

POETRY.

JANUARY.

This is the first and generally the coldest month of the year. Its zodiacal sign is Aquarius, or the Waterbearer. It derives its name from Janus, a deity represented by the Romans with two faces, because he was acquainted with past and future events. Cotton introduces him into a poem on the New Year—

"Hark! the cock crows, and yon bright star Tells us the day himself's not far; And see where, breaking from the night, He glides the western hills with light. With him old Janus doth appear, Peeping into the future year, With such a look as seems to say, The prospect is not good that way, Thus do we rise ill sights to see, And 'gainst ourselves to prophesy; When the prophetic fear of things, A more tormenting mischief brings, More full of soul-tormenting gall Than direst mischiefs can befall. But stay! but stay! Methinks my sight, Better inform'd by clearer light, Discerns serenity in that brow, That all contracted seemed but now. His revers'd face may show distaste, And frown upon the ill he past; But that which looks this way is clear, And smiles upon the new-born year."

According to the ancient mythology, Janus was the God of gates and avenues, and in that character held a key in his right hand, and a rod in his left, to symbolize his opening and ruling the year. Sometimes he bore the number 300 in one hand, and 65 in the other—the number of his days. At other times, he was represented with four heads, and placed in a temple of four equal sides, with a door and three windows in each side, as emblems of the four seasons and the twelve months over which he presided.

According to Verstegan (Restitution of Decayed Intelligence, 4to. 1625, p. 59), the Saxons called this month "Wolfmonath," or Wolf-month, because the wolves of our ancient forests, impelled by hunger at this season, were wont to prowl and attack man himself; the inferior animals, on whom they usually preyed, having retired or perished from the inclemency of the weather.

The Saxons also called this month "After-yule," or after Christmas. In illuminated calendars, prefixed to Catholic missals, or service books, January was frequently depicted as a man with fagots or a woodman's axe, shivering and blowing his fingers. Spencer introduces this month in his Faerie Queene—

"Then came old January, wrapp'd well In many weeds, to keep the cold away; Yet did he quake and quiver like to quell, And blow his nayles to warme them if he may; For they were numb'd with holding all the day An hatchet keene, with which he felled wood, And from the trees did lop the needles spray."

SONG OF SPAIN.

I saw him at the revel, Where the foaming cup ran high, And the vaulted roof was ringing To hymns of victory. With a thousand warriors gazing On him, their star and pride,— The golden spoil around him, And the WOMAN by his side!

I saw him in the battle, When his raven plume arose Dark from its mountain eyrie, A death-like token to his foes! And the thousands following after, Where his trumpet rent the air, The watch-word of the slaughter— And the WOMAN too was there!

I saw a lonely valley, Whose plane was far and deep, And amid the dark recesses Where Cantabrian shadows sleep; Meet for the stern Guerilla, His long last rest to share— But o'er him there was only The WOMAN weeping there!

TERRIBLE BATTLE OF EYLAU.

(February, 1806.)

Never in the history of war, did two armies pass a night under more awful and impressive circumstances than the rival hosts who now lay, without tent or covering, on the snowy expanse of the field of Eylau. The close vicinity of the two armies, the vast multitude assembled in so narrow a space, intent only on mutual destruction, the vital interest to the lives and fortunes of all which were at stake; the wintry wilderness of the scene, cheered only by the watch-fires, which threw only a partial glow on the snow-clad heights around; the shivering groups, who in either army lay around the blazing fires, chilled by the girdles of the impenetrable ice; the stern resolution of the soldiers in one army, and the enthusiastic ardour of those in the other; the liberty of Europe now brought to the issue of one dread combat; the glory of Russia and France dependent on the efforts of the mightiest armament that either had yet sent forth, all contributed to impress a feeling of solemnity which reached the most inconsiderate breast, oppressed the mind with a feeling of anxious thought, and kept unclosed many a wearied eyelid in both camps, notwithstanding the extraordinary fatigues of the preceding days.

The battle began at daylight on the 8th of February, in the midst of a snow-storm. At an early hour of the day, Augereau's column of 16,000 men was enveloped by the Russian masses, and, with the exception of 1500 men, was entirely destroyed. Napoleon himself was in the most imminent hazard of being taken prisoner. He had slept at Eylau on the night before, and was now in the church-yard, when the crash of the enemy's balls on the steeple, showed how nearly danger was approaching. Presently one of the Russian divisions following rapidly after the fugitives entered Eylau by the Western street, and charged with loud hurrahs, to the foot of the mound where the Emperor was posted with a battery of the imperial guard and a personal escort of 100 men. Had a regiment of horse been at hand to support the attack, Napoleon must have been made prisoner; for though the last reserve, consisting of six battalions of the old guard, were at a short distance, he might have been enveloped before they could get to his rescue. The fate of Europe then hung upon a thread, but in that terrible moment, the Emperor's presence of mind did not forsake him; he instantly ordered the little body guard, hardly more than a company, to form a line, in order to check the enemy's advance, and despatched orders to the old guard to attack the column on one flank, while a brigade of Murat's horse charged it on the other.

The Russians, disordered by success, and ignorant of the inestimable prize which was almost within their grasp, were arrested by the firm countenance of the little band of heroes who formed Napoleon's last resource; and before they could re-form their ranks for a regular conflict, the enemy was upon them on either flank, and almost the whole division was cut to pieces. This dreadful slaughter continued through the day, the Russians and the French alternately repulsing each

other, both sides fighting with the most desperate intrepidity, and every charge leaving the ground covered with carnage. Towards evening the Russians, under Lestocq, advanced against the division of Frainet. The French were driven before them. Marshal Davoust, in vain attempted to withstand the torrent. 'Here,' cried he, 'is the place where the brave should find a glorious death, the cowards will perish in the deserts of Siberia.' Still the French were driven on with the loss of 3,000 men, and the whole Russian line were pressing on to victory, when the rapid night of the north fell, and the battle was at an end.

This was the first heavy blow which Napoleon had received in European war. He had once before been on the point of ruin, but it was in Syria, and a British officer had the honour of making the conqueror of Italy recoil. It is now unquestionable that at Eylau he was defeated. At 10 at night he gave orders for his artillery and baggage to defile to the rear, and the advanced post to retreat. He was on the point of being disgraced in the eyes of Europe, when he was saved that disgrace by the indecision of the Russian General. A council of war was held by the Russian leaders on horseback, to decide on their future course.—Count Osterman Tolstoy, the second in command, with Generals Keoning and Lestocq, urged strongly that retreat was not to be thought of—that Napoleon was beaten in a pitched battle—that whichever army gained ground would be reputed victor, and that the true policy was to throw their whole force upon him without delay. But Benningsen, unaccountably, satisfied with his triumph, past the vigor of youth, unacquainted with the enormous losses of the French army, and exhausted by 36 hours on horseback, directed the march on Koningsberg. Such was the terrible battle of Eylau, fought in the depth of winter amidst ice and snow, under circumstances of unexampled horror; the most bloody and obstinately contested that had yet occurred during the war—and in which, if Napoleon did not sustain a positive defeat, he underwent a disaster, which had well nigh proved his ruin. The loss on both sides was immense, and never, in modern times, has a field of battle been strewn with such a multitude of slain.

On the side of the Russians twenty-five thousand had fallen, of whom about seven thousand were already no more; on that of the French upwards of thirty thousand were killed or wounded, and nearly ten thousand had left their colors, under pretence of attending to the wounded, and did not make their appearance for several days. The other trophies of victory were nearly equally balanced—the Russians had to boast of the unusual spectacle of twelve eagles taken from their antagonists—while they had made spoil of sixteen of the Russian guns and fourteen standards. Hardly any prisoners were made on either side during the action; but six thousand of the wounded, most of them in a hopeless state, were left on the field of battle and fell into the hands of the French. Never was a spectacle so dreadful as the field of battle presented on the following morning. About fifty thousand men lay in the space of two leagues weltering in blood. The wounds were for the most part, of the severest kind, from the extraordinary quantity of cannon balls that had been discharged during the action, and the close proximity of the contending masses, to the deadly batteries, which spread grape at half musket shot, through their ranks.

Though stretched on the cold snow, and exposed to the severity of an arctic winter, they were burning with thirst, and piteous cries were heard on all sides for water, or assistance to extricate the wounded men from beneath the heaps of slain or load of horses by which they were crushed. Six thousand of these noble animals encumbered the field, or, maddened with pain, were shrieking aloud amidst the stifled groans of the wounded. Subdued by the loss of blood, tamed by cold, exhausted by hunger, the fœmen lay side by side amidst the general wreck. The Cossack was to be seen beside the Italian; the gay vine-dresser, from the smiling banks of the Garonne, lay athwart the stern peasant from the plains of the Ukraine. The extremity of suffering had extinguished alike the fiercest and most generous passions. After his usual custom, Napoleon in the afternoon rode through this dreadful field, accompanied by his generals and staff, while the still burning piles of Surpallen and Saussgarten sent volumes of black smoke over the scene of death—but the men exhibited none of their wanted enthusiasm—no cries of Vive l'Empereur were heard.

THE FAIR QUAKERESS.

AN EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF GEORGE III.

The only authentic portrait known of this admired fair one, the early favourite of George the Third when Prince of Wales, is at Knowle Park, the seat of Lady Plymouth. It is described as the Portrait of Hannah Lightfoot, that being her married name. How it came into the possession of that noble family, none of the present race are able to explain. It is however suspected to have been sent by Edward Duke of York, the brother of George the Third, before his marriage with Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg Strelitz, as a deposit for safe preservation, until it could be disposed of elsewhere. The picture has been attributed to Gainsborough; but if so, it must have been an early production of that clever artist.—The late Duke Frederick of York had a beautiful enamel from this portrait, mounted in the lid of a snuff-box, which after his death, was in the possession of George the Fourth, and might now perhaps be found at Bifrons, the seat of the Dowager Marchioness of Canningham.

The father of Hannah Lightfoot was a linen draper, residing in St. James's market, London, then a place of great traffic, and the leading thoroughfare from Leicester Fields to St. James's Palace. He afterwards failed in business, then went upon the Stock-Exchange, and being supported by members of the Society of Friends, eventually amassed a large fortune as a broker. Miss Wheeler was a very beautiful girl—and with the natural vanity of fine women universally admired, was very fond of displaying herself at the window, where she first attracted the notice of George the Third, when Prince of Wales, as he took his daily rides in his way from Saville-House, Leicester Square, to St. James's Palace. The celebrated Miss Chudleigh, afterwards Duchess of Kingston, was the Prince's confidant on the occasion; she was then one of the ladies in waiting on the Princess of Wales, the mother of George the Third, and in her the spirit of intrigue was predominant, from an early age; added to which she is known to have entertained a great dislike to the Earl of Bute, who then exercised a tyrannical control over both the Prince and his mother. To frustrate that wily Minister's views, or, perhaps, to create a breach between him and his royal pupil, and thus to revenge herself upon the Earl, is supposed to be the chief incentive for her interference in this mysterious affair. However, certain it is, that she undertook the difficult task of introducing the enamoured Prince

to the object of his affection—and when it is considered that the young lady was one of that shrewd, retiring and moral sect denominated Quakers, it may be readily conceived, that her office was one of great difficulty. The lovers are said to have had their first interview at the Haymarket, where lodgings had been engaged by Miss Chudleigh, expressly for the purpose. Here Col. George—the soubriquet of the Prince—and Anne Wheeler, continued to enjoy each others society in stolen interviews, for some time previous to the death of George the Second. That a private marriage as solemnized between the Prince and Miss Wheeler, in 1759, in the name of George Guelph, it has been asserted is capable of proof, Miss Chudleigh and Edward Bute of York being the witnesses thereto. There is reason to suppose that Lord Bute was the first to discover this affair, which created great uneasiness in the cabinet at Saville-House, where the mother of George the Third then resided. On the matter being communicated to her, she interfered, and not then suspecting it was anything more than an amour, she pressed for and obtained a promise from her son, that he would continue the connexion. Lord Bute was not however satisfied with this promise, and discovering by some means that the intimacy was still persisted in, he sought an interview with the friends of the lady, when important disclosures took place. The result was a determination of the Prince's mother and the Minister, to obviate as far as possible the consequences of this imprudent amour, by accelerating the marriage of both parties, and for this purpose a negotiation was formed with Mr. Wheeler, the father of the lady, who foreseeing nothing but disgrace to his daughter and his family, from the threatened exposure of such a connexion, readily lent himself to the Minister's views, the more so, perhaps, as it was proposed to contribute a marriage portion for the lady, on the day of her being affianced to Mr. Lightfoot, a person of her own persuasion, and a suitor whom her parents had been anxious she should have married.

The Prince, then young and unsuspecting, although devotedly attached to the fair Quakeress, was naturally timid and irresolute—and, being completely under the dominion of his mother and the Earl of Bute, was easily beguiled into acquiescence, under the belief that if the lady had any legal claim, her subsequent marriage and the power of the Crown might annul it. Of this, however, the Prince quickly repented, and determined that, happen what might, he would not resign the society of the lady. Accordingly, while the Ministers thought themselves quite secure in the success of their scheme, and the parents of Hannah Wheeler were contemplating an equally satisfactory result in the approaching nuptials of their daughter, the lovers proved themselves by far the cleverest diplomatists.

It was agreed between them, the better to disguise their intentions, that the lady should consent to this marriage with Mr. Lightfoot—and, on the same evening, elope with her royal lover, who provided a safe retreat for her. Of this fact there is no doubt. The lady was so married to Mr. Lightfoot, at the Quaker Meeting House, then in St. Martin's Lane, and on the same evening, before consummation, she stole away privately from her father's house—and surrendering herself to a trusty friend of her royal lover, was conveyed off with such secrecy and security, that no traces of it could afterwards be discovered. Among the papers of the Earl of Bute, there was found a very severe letter from George the III. remonstrating with that Nobleman for his interference in this matter, and particularly censuring his conduct in making it known to his mother, the Princess of Wales. The lovers continued to meet occasionally, until very shortly before the King's marriage with Queen Charlotte, when the lady was, with her children, for a time, removed to Devonshire; but, eventually, she returned to Kew, where she assumed the name of Oxford, and afterwards, it is said, died in childbirth. So cautiously was this intimacy managed, that the lady's father, her husband and family, could never discover her retreat. Mr. Lightfoot, it is said, only once caught a glimpse of his wife in a carriage, driving along Pall-Mall; but as it was some years afterwards, he might have been mistaken; however, before he could approach the vehicle, it had started off with increased speed, and was soon out of sight. It is due to the memory of George the Third to state, that he provided handsomely for his two sons, by this connexion. One afterwards obtained high rank in the British service, and is, I believe, still living—the other a singularly clever but perverse person, obtained a lucrative situation in a Government office, which he resigned; he was afterwards employed by Mr. Pitt, as an attaché in foreign affairs—and in that capacity was very useful at the commencement of the French Revolution—he died a few years since at Foley-place, leaving an only son, wholly unprovided for, to whom his late Majesty William the Fourth behaved kindly.

The circumstances here narrated are said to have been the primary cause of the mental affliction of George III. who could never forget his first love, or forgive himself for abandoning his contract with her. This I do not believe—and for this reason—if there was any marriage ceremony between him and the fair Quakeress, which is doubtful, there was at that time nothing else but political motives to prevent the Prince avowing it.—(From the M.S. of the Duchess of Kingston.)

SINGULAR AND PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE.—On Friday last, two Scilly pilot-boats discovered a vessel bottom up, off St. Mary's, and took her in tow; but night coming on, and the weather becoming unfavourable, they for the time abandoned her. The next morning they again went in search of her, when they found that she had been driven ashore on the rocks, still with her bottom up. They went near her, and fancying they heard some noise in the hold, cut a hole in her bottom, when four men came out! It appears that the vessel was oil laden; and that, from the buoyant nature of her cargo, she not only kept afloat after she had capsized, but rode lightly on the water. The men were in the cabin when the accident happened, and finding that the vessel did not fill, they crept into the lazarette, and proceeded from thence into the lower part of the hold, next the keelson, that part being of course left vacant by the falling of the cargo against the deck. Here they remained sixty hours without nourishment, and with slender hopes of deliverance; and when at length they were so providentially liberated, they were in a state of great exhaustion—so great, indeed, that one of them died almost immediately.

THE SCOTTISH THISTLE.—This ancient emblem of Scots' pugnacity, with its motto, "Nemo me impune lacessit," is represented of various species on royal bearings, coins, and coats of armour, so that there is some difficulty in saying which is the genuine original thistle. The origin of the national badge itself is thus handed down by tradition:—When the Danes invaded Scotland

it was deemed unwarlike to attack an enemy in the pitch of darkness of night, instead of a pitched battle by day; but on one occasion the invaders resolved to avail themselves of this stratagem; and in order to prevent their camp from being heard, they marched barefoot. They had thus neared the Scottish force unobserved, when a man unluckily stepped with his naked foot upon a superb thistle, and instinctively uttered a cry of pain, which discovered the assault to the Scots, who ran to their arms, and defeated the foe with a terrible slaughter. The thistle was immediately adopted as the insignia of Scotland.

ARITHMETICAL EXPRESSION.—How easy it is to speak millions and billions, yet how difficult to conceive that even a million is! But still we should endeavour to obtain some idea of that mighty number. Suppose we speak of the national debt; the words expressing the round sum of eight hundred millions sterling are rapidly spoken; but who can form a conception of that amount? We know, however, what a dollar is; and we may for convenience, consider its value equal to a crown piece, or five shillings. We know, too, what minutes, hours, or days are. Then we may form some idea of the amount, though a remote one, when we discover by calculation, that the debt is considerably more than a dollar per minute, from the time our first parents were in Paradise, to the present day!—more than fifteen pounds sterling per hour, through all the ages of man's existence! A billion, however, is a far more comprehensive term: so much so, indeed, as to be beyond all conception. Taking the Mosaic date, as nearly as can be computed, the world has not yet existed even one-fifth part of one billion of seconds.—Smith and Dolier Copy Books.

SACK OF A VILLAGE BY AN EGYPTIAN ARMY.—As soon as the General and his suite had disappeared, I and my comrades, being resolved to see something, turned our horses' heads towards the village whose smoking ruins the general had pointed out. It lay about a mile and a half from his tent. As we approached, the wind which blew from it seemed actually laden with the fetor of half-burnt carcasses. It was an odour perfectly unlike any I had ever before encountered. There was no escaping from it. It clung to one's nostrils, clothes, everything. But we had short time for reflection, for we were soon on the spot. A broken part of the rampart served us as a gate, through which our horses clambered with some little difficulty. What a terrible sight burst upon our eyes! Immediately before us were a party of Nubians rooting amongst the rubbish and yet burning walls, still fringed by the half-extinguished flames. They were delving for treasure concealed by the unfortunate inhabitants, nearly a dozen of whom lay dead at the entrance of the breach, which they had died in defending. The appearance of the bodies was horrible in the last degree. Most of them seemed literally to have been burnt to death. There having been no outlet for escape which was not taken possession of by the invaders, the flames and heat of the adjoining houses, when fired, must have consigned them to the most painful and torturing end. Filled with disgust, I was urging my horse forward, when the noble animal, with the instinct of his race, refused to budge; and on looking down I saw, stretched across the narrow path, the body of a young woman clasping an infant to her breast. Her clothes were still burning, and as the offensive exhalations rose from her body, I either heard, or fancied that I heard, the hissing noise of the flames, as they licked up the juices that oozed through the pores in the body. Even there—there, in the midst of all that is horrible or devilish—the bland smile of infancy seemed yet to linger on the face of the infant, which, in the struggles of death, she had clasped to her bosom with all that frightful energy which a mother alone can feel. Yet one of the feet of the child had been burnt off. It must surely have been freed from all mortal suffering ere that terrible agony could have reached it, for its face was as the face of slumber.—From Fraser's Magazine for December.

Descent of the Rapids between Lake Ontario and Montreal, by a Steamer.—The following description of the first descent of the Rapids between Lake Ontario and Montreal, by a steamer, is copied, with vouchers for its correctness, into the Canada papers from the New York Commercial Advertiser. The steamer is the Ontario, since re-christened the Lord Sydenham, one of a new line of boats which are to run with the mails between Quebec and Montreal. It is a handsome vessel, 206 feet in its extreme length, 26 feet in breadth of beam, 53 feet broad across the paddle boxes:—

"It was finally determined to make an attempt to transfer her to the line running between Montreal and Quebec. Although this attempt was thought by some to be as feasible as sailing down the Falls of Niagara, Mr. Hamilton was willing to risk his splendid vessel. A crew of bold spirits were selected, the most experienced pilots procured—French Canadians for the Long Sault and the other rapids to the Cascades, and an Indian of the Caughnawaga tribe to guide her over the Lachine. Previous to making the attempt Captain L. Hilliard, the commander of the boat, a well-tried Yankee navigator, who has had much experience on the St. Lawrence, went down on several rafts of timber, and made all the examinations and preparations which were practicable. On the morning previous to the 18th of August, the boat left Prescott, and in less than nine hours she had passed over all those rapids which are so appalling to the sight, and was safely moored at the wharf in Montreal; as great an exploit as ever was performed by a steam-boat of such a class. In conversation with Captain Hilliard, he stated to me, that at one period his Canadian pilot would gladly have given up the job, and gone ashore; but he behaved nobly. Another individual told me, that after the boat had safely made the leap of the Lachine, the Indian who had guided her through the passage threw up his cap, and made three astonishing leaps along the deck, manifesting the greatest triumph at his success. I inquired of Captain Hilliard whether any preparations had been made for their preservation in case of accident; he said there had not. There was no life-preserver, nor even an extra plank or spar, as he feared that had anything of the kind been seen by the crew, the 'white feather' might have been shown. Mr. Hamilton, as a token of his regard for Captain Hilliard, has presented to him an elegant and costly gold watch, with the following inscription on the inner case:—'Presented to Captain L. Hilliard, by John Hamilton, to commemorate the safe arrival at Montreal of the steam-boat Ontario, from Prescott, Upper Canada, 19th August, 1840.'