

THE CLOSING SCENE.

BY T. BUCHANAN READ.

The following is pronounced by the Westminster Review to be unquestionably the finest American poem ever written:

Within this sober realm of leafless trees The russet reaper inhaled the dreary air, Like some tanned reaper in his hour of ease.

When all the fields are lying brown and bare:

The gray barns looking from their hazy hills,

O'er the dim waters widening in the vales,

Sent down the air a greeting to the mills,

On the dull thunder of the alternate falls:

All sights are mellowed, and all sound subdued,

The hills seemed further, and the streams sang low.

As in a dream the distant woodman havel

His winter log, with many a muffled blow.

The embattled forests, erowhite armed with gold,

Their banners bright with every martial hue,

Now stood like some sad beaten host of old,

Withdrawn afar in Time's remotest blue;

On slumberous wings the vulture tried his flight,

The dove scarce heard his singing mate's complaint,

And like a star slow drowning in the light,

The village church vane seemed to pale and faint;

The sentinel cock upon the hillside crew—

Crew twice, and all was stiller than before—

Silent, till some replying wanderer blew

His alien horn, and then was heard no more.

Where erst the jay, within the elm's tall crest,

Made garulous trouble 'round her unfledged young;

And where the oriole hung her swinging nest,

By every light wind like a censor swung;

Where sang the noisy masons of the leaves,

The busy swallows circling ever near—

Foreboding as the rustic mind believes, An early harvest and a plenteous year.

Where every bird which charmed the vernal feast

Shook the sweet slumber from its wings at morn,

To warn the reapers of the rosy east;

All now was songless, empty and forlorn.

Alone from out the stable, pled the quail,

And croaked the crow through all the dreary gloom;

Alone two pheasants, drumming in the vale,

Made echo to the distant cottage loom;

There was no bud, no bloom upon the bowers,

The spiders wove their thin shrouds night by night,

The thistle down, the only ghost of flowers,

Sailed slowly by—passed noiseless out of sight.

Amid all this, in this most cheerless air,

And where the woodbine shed upon the porch

Its crimson leaves, as if the year stood there

Firing the door with his inverted torch;

Amid all this, the centre of the scene,

The White haired matron, with monotonous tread,

Piled the swift wheel, and with her joyless mien,

Sat like a fate, and watched the flying thread.

She had known Sorrow—he had walked with her,

Oftt supped, and broke with her the ashen crust,

And in the dead leaves still she heard the stir

Of his black mantle trailing in the dust.

While yet her cheek was bright with summer bloom,

Her country summoned and she gave her all;

And twice war bowed to her his sable plume—

Regave to her the sword to rust upon her wall;

Regave the sword, but not the hand that drew

And struck for liberty the dying blow;

Nor him who, to his sire and country true,

Fell 'mid the ranks of the invading foe.

Long, but not loud, the droning wheel went on,

Like the low murmur of a hive at noon,

Long, but not loud, the memory of the gone

Breathed through her lips a sad and tremulous tone.

At last the thread was snapped—her head was bowed!

Life dropped the distaff through her hands serene;

And loving neighbors smoothed her careful shroud,

While death and winter closed the autumn scene.

—The Government has just printed the official record of the Guitaneau trial.

It makes three large volumes. The work is gotten out in the best style of the Government Printing Office.

The volumes are handsomely bound in calf and boards, and are printed on an excellent quality of paper.

The three volumes make 2881 pages in all. But a limited number of copies—250—were printed.

There is a great demand for complete sets of this publication. The demand comes from all over the country, principally from lawyers and collectors of the curious in literature.

Even now as much as \$25 is offered for a complete set.

—It is understood in Washington that a suite of rooms have been engaged for President Arthur at Fortress Monroe,

where he proposes to spend a week or more. It was his intention to visit the fortress on his return from Florida,

but the rumors of his illness hurried him to Washington. About this time last year

the President visited Fortress Monroe to attend the graduating exercises of the artillery school. The date of his departure from Washington has not been fixed.

—A widow of New York wants to exchange a monument, presumably that of her dear, dead husband, for a gold hunting case watch and the balance in money.

INTEMPERANCE.

I am aware that there is a prejudice against the man engaged in the manufacture of alcohol. I believe from the time it issues from the coiled and poisonous worm in the distillery until it empties into the hell of death, dishonor and crime, that it demoralizes everybody that touches it from its source to where it ends.

All that we have to do is to think of the wrecks on either bank of the stream of death, of the suicides, of the poverty, of the ignorance, of the insanity, of the destitution, of the little children tugging at the faded and weary breasts of weeping and despairing wives, asking for bread; of the talented men of genius it has wrecked, the men struggling with imaginary serpents, produced by the devilish thing; and you think of the jails, of the almshouses, of the asylums, of the poisons, upon the scaffolds upon either bank, I do not wonder that every thoughtful man is prejudiced against the stuff called alcohol.

Intemperance cuts down youth in its vigor, manhood in its strength and age in its weakness. It breaks the father's heart, bereaves the dotting mother, extinguishes natural affections, erases conjugal loves, biots out filial attachments, blights parental love, and brings down mourning age in sorrow to the grave. It produces weakness, not strength; sickness, not health; death, not life. It makes wives widows, children orphans, fathers fiends, and all of them paupers and beggars. It feels rheumatism, nurses gout, welcomes epidemics, invites cholera, imports pestilence and embraces consumption. It covers the land with idleness, misery and crime. It fills our jails, supplies our almshouses, and demands our asylums. It engenders controversies, fosters quarrels and cherishes riot. It is the life blood of the gambler, the element of the burglar, the prop of highwaymen and the support of the midnight incendiary. It crowds your penitentiaries and furnishes victims for your scaffolds. It countenances the liar, respects the thief, and esteems the blasphemers. It defames the nevolence, hates love, scorns virtue and slanders innocence. It incites the father to butcher the helpless offspring, helps the husband to massacre his wife, and the child to grind the paricidal axe. It burns men, consumes women, detests life, curses God and despises heaven. It suborns witnesses, nurses perjury, defiles the jury box, and stains the judicial ermine. It degrades the citizen, debases the legislator, dishonors the statesman, disarms the patriot. It brings shame, not honor; terror, not safety; despair, not hope; misery, not happiness; and with the malevolence of a fiend, it calmly surveys its frightful desolation, and unsatisfied with the havoc, it poisons felicity, kills peace, ruins morals, blights confidence, slays reputation, wipes out national honors, then curses the world, and laughs at its ruin.

—[Bob Ingersoll.]

—A LONDON paper tells of a stout man of diffident presence who would walk solemnly into a restaurant or bar and stop suddenly before any of three or four people he might happen to see.

When they turned their eyes upon him, as they naturally would do, he proceeded with great gravity to unbutton his waistcoat. The result of this was the disclosure of an enormous beard some two feet in length, the lower part of which was kept inside the waistcoat when not required for professional purposes. He would then, after receiving any comments with perfect silence, button up his waistcoat and hold out his hat. His whole demeanor seemed to say:—

"This truly magnificent beard speaks for itself; no words of mine can add to its beauty, and if you haven't sense enough to appreciate it, had I drop a copper in the owner's hat, words would be wasted on you."

—The Southern Pacific railway company is trying to get possession of the Texas Pacific land grant in Arizona, New Mexico and California, and claims that the grounds taken by the attorney general in deciding that the New Orleans Pacific is entitled to the backbone land grant apply to this case.

—An immense amount of building is in progress in Washington. Many government employes at from \$2500 to \$4000 a year own handsome houses in more or less fashionable quarters, and invite the reflection that they are marvelously good managers to do it.

—BUILDING is going on in Philadelphia so fast this spring, that the man who goes to sleep on a lot at night is liable to have a roof over his head in the morning—that is if the police do their duty.—[Philadelphia Herald.]

MISCELLANEOUS.

Oh, My Back!

That's a common expression and has a world of meaning. How much suffering is summed up in it.

The singular thing about it is, that pain in the back is occasioned by so many things. May be caused by kidney disease, liver complaint, consumption, cold, rheumatism, dyspepsia, overwork, nervous debility, &c.

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Logansport, Ind. Dec. 1, 1886.

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