the body, bound to the tree, and left with the executioner's knife sticking by him, to show that he was not murdered, but a convict of the *Frei Gericht*.—The tribunal used to assemble at midnight in the churchyard of the place where they intended to hold a sitting. At break of day, the ringing of the bells announced to the inhabitants the presence of these formidable visitors. All were obliged to assemble in an open field, sitting down in a circle, in the middle of which sat the President and Judges of the Tribunal—the *insignia* of a sword and rope before them. When any one of bad reputation appeared in the circle, one of the judges would step up to him, and touching him with his white staff, say to him—"Friend, there is no good bread to be eaten elsewhere as here." If the conscience of the person was so clear that he did not choose to take the hint and go away, he might sit still and run the chance of accusation; but it was generally more prudent to decamp. When the judge touched any one three times with the formidable white wand, it was a signal that he was a hapless convict already secretly accused and convicted; and no time was lost in hanging him at the next tree or beam which presented itself. This was the invariable punishment of criminals of all ranks; although now it is out of use in Germany, and the meanest criminals have the honour of decapitation. The youngest judge generally performed the office, which was managed with so much secrecy that the hangman was rarely known. The crimes taken cognizance of by the *Vehm Gericht*, were chiefly heresy, infidelity, sacrilege, high treason, murder, incendiarism, rapes, robbery, and contumacy to the tribunal, its judges and messengers.

Genius is the gift of the Deity; it discovers it

UNDESIRABLE EFFECTS OF NOVEL READING.

(AN EXTRACT.)

But there is another way in which it may be apprehended that novels are frequently hurtful.—The epic poem and the romance of chivalry transport us to a world of wonders, where supernatural agents are mixed with the human characters; where the human characters themselves are prodigies, and where events are produced by causes widely and manifestly different from those which regulate the course of human affairs. With such a world we do not think of comparing our actual situation; to such characters we do not presume to assimilate ourselves or our neighbours; from such a concatenation of marvels we draw no conclusions with regard to our own expectations in real life. But real life is the very thing which novels affect to imitate; and the young and inexperienced will sometimes be too ready to conceive that the picture is true, in those respects, at least, in which they wish it to be so. Hence both their temper, conduct, and happiness may be materially injured. For novels are often romantic; not, indeed, by the relation of what is obviously miraculous or impossible; but by deviating, though perhaps insensibly, beyond the bounds of probability or consistency. And the girl who dreams of the brilliant accomplishments and enchanting manners which distinguish the favourite characters in those fictitious histories, will be apt to look with contempt on the most respectable and amiable of her acquaintance; while in the showy person and flattering address of some contemptible, and perhaps profligate coxcomb, she may figure to herself the prototype of her imaginary heroes, the only man upon earth with whom it is possible to be happy. Nay, if she would venture to indulge her lover with a private assignation, she knows from those authentic records, that her conduct is sanctioned by the example of ladies of the most inflexible virtue. She may still plead the same authority for her justification, if, for the sake of this fascinating youth, she render herself an outcast from her station and her family. Whatever she may give up, she has learned from her oracles, that no sacrifice can be too great for real love; that real love, such as subsists, and ever will subsist, between herself and the best of men, is adequate to fill every hour of her existence, and to supply the want of every other gratification, and every other employment. And although she may be prevented by fortunate circumstances, or by the prevalence of better principles from exhibiting, in her own fate, the catastrophe of a melancholy novel; yet, tinctured with such notions, she must, even in prosperity, be lamentably disappointed in her fondest hopes, and look with a joyless heart to the society of ordinary mortals, to the ordinary duties and ordinary comforts of life; those duties which the sober minded discharge with cheerfulness, and those comforts in which they acquiesce with contentment and delight.

Religious.

ADDRESS

Of the Rev. Mr. WAAR, of Serampore, (India,) before the New-York Bible Society at its late anniversary, concluded from our last.

This idolatrous belief in the purifying nature of the Ganges, inculcated in the Shaster, leads multitudes, in a state of perfect health, to cast themselves into the stream and perish. Capt. Pudner, a gentleman now in England, saw sixteen females, with pans of water hanging to their shoulders, sink in this river, in one morning as he sat at his own window there. They were assisted by the bramhuns (the priests) to climb over the side of the boat, and held up in the water till they had themselves filled the pans, and they then sunk, nothing but a few bubbles of water marking where they had gone down. While Dr. Robinson, lately deceased at Calcutta, resided at the same place, twelve men were immolated on the same spot, and by a similar process. Our own missionary there, Mr. M'Intosh, in his letters to Serampore, frequently writes in the most distressing manner on the subject of these immolations.

But there is something infinitely beyond all this horror, something which has no parallel in the annals of time, nor among the most barbarous and savage tribes. The scalping by your Indians is mere child's play, compared with the burning of the Hindoo widow on the funeral pile. By an official statement put into my hands in the year 1818, and a copy of which I brought with me from India, it appears, that in 1815, between 4 and 500 females were burnt or buried alive in the Presidency of Bengal alone; between 5 and 600 in 1816, and in 1817 (only three years ago) there were 706 widows thus roasted alive or buried alive in that part of British India. This is the official statement. But, sir, I have no doubt, but that these immolations were far more numerous; that they were 1400, or perhaps 2800! Is there any thing like this to be found amongst all human records? Into what forest, sir; amongst what tribe of savages shall we go for scenes of blood and murder like these? And yet these are the mild and innocent sons of Brahme. I have seen three widows thus roasted alive! But the impressions made upon the mind by the sight of these horrible—these most horrible practices—are almost overwhelming; otherwise I could have been present at many of these immolations. And all this proceeds from the same sacred writings, from the Shaster, which promises the poor widow, that if she will burn, she shall by the merit

of this act, carry with her to heaven (a sensual paradise) fourteen generations of relations and her deceased husband, where they shall all remain while fourteen kings of the gods shall have succeeded to the throne of India. The funeral pile consists of a quantity of faggots laid on the earth, rising about three feet from the ground.—After bathing, and performing various superstitious rites, the widow comes to the pile walks round it four times, scattering flowers and parched corn, and then lays herself down on the pile by the dead body, which she enfold in her arms. With two cords laid across the pile, the dead and living bodies are then tied fast together.—More faggots are now laid upon the bodies, and two levers are brought over them, pressing down the living widow, and preventing her, after the flames begin to scorch her, from escaping from the hands of these "staunch murderers." The eldest son now sets fire to the pile, and, as the flames ascend, the shouts of the mob and the noise of the drums, effectually drown the screams of the poor widow, who is thus pursued to death with as little pity as is felt by a parcel of rude boys while stoning to death some noxious animal. The widows of the weavers are, when immolated, buried alive.—In this case, a large grave is dug by her relations; and, after the performance of certain superstitious rites, the widow is let down into it, in the centre of which she sits, taking the dead body on her lap, and inclosing it in her arms. In this posture she sits, an unmoved, unremonstrating spectator, while her children and relations throw into the earth, and while two of them descending into the grave, trample it firm around her. She sees the earth rising higher—and higher; till at length it reaches her head. All the rest of the earth is then thrown hastily upon her, and when the grave is full, these relations mount to the top of it, and tread the earth firm on the head of the suffocated victim! Why, sir, one is ready to ask, whether this is hell or earth! And yet all this is practised in the face of the whole population; and this is a part of the religion of Brahme.

What then is the remedy for such a state of society as this? It is hoped that the British government will ere long interpose and interdict these horrible practices. But it is the introduction of Christianity alone which can effectually teach these people the "way of peace." It is in the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures, and by the spread of the Gospel, that the Almighty will be known in India as "the Father of the fatherless, and the Husband of the widow."

The Shaster is also the source of all those abominations connected with religious ceremonies which so much abound among the Hindoos. The songs, the dances, exhibited at their religious festivals, are so impure that the very natives themselves are ashamed, when called upon to offer an apology for them. Gopel, a learned bramhun, confessed to a friend of mine, that he was never present on these occasions without hiding himself behind a pillar of the temple. And yet this is in, what is to them, the house of God; and these are a part of the services which they offer to the deity! And thus that which should be the source of illumination, is the very element of darkness; that which should elevate, debases and degrades, and that which should purify and save, becomes the poison of the soul, and accelerates its ruin.

Notwithstanding all the predictions of the enemies of missions, who declared that their strong holds in India were invulnerable; that the Hindoos, whatever other heathen might do, would never renounce every thing for Christ—and notwithstanding all the real and most awful obstacles in the way of the evangelization of this country—more than 600 Pagans have, in connexion with one mission station only, renounced their gods and been brought to own the Redeemer—the Holy Scriptures, in whole or in part, have been translated and published at Serampore, in 25 of the languages of India; languages in which they had never before appeared, and one of them, the Chinese, spoken by two hundred millions of men; these Scriptures are spreading a glorious light where they have been most read; and many Hindoos have been converted, comforted in sickness and supported in death by their perusal; more than fifty of these converted pagans have become Christian teachers; twenty thousand heathen children attend the schools established by Christians in India; and now a new college is founding at Serampore, that the converted natives may themselves, under the Great Head of the church, become the Evangelists of Christ, and the Saviours of their country.

I have every reason, sir, to be grateful for the very kind manner in which I have been received in the United States, and particularly in New-York. The support which I have begun to realize here, in reference to the Native Missionary College, also deserves my thanks. It was to be expected, that in a land where Christianity has been pouring forth her choicest treasures, such an object, though a distant one, would find many a heart warm towards it. Ah! sir, the cries of 150 millions cannot be heard without the deepest sympathy, wherever the worth of the immortal mind, and of the everlasting Gospel is felt. Is there in any one country beside, China excepted, such a wreck, such a ruin as this? One hundred and fifty millions! And how should the wants of such a population, the individual instruction of all these millions, be met by foreigners, supported by public contribution? No, sir, India can only attain a higher civilization, and a saving illumination, by the grace, the gifts, and the exertions of its own renovated population.

Every soul is a world.