

Literature, & c.

The British Magazines

FOR APRIL.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

NIGHT ATTACK.

[We copy the following extracts from "Marston, or the Memoirs of a Statesman," being a continuation of the description of an assault made on the dwelling of a gentleman of rank in Ireland at the commencement of the rebellion, which we copied from the January number of this periodical.]

The insurrection had broken out; there could now be no scepticism on the subject. Some hundreds of armed men were already crowding the grounds in front of the mansion; and from the shouts which rose from every quarter, and still more from the fires which blazed on every hill round the horizon, the numbers of the insurgents must have amounted to thousands. It was evident that we were in a pitfall, and that resistance was only the protraction of a fate which was now inevitable. The shrieks of the females and the despondency of the men, who naturally thought that their last hour was come, were enough to dishearten all resolution. For a few minutes, the only orders which I could give were to bar the doors and close the windows. The multitude, new to hostile enterprises, had till now kept at some distance, warned by their losses in the skirmish with the yeomanry, and probably expecting the arrival of troops. But the sight of our precautions, few and feeble as they were, gave them new courage; and discharges of musketry began to drop their bullets into the midst of our startled assemblage. It is only justice to the national intrepidity to say, that every measure which I proposed for defence was unhesitatingly adopted; and that one of my chief difficulties was to prevent rash sallies, which must have only terminated in loss of life. The short interval now allowed to us was employed in barricading the mansion, which was built almost with the strength of a fortress, and posting every man who could handle a musket or pistol, at the windows. Still I knew that this species of defence could not last long; and that my only hope for our lives was, that the firing might bring some of the troops who patrolled the country to our assistance. But the discharges became closer and heavier, and still no sound of succour was to be heard. My situation became more anxious every moment; all looked up to me for their guidance; and though my garrison were brave and obedient, as became the high-spirited sons of Ireland, there seemed the strongest probability that the night would end in a general massacre. Yet there was no faint-heartedness under the roof; our fire was stoutly kept up whenever the assailants came within range; and as I hurried from chamber to chamber to ascertain the condition of our defence and give directions, I found all firm. Still the terrors of the females—the sight of the first women of the province flying for refuge to every corner where they might escape the balls, which now poured into every window; the actual wounds of some, visible by the blood streaming down their splendid dresses; the horror-stricken looks of the groups clinging to each other for hopeless protection; and the actual semblance of death in others fainting on the sofas and floors, and all this under an incessant roar of musketry—made me often wish that I could give way to the gallant impatience of my friends within the mansion, and take the desperate hazard of plunging into the midst of the multitude.

But a new danger awaited us; a succession of shrieks from one of the upper apartments caught my ear, and on rushing to the spot, and forcing my way through a crowd of women half-frantic with alarm, I saw some of the out-buildings immediately connected with the mansion, wrapped in a sheet of fire. The insurgents had at last found out the true way to subdue our resistance; and we obviously had no alternative but to throw ourselves on their mercy, or die with arms in our hands. Yet, to surrender was perhaps only to suffer a more protracted death, degraded by shame; and when I looked round me on the helplessness of the noble and beautiful women around me, and thought of the agony which must be felt by us on seeing them thrown into the power of the assassins who were now roaring with triumph and vengeance, I dismissed all thoughts of submission at once, and determined to take the chances of resistance while any man among us had the power to draw a trigger. In rushing through the mansion, to make its defenders in the front aware of the new danger which threatened us, I happened to pass through the ball-room, where the corpse of its noble and brave master was. One figure was standing there, with his back to me, and evidently gazing on the body. Of all the friends, guests, and domestics, not one had remained. Loud as were the shouts outside, and constant as was the crashing of the musketry, I could hear a groan, which seemed to come from the very heart of that lonely by-stander. I sprang towards him; he turned at the sound of my step, and, to my surprise, I saw the face of the man whose share in the insurrection I had so singularly ascertained. I had a loaded musket in my hand, and my first impulse, in the indignation of the moment, was to discharge its contents through his heart. But he looked at me with a countenance of such utter dejection, that I dropped its muzzle to the ground, and demanded "What had brought him there at such a time?" "This," he exclaimed, pointing to the pallid form on the sofa. "To that man I owed everything. To his protection, to his

generosity, to his nobleness of heart, I owed my education, my hopes, all my prospects in life. I should have died a thousand deaths rather than see a hair of his head touched—and now, there he lies." He sank upon his knees, took the hand of the dead, and wept over it in agony.

But I had no leisure to wait upon his remorse; the volleys were pouring in, and the glare of the burning buildings showed me that the flames were making fearful progress. "This," said I, "is your work. This murder is but the first fruits of your treason; probably every life in this house is destined to butchery within the hour." He sprang on his feet. "No, no," he cried, "we are not murderers. This is the frenzy of the populace. Regeneration must not begin by massacre."

The thought suddenly struck me that I might make his fears, or his compunctions, at the moment available.

"You are at my mercy," said I. "I might justly put you to death at the instant, as a rebel, in the fact; or I might deliver you up to the law, when your fate would be inevitable. I can make no compromise. But, if you would make such atonement to your own conscience as may be found in undoing a part of the desperate wrong which you have done, go out to those robbers and murderers who are now thirsting for our blood, and put a stop to their atrocities if you can; save the lives of those in the house; or, if you cannot, die in the only attempt which can retrieve your memory."

He looked at me with a look of surprise for a moment, and uttered a few wild words, as if his mind was wandering. I sternly repeated my demand, and at length he agreed to try his influence with the multitude. I threw open the door, and sent him out, adding the words—"I shall have my eye upon you. If I find you swerve, I shall fire at you, in preference to any other man in the mob. We shall die together." He went forth, and I heard his recognition by the rebels, in their loud shouts, and their heavier fire against our feeble defences. But, after a few moments, the shouting and the fire ceased together. There was a pause; from its strangeness after the tumult of the last hour, scarcely less startling than the uproar. They appeared to be deliberating on his proposition. But while we remained in this suspense, another change came; loud altercations were heard; and the pause was interrupted by a renewed rush to the assault. We now looked upon all as hopeless, and expected only to perish in the flames, which were rolling in broad sheets over the roof of the mansion. There was no symptom of faint-heartedness among us; but our ammunition was almost exhausted, and every countenance was pale with despair; another half hour, and our fate must be decided. In this extremity, with every sense wound up to its utmost pitch, I thought that I heard the distant trampling of cavalry. It came nearer still. There was evident confusion among the rebels. At length a trumpet sounded the charge, and a squadron of horse rushed into the lawn, sabring and firing among the multitude. The struggle was fierce, but brief; and before we could nabar the doors, and burst out to take a part in the *melee*, all was done; the rebels had fled, the grounds were cleared, and the dragoons were gathering their prisoners.

DESCRIPTION OF GRATAN.

[From the same work we copy the following graphic sketch of this celebrated orator and statesman.]

The House was at length hushed, and Grattan rose. I cannot revert to the memory of that extraordinary man, without a mixture of admiration and melancholy—admiration for his talents, and melancholy for the feeling that such talents should expire with the time, and be buried in the common dust of the sepulchre. As a senatorial orator, he was incontestably the greatest whom I ever heard. With but little pathos, and with no pleasantry, I never heard any man so universally, perpetually, and powerfully, command the attention of the House. There was the remarkable peculiarity in his language, that while the happiest study of others is to conceal their art, his simplicity had the manner of art. It was keen, concentrated, and polished by nature. His element was grandeur; the plainest conception in his hands, assumed a loftiness and power which elevated the mind of his hearers, as much as it convinced their reason. As it was said of Michael Angelo, that every touch of his chisel was life, and that he struck out features and forms from the marble with the power of a creator, Grattan's mastery of high conceptions was so innate, that he invested every topic with a sudden magnitude, which gave the most casual things a commanding existence to the popular eye. It was thus that the grievance of a casual impost, the delinquencies of a police, the artifices of an election, or the informalities of a measure of finance, became under his hand historic subjects, immortal themes, splendid features, and recollections of intellectual triumph. If the Pyramids were built to contain the dust of nameless kings and sacrificed cattle, his eloquence erected over materials equally transitory, memorials equally imperishable.

His style has been criticised, and has been called affected and epigrammatic. But, what is style to the true orator? His triumph is effect—what is to him its compound? What is it to the man who has the thunderbolt in his hands, of what various, nay, what earthly—nay, what vaporous material it may be formed? Its blaze, its rapidity, and its penetration, are its essential value; and smiting, piercing, and consuming, it is the instrument of irresistible power.

But Grattan was an orator by profession, and the only one of his day. The great English speakers adopted oratory simply as the means

of their public superiority. Pitt's was the oratory of a ruler of empire; yet Fox, oratory was the strong, massive, and yet flexible instrument of a leader of party. But with Grattan it was a faculty, making a portion of the man, scarcely connected with external things, and neither curbed nor guided by the necessities of his political existence. If Grattan had been born among the backwoodsmen, he would have been an orator, and have been persuasive among the men of the hatchet and the rifle. Wherever the tongue of man could have given superiority, or the flow and vigour could have given pleasure, he would have attained eminence and dispensed delight. If he had not found an audience, he would have addressed the torrents and the trees; he would have sent forth his voice to the inaccessible mountains, and have appealed to the inscrutable stars. It is admitted, that in the suffering condition of Ireland, he had a prodigious opportunity; but, among thousands of bold, ardent, and intellectual men, what is his praise who alone rushes to their front, and seizes the opportunity?

On this night he spoke with remarkable power, but in a style wholly distinct from his former appeals to the passions of the House. His accents, usually sharp and high, were now lingering and low; his fiery phraseology was solemn and touching, and even his gesture, habitually wild, distorted, and pantomimical, was subdued and simple. He seemed to labour under an unavowed impression of the share which the declamatory zeal of his party had to lay to its charge in the national peril. But I never seen more expressive evidence of his genius, than on this night of universal consternation. His language, ominous and sorrowful, had the force of an oracle, and was listened to like an oracle. No eye or ear strayed from him for a moment, while he wandered dejectedly among the leading events of the time, throwing a brief and gloomy light over each in passing, as if he carried a funeral lamp in his hand, and was straying among tombs. This was to me a wholly new aspect of his extraordinary faculties. I had regarded rapidity, brilliancy, and boldness of thought, as his inseparable attributes; but his speech was now a magnificent elegy. I had seen him, when he furnished my mind almost with the image of some of those men of might and mystery, sent to denounce the guilt, and heap coals of fire on the heads of nations. He now gave me the image of the prophet, lamenting over the desolation which he had once proclaimed, and deprecating less the crimes than the calamities of the land of his nativity. I never was more struck with the richness and variety of his conceptions, but their sadness was sublime. Again, I desire to guard, against the supposition, that I implicitly did homage to either his talents or his political views. From the latter, I often and deeply dissented; in the former I could often perceive the infirmity that belongs even to the highest natural powers. He was no "faultless monster." I am content to recollect him as a first-rate human being. He had enemies, and may have them still. But all private feelings are hourly more and more extinguished in the burst of praise, still ascending round the spot where his dust is laid. Time does ultimate justice to all, and while it crumbles down the fabricated fame, only clears and separates the solid renown from the common level of things. The foibles of human character pass away. The fluctuations of the human features are forgotten in the fixed majesty of the statue; and the foes of the living man unite in carrying the memorial of the mighty dead to its place in that temple, where posterity comes to refresh its spirit, and elevate its nature, with the worship of genius and virtue.

From Fraser's Magazine.

LORD BROUGHAM.

EMERGING from the comparative obscurity of a provincial capital, as an advocate, he talks himself into the distinction of being talked about; thence he talks himself into the popular branch of the legislature, where again he talks to such purpose as to become the mouthpiece of the most exclusive section of an exclusive aristocracy: arrived at this point, he reappears on his old scene of action, and talks to the people with the new sanctions and powers which his parliamentary talking has obtained for him; he talks at meetings, he talks at dinners, he talks at mechanics' institutes; he talks to the men of the south, he talks to the men of the north; he talks to everyone of every thing, till the whole land is filled with the echo of his voice,—till, with all England, nay, with all the world, for his listeners, men wonder where next he will find an audience; when lo! suddenly, incomprehensibly, as if by magical power, at a few more waggings of that ever-vibrating organ of his, the doors of the senate itself fly open, and peers of ancient lineage crowd down to welcome him to this sanctuary of noble blood, to usher him up even to the judgment seat itself, to make him lord paramount over themselves and their proceedings, the licenser of their thoughts, and the originator of their laws!

POWER OF ELOQUENCE.

Eloquence, in this empire, is power. Give a man nerve, a presence, sway over language, and, above all, enthusiasm, or intellectual skill to simulate it; start him in the public arena with these requisites; and, ere many years, perhaps many months, have passed, you will either see him in a high station, or in a fair way of rising to it. Party politics, social grievances, humanity mongering, and the like, are to him so many new discovered worlds wherein he may, with the orators' sword—his tongue—carve out his fortune and his fame. Station—the prior possession, by rank or wealth, of the public ear—is, no doubt, a great advantage. It is much for a man to be asked as

a favour to speak to a cause, for that his rank and name will influence the people; or to have secured to him by his birth a seat in the senate; these things, doubtless, give one man a start before another in the race. But, without the gift of eloquence, all these special favours of fortune are of no avail in securing your influence over your countrymen. Unless you have the art of clothing your ideas in clear and captivating diction, of identifying yourself with the feelings of your hearers, and uttering them in language, more forcible, or terse, or brilliant, than they can themselves command; or unless you have the power—still more rare—of originating,—of commanding their intellects, their hearts,—of drawing them in your train by the irresistible magic of sympathy,—of making their thoughts your thoughts, or your thoughts theirs; unless you have stumbled on the shell that shall make you the possessor of this lyre, never hope to rule your fellow men in these modern days. Write books rather; be a patient and admiring listener; make other men puppets if you can, and hold the strings; but rest content with a private station, and make it as influential as you may. Publicly and ostensibly powerful you never will be, unless you have mastered the art of oratory.

From Dolman's Magazine.

ANECDOTES OF CALCUTTA.

[The following extracts are taken from an article in this periodical, under the above head.]

MUSQUITOES IN CALCUTTA.

ALMOST the first individuals to whom the stranger is introduced after his arrival in India, are—the musquitoes, the most voracious cannibals on the face of the earth. Talk as you will of the South Sea Islanders, the Khoords, and others, they are not to be compared with this tribe of man eaters. These, at the same time that they surpass all others in voracity, are the most perfect epicures. They know by instinct "a fresh arrival," and no sooner has he taken possession of his couch, than leaving the acclimated corpus of the old resident, whose juices have become thin and tasteless, they hasten to him, and glut and gormandize and revel in his blood! Oh, how he tosses, and turns, and scratches, and rubs himself!

A BAZAAR IN CALCUTTA.

BUT come, dear reader, accompany me on a stroll through the native town. This is what is called a bazaar! (Think of the places so called in London!) The houses are built of mud, huddled miserably together, and redolent of oil, smoke, and dirt. Here is a fruiterer sitting on his haunches, and selling his wares, which consist of coconuts and water melons. The latter (turbooz) are very refreshing at this warm season, and some of them are so large as to weigh twenty or thirty pounds. They grow in abundance on the sandy loam which skirts the bank of the rivers. The next shop is that of a Chinese shoemaker, who no doubt thinks he makes a very fine display. Gaudy slippers of red cloth, bedecked and beautified with spangles for the rich, adorn the front of his stall, while for the poor there are rough untanned leather ones; but all you observe, are turned up at the toes in the Eastern fashion. On the opposite side is the stall of a barber, who is engaged in shaving a customer. Look at him! How he beams at the man's face with his paws! He has no idea of using a brush to lay on the lather, but wets the soap, spreads it on the face, and then rubs it in with his dirty fingers. Now he has done the beard, and is going to commence operations on the head. He scrapes it bare all around, leaving nothing but the lock on the top, by which its proprietor firmly believes that Mahomet will some day drag him up to heaven. Inside of the stall, quite *a propos*, you may discern the barber's wife engaged in a hunting excursion among the dark and dishevelled locks of a female companion. This is a confectioner's. See the pyramidal piles of dirty sugar and rancid oil cakes set out on a filthy ostage which serves as a shop front! There sits the proprietor in state, smoking a nasty redclay pipe with a cocoa-nut bowl, and driving its fumes among his commodities. His journeyman is employed, over a cauldron of hot ghee, in manufacturing the favourite *jelabee*, supporting in his hand a vessel containing flour and water, and having an orifice in the bottom, through which he allows the mixture to drop into the ghee, twisting and turning the flour pot about continually, so as to form the mess into circular figures, which, when fried, are ready for consumption, and counted by the natives a great delicacy. Bah! And here is an eating house, the manager of which doubtless thinks himself superior to Kitchener, if he has ever heard of that worthy. Look at him! He is preparing a *kabob* for that hungry looking *coolie*, who stands by gazing at it as if he had not eaten for a week! It is a piece of a jackal, which the *artiste de cuisine*, in imitation of those rogues of the west who make juggled hare out of tom-cats, is about to palm off on his customer for mutton.

MARRIAGE AND HAPPINESS IN INDIA.

COURTSHIP in England is a work of time, and marriage one of consideration. But amongst the English in India they make short work of all this. Two or three meetings, sometimes only a single one,—and all is arranged. The circumlocutory movements of sagacious and speculative mammals around young sprigs of fashion, the cool calculations of statistical and systematical papas on the relative merits of prospective heiresses, are here alike unknown, and the fledglings are left to yield themselves willing captives to the net, and thrust themselves into the snare of Hymen.