

Poetry.

SCENE IN A DALECARLIAN MINE.

BY MRS. HERMAN.

"Haste, with your torches, haste! make firelight round!"
 —They speed, they press—what hath the miners found?
 Relic or treasure, giant sword of old?
 Gems bedded deep, rich veins of burning gold?
 —Not so—the dead! An awe-struck band,
 In silence gathering round the silent stand,
 Chained by one feeling, hushing e'en their breath,
 Before the thing that, in the night of death,
 Fearful, yet beautiful, amidst them lay—
 A sleeper, dreaming not!—a youth with hair
 Making a sunny gleam (how sadly fair!)
 O'er his cold brow: no shadow of decay
 Had touched those pale bright features—yet he were
 A mien of other days, a garb of yore.
 Who could unfold that mystery? From the throng
 A woman wildly broke; her eye was dim,
 As if through many tears, through vigils long,
 Through weary strainings:—all had been for him!
 Those two had loved! And there he lay, the dead,
 In his youth's flower—and she, the living, stood
 With her grey hair, whence hue and gloss had fled—
 And wasted form, and cheek, whose flushing blood
 Had long since ebb'd:—a meeting sad and strange!
 —Oh! are not meetings in this world of change
 Sadder than partings oft? She stood there, still,
 And mute, and gazing, all her soul to fill
 With the loved face once more—the young, fair face,
 'Midst that rude cavern touched with sculpture's grace,
 By torchlight and by death:—until, at last,
 From her deep heart the spirit of the past,
 Gushed in low broken tones:—"And thou art I
 And thus we meet, that loved, and did but part
 As for a few brief hours!—My friend, my friend!
 First-love, and only one! Is this the end
 Of hope deferred, youth blighted? Yet thy brow
 Still wears its own proud beauty, and thy cheek
 Smiles—how unchanged!—while I, the worn, and weak
 And faded—oh! thou wouldst but scorn me now,
 If thou couldst look on me!—a withered leaf,
 Seared—though for thy sake—by the blast of grief!
 —Better to see thee thus:—for thou didst go,
 Bearing my image on thy heart, I know,
 Unto the dead. My Ulric! through the night
 How I have called thee!—with the morning light
 How have I watched for thee!—wept, wandered, prayed,
 Met the fierce mountain-torrent, undismayed,
 In search of the!—bound my worn life to one,
 One torturing hope!—Now let me die!—'tis gone!
 Take thy betrothed!"—And on his breast she fell.
 —Oh! since their youth's last passionate farewell,
 How changed in all but love!—the true, the strong—
 Joining in death whom life had parted long!
 —They had one grave—one lonely bridal bed—
 No friend, on kinsman there a tear to shed!
 His name had ceased—her heart outlived each tie,
 Once more to look on that dead face—and die!

[Salt mines are said to possess preservative qualities.]

THE EVENING HOUR.

This is the hour when Memory wakes
 Visions of joy that could not last!
 This is the hour when Fancy takes
 A survey of the past.

She brings before the pensive mind
 The hallow'd scenes of former years,
 And friends who long have been consign'd
 To silence and to tears.

The few we lik'd, the ones we lov'd—
 A sacred band come stealing o'er,
 And many a form far hence remov'd,
 And pleasures now no more.

Friendships that long in death are hush'd,
 And young affection's broken chain,
 And hopes that fate too quickly crush'd—
 In memory live again.

Few watch the fading gleams of day
 But muse o'er joys as quickly flown;
 Till after tint they die away,
 Till all at last are gone.

This is the hour when Fancy wreathes
 A spell round joys that could not last;
 This is the hour when Memory breathes
 A sigh to pleasures past.

Miscellaneous.

PROPHECYING.

On the Comet of 1832, which some predict is to destroy our Earth.

Some German Journals predict the appearance of a comet in 1832, which must destroy our Globe, and this has been copied and commented on by the journalists of other countries. In a letter dated May 12, 1828, addressed to the French Academy of Sciences, the author, M. G***, a professor in Paris, ventures to put the question to the Academy, whether it does not consider itself bound in duty to refute as speedily as possible this ridiculous assertion. "Popular errors," he observes, "are productive of serious conse-

quences." Several members of the Academy may still remember the accidents and disorders which followed a similar threat, imprudently communicated to the Académie des Sciences, by M. de Lalande, in May, 1773. The announcement of the comet of 1832 may produce similar effects, unless the authority of the Academy applies a prompt remedy, and this salutary intervention is at this moment implored by many benevolent persons." As it is extremely probable that the Academy will make no reply to this letter, we shall here enter into some details which will show how destitute of foundation these popular errors are, which M. G*** dreads. The comet which is to appear in 1832, is the comet of six years and three quarters of which the orbit was calculated in France, by one of the most distinguished astronomers, M. Damoiseau, member of the Académie des Sciences. All that has been said in Germany respecting this comet, is founded on the results obtained at Paris. Now, these results are so far from being terrifying, that they do not even leave the smallest possibility of an accident. The comet of 1832, in its shortest distance from the earth, will remain more than sixteen millions of leagues from it. It might come a thousand times nearer before any danger could be apprehended. In 1770, a comet came so near as 750,000 leagues (about nine times nearer than the moon.) Lalande estimates the distance at which a comet might produce sensible effects upon the earth, at 13,000 leagues. Whence, then, comes the error of the journalists, of whom the author of the letter speaks? Without doubt, solely from the circumstance, that the comet in question will pass very near the earth's orbit (14 diameters, from 13 to 14,000 leagues); so that, in fact, were the earth to be at the same time in the part of its orbit nearest the comet, some alarming disturbance might ensue. It is unnecessary to say, that so gross a misapprehension as that which we have just pointed out, was not committed by any astronomer. The only respectable publication in Germany on the subject, is a letter of M. Olbers, in which that astronomer gives an account of the result obtained by M. Damoiseau; and it is without doubt, because ignorant persons have seen in this letter that a comet will approach very near the earth in 1832, that they persuaded themselves of it collision with the earth. M. G***'s letter contains an assertion with reference to Lalande, which we think it our duty to refute.—That astronomer was but the very innocent cause of the great terror which pervaded the public mind in 1773. The following is the real cause: Newton, in speaking of the consequences that might result from a comet's coming in contact with the earth, had said that Providence had so arranged as to render such a collision impossible. Lalande thought differently. No orbit, it was true, was known to interfere with that of the earth; but the orbits might be sensibly altered by the planetary attractions. Besides, the orbits of all the comets were very far from being known. Was it not rash to pronounce it certain, that none of the orbits hitherto not calculated, could come into contact with that of the earth, and that, of those known, none could ever be disarranged, so as to intersect it. There was nothing but what was very just in these remarks. Time has confirmed them, since the orbit of the comet of six years and three quarters passes so near that of the earth, that the smallest disturbance might cause their intersection. But before a disaster could happen, it would not only be necessary that the orbits should meet, but also that the bodies themselves should happen to be at the point of intersection, and the probabilities of such a concurrence are infinitely small. This was M. Lalande's opinion. He drew up a memoir on the subject for a public meeting of the academy; but happening to be last in the order of readers, the time passed away, and it was not read. The title, *Reflexions sur les comètes qui peuvent approcher de la terre*, announced a subject calculated to interest the greater number of hearers. It was asked what the memoir contained? and the answer was that it contained an account of the effect which a comet striking the earth might produce. A noise went abroad that the comet was to come, and that it was predicted by Lalande.

Maupertius, in his letters on the same subject, spoke in a much more positive and terrifying manner, and yet nobody took notice of them; but Maupertius was not positively known as an astronomer; he had not made almanacks; he had not the power of inserting in the journals accounts of all the astronomical phenomena. The alarm excited by this alleged prediction was so general, that the Lieutenant of the Police wished to see the memoir, and he found nothing in it to authorise the terrors that had arisen, and ordered its speedy publication. When it was printed, nobody would believe it. It was pretended that the author had suppressed the fatal prediction, not to terrify by the announcement of a catastrophe from which he had no means of withdrawing himself. The same terrors were renewed at various epochs, but with less violence, and the blame was always laid on Lalande, who had not said a single word on the subject. At the present day comets are not so general an object of terror. In proportion as the mass of the population becomes more enlightened, superstitious terrors of all kinds are less to be dreaded. The conjunctions of the planets, which were formerly the cause of much more violent, and still more unreasonable fears; the eclipses, which so long divided with comets the right of terrifying the nations on earth, have been discovered to be incapable of producing any of the effects that were attributed to them. Of all these terrors, there only remains, with respect to the comets, a possibility so extremely uncertain, that no rational person could conceive any apprehension on the subject. One thing which we must not omit to mention, with respect to comets, is, that the new data obtained respecting their constitution are of such a nature as to modify, in a great degree, the ideas suggested by the possible occurrence of accidents resulting from their striking against the earth. These bodies, in fact, which were supposed to have a density many thousands of times greater than the earth, are in general of such slight materials that stars of the first and second magnitude may be seen through them. The rapidity

of their motions is another circumstance calculated to afford assurance against the disasters which they might occasion, since their results from it, during the time which they might act upon us, would necessarily be very short and would never exceed two or three hours, as Dionis Dusegour, M. D. has demonstrated.

From the New-York Journal of Commerce.

In all ages of the world there have existed individuals who seemed to have delighted in the agitation of the fears of mankind. The present prediction is by no means an original one. The superstitions of past generations have often been inflamed by similar foreshadowings; and the approach of a comet, especially, has always afforded to croakers and fanatics a most eligible chance for the display of their frightful astrology. We have a long catalogue of these forebodings and attempted delusions at hand, which we might quote by way of illustration; but for the present will cite only the following, for which history furnishes indubitable vouchers:

In the year 1761 two men at Cologne having reported that they had just arrived from Damascus, were visited by the Jesuits of the former place, with whom they conversed in the Hebrew, Chaldaic, Greek and Latin Languages. They came, as they affirmed, by Order of Heaven, to call men to repentance; and stated themselves to be prophets and only 700 years of age. They predicted among other things, the destruction of Constantinople in 1766; the inundation of all England, in 1769; an earthquake throughout the globe 1770; the fall of the sun, moon and stars, in 1771; the conflagration of the whole earth in 1772—and finally, the general judgment in 1773. We believe they proceeded no further in their predictions.

Whiston, the Mathematician, predicted, not the destruction of the Earth, but the actual advance of the millennium at a period he chanced nevertheless to survive. During its fancied approach however, he endeavoured to lease an estate for thirty years to a friend. 'How can you, Mr. Whiston,' said his friend, 'thus endeavour to impose upon me, when you know, that, in less than half that time all men's property will be in common; and no man's estate worth sixpence?'

John Stofferus, a learned man, who flourished in the 16th century in Suabia, predicted a terrible deluge in 1524, which alarmed all Europe. He was seconded by the astrologers of the day, and all sort of expedients were contrived in order to evade the menaced calamity. People who dwelt near the sea shore sold their estates at great loss; inspectors were sent to survey grounds in the provinces to which men or beasts might resort to escape the inundation; and books were published pointing out the most feasible methods of avoiding the catastrophe. The panic raged violently in France, inasmuch that some persons grew distracted—some built high arches as a means of deliverance—and M. Auriol, a magistrate of Toulon, actually erected four high pillars with a boat on the summit. But the obstinate continuance of dry weather chagrined the prophets amazingly.—Nevertheless Stofferus persisted in his prediction, the fulfilment of which he merely postponed to the year 1536.

In the same century, a Lutheran divine foretold the "end of the world," which was to happen in 1533. On the day appointed, while he was preaching, a sudden tempest arose, during the raging of which his hearers remained perfectly quiet, having all faith in the prophecy. But as the storm subsided, quite disappointed in their expectations, they tore the preacher from his desk, and gave him an unmerciful flagellation for his mistake.

Countless soothsayers of this description have at different periods endeavoured to disturb the peace of the world by foretelling its sudden ruin. Among them one George Bell, a religious enthusiast, about half a century since, pretended to foresee the end of the world: but having retracted before the time arrived, people allowed their fears to subside. Lord Napier, the ingenious inventor of the logarithms, suffered himself to be affected by a similar delusion, and also foretold the end of the world at a certain date—which period, however, he, unfortunately, happened to outlive.

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D. B. SHELTON.

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