

POETRY.

[FOR THE COURIER.]

REFLECTIONS ON A HUMAN SKULL.

Cast up in digging a grave—and supposed to have been buried a century ago—

Is this the dwelling of a human soul?

Man's graceful structure's proud & lofty dome?

The beautiful attire of his rich or poor?

Where erst a sage reason made his transient home?

Now torn as vilest dust beside the grave,

For slumy worms a dark and lonesome cave.

To whom, dread relic, didst thou once belong?

What rank, or grade, or class, or rich or poor?

Among earth's bustling, multitudinous throng,

That bustling throng, ah! living now no more?

Wast thou to live in riches, or in want?

Or doom'd to bear their proud and withering scorn?

Didst thou on high, in power and office stand?

Did stern authority sit on thy brow?

Where now the frown which follow'd thy command?

When waiting servants did not quickly bow?

"Tis fled away, as clouds at morning's breath,

Before the rigid, grim, cold frown of death.

Mystic shell, though now in ruin laid,

Thou'rt still by folly's foot from place to place,

Thou'rt still the worthless from the sexton's spade,

And 'neath thy ev'ry sense and charming grace?

Yet in decay, dost thou no riches bear?

Undevelop'd proof of heaven's transcendent care?

But what this skull, compar'd to life and light,

Thou empty mockery dost make while enshrin'd—

Now dark and gloomy as the vault of night,

When light's bright orb no longer rolls and glows?

While depths dark shadows spread their horrors

Impending dread, and terror, and despair.

Concentrated once in this forsaken shell,

Did the fine nerves and wondrous sense meet?

Each had its functions and its curious cell,

Close by superior reason's higher seat?

For these, alas! perishing o'er all—

The understanding kept its judgment hall.

Were war or love's anxious chief delight?

Where now the eye, whose fierce and fiery glance

Was drest as lightning in the sanguine fight?

In love as bright and keen as polished lance,

Which could extend its sight to worlds afar,

'Tis quenched in darkness like a fallen star.

Where now the curious organs of the ear?

Where judgment erst his full of audience held,

That harp which could excite a smile or tear,

According to the tones which on it swell'd?

Responding to a whisper, or the thunder—

'Tis stringless now, and mute, and rent and sour.

Where now the faculty which once could smell

The different odors, various things disclose?

The nerves olfactory with ease could tell

Urean, the sweet carnation from the rose;

Is pleasure's salt—antipathies forgot—

Corruption's putrid stench offends it not.

Where now the dainty palate's squeamish power,

With skill untaught, though distinctly pang,

That skillful judge of bitter, sweet, and sour?

'Tis tasteless now—no allspleased palate—

That it like the honey and the gall.

Where the eloquent spokesman, termed the tongue,

Herald of truth, or falsehood's common cry?

Where stern rebuke or soft persuasion hung,

Whose word could kindle war or wild desire?

Where now its music—where its eloquence?

In silent ruin with the powers of sense.

Where is the brain—throne of the conscious soul?

That master-piece of heavenly art and skill;

Where reason sat beneath her "golden bowl,"

Attended by the judgment and the will;

Where is the closet where her records stood?

Those chronicles of evil and of good.

Where is the memory's museum—where

Her picture gallery; where she survey'd

Past scenes sublime and beautiful and fair,

In their just form and colour, light and shade?

Which when review'd, awoke alike delight,

Those scenes excited when before the sight.

Where is the tablet, so minutely small,

No anatomical research could find;

Where memory engrav'd at pleasure, all

The various knowledge she would keep in mind;

With tones of ancient lore and modern thought,

Fancy's creations and the works of thought.

Where is imagination's painting room?

Where she portray'd to the astonished mind,

Ideal worlds in rich Elysian bloom and air,

Or horrid shapes of dark infernal kind?

The source which yields the inner's strangest views?

The strangest scenes to the fastidious muse?

Where is the shadowy enchanted cell,

Where she convers'd with unsubstantial things?

When sleep had exercised her magic spell,

And busy fancy sped her fiery wings;

Where the bewilder'd spirit might behold

Rivers of wine and hills of burning gold?

But where, oh! where, is the ejected soul?

For whose chief use these organs were design'd?

Do clouds of Stygian darkness round her roll?

Or in the bowels of earth is she still?

Waiting with pleasing hope, or trembling dread,

The solemn day when God shall raise the dead!

For her remembrances are not effaced—

Never did conscious spirit in her flight,

Forget the records, (in a thoughtless haste,) of moral actions, whether wrong or right;

But took them hence, when from the body driven, As passports of her way to hell or heaven.

Fair birds of Paradise, if here below,

Thy wings were fledg'd with christian piety,

How blest in having left this vale of woe,

For heights of perfect life and liberty—

In having burst this shell of mortal right,

To soar and sing in skies of endless light.

But haply I behold the poor remains,

Of some vain female's head and face;

Whose chief delight and pleasure were the pains

She took 't improve each fair exterior grace;

Who let her precious moments idly pass,

Between the toilet and her looking glass.

Oh, what a spoiler is the monster death!

When once he hurls his life-destroying dart,

Not only does he stop the fleeting breath,

But every grace and beauty straight depart—

All flesh is grass," however fair it be;

How strikes this truth while I survey its doom.

Haply from that bald crown, the ringlets flow'd—

O'er that blank forehead, signs of pleasure spread—

In those dark sockets sparkling eye-balls glow'd—

On that grim chap net lips of ruby red—

That broken ridge once bore a graceful nose,

Dividing cheeks might match the damask rose.

But ah! they're gone, corrupted and decay'd,

And haply wouldst be 't admiring through'd,

Through sculptured models, the poet's song—

All that remains of man, or maid, or wife,

This skull which shows the vanity of life.

Hunters of wealth and fame and pleasure come—

Beauty's possessors, and admirers cease—

This necked horse—behold your future home;

And learn a lesson from mortality!

To seek a house, a portion, and a joy,

Which pain can not disturb, nor death destroy?

For death shall shortly blend you with the dust—

When of its life you have been timely wise,

You may lie down in peace and undisturb'd;

That Christ shall once again descend the skies,

Whose quick'ning voices shall break death's ancient reign.

And you shall rise and join his bright triumphant train.

Saint John, March, 1833.

J. REDFERN.

WITHERED VIOLETS.

Long years have passed, pale flowers! since you

Were culled, and given, in brightest bloom,

By one whose eyes you once had seen,

Whose breath was like your own perfume.

Long years! but though the bloom be gone,

The fragrance of your memory lives on;

Survives, as memory lives, your freshness dead,

When all that blessed life has fled.

Thus hues and hopes will pass away—

Thus youth and bloom, and bliss depart;

Oh, what is left when these decay?

The faded leaf—the withered heart!

LEGISLATIVE DEBATES.

Fredericton, Monday, February 25.

The House then went into COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY; but no important debate arose on the appropriations brought forward. On Mr. Partelow's moving for the special grant of £400 to complete the road from St. John to Indian Town, as agreed to in the Report of the Road Committee.

Mr. Wier said, that it was a most enormous sum to give to that road. It was a great deal too much, after that which had been expended on it. He knew two gentlemen who had travelled over it last October, and who were of opinion that about £250 would be an ample provision for the rest of the work. The Province had already given £1600 to it, and it was really abominable to ask for any more.

Mr. Partelow said, he was quite astonished to hear the remarks of the hon. member. The whole affair had been unanimously settled, like all the rest, by the Road Committee, and it was a mere matter of form, after the report had been accepted, to pass the resolutions in committee of supply.

Mr. Weldon said, that the committee must be well satisfied of the great importance of this road; he (Mr. W.) had lately gone over it himself, and he thought it certainly would require about £400 to complete it. The road was very wide and well made; there were some very high and rocky hills cut through, and he could see no objection to the grant.

Mr. Chandler said the grant had been agreed to by the Road Committee; and though he (Mr. C.) regretted the expense of that road as much as any individual, yet, as reasons had been shown and allowed in committee for the grant, &c. as the report had been agreed to and accepted, he hoped it would be sustained.

Mr. S. Humbert said, that notwithstanding the large grants made for the road, it would, after all, cost the contractor £500.

Mr. Partelow confirmed Mr. S. Humbert's statement, and said, that the contractor had lately requested him (Mr. P.) to present a petition for him on the subject; but he had advised him not to press it, as a grant was agreed to by the Road Committee.

Mr. Slason observed, that this road was one of the most important in the Province; because, at certain seasons of the year, when the frosts were high, and no vessels could get through the falls at Indian Town, there was no other way of transporting goods and supplies for the country from St. John, but by carrying them on the road to the steamer, &c. at Indian Town. The road was well made, and had been a very great labour to bring it to its present state.

Mr. Wier asked whether the St. John members would ever ask for any more money for this road? Messrs. Partelow, Simonds, &c. replied in the negative, and the resolution was then agreed to.

Wednesday, March 6.

REVENUE BILL. The duty on foreign ozen was quietly reduced to 20s. per head; and that on Tobacco to £5 per cask. When the section respecting BARRIS Goums came up, Mr. Speaker briefly expressed his fears of the policy of the measure; and he said, that nothing but a conviction of its necessity, for the purpose of providing ways and means to meet the present expenses of the country, had induced him to vote for it.

Mr. Simonds energetically repeated the sentiments uttered by him on the subject, in debate in Committee of Ways and Means; and hoped the committee would be induced to strike out the section.

Mr. Wier supported Mr. Simonds' observations, and moved that the sections be struck out; which motion was seconded by Mr. Simonds.

Mr. Brown expressed his astonishment at the attempt to strike out the section, after the fact of the principle had been finally settled in a previous Committee; and he repeatedly intimated his opinion, as expressed in Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. Wier's motion was put, and negatived, 15 to 7; and the blank then filled with "£210s. per cent." The Committee then went *seriatim*, throughout a long list of *exceptions* to the tax; comprising articles for use in ship-building, the fisheries and agriculture, and books and publications; ensuing some and confirming the rest; after which, as the *taxing parts* of the bill were disposed of, the Chairman reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again.

Thursday, March 7.

J. Ambrose Street, Esquire, having first been duly qualified, took his seat as Member for the County of Northumberland, in the room of Joseph Curwad, Esquire, translated.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Mr. S. Humbert violently opposed the passing of the St. John Bye Road appropriations, on account of an insufficient allowance to certain parts of Loch Lomond. The hon. member contended that last year, when a re-appropriation was made of a sum of £80, formerly appropriated for the particular road, on the north side of the lake, to which he alluded, some specific understanding was entered into between him and the other hon. members for St. John, which had not been adhered to in making the present appropriations. This was distinctly denied by the other hon. members, who insisted that it would be silly to expend much money on the road alluded to, under present circumstances, and that the division of the money was fair and proper. The appropriations were passed.

ENGLISH EMIGRANTS.

Mr. Taylor moved for a sum of £ to be granted to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, for the relief of poor and distressed emigrants, in the Parishes of Douglas and Fredericton. The hon. member observed, that these were chiefly English Emigrants, who came out to this country last summer, and had principally been employed in making the royal road. They had now become a burden on the parishes of Douglas and Fredericton, not as paupers, because they had no claims as such, but as dependent entirely on the hand of charity. In September last, they made application for relief to the Commissioners of the Alms House; but the Commissioners could not possibly afford it to them. [The hon. member here read a letter from Thomas Baillie and G. F. Street, Esquires, to the Commissioners, and the reply of the Commissioners thereto.] It appeared that the number (men, women and children), now thus situated, was about 110; who were subsisting only by begging from door to door, and in fact, were almost starving. Their claim on the house was as great as that of any poor emigrants, and their case was one of such extreme hardship, as fully entitled them to the consideration of the committee. They must be supported through the winter in some way, and if the house did not afford any relief, they must remain a burden on a few charitable individuals.

Mr. Slason said that these poor people were actually in a state of starvation; they had no way of getting provisions, or fuel, or clothing, and he thought they had been deceived from their own country, where they were parish paupers, and induced to come out to this country; how, he could not say; but here they were, and must not be suffered to starve.

Mr. Speaker said, that though there might be no impropriety in making some provision, in such a case, yet he was not disposed to do so at present, or till further inquiry had been made. It was not like making provision for emigrants in support towns. There, some provision was absolutely necessary, for poor and distressed emigrants, on their first arrival, to assist them till they could get distributed through the country. But these people were very differently situated. They had been here some time, and had been employed on the royal road. If the reports abroad respecting that road were correct, some further information would be necessary, before passing this resolution. The committee must first know how these people had been induced to come to this country; how they had been employed, how paid, how they had lived and conducted themselves, &c. and till such information was obtained, he (Mr. Speaker) could not go for such a grant.

Mr. Slason said, that while such enquiries were making, the people would starve. They had nothing to eat or to keep them warm; and something should be done to relieve them. It would be extremely hard to put 110 or 120 of them on the little parish of Douglas.

Mr. Taylor perfectly agreed in the necessity of enquiring how the people came here, and how they had been treated, &c. But in the mean time, "while the grass grows," the *house starves*; and therefore, these poor people must be provided for in some way or other. Some temporary relief for the remainder of the winter season, was absolutely necessary; and perhaps in the spring they might be again employed. In the mean time, the necessary information might be acquired.

Mr. Simonds thought this case a very different one from any other. If the people were suffering, they ought to be relieved; but it was most extraordinary, that these people, as it appeared, had been brought out to this country by Mr. Baillie, and then thrown on the parish. This was another real grievance to

the country. This officer had brought out these people, to suit his own purposes, and after wantonly invading money on the royal road, they were turned on the parish. If that officer had conducted the affairs of his office as he ought, there would have been ample funds from the casual revenue, to support these poor people. If the expenses of that office had not been enormous, there would have been an ample surplus revenue in hand. But on such a scale of extravagance it is contended, that even the mere salaries of the clerks amounted to £1770 annually. [The hon. member here read a list of the names of all the clerks in the Crown Land Office, and their respective salaries.] And, yet, these two parishes were called on to support these poor people; and besides this, he (Mr. S.) believed, that the royal road had cost about £500 per mile. He understood that these persons, while working on it, had been continually supplied with great quantities of rum; which, instead of benefiting them, ruined them in health and means. The whole affair was such a great grievance, that he (Mr. S.) was quite at a loss to know what to do in this matter. The province had got, somehow or other, into a most extraordinary state; there was something rotten at the very core, and the country could no longer submit to it. It was certainly very unfair that the two parishes should be burdened with all these persons; and perhaps it would be as well to address his Excellency, praying him to order them some relief from the casual revenue.

Mr. Partelow agreed with Mr. Speaker, that it would not be proper to support the grant at the present time, and thought it would be advisable to move for information on the subject. As so much rum appeared to have been furnished to the men on the royal road, they might, perhaps, have been encouraged to take it, and that might have been a great cause of their present distress. The hon. member contended that this case bore no analogy to the grants for distressed emigrants in support towns; the peculiar situation of which places rendered them particularly liable to a large influx of such persons, who, for a time, became burdensome there. Another reason for requiring information on this subject was, that it had been reported, that the Commissioner of Crown Lands had made contracts with certain parishes in England, to bring out these paupers, and that he had made money by it. This country ought not to be saddled with such a burden; and yet the poor creatures should not starve. Let the Commissioners of the Alms House and other parish officers support them for the present, and afterwards bring them to claim before the house, and the house would by that time, perhaps, be able to take some decisive measures on the question.

Mr. Speaker expressed his perfect concurrence in the idea, that, as these people had been introduced into the country, for the purpose of making the royal road, they ought to be supported from the casual revenue.

Mr. End said, whether these people came out to help send the Casual Revenue, or whether Mr. Baillie brought them out, or how or why they came, was not the question for consideration now. He only wanted to know, whether the committee could be doing their duty, in giving a portion of the public money to prevent them from starving. Who knew that Mr. Baillie had brought these people out? What authority was there for such an assertion? Did the people say so themselves? He (Mr. E.) verily believed, when he heard so much about this officer, that every question to be debated in the house, and every event in the Province, would be made to turn on him, in some way or other. He wondered the *measles* now running through the country were not attributed to that officer; and he supposed, that if the *cholera* should come summer, it would be said that Mr. Baillie brought it in—Look at the absurdity and inhumanity of refusing relief to these poor men. The committee the other day gave a large sum to the black settlers of Loch Lomond; and why not be equally charitable to these poor Englishmen? The royal road was let out by auction, to the persons who hired these people. He (Mr. E.) did not believe for a moment, that the Commissioner of Crown Lands had ever made money by bringing out these poor men; but if he had any thing at all to do with it, that he had lost money by them. In their petition to the Alms House, the Commissioners for relief, they said nothing at all about Mr. Baillie having ever deceived them.—This was altogether a case of emergency. He did not like to see the House saddled with annual expenses; but these people came out last summer, and were totally unacquainted with the nature of the climate; and if, therefore, they had been improvident in the summer, they had only fallen into a mistake which all strangers were liable to for the first year. If there had been any breach of contract between Mr. Baillie and them, the law was open to them; and he (Mr. E.) did not think of his profession, felt proud to say, that there were plenty of lawyers who would readily take their case, and who would not hesitate to sue Mr. Baillie or any other Mr. in the country, if necessary required. He was therefore for relieving the parishes from the sole burden of these poor people, by giving a small grant this time; but would also be for stating, that the house would not repeat the grant.

Mr. Taylor did not think it would be found that Mr. Baillie had any thing to do with bringing the people to this country. He doubted that assertion very much. With respect to the royal road, what he had heard, he believed it was not properly put up to auction. These men, however, were hired there; but it was well known that strangers could be but little acquainted with road work in this country; and therefore they could not do much, and they consumed all their earnings. The case was extremely urgent, and the public funds were the most proper place to relieve these people from.

Mr. Slason supported Mr. Taylor's observations. He (Mr. S.) said there were poor and distressed emigrants all over the country, and he thought, at this inclement season; and he thought, before that grant could be allowed, some very special reasons should be shown. It appeared that these people were the English emigrants who came out to work the royal road. It was generally believed, when they arrived, that they came out under a special contract. It appeared, however, their hopes had been blasted, their prospects had failed; and they ought to be supported by the persons who brought them out. But he (Mr. S.) did not like to see the House saddled with every thing that came before it. He thought Mr. Taylor's motion ought to be applied to the House, for leave to change his name, or to be transported to the deserts of Loch Lomond, and then he would never more be heard of.

Mr. Weldon thought this might be a very fit claim on the Casual Revenue, but not on the Province Treasury, and therefore the resolution could not be sustained. There was no information before the house, as to what they