

## Poetry.

## ENGLISH CHURCHES.

[The "too early lost" Miss Landon left as a legacy to the world a portfolio of unpublished poems, one of which is the following, touching and beautiful:]

How beautiful they stand,  
Those ancient altars of our native land!  
Amid the pasture fields and dark green woods,  
Amid the mountain's cloudy solitudes;  
By rivers broad that rush into the sea;  
By little brooks that, with a lapsing sound,  
Like playful children, run by copse and lea!  
Each in its little plot of holy ground.  
How beautifully they stand,  
Those old grey churches of our native land!

Our lives are still turmoil;  
Our souls are in a weary strife and toil,  
Grasping and straining—tasking nerve and brain,  
Both day and night, for gain!  
We have grown worldly—have made gold our god—  
Have turned our hearts away from lowly things;  
We seek not now the wild flower on the sod;  
We seek not snowy-folded angel's wings,  
Amid the summer skies—  
For visions come not to polluted eyes!

Yes, blessed quiet fanes!  
Still piety, still poetry remains,  
And shall remain, whilst ever on the air  
One chapel bell calls high and low to prayer—  
Whilst evergreens and sunny churchyards keep  
The dust of our beloved, and tears are shed  
From fountains which in the human heart lay deep!  
Something in these aspiring days we need,  
To keep our spirits lowly,  
To set within our hearts sweet thoughts and holy!

And 'tis for this they stand,  
The old grey churches of our native land!  
And even in the gold-corrupted mart,  
In the great city's heart,  
They stand; and chanty dim, and organ sound,  
And stately services of prayer and praise,  
Like to the righteous ten which were not found  
For the polluted city, shall upraise,  
Meek faith and love sincere—  
Better in time of need than shield or spear!

## Literary Selections.

## WINE.

## A TALE OF THRILLING INTEREST.

"Oh! thou invisible spirit of wine!—if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee—devil!"  
SHAKESPEARE.

Some eighteen months or two years ago, I was doing my duty to my country and myself on board his Majesty's frigate the *Astræa*, by undergoing seventeen games of chess per diem with our first lieutenant, and filling up every pause with murmurs at the continuance of these piping times of peace. We had been cruising some months in the Mediterranean, chiefly for the amusement of two dandy cousins of an honorable captain, whom we picked up at Malta, basking like two yellow, over-ripe gourds in the sunshine. We had touched at most of the ports of the Ionians, where cyprus may be had for paying for, and where *faldeltas* are held by hands as fair as their coquettish folds are black and lustrous.

At length, one beautiful evening, one of those twilights of chrysolite and gold, such as poets dream of, and the Levant alone can realize, (having been for the three preceding days, not "spell-bound," but "calm-bound among the clustering Cyclades,") it was the pleasure of our honorable captain and his cousins to drop anchor in the Bay of —, (I have reasons of my own for not being more explicit,) where after swearing the usual number of oaths at the quarantine officers, and the crews of the Venetian and Turkish traders, who make it part of their religion to give offence to the blue-jackets where offence can be given with impunity, I had the satisfaction to find myself, at about seven o'clock p. m., seated at the mess of His Majesty's gallant — th. doing as much justice to the roast beef of Old England as if we had not been within a day's sail of the Island of the Minotaur.

"Are you a punch-drinker?" inquired my neighbor, Captain Wargrave, with whom, as a school-fellow of my elder brother's, I had quickly made acquaintance.

"If I may venture to own it, no!" said I; "I have swallowed too much punch on compulsion in the course of my life."

"I had judged as much from your looks," replied Wargrave, who had promised to see me on board the frigate. "If you want to get away from these noisy fellows, we can easily slip off while Lord Thomas and his operations engage their attention."

And, in compliance with the hint, I found myself sauntering with him, arm in arm, on the bastions of —. We had an hour before

us; the captain's gig was not ordered till eleven; and, in order to keep an eye at once on the frigate and the shore, we sat down on an abutment of the parapet to gossip away the time.

"There seems to be hard-going fellows in your mess," said I to Wargrave, as he sat beside me, with his arms folded over his breast. "Thornton, I understand, carries off his two bottles a day, like a Trojan; and the fat major who sat opposite to me, made such play with the champagne, as caused me to blush for my squeamishness. For my own part, I should be well content never to exceed a couple of glasses of good claret. Wine affects me in a different way from most men. The more I drink, the more my spirits are depressed. While others get roaring drunk, I sit moping and despairing; and the next day my head aches like an artilleryman's."

"You are fortunate," said Wargrave, drily.

"Fortunate?" cried I. "I wish I could appreciate my own luck! I am voted the sulkiest dog unchained, whenever it is my cue to be jolly; and proving a wet blanket to a merry party over-night, am ready to shoot myself with the headache and blue-devils next morning. If there be a fellow I really envy, it is such a one as Thornton, who is ready to chime in with the chorus of the thirty-sixth stanza of 'Nancy Dawson' between his two last bottles, and keeps his head and legs an hour after the rest of the party have lost theirs under the table. There is something fresh and picturesque in the mere sound of 'the vine—the grape—the cup—the bowl!' It always appears to me that Bacchus is the universal divinity, and that I alone am exempted from the worship."

Wargrave replied by a vague, unmeaning laugh, which led me to conclude that my eloquence was lost on him. Yet I continued—

"Do you know that, in spite of the prevalence of the Bacchanalian idolatry, I think we hardly give the honor due to the influence of wine. It has ever been the mania of mankind to ascribe the actions of their fellow creatures to all motives but the true; but if they saw clearly, and spoke honestly, would admit that more heroes have been made by the bottle than the sword."

"Have you any personal meaning in this tirade?" suddenly interrupted my companion in a voice whose concentration was deadly.

"Personal meaning?" I reiterated. "Of what nature?" And for a moment I could not but fancy that poor Wargrave had taken a deeper share in the Chateau Margoux of the fat major than I had been aware of. A man rather touched by wine is sure to take fire on the most distant imputation of drunkenness.

"I can scarcely imagine, sir," he continued in a voice, however, that savored of anything rather than ineptitude, "that any man acquainted with the misfortunes of my life should address me on such a subject!"

"Be satisfied, then, that your indignation is groundless, and most unreasonable," said I still doubtful how far I ought to resent the ungraciousness of his demeanor; "for, on the word of a gentleman, till this day, I never heard your name. Your avowal of intimacy with my brother, and something in the frankness of your manner that reminded me of his, added to the hilarity of an unexpected reunion with so many of my countrymen, has perhaps induced too sudden a familiarity in my demeanor; but, in wishing you good night, Captain Wargrave, and a fairer interpretation of the next sailor who opens his heart to you at sight, allow me to assure you that not a shadow of offence was intended in the rhapsody you are pleased to resent."

"Forgive me!" exclaimed Wargrave, extending his hands, nay, almost his arms towards me. "It would have afforded only a crowning incident in my miserable history, had my jealous soreness on one fatal subject produced a serious misunderstanding with the brother of one of my dearest and earliest friends."

While I frankly accepted his apologies and offered hand, I could detect by the light of the moon an altered expression of such profound dejection on the altered face of Wargrave—so deadly a paleness—a *haggardness*—that involuntarily I re-seated myself on the wall beside him, as if to mark the resumption of a friendly

feeling. He did not speak when he took his place; but, after a few minutes silence, I had the mortification to hear him sobbing like a child.

"My dear fellow you attach too much importance to an unguarded word," said I endeavoring to reconcile him with himself. "Dismiss it from your thoughts."

"Do not fancy," replied Wargrave, in a broken voice, "that these humiliating tears originate in anything that has passed between us this night. No! The associations recalled to my mind by the rash humor you are generous enough to see in its true light, are of a far more ancient date, and far more ineffaceable nature. I owe you something in return for your forbearance. You have still an hour to be on shore," he continued looking at his watch. "Devote those minutes to me, and I will impart a lesson worth ten years' experience; a lesson of which my own life must be the text—myself the hero!"

There was no disputing with him—no begging him to be calm. I had only to listen, and impart in the patience of my attention, such solace as the truly miserable can best appreciate.

"You were right," said Wargrave, with a bitter smile, "in saying that we do not allow ourselves to assign to wine the full measure of authority it holds among the motives of our conduct. But you were wrong in limiting that authority to the instigation of great and heroic actions. Wine is said in scripture to 'make glad the heart of man.' Wine is said by the poets to be the balm of grief, the dew of beauty, the philter of love. What that is gracious and graceful is it not said to be? Clustering grapes entwine the brow of its divinity, and wine is held to be a libation worthy of the gods. Fools! fools! fools!—they need to have poured forth their blood and tears like me, to know that it is a fountain of eternal damnation!—Do not fancy that I allude to *drunkenness*; do not class me, in your indignation, with the sensual brute who degrades himself to the filthiness of intoxication. Against a vice so flagrant how easy to arm one's virtue! No! the true danger lies many degrees within that fearful limit; and the Spartans, who warned their sons against wine by the exhibition of their drunken Helots, fulfilled their duty blindly. Drunkenness implies in fact, an extinction of the very faculties of evil. The enfeebled arm can deal no mortal blow! the staggering step retards the perpetration of sin. The voice can neither modulate its tone to seduction, nor hurl the defiance of deadly hatred. The drunkard is an idiot; a thing which children mock at, and women chastise. It is the man whose temperament is excited, not overpowered by wine, to whom the snare is fatal. Do not suppose me the apostle of a temperance society, when I assert on my life, my soul, my honor, that after three glasses of wine, I am no longer master of my actions. Without being at the moment conscious of the change, I begin to see, feel, hear, and reason differently. The minor transitions between good and evil are forgotten; the lava boils in my bosom. Three more, and I become a madman."

"But this constitutes a positive physical infirmity," said I. "You must of course regard yourself as an exception?"

"No! I am convinced the case is common. Among my own acquaintance, I know fifty men who are pleasant companions in the morning, but intolerable after dinner; men who neither like wine nor indulge in it; but who, while simply fulfilling the forms and ceremonies of society, frequently become odious to others and a burden to themselves."

"I really believe you are right."

"I know that I am right; listen. When I became your brother's friend at Westminster, I was on the foundation, an only son, intended for the church; and the importance which my father and mother attached to my election for college, added such a stimulus to my exertions, that at the early age of fourteen their wish was accomplished. I was the first boy of my years. A studentship at Christ's Church crowned my highest ambition; and all that remained for me at Westminster was to preside over the farewell supper, indispensable on occasions of these triumphs. I was accustomed to wine,

for my parents had taken silent note of the infirmity of my nature; and a very small proportion of the fiery tavern port, which forms the nectar of similar festivities, sufficed to elevate my spirits to madness. Heated by noise and intemperance, we all sallied forth together, prepared to riot, bully, and insult. A fight ensued; a life was lost. Expulsion suspended my election. I never reached Oxford; my professional prospects were blighted; and, within a few months, my father died of the disappointment! And now what was to be done with me? My guardians decided that in the army the influence of my past fault would prove least injurious; and, eager to escape the tacit reproach of a mother's pale face and gloomy weeds, I gladly acceded to their advice. At fifteen, I was gazetted in the — Regiment of Light Dragoons. At Westminster they used to call me 'Wargrave the peace-maker.' I never had a quarrel; I never had an enemy. Yet, twelve months after joining the —th, I had acquired the approbrium of being a quarrelsome fellow; I had fought one of my brother officers, and was on the most uncomfortable terms with four others."

"And this sudden change—"

"Was then attributed to the sourness arising from my disappointments in life. I have since ascribed it to a truer origin—the irritation of the doses of brandy, tinged with sloe juice, which formed the luxury of a mess-cellar. Smarting under the consciousness of unpopularity, I fancied I hated my profession, when in fact I only hated myself. I managed to get on half-pay, and returned to my mother's tranquil roof; where, instead of regretting the brilliant life I had forsaken, my peace of mind and contentment came back to me at once. There was no one to bear me company over the bottle; I was my mother's constant companion; I seldom tasted wine; I became healthy, happy, beloved as a neighbor and fellow citizen. But higher distinctions of affection followed. A young, and very beautiful girl, of rank and fortune superior to my own, deigned to encourage the humble veneration with which I regarded her. I became emboldened to solicit her hand. My mother assured her I was the best of sons. I readily promised to be the best of husbands. She believed us both; accepted me—married me; and, on welcoming home my lovely, gentle Mary, all remembrance of past sorrow seemed to be obliterated. Our position in the world, if not brilliant was honorable. My mother's table renewed those hospitalities over which my father had loved to preside. Mary's three brothers were our constant guests; and Wargrave—the calm, sober, indolent Wargrave—once more became fracions and ill at ease. My poor mother, who could conceive no fault in my disposition, concluding that, as in other instances, the husband had discovered in the daily companionship of married life, faults which had been invisible to the lover, ascribed to poor Mary all the discredit of the change. She took a dislike to her daughter-in-law, nay, even to Mrs. Wargrave's family, friends, and acquaintances. She saw that after they had been dining with me, I grew morose and irritable; and attributed it to the fault of my guests, instead of the cursed wine their company compelled me to swallow. Fortunately, poor Mary's time was engrossed by preparations for the arrival of her first child, a pledge of domestic happiness calculated to reconcile a woman even to greater vexations than those arising from the husband's irritability. Mary palliated all my bursts of temper, by declaring her opinion that 'any man might possess the insipid quality of good humor, but that Wargrave, if somewhat hasty, had the best heart and principles in the world.' As soon as our little boy made his appearance, she excited the contempt of all her female acquaintances, by trusting 'that Harry would, in all respects, resemble his father.' Heaven bless her blindness!"

Wargrave paused for a moment, during which I took care to direct my eyes toward the frigate.

"Among those female friends was a certain Sophy Cavendish, a cousin of Mary's; young, handsome, rich, but gifted with that intemperate vivacity which health and prosperity inspire. Sophy was a fearless creature; the only person who did not shrink from my fits of ill-