

## LITERATURE, &amp;c.

## A PIG'S TALE!

It was November,—a bitter cold wind blew resolutely and remorselessly. I am not easily to be set aside when I have once made up my mind for a walk; so cuddling up myself in my cloak, forth I sallied for an out-of-town perambulation—five miles out and five in. Nothing could be more uninviting than the day. The sky was of that lead-like colour which bespeaks an inclination to rain if it might be permitted, but that being denied, a resolution to satisfy itself with alternate sleet, snow, or bouncing or bounding hail—all pretty confectionary modes of cooking what was intended for so many showers of rain, which a man “dressed in a little brief” discontent must be fastidious indeed utterly to disdain. I, for my part, prefer these cold-cloud comforts to your common place pelting shower; they may, it is true, eat your cheeks as with minute sharp pieces of flint; or pepper your nose as with small pebbles; or only stifle your mouth and fill your eyes with what would be disagreeable enough if permanent; but a man with any warmth in his body may melt his way through any given quantity of snow that can drift around him—if he keeps moving;—if he shuts his mouth he need not swallow hailstones large enough to choke him; and, as for the pin-and-needle persecution which a shower of sleet can inflict upon the chubbiness of his cheeks, if there is any blood in those facial parts, it is sure to fetch out what artists would call their colour. Nature, like a good old lady as she is, has, as it was posted at all accessible points where the enemy Weather may make its attack extra defences of flesh and blood; and thus, by resolutely defending the out-works, protects the citadel. A soaking shower, such as we have it in England, is not perhaps, so easily warded off: delightful it is, no doubt, to ducks and other such oily-feathered lovers of the damp and the disagreeable—and keeps their downy coats, waistcoats, and small-clothes clean, comfortable, and fit for company; but it delights no me: I confess my preference for hailstones, snow, and sleet,—if I must have either one, two, or three or four modes of administering these watery matters. A soaking of this sort is very well in its way; but I am of Anacreon's humour, and like to “moisten my clay” in my own particular manner, deeming all other modes superfluous.

It was Sunday—a *dies non* among the fashionable vulgar who, from some mistaken superstition as to what they consider gentility, think Sunday exercise ‘vastly ungentle,’ and only the requisite and proper enjoyment of milliners' girls, shop-boys and mechanics. There is nothing so vulgar as the fear of vulgarity. Sunday was undeniably ordained as a day of piety, rest, and sober recreation. He who so appointed it, as far as I have observed, seems to have made no other marked distinction between that day and other days: the sun rises as gloriously as on other mornings; the entire machinery of nature moves on without any visible pause, and loses not either its use, beauty, regularity, or subserviency to His will and the universal service of mankind and every other kind;—all goes on, to all appearance, on Sundays, as on Saturdays or Mondays. Shall contemptible fashion or frivolity dare, then, to mark a day as vulgar, which it perhaps refuses to religion and denies to exercise, and those healthy sensations which follow close upon the heels of exercise? Impossible! No, ye well-attired sons and daughters of that ancient antic, Prejudice, ‘imagine not this vain thing;’ if you have dreaded to be vulgar, fear it no more; but believe, as I do hotly, that nothing which is innocent is vulgar, however, commonplace or unfashionable it may be. Discard so unworthy a thought, and, with the poet say, whether it be Sunday or any other day,

‘Oh, how can we renounce the boundless store  
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields!  
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,  
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;  
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,  
And all that echoes to the song of even;  
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,  
And all the dread magnificence of heaven—  
Oh how can we renounce, and hope to be forgiven?’

It was Sunday; but a thinly attended one. The wind was really too scrutinizing for the weak and the tender, and, therefore, only the robust, or those who thought themselves so, were abroad. Women, consequently were ‘like angels' visits’—every one by this time, knows the rest of the quotation. The few pantalooned persons one met, were ‘perplexed with sudden changes;’ and puckered lips, pursed up mouths, and winking eyes were the fashion of the day. Here and there a carriage rolled along, but what it contained was concealed by the steam on the glasses: a solitary horseman scampered at full speed—if too genteel to pocket his turnpike coppers, his coat tails blown up about his shoulders, and his chestnut's long tail now half whisking his eyes out, and now lashing its own sleek sides. I really pitied that Smith I met in a green lane. His horse seemed warm enough—smoking warm; but he, poor fellow,—if a cloakless, great-coatless rider, with a spare body, and a skin hanging loosely about him like a mess-fit—‘a starveling in a scanty vest,’ could possibly be warm, then I do not despair of some one out-Parry-ing Parry, and penetrating the North Pole with a red hot poker. His mare seemed to dislike the day as much as her master, for she snorted and tossed her head as the sleet struck into her nostrils and eyes, and kept tickling the susceptible hairs inside her ears; and she put down her feet on the splashy road with the anxiety of a cat overtaken in a midnight wandering by a snow-fall which melts as it falls. He was a small print, Elzevir edition of Man, stuck upright in his saddle upon a huge-boned, deep barrelled horse—just such a man as the nine-foot attorney about town, considering the space between his eyes and his legs, might mistake for one of his boots, and laying hold of his ears

for the straps, attempt to pull him on. He looked like an icicle in Wellingtons and blue trowsers, than a Mr Smith. His eyes shone like two cinders when they are cold; his face was of the colour of one of those facetious looking blue jugs in which ale is sometimes served in country public houses—his nose was its handle; altogether he was an impersonation of a line in a popular sea-song—

— the blue above and the blue below.’

Some simple-minded poet has enquired,

‘Why does azure deck the sky?’

I should say, simply to keep this conjectural Mr Smith in countenance. What a luxury he would have been to a champagne party in the dog-days, if he could have been saved as he was till that time, when dandies die off by hundreds if iced champagne runs scarce: a bottle of that fine effervescence placed any where in his neighbourhood, could not have possibly required chilling. I really pitied him, and passed on, meditating what his then condition must end in: he only wanted a cool reception from his wife when he got home to put him in a state of congelation fit for exportation to either of the Indies, as a specimen of English ice.

But while I was looking after him, and laughing, I became suddenly conscious that ‘I also was an Arcadian,’ and myself rapidly cooling down to the freezing point. The wind still blew keenly and cuttingly: the sleet still came from all points of the compass, and I began to grow uncomfortably cold and beggarly hungry: striking out of the cross road, therefore, I pushed as fast as the driving gusts would permit into the high road, determined to make amend for my out-door discomforts by some extra inn-comforts. ‘Any port in a storm,’ says a nautical proverb: so I made for the first sign I saw, ‘swinging slow with sullen roar,’ or rather gibbet-like creak. It bore on it as on a ‘charger’ the king's Head. I have no objection to king's heads when made thus attractive. I entered; it had a handsome interior, and the room into which I was ushered was the very perfection of cleanliness and cozyness. A brisk fire ran roaring up the chimney; a chair was placed by mine host before it, into which I dropt, and felt all over assured that I was very comfortable. I saw, by the respectful attention with which he regarded me, that he of the King's head thought it not impossible that I might ask him for some comfort on so uncomfortable a day which it was possible he could provide. His benevolent eyes saw, as if by intuition, that I had not dined, and looked all willingness that I should. I therefore popped the important question at once:—‘What have you for dinner, Mr —, Mr —?’ ‘Cockerell, Sir, at your service.’ ‘Yes, Mr Cockerell, what can I have?’ ‘Why, Sir,’ quoth he with a cold, dry rub of his hands—‘we have some boiled fowls and pickled pork coming up, if that will do, if not —’ ‘Not a word more, Sir, that is the very thing; As soon as you are ready, I am.’ He bowed, dusted a table as he passed across the room, and went out. [To be continued.]

FROM THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

## THE SOLDIER'S RETURN.

BY JOHN MACKAY WILSON, ESQ.

SEVEN or eight years ago, I was travelling between Berwick and Selkirk, and, having started at the crowing of the cock, I had left Melrose at four in the afternoon. On arriving at Abotsford, I perceived a Highland soldier, apparently fatigued as myself, leaning upon a walking-stick, and gazing intensely on the fairy palace of the magician, whose wand is since broken, but whose magic still remains. I am no particular disciple of Lavater's, yet the man carried his soul upon his face, and we were friends at the first glance. He wore a plain Highland bonnet, and a coarse grey great coat, buttoned to the throat. His dress bespoke him to belong only to the ranks; but there was a dignity in his manner, and a fire, a glowing language, in his eyes, worthy of a chieftain. His height might exceed five feet nine, and his age by about thirty. The traces of manly beauty were still upon his cheeks: but the sun of a western hemisphere had tinged them with a sal-low hue and imprinted untimely furrows.

Our conversation related chiefly to the classic scenery around us; and we had pleasantly journeyed together for two or three miles, when we arrived at a little sequestered burial-ground by the way-side, near which there was neither church nor dwelling. Its low wall was thinly covered with turf, and we sat down upon it to rest. My companion became silent and melancholy, and his eyes wandered anxiously among the graves.

‘Here,’ said he, ‘sleep some of my father's children, who died in infancy.’

He picked up a small stone from the ground, and, throwing it gently about ten yards, ‘That,’ added he, ‘is the very spot. But, thank God! no gravestone has been raised during my absence! It is a token I shall find my parents living—and, continued he, with a sigh, ‘may I also find their love! It is hard sir when the heart of a parent is turned against his own child.’

He drooped his head upon his breast for a few moments and was silent, and hastily raising his forefinger to his eyes, seemed to dash away a solitary tear. Then turning to me, he continued: ‘You may think, sir, this is weakness in a soldier; but human hearts beat beneath a red coat. My father, whose name is Campbell, and who was brought from Argyshire while young, is a wealthy farmer in this neighbourhood.

Twelve years ago, I loved a being gentle as the light of a summer moon. We were children together, and she grew in beauty on my sign, as the star of evening steals into glory through the twilight. But she was poor and portionless, the daughter of a mean shepherd. Our attachment offended my father. He commanded me to leave her for ever, I could not, and he turned me from his house. I wandered, I knew not, and I cared not, whither. But I will not detain you with my history. In my utmost need I met a sergeant of the forty-second, who was then upon the recruiting service, and in a few weeks I joined that regiment of proud hearts. I was at Brussels when the invitation to the wolf, and the raven rang at midnight through the streets. It was the herald of a day of glory and of death. There were three Highland regiments of us—three joined in one—joined in rivalry, in love, and in purpose; and, thank Fate! I was present when the till then invincible legions of the cuirassed Gauls rushed, with their war-horses neighing destruction, upon a kneeling phalanx of Scottish hearts, shielded only by the plaid and the bare bayonet from the unbeaten sabres of the united glory of France, as they poured like torrents of death on the waving plumes of our devoted band, to extirpate our name from the annals of Scottish heroism. Then, then, in the hour of peril and of death, the genius of country burst forth through the darkness of despair, like the first flash of the young sun upon the earth when God said ‘Let there be light!’—as the Scots Greys flying to our aid raised the electric shout, ‘Scotland for ever!’ ‘Scotland for ever!’ returned our tartaned clansmen: ‘Scotland for ever!’ reverberated as from the hearts we had left behind us; and ‘Scotland for ever!’ re-echoed ‘Victory!’ It was a moment of inspiration and of triumph. Forward dashed our Highland heroes, fearless as their fathers! resistless as the mountain cataracts. The proud steed and its mailed rider quailed at the shout. Home and its world of unutterable joys—yes, home and the fair bosom that would welcome its hero—glory and the spirit of our fathers—all rushed upon our imagination at the sound. It was a moment of poetry, of patriotism, and of inspiration—of poetry felt by all, except the wretch,

Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own my native land!

Heavens!’ added he, starting to his feet, and grasping his staff, as the enthusiasm of the past gushed back upon his soul, ‘to have joined in that shout was to live an eternity in the vibration of a pendulum!’

In a few moments the animated soul that gave eloquence to his tongue drew itself back into the chambers of humanity, and, resuming his seat upon the low wall, he continued: ‘I left my old regiment with the prospect of promotion, and have since served in the West Indies: but I have heard nothing of my father—nothing of my mother—nothing of her I love!’

While he was yet speaking, the grave-digger, with a pick-axe and spade over his shoulder, entered the ground. He approached within a few yards of where we sat. He measured off a narrow piece of earth—it encircled the little stone which the soldier had thrown to mark out the burial-place of his family. Convulsion rushed over the features of my companion; he shivered—he grasped my arm—his lips quivered—his breathing became short and loud—the cold sweat trickled from his temples. He sprang over the wall—he rushed towards the spot.

‘Man!’ he exclaimed in agony, ‘whose grave is that?’

‘Hoot! awa’ wi’ ye,’ said the grave-digger, starting back at his manner; ‘whatna way is that to gliff a body!—are ye daft?’

‘Answer me,’ cried the soldier, seizing his hand; ‘whose grave—whose grave is that?’

‘Mercy me!’ replied the man of death, ‘ye are surely out o’ your head—it’s an auld body they ca’d Adam Campbell’s grave—now are ye ony thing the wiser for spierin’?’

‘My father!’ cried my comrade as I approached him; and, clasping his hands together, he bent his head upon my shoulder, and wept aloud.

I will not dwell upon the painful scene. During his absence, adversity had given the fortunes of his father to the wind; and he had died in an humble cottage, unlamented and unnoticed by the friends of his prosperity.

At the request of my fellow-traveller, I accompanied him to the house of mourning. Two or three poor cotagers sat around the fire. The coffin, with the lid open, lay across a table near the window. A few white hairs fell over the whiter face of the deceased, which seemed to indicate that he died from sorrow rather than from age. The son pressed his lips to his father's cheek. He groaned in spirit, and was troubled: He raised his head in agony, and, with a voice almost inarticulate with grief, exclaimed inquiringly, ‘My mother?’

The wondering peasants started to their feet, and in