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LITERARY.

THE HEIRESS OF BRUGES.

(1.) [This new Work by Mr. Grattan is a rapid and somewhat hurried tale connected with the energetic and successful struggle in which Flanders, aided by Holland, threw off the oppressive dominion of Spain in 1600. The courage and civil spirit of Freedom by which these brave and industrious countries have been so often distinguished, still evince to the world the durability of national character; although in its recent display, it is "sicklied o'er" with the political character and difficulties of the times. But the contrast is rendered still more painful by showing that Liberty, however sought or won, is no guarantee against the future revolutions of political relations and interests. It has to contend not only against foreign power and influence, but against the rise of new divisions and opponent views, the love of superiority, and all the passions which prompt or aid the ambition and rivalries of societies. The hopes of the Patriot and the friend of Freedom become darkened, when they see countries, as Holland and Belgium, once united in the cause of Liberty, contending against each other, as the oppressor and oppressed.]

Mr. G. preserving his Heroine in all the romantic purity of sentiment required by the laws of fiction, has given a pretty correct picture of the period. The military character still preserved something of the individuality of Chivalry. It was however gradually merging into the professional spirit of arms, and softening its connection with the different orders of society. Religion divided and degraded by worldly causes, had become an ingredient in all political changes, and filled up each vacancy in every scheme where something was required to sanctify or strengthen, and still worse, was frequently made substitute to motive, too offensive for political morality or too dangerous for open declaration.

The Hero of the Tale, one of the young and aspiring Patriots of Flanders, is represented with the usual qualities necessary in that character—talents, courage and grace—qualities not common, but not improbable. Circumstances partly connected with the revolutionary mystery and events of the time, and partly with an adventure not very creditable to the rigidity of his morality, induce the Count de Bassenvelt to woo the citizen—Heiress of Bruges, under an assumed and humble character; and in stooping to conquer he seems to have been fully aware of the value of his services in love as well as in war—as a Serrader or a Sabreur. While he was thus subduing her heart in the disguise of an Apprentice, studying "Music and the Laws," and protegee of her Father, her imagination and pride were excited and flattered by being the object of ceremonial overtures of alliance from him (which in their times and in their rank preceded personal introduction) in his proper Name and supported by his youthful renown. Although the Author is very careful to assure us of his Heroine's sensitive repugnance at his reported gallantries (which appears to have exceeded even the liberal bounds faintly traced by Romancers in their Ethical System) his youth, heroism, and rumoured fascination of manners, had effected an imaginary influence over her mind. In fact, either the ideal Count de Bassenvelt or Master Lambert Bronon, the young Student in propria persona, seem to have been quite equal to the task of winning her heart; for her pride was not a match for the reality in the person of her Father's humble dependent—and all his attractive powers scarcely succeeded in rivaling the visionary spell of ambition and report, and the possibility of her destiny being united with the rising Patriot of her Country. It would require Sir W. Scott, or some Master in demology and witchcraft to explain the second sight by which Beauty prognosticates its own future triumphs and elevation:—we suspect divination by the Mirror.

Our first Extract describes the state of Bruges at the period of this revolution. The second relates the origin of the wealth of Siger Van Rozenhoed, who had become, at the opening of the story, Burgomaster of his native City—one of its most influential citizens, and a zealous supporter of the patriotic party.]

The state of Belgium at that period was one of doubt, danger and confusion. The contest against Spanish tyranny had loosened all the ties which bound society together. In the fierce struggle for liberty every minor consideration was forgotten; and property of all kinds were left insecure, between despotism and anarchy.—The city of Bruges, though still a place of great wealth, inhabited by many noble families, and in many ways distinguished, was rapidly declining. The turbulent spirit of its inhabitants in its proud and palmy days, when it was the emporium of Europe, had by degrees deprived it of that high distinction. The richest and most enterprising of the foreign merchants had one by one abandoned it. The establishments of the various European powers, those of the Hansatic Towns, its best privileges and its most lucrative manufactures, were transferred to Antwerp. Emigration and war decreased its population, improvement became stagnant, property fell in value, speculation died away; but when an individual showed more energy than his fellows, and ventured a large purchase or extensive risk, his gains were, if successful, consequently enormous. However, as before mentioned, the insecurity of property at this crisis left little relish for enterprise; and men were contented to repose on the wealth they had inherited, or enjoy a competence, rather than hazard ruin in striving for increase. Still enough of its former greatness re-

mained to make Bruges in many ways delightful. It was at the period in question free from the actual presence of war. The riotous character of the people had subsided into one less agitating, though full as exciting. Men's minds became, by degrees, enlightened, instead of being inflamed; general interests gained a gradual, but by no means a complete ascendancy over local objects. The weavers, a body of men so desperately notorious in the history of the town, had in the opening of the revolution abandoned their looms, and taken up arms; not as of old, to sustain some sordid monopoly for private gain, but to fight against an odious enemy for the public good. With purity of motive came refinement of manners; and the great mart of commerce was changed into the chosen seat of elegance. The arts began to burst vividly through the fumes of intestine war. Painting, sculpture, and music were protected and encouraged; luxurious living and splendid apparel had been for ages characteristic of this celebrated place; and even at the period we treat of, the style of the female inhabitants, noble and plebeian, might have excited a remark from any queen who visited it, similar to that of the royal consort of Philip le Bel, in the fourteenth century, that "she found there six hundred ladies as well dressed as herself." Such were the striking features of the city, when Siger Rozen began to raise his head above the ignoble crowd, and looked even higher than that, for the indulgence of his aspiring views.

Siger Rozen was by trade a gold-beater; and, in the year 1560, inhabited that quarter of the town which stretches northward from the great square to the Asses Gate, at that time a straggling extent containing several close and ill-built streets, with gardens and orchards intermixed, the houses being either of wood, or preposterous specimens of the worst style of architecture, and then almost tumbling into decay. The one occupied by Siger Rozen was one of the oldest and most dilapidated. It threatened death and burial at the same time to any one venturesome enough to become its tenant; but the hardihood of Siger Rozen braved the danger, for the advantage of possessing in imagination a mansion of a hundred chambers. Such had once been the one in question, as was evidenced by some rotten beams and rafters, with sundry marks against the walls, roofs and ceilings, of what was, a century before, the still inhabited remains of a splendid palace. It had been constructed by the last representative of the noble family of Savenslacht, who was massacred, with many other men of rank, by the rebellious citizens under the very eyes of their captive sovereign, Count Louis de Creci, in the year 1325. The family became extinct in the person of this unfortunate victim; and his large possessions and new built palace being confiscated, descended through several generations to his race. These possessors had none of the sympathy of family pride to preserve intact the integrity of the estate, or keep up the unwieldy splendour of the mansion. The first was accordingly sold, resold, and subdivided; the latter crumbled away, moulding by moulding, cornice by cornice, wing by wing, galleries, corridors and parlours; till at length, in less than three hundred years from its erection, it became a desert shell of bare and weather-beaten walls, enclosing a mass of ruin and rubbish, and affording but a little corner nook, supported over one of the vast cellars, in which the poor and houseless gold-beater secured a shelter from the storms of the sky and the world.

Life had been up to this period a hard trial for Siger. He had held a long tussle with poverty and ill luck; and he never dreamed of being able one day to put his foot on their low-bent necks. But he indulged in, without knowing from whence they arose, long reveries of wealth and grandeur. He used often to look up to the ruin which sheltered him, or gaze from some jutting stone into the void of its wide area, and pace, in fancy, saloons and halls of renovated splendour. He sometimes rubbed his eyes in hopes of their opening again on realities; and always turned away with a sigh for those illusive minutes, which were worth an age of his every day life. Even in his sober hours, when the ding of his hammer told him where and what he was, he used to start at the notion that he had freed the imprisoned spirit of the metal by his strokes, and that it hovered round him in a grateful guardianship. Marvelling at these strange vagaries of imagination, he would ask himself what could have put them into his brain? But he never could solve this oft-repeated question; and never understood that his visions arose from the fumes of a dormant ambition, thus constantly giving notice of an existence which only waited for an excitement to be fully developed.

He was about thirty years of age when he secured the refuge just described, and he continued in its unrestricted occupation for several months. Siger, whose mind was at once active and speculative, amused himself in his leisure hours, when his hammer was laid at rest, in clearing away a little plot of garden ground, close to the remains of an octagonal pavilion, which had tumbled, like the mansion, into premature decay. He worked for several days, with pickaxe and shovel, clearing away the rubbish. One or two stragglers, who saw his work, and did not comprehend the possibility of redeeming sufficient of the soil to form a turnip bed, soon set the report afloat that poor Siger Rozen, sick of life, was about to put an end to it, and was digging his own grave. But his intentions were still more profound; and he

soon satisfied his inquisitive neighbours that his object was to make life itself more palatable, by being enabled to add, at small expense, a few pot-herbs to his soup, or a relish of parsnips to his Friday's dinner of salt sock-fish. This candid explanation of his motives relieved him from all the troublesome effects of curiosity. He was allowed to delve at his daily task without further observation; and well it was for him that he was not observed.

It was about the sixth or seventh evening of his labour, that, having returned from his master's workshop, and taken the shovel once more in hand, to clear away the last of the fragments of stone and brick which had impeded his progress, he was surprised to find that the instrument, at the very first stroke, penetrated through every obstruction, and sunk, half handle up, into a cavity, the bottom of which it did not touch. Siger started back, as if an earthquake had gaped before him. But he recovered himself in a moment or two; looked round wistfully, to be sure he was un-noticed; and returned to his work, with a quicker throbbing of the heart than seemed justified by the occasion; but it was excited by a vague sensation of hope, the extent of which was not known even to himself. Custom had by no means extinguished the dreamy thoughts which had taken possession of Siger's mind, from the very first day he had fixed himself in the desolate remains of the Savenslacht House. He made it his abode, with a vapoury notion of he knew not what, but something like that which makes the holder of a lottery ticket calculate (or at least speculate) in his own despite, on all possibilities, probabilities, and chances.

He at every moment expected to feel his instrument strike against an iron chest, or some hoard of treasure, as certainly as 'twould had been directed by a divining rod. At length, and after near an hour's continued delving in the extensive cavity, the shovel did come in contact with some object that felt different from any thing it had before struck against, and unlike those of our labourer's anticipations. It was a hard body in a soft covering. Siger threw down the shovel, and stooping low, he felt the material with trembling hand, and ascertained that it was neither more nor less than an old sack, of a texture originally coarse as well as strong. His fingers instinctively dabbled in every fold and crevice of the mass; but he could not by this means discover the nature of its contents. Once more throwing a cautious glance above him, and being again assured that the twilight shadows concealed no witness to his discovery, he resolved to lift the sack in his arms, heavy as it was, and drag it for secret inspection, into the furthest corner of the vault, where the faint light from above could barely serve, without betraying his purpose. He accordingly raised it up bodily, and with considerable effort; but the pressure of its weighty contents against the opening burst the rotten ligaments which bound it, as well as the worn out stuff of which it was made; and from its many apertures an actual flood of treasure poured out, at the feet of the amazed and bewildered man.

The first instinct of recovered sense made him nervously grasp the handfuls of the coin and jewels. His next feeling was anxiety to be assured that he was still alone; and he started on his feet, and looked up again into the garden. Although again satisfied on this point, he still dreaded interruption; and, urged by impulse more than reason, he began to scrape over a quantity of small and rubbish, until he had completely buried the whole mass of treasure. He then cautiously crept by the from the place, and creeping along the walls and through the tangled stubs, he gained his hovel. There, howe noises could not rest. The hum of street filled him with uneasiness; and the lights in the neighbouring houses made him fancy every inhabitant on the watch to seize upon his treasure. He grasped the first, indeed the only weapon he had, with his hammer of his trade; and he separate nerves rigidly wound up for a vigorous defence against all assailants, he repaired to the pavilion, and there kept start watch during the whole night; nor left his post till the broad daylight convinced him that his remaining on the spot was in itself as suspicious as it was unnecessary.

For two days more did Siger suffer tortures of the most various kind. He dreaded, to return to his secret hoard—he slunk in to quit the place for a moment; he repast out, when he sought each poor swagger with the air of a thief, instead of the air of a rich man—sat watching by day from his nook, and prowled at night in the garden, close to the spot which contained the hoard, which he panted once more to gloat over, yet dared not. His comparison of poverty had been bliss, in cold had all with his three days of wealth. He of his suffering of a miser, without any enjoyment; and he feared, at times, that of the superstition of his character, and the age, that some fiend had played him a trick of mere delusion; or, supposing the whole affair to be real, that some other might spirit away the treasure into the gaping depths of the earth.

Siger, however, did not long believe these apprehensions, so degrading to a man of his natural strength of mind. The first shock of this sudden change gone by, he recovered himself sooner, perhaps, than most other men would have done; after such a metamorphosis; for, in fact, one accustomed all his life to crawl upon the earth might well require some preparation, before he could stand erect, or go on two legs. Frequent visits to the vault were now boldly undertaken by day, as well as at night, and Siger divided his treasures into various parcels, which he

carefully buried in several parts of the premises that held no attraction to intruders. He began to walk more boldly in the streets, as he passed to and fro; and ventured to offer a couple of the larger coins for exchange, merely averring that he had found them. He had a tolerable notion of their value, and was not averse, but made a dexterous show of anxiety about the merest trifle, to remove any chance of suspicion, which an air of indifference might have excited. But he was all the while convinced that he was the actual possessor of almost boundless wealth. The very gold in coins, ornaments, and articles of plate, he saw to be of great value. He was afraid to calculate the worth of the jewels; arithmetic seemed to want numbers to complete the reckoning, and his head turned whenever he made the attempt.

[To be continued.]

MEMOIRS OF OBERLIN.

(2.) [The following extracts from the Life of Oberlin, a Lutheran Clergyman, in a remote and neglected District of France, may suggest many reflections useful in all situations of Society. The fame of this benevolent and singular man is entirely founded on that practical scheme of Religion and Morality which renders life a busy scene of action and improvement—rescuing the wretched and gloom of spiritual authority, for a cheerful and animated employment of all our faculties under a sense of Divine favour and approbation.]

'Confident,' says his biographer, 'that strength would be afforded if rightly sought. Oberlin resolved, when he entered on his cure, to employ all the attainments in science, philosophy and religion, which he had brought with him from Strasbourg, to the improvement of the parish and the benefit of his parishioners.' There seems reason to suppose that, before his marriage he had attempted too much at once, and acted in a manner which kindled opposition instead of conciliating good will. We are told that the persons over whom Stouber had gained an influence silently acquiesced in his projects, but that a very determined spirit of resistance soon manifested itself among others; and that, supposing old practices to be always safe, and new ones to be as certainly pernicious, they resolved not to submit to innovation. But the sort of resistance which they projected could not have been provoked by any of Oberlin's economical innovations; these, as will presently be seen, were judiciously introduced, and so evidently intended for general and tangible good, that they could not have raised an angry spirit in those by whom they were disapproved. Some rash interference with their customs—some premature attempt at resorting to discipline, where it had long been totally disused—may be suspected; otherwise, uncivilized and even brutal, as the people might be, they would never have formed a plan for waylaying their new minister, and inflicting upon him 'a severe castigation.'

In the consciousness of such power, Oberlin began his measures for civilizing the people, as one who rightly perceived that by bettering their social condition he should promote their moral, and thereby prepare a way for their spiritual improvement. All the roads belonging to the Ban de la Roche were impassable during the greater part of the year; and the only mode of communication from the greater part of the parish with the neighbouring towns was by stepping stones over the Bruche, a stream which, having its sources in these mountains, falls into the Ill before it reaches Strasbourg.—It was thirty feet wide at the crossing place; but in winter, the way is said, in the book before us, to have been along its bed; those who know what mountain streams are in winter may suspect some error here in the compiler. Being thus insulated, as it were, in their own valley, the inhabitants had no vent for their produce, had there been a surplus to dispose of; they had accustomed themselves in consequence to be contented with a bare and wretched subsistence; they had not even the most necessary agricultural instruments to aid them in obtaining this, and were without any means of procuring them. This was their state when Oberlin assembled them, and proposed to open a communication with the high road to Strasbourg by blasting the rocks, constructing a solid wall to support a road about a mile and a half in length along the banks of the Bruche, and building a bridge across that river near Rothau.

The peasants were astonished at such a proposal; they looked upon it as utterly impracticable, and all began to excuse themselves on the score of having as much private business on their hands as they could get through. They talked of difficulties, and raised objections, to which Oberlin replied, by reminding them, that they were shut up in their own villages six

months out of the twelve; whereas, if this road were made, and the river bridged, they would at all times have an open intercourse with the neighbouring district; they would always have a market for their produce—they might then supply themselves with many most useful things of which they now felt the want, and they would have the means of providing comforts for themselves and their children; and he concluded by saying, let those who see the importance of all this come and work with me! and with that, shouldering a pickaxe, off he set with a faithful servant, to begin the work. The effect of his speech and of his example was such, that the peasants are said not only to have desisted from their opposition, but with one accord to have hastened for their tools, and then followed him. He appointed to each his task, reserving for himself and his man the most difficult and dangerous places. This spirit spread through the whole parish; implements were wanted for the number of willing hands; he procured them from Strasbourg, and, as expenses accumulated, he obtained funds through the exertions of his friends. The Bank of Faith answers all demands that are made upon it by true and generous enthusiasm. Walls were erected to support the earth wherever it was likely to give way; mountain-torrents, which had hitherto inundated the meadows, were diverted into courses, or received into beds of their own construction; a neat wooden bridge, which at this day, though fifty years have elapsed, still bears the name of the Pont de Charite, was thrown over the Bruche; and at the commencement of 1770, a year and a half after Oberlin's marriage the whole task was completed, and a communication with Strasbourg opened.

Road and bridge making, which in our times have been brought to the highest point both of beauty and perfection by Mr. Telford, were among those arts that were well nigh lost at the breaking up of the Roman empire; they might have been wholly so, had not a necessary work of this kind occasionally been undertaken, sometimes by a saint, sometimes by the devil, according to circumstances rather of place than time; the devil was Pontifex Maximus among the mountains: a single saint or a convent took that office, together with the charge, *viam curandarum* upon the line of some highway. Oberlin, perhaps, was not aware that more than one good man has obtained his apotheosis in the Roman calendar by works like that which he had the ardour to undertake, and the happiness to accomplish. He looked as little for any reward in earthly honours as they had done; but he had that reward also at last; and immediately he was abundantly rewarded by the success of his endeavours, and the increased influence over his parishioners which he obtained by it. They now experiencing the benefit of his zealous exertions for their welfare, cheerfully engaged in his next project—that of forming roads between the four villages of his parish, which were till this time in a state of savage separation. The spirit of well directed industry that had thus been raised, made the Steinthal a lively and an animating scene: 'The pastor, who on the Sabbath had directed their attention with the earnestness and warmth wherewith his own soul was filled, to the rest that remaineth for the people of God,' was seen on the Monday, with a pickaxe on his shoulder, marching at the head of two hundred of his flock.

Such was the uncivilized state of the parish, and, indeed, of the adjacent country, that tools and implements of husbandry, at any nearer place than Strasbourg; two days, therefore, must be spent in going thither and returning; and as the same causes which had hitherto kept the people in barbarism had kept them poor, they had no money for such emergencies. Oberlin's whole income did not exceed a thousand francs; but if ever a man was 'passing rich with forty pounds a-year,' he was so. 'Spend, and God will send,' seems to have been his maxim—not in the spendthrift, reckless, and senseless use of the saying, but in the spirit of one who believed that he who hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord. He stocked a warehouse in Waldbach with these articles, and gave the purchasers credit; and he established a sort of lending fund, under the strict regulation that those who did not punctually replace the loan on the prescribed day were to lose, for a certain time, the privilege of borrowing from it again. These things could not have been done without assistance from his friends in Strasbourg; but Christian friends will never be wanting to such men for such objects. His next measure was to select some of the handiest of the elder boys, and send them to Strasbourg, there to learn the respective trades of carpenter, mason, glazier, cartwright, and blacksmith; these, when they returned to the Steinthal, trained up others, and their earnings circulated in the parish, which was another advantage gained. Most of their habitations were wretched cabins quarried in the rocks, or burrowed in the sides of the mountains: comfortable cottages were now erected under Oberlin's superintendance, and cellars deep enough to preserve their potatoes from the frost.

One of his favorite maxims was, 'Let nothing be lost; and nature was never followed more carefully in observations of this principle than by Oberlin. He taught his people not only how to manage their manure in the best manner, but to convert leaves, rushes, moss, and coles from the pine forest into a compost; and he paid children a certain price for tearing up old woollen rags and cutting old shoes into pieces for the same purpose. Never was there a more practical utilitarian; nothing escaped his indefatigable attention, and nothing was beneath it; and the manner in

which he induced his parishioners to profit by his lessons, shows a degree of patient prudence, which is seldom found connected with so much ardour and enthusiasm. Ignorant people are never more obstinate in ignorance than when any attempt is made to improve those practices in husbandry which they have learnt from their fathers. They acknowledged Oberlin's genius as a road maker; but they could not believe that their pastor, who had spent all his life in Strasbourg, could understand the management of fields and gardens as well as themselves. Being well aware of this he prepared a practical lesson, without giving them any cause to suspect it was for their instruction. There were two gardens belonging to the parsonage, each crossed by a frequented footpath; one of these, which was noted by the poverty of its soil, he converted into a nursery, where, having well prepared the ground, he planted slips of apple, pear, plum, cherry, and walnut trees; in the other he dug trenches, four or five feet deep, in which he planted young fruit-trees, and surrounded them with such soil as he considered best adapted to them. In this work a favourite and intelligent servant, the same who had been his aide-de-camp in road-making, was his sole assistant. The trees flourished in the course of their sure growth—this being a work which, when well performed, is liable to no casual disappointment. The people, as he expected, could not help observing this, and wondering at the difference between the state of their pastor's garden and of their own; and at length they questioned him, to his wish, how it was that such fine trees had been made to grow in such an unfavorable soil? Oberlin, according to his custom of connecting every incident with religious considerations, first directed their thoughts to Him 'who causeth the earth to bring forth her bud, and who crowneth the year with his goodness.' He then reminded them that all the benefits of nature were not gratuitously bestowed on man, and explained to them that this was one of those cases in which, according to their labour, would be their reward. 'Those who wished to follow his example—and it was soon generally followed—were supplied with young trees from his nursery; grafting became a favourite employment, when he had instructed them in it; gardening a favorite recreation. 'The vice of the country underwent a complete change; for the cottages, hitherto, for the most part, bare and desolate, were surrounded by neat little orchards and gardens; and in place of indigence and misery, the villages and their inhabitants gradually assumed an air of rural happiness.'

Stouber's school-house, which was the only regular one in the five villages, had been constructed of unseasoned wood; Oberlin found it in a ruinous state; nor could he, have persuaded the overseers of the commune to repair it, unless he had formally engaged that no part of the expense should fall upon the parish funds. Some money he collected among his friends at Strasbourg; and with this, though far from sufficient for the purpose, he began, 'for neither personal considerations, nor the fear of being unable to meet contingent expenses, ever deterred him from putting into execution schemes of usefulness. He had an unbounded confidence in the goodness of his heavenly Father; and was convinced, as he often said, that if he asked for anything with faith, and it was really right that the thing should take place, it would infallibly be granted to his prayers.' Too much of such faith is a better quality, in a man, and

Dr. Johnson somewhere notices the reformation of a parish in a very savage state, (as too many parishes are) by the civilizing influence of a decayed gentleman, who came among them to teach a petty school. It is to be regretted that he did not obtain the details and preserve them; they would have formed as valuable a paper as any in the Rambler. One of the most notable things in a poor and dull allegory of Bunyan's age is, an invasion of the whole country of Nonage by Apollyon, who the more fully to accomplish his intentions in occupying it, resolves 'that a great part of the weak and feeble inhabitants should be tutored by Mrs. Ignorance.' Accordingly, he accosts that personage in these words—'My dear cousin and friend, I have a great number of pretty boys and girls for you to tutor and bring up for me—will you undertake the charge?' 'Most dread and mighty Apollyon,' she replies, 'you know I never yet declined any drudgery for you which lay in my power.' Apollyon, then, after complimenting her upon what she had already done for the advancement of his kingdom and greating his power in the world, turns to his associates and says, 'Noble Peccatum, this gentleman, Madam Ignorance, is your child, your natural offspring, your own flesh and blood; therefore, I charge you to help and assist her in this great work; for I should be glad if she had the educating of all the children in the known world.' Peccatum will keep his ground when he dares not show his face—and was, no doubt, sometimes found poaching in the Ban de la Roche; but as for Madam Ignorance, Oberlin fairly cast her out of his parish. Perhaps education was never in any place made so general, nor, in many useful respects, carried so far, as by this extraordinary and most exemplary pastor.

[To be Continued.]