

Literature, &c.

From the New York New World.

A THRILLING INCIDENT.

THE Hospital at New Orleans, during the prevalence of an epidemic, presents a sight beyond the powers of description, and of which our northern friends can form but an imperfect idea. The invalids are chiefly strangers, far from home, kindred and friends. Upon their entrance through its massive walls, and into its sombre cells, their names are recorded upon the books of the institution, with the place of birth, time of arrival &c., and the departure from thence is as scrupulously noted. The fatal word DEAD opposite many of the names meets the eye of the visitor, and calls up feelings in no wise calculated to render his sojourn there one of mere pleasure or amusement; it is in fact a visit to a charnel house, where death revels in the majesty of revenge, and makes the human frame the scene of his 'banquet song,' the music of which is.

'The groan, the knell, the pall, the bier.'

Death becomes familiar amid such scenes, and the heart callous to his power; they look upon it as one of the privileges of human nature, and as 'if life without it were not worth taking.' It is indeed here,

—'the poor, the prisoner, and the mourner,

Fly for relief, and lay their burdens down!'

The writer of this has frequently looked over the books of entry, and among the recorded names he has recognized many who had left their peaceful homes and 'ain fire sides' either to satisfy a roving disposition, or to avoid man's inhumanity to man, which in northern cities pursues the poor and necessitous even to the prison walls, so as to glut the tender mercies of creditors with the knowledge of their victim's incarceration; and for what? Ay, for what? Simply because the poor wretch cannot pay him a few dollars—a debt incurred under an accumulation of miseries, and for the payment of which he had asked time for the acquiring of health and a prospect of employment. With a prison in the perspective, and a Christian landlord in the front threatening him with instant seizure, the heart broken creature flies from his home, his family and his friends, and finds a resting place in the 'City of the Dead.*' The widow's son here breathes his last, while she mourned his absence—not his death; her letters remain at the post office, and she censures him in her silent hours of grief for his neglect. But she excuses him on the ground of youth, and smiles in her widowhood on the hope—little dreaming it is but hope—deferred, 'melting even in the ray in which it glitters.'

The lover, too, sleeps in death, and the maiden in her far off home, dreams of joy and hope which can never be hers. One name among those is written upon memory's tablet, and will only disappear when the mirrored surface is broken, and recorded things washed out by the stream of time, leading as it does down to the ocean of oblivion. The name of Hugh Reinagle is engraved on a piece of marble in the American burying ground, New Orleans—erected to his memory by one who loved him living, and mourns him dead. Peace to his ashes.

Many a blooming cheek has faded, and a bright eye grown dim and lustreless, many a joyous heart has fallen beneath the Upas breath of the fiend of the South.

What there is between the summer and winter of the South, the first which which in all other climes is all sunshine and joy to the young heart is there all gloom and sorrow!—There winters are the sunshine and spring of the year.

But let us return to the hospital. The reader must imagine to himself a long room, on each side of which, extending the whole length, a range of single beds, on each one (which is frequently the case during an epidemic) let him picture a victim lying in all the agony of mental and physical suffering—let him also imagine the effect of the disease upon the inmates which according to their different constitutions; or the nature of the attack, act in different ways. One in the last gasp of death vomits up the dark particles, formed by mortification, and which is termed 'black vomit,' his eyes are fixed, senses gone, his limbs writhing. Another raves in frenzy wild, tearing off the bed clothes to pieces, and, rolling off on the floor, dies ere the attendants can replace him.

Let the reader picture such a scene, and he will form a tolerable idea of the place which words are inadequate to describe. In no city, however, are the poor

* Name given to New Orleans.

more carefully attended during the severe scourge, than they are in New Orleans; but my readers must take into consideration the numbers misfortune renders amenable to the cause of death.

On one of the beds near the centre of the room lay a man in the last stage of the disease. The officiating physician had just informed him that there was no hope—death was doing its work. The man resigned himself calmly to his fate. On the bed which stood immediately opposite to that of the dying man's was one who had just been brought in from his boarding house; his case was also considered desperate.

In a sick room—and who has not experienced the agonized feelings and sufferings of one?—there are subjects upon which the eye rests in these moments when pain permits the reason to roam in its mental wanderings; and the eye rests upon some object, calling up as it were the dreams of the past, when health and strength went hand in hand with hope, and the bright sunshine of a happy future gleam before us; there is a dreamy luxury in this which can be realized by those who have experienced this exercise of mind in the moment of danger, and who live to dwell upon it.

The writer of this, in 1832, during the prevalence of as severe an epidemic as ever prevailed in New Orleans, suffered an attack of yellow fever, and believes that his life was saved by his strength of mind, overcoming the alarm created by the idea of dying among strangers, and of a disease considered by many incurable. The imagination does more harm in cases of sickness than the disease itself.

One of these men, to whom I particularly allude, the nature of the disease permitted to indulge in this 'fitful dream' between life and death: mortification had already taken place, and his pains were lulled.* The light of life was going out, and the shadowy outline of the grave was before him. His eyes wandered around the vast room. At that moment the man opposite him turned—their eyes met—lustreless as they were, dimmed by the waters of oblivion which were rushing from them, to close up the fountain for ever. The recognition was mutual—a half uttered exclamation of surprise, the outstretched arms, which fell again powerless at their side—'William, is that you?'

An agonizing groan was the answer. Years have passed away since last they parted, and now where did they meet? in the house of death! 'Oh God! my brother, is not this awful, to meet thus—reach—your hand,—one grasp—one pressure—I—I—' Uttering this, he fell back. The other could not speak, he had not yet tutored himself to die, it had not been told him, that his hours were numbered. The shock was too much for him, he stretched his hand as it were mechanically; the other witnessed the motion. Desperate even in death, he raised himself up, and by a superhuman effort he rose from his bed, tottered across the room, caught the extended, feverish hand of his brother, (for they were brothers,) kissed his quivering lips which were now closing for ever, attempted to speak, but voice and strength failed. He turned around for the purpose of regaining his own bed. One look—one step—he laid down, and in a few moments the two brothers were—dead.

* When mortification takes place all pain ceases.

From the Rev. H. Stowell's Lecture on Infidelity.

DEATH OF INFIDELS.

FROM amongst the beacons furnished by the last hours of the sceptical, let two be selected, those left by the two archleaders of the faithless host—Voltaire, the prince of philosophical, and Paine, of vulgar infidelity. The horrors of the closing scene of the profane though brilliant Frenchman are too well authenticated to be disproved. They are the more memorable, because had infidelity been allowed to chose the champion on whose constancy she would have staked her character, would she not have chosen him who had assailed Christianity with no less force than violence, whose enmity against it had known no abatement with declining years, who had seemed to triumph over every misgiving of conscience, and whose habitual fiendish exclamation in reference to the Saviour had been, 'Crush the wretch?' But when this proud blasphemer had been spared to nearly four score years and ten—and when he had diffused the poison of his principles throughout his native land—when, after a season of partial discredit and retirement from the metropolis, he had returned to Paris for the purpose of enjoying a kind of public apotheosis—

when a mighty assembly had wreathed his hoary hairs with laurels, and overpowered him with idolatrous applause.—then, whilst returning to his apartment, his nostrils still reeking with the incense of adulation, and his ears still echoing with the acclamations of adoring thousands—at the very moment God smote him, as he had smitten the haughty King of Israel, with a terrible and immediate malady. The hand of God was upon him, and the potsherd of the earth found how fearful a thing it was to strive with its Maker. Almost unimaginable were the torments of his mind, his cries were piercing as the shrieks of a fiend; his atheistic associates, who would fain have steeled his spirit, fled before his curses; the nurse who waited upon him would never afterwards tend the death bed of an unbeliever, and Dr. Touchin, his physician, declared, 'That the furies of Orestes were nothing to the tortures of Voltaire.' Scarcely less horrible were the last hours of Paine. That miserable scoffer, having done untold mischief to the ignorant and unstable, after a career, of unsuccessful villainy, found himself in the end 'forsaken,' as he expressed it by God and man.—Friendless and unpitied on a foreign shore, he lingered out his latter days racked with pain, and surrounded with filth and destitution; his fool hardiness failed altogether—his pride vainly struggled to suppress his horrors—alternately he prayed and blasphemed: abject was his wretchedness, and piteous were his means. This, infidelity, are the consolations thou reservest for the hour of nature's agony, it is thus thou smoothest the pillow of thy dying votaries. Nor will it vindicate thee to point to the boasted calmness with which Hume and others met their end, for their calmness was forced; and there was effort in their peace. Recent disclosures indicate, that even the torpid Scotchman had his shivering forebodings; and, independently of these, his levity in dying was as indecent as we believe it was unreal. No one acquainted with the desperate pride of the human heart will wonder to see how mightily it will wrestle to retain the mask of consistency, even amid the expiring agonies of unbelievers. But, spite of every effort, if the visor do not always drop, yet it rarely fails to be so far decomposed as to betray the real features which it is designed to hide.

From the New York New World.

MELANCHOLY MUSINGS.

BY THE HON. MRS. NORTON.

Ah! who e'er dreamed, when on life's flowers,
All fresh and fragrant, lightly pressed
The velvet footfall of the Hours,
And joy and hope each vision blest,
That sorrows, such as press me now,
Would shroud the darkened heart and brow.

Though friendship, when our sky is light,
In beauty o'er our pathway bends,—
As clouds gleam beautiful and bright
When tinged with sunshine—faithless friends
E'en like the summer clouds,—are gone—
When darkness and the storm come on.

And love—that incense so divine
Of the fond breast is guleless youth,
Flames oft at some unworthy shrine,
And they who trust to plighted truth,
Lean on a reed that soon may part,
And send its shivers through the heart.

And fame, for which we spend our breath,
Is but a meteor of the mind
That lures us on to toil and death;
And her successful votaries find
Hate's poisoned flowers amid the chain
Of roses wreathed around the brain.

For envy's eyes and slander's tongue,
Must lay the aspiring spirit low,
Although the innocent and young
Be more than orphaned by the blow;
And for a Mother's honored name,
Be left a heritage of shame.

Joy's font has long since been dried up;
My soul, by care and sorrow riven,
Turns as I drain life's bitter cup,
From heartless man to righteous heaven;
And oh! I long on earth's soft breast,
To lay my weary head and rest.

FERTILITY OF THE EARTH.

IT is worth while to observe what is often overlooked, that to the soil on which we tread God hath made us indebted for the arts which adorn, and the learning which ennoble, just as much as for the food which sustains human life. If God had thrown such barrenness into the earth that it would only yield enough for the support of those who tilled the earth, every man must have laboured for himself on the overspread face of nature. So that, if you examine with any carefulness you must discover that the sole reason why this company of men can devote itself to the business of legislation, and that

to the study of jurisprudence—why we can have schools and universities, and can set apart individuals, who shall give their whole attention to the instruction of their fellows—why we can have armies to defend our liberties, and navies to prosecute our commerce, and preachers to stand up and point mankind to Jesus of Nazareth—that the sole practical reason of all this is to be found in the fertility of the soil. For, if it were not fertile enough to yield more than he requires for himself, every man must be a husbandman, and no man could follow any other profession.

So that, by an arrangement which appears the more wonderful the more it is pondered over, God hath liberally thrown into the soil provision, for the various wants—physical, moral, and intellectual,—of the race whose successive generations possess its provinces. And, though you may trace with persevering curiosity the rise and progress of science, and map down the steps of the march of civilization, and show how, in the advances of a nation, the talented and the enterprising have carried on a noble crusade against ignorance and barbarism; we can bring you back to the dust out of which you were made, and bid you find there the elements of all the realities of which your dominion is made, and tie you down to one surprising, though half forgotten fact, that God invested the ground with the power of ministering to man's necessities, and that the arts by which their corporeal necessities are upheld, and the good laws by which they are governed, and the schools in which their minds are taught, and the churches in which their souls are instructed, may be referred to one and the same grand ordinance of God, and ascribed to that fruitfulness—that 'God hath of his goodness prepared for the poor.'

From Wilde's Narrative.

GIBRALTER.

THE scene which presents itself is of a singular description, and such as I can liken only to a fancy ball. The stiff, erect person of the English soldier, buttoned to the throat, and his neck stuck into a high regimental stock, meets you at every turn; and as officers on duty or on lounge, parade every second street, the walk of the private is one continued salute from beginning to end. How ill our men contrast with the noble bearing, the stately gait, and fine athletic person of the stately Moor, clad in his snow white flowing hyke, red slippers, and wide spreading turban. Thousands of the children of Israel, dressed in their blue gowns and small black skull caps, crowd the streets, hastening, with down-cast eyes and plodding faces, intent upon some new speculation, or planning some untried method of gain or interest. Spanish contrabandists, in their high peaked hats, spangled jackets, yellow leggings, and embroidered vests, swagger past you wherever you go; and merchant's clerks, in white jackets, and upturned cuffs, bustle into the counting houses, while the fumes of tobacco, smoked in all shapes and forms, issue from every mouth. The shops are numerous, and filled with French frippery and pinchback jewelry.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

STATISTICS OF THE JEWISH NATION.

THE statistics of the Jewish population are among the most singular circumstances of this most singular of all people. Under all their calamities and depressions, they seem to have remained at nearly the same amount as in the days of David and Solomon, never much more in prosperity—never much less after ages of suffering. Nothing like this has occurred in the history of any other race, Europe in general having doubled its population within the last hundred years; and England nearly tripled hers within the last half century—the population of America being still more rapid; and the world crowded in a constantly increasing ratio, yet the Jews seem to stand still in this vast and general movement. The population of Judea, in its most palmy days, did not probably exceed, if it reached, four millions. The numbers who entered Palestine from the wilderness were evidently not much more than three millions—and their census, according to the German statistics, which are generally considered to be exact, is now nearly the same as that of the people under Moses—about three millions. They are thus distributed:—In Europe 1,960,000, of which about 668,000 are in Poland and Russia, and 453,000 are in Austria. In Asia, 738,000, of which 300,000 are in Asiatic Turkey. In Africa, 504,000, of which 304,000 are in Morocco. In America, North and South, 5,700. If we add to these about 15,000 Samaritans, the calculation in round numbers will be about