

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

THE BLIND WOMAN.

FROM THE FRENCH OF BERENGER.

It snows, it snows, but on the pavement still
She kneels and prays, nor lifts her head;
Beneath these rags through which the blast
blows shrill,
Shivering she kneels and waits for bread.
Hither each morn she gropes her weary way,
Winter and summer, there is she.
Blind is the wretched creature! well a day!
Ah! give the blind one charity!

Ah! once far different did that form appear;
That sunken cheek, that colour wan,
The pride of thronged theatres, to hear
Her voice, enraptured Paris ran;
In smiles or tears before her beauty's shrine,
Which of us has not bowed the knee?—
Who owes not to her charms some dreams di-
vine?
Ah! give the blind one charity!

How oft when from the crowded spectacle,
Homeward her rapid courses flew;
Adoring crowds would on her footsteps dwell,
And loud huzzas her path pursue.
To hand her from the glittering car, that
bore
Her home to scenes of mirth and glee,
How many rivals throng'd around her door—
Ah! give the blind one charity.

When all the arts to her their homage paid,
How splendid was her gay abode;
What mirrors, marbles, bronzes, were dis-
played,
Tributes by love on love bestowed;
How duly did the muse her banquets gild,
Faithful to her prosperity:
In every palace will the swallow build!
Ah! give the poor one charity!

But sad reverse—sudden disease appears;
Her eyes are quenched, her voice is gone,
And here, forlorn and poor for twenty years,
The blind one kneels and begs alone.
Who once so prompt her generous aid to
lend?
What hand more liberal, frank, and free,
Than that she scarcely ventures to extend?—
Ah! give the poor one charity!

Alas for her! for faster falls the snow,
And every limb grows stiff with cold;
That rosy once woke her smile, which now
Her frozen fingers hardly hold.
If bruised beneath so many woes, her heart
By pity still sustain'd may be,
Lest even her faith in heaven itself depart,
Ah! give the blind one charity.

From Dicken's Household Words.

THE LAST OF THE HOWLEYS.

At the beginning of the year seventeen hundred and ninety-eight, a respectable family, named Howley, resided in the neighbourhood of Wexford, in Ireland. They consisted of the father; two sons, Mark and Robert; a daughter, named Ellen. That was the year of the great Rebellion, when the patriot volunteers, having taken successively the titles of United Irishmen and Defenders, openly declared themselves in revolt against the government of the sister country. The civil war raged fiercely in the southern provinces; and the Howleys speedily became involved in it. The father, who assumed the title of colonel, had placed himself at the head of an armed band, chiefly composed of peasants on his own estate, fell, fighting, at the battle at Vinegar Hill. Both the sons were taken prisoners with arms in their hands by the king's troops, during the terrible fight in the streets of Ross; and Mark, who was the elder, was shot, without trial, on the spot where he was captured; Robert being a slim youth of fifteen—and of an appearance even younger than his years—was spared, and sent to Dublin for trial. His sister Ellen, who was then a girl of seventeen, and of very remarkable beauty, set out without consulting any one—indeed, there was few who dared trust to the advice of another in that terrible time—contrived to traverse a country still swarming with troops and insurgents, and arrived safely in Dublin.

There, with no friend or acquaintance in the city, she remained from the month of June until the February of the following year. During that time she was not allowed to see or communicate with her brother; but the misfortunes of her family, and the loneliness of her situation, transformed the young girl into a self-reliant woman. Every day was methodically spent in some endeavour, direct or indirect, to save her brother's life. She sought for friends, and succeeded in interesting those who had been mere strangers. Day after day she haunted the courts, listening to the speeches of the various counsel, in order herself to form a judgment of their skill. When she had fixed upon one to undertake her brother's defence, she instructed him herself, paying his fees out of a little treasure she had brought with her, and which had been kept by her father against a

The Barrister whom she had chosen, was a young man named Roche, then but little known in his profession. He felt for her sorrows, and began to take an interest in his client's case.—Every day, after visiting the prisoner, he brought her some intelligence from him, and succeeded in whispering to him, in return, a word of consolation from his devoted sister.—He also entered into her schemes for interesting influential persons in her favour; but he was a young man, and having risen by his own efforts above the humble position of his family, he had but little personal interest. The atrocities committed at Wexford, and the horrible story of the barn at Scullabogue, had produced a strong feeling against all prisoners from the south; and their applications to the Lord-Lieutenant were met by a cool official answer.

Meanwhile, Roche directed all his energies to preparing for the defence. The morning appointed for the trial came. It was a showery day. Gloom and sunshine changed and counterchanged a dozen times, as the young maiden trod the quiet streets near the prison-walls, awaiting the hour when the court should open. It was an anxious moment when she stood in presence of the judge, and heard her brother's name called, and watched the door through which she knew that he would come. Many eyes beheld her—not all, alas! eyes of compassion—standing in the dusty bar of sunlight that came through the high arched window. Roche calmly arranged his papers without looking towards her, and the faint shriek that she uttered when her brother appeared, after all that long, dark winter, seemed to have caught all ears save his. But the young Barrister, though seeming to be wrapt in thought, lost nothing of what passed—not even the impression that her beauty made upon some persons present. Though the evidence against the youth was too clear to be doubted, Roche dwelt strongly upon his youth, and the misfortunes his family had already suffered, and told, in simple and affecting language, the story of the sister's struggles. The effect of the appeal upon an Irish jury was the acquittal of the prisoner; who, after a solemn warning from the judge of the danger of being ever again accused, left the court with his sister, and the friend to whom he owed his life.

The impression of that trial, and of his interesting client was not easily to be effaced from the mind of Roche. Her frequent visits, her importunities, which at times had almost vexed him, her fluctuating hopes and fears, he now began to miss, as pleasing excitements which had passed away in the attainment of their object.—He corresponded with Ellen Howley at intervals; and, delighted by the womanly sense and tenderness of her letters, he soon became aware of his attachment for her. A journey to Wexford—though only sixty miles distant from the capital—was not a slight matter then, and a year and a half elapsed before he was enabled to quit his duties and pay a visit to the Howleys.

It was on a rainy day in a rainy autumn that Roche arrived in Wexford. A shrill wind blew from seaward, driving on the moist, heavy clouds. Traces of the late conflict were still visible in the streets; and the sullen manner of the common people with whom he came in contact, indicated their suspicions of a stranger.—But when he inquired at the inn for the residence of the Howleys, the son of the landlord sprang forward, and eagerly offered to show him the way.

Kilowen, where the Howleys resided, was at a distance of three miles from the town. The way lay down a cross country road in the neighbourhood of the sea coast; a lane, partly through an enclosed plantation overgrown with rank shrubs, conducted to the house. Not a single cottage, or even hut, did they pass, except, once or twice, the ruined walls of a house, wrecked, as Roche's guide told him, by the royalist yeomanry, after the recapture of the town. The residence of the Howleys was a large red brick mansion, by no means old or dilapidated; but the railing that surrounded the shrubbery had been torn out for pikes, leaving squares holes, in which the rain had accumulated, along the top of the parapet wall.—The grounds around the house were extensive, consisting of shrubberies, paddock, and plantations of young fir. There was a kind of porter's lodge beside the rusty iron gate; but its shutters were closed, and its door was nailed up.—Grass grew upon the soil; dry dust lay thick upon the threshold; and the drops of rain and the withered leaves that fell with every movement of the wind, were fast rotting away the wooden roof.

In this desolate and solitary spot, Roche remained two months with the Howleys. The rebellion had left Ellen no relative except her brother. The serving-man, who had lived in the lodge, had also lost his life in the insurrection, and his place had never been filled up.—The brother and sister, and an old woman-servant, now formed the whole household. Owing to the political troubles of the country, the land belonging to them was then in part uncultivated; but the brother collected such rents as could be recovered, and the Howleys, though impoverished, were still in easy circumstances. Roche accompanied the brother in fishing or shooting excursions on the banks of the Slaney, during which the latter frequently spoke of po-

litical matters, and hinted that the rebellion might again break out before long; but Roche, who had no sympathy with the insurrectionists, always turned aside the conversation, or spoke to him of what his family had already suffered, and warned him of his imprudence in approaching such matters. Robert was of a gay, reckless disposition; but the sister was the same subdued thoughtful creature. The sad and solitary spirit of the place seemed to centre in her. Roche remarked, at first with surprise, that no visitors came there; but he soon grew accustomed to their lonely life, and began to feel a pleasure in it. It was pleasant, sitting beside her in the long evenings, to fancy that he had abandoned for ever the strife and anxiety of his profession, and even the ambitious hopes which had made his labours light to him, to live with them in that quiet home, which had outlived the storms of 'ninety-eight.

Roche's visit to Killowen naturally increased his affection for the young lady. When the day of his departure drew near, he frankly told her his circumstances, and solicited her hand. She set before him, like a noble girl, the injury that might result to him in his profession from alliance with a family considered as rebels by the government; she reminded him that her brother was rash and hot-headed, and that their troubles possibly might not yet be over; she prevailed upon him at last, to postpone the marriage for a twelvemonth. On this arrangement, made with the approval of her brother, and on the understanding that he was to return at that season on the following year, Roche bade her farewell, and returned to Dublin to follow his profession.

The appointment twelve months had nearly passed away, when one of those minor outbreaks which, for many years, followed at intervals the suppression of the Great Rebellion, again involved the Howley family in trouble. On the twelfth of July (the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne), a party of the society of Orangemen, which had grown bolder than ever since the triumph of the loyalists, assembled in the town of Wexford, and marched across the bridge and through the principal streets in procession, carrying banners inscribed with mottoes offensive to the Catholics, and preceded by musicians playing 'Croppies lie down,' and other tunes known to be irritating to them. The Ribbonmen remained in-doors; but it was whispered about that it was intended to light bonfires in the streets at night, and to burn in effigy some of the favorite leaders of the United Irishmen, who had suffered for their treason; and it soon became known that a riot would take place. The Orangemen, who have since been found to be so mischievous a body, were, in those days of party warfare, openly encouraged by the authorities, and looked upon as a useful barrier against the revolutionary spirit of the common people. No pains, therefore, were taken to stop their proceedings, and several frays ensued, in which some lives were lost. One of these occurred in the market place, where a large fire had been made. The attacking party were at first beaten off, and the Orangemen's bonfire had sunk into a great heap of embers, glowing and rustling in the wind, when a man named Michael Foster, who was in the act of raking the fire with a pole, was shot by an unseen hand, and immediately fell forward on his face. A few persons who were standing near him (most of the Orangemen had already dispersed) fled at the report of the gun; before any of his own party returned there, the head, and a portion of the body, of the murdered man, were almost consumed by the fire.—There was then a dead wall on one side of the market-place, from an angle of which some persons pretended to have remarked that the shot was fired; however, in the hurry and bustle of that night the murderer escaped.

Outrages were committed on both sides; but so strong was the prejudice of the authorities in favour of the party who gave the provocation, that no Orangeman was apprehended, while a great number of Ribbonmen were taken, and lodged in prison; on the following day, a diligent search was made for others, who were known to have been connected with the affray. The murder of Michael Foster in the market place, made remarkable by the mystery attending it, and the horrible circumstance of the burning away of the head, was the subject of much investigation. Little doubt was entertained that the perpetrator had taken advantage of the riot, to commit an act of personal revenge. The conspicuousness of the victim, standing at the moment in the glare of the red embers, had no doubt enabled the murderer to take aim. That it was the act of one man, and that the man was satisfied with the result, was concluded from the circumstance that the gun was only fired once, and that the assassin or his party did not rush forward, as was the invariable practice of the Irish in an affray.

Suspicion, casting about for some person known to have a plausible motive for the crime, was not long in finding a victim. It was remembered that the murdered man had been a witness against young Howley on his trial; he was moreover, said to have openly boasted of having with his own hand cut down the father, at the fight at Vinegar Hill. This clue was at once seized, and, on the night following the Orange riot, young Howley was arrested, and conveyed to the jail at Wexford.

Evidence, true or false, was quickly procured

against him. One of the Orange party now came forward, and (for the first time) stated that as he stood near the angle of the dead wall on the night of the murder, he heard a voice, which he immediately recognised as that of Howley, exclaiming, "By the Holy Ghost, I'll make a hole through that villain!" Immediately after which, he heard the report of a gun, and fearing that there were many armed men of the Ribbon party at hand, fled with others. Young Howley admitted that he was at Wexford that night, and that he carried his gun with him, but solemnly denied that he was the murderer of Foster; declaring that he had never heard of his boast of having slain his father until that moment, and that he did not believe it. Nor could any witness now be found who had ever heard of such a boast. But the magistrates committed him; a special commission was appointed; and, for the second time, young Howley was to be tried for his life.

On the day of her brother's apprehension, Ellen Howley had written to her lover the intelligence of her new troubles, and again imploring that assistance which had already served to rescue him from a violent death. But the difficulty was now greater than before. The trial was to take place at Wexford, instead of at Dublin; and the inhabitants of that town were strongly against the rioters. Roche knew that it would be extremely dangerous to the prisoner if he were to plead his cause a second time. He therefore secretly instructed a barrister who was a warm friend of his, besides being a Protestant and a strong government man, to proceed to Wexford and conduct the defence. The day of trial arrived, and Howley's counsel would probably have succeeded in neutralizing the feeble testimony against his client, but for a circumstance which, though probably intended to save him, was undoubtedly the cause of his destruction. On his way to the court-house to give evidence on the trial, the principal witness against Howley was fired at from a plantation beside the roadway, and wounded in the arm: The ball passed through the flesh, without breaking the bones, and the man, after having the wound dressed, persisted in presenting himself at court to give his evidence.

The appearance of this fanatic, who, whether speaking truth or falsehood, had wrought himself to a belief in his own statement, created a deep impression upon the audience. His pallid countenance, his arm in a sling, his narrative of the attack upon him by a secret assassin, presumed to be a friend of the accused, and his statement—not to be shaken—of the words used by Howley, decided the minds of the jury.—The eloquent appeal of his counsel was often interrupted by murmurs in the court; and the young man was found guilty, and sentenced to death. (To be continued.)

From Tait's Magazine for March.

An article called "The great Debate," will at the present time be pursued with intense curiosity, turning as it does upon the personal appearances, characteristics, manners, &c., of several of the principal debaters on Mr Roebuck's famous motion for a committee to inquire into the mismanagement of the war. The writer of this paper has evidently perfectly at home in the gallery of the House of Commons. He thus describes:—

THE APPEARANCE OF THE HOUSE.

Half past four comes; but the debate has not commenced, though the House is well filled, and every part where the strangers can gather together, is crowded. Lord John Russell has an explanation to make, and the Speaker names him. Immediately his lordship rises—if possible, looking smaller than usual, and evidently in a position which he does not enjoy. He does not speak from the spot where in times past it has been his "the applause of listening senates to command," but from three benches higher up, whereon do congregate what the late Sir Robert Peel was accustomed to term "pure old Whigs." There Sir George Grey, through two dreary sessions, mourned his absence from office—there Lord Seymour mourns it still. The house is silent and attentive; even Sir W. Molesworth for once is wide awake, and Sir C. Wood has a serious air, ill in keeping with his usual flippant style. Of Lord John himself, I feel inclined to say with Tennyson, that his "cheek is paler than should be in one so young." And that the hems and haws, and draws and hesitates, a little more than is his wont. He is dressed in black. One scarcely knows which spreads most his arms or his sentences. It is very clear, that if Lord John Russell ever took lessons of an elocution master, the money was thrown away, and few pert youths in our discussion classes and debating clubs could clothe their ideas in a more slovenly manner. At any rate so far as pronunciation is concerned, compared with them the most illustrious of the Whigs would be nowhere; yet for many a stirring year that feeble little man has led the Liberal party in the house—has been England's Premier, and has ruled the destinies of the world; and now, is he not making another bid for office, leaving the sinking ship with a view to a better berth elsewhere? Evidently the house thinks so; and the Opposition when he sits down, at any rate, cheer him with a will. Palmerston—erect and vigorous as if he had never known the wear and tear of seventy summers—rises and replies. Of course, the house laughs. Palmerston is sup-