

MISCELLANY

The Closing Scene.

By F. B. READ.

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

Within the sober realms of leafless trees,
The russet year inhaled the dreamy 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 dun waters widening in the vales,
Sent down the air a greeting to the mills,
On the dull thunder of alternate flails.

All sights were mellowed, and all sounds subdued,
The hills seemed further and the stream sang low,
As in a dream the distant woodman hewed,
His winter log, with many a muffled blow.

The embattled forests, crewlike armed with gold,
Their banners bright with every martial line,
Now stood like some sad, beaten host of old,
Withdrawn afar in Time's remotest blue.

On sombre wings the vulture tried his flight;
The dove scarce heard his sighing mate's complaint;
And, like a star slow drowning in the light,
The village church vane seemed to pale and faint.

The sentinel crouk upon the hill-side crew—
Crew thrice—and all was stiller than before;
Silent, till some replying warbler blew
His alien horn, and then was heard no more.

Where erst the jay, within the elm's tall crest,
Made garrulous trouble round her unfledged young;
And where the oriole hung her swaying nest,
By every light wind like a censer swung;

Where sang the noisy martins of the eaves,
The busy swallows circling ever near—
Foreboding, as the rustic mind believes,
An early harvest and a plenteous year;

Where every bird that waked the vernal feast,
Shook the sweet slumber from its wings at morn;
To warn the reaper of the rosy East,
All now was sunless, empty and forlorn.

Alone, from out the stubble, piped the quail;
And croaked the crow through all the dreary gloom;
Alone, the pheasant drumming in the vale,
Made echo in the distant cottage loom.

There was no bud, no bloom upon the bowers;
The spiders mowed 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 dreary air,
And where the woodbine shed upon the porch
Its crimson leaves, as if the year stood there,
Firing the floor with its inverted torch.

Amid all this, the centre of the scene,
The white-haired matron, with monotonous tread,
Plied 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,
Oft supped, and broke with her the ashen crust,
And in the dead leaves still she heard the stir
Of his thick 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—
Re-gave the sword to rust upon the wall.

Re-gave 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 drooping 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 drooped the distaff through her hands serene;
And loving neighbors smoothed her careful shroud;
While death and winter closed the autumn scene.

What an Empress Does With Her Old Clothes.

What lady, when reading graphic descriptions of the brilliant and costly toilets of the French Empress, who must needs have a new dress every day in the year, has not wondered what becomes of these splendid fabrics etiquette or fashion allow her to wear but once? Somebody tells us how they are disposed of:

When Queen Elizabeth died, she left, as she said, a thousand and more dresses. Modern queens are more practical, for they dispose of their dresses in their lifetime. Eugenie, who sets the fashions for the civilized world, has a sale of her cast-off dresses every year, and as she rarely wears a dress twice, the number sold is always very great. A Paris letter-writer gives a graphic account of a sale just terminated. He says that

"the custom was established by the royal ladies of the Tuileries long before the great revolution, acceded to by the Empress Josephine, continued under the restoration, maintained by the Princess of the house of Orleans, and kept up with great spirit under the present reign.

A long gallery which runs along the basement story of the palace, looking into the garden, just opposite the Prince Imperial's winter walk, is fitted up from one end to the other with oak wardrobes. This is one called *de Froque* of the palace. It is here that the refuse dresses and cast-off apparel of the royal and imperial ladies, who have succeeded each other for the hundred years in occupation of the Tuileries, are invariably borne when rejected from the floor above. The wardrobe cupboards, numerous and extensive as they are, get generally well filled during the year, and when the four seasons are considered thoroughly over, a sale is made of the whole, where every article is prized beforehand, and visitors are admitted to view and purchase without the observance of further ceremony than the presentation of an invitation card from her Majesty's attendants, to whom the privilege of granting them belongs.

The sale is called in the present day the "Detour de Compeigne," but has been known under other names during former reigns—"Sacrifice de Fontainebleau," "Caprices de St. Cloud," "Joles de la Malmaison"—according to the place whence the court returned to spend the winter in Paris, and which have varied with every sovereign. The sale of the regal wardrobe of the Tuileries is conducted on the strictest principle of equity. The shutters of the long gallery are closed, and it is lighted up from one end to the other by lamps and candles, so that the light is stronger than it would be were daylight admitted, as the ceiling is low and the windows sunk deep into the wall. Every article is ticketed, and, of course, no deviation from the original decision can possibly be allowed.

A long line of stretchers are placed all down the middle of the gallery, the doors of the wardrobes on either side are flung open, and the visitor, walking slowly down on one side and returning by the other, makes choice of what may suit her taste, and inscribing the number it bears on a card, hands the latter to the attendant in waiting at the door and departs.

The stretchers are occupied by the shawls, the wardrobes by the dresses, the shelves by the under linen, while a sort of counter at the further end of the gallery is filled with the chamignons, on which are exhibited the bonnets and head-dresses, the white satin dress, most splendidly embroidered in silver, with the tunic of *bouillonnee* gauze, and the silver *nouches* confined by bands of ponceau velvet, in which her majesty went to the opera with the king consort of Spain, was not quoted higher than the nankeen-colored dress and jacket, braided in green, which was recognized as the uniform invented by the empress for the drives at Fontainebleau.

To be sure, the buttons were of malachite, and set in gold, but the material of the dress could scarcely be considered as bearing any value whatever. The shawls were principally of French manufacture, and mostly for summer wear; the cloaks and mantles, deprived of their lace or fur, were unattractive. The utmost exaggeration seems to exist upon the prices put upon the bonnets.

In the first place, the article itself is out of fashion almost as soon as seen; in the next, it possesses no resource whatever; and, above all, it is liable to greater deterioration than the dress. The habit of leaning back in the carriage, which has become so general, destroys the bonnet immediately, and renders it shabby in form, even when still bright and fresh in color. The proceeds of the sale are given ostensibly to the poor, but the things are generally bought by the valets and women of the wardrobe, who dispose of what remains unsold to the great dealers in Paris, who again sell them to their customers at immense prices.

A UNION SOLDIER TO THE RESCUE.

A day or two since, a Confederate soldier, recently discharged from a Northern prison, was returning home to the far off South, sick, emaciated and almost dead, when, in passing the Broadway Hotel, an individual who was sitting in a chair by the door, on Broadway, accosted him with something near the following language: "So you got your rights, did you, you d—d cowardly Southern son of a b—h?" The pale, battle-scarred veteran turned slowly around, while a cold gleam of lightning lit his dark eye, and said slowly, "I am no

coward, and my poor old, gray-haired mother is a decent woman; and, sir, I have seen the day when you would not dare insult me thus; but I am now among strangers, sick and feeble, endeavoring to get home to my friends once more. The Government has kindly furnished me with transportation for that purpose, and I do not believe it or its soldiers would thus insult a sick man."

A Union soldier passing by happened to hear the whole affair, and at the conclusion of the poor fellow's words, turned to the scoundrel sitting by the door with, "You thus outrage the feelings of a man not able to defend himself against your cowardly assaults—you miserable dog—you sneaking puppy. This man has fought me for four years, while you had not courage enough in your coward heart to shoulder arms on either side. No man would use such language toward an invalid, if he had ever been where bullets whistle. I honor him for his courage, but despise you for your infernal cowardice and meanness, and will teach you such a lesson as you will not soon forget." It was all the excited crowd, which, attracted by high words, had gathered around, could do to keep the noble fellow from roundly thrashing the miscreant. The Union soldier accompanied the sick man to the boat, as he said, "to see that no more insults should be given him." This heroic action deserves commendation and reward.

Stockholders' Meeting.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE.
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Wilmington, N. C., Oct. 20, 1865.

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LETTER FROM MR. BARNUM.
New York, July 14, 1865.

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