

POETRY.

THE BETTER LAND.

BY MRS. NEMANS.

"I hear thee sing of the Better Land,
Thou call'st its children a happy band;
Mother! oh, where is that radiant shore?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fire-flies glance through the myrtle boughs?"
" Not there, not there my child!"

"Is it where the feathery palm trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies?
Or 'midst the green island of glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
And strange bright birds, on their starry wings,
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things?"
" Not there, not there my child!"

"Is it far away, in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold?
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand—
Is it there, sweet mother, that better land?"
" Not there, not there my child!"

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy!
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair—
Sorrow and death may not enter there;
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom,
Far beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
It is there, it is there my child!"

From the Boston Columbian Centinel.

THE GREEKS.

The New-Haven Lt. Inf. Band have raised
Eighty Dollars for the Greeks by a Concert.
The following beautiful original Song by PERCIVAL
was sung on the occasion:—

SONG. TUNE—Bruce's Address.

Rouse ye, at a nation's call—
Rouse and rescue, one and all—
Help, or Liberty shall fall—
Fall in blood and shame.

Shame to him, who coldly draws
Backward from the noblest cause—
Not to him, who fights and falls—
His a glorious name.

Sons of more than mortal sires—
They have lit again their fires,
Or to be their funeral pyres,
Or their sun of fame.

Hear ye not the widow's cry?
" Help us, or we faint and die—
See! the murderous foe is nigh—
Hark! the wasting flame.

Wither can we fly for aid?
Where is now the warrior's blade?
Low the mighty heart is laid,
Death alone could tame.

To the mountain—to the cave,
Let us fly and weep the brave—
Better die than live a slave—
Better death than shame."

O forbid it chosen land!
Open wide the helping hand—
Four thy corn and wine like sand—
What is wealth to fame.

Quick! before the flame expire—
Feed—O! feed the holy fire—
Feed—and it shall kindle higher—
Win a glorious name.

BIOGRAPHY.

CHARACTER OF THE DUKE OF YORK.

(BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.)

In the person of His Royal Highness the Duke of York we may justly say, in the language of Scripture, "there has fallen this day in our Israel, a Prince and a great man." He has from an early period of his manhood, performed a most important part in public life. In the early wars of the French Revolution, he commanded the British Forces on the Continent, and although we claim not for his memory the admiration due to the rare and high gifts which in our latter times must combine to form a military genius of the first order, yet it has never been disputed that in the field His Royal Highness displayed intelligence,

military skill, and his family attribute—the most unalterable courage. He had also the universal testimony of the army for his efforts to lessen the distress of the privates, during the horrors of an unsuccessful campaign, in which he acquired, and kept to his death, the epithet of the Soldier's friend.

But it is not on account of these early services that we now, as boldly as our poor voice may, venture to bring forward the late Duke of York's claims to the perpetual gratitude of his country. It is as the reformer and regenerator of the British Army, which he brought from a state nearly allied to general contempt, to such a pitch of excellence, that we may, without much hesitation, claim for them an equality with, if not a superiority over, any troops in Europe. The Duke of York had the firmness to look into and examine the causes, which, ever since the American war, though arising out of circumstances existing long before, had gone as far to destroy the character of the British Army, as the naturally good materials of which it is composed, would permit. The heart must have been bold that did not despair at the sight of such an Augean stable.

In the first place, our system of purchasing commissions—itsself an evil in a military point of view, and yet indispensable to the freedom of the country—had been stretched so far as to open the way of every sort of abuse. No science was required, no service, no previous experience whatsoever; the boy let loose from school the last week, might in the course of a month be a field officer, if his friends were disposed to be liberal of money and influence. Others there were, against whom there could be no complaint for want of length of service, although it might be difficult to see how their experience was improved by it. It was no uncommon thing for a commission to be obtained for a child in the cradle; and when he came from College, the fortunate youth was at least lieutenant of some standing, by dint of fair promotion. To sum up this catalogue of abuses, commissions were in some instances, bestowed on young ladies, when pensions could not be had. We know ourselves one fair dame who drew the pay of Captain in the Dragoons, and was probably not much less fit for the service than some who, at that period actually did duty; for, as we have said no knowledge of any kind was demanded from the young officers. If they desired to improve themselves in the elemental parts of their profession, there were no means open, either of direction or instruction. But as a zeal for knowledge rarely exists where its attainment brings no credit or advantage, the gay young men who adopted the military profession, were easily led into the fashion of thinking, that it was pedantry to be master even of the routine of the exercise they were obliged to perform. An intelligent sergeant whispered from time to time the word of command, which his Captain would have been ashamed to have known without prompting, and thus the duty of the field day was huddled over, rather than performed. It was natural, under such circumstances, that the pleasures of the mess, or of the card or billiard table, should occupy too much of the leisure of those who had so few duties to perform. And that extravagance, with all its disreputable consequences, should be the characteristic of many, while others despairing of promotion, which could only be acquired by money or influence, sunk into mere machines, performing without hope or heart, a task which they had learned by rote.

To this state of things, by a succession of well-considered and effectual regulations, the Duke of York put a stop with a firm and gentle hand. Terms of service were fixed for every rank, and neither influence nor money was permitted to force any individual

forward, until he had served the necessary time in the present grade which he held. No rank short of that of the Duke of York—no courage and determination inferior to that of His Royal Highness, could have accomplished a change so important to the service, but which was yet so unfavourable to the wealthy and to the powerful, whose children and proteges had formerly found a brief way to promotion. Thus a protection was afforded to those officers who could only hope to rise by merit and length of service, while at the same time, the young aspirant was compelled to discharge the duties of a subaltern, before attaining the higher commissions.

In other respects, the firmness of the Commander in Chief was found to have the same gradual and meliorating influence. The vicissitudes of real service, and the emergencies to which individuals are exposed, began to render ignorance unfashionable, as it was speedily found that mere valour, however fiery, was unable on such occasions for the extrication of those engaged in them; and that they who knew their duty and discharged it, were not only most secure of victory and safety in action, but most distinguished at head-quarters, and most certain of promotion. Thus a taste for studying mathematics, and calculations applicable to war, was gradually introduced into the army, and carried by some officers to a great length, while a perfect acquaintance with the routine of the field day was positively demanded from every officer in the service, as an indispensable qualification.

His Royal Highness also introduced a species of moral discipline among the officers of our army, which has had the highest consequences on their character. Persons of the old school of Captain Plume and Captain Brazen, men who swore hard, drank deep, bilked tradesmen, and plucked pigeons, were no longer allowed to arrogate a character which they could only support by deep oaths and ready swords. If a tradesman, whose bill was unpaid by an officer, thought proper to apply to the Horse Guards, the debtor received a letter from head quarters requiring to know if there existed any objections to the account, and failing in rendering a satisfactory answer, he was put on stoppages until the creditor's demand was satisfied. Repeated applications of this kind might endanger the officer's commission, which was then sold for the payment of his creditors. Other moral delinquencies were at the same time adverted to; and without maintaining an inquisitorial strictness over the officers, or taking too close inspection of the mere gaieties and follies of youth, a complaint of any kind, implying a departure from the character of a gentleman and a man of honour, was instantly inquired into by the Commander in Chief, and the delinquent censured or punished, as the case seemed to require. The army was thus like a family under protection of an indulgent father, who, willing to promote merit, checks, with a timely frown, the temptations to licence and extravagance. The private soldiers equally engaged the attention of His Royal Highness. In the course of his superintendance of the army, a military dress, the most absurd in Europe, was altered for one easy and comfortable for the men, and suitable to the hardships they are exposed to in actual service. The severe and vexatious rules exacted about the tying of hair, and other trifling punctilios, (which had been some times known to goad troops into mutiny), were abolished, strict cleanliness was substituted for a Hottentot head-dress of tallow and flour. The pay of the soldier was augmented, while care was at the same time taken, that it should, as far as possible, be expended in bettering his food, and extending his comforts. The slightest

complaint on the part of a private sentinel, was as regularly inquired into, as if it had been preferred by a General Officer. Lastly, the use of the cane (a brutal practice, which our officers borrowed from the German) was entirely prohibited, and regular corporal punishments, by the sentence of a Court Martial, have been gradually diminished.

If therefore, we find in the modern British officer more information, a more regular course of study, a deeper acquaintance with the principles of his profession, and a greater love for its exertions—if we find the private sentinel discharge his duty with a mind unembittered by petty vexations and regimental exactions, conscious of immunity from capricious violence, and knowing where to appeal if he sustains injury—if we find in all ranks of the army a love of their profession, and a capacity of matching themselves with the finest troops which Europe ever produced,—to the memory of His Royal Highness the Duke of York, we owe this change from the state of the forces thirty years since.

The means of improving the tactics of the British army did not escape His Royal Highness's sedulous care and attention. Formerly every commanding officer manoeuvred his regiment after his own fashion; and if a brigade of troops were brought together, it was very doubtful where they could execute any one combined movements, and almost certain that they could not execute the various parts of it on the same principle. This was remedied by the system of regulations compiled by the late Sir David Dundas, and which obtained the sanction and the countenance of His Royal Highness. This one circumstance, of giving an uniform principle and mode of working to the different bodies, which are, after all, but parts of the same great machine, was in itself one of the most distinguished services which could be rendered to a national army, and it is only surprising that, before it was introduced, the British army was able to execute any combined movements at all.

We can but notice the Duke of York's establishment near Chelsea for the orphans of soldiers, the cleanliness, and discipline of which is a model for such institutions; and the Royal Military School, or College, at Sandhurst, where every species of scientific instruction is afforded to those officers whom it is desirable to qualify for the service of the staff. The excellent officers who have been formed at this institution are the best pledge of what is due to its founder.—Again we repeat, that if the British soldier meets his foreign adversary, not only with equal courage, but with equal readiness and facility of manœuvre; if the British officer brings against his scientific antagonist, not only his own good heart and hand, but an improved and enlightened knowledge of his profession, to the memory of the Duke of York the army and the country owe them. (To be concluded next week.)

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