

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Wilmer &amp; Smith's European Times.

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF JAMES MONTGOMERY.

BY J. W. KING.

We have observed, for some years, with a good deal of interest, the poetical career of Mr. King, and have marked with pleasure a progressive improvement in his style, which promises ultimately to lead to a high order of excellence. Grandpapas are probably delighted

To dwell begirt with growing infancy—  
Daughters and sons of beauty;

and even cynical old critics like ourselves can dispense the smile of approbation to hopeful juniors. Scott says of the ball given by the gallant James at Holyrood, on the eve of Flodden Field—"It was his merriest and his last." So we may say of our young friend, Mr. King, that this is decidedly his happiest as it is his latest effort. It is not only the best thing he has done, but, what is the most worthy contribution to the memory of Montgomery which we happen to have met with. It has a smack of Southey about it, which in these days of prosaic poetry and transcendental prose is quite refreshing to an old-fashioned ear. We therefore make no apology for giving it a niche in our column of literary gossip:—

"He sleeps with the prophets."

"The Wanderer sleeps!"

Throbs through the city like a knell;  
Strength stays his wielding arm,  
Age bows his head,  
Friendship, and Youth, and Beauty  
Mourn the dead.

The Wanderer sleeps;

The bard of "Greenland" sings no more;  
Bereaved Memory weeps—  
Not with pale grief, but love all hallowed o'er,  
With reverend age, and bonny blooming youth,  
And virtue strong and pure,  
World Fame that shall endure  
With time and truth.

The prophet on the world's highway,  
The sage in council sweet,  
The friend who cheered the darkest day,  
The voice who loved to greet,  
The heart that scattered broad and free  
The gifts the gifted mind had given—  
We know no more; yet this we know—  
He who so long and sweetly sang below  
Sings high in heaven.

Then not a song of woe,

Oh! not in dolorous weeds,  
The good man calmly laid him down  
Upon the lap of May,  
Met with a smile the conqueror's frown,  
And passed away.  
Bright is the profit here  
With heaven's eternal beams;  
And who shall touch the silent lyre?  
Lo, all ye hills, ye wildly-digging streams,  
Ye mingling syrens of the trees—  
Hymn ye our sweet obscurities  
At golden morn and mellow eve;  
And ruddy Childhood, come and weave  
A grave-wreath from the daisied meads  
For him who loved you so.

Oh, brighter than the crown of kings—

A people-honoured name;  
Oh, richer than all earthly things—  
A large and spotless fame.  
Grasp the whole wealth of Christendom,  
Hold worlds within a span,  
Tis dress, where greatly lives and dies  
The Christian and the Man.  
Ye who would sing the poet's life,  
Go forth with hallowed tongue,  
And tell it out to Africa's sons,  
The "Wanderer's" Alps among—  
How he who sung their mighty wrongs  
Sleeps calm and full of days,  
Followed by Hall's hundred hills,  
Wild streams, and sunny breeze;  
Say how the swart-browed artisan  
Threw down the hissing steel,  
And ceased the thousand-throated din—  
Hammer, and shaft, and wheel;  
Say how the city's broad, full tide  
With solemn mien came forth,  
And bowed around the hallowed dead,  
In honour of his worth.

Sleep, gentle bard,

The good man's rest is thine,  
And in our memory's strong regard  
Thy life shall ever nobly shine.  
Like the sweet lark that soars to wake the dawn,  
Thy muse broke forth in chilling haste,  
Till earth and sea, and hill and dale were gone,  
And in the manhood of thy days,  
I own from the lands of light and Truth  
Thy graceful numbers came,  
Pure as their theme, and vigorous as Youth,  
And full of truth.

Full many a mourning heart holds dear  
Some sweet memento of thy worth;  
Full many a memory-baunting tear  
Records thy exodus from earth:  
And while the Primrose opens its eye,  
The Robin cheers the lone abode;  
While sings the summer lark on high,  
And Nature speaks through Nature's God!  
May the sweet bard of "Zion" claim  
The Christian poet's deathless name.

From the Anglo American Magazine.

## THE UNKNOWN.

To conceal.

With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught—  
Passion, or feeling, purpose, grief, or zeal—  
Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,  
In a stern task of soul!

In one of the most beautiful and picturesque counties of the principalities of Wales, and on one of that chain of mountains which nature seems to have intended as a defensive barrier between ancient Cambria and England, there is situated a romantic village, whose houses are built at intervals up the side of the eminence, and are crowned and overlooked by the remains of a fortress on its summit, and was once powerful and commanding. The time, however, is gone by which beheld its grandeur, since from being the stronghold of feudal power and oppression, it has been successively the scene of knightly chivalrous prowess, of lady love, and minstrel lore, down to the polish and splendour of recent times. The same illustrious family continued to be its possessor and inmates from the period of its erection until the present generation, who, at the call of fashion, removed to a more commodious and modern mansion in the plains it overlooked, and left the ancient seat of their ancestors, to become the residence of their dependents.

The beauty of the surrounding country occasions many tourists to visit this otherwise secluded village; and the ancient fortress occasionally becomes the abode of such of the lovers of nature as are not satisfied with a temporary view of the charms she exhibits. In its antique and gloomy chambers the summer day's wanderer finds a pleasing contrast to the gorgeous brightness of all external objects; he may gaze from the dim Gothic windows upon a scene of almost Italian loveliness; he may turn towards the interior of the chamber; and the grim and time-faded pictures that still remain upon the walls, the dark panels, and heavy doors, the wide fire places that mark its antiquity, may serve to recall to his memory much that he may have heard of the prowess of ancient times. How much do the least romantic, and most creditable of the old chronicles impress one with an idea of the lawless state of mankind in the darkest ages! What stories they relate of rapine and fraud—of ambition in the state—of force in arms—of stratagem, combined with force, in love—yet not unmingled with traits of grandeur of soul, that, like gleams of light in a stormy day, seem the more brilliant from the darkness by which they are surrounded!

It is now some years since a young traveller, who had a mind capable of feeling the full force of historic truth and philosophic reasoning, came from Cambridge to spend the summer vacation amid the stillness and the beauty of nature. Of the learning of the schools he had enough, and, perhaps, to spare, since he drank of the cup of knowledge with a thirst that seemed insatiable,—the deeper he quaffed, the greater was his desire; and he became thoughtful and abstracted beyond his year. He seemed to have that fire and motion of the soul which,

—'But once kindled, quenches evermore,  
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire  
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,  
Fatal to him that bears, to all that ever bore.'

His father, who was entirely of an opposite character, and who had, in his early days, suffered something from his friendship with one of his son's temperaments, was anxious to overcome this restlessness in the youth; he, therefore sent him on an excursion into Wales, hoping that the natural beauties he would there behold might wean him from his too closely followed inquiries into philosophic truth.

At the period of his arrival at the ancient fortress, it happened to have for a tenant an old and sorrowful man, one whose grey hairs, and furrowed brow and 'lack-lustre eye,' gave evidence of a long and wearisome existence. He was of such a retiring deportment—so taciturn and repelling—and there was such an expression of suspicion in the quick inquiring glance which he sometimes directed from beneath his overhanging brow, that the young man felt unwilling to break in upon the seclusion of one so much older than himself, and one who evidently shunned and disliked society. Yet there was something about him which excited an almost painful interest in the breast of his observer.—He was old, helpless and solitary. He had either outlived all the objects of affection and friendship once dear to his bosom, or he had outlived their remembrance of him; in either case he was rather to be pitied than condemned.

It was the custom of the young student to sit in his chamber at the hour of twilight, and to watch the stars as they appeared, one by one in the calm ether—sheddings, from their golden urns, a radiance more tender and delightful than

that of day. At such periods he was wont to apostrophize them as the bright and changeless things that had kept, untired, their silent virgils from the first night of creation—as objects, if not as worlds, removed from our crime tainted and care loaded atmosphere, and "peopled with beings as bright as their own beams."

From such meditations he was frequently recalled by the light that shone from the chamber of the unknown, and which, as it was situated in an opposite angle of the old fortress, he could easily overlook. Regularly, at the same hour of the night, the stranger lit his lamp; and as the student watched its flickering light, he bethought him of the olden time when that room might have been 'the bower' of some courtly and lovely dame; and when such a light, beaming from its lofty window, would have been construed into a love-light beacon, to guide home her lover or her lord. Sometimes he was filled with curiosity to ascertain the nocturnal employments of the Unknown, for employed he undoubtedly was, and it must be something, thought the student, remarkably interesting, that should call forth such unusual assiduity, in one who seemed to have nothing worth living for. Yet, in spite of his pertinacious observance, nothing could the student discover but that the Unknown, after lighting his lamp, drew from his depository a casket or desk, then placing himself between the window and the table, he continued for hours, to contemplate its contents. Thus, shut out from the truth, the student resorted to fiction, and there was nothing, however wild, that his heated and speculative imagination did not present to him—he fancied him an astronomer, calculating the revolutions of the heavenly bodies; from an astronomer he converted him, by a ready process, into an astrologer, and thence into a magician.—From a practitioner of magic and the black arts, the student, who was well versed in the histories of the middle ages and all their legends, transmuted the Unknown into an alchemist, busied him in the search of the *elixir vitae*—pursued him with imaginary persecution—gifted him with boundless wealth, and then (as the strange association of ideas will sometimes lead us into absurdities) the Unknown degenerated into a maker of counterfeit coin.

Awaking, with a start, from such reveries as these, the student could scarcely forbear laughing at his own speculations; and after indulging them, he frequently retired to rest, and renewed in his dreams the wanderings of the mind.—One day, during which he had observed that the Unknown seemed unusually retiring and melancholy, he suffered himself to be so absorbed in such meditations that his overcharged and weary spirit refused to part with the images he had presented to it, even after the body had sunk to repose. He dreamed that he sat in the chamber of the Unknown, with the mysterious desk open before him; that he stretched out his hand to reach a roll of parchment that it contained, but, ere he could grasp it, it closed with a tremendous noise, and he suddenly awoke. There was, indeed, a loud knocking at the door of his apartment; The Unknown was ill, and desired his presence.

The student hastily threw on his clothes, and proceeded to the apartment whose secrets he had so much wished to penetrate. The curtains were closed round the bed of the Unknown; his visitor put them aside, and gazed with surprise on the altered countenance of the dying man. He was now speechless; so rapid was the progress of his disease; his teeth were clenched; his lips were severe and pale; his eyes were glazed; death was legibly written upon every feature. He shook his head as he distinguished the student; as a last effort he held out his hand, and the young man received from him a small key; nature could do no more; he laid his head back upon his pillow, and the student was alone with the dead.

It is an awful thing 'to be alone with the dead,' with the body of one whose spirit has that moment escaped from us; and, as we gaze on the mute remains of humanity, every feeling and passion, however turbulent, is hushed, and benumbed to silence. Is it that we are unconsciously impressed with the sense of the presence of an invisible disencumbered spirit, that yet hovers round its late tenement, watching our deportment, prying into our thoughts, estimating the sincerity of our regrets? or do we know ourselves to be standing in the court of death, before the very altar upon which an offering has been recently made to Him, where we ourselves shall one day come? or is it a sense of loss, of deprivation, a snatching away of something incalculably valuable that thus effects us? It may be one or all these feelings that subdues, for a time, in the chamber of the dead, the lamentations of the relative and the friend; that stills the clamours of the interested, the enquiries of the curious; it was some such feeling that obliterated from the student, as he gazed on the remains of the Unknown, his recent desire to scan into his history.

But on the morrow, when it became necessary to make arrangements for the funeral, the student unlocked the desk, of which he had received the key. It contained a sum of money, folded in a paper, on which were inscribed,— "For my funeral expenses." In a secret drawer was deposited a miniature of a female of dazzling beauty, and several closely written sheets of paper addressed to "the finder." The student,

therefore, scrupled not to examine their contents.

## THE MANUSCRIPT OF THE UNKNOWN.

Stranger! whoever thou art into whose hands this record of my existence may chance to fall, pause ere thou openest its pages, and recal to thy mind such scenes of thine own life as may best assure thee that frailty is the companion of man; since, if no humiliating sense of thine own errors teach thee to look with compassion on mine, thou wilt do well to shut the book, and resign it into the hands of a more merciful judge. There was a time when I ranked high among my fellow men. I was esteemed for my virtues, and admired for my talents. I looked forward to a life of honor, and a death of renown. Alas, to what have I been degraded!

I do not remember my father; he died on the day of my birth; an ill omen of the fate of his posthumous son. I was the first and only child of my mother, who was freed, by the death of her husband, from the most insupportable species of domestic tyranny; and from the earliest hour of consciousness, I remember myself to have been the sole idol of her heart. I formed no wish, however wild—I had no desire, however extravagant, that she did not seek to gratify; and my temper, naturally irritable and violent, was made worse by this ill-timed indulgence! Her fortune was limited, and, as the masters she employed to conduct my education flattered her with the belief that I possessed extraordinary talents, she resolved that I should embrace a profession by which I might at once acquire both emolument and renown.

From domestic tuition I passed to Eton, and thence I was entered as a student at the courts of law in the metropolis.

I will pass over my probationary years, a great portion of which I idled away at the retired mansion of my mother, and merely state that I was honourably called to the bar in the thirtieth year of my age; and that I began my career with a full determination to commit no action that might bring disgrace upon myself, or discredit upon my profession; but such resolutions are more easily made than adhered to. Time had somewhat subdued my youthful volatility, but I was still rash, headstrong, and impetuous; outwardly, and where my interests or my character required it, I could be calm and temperate; I was able to repress before strangers those quick and virulent resentments which burst forth in the domestic world with a violence that made my mother shrink, and my servants tremble, but which, when once exhausted, left in my mind no seeds of malice or enmity. Even in despite of these paroxysms my attendants loved me; my mother bowed to their fury in silence, she felt that she should have curbed them in my youth; and one, who was neither relative nor servitor, wept until her tears disarmed me.

She was the companion, the ward of my mother, if so might a portionless orphan be denominated. She was the child of an old and faithful friend, and, on the death of her last parent, my mother offered her an asylum under her roof. Emma Gordon gladly availed herself of the protection of such a woman, and became domesticated at our cottage. She was meek, unoffending, and affectionate, without energy, mediocre in intellect, insipid in her manner, and doll-like in her appearance. She was brought up in the strictest exercise of all religious and moral duties. Everything wrong, whether it was a petty departure from decorum, or an atrocious murder, came under her idea of things that were 'improper,' and I often ridiculed, with merciless severity, this indiscriminating mode of censure. I was the object on which such affections as she possessed were wholly lavished; but I could not be said to love in return. The passive preference, the soulless tenderness, of such a woman, could not call forth the impetuous, deep, and glowing love that I was capable of feeling for a more energetic and intellectual female, one with whom I could fully have interchanged every thought, every feeling, every sentiment, who would have had one heart, one mind, one soul with myself, who would have been to me, and I to her, as an oracle of wisdom, of happiness, of life.

Perhaps I was wrong to indulge my mother in the belief that I loved her ward; but I knew that my parent had set her heart upon the marriage, and I had no intention of disappointing her. I had then seen no woman that answered to my own secret ideal of personal and mental charms. Emma, by long habitude, was so well acquainted with the custom of self-indulgence, of indolence, and of luxury, which I yielded to at home, that she was partly necessary to my comfort; to marry her would be to secure a skilful nurse, a careful housekeeper, a judicious manager of my domestic affairs, and a piteous minister to my capricious whims. For amusement or for advice, I would seek elsewhere.

I did not, in these calculations, consider any one but myself; I never gave a thought to futurity, of the children I might have, or the qualities they might inherit. Like the admonition of the ancient sage, when I asked myself what was the object of my cares, I could only couch my answer in the thrice reiterated and odious monosyllable, self, self, self. I did not, as her sex required, even leave it to Emma to appoint the day of our marriage, but, having signified to my mother and to her the period of my return, I required them to have everything in