

## Literary Extracts, &c.

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

FROM THE N. Y. CRITICAL REVIEW.

ONTWA.

The Son of the Forest. A Poem.

[CONCLUDED.]

The poem opens well. The council scene—the aged oak under which it is held—the tempest—and the proud bearing of Kaskaskias, are described with beauty and force. Ontwa is chosen as messenger of war to Saranac, Chief of the invading Iroquois, and invested with the warrior's heron plume. We pass over Kaskaskias's parting direction to his son, (which, though pleasingly written, reminded us of "Speed, Malise, speed,") and the beautiful adventure of the deer, to give the picture of Oneyda, the daughter of Saranac—whose repose Ontwa surprises. The wild warrior is struck with mute admiration, and thinks, in his rapture, that the sleeping beauty is a "spirit sent from liquid cave," to guide the favored Saranac. This is a pretty image: indeed, the whole description speaks the poet.

"Her raven hair, half wreath'd, descended,  
And o'er her face like shadows blended;  
Half veiling charms of fairer hue  
Than ever forest daughter knew.  
Such locks ne'er deck'd the desert child!  
Ne'er bloom'd such cheeks in forest wild!  
Not that, the skin of doe, or fawn,  
That o'er her fairer neck is drawn,  
And all the rising breast conceals,  
Which Erie's daughter half reveals.  
Trembling, as in my dream I knelt,  
And all the awe of worship felt:  
"Bright spirit of the air or deep!"  
Let Ontwa guard thy morning sleep.  
This wild rose, blooming o'er thy rest,  
I'll pluck to decorate thy breast;  
That kind propitious sweets may bear  
My name to visions rising there."  
I gazed, enchain'd by powerful spell,  
Till bow and dart forgotten fell,  
And Erie and invading host  
Were all in one deep feeling lost.  
I watch'd the closing of her dreams  
To catch her eye's first opening beams,  
The long dark lashes slowly rose,  
As all unwilling to disclose  
The light beneath: so fringed height  
Of gives delay to morning's light.  
They broke,—but oh! 'twere vain,—how faint  
Were tints the gleam of star to paint!  
What wonder, that my forest eye  
Should deem her spirit of the sky?  
Or, doubt that the red Indian's earth  
Could give such shining beauties birth?  
My youthful ear had heard of race,  
With form enrob'd and snowy face,  
Which, coming from the rising sun,  
O'er all the morning world had run;  
But Ontwa never knew their blood  
Had beat in hearts that roved the wood,  
Nor that their fairer hues had shed  
Their lustre o'er our shadowy red."

pp. 47, 48.

He is seized as a spy; but, on producing the blood-stained weapon, as a pledge of Erie's ire, he is released, and suffered to depart. The war dance which is held on his return, and the songs of the Chiefs, are among the best passages in the poem. The adventures of Catawba possess great beauty, both of poetry and imagination. The secret march of the Eries, their battles, and final overthrow, and the noble death of Kaskaskias, follow in swift succession, and are related with animation. Ontwa, the only remnant of his race which the artillery of their foes had spared, is destined as a sacrifice to the insatiable revenge of their conquerors. Bound to the oak, awaiting the dawn of day as a signal to light the fire of death, the captive raises his victim song—which we cannot resist extracting, although we shall exceed our limits.

"Think not Ontwa's spirit shaken;  
Fear can ne'er a throb awaken—  
Though this form be captive taken,  
Still his soul is free.

All your fiery torments scorning,  
Pleased he sees the pile adorning,  
Which shall send him, with the morning,  
Sire and friends to see.

"What though Erie low be lying—  
And no voice will e'er be crying—  
For revenge of Ontwa dying!  
Still his soul will boast:

Where yon vultures now are feeding,  
Many a foeman's corpse lies bleeding,  
Given by Ontwa's dart their speeding:  
These revenge his ghost.

"Stars of heaven! why still ascending?  
Would your lights were downward bending,  
Would the shades of night were ending,  
And the day begun.

"By delightful rivers straying,  
Erie's gather'd bands are straying,  
Chiding Ontwa's long delaying—  
Would the night were done."

While his intoxicated guards are sleeping, Oneyda releases the Erie, and, after some hesitation, becomes the companion of his flight. The following lines have great sweetness and tenderness: Ontwa is watching the troubled sleep of Oneyda, as she rests in the forest:

"Sweet sleeper! calm thy vision's fear;  
Is not thy watchful warrior near?  
The forest sleeps beneath the sun,  
The lonely waters calmly run,  
And scarce the insect flutters round,  
Lest it should wake thee with its sound,  
Soon as thy broken slumbers end,

Again our course afar we'll bend,  
Launch our light bark, and refuge take  
In friendlier regions o'er the lake.  
There, where Ohio's waters press  
Their silent way through wilderness,  
And echo, as they wind along,  
Only the bird's or hunter's song,  
On some lone border of the wild,  
I'll shelter thee, thou snowy child!"

p. 88.

The prophetic vision of the Indian girl is fulfilled—the fugitives are overtaken by their pursuers, and, in shielding her lover, Oneyda receives her death wound.

"The victor chief tore off his plume;  
The wailing tribe sat down in gloom:  
But chief nor tribe could never know,  
The depth of Ontwa's silent wo."

We think we may safely venture to encourage our author to pursue the course, he has with such promise begun. He evidently possesses the most important requisites of a poet—imagination, taste, and feeling. The production before us, betrays an unpractised hand, and a timidity which has led him to repress, rather than exert his powers. We doubt not, that their full development, will justify the favorable opinion we have expressed.

The notes which illustrate the poem, and which are extracted from the manuscript journal of Governor Cass, of Michigan, are highly interesting, and throw considerable light upon the manners of the Indian race. Every memento of this people who are passing away before our eyes, should be scrupulously preserved. The time is fast approaching, when there will be nothing left of them, but the recollection that they once have been. The tide of emigration flows rapidly on. It is in vain that the Indian, reluctantly bartering his native hill, retreats from the white man's dwelling: Scarce is he settled in deeper forests, than the swarms of the honey-bee, the faithful forerunner of civilization, announce to the savage the approach of the intruding strangers. Debased, subdued, but not civilized, the race is swiftly becoming extinct. But it is not this cause alone, which excites curiosity and interest for the Indian people. Their varied character—the obscurity which shrouds their origin, and which is rendered deeper by the antiquities to be found among them—their peculiar virtues and vices—their wild pursuits, and wilder superstitions—their patience in want, fortitude in suffering, and courage in danger—the faithfulness of their friendship, and the intensity of their hate, will ever render them subjects of interest: and while their history offers tempting themes for the poet, it also opens a wide field for the philosopher.—It is not the least remarkable trait in the Indian character, that it withers at the touch of civilization. The savage, secluded within his own vast forest, and the savage placed within the reach of white men's vices, are distinct beings. After all that has been planned, and carried into execution, for the enlightening of the Indians—what has been done? Let the wretches we often see in our streets, and the horrid compound of savage and civilized vices, which mark the Indian whenever he has come in contact with his white brethren, answer the question. Amidst all the faults that stain the wild savage, he is exempted from one curse: He is temperate, for he has not the knowledge of intoxicating liquors; and it is this fatal gift that the white man brings him,—a gift that poisons every blessing he would confer. It is well known that, having once tasted spirit, they imbibe for it a passion neither to be overcome nor satiated. Of the brutalizing effects of this fondness for liquor, they are themselves aware: "You bring my people the Bible," said a Chief, "but you give us brandy." And it is in savage, as in civilized nature, to seize more greedily on the evil than the good. That they receive the Christian faith, with coldness, or suspicion, is little to be wondered at, when we consider the poor commentary the lives of the generality of persons, calling themselves Christians, afford, to the truths they would inculcate. Acuteness of observation is the characteristic of the savage, and he is not slow to perceive the wide difference between the actions of his civilized instructors, and the sacred rules by which they profess to guide them. The Catholic missionaries, by their patience, their never wearied zeal, and their winning manners, have effected more than any other sect. But, as the forms of their worship rather strike the imagination than touch the heart, we find, that unless the faith of the wild convert has been strengthened and continued by constant attention, it has gradually faded from his mind; and, at last, the be-

lief has been forgotten, which, perhaps, was never clearly understood.

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The safeguard of the Indian is the independence of his character. In this he forms a contrast to the African, who readily imbibes other customs, and soon loses his distinguishing traits.—Not so the Indian; he retains his original habits with great tenacity, and even if (which has rarely happened) he becomes civilized, he does not assimilate with the strangers around him. He abides with white men as if neither his heart, nor home, was among them, and is scarce ever firm enough to withstand the temptation of returning to his natural habits. The instance of Peter Osekett, the protege of the Marquis De La Fayette,—who was instructed by the most polished masters in Paris, and had made some progress in acquiring the accomplishments of refinement—yet, who returned to his native woods, threw of the dress and manners of civilized men, and sunk into a drunken and ferocious savage,—speaks volumes.

That there is a charm in their mode of living, that retains the Indians, and even allures the white man, has often been observed. We have heard a scientific foreigner, whose pursuits led to a residence of some months among the Indians, assert, that those were as happy days as he had known. He described the chief attraction of their life as arising from a perfect absence of care, and exemption from all those irksome, artificial restraints of society, and petty vexations and intrigues, which harass the life of civilized man. It must, however, be allowed, that the feelings of this person might have been very different, if he had looked forward to the prospect of spending his life with these people, and bidden farewell to the delights of refined conversation, and that pleasure which the acquirement of knowledge brings.

The history of the founder of St. Regis, is a strong example of the attachment which the Indian life inspires. His name was Cammon. When a mere boy, rambling with his sister, a girl of fourteen, in the woods, near the settlement of Caughnawaga, they were surprized by a party of Indians. The girl, in attempting to climb a tree in order to conceal herself, fell, and broke her arm. The savages seized the boy, but probably not caring to be troubled with the wounded girl, left her to find her way home as well as she could. The Indians, according to their custom, adopted their little prisoner, and educated him in their own habits. The quickness and talents he evinced, as he grew up, obtained him the confidence of the tribe; and at manhood he became, virtually, the Chief of the village. At this time, Father Gordon, the Catholic priest, struck by the singularity of the circumstance of a white possessing so much influence over the Indians, inquired into his history, and with some difficulty traced his family—who joyfully claimed the lost one. After remaining with them for some time, Cammon's wild habits prevailed, and he quitted the comforts of civilized life, for the freedom of the children of the forest. He found, however, that his absence had given offence, and excited jealousy among the Indians, and that many of them regarded him with unfriendly eyes. Under these circumstances, Father Gordon advised him to select the most attached of his friends, and form a new settlement. He accordingly followed this counsel, and founded the village of St. Regis. He married an Indian woman, and left a large family of sons, who have the influence, if not the rank, of Chiefs among the Indians.

The various and wild superstitions of the Indians, at once refute the assertion, that they have no imagination. The extravagance and absurdity of some of their tales is only to be equalled by the implicit belief with which they receive them. Their dreams are oracles. Governor Cass says:

"The Indians have great confidence in dreams: They are considered as the immediate manifestations of the will of the Great Spirit; and it is almost impossible to persuade them to disregard these impressions. The most important expeditions are sometimes stopped and turned back, by a dream of one of the party. In the year 1778, a party of about one hundred Chippewa warriors, led by a Chief named Wa-begon-a, left Detroit upon a war excursion against the infant settlements of Kentucky. During the march, warrior after warrior abandoned the party, affected by the dreams which they had, or feigned to have; until the number

was reduced to twenty-three. When they arrived upon the Ohio, they struck a road apparently much travelled. They watched this road some time; but not meeting with any success, they returned, and proceeded one day's march towards home. On the evening of this day, a British interpreter, who was with the party, remonstrated against their return, and urged the Chief to remain in the country, until they could strike the Americans. He dwelt upon topics obvious to the Indians; and represented the disgrace which would attend an unfortunate expedition. The Chief finally consented to refer the question to a dream. He prepared himself for the approaching communication, and in the morning stated that the Great Spirit had appeared to him, and had directed him to watch the road again, until a party of the Americans should pass. The Indians returned with great confidence, stationed themselves upon the road, and there remained until a party approached—upon whom they fired. They took two scalps and three prisoners.

"It was not difficult to perceive that this road was daily travelled, and the Chief hazarded little in advising his warriors to watch it. The whole plan was probably contrived between him and the interpreter, to restore confidence to the dispirited party."\*

It is obvious that the minds of the Indians are prepared for these impressions. Fasting, watching, long conversations and intense reflection upon the subject, produce the very result of which they are in pursuit. They dream because their faculties, intellectual and corporeal, are in a state of excitement most favorable to such an object.

The most interesting and perplexing circumstances, concerning the Indians, are the antiquities found among them, and of which they can give no account; or one so vague and unsatisfactory, as rather to bewilder, than aid, the inquirer. That the works which have been discovered in various parts of the country, are vestiges of a people far superior to the present race, is evident;—but what their destiny and fate—their names and customs—are questions, in answer to which every thing may be conjectured, but nothing proved. The author's remarks on these antiquities are appropriate; but he could not be expected to throw much light on the obscurity that surrounds them. Of the man-eating society, a very curious description is given; and there appears not to be the slightest doubt of the truth of its former existence.

The practice of cannibalism being abhorrent to every feeling of our nature, and the many instances, where the most plausible stories, on severe scrutiny, have been proved to be false, had caused us to lend an unbelieving ear to tales of this kind. That the transports of rage or revenge have urged men to vent their fury, by mangling the dead bodies of their enemies, we unhappily have no need of examining Indian customs to prove: we have instances enough of such brutality in civilized men. But we do not think that man, even in his most savage state, ever fed upon his fellow-men, merely to satisfy his appetite: We have never heard a well-authenticated instance of it, where it could not be traced, either to the desperation of famine, or to the cruelty of revenge. The institution which existed among the Miamis and Kickapoos, is robbed of some of its horror, by the solemn and religious air which attended its ceremonies. We must, however, agree with the author, that 'no parallel to it can be found among the other tribes, nor perhaps in the whole record of human depravity.'

A society existed, called "the man-eaters," whose duty it was to eat any prisoners, devoted to this horrible purpose by those who captured them. This society was co-eval with the earliest traditions of either tribe; and the institution was associated with religious sentiments, and with feelings of reverence, in the minds of the Indians. Its members belonged to one family, called "the bear," which, however, included many individuals. They were admitted into the society by a secret and solemn initiation, and with many imposing ceremonies. This right, or duty, for I cannot ascertain in which light the admission was viewed, extended to males and females; and the whole number, at the period to which my information relates, was about 20. But I am ignorant whether there was any limitation of number, except by the exclusion of individuals from the sacred family.

"On ordinary occasions, when a prisoner is sacrificed, it is done to gratify

the revenge of the near relations of a fallen warrior: But when these relatives are strongly excited, either in consequence of the natural strength of their passions, or of a peculiar attachment to the deceased, or of any uncommon circumstances attending his death, the prisoner is then sentenced to a specific death, and to be delivered to the "Man-eaters." They take possession of him, and execute him in conformity with the sentence. After being delivered to them, there is no power to ransom him: His fate is irreversibly fixed."\*\*\*\*

One of the members of this society, called "White Skin," an influential Miami Chief, is yet living. But the institution itself has disappeared; and such is the change in the feelings of the Indians upon these subjects, that he is sometimes reproached with this connexion, formerly so much venerated and respected. It has been stated that the celebrated Chief, Little Turtle, was active in the abolition of this horrible practice. Such an exertion was in unison with his character and principles."\*\*\*\*

## Religious.

FROM HANNAH MORE.

What a support in the dreary season of sickness is it to reflect, that the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering; that if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him, which implies also the reverse, that if we do not suffer with him, we shall not reign with him; that is, if we suffer merely because we cannot help it, without reference to him, without suffering for his sake and in his spirit. If it be not sanctified suffering it will avail but little. We shall not be paid for having suffered, as in the creed of too many, but our meetness for the kingdom of glory will be increased if we suffer according to his will and after his example.

He who is brought to serious reflection by the salutary affliction of a sick bed, will look back with astonishment on his former false estimate of worldly things. Riches! Beauty! Pleasure! Genius! Fame!—what are they in the eyes of the sick and dying.

RICHES! These are so far from affording him a moment's ease, that it will be well if no former misapplication of them aggravate his present pains. He feels as if he only wished to live that he might henceforth dedicate them to the purposes for which they were given.

BEAUTY! What is beauty, he cries, as he considers his own sunk eyes, hollow cheeks, and pallid countenance. He acknowledges with the Psalmist, that the consuming of beauty is "the rebuke with which the Almighty corrects man for his sin."

GENIUS! What is it? Without religion genius is but a lamp on the gate of a Palace. It may serve to cast a gleam of light on those without, while the inhabitants sit in darkness.

PLEASURE! That has not left a trace behind it. "It died in the birth, and is not, therefore, worthy to come into this bill of Mortality."

FAME! Of this his very soul acknowledges the emptiness. He is astonished how he could ever be so infatuated as to run after a sound, to court a breath, to pursue a shadow, to embrace a cloud.—Augustus, asking his friends as they surrounded his dying bed, if he had acted his part well, on their answering in the affirmative, cried *plaudite*. But the acclamations of the whole universe would rather mock than soothe the dying Christian if unsanctioned by the hope of divine approbation. He now rates at its just value that fame which was so often eclipsed by envy, and which will be so soon forgotten in death. He has no ambition left but for heaven, where there will be neither envy, death, nor forgetfulness.

When capable of reflection, the sick Christian will revolve all the sins and errors of his past life; he will humble himself for them as sincerely as if he had never repented of them before; and implore the divine forgiveness as fervently as if he did not believe they were long since forgiven. The remembrance of his former offences will grieve him, but the humble hope that they are pardoned will fill him "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Mankind live all in masquerade: he, therefore, who mixes with them unmasked is always ill received, and commonly abused by the whole assembly.