

Poetry.

FROM THE CHARLESTON COURIER.

The world is bright before thee,
Its summer flowers are thine,
Its calm blue sky is o'er thee,
Thy bosom, pleasure's shrine.

And thine the sun-beam given,
From nature's morning hour;
Pure, warm, as when from heaven
It burst on Eden's bower.

There is a song of sorrow,
The death-dirge of the gay,
That tells, ere dawn of morrow,
Those charms may melt away.

That sun's bright beam be shaded,
That sky be blue no more,
Its summer flower's faded,
And youth's warm promise o'er.

Believe it not, though lonely,
Thy evening home may be,
Though beauty's bark can only
Float on a summer's sea.

Though Time thy bloom is stealing,
There's still, beyond his art,
The wild-flower wreath of feeling,
The sun-beam of the heart. —
— CROAKER.

JUNKETTING.

Corinthian Regulation for High Living without means.*

Diphilus, of Sinope, in Pontus, says, that
There was a notable law at Corinth,
Where, if a fellow outran reason,
Feasting and junketting at furious cost,
The sumptuary justice call'd upon him,
And thus began to sift him:—"You live well!
But have you well to live?—You squander
freely!
Have you the wherewithal? Where are your
funds,
For these outgoings? If you have—go on!
If you have not, we'll stop you in good time,
Before you outrun honesty—for he
Who lives, we know not how, must live by
his wits:
Either he touches some fool's purse,
Or is the accomplice of some knavish gang;
This, a well ordered city will not suffer;
Such vermin we expel."

* It is a pity that this salutary regulation of Corinth were not imitated in this country; we should not then see, as is now the case, pampered pride and ignorance, rioting upon the substance of honest industry.

Literary Extracts, &c.

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

FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

We have long been of opinion that our native country opens to the adventurous novel-writer a wide, untrdden field, replete with new matter admirably adapted to the purposes of fiction. Our views on this subject have already been partially developed, (N. A. Rev. No. 31) and our conviction has not been staggered by any arguments we have heard opposed to them. That nothing of the kind has hitherto been accomplished, is but a poor argument at best—especially when taken in connexion with the fact, that nothing has as yet been attempted. We are told, it is true, that there is among us a cold uniformity and sobriety of character; a sad reality and utility in our manners and institutions; that our citizens are a downright, plain-dealing, inflexible, matter-of-fact sort of people; in short, that our country and its inhabitants are equally and utterly destitute of all sorts of romantic association. We are not so foolhardy as to deny the truth of the theory on which these objections rest. It is not enough that solitary exceptions may be found here and there, if there be in fact great general uniformity pervading the mass of the people. The characters of fiction should be descriptive of classes, and not of individuals, or they will seem to want the touch of nature, and fail in that dramatic interest which results from a familiarity with the feelings and passions pourtrayed, and a consciousness of their truth. Admitting then, that the power of creating interest in a work of fiction, so far as it arises from development of character, lies in this generalizing principle which substitutes classes for individuals, we are triumphantly asked whether that state of society is not best fitted to the end proposed, in which this system of classification is already carried to its greatest extent;—where order rises above order in the most distinct and uniform gradation—each pinnacle standing aloof from its neighbor, each separated by its own impenetrable barrier. No—certainly not; if by these distinctions are meant the mere formal divisions of society into lords, gentlemen, and villains. It is not such artificial and arbitrary distinctions which give the greatest possible variety and scope to character, or effect that kind of classification which is best adapted

to the wants of the author. On the contrary, they are so many impediments in his way, forcing character out of its natural development into constrained and formal fashions, if such principles were left to their own tendency, they would make all men so many flat-headed Indians; and when the causes of these unnatural distinctions in human character had ceased to exist, we should look round in vain for the model of the dull and uniform monsters they had created. Not so where men have sprung up in active and adventurous communities, unshackled by forms, unfashioned by governments, and left freely to work out their own way, pursuing their own objects, with nothing to interrupt or affect them, but that mutual attrition which has not always the effect of polishing in the moral, as in the physical world. When therefore, we are told that the country whose society contains the most abundant distinction of classes is the chosen fairy land of poetry and romance, and that America can never be such because it contains none, we are instinctively brought to remember a certain forensic maxim, which may be of use before more than one species of tribunal, namely, where the law is against you, always deny the fact. Now we do most seriously deny, that there is any such fatal uniformity of character among us, as is herein above supposed;—we deny (bating the formidable division into king, lords, and commons,) that there is not in this country a distinction of classes precisely similar in kind, and of extent nearly equal to that which exists in Great Britain; nay, we boldly insist, that in no one country on the face of the globe, can there be found a greater variety of specific character, than is at this moment developed in these United States of America. Do any of our readers look out of New-England and doubt it? Did any one of them ever cross the Potowmac, or even the Hudson, and not feel himself surrounded by a different race of men? Is there any assimilation of character between the high-minded, vain-glorious Virginian, living on his plantation in baronial state, an autocrat among his slaves, a nobleman among his peers, and the active, enterprising, money-getting merchant of the East, who spends his days in bustling activity among men and ships, and his nights in sober calculations over his ledger and day-book? Is the Connecticut pedler, who travels over mountain and moor by the side of his little red wagon and half-starved pony, to the utmost bounds of civilization, vending his 'notions' at the very ends of the earth, the same animal with the long shaggy boatman, 'clear from Kentuck,' who wafts himself over the Mississippi, or the Ohio? Is there nothing of the Dutch burgomaster yet sleeping in the blood of his descendants; no trace of the prim settler of Pennsylvania in her rectangular cities and trim farms? Are all the remnants of her ancient puritanism swept out of the corners of New-England? Is there no bold peculiarity in the white savage who roams over the remote hunting tracts of the West; and none in the red native of the wilderness that crosses him in his path? It would be hard indeed out of such materials, so infinitely diversified, (not to descend to the minister distinctions which exist in each section of the country,) which, similar in kind but far less various, have in other countries been wrought successfully into every form of the popular and domestic tale, at once amusing and instructive, if nothing can be fabricated on this degenerate soil.

But where are your materials for the higher order of fictitious composition? What have you of the heroic and the magnificent? Here are no 'gorgeous palaces and cloud capped towers,' no monuments of Gothic pride, mouldering in solitary grandeur; no mysterious hiding places to cover deeds of darkness from the light of the broad sun; no cloistered walls, which the sound of woe can never pierce; no ravages of desolating conquests; no traces of the slow and wasteful hand of time. You look over the face of a fair country, and it tells you of no tales that are gone by. You see cultivated farms, and neat villages, and populous towns, full of health, and labor, and happiness. You tread your streets without fear of the midnight assassin, and you perceive nothing in their quiet and orderly inhabitants, to remind you of misery and crime. How are you to get over this familiarity of things, yet fresh in their newest gloss? You go to your mighty lakes, your vast

cataracts, your stupendous mountains, and your measureless forests. Here indeed you find nature in her wildest and most magnificent attire. But these boundless solitudes are not the haunts of fierce banditti; you have never peopled these woods and waters with imaginary beings; they are connected with no legendary tales of hoary antiquity;—but you cast your eye through the vista of two short centuries, and you see them as they now are, and you see nothing beyond. Where then are the romantic associations, which are to plunge your reader, in spite of reason and common sense, into the depths of imaginary woe and wonder?

If we are asked with reference to the good old fashioned romance, and are to construct a second castle of Otranto, to amaze our reader with mysteries, like those of the far famed Udolpho, or harrow up his young blood with another Fatal Revenge, we answer, that in our humble judgment, it matters little in regard to these mere creations of the brain, in what earthly region the visionary agents are supposed to reside; the moon, for aught we know, it has been elsewhere said, may be as eligible a theatre of action, as any on this earth. Not that we would speak disparagingly of the wildest creations of romance, or have it thought that we are less affected than others, by those masterly efforts of a bold imagination, left to luxuriate in its own ideal world. But we are not ambitious that scenes so purely imaginary, should be located on this side of the Atlantic, when they cannot from their very nature, partake any thing of the character of the soil and climate which give them birth; although we are by no means sure that a first rate horror, of the most imaginative kind, might not be invented without the aid of Gothic architecture, or Italian scenery.—While for these reasons, which do not peculiarly affect ourselves, we have no particular longing after this species of American castle building, we do hope to see the day, when that more commodious structure, the modern historical romance, shall be erected in all its native elegance and strength on American soil, and of materials exclusively our own. The truth is, there never was a nation whose history, studied with that view, affords better or more abundant matter of romantic interest than ours. When you ask us how we are to get over the newness and quietude of every thing among us, your question points only at the present time—a thing in itself utterly destructive of romance in all quarters of the globe. What should we think of a historical romance, for instance, in which the duke of Wellington should win the battle of Waterloo, and the marquis of Londonderry be made the secretary of state for foreign affairs? And yet if their lordships should meet with any different fortune or fate, however excellent the plot, however spirited and well sustained the characters, who would not throw down a book with a quædunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus ed? Since then the præterperfect is our only romantic tense, we reply, a little paradoxically perhaps, go back to the days when things were newer—but not so quiet as they are now. It is no new principle in the laws of imagination, that remoteness in point of time attaches romantic associations to objects which have them not in themselves—and these, so soon as they are created, become heightened by contrast. A ruin is a romantic object, only because it carries you perforce into remote antiquity, and suggests on its very front the moated castle with all its battlements and towers standing in proud proportion, a stately pile that seemed to bid defiance to the ravages of time and storm. You look at an elegant modern edifice, with a stack of chimneys for its minarets, and a smiling cornfield for its court yard, and it suggests nothing of itself, but the unromantic notion of peace and comfort, which are reigning within. Go back then to the day when its walls were slumbering in their native quarry, and its timbers flourishing in the living oak; when the cultivated farm was a howling wilderness, the abode of savages and outlaws, and nothing was to be seen in its borders but rapine and bloodshed. Imagine some stern enthusiast, voluntarily flying the blanchiment of more luxurious abodes—or some accomplished courtier, driven from the scene of his ambition and intrigues—or some gallant soldier wearied of the gay capital, and panting anew for adventure and renown, fearlessly marching with his chosen band into these dreary and dangerous

solitudes; follow him through the perils and difficulties he surmounts, and witness the long struggle of civilization, encroaching on the dominion of barbarism; and you will then find that romantic associations may become attached even to this familiar spot. Neither need we revert to any very remote period of antiquity to rid us of this familiarity, which forever plays about present things with a mischievous tendency to convert the romantic into the ludicrous. It is astonishing what changes are effected in manners, customs, names, and outward appearances, in the course of a single human generation; and when we look at the days of the fathers of the oldest now living, how little do we see that we recognize, how much that we wonder at! Not the least pleasing, perhaps, of the many admirable productions of the great master of romance in modern times, refer to a period hardly so remote as that of which we speak; and yet no one, not even they who live on the very spot, which is represented as the theatre of great and romantic action, complains of the familiarity of those scenes.

There seem to be three great epochs in American history, which are peculiarly well fitted for historical romance;—the times just succeeding the first settlement—the era of the Indian wars, which lie scattered along a considerable period—and the revolution. Each of these events, all pregnant with interest in themselves, will furnish the fictitious historian with every variety of character and incident, which the dullest imagination could desire or the most inventive deserve. What is there for instance in the rebellions and wars of the Scotch covenanters, to compare with the fortunes of those sterner puritans, who did not rise in arms against their prince; but who, with a boldness of adventure, under which the spirit of chivalry itself would have quailed, leaving behind them all that is most dear to men on earth, the companions of their youth, the graves of their fathers, the home of their hearts, crossed a trackless ocean; not for the visit of a day, not cherishing a latent hope of future return, when they should have amassed wealth, or acquired fame, to raise them in the estimation of their countrymen; but with the humble hope and firm resolve to expend their lives and their children's lives in the wilderness, for the sake of worshipping their God after the fashion of their own hearts. The situation and character of these men, who, 'had they been as free from all sins as gluttony and drunkenness,' (so says one of their quaint historians) 'might have been canonized for saints,' are in the highest degree picturesque; and moreover afford a singular contrast to those of Raleigh's successors in the south, headed by that man of adventure, who had challenged a whole Ottoman army in his youth, carrying off the heads of three Turkish champions at his saddlebow, and who was now solacing his riper years, amidst the cares of a colonial government, in the arms of the renowned Pocahontas. The gloomy but sustaining spirit of fanaticism in these, who had fled to the wilderness for conscience' sake; the disappointed avarice of those who had come to it for silver and gold; the stern ecclesiastical oligarchy first established in the east; the worldly time-serving despotism of Smith and the succeeding governors in the south; the one punishing with banishment and death 'that damnable heresy of affirming justification by works'; the other promulgating in the new world the laws of the old 'to prevent sectarian infection' from creeping into the pale of mother church; the former denouncing temporal punishment and eternal wrath, against 'all idlers, common coasters, unprofitable fowlers, and tobacco takers'; the latter formally enacting and literally executing that salutary law, that 'he who will not work shall not eat'; the Virginia colony importing into the country a cargo of negroes, to entail the curse of slavery on their remotest posterity, in the same year that our first fathers were founding the liberties of America on the Plymouth rock, and Winthrop, with his company of sturdy Independents, extending along the shores of Massachusetts the work which had been so happily begun, while 'refiners, goldsmiths, and jewellers,' 'poor gentlemen, tradesmen, serving men, libertines, and such like, ten times more fit to spoil a commonwealth, than either to begin or maintain one,' as the old writers inform us, were still flocking over to the shores of Virginia. Such contrasts judiciously exhibited,

The Indian wars, of which the first occurred soon after the time of which we have just spoken, and the last of any note in New-England, in the years 1722–25, are fruitful of incidents, which might, to great advantage, be interwoven with the materials before noticed, and it scarcely needs to be asserted, that the Indians themselves are a highly poetical people. Gradually receding before the tread of civilization, and taking from it only the principle of destruction, they seem to be fast wasting to utter dissolution; and we shall one day look upon their history with such emotions of curiosity and wonder, as those with which we now survey the immense mounds and heaps of ruin in the interior of our continent, so extensive that they have hardly yet been measured, so ancient that they lie buried in their own dust and covered with the growth of a thousand years, forcing upon the imagination the appalling thought of some great and flourishing, perhaps civilized people, who have been so utterly swept from the face of the earth, that they have not left even a traditional name behind them.

At the present day, enough is known of our aborigines to afford the ground-work of invention, enough is concealed to leave full play for the warmest imagination; and we see not why those superstitions of theirs, which have filled inanimate nature with a new order of spiritual beings, may not be successfully employed to supersede the worn out fables of Runic mythology, and light up a new train of glowing visions, at the touch of some future wizard of the West. At any rate we are confident that the savage warrior, who was not less beautiful and bold in his figurative diction, than in his attitude of death, the same who 'suffered not the grass to grow upon the war-path,' and hastened 'to extinguish the fire of his enemy with blood,' tracking his foe through the pathless forest, with instinctive sagacity, by the fallen leaf, the crushed moss, or the bent blade, patiently enduring cold, hunger, and watchfulness, while he crouched in the night-grass like the tiger expecting his prey, and finally springing on the unsuspecting victim with that war-whoop, which struck terror to the heart of the boldest planter of New-England in her early day, is no mean instrument of the sublime and terrible of human agency. And if we may credit the flattering pictures of their best historian, the indefatigable Heckewelder, not a little of softer interest might be extracted from their domestic life.

* The Indian name of the peninsula on which Boston now stands.