

## LITERATURE.

## THERE IS NOTHING IN VAIN.

Oh! prize not the the essence of Beauty alone,  
And disdain not the weak and the mean in our way,  
For the world is an engine—the Architect's own,  
Where the wheels of least might keep the larger in play.

We love the fair valley, with bloom in the shade,  
We sing of green hills—of the grape and the grain;  
But be sure the Creator did well when he made  
The stark desert and marsh—for there's nothing in vain.

We may question the locust that darkens the land,  
And the snake, flinging arrows of death from its eye;  
But remember they come from the Infinite Hand,  
And shall Man, in his littleness, dare to ask why?  
Oh! let us not speak of the "useless" or "vile,"  
They may seem so to us—but be slow to arraign:  
From the savage wolf's cry, to the happy child's smile,  
From the mite to the mammoth, there's nothing in vain.

There's a mission, no doubt, for the worm in the dust,  
As there is for the charger with nostrils of pride;  
The sloth and the newt have their places of trust,  
And the agents are needed, for God has supplied.  
Oh! could we but trace the great meaning of ALL,  
And what delicate links form the ponderous chain;  
From the dew-drops that rise, to the star-drops that fall,  
We should see but one purpose, and nothing in vain.

ELIZA COOK.

## AN EVENING'S ADVENTURE AT A COUNTRY INN.

Even in this age of rapid locomotion, there must be few of my readers who have not been, at least once in their lives, the habitant of a Scottish country inn on a Sabbath evening. It is necessary, however, that they should have been in the same situation on some other evening of the week, that they may properly appreciate that sober quiet, that softened stillness, that more than partial cessation from labour, and din, and discord, of things animate and inanimate, that pervades the precincts of a country inn on the evening in question. The lighting of a bed-room candle, or the ringing for a pair of slippers, at such a time, seems to be done under protest. The chambermaid, who the evening before looked so made up of "becks, and nods, and wreathed smiles," that you wondered whether she smiled through her sleep, or even if she ever shut her eyes at all, they glanced so brilliant, and cheerful, and happy, now looks demure and grave, while every dimple seems to say, 'Nea daffin the night; ye ken it's Sunday.'

Go down stairs, and you find the ostler seated at the kitchen fire, listless, inactive, with a face ten times more demure than the maid's, his finger and thumb inserted in a well-worn edition of the "Scots Worthies," or "The Confession of Faith." Passing the bar, you observe the landlady seated similarly occupied; her snow-white cap and collar, and sober silk gown, proclaiming that maid and matron are at peace. Scolding is banished for a day. Mine host is stretched, pipe in hand, now eyeing his portly helpmate, anon watching the clouds that curl in regular succession from his almost motionless lips. The clock at the top of the staircase is the only object, within or without, that seems to court your observation; its constant, well marked march, sounding, amid the stillness, louder than you ever heard it before, till you attach an importance to it that amply makes up for your neglect of it in time past, because you have nothing else to listen to.

In such circumstances did I find myself the solitary incumbent of the traveller's room, in the snug little inn at—, on an evening in November, 18—. In frame of mind I was listless, indolent, too lazy to be fretful, and too solitary to be altogether comfortable. I had swallowed three tumblers of toddy, each mellowed by its accompanying cigar, without producing any change beyond an increase of my indolence, and a tendency to nap. The yew trees which grew in the church-yard, that stood on the opposite side of the way, had gradually become dark, and more dark, as I looked at them; the autumn wind gently swaying the lighter branches to and fro, against the dull sky beyond. One by one the headstones disappeared, first the old, then the new. The old belfrey, the white-washed walls of which had made the room seem light even after sunset, had given in, and looked sombre as all which surrounded it. I tried to pick out the grave-stones, the records which I had conned over that afternoon, instead of listening attentively to the sixteenthly, seventeenthly, and lastly, of a discourse excellent in all things but in its length, which the parish minister had delivered; till I lost those frail memorials of the village dead in the gradually increasing darkness.

I had begun to nap in my chair, as it was too early to go to bed when the sound of the mail rattling through the street impelled me once more to the window. It stopped for an instant, and, to my infinite consolation, deposited a passenger at the door of 'mine inn.' 'The night is not yet altogether lost,' thought I; 'I will have something to interest me now; if not to chat with, at least to look at, or drink with, or quarrel with, or—anything rather than this dormant, thumb-sucking use of time.' The step of a light foot, followed by the tramp

of a heavy ditto in the lobby, on the stair, crowned my hopes; and Martha immediately appeared, ushering in a bundle of wearing apparel, consisting chiefly of muffler, boots, and greatcoat, surmounted by a hat; the only glimpse of humanity that could be obtained being a portion of a nose, much resembling the toe of a crab in formation; the colour rich, rare, burnished red.

Hamlet's churchyard acquaintance, the grave-digger, might, for aught I know, possess a more extensive wardrobe in waistcoats: but I would have backed the new comer, for any odds, in great-coats. One by one they fell from his shoulders, till I wondered how he had managed to carry them, and then how the mail had undertaken the transmission of such a mass. Greatcoat after greatcoat fell from his shoulders; muffler after muffler from his neck; till, stripped to a kind of covering that halted midway between a greatcoat and a sur-tout, and a wollen neckerchief not smaller than a blanket, the stranger, in his 'habit as he lived,' took his place on the opposite side of the fire-place; and drawing his hand across his eyes, and his legs to the fender, he rang the bell.

'Stiff and hot,' said the stranger to Martha, who appeared and immediately withdrew.

I looked at the stranger, as he warmed his purple-pointed fingers at the blaze. There was something in his appearance which raised a feeling of dislike in my mind although, if asked the reason, I probably could not give one. I scanned him from the boots to the wisp of hair, half gray, half black, which hung like a leaden waterspout over his forehead. My dislike grew as I gazed. I felt a kind of fidgety feeling; I was disappointed. Like Frankenstein, the being I had so ardently longed for was an annoyance which I now could have as ardently wished away. I thought of retiring to bed, when I recollected that I had not yet spoken to him: to leave without doing so would have been absolute rudeness. I said, "Mild weather for travelling, sir."

'It is,' said the stranger, fixing his eyes on me as if he had observed my presence in the room for the first time. If my dislike was great when I looked at him, it grew greater now that he looked at me. Such eyes! they were neither black, blue, hazel nor gray, but a kind of neutral tint, which I cannot give a name to; and yet they sparkled and glowed in the light like a cat's; bright, piercing, they seemed almost to stand out from under the pent-house of his brows, looking up and down a face which appeared as if the outer skin had been peeled off, and the under cuticle suddenly frozen, so red was it;—not the redness of health, but an unearthly, dark, crimson hue, like a stain of blood on a towel.

'Mail full to night, sir?' said I, making an attempt to overcome a dislike which seemed to have now reached its climax.

'Nobody outside but myself,' said he, as he wriggled his nose into his tumbler. I was in momentary expectation of seeing the mixture ignite from the fiery quality of his facial protuberance. It—the nose—avoided the collision, however, by a dexterous jerk, which could only have been obtained by long practice. The liquid did not take fire, although it appeared considerably diminished, probably absorbed by the intense heat.

Another half hour elapsed, while I puffed my cigar with all the energy my lungs would permit. The stranger ordered glass after glass of 'stiff and hot,' while I mechanically followed his example. My friends tell me I get prosy when elevated; my readers may think I am so now. I had gazed so long in the face of the stranger that I wondered how it would look from the other side of the room. I tried the experiment without satisfying myself either one way or other. The church yard caught my eye, and I again ventured an observation. 'Bad taste to stick those grave-yards always in the centre of a town,' said I.

'Very inconvenient,' said he. 'Those who did so were no friends of science.'

The remark puzzled me. 'In which way?' said I.

'Why, you see,' said he, 'a subject can't be got without running great risk. The Scotch are so nasty particular on that score.'

'On the subject of science?' said I: 'I thought they liked to dabble a little in all, from metaphysics to mesmerism.'

'As to dabbling in the sciences, they like them well enough in the abstract: but they have not arrived at that acme of liberality which prompts them to give a subject now and then to the dissecting room.'

'I don't wonder at that,' said I; 'such a course outrages one of the finest feelings of our nature—respect for the dead.'

'Stuff! stuff!' said he; 'such feelings are a remnant of barbarism or something worse. How much better if Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay, instead of stopping holes 'to keep the wind away,' had given his carcass to the schools. What a splendid action that would have been! Cæsar was a great man, sir!'

I assented to the opinion of ages by a nod of the head. 'It can't be remedied now,' said I.

'And though it could,' said the stranger, "if the fortieth cousin of Cæsar were a Scotchman, that man would object to it. Shameful, sir!" and again the nose of the stranger gleamed like a fiery meteor in the tumbler.

'And yet there is no lack of subjects for the schools, in spite of Cæsar's forgetfulness,' said I.

'Ay, but the risk that is run,' said he. 'No later than yesterday two gentlemen, or at least one of them,

was nearly made a subject of himself in his endeavours to benefit posterity.

Something to interest me now, thought I, as I settled in my chair. 'How was that, sir?' I enquired. He began—

It was rumoured in Edinburgh that a case of more than usual interest had been interred in the church-yard of—, some miles from this. Something handsome was offered for the purpose of securing it; but men who had never been known to stikle before, fought rather shy of this. From the state of feeling lately evinced in two or three affairs of the same kind, the attempt was a very hazardous one. Dr.—offered still more handsomely, as he was anxious to procure the subject in question to illustrate a course of lectures he was then delivering. With such warm offers the difficulties melted like wax, and T—and W—, two gentlemen well known for their friendly disposition to science when anything was to be got by it, made the necessary arrangements, and even succeeded in disinterring the body, but, unable to convey it to town that night, left it in a heap of manure in a field by the road side, with the intention of removing it early next morning.

'Every thing had succeeded as they could wish, and a gig was hired from mine host of the—, in the ancient burgh of L—, to convey the prize to town. In removing it, however, a derv boy who had been snoozing away his time at the back of a dyke, was witness to the transaction, and immediately ran and informed his master, who mounted his pony, and sat off in pursuit. W—and T—, seeing they were pursued, and rightly judging that the only chance was to outstrip the pursuer in speed, drove with fury. Still the farmer gained upon them. If they could only get through the burgh which lay in their way without discovery, all would be well. If he overtook them before they accomplished this, life was in jeopardy. The souters of L—were no hands to trifle with; as they had lately shown in the case of their grave-digger, another friend to anatomical pursuits in the first stage, viz, the procuring the subject. The danger was imminent; and T—, seeing the farmer making upon them every moment, had no disposition to try such an ordeal. He would not go on, but entreated W—to stop, relinquished the body, and cut for it. His friend, however, was in no such humour: having brought it thus far, it was like snatching the bite from his mouth to relinquish it. The other remonstrated, but without effect, and finding nothing else would do, left the gig and made off across the fields. Unfortunate stoppage. Still the farmer spurred, and was soon neck and neck with the gig and its remaining occupant, and thus they entered the burgh. The only chance was now that the farmer's cries would be drowned in the noise, or that the gig would precede the alarm, and thereby escape. Speed must do it. Seeing the idlers in the street, the farmer bawled out in a thick burr, 'Corse!' In a moment all was commotion, every head was thrust out. Great black-bearded fellows, with implements of their trade in their hands, rushed from every doorway. Old women, at other times unable to move, started out to swell the uproar with their cries. The inhabitants, one and all, were on the street in less time than I have taken to tell it. Still the gig careered onwards, the horse covered with foam. Still the farmer lashed his shely, and this might have continued till the burgh was cleared, had not a carrier, who was packing his cart in the street, thrown a block which he held in his hand, with the view of stopping the gig; instead of going under the wheel as intended, it got between the spokes, and striking the shaft, wheel and block flew in the air in a thousand pieces, and down fell man, horse, and gig in the street.

"Whar's the corse?" shrieked out a plurality of voices.

"I have none," cried W—; "you are mad, why do you stop me thus?"

"Corse!" shouted the farmer, who was buried in the crowd, shely and all.

All this spoken in a breath. In another instant, the contents of the gig were strewed in the air, and the sack containing the subject was dragged on the street. This was damning evidence. A universal groan was emitted, and for some minutes not a word was spoken. The stillness was broken only by the sound of the blows which fell thick and three-fold on the devoted carcass of the resurrectionist—he was up in an instant. A hundred hands were at his throat; a hundred fists were beating like sledge hammers at his ribs. His cloak, his coat, his vest, and even his shirt, were torn to shreds by the infuriated multitude. He always contrived to rise the moment he was knocked down, about thirty times to the minute: had he lain on the ground one instant he would have been trampled to death. While this unequal war was going on, others were employed in wreaking vengeance on the gig. They made chips of it in a moment, and would have sacrificed the horse as well, but for the interference of the farmer. He could do any thing with the mob for the time. Never was man so applauded.

The noise of the riot having reached the town hall where the magistrates were assembled that morning, in furtherance of some burgh business, they hastened to interfere, impressed with a notion of the illegality of the proceedings and the likelihood of a long bill of damages against the burgh, which already had more debts than they were well able to liquidate. The provost, in virtue of his office, was foremost, and had his silver spectacles smashed to atoms in his endeavours. The