

LITERATURE, &c.

HIGHLAND LIFE.—Far be it from us to insinuate that 'life in the Highlands,' though for the most part calm and unvaried, is therefore of necessity either tedious or dull. To those who have a relish for rural pursuits and amusements, there is no country which affords them in greater diversity or perfection. There is something peculiarly exhilarating and elating in the interminable extent and wild picturesque variety of a large Highland property, which must be unknown to the majority of our Southern neighbours. In noble mountains and green vallies—the mysteries of its deep glens and dark woods—the fantastic forms of its rocks and precipices—its rapid torrents and majestic rivers—its bright silver lakes gleaming in the sun, or its dusky tarns, whose black water reflects back only the shaggy heath and rugged cliffs which hem them in—its rich cultivation and beautiful farms embossed in woods of weeping birch; even its strange locking toons and assemblages of black huts, scattered on the brae-face or river's bank, amidst a profusion of 'bonnie broom,' rich-scented wbins (furze), bramble and bog-rose bushes, potato patches, and crofts of black oats—all are so many points of interest to a proprietor—so many objects of regard, and motives to the exertion of an improving spirit, which may vie even with the polished beauty, the rich exuberant verdure, and more perfect culture of 'merry England.' When a Highland Laird wanders staff in hand, the live long day among his thriving plantations, views his improving farms, or traverses the wide bounds of his grazing—when, with his gun over his shoulder, he strides over a dozen miles of good grouse-hill, or summons out a score of gillies to beat the side of a glen, and, together with his friends, returns home loaded with woodcock, and blackcock, and hares and roe-bucks—ay, and sometimes with a gallant stag, or a fat 'yell hind,' across the back of a pony, we think he may be held excused if he feels a pride and exultation equal to that of the English lord or squire, who can count treble his rent on a tithes of the surface, and who, from a cover of a score of acres, will drive out to slaughter some hundred head of pheasants as tame as barn-door fowls, or of hares and rabbits that scarce dream of getting out of the sportsman's way.—*Fraser's Highland Smuggler.*

CHILDREN, WHEN A STRIKE TAKES PLACE IN A FACTORY TOWN.—When the strike extended to the factory children as well as the adults, the parents thought it far from being the worst thing that had happened.—While the committee shook their heads over this weighty additional item of weekly charge, many tender mothers stroked their children's heads, and smiled when they wished them joy of their holiday, and bade them sleep on in the mornings without thinking of the factory bell. It was some days before the little things got used to so strange a difference from their usual mode of life. Some would start up from sleep, with the question, 'Father, is it time?' Some talked in their sleep of being too late, and went on to devour their meals hastily, as if their time was not their own. It would have amused some people, and made others melancholy, to watch the sports of these town-bred children. One little child was seen making a garden—that is, boring a hole between two flints in a yard, with a rusty pair of scissors, and inserting a daisy, which, by some rare chance had reached her hands. Others collected the fragments of broken plates and tea-cups from the kennels, and spread them out for a mock feast, where there was nothing to eat. The favourite game that was played, was at being cotton spinners; a big boy frowning and strutting, and personating the master; another, with a switch in his hand, being the overlooker; and the rest being spinners or piccers, each trying which could be the naughtiest, and get the most threats and scolding. Many were satisfied with lolling on the stairs of their dwellings, and looking into the street all day long; and many nursed their baby brothers and sisters, sitting on the steps or leaning against the walls of the street. Hannah Bray, when not abroad with her father, took pains to stir up her little neighbours to what she called play. She coaxed her father into giving them a ball, and tried to teach the children in the next yard to play hide and seek; but she often said she never before saw such helpless and awkward people. They could not throw a ball five feet from them, or flung it into one another's faces, so as to cause complaints and crying fits. In hiding, they always showed themselves, or came out too soon, or not soon enough, or jostled and threw one another down; and they were the worst runners that could be conceived. Any one of them trying to catch Hannah looked like a duck running after a greyhound. Hannah began by laughing at them all round; but observing that her father watched their play with tears in his eyes, she afterwards contented herself with wondering in silence why some children were so unlike others.—*A very affecting Sketch from Miss Martineau's Manchester Strike.*

FROM THE LONDON NATIONAL OMNIBUS.

The Easter Gift.—A Religious Offering, by L. E. L. Svo. p. p. 40. London: 1832.—Fisher.

If we were fortunate enough to select a beautiful poem the other week from this modest little volume before we had read it, we are still more pleased that a careful perusal has perfected the good opinion which we formed, by anticipation, of its contents, and that its pages should still have presented us with fresh beauties, and a stream of verse, pure, sacred, untainted, as the fount from whence it sprung. L. E. L. has not only added to her poetical reputation by these pious effusions, but she has strengthened herself in the love and admiration of all the virtuous and good. The moral that flies upon the wings of thought—from page to page—the meek spirit of humility that is breathed in every prayer—the high and holy character that marks the poetry of scripture—all combine to make the little volume a beautiful index of a young and spotless heart—and to recommend it to all those who love to avail themselves of the loftier purposes of such poetry to commune with themselves—or with their Maker. Our extract is a gem:—

THE INFANT ST. JOHN.

"Lo! on the midnight winds a young child's voice
With lofty hymn,
Calling on earth and heaven to rejoice
Along with him.

Those infant lips are given from above
A spirit tone,
And he speaks out those words of hope and love
To prophets known.

He is a herald, as the morning star
Brings daylight in,
For he doth bring glad tidings from afar
To man and sin.

Now let the desolate earth lift up her head,
And at the word,
Wait till the mountains kindle with the tread
Of Christ the Lord.

And earth was conscious of her God; he came
Meek and decried
Bearing the weight of sorrow, sin, and shame;
And for us died.

Twice shall he come; e'en now the appointed hour
Is in its birth,
When he shall come in glory and in power,
To judge the earth.

Not as before, to win mankind and save;
But in his ire,
When earth shall be put a mighty grave,
In that red fire.

Do we not live now in those evil days
Which were foretold
In holy writings and inspired lays
Of prophets old?

There is a wild confusion in the world,
Like the vexed sea;
And ancient thrones are from high places hurled,
Yet man not free.

And vain opinion seek to change all life,
Yet yield no aid
To all the sickness, want, the grief and strife,
Which now pervade.

Are not these signs of that approaching time
Of blood and tears,
When thou shalt call to dread account the crime
Of many years?

Then who shall bide before thee? only he
Who is all thine,
Who had stood fast, amid iniquity,
In faith divine.

Oh, Lord! awaken us; let us not cease
To look afar;
Let us not, like the foolish, call it peace
When there is war.

Oh! teach us to believe what thy blest word
Has long declared,
And let thy second advent, gracious Lord,
Find us prepared."

THE HAUNTED CHAMBER.

A story is told by Mr. Gardener in his entertaining work on the "Music of Nature," which, besides possessing the usual interest attached to mysteries of every description, is calculated to make a very beneficial impression upon all those nervous persons who are in the habit of ascribing sounds, for which they cannot immediately account, to the agency of supernatural beings.

"In one of the baronial castles of the north," says that author, "which had been uninhabited for years, there were heard at times such extraordinary noises as to confirm the opinion among the country people that the place was haunted. In the western tower an old couple were permitted to live who had been in the service of the former lord, but so imbued were they with the superstitions of their country, that they ne-

ver went to bed without expecting to hear the cries of the disturbed spirits of the mansion. An old story was current, that an heir apparent had been murdered by an uncle, that he might possess the estate; who, however, after enjoying it for a time, was so annoyed by the sounds in the castle, that he retired with an uneasy conscience from the domain, and died in France.

"Not many years ago the property descended to a branch of the female line, (one of the heroes of Waterloo,) who, nothing daunted, was determined to make this castle his place of residence. As the noises were a subject of real terror to his tenantry, he formed the resolution of sleeping in the castle on the night he took possession, in order to do away these superstitious fears. Not a habitable room could be found except the one occupied by the old gardener and his wife in the western turret, and he ordered his camp bed to be set up in that apartment. It was in the autumn, at night fall, that he repaired to the gloomy abode, leaving his servant, to his no small comfort, at the village inn; and, after having found every thing comfortably provided, turned the large old rusty key upon the antiquated pair, who took leave of him to lodge at a farm hard by. It was one of those nights which are checkered with occasional gleams of moonshine and darkness, when the clouds are riding in a high wind. He slept well for the first two hours; he was then awakened by a low, mournful sound, that ran through the apartments. This warned him to be up and accoutred. He descended the turret stairs with a brilliant light, which, on coming to the ground floor, cast a gigantic shadow of himself up the high embattled walls. Here he stood and listened, when, presently a hollow moan ran through the lonely corridor, and died away. This was followed by one of a higher key, a sort of scream which directed his footsteps with more certainty to the spot. Pursuing the sounds he found himself in the great hall of his ancestors, and, vaulting upon the large oaken table, set down his lamp, and folding his cloak about him, determined to wait for the appearance of all that was terrible. The night, which had been stormy, became suddenly still; the dark fitting clouds had sunk behind the horizon, and the moon insinuated her silvery light through the chinks of the mouldering pile. As our hero had spent the morning in the chase, Morpheus came unbidden, and he fell asleep upon the table. His dream was short; for close upon him issued forth the horrid groan; amazed, he started up and sprang at the unseen voice, fixing, with a powerful blow, his Toledo steel in the arras; the blade was fast and held him to the spot. At this moment the moon shot a ray that illuminated the hall, and showed that, behind the waving folds, there lay the cause concealed. His sword he left, and the turret retraced his steps. When morning came, a welcome crowd greeting, asked if he had met the ghost? 'Oh yes,' replied the knight, 'dead as a door-nail behind the screen he lies, where my sword has pinioned him fast; bring the wrenching bar and we'll haul the disturber out.' With such a leader, and broad day to boot, the valiant throng tore down the screen where the sword was fixed; when lo! in a recess lay the fragments of a chapel organ, and the square wooden trunks made for hallowed sounds were used as props to stay the work when the hall was coated round with oak. The wondering clowns now laughed aloud at the mysterious voice. It was the northern blast that found its way through the crannies of the wall to the groaning pipes, that alarmed the country round for a century past."

Thus the sound which had long diffused so much terror in that neighbourhood, proceeded not from a supernatural, but a very natural cause. Nor does any sound ever reach the ear by day or by night, without being produced by the ordinary laws of nature. We may not be able to detect its source at the moment, but we may feel assured that it exists somewhere, and that there is nothing in it requiring the miraculous interposition of the Deity. He is indeed present everywhere but He carries on His operations upon a uniform system, which He has himself laid down, and every body who has the gift of common sense, ought to know, that that system is not likely to be deviated from, merely for the purpose of agitating the nerves of the timid and the foolish. Very often a sound is heard where there are chests of drawers or other furniture, as if something fell upon them; the supposed cause of the noise is looked for, and not being found, 'how mysterious!' we are apt to exclaim. I have known such an accident as this throw a lady into a fever, as, from its having happened on three successive days, she believed it to be ominous of death, or some other misfortune. The fact was that owing to a change of temperature in the weather, the wood composing one of her drawers shrank a little, and the noise was produced by its separating at the joints. The operation was a perfectly natural one, and if she had given a thought to it she might have been saved from her fever. I have myself been a good deal puzzled once or twice during last winter, by a very audible, though not disagreeable sound which breathed in my