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LITERATURE.

*Life of General Sir Charles Napier, &c.** By William Napier Bruce. (John Murray).

MR. BRUCE has done well to remind the public of a once famous name which taught, as he justly says, a noble lesson:

"Disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem,
Fortunam ex aliis."

He begins with the beginning—his hero's birth (August 10, 1782); and chap. i., "Early Years," is not the least interesting part of a biography whose startling episodes commence with fighting Frenchmen in Spain, and terminate with fighting Lord Dalhousie ("when brither Scots meet," &c.) in India. During the great campaign he saw sundry "beautiful fights." He was taken prisoner; and one wound of many left him that curious jerk and twitch of the head and jaws which we all remember. He also brought back a confirmed habit (begun by corresponding with his mother) of putting down his impressions on paper with a freshness, a *naïveté*, and a vivacity which described the inner man; but with advancing years his pen ran into an extravagance which, combined with peculiar incontinence of tongue and passionate recklessness of assertion, produced a host of hot and rancorous enemies. Mr. Bruce puts it: "His masterful spirit and irrepressible energy frightened steady-going officialism." True; but, as Mr. Bruce's book shows, the statement covers too little ground. However, Major Napier came out of the campaign a man noted for conspicuous personal gallantry and for the *coup d'œil* which makes the general: "Well done, my majors" (p. 16) will not be forgotten. There is no need to linger over his career in Bermuda, where he advocated for American warfare raising black troops and slave emancipation; in the Ionian Islands and Greece, where he met Byron and Trelawny, and squabbled with Sir F. Adam; over his studies, or over his taking command of the Northern District, where "he was inclined to use buck-shot" (which has given a *sobriquet* in later days) against the Chartists. The main interest of the biography begins (chap. v.) with October 1841, when Sir Charles Napier, sixty years old, and with forty-eight years of varied service which had given him much "experience in the art of killing," landed in India. He was so lacking in worldly wealth that when he took command in Poonah a Bombay firm,

* Preface, nine chapters, pp. 423 (vii. and 416), and appendix of officials, but no index, the eighth mortal sin; portrait much idealised, and hardly showing our original "Fagin" (as in my wife's Book *A. E. I.*); two illustrations, two plans, "Meeanee" (which means any fishing village) and "Dubba," and two maps, which might have been reduced to page-size, and printed upright in *verso*.

they say, refused to advance him £500; and although he tried hard to learn Hindostani, he invariably dropped into a doze after a few minutes, and the Munshi, who stood behind his chair, was far too polite to awake him.

In August 1842 the Bombay Government applied for his services in Sind, Upper and Lower; and he set out with the following entry in his diary:

"3d. Sept.—Off in three hours, and this is old Oliver's day—the day he won Dunbar and Worcester, and the day he died; and a very good day to die on, as good as the second or the fourth! 'A crowning victory.' Strange! Why are we superstitious? Why is there a devil? It puzzles man, and so he is superstitious."

The idea of a man having time to write such utter "bosh"!

But he was *mal vu* at home. He had called the high and mighty Court of Directors, then throned in the Hall of Lead, "ephemeral sovereigns"; he had quoted Lord Wellesley's "ignominious tyrants of the East"; and he had said of the Great Company's rupee that it was stained with blood, and, "wash it as much as you please, the cursed spot would not out."

We have now a short and very inadequate sketch (pp. 157-64) of British relations with the Amirs of the Lower Indus. The meeting Major Outram opens the drama, which ends with the catastrophe "I have sinned"; and we are hurried to the affairs of "Meeanee" and "Dubba." Here, however, Mr. Bruce never attempts to throw light upon the dark corners of history. Outram saw, as did all India, that the conquest of Sind would be thrust upon us; and in more than one official despatch he had justified the measure by the ill-conduct of the Amirs, which he even exaggerated. But he naturally wished to keep the work for himself. He had been long enough among the "politicals" to learn their policy—even the most honest men can justify such conduct to themselves; and when, after sundry blunders in the Sind campaign, he returned to England in 1843, he ranged himself on the popular side of the Directors, whose hatred for Sir Charles Napier had grown with his success. Hence a lasting breach, which only widened as the years went on.

In January 1843 Sir Charles Napier marched down from Upper Sind after blowing up Imam Garh, and the Sindis remembered the old prophecy anent the next conquest:

"Lean blue (*i. e.* grey) steeds from the North shall haste."

Their fears and hopes precipitated matters, and on February 17 took place the "Battle of Meeanee." Here again Mr. Bruce is simply popular. Of this celebrated affair there are two conflicting accounts. One is in the *Conquest of Scinde*, by Sir William Napier, the noble old soldier whom we all revered, admirably told, a perfect picture, but so careless of details that it caused endless chaff among the conqueror's staff at Government House, Karachi. The other—a report by Major Waddington, of the Bombay Engineers—was a dry, sober, and matter-of-fact relation, which dwelt upon the shady rather than the bright side; and there is a third yet to be written. Neither of these authorities tell us, nor can we expect it, how the mulatto who commanded the Amirs' artillery had been per-

sueded to fire over their enemy's head, and how the Talpur commandant of cavalry—for a consideration—drew off his men as the action began, and set the shameless example of flight. When the day comes to look into the disbursements of "Secret Service Money," the public will learn strange things; and, meanwhile, those of us who have lived long enough to see how history is written can regard it only as a poor romance. Yet the results of "Meeanee" must not be despised. Sir Charles Napier taught the English soldier once and for ever how to fight a winning fight against barbarians—be they Baloch or Sudani negroes. The recipe is beautifully simple: a sharp cannonade to shake the enemy's mass, an advance of infantry in line or *échelon*, and a dash of cavalry to do the cutting up.

Followed, March 24, 1843, the action at "Dubba," the tail of the storm, and this virtually ended the war. On April 8 the general was back at Hyderabad, "having in sixteen days with 5,000 men defeated more than 26,000 in battle, captured two great fortresses, and marched two hundred miles under a Scindian sun" (p. 220). Despite Outram's predictions of guerilla warfare for ten years, the conqueror made in very few months the country much safer than any part of British India. In 1844, when I was levelling down the canals, the ryots blessed me, crying out, "These men are worthy to rule us: Allah aid them who govern us for our good!"

Chap. vii., "The Settlement of Scinde," shows Sir Charles Napier as a most successful organiser, who disdained "sticklers for abstract rights," and gave the province what it wanted—a fine strong military despotic rule. But in the intervals of business the governor turned fiercely upon his old unfriends, the Directors, who had not only roused at him the whole Anglo-Indian world, but had the indescribable meanness ("that quarrel with Hogg!") to attempt a reduction of the prize-money he had earned so well. This made him venomous, and the local wit wrote:

"Who, when he lived on shillings, swore
Rupees were stained with Indian gore,
And widows' tears for mottoes bore,
But Charley?"

"And yet who, in the last five years,
So round a sum of that coin clears,
In spite of gore and widows' tears,
As Charley?"

The "Trukku Campaign" (January-March 1845) came to interrupt these ignoble disputes; and the "Shaytán-ká Bhái" (Satan's Brother), despite all his croakers, civil and military, followed up Bejá Khán and the hill-robbers to their hold, and took it without striking a blow. This episode was remarkable for originating the Land Transport Corps and the Baggage Corps, lasting boons to the Anglo-Indian Army, by which the genius of the veteran evolved order out of utter disorder, efficiency from extreme inefficiency.

I have no intention of following Sir C. Napier's career as Commander-in-chief of India, which was fated to fail, and which wrung from him the bitter cry, "All is vanity!" But his unfair treatment and the recall of Lord Ellenborough, the idol of the army, sealed the fate of the Directors, and virtually abolished the "Honourable East India Company." He returned to England in March

1851, and died—in his bed—on August 29, feeling, and justly feeling, that he was an ill-used man. The reader will find, also, this well told in Mr. Bruce's volume: the reviewer has no room for it. Nor, with the fear of the editor before my eyes, will I quote certain Napierian nuts marked for quotation, especially in pp. 68, 76, 114, 176, 242, 286, 320, 331, 349 (very severe on the Directors), and 378.

R. F. BURTON.

Miscellanies, Prose and Verse. By William Maginn. Edited by W. Montague. (Sampson Low.)

THE once famous "Doc" has become nothing more than a name to the present generation; and it is to be feared that this collection of some of his most brilliant work will not be sufficient to elevate him to that place in English literature which he once bid fair to attain. Why, with all that learning and wit, that literary facility in prose and verse, that gift of acquiring languages, and the rest of it, which made him appear as a prodigy in the eyes of his contemporaries, he has fallen into such neglect has often been, and will often again be, a subject for a homily. But all that can be written about his careless habits and love of the bottle, however edifying, is not sufficient to account for the fact that a man of such varied power as "bright, broken, Maginn," should be so soon forgotten after his death. Many men who committed greater excesses (like Byron), or who had less self-control (like Coleridge), have made their immortality sure.

It is easy to say that if he had been more steady he might have produced more lasting work; but in this book of *Miscellanies*, full as it is of intellectual vigour, there is little to support such a theory. On the contrary, the most notable qualities of his work, the flashing wit, the Swiftian and Rabelaisian humour, the suddenness and audacity of his sallies, the swiftness of his arrows of scorn and sarcasm, are just those which would not have been fostered by a quiet and regular life. If he had scorned delight and lived laborious days, he might have annotated Shakspeare, edited Greek plays, or added another to the forgotten translations of Homer; but we should never have had the "Maxims of Odoherly" or the song of "The Irishman and the Lady." The world, doubtless, would not have been much poorer if deprived of these and other specimens of his fresher and wilder humour; but it was his freshness and his wildness that gave him his "flavour," and, without that, though he might have done a large amount of useful and scholarly work, he would not have gained so conspicuous a place in his generation, and the shadows of oblivion might have settled upon him without the "special wonder" of posterity.

Maginn was essentially a "Man of the Time"—a typical literary man in the days when a certain amount of scholarship and a capacity for hard drinking were necessary qualifications for the profession. "Man being reasonable must get drunk" was evidently part of Maginn's creed. We must not, of course, take the "Maxims of Odoherly" too seriously; but the thirty-fourth embodies principles upon which he at least acted, if he

did not hold them. It is admirable after its fashion, though too long to quote. Maxim forty-second is of more practicable size, and has the merit for the present purpose of being in all probability entirely sincere.

"Never boozify a second time with the man whom you have seen misbehave in his cups. I have seen a great deal of life, and I stake myself upon the assertion that no man ever says or does that brutal thing when drunk which he would not also say and do when sober if he durst."

The following extract from maxim seventeenth is meant for a humorous exaggeration, but Maginn doubtless felt that it was an exaggeration of the truth:

"A man has no conception of the true sentimental sadness of the poetic mind unless he has been blind-drunk once and again, mixing tears with toddy, and the heigho with the hiccup."

His contempt for sober men was only equalled by his hatred of Whigs—in one case as the other he was an unfinching partizan. In this, again, he was typical of his time, carrying the strongest political animus even into the fields of literature. His review of *Adonais* was probably sincere, for he was too much blinded by party hate to see anything but the ridiculous and contemptible in Shelley and Keats. If he had lived he would probably have changed his mind; for he had too much literary sympathy to have remained for ever deaf to the note of any true genius. It had been the same with regard to another poet. In his "Lament for Lord Byron" he confesses—

"In thy vigour of manhood
Small praise from my tongue
Had thy fame or thy talents
Or merriment wrong;
For that Church, and that State, and
That monarch I loved,
Which too oft thy hot censure
Or rash laughter moved."

A man so strongly biased in his generation cannot expect that posterity will attach much value to his critical or his political work, though they may gain him notoriety in his lifetime; but if we deduct these there is little left of Maginn but the jester, and the fame of the jester is notoriously short-lived. The fact is that all Maginn's brightest gifts were ephemeral in their nature; and it is only because they were so strong of their kind that his name still lives, and deserves to live for at least some time longer. Out of the present volumes one smaller book might be made, every line of which could be read again and again with pleasure by those who love good jests and have some knowledge of the society in which Maginn was born. And beneath these jests there is no lack of wisdom to be found by those who can sift the grain from the chaff. Nevertheless it is doubtful whether Maginn can be regarded as a "wasted genius"; for if he had really anything serious to say which would have been of much interest to humanity at large, surely here or there some note of it would have been apparent in his current work. But we look in vain for any such sign. Jokes innumerable and excellent, parodies many and first-rate, paraphrases from Horace of much wit and ingenuity, we find indeed; but all these were humorous reflections in the current with which he and his fame were

swept away. His translations show more stability; and if we take his Homeric ballads and put them beside his translation from Vidocq we must admit an unusually wide range of literary sympathy. But the light of these is reflected; and though it is impossible to deny him originality or imagination, both of these required a stimulus from some other mind to set them in action. It was not when alone with his own thoughts, but when he was parodying Coleridge or Shelley, that he was in most danger of "dropping into poetry."

Nevertheless, one does not need to be told that Maginn was a very remarkable man, and had once a great reputation. The opinion of his contemporaries is amply justified by this collection of his prose and verse. Prose so vigorous and spirited has seldom been written, verses so various and facile are very rare. Every line of both is alive. To enjoy much of it we have perhaps to surrender some of our more modern prejudices and to adopt Maginn's. It requires some little effort to feel at home in his jovial company, and view things through the spectacles of

"The slashing, dashing, smashing
Lashing, thrashing, hashing Irishman";
but those who can do so will find it well worth the trouble.

Little praise can be given to the manner in which these *Miscellanies* have been "edited," for they have not been edited at all. They have been printed without arrangement, without notes, without a record of the journals and magazines in which they appeared, and without the dates of their appearance; and they are prefaced by a meagre and commonplace memoir. If Maginn were worth any trouble he was worth more than this.

COSMO MONKHOUSE.

The Parnell Movement: with a Sketch of Irish Parties from 1843. By T. P. O'Connor. (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.)

WHAT Parnellism is everyone fancies he understands. How it came to be what it is, why and wherein it differs from O'Connellism, and Young Irelandism, and Fenianism, and the *ism* of Isaac Butt, is not so clear even to that Philistine intellect which assumes itself to be omniscient in Irish matters. Mr. O'Connor, therefore, has done a very timely work in tracing the growth of the movement and connecting it with previous movements of a similar kind. He calls his book "an indictment of the Act of Union"; but as a clear and very readable account of Irish affairs from the point where Sir C. G. Duffy left them in his *Four Years of Irish History*, it is a good deal more than a political manifesto. To the question: Is it impartial? I reply by another: Is it impartial to fairly marshal facts and then to draw your own conclusions? To show, for instance, that, just before and during the famine, corn and cattle were exported in unexampled quantities; and then to lay the blame of this not on the ministry of the day, but on that land system which the Union Parliament refused to modify, and which "necessitated the export of food from a starving nation"—that is a sample of Mr. O'Connor's impartiality; and it is impartiality of the right sort. Absolutely im-