

COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.



"That Government is the best which governs least."

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DEMOCRAT.

Dr. Berkeley's Prophecy.

The following lines have become interesting to Americans from the fact that they were written long before it was a matter of reasonable calculation that we would ever become emancipated from our colonial vassalage. The author was Bishop of Clonfert, and celebrated as a metaphysician.

The muse, disgusted at an age and clime
Harrow of every glorious theme,
In distant lands now waits a better time,
Producing subjects worthy fame.

In happy climes, where, from the genial sun
And virgin earth, such scenes ensue
The force of art by Nature seems undone,
And fancied beauties by the true.

In happy climes, the seat of innocence,
Where Nature guides and virtue rules—
Where men shall not improve for truth and sense
The pedantry of courts and schools.

There shall be seen another golden age
The rise of empire and of arts;
The good and great inspiring epic rage,
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

Not such as Europe breeds in her decay:
Such as she bred when fresh and young,
When heavenly flame did animate her clay,
By future ages shall be sung.

Westward the course of empire takes its way,
The four first acts already past—
A fifth shall close the drama with the day,
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

Westward the star of empire, &c. This error is almost always perpetrated by writers for the periodicals of the day. It is time it was arrested.

Random Shots, No. 8.

BY NONDESCRIBT.

American and English Authors.

A NATION does not attain an eminence in literature in a day. Centuries are required to perfect and polish a language, and until it reaches a good degree of perfection, its literature must necessarily be defective. True, it may boast of genius and talent, but the most original thoughts badly expressed, and the boldest conceptions illy executed; excite neither enthusiasm nor admiration. There are also other considerations upon which the literary works of a nation nationally depend; viz the genius of its institutions and the natural disposition of its inhabitants.

There was a time when an American book was not read, even at home. When transatlantic criticisms were the order of the day, and praise and censure were awarded upon this side of the water, upon the dictum of an English reviewer. This state of things was a disgrace to the country and gradually the evil has amended. And why should it not? What has been produced in the old world whose parallel or superior has not flourished here? In arms can any bear a comparison with a Washington or a Jackson? In eloquence with a Washington or a Jackson? In science with a Franklin? In statesmanship with a Jefferson? In law, medicine, theology and literature, the names of our distinguished men are legion.

In poetry it must be confessed, that while we can boast some of the sweetest and most classical productions in the language, England has as yet far outstripped us. We certainly have no eminently great poets. The time for this must come yet. In every other department we equal or excel. Under the head of poetry the drama is of course included. A great Author is not so particularly the property of any one nation as of the world. Homer belongs not to Greece, his fame extends far beyond her narrow boundaries, spreads over every clime and will descend to latest posterity. Horace prophesies the same of himself. Milton and Shakespeare and Byron will be at home where ever the English language is spoken and read.

The mania for English Books and Authors continued, notwithstanding the Giant strides of our own literature; until the notorious Charles Dickens, better known as "Boz," in his long-to-be-remembered avator to the shores of this continent. Every body was crazy. Dickens was toasted and dined and supped and fondled like a little Lap dog, as he finally proved himself to be. Having failed in his mission to the United States, he returned round and vomited upon us a most infamous libel; pouring out his spleen and malice upon those who had paid him that respect and attention, which he showed by this course, he did not merit or deserve.

This last dose, thank God! cured for all time to come, the sickly notions of all favored British writers. The nation recoiled from the viper—and the dinners and suppers eaten with Dickens, poured upon the stomachs of the Partakers. While no one would object to carrying out the letter and spirit of the motto "honor to whom honor" every right minded man acknowledges the fallacy of the doctrine, "the King can do no wrong." Let respect be paid to merit, wherever found, in proportion to its deserts, for no one man ever established the literature of any country.

I make a few remarks on the subject of hankering after every thing foreign in the first No. of these articles, under the head of "Titles in America" promising to say more at some other time. To show how effectually Dickens cured up our people, it is only necessary to remark, that the advent of "Boz," displaced and Lover, both of them

distinguished in the Republic of letters, have been travelling through the United States and they buy their own dinners and suppers.

They receive the respect and consideration due them, as men know in the paths of literature, but man worship is dispensed with. Every nation owes, and should pay a sufficient regard to the learned, talented and scientific men of another. It is an incentive, an inducement that no man will disregard. Man owes much to society, but in return it should be remembered, that society owes, also, much to man. The obligation is not all on one side by any means. If a general owes much to his soldiers they are also bound to him.

The time for discarding an American Book has passed. It will be some time yet, however before a very great literary effort will be made here, for this country is got up upon the go-a-head principle. All are well informed but none are super-eminent.

THE MANIC CLOWN.

A THRILLING SKETCH—BY J. H. BROWN.

The following narrative, with scarcely any alteration, is true. The particulars thrilling as they are, were taken from the mouth of the unfortunate creature, during one of the lucid intervals, between his bowl of madness, while confined in the mad-house of P—, England, and may be remembered as being noticed by journals of the time; the notes were laid aside, but not forgotten, and the author had but waited an opportunity to place them in this manner before the readers of this sheet.

"And here," said the keeper, "as he came to 13, from whence came low moaning, 'here we have a strange prisoner, from whom you may gather a tale worthy of note and surpassing any you have taken, if we can but find him quiet, as he is at times; a strange story is his, and he is one of the most savage and raving prisoners we have, at times.'"

So saying, he unlocked the door, after having looking thro' at the grate, and we entered; crouched down upon his iron and immovable stool in the corner, with his face buried in his hands, hair long, black and matted, his dress fantastical and strange—being but the attire, torn in various places, of a ring mimic—was a man who moved not at our entrance: he was, like all we had seen, chained by the wrists to the floor, rendering it impossible for him to move more than was required, in sitting—or lying upon the coarse bed beside him. Nothing escaped him save a low moan, which at times he sent forth, and shaking his head, buried it still deeper in his hands; the keeper said in this manner he had passed whole days, and then he was most peaceable, and less violent.

Touching him with the end of the stick he carried in his hand, he said, "look up." And the miserable being turned up his haggard face to our view.

"Why do you come here again?" said he, sadly—"to make a show of me!—You tell me, and those who come to look at me, that I am mad! do you not fear me? ay! strong man—do ye not fear me, weak creature that I am? yes, and so you chain my arms and hands and feet so, that I cannot lift them up, but look ye, there is one thing you cannot chain—one thing you cannot manacle, and if you could, I would bear all the chains that could be heaped upon me—memory! chain that! keep it dead from before me—let it not haunt me day and night—let me hear the voice that rings forever in my ear and you may chain and load me down, and I will thank you for it."

And he dropped his head, and buried his face once more in his hands.

"He has not been so rational for many a day," said the keeper, "for which I am thankful, for he is like a lion when the fit is on him and—"

"Ha! ha! ha! shouted the madman, raising and flinging his arms as high about him as his manacles allowed—"ha! ha! ha! I am with you once again! come, is all ready! who goes on first? why do you stare so wildly at me! come, I am merry and shall make them all laugh out to-night!—ha! ha! ha! and his pale face was lit up with a wild, demonical expression. Soon he spoke again—

"Where, Mary, not come yet? Strange, it's time—long past the time and she knew well that she should be here early. Why gaze on me? she is not—no, no, nothing has happened—tell me, is she safe, is my

dear child safe! Oh, God, I remember, Mary is dead—dead. Ha! ha! ha!"

And, with loud shrieks he dashed his hands to his forehead.

Soon he sat down again upon his low iron stool dejectedly, and spoke not; then looking up again, he gazed round, and upon the keeper and myself, who stood by the door, beyond his reach.

"Come nearer me," said he, beckoning—

"Come nearer; no, not you, I fear you," and he shuddered as the keeper stepped towards him—I fear you, for your eye strikes a terror to my heart, and that, and the form of my child before me ever, is all I dread! Come, and I will tell you of my child—my little Mary, my own pet child—I'll tell you how she died."

Not daring to trust myself within his reach, I stepped as near to him as possible, so that he could not reach me; he bent forward, and placed his head upon his hand, and with a sudden tremor and wildly glaring eye, he began:

Once, I know not when, but I could count by days, I knew the night, tell the bright sun and the clear moon and stars, but now all are the same to me.—Days I know none, and nights linger round me ever; well, long, long ago, ere I came to this dull gloomy place, I was out among men; drank, eat, cried, laughed like men, ay, and that too merrily, for I was jester in the ring, made the crowd, the heartless rabble, laugh and raised a merry noise, no matter whether my heart was sick or gay, but I was glad some times to see the long tiers, the closely packed boxes, and the stalls, each one with smiles, to hear the loud laugh, the merry words, and knew that I had caused it all—to hear their hurrahs, to see them wave their hats and handkerchiefs, when with a shrill whoop, I jumped into the ring.—That would cheer me sometimes when my heart belied the laugh upon my face the jest to which my tongue gave utterance.

Well, so years went on, until my wife, my own beloved Mary, died; she whom I loved so fondly and true, I laid to sleep in the cold damp earth; no one could have thought that I, the jester, the clown, the one who made them laugh could weep! But oh! how many hours I have passed beside that lonely grave; my Mary! she had loved me as few women love, she had trodden in the same rough road, walking beside me in my troubles and sorrows, sharing what I enjoyed, or suffered without a murmur; and when I knew she was dead, it seemed as if my time on earth was over, and the same grave dug for her should take me in also. But she had left me one over whom I must watch with anxiousness, and love if possible, more than heretofore, my little daughter, the image of her mother, my own little pet, Mary.

I struggled with the deep, the bitter curse of poverty. Could I have gained a livelihood by toil, incessant hardship and endurance, elsewhere, gladly would I have rushed to it and blessed heaven for its kindness. But no; poor, broken-down, a miserable, wretched man—no profession, no business, save the one I followed. I was still forced to drag on in the arena, where my wants allowed but a very short scanty respite upon my wife's death.

But what cared the crowd? the clown should not be sad, no, impossible for the ring jester to weep, it was a thing unheard of, and would have raised a loud, er laugh than any of my liveliest sallies.—And so with a heart overburdened, sick and faint, I was forced to laugh and make merry.

"Oh, what a pleasure and a joy to me was little Mary! how her sweet artless smiles lit up the gloom within my breast—how her merry laugh made me feel young and happy for the time, and with what fondness, strange, ay, mad devotion did I hang upon every word, tone, look of hers! She grew, and was beautiful indeed.

How many hours when the toil of my profession was over for the night, did I sit beside her little cot, and gaze upon her as she lay sleeping before me! often, very often, with a smile playing upon her lovely face, telling that her dreams were sweet and pleasant, and make me even smile

myself as I looked upon her, and wished that I was as young and innocent, as she was.

"And then what horrid horrid thoughts came crowing in upon my feverish brain. Ah, how I'd struggle and fight with them, and I would weep and moan aloud.

"For, oh! I thought—yes the thought would come, what if death should rob me of her—her, my Mary—all, all I loved on the wide earth—she in whom were centered all my affections, the only one inducing me to still drag on my weary life: what if the cold, strong, sure arm of death should smite her down in all her purity and loveliness? True, she would die, would die some time, as did her mother, as must all of us, but should that moment be while I remained on earth? Oh, how I prayed to God to arrest death's dart till I was in the skies.

"Yes, will you believe it, the clown—mark me the clown prayed! The one who, in fanciful attire, leaped and rode, joking merrily in the ring—he, the one who wept beside the grave of his dear wife, prayed beside the little cot of his sweet child—he prayed for her!

"And then again another and more dreadful vision came to me! to which she thought of death was nothing: should she die, growing more beautiful and lovely every hour—should she still continue the object of my entire thought and fall to sin!—oh, God! the thought was sickening, then how I bent down and prayed—then how I trembled for the fate of my dear child.

"London's no place for a young, motherless and beautiful girl: for temptation and every allurements to sin and vice existed upon each turn: and should she fall! Would that ere that moment I could see her a corpse before me!

Well, as I'd set, and gaze and muse on all of this, as my thick coming fancies passed before me, sometimes she would awake at first she was surprised to find me there in tears, and sought to know the cause; and then she would say, 'dear father, do go to rest, for your own little Mary asks you; then I'd kiss, and bid her good night, wishing her pleasant dreams, and leave her till I thought she was asleep again, and then go softly creeping back again to watch till morning.

Each day, each moment, found me growing weaker and weaker. And as she grew more and more fair and beautiful, the more I failed in strength and every thing, but love for her, no abatement could there be in that while the life-blood coursed through my veins.

"Sometimes I took her to her mother's grave, where she was always sure to bring some simple flower, and I would tell her of the one who laid beneath, so good, so gentle and so kind, telling her that she must try and be like her; and then she'd ask me many artless questions, if she was in Heaven then, and if she loved me as tenderly as did she, and then she'd say the only word upon the head stone, simply 'Mary, she said, 'why that is my name too!

"My salary became inadequate to my wants, I pinched myself sadly to allow my daughter education, and enable her to dress prettily, and that she might not suffer for a thing. So I applied for more: and told them that I could not live with what I had. But alas they answered that my request could not be complied with, said they would retain me paying me what I was then receiving or that I might go, for though I was a favorite, I was grown weak, and old and many a younger one was waiting for the chance and situation I then held.

"I demurred, but it was of no avail—pleaded poverty, but it was of no help, and I was turning to leave when once again the manager spoke to me—

"If you are poor and wanting as you say I can name a way by which you can get money.

"Name it," eagerly cried I.

"Your daughter, she is young and handsome she—"

"What mean you by these words," shouted I as I stood panting before him—

"Why not train her for the arena?"

"Horrible idea! Train my little Mary for the arena? No, no I could not think

of such a thing. I could not find it in my heart to bring that dear, one, pure as she was, untouched, unsullied yet by sin, into the midst of the many low vile creatures hanging round such a place. No, no, the thought was agony.

"So I toiled on, harder and harder still than ever, little did those who laughed so loudly, so lengthily, and so heartily, think the heart of him who caused him so to do was sadly beating, while he sang the merry song, or danced and capered, telling his curious jokes, and talking out so loud himself, oh no. At length nature could support it no longer. I grew sick, and was scarcely able to go through my performance: and the words of the manager recutting to me again, there was no alternative, I was forced to bring her to the house.

"And that hour when first she stepped therein I curse, ay curse it from my heart!"

And here the poor maniac, so rational, and for such a length of time, covered his face with his hands, and swaying his body to and fro, uttered loud curses and cries.—Upon this I feared that the remainder of his story was lost, and waited long for his paroxysm to cease, by degrees his voice subsided, and he commenced again.

She murmured not—she said she was glad she could be earning something to assist me in our poverty, and she would try her best to learn and please, poor child, poor Mary!

"Weeks—weeks, and many too we practised. Every day for hours, and she would not say that she was tired, no complaint not one, and she learned too, rapidly.

"How I watched her then! all day, all night not a moment could my eyes be from her. After hours and hours of training and toil she was prepared for debut.

"The day preceding the night was sad enough for me. We went together to her mother's grave, and sat an hour or two: I told her that she was soon to come before the world, that she would be surrounded by sin, misery and temptation, but ever to cherish the memory of, that mother dead, who when living was free from taint and peerless as driven snow. She was so young, she could not understand me fully, but said, sweet child, that she would go to Heaven to meet her there, and if she would she must be good to do so.

"The night arrived—portentous night; and with a sadly beating heart I put on my customary habiliments. Mary was to appear in two performances, the first alone, the second in conjunction with the best performer in the arena—and sweetly did she look when all attired for her first appearance. Never had she looked so beautiful, with her little spangled frock and tights, so like a sylph, so pure, so innocent. Again and again I kissed her, and bid her fear not.

"The house, long before the advertised time for the raising of the curtain, was densely packed, for the announcement of the first appearance in public of the daughter of—had long been underlined, and had been heralded forth in glowing words for several days. Yes, men came to look upon the one whom poverty had compelled to appear, whom want had driven from her peaceful home, and to laugh at the jests of her sad hearted father.

"And they would not look in vain, for at rehearsal the manager, struck with her beauty and daring courage, with her skill on horseback, made me liberal offers for her services, which poverty of course made me accept. It is not often managers applaud their hirelings.

"Tier above tier they rose—and when, as the curtain rose up on high, and with a shriek and merry 'here I am,' I jumped into the ring, deafening plaudits made all echo again.

"I know not how I acted, what I said, but from time to time I heard the shout; my thoughts were upon my child, and when the moment came for her to appear, and I led her by her little hand to make her bow, feelings of pride mingled with my sadness, for it was Mary, my child, for whom they shouted, unto whom they rose, to whom every eye was turned.

"But oh! what a moment for me! With lightness of air she vaulted to the saddle,

and round went the noble steed like lightning, round the arena it seemed to me as if it were not half so long, then how they applauded! My eyes followed her as she went round, my heart knocked against my bosom, at each beat, and when she stopped for rest I could not speak. It was well for me that they saw it not; they were waving handkerchiefs and sending flowers to her from every portion of the place.

"It was a triumph. I was wild, frantic with joy, fear, and weakness! Sweetly, and with grace she smiled and waved her tiny arms and hands, as the foaming steed walked slowly around to let her breathe, and give her rest.

"Off again, performing more difficult feats than before, and with the same ease and grace. One could not have told, to have looked on, that she had not done the same thing months and months before, so easy, no effort, so coolly, no embarrassment; it was through—I breathed again.

"But no—she must come before them: and I led her out again. I need not tell how they shouted, what they did: you'd say my brain was turned with love for my dear child, and would not think I told the truth.

"And now, one more appearance and the last that night. On she came, borne by the best performer in the arena, the favorite of the place: with what ease and grace he held her upon high, how smartly she looked, away up there, all tinsel and spangles, glittering so finely in the gaslight: and he like Hercules beside of her, urging the steed onwards to its utmost powers.

"The most intrepid riders are carried the swiftest to enable them to sustain their balance, and he was famous for the swiftness of his riding, it seemed as if his steed flew. No word came from my lips, though I was in the arena all the time. I was not thinking where I was, or what I was doing, all I thought of was my child.

"High in the air he threw her, catching her so easily, as if 'twas play, and she, clapping her little hands, no fear had she. How they applauded! her triumph was complete.

"Each moment brought the performance nearer to a close, and how I wished it through. But no, his steed fearing the whip, trained to exerting all his powers, when his rider was upon his back, kept on this lightning course, and, oh God! in one unlucky feat, he missed her, I saw her fall, the horse reared, and down came his heavy hoofs upon my Mary.

"I cannot tell you what followed, I saw them rise round on every side, there were cries, but I know that piercing shrieks drowned them, I saw blood, red blood upon my dear child's face. I had sprung to her ere the horse had hardly moved, and seized her from beneath his feet, and all connected with the place rushed to my side.

"But she, the beautiful, the idol of my life and hope, a moment before so full of joy, I had clasped unto my heart a corpse.

"Ah! she was dead! dead like her mother Mary, dead like every thing to me that should be full of life! dead, and I lived!

"I know no more, no more," said the poor maniac, as he wiped his dry eyes, as if there had been enough to dash away.

"I could have wept once, but now my eyes are dry, and I've no tears to shed.—Men tell me that she lies beside her mother's grave, and that for many hours they could not separate us, but I remember nothing of it, and am sure it was not so.—But they brought me here to this dark place, and shut out the bright light, and will not let me listen to the songs of birds, or smell the fragrance of the flowers, they chain me down, ay! load me with double manacles as these, when they have barred the door, ay! they cannot close them to my Mary. I see her now, now with the red blood streaming down her pale face, don't let me see it—away—away!"

And with a tear of real pity and after obtaining the location of the two graves, I turned from him, and the massive doors were again closed and barred upon the Manic Clown.