

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction eBook

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction

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Page 1

THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE, AT ROME.

[Illustration: The Arch of Constantine, at Rome.]

“Still harping” on the Fine Arts—*Architecture and Painting*. Of the former, the above engraving is an illustration; and of the latter, our readers will find a beautiful subject (from one of *Turner’s* pictures) in a *Supplement published with the present Number*.^[1]

[1] The Second of “the Spirit of the Annuals,” containing a fine Engraving, after a celebrated picture by Turner, and a string of *poetical gems* from the Anniversary, Keepsake, and Friendship’s Offering, with unique extracts from such of “the Annuals” as were not noticed in the previous Supplement.

The Arches of Rome were splendid monuments of triumph, erected in honour of her illustrious generals. They were at first very simple, being built of brick or hewn stone, and of a semicircular figure; but afterwards more magnificent, built of the finest marble, and of a square figure, with a large, arched gate in the middle, and two small ones on each side, adorned with columns and statues. In the vault of the middle gate, hung winged figures of victory, bearing crowns in their hands, which, when let down, they placed on the victor’s head, when he passed in triumph.

The *Arch of Constantine*, the most noble of all of these structures, subsists almost entire. It was erected by the senate and Roman people, in honour of Constantine, after his victory over Maxentius, and crosses the Appian Way, at the junction of the Coelian and Palatine Hills. Here it stands as the last monument of Roman triumph, or like the December sun of “the world’s sole monument.”

This building consists of three arches, of which the centre is the largest; and has two fronts, each adorned with four columns of giallo antico marble, of the Corinthian order, and fluted, supporting a cornice, on which stand eight Dacian captives of Pavonazzetta, or violet-coloured marble.

The inscription on both sides of the architrave imports, that it was dedicated “to the Emperor Caesar Flavius Constantine Augustus, the greatest, pious, and the happy; because by a divine impulse, the greatness of his courage, and the aid of his army, he avenged the republic by his just arms, and, at the same time, rescued it from the tyrant and his whole faction.” On one side of the arch are the words, “Liberatori urbis,” to the deliverer of the city; and on the other, “Fundatori quietis,” to the founder of public tranquillity.

Although erected to the honour of Constantine, this arch commemorates the victories of Trajan, some of the basso-relievos, &c. having been pilfered from one of the arches of Trajan. This accounts for the Dacian captives, whose heads Lorenzo de Medicis broke off and conveyed to Florence, but the theft might not have been so notorious to



posterity, had not the artists of Constantine's time added some figures of inferior merit. Forsyth says, "Constantine's reign was notorious for architectural robbery;" and the styles of the two emperors, in the present arch, mar the harmony by their unsightly contrasts.



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Although the decree for erecting this arch was, without doubt, passed immediately after the defeat of Maxentius, it appears from the monument itself, that the building was not finished and dedicated till the tenth year of Constantine's reign, or the year of Christ 315 or 316.

The newly-erected arch opposite the entrance to Hyde Park is from the Roman arch, though, we believe, not from any particular model. In the View of the New Palace, St. James's Park, (in our No. 278,) the arch, to be called the Waterloo Monument, and erected in the middle of the area of the palace, will be nearly a copy of that of Constantine at Rome. In the court-yard of the Tuilleries at Paris, there is a similar arch, copied from that of Septimius Severus. This was formerly surmounted by the celebrated group of the horses of St. Mark, pilfered from Venice, but restored at the peace of 1815.

* * * * *

THE BEGGAR'S DAUGHTER OF BETHNAL GREEN.

(For the Mirror.)

The popular ballad of "The Beggar's Daughter of Bednall-Greene" was written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It is founded, though without the least appearance of truth, or even probability, on a legend of the time of Henry III. Henry de Montfort, son of the ambitious Earl of Leicester, who was slain with his father at the memorable battle of Evesham, is the hero of the tale. He is supposed (according to the legend) to have been discovered among the bodies of the slain by a young lady, in an almost lifeless state, and deprived of sight by a wound, which he had received during the engagement. Under the fostering hand of this "faire damosel" he soon recovered, and afterwards marrying her, she became the mother of "the comelye and prettye Bessee." Fearing lest his rank and person should be discovered by his enemies, he disguised himself in the habit of a beggar, and took up his abode at Bethnal-Green. The beauty of his daughter attracted many suitors, and she was at length married to a noble knight, who, regardless of her supposed meanness and poverty, had the courage to make her his wife, her other lovers having deserted her on account of her low origin. Before entering, however, upon the ballad, it may not, perhaps, be thought irrelevant to give a brief sketch of the family of the De Montforts.

Simon de Montfort, created Earl of Leicester by Henry III., was the younger son of Simon de Montfort, the renowned but cruel commander of the croisade against the Albigenses. This nobleman was greatly honoured by Henry III., to whose sister, the Countess Dowager of Pembroke, he paid his addresses, and was married, with the consent of her brother. For the favour thus shown him by his sovereign, he, however, proved ungrateful: his inordinate ambition, cloaked by a pretended zeal for reform, was

the cause of those rebellions which, in the reign of Henry III., kept the kingdom in such a continued turmoil. The



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different oppressions and successes of the confederate barons, who at length got possession of the king's person, and the civil wars which ensued, are so well known as to render any remark on the subject superfluous; suffice it to say, that the disputes between the malcontents and the royal party were at length terminated by the battle of Evesham, which decided in favour of the latter. In this field fell the Earl of Leicester and his eldest son, Henry de Montfort. His death was followed by the total ruin of his family; his titles and estates were all confiscated; the countess, his wife, who had been extremely active in her designs against the royalists, was banished, together with her sons, Simon and Guy, who afterwards assassinated their cousin, Henry d'Allmane, when he was endeavouring to effect a reconciliation between them and their uncle, Henry IV. The head of the earl was sent as a signal of the victory by Roger de Mortimer to the countess; but his body, together with that of his son Henry, was interred in the Abbey of Evesham; thus leaving the improbability of the legend without a shadow of doubt.

As our limits will not allow us to quote the whole of the ballad,[1] we must content ourselves with giving the song of the beggar, which, as well as being the most interesting, contains the whole of the legend concerning de Montfort:—

A poore beggar's daughter did dwell on a greene,
Who for her fairnesse might well be a queene:
A blithe bonny lasse, and a daintye was shee,
And many one called her pretty Bessee.

Her father hee had noe goods nor noe land,
But begg'd for a penny all day with his hand;
And yett to her marriage he gave thousands three,
And still he hath somewhat for pretty Bessee. And if any one here her birth doe disdain,
Her father is ready, with might and with maine,
To prove shee is come of noble degree—
Therefore, ever flout att prettye Bessee.

* * * * *

Then give me leave, nobles and gentles, each one,
One song more to sing, and then I have done;
And if that itt may not winn good report,
Then doe not give me a *Groat* for my sport. Sir Simon de Montfort my subject shall bee.
Once chiefe of all the great barons was hee—
Yet fortune so cruelle this lorde did abase,
Now loste and forgotten are hee and his race.



When the barons in armes did King Henrye oppose,
Sir Simon de Montfort their leader they chose—
A leader of courage undaunted was hee,
And oft-times he made their enemyes flee.

At length in the battle on Eveshame plaine
The barons were routed, and Montfort was slaine;
Moste fatall that battel did prove unto thee,
Thoughe thou wast not borne then, my prettye Bessee!

Along with the nobles that fell at that tyde,
His eldest son Henrye, who fought by his side,
Was felde by a blowe he receiv'de in the fighte!
A blowe that depriv'de him for ever of sight.



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Among the dead bodyes all lifelesse he laye,
Till evening drewe on of the following daye,
When by a yong ladye discover'd was hee—
And this was thy mother, my prettye Bessee!

A baron's faire daughter stept forth in the nighte,
To search for her father, who fell in the fight,
And seeing yong Montfort, where gasping he laye,
Was moved with pitye, and broughte him awaye.

In secrette she nurst him, and swaged his paine,
While he throughe the realme was beleev'd to be slaine:
At lengthe his faire bride she consented to bee,
And made him glad father of prettye Bessee.

And nowe, lestoure foes our lives sholde betraye
We clothed ourselves in beggars' arraye;
Her jewells shee solde, and hither came wee—
All our comfort and care was our prettye Bessee.

And here have wee lived in fortunes despite,
Thoughe poore, yet contented with humble delighte;
Full forty winters thus have I beene
A silly blind beggar of Bednall-greene.

And here, noble lordes, is ended the song
Of one that once to your owne ranke did belong:
And thus have you learned a secrette from mee,
That ne'er had beene knowne but for prettye Bessee.

[1] Vide Percy's "Reliques," vol. ii. p. 178.

At Bethnal-Green is an old mansion, which, in the survey of 1703, was called *Bethnal-Green-House*, and which the inhabitants, with their usual love of traditionary lore, assign as the "Palace of the Blind Beggar." This house was erected in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, by John Kirby, citizen of London, and was, says Stow,[1] "lofty like a castle." It was afterwards the residence of Sir Hugh Platt, Knight, the author of many ingenious works; from him it came into the possession of Sir William Ryder, Knight, who died there in 1669; of late years it has been used as a private madhouse. The tradition of the beggar is still preserved on the sign-posts of several of the public-houses in the neighbourhood.

[1] Strype's Stowe, vol. ii. p. 47, edit. 1755.

S.I.B.

* * * * *

HISTORY AND ANTIQUITY OF WILLS.

(For the Mirror.)

According to Blackstone, wills are of high antiquity. We find them among the ancient Hebrews; not to mention what Eusebius and others have related of Noah's testament, made in writing, and witnessed under his seal, by which he disposed of the whole world. A more authentic instance of the early use of testaments occurs in the sacred writings, (Genesis, chap. xlviii.) in which Jacob bequeaths to his son Joseph, a portion of his inheritance, double to that of his brethren.



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The Grecian practice concerning wills (says Potter) was not the same in all places; some states permitted men to dispose of their estates, others wholly deprived them of that privilege. We are told by Plutarch, that Solon is much commended for his law concerning wills; for before his time no man was allowed to make any, but all the wealth of deceased persons belonged to their families; but he permitted them to bestow it on whom they pleased, esteeming friendship a stronger tie than kindred, and affection than necessity, and thus put every man's estate in the disposal of the possessor; yet he allowed not all sorts of wills, but required the following conditions in all persons that made them:—

1st. That they must be citizens of Athens, not slaves, or foreigners, for then their estates were confiscated for the public use.

2nd. That they must be men who have arrived to twenty years of age, for women and men under that age were not permitted to dispose by will of more than one *medimn* of barley.

3rd. That they must not be adopted; for when adopted persons died without issue, the estates they received by adoption returned to the relations of the men who adopted them.

4th. That they should have no male children of their own, for then their estate belonged to these. If they had only daughters, the persons to whom the inheritance was bequeathed were obliged to marry them. Yet men were allowed to appoint heirs to succeed their children, in case these happened to die under twenty years of age.

5th. That they should be in their right minds, because testaments extorted through the phrenzy of a disease, or dotage of old age, were not in reality the wills of the persons that made them.

6th. That they should not be under imprisonment, or other constraint, their consent being then only forced, nor in justice to be reputed voluntary.

7th. That they should not be induced to it by the charms and insinuations of a wife; for (says Plutarch) the wise lawgiver with good reason thought that no difference was to be put between deceit and necessity, flattery and compulsion, since both are equally powerful to persuade a man from reason.

Wills were usually signed before several witnesses, who put seals to them for confirmation, then placed them in the hands of trustees, who were obliged to see them performed. At Athens, some of the magistrates were very often present at the making of wills. Sometimes the *archons* were also present. Sometimes the testator declared his will before sufficient witnesses, without committing it to writing. Thus Callias, fearing to be cut off by a wicked conspiracy, is said to have made an open declaration of his will

before the popular assembly at Athens. There were several copies of wills in Diogenes Laertius, as those of Aristotle, Lycon, and Theophrastus; whence it appears they had a common form, beginning with a wish for life and health.



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The most ancient testaments among the Romans were made *viva voce*, the testator declaring his will in the presence of seven witnesses; these they called *nuncupative* testaments; but the danger of trusting the will of the dead to the memory of the living soon abolished these; and all testaments were ordered to be in writing.

The Romans were wont to set aside testaments, as being *inofficiosa*, deficient in natural duty, if they disinherited or totally passed by (without assigning a true and sufficient reason) any of the children of the testator. But if the child had any legacy, though ever so small, it was a proof that the testator had not lost his memory nor his reason, which otherwise the law presumed. Hence probably (says Blackstone) has arisen that groundless, vulgar error of the necessity of leaving the heir a shilling, or some other express legacy, in order to effectually disinherit him; whereas the law of England, though the heir, or next of kin, be totally omitted, admits no *querela inofficiosa*, to set aside such testament.

Alfred the Great made a will, wherein he declared, in express terms, that it was just the English should be as free as their own thoughts.

P.T.W.

* * * * *

THE COSMOPOLITE.

DANCING.

(*For the Mirror.*)

Dancing is defined to be “to move in measure; to move with steps correspondent to the sound of instruments.” But there are other species of dancing—as

-----for three long months

To *dance attendance* for a word of audience:

and to dance with pain, or when, as Lord Bacon says, “in pestilences, the malignity of the infecting vapour danceth the principal spirits.” The *Chorea S. Viti*, or *St. Vitus’s Dance* is another variation, said to have once prevailed extensively, and to have been cured by a prayer to this saint! whose martyrdom is commemorated on June 15. It may not be generally known that a person afflicted with this species of dancing can *run*, although he cannot walk or stand still. Another and a more agreeable species is to *lead the dance*, an unjust usurpation which is practised in a thousand other places beside the ball-room.



According to the mythologists, (authorities always quotable, and nobody knows why,) the Curetes or Corybantes, a people of Crete, who were *produced from rain*, first invented the dance to amuse the infant Jupiter—with what success he danced we know not, for when a year old he waged war against the Titans, and then his dancing days must have terminated.

A history of dancing is, however, not to our purpose; but a few of its eccentricities. It occurs in the customs of all people, either as a recreation or as a religious ceremony—held in contempt by some, and in esteem by others. David danced before the ark; the daughters of Shiloh danced in a solemn yearly festival; and the Israelites, (good judges) danced round the golden calf.



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The ancients had a peculiar *penchant* for dancing, whether in person or by animals; and the feats of the latter distance all the wretched efforts of the bears, dogs, and horses of our days. The attempts of Galba to amuse the Roman people throw into the shade all the peace-rejoicings and illuminations of St. James's and the Green Parks. Suetonius, Seneca, and Pliny tell us of *elephants* in their time that were taught to walk the rope, backwards and forwards, up and down, with the agility of an Italian rope-dancer. Such was the confidence reposed in the docility and dexterity of the animal, that a person sat upon an elephant's back, while he walked across the theatre upon a rope, extended from the one side to the other. Lipsius, who has collected these testimonies, thinks them too strong to be doubted—perhaps even stronger than the rope. Scaliger corroborates all of them; Busbequius saw an elephant dance a *pas seul* at Constantinople; and Suetonius tells us of twelve elephants, six male and six female, who were clothed like men and women, and performed a country dance, in the reign of Tiberius. In later times, horses have been taught to dance. In the carousals of Louis XIII. there were dances of horses; and in the 13th century, some rode a horse upon a rope. All this eclipses the puny modern feats of Astley and Ducrow.[1]

[1] Miraculous dancing is not, however, confined to animals; for William of Malmesbury gravely relates an instance of 15 young women and 18 young men who (by the anathema of a priest) continued dancing a whole year, and wore the earth so much, that, by degrees, they sunk midway into the earth!

The Greeks and Romans were divided upon the propriety of dancing. Socrates who held death in contempt, when a reverend old gentleman, learned to dance of Aspasia, the beautiful nurse of Grecian eloquence. The Romans forgot their loss of the republic and of liberty—

-----the air we breathe
If we have it not we die.

in seeing Pylades and Bathyllus dance before them in their theatres—an indifference of which we were reminded on hearing that the Parisians sat in the *Cafes* on the Boulevard du Italiens—sipping coffee and sucking down ice, during the capitulation of the city, and while the French, killed and wounded, were conveyed along the road before them.

Cato, *Censorius*, danced at the age of fifty-six. Cicero, however, reproached a consul with having danced. Tiberius, that monster of indulgences, banished dancers from Rome; and Domitian, the illustrious fly-catcher, expelled several of his *members of parliament* for having danced. We are much more civilized, for such an edict as that of Domitian would clear our senate-houses as effectually as when Cromwell turned out the Long Parliament.

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Among the Italians and the French even there have been found enemies to dancing. Alfieri, the poet, had a great aversion to dancing; and one Daneau wrote a *Traite des Danses*, in which he maintains that “the devil never invented a more effectual way than dancing, to fill the world with ——.” The bishop of Noyon once presided at some deliberations respecting a minuet; and in 1770, a reverend prelate presented a document on dancing to the king of France. The Quakers consider dancing below the dignity of the Christian character; and an enthusiast, of another creed, thinks all lovers of the stage belong to the schools of Voltaire and Hume, and that dancing is a link in the chain of seduction. Stupid, leaden-heeled people, who constantly mope in melancholy, and neither enjoy nor impart pleasure, will naturally be enemies to dancing; and such we are induced to think the majority of these opponents.

The French are inveterate dancers. They have their *bals pares* and their *salons de danse* in every street; and as long as the weather will permit, they dance on platforms out of doors, and a heavy shower of rain will scarcely cool their ardour in the recreation. Some of their stage *figurantes* resemble aerial beings rather than bone and blood, for flesh may almost be left out of the composition. But the Italians are a nation of dancers as well as the children of song, and they seem to have followed the noble example of old Cato, in this respect, with better effect than they have studied his virtue. We are also told upon good authority, that the American dancers equal any of the European *figurantes*.

The English people have always been lovers of dancing; and it forms an accompaniment of almost all their old sports and pastimes. Witness the maypoles, wassails, and wakes of rural life, and the grotesque morris-dance, originating in a kind of Pyrrhic or military dance, and described by Sir William Temple as composed of “ten men, who danced a maid marian and a tabor and pipe.” In the time of Henry VII. dancers were remarkably well paid; for in some of his accounts in the Exchequer, we find

L. s. d.
 Paid to a spye, in reward----- 2 0 0
 To Pechie, the fool, in rewarde----- 0 6 8
 To Richard Beden, for writing of bokes—— 0 10 0
 To the young dameysell that daunceth—— 30 0 0

In Shakspeare’s time, to *dance* was an elegant accomplishment. Thus in the “Merry Wives of Windsor,” “What say you to young Mr. Fenton? He capers, he *dances*, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses.” Locke thus alludes to the graceful motions which dancing lends to the human frame: “the legs of the dancing-master, and the fingers of a musician, fall, as it were, naturally, without thought or pains, into regular and admirable motions.”



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It must be somewhat surprising to those who over-rate the matter-of-fact character of the English people, that so great a majority of them are attached to *dancing*. Among rank and wealth this amusement admits of a finer display of beauty and artificial decoration than almost any other recreation; for nothing can be more splendid than a brilliantly illuminated and well-filled ball-room. Dancing among the middle classes of society is equally mirthful though not of so ostentatious a character, and it is a question whether the latter, being free from the alloy of fashionable follies, are not more exhilarated by sweet sounds than their wealthy superiors. But the mushroom aristocracy and pride of purse often operate as checks to the enjoyment of both these classes; and splendid dancing accommodations sometimes put an end to the amusement. At Dorking, in Surrey, attached to one of the inns is a ball-room, which cost the builder L12,000, and here is one, or at most three balls during the year, while at scores of places within our recollection, of less consequence, there are monthly and even weekly balls; and we are inclined to think these periodical recreations of great importance to the happiness of country towns. But there is a species of intoxication sometimes arising from them—that of dancing all night, to suffer from exhaustion and rheumatism on the following day—an evil easy of remedy, by such amusements being more frequent and less protracted. The influence on the character of the people would probably be that of rendering it more even, from the admixture or reciprocation of pleasure and business being more proportional. This plan would get rid of much of the ostentation and expense of a country ball, and would ultimately prove the best antidote to the sins of scandal.

As we have spoken of public dancing in the time of Henry VII., we will show that the enormous sums paid to *artists* have nourished their conceit to an alarming height. Pitrot, the Vestris of his day, was a consummate specimen of this effrontery. At Vienna, he chose to appear only in the last act of the ballet. The emperor desired him to come forth at the end of the first; Pitrot refused; the court left the opera, and then Pitrot told the dancers they would have a hop by themselves, which they did. However, this was forgiven; and, at his departure, he was presented with the emperor's picture, set with brilliants. Pitrot received it with *sang froid*, pressed his thumb upon the crystal, crushed the picture to pieces, adding, "Thus I treat men not worthy of my friendship." This fellow behaved equally ill in France, Prussia, and Russia; but, at length, scouted by all his patrons, and, after giving his thousands to opera girls, he wandered about Calais in rags and poverty. Farinelli, after accumulating a fortune in England, built a superb mansion in Italy, which he called the *English Folly*.^[1]



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[1] Here is a card “extraordinary” of one of our humble English dancing-masters:—“As Dancing is the poetry of motion, those who wish to sail through the mazes of harmony, or to ‘trip it on the light fantastic toe,’ will find an able guide in John Wilde, who was formed by nature for a dancing-master.—N.B. Those who have been taught to dance with *a couple of left legs*, had better apply in time, as he effectually cures all bad habits of the kind.”

The oddity of some ideas of dancing is really ludicrous. The Cambro-Britains, in a very late period, used to be played out of church by a fiddle, and to form a dance in the church-yard at the end of the service. But the ideas which the Chinese have of dancing exceeds all others. When Commodore Anson was at Canton, the officers of the *Centurion* had a ball upon some court holiday: while they were dancing, a Chinese, who very quietly surveyed the operation, said, softly, to one of the party, “Why don’t you let your servants do this for you?”

* * * * *

FINE ARTS.

SCHOOL OF PAINTING AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTION.

(To the Editor of the *Mirror*.)

I beg to present you with a brief notice of the School of Painting at the British Institution, Pall Mall; you may rely upon its correctness, as I have been extremely cautious in making my notes, and in ascertaining every particular relative to the subject.

The students at this excellent institution have, for several weeks, been arduously engaged in copying the fine pictures which were entrusted to the directors by his majesty, and the nobility, for that purpose. In general, the students have been very successful, and deserve much praise; I must, however, in my prescribed limits, only mention a few.

Vandyke’s *Duchess de St. Croix* has been cleverly copied by Mr. Boden and Mr. Faulkner; the latter gentleman has well imitated the color and the beautiful finish of the original. Messrs. Frisk, Child, Howell and M’Call have likewise made clever copies of this *chef d’oeuvre* of art. Many bold efforts have been made to copy Hobbima’s large *Landscape*; Mr. Laporte’s is the most complete, though not quite spirited enough in the handling. *The Spanish Gentleman*, by Velasquez, has engaged the pencils of numerous artists, though they have not all been so successful as could have been wished; Messrs. Inskipp, Frisk, Morton and Child have produced the best *fac similes*. *The Lime Kiln*, by the younger Teniers, has been carefully studied by Mr. Gill, &c.; and Messrs. M’Call and Morton, have executed the finest studies from *Innocent X.*, by Velasquez.

The Embarkation, by Claude, is extremely well imitated in Mr. Cartwright's copy; and the *Virgin and Child*, which is one of Julio Romano's best works, has met with due attention from Mr. Farrier, and others. Mr. Novice



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has executed the only copy from DeHooze's fine picture—*A Dutch Family preparing for a Walk*; and Messrs. Foster and Earl display considerable talent in their copies from the *Landscape and Cattle*, by Cuyp. Other admirable works by Guido, Rubens, Bassan, Ruysdael, Vanderneer, and Canaletta, have met with a host of imitators, from whose talents we may anticipate, at no distant period, pictorial excellency of the first order. I should discover a want of gallantry, and, indeed, be most unjust, were I not to say that the ladies, in nearly all their undertakings, have exerted their utmost to excel; those especially, who have executed copies in water colours deserve the highest recommendation.

G.W.N.

* * * * *

THE ANECDOTE GALLERY.

THAXTED HIGHWAYMEN.

(*For the Mirror.*)

The following incident led to the breaking up and dispersion of a gang of desperate highwaymen, denominated the Thaxted gang, who about sixty years ago used to infest the roads in the neighbourhood of Dunmow, Thaxted, and the adjacent towns and villages:—

An opulent farmer of Thaxted, being one day at Dunmow market, received a considerable sum of money, the produce of grain and other marketable articles, which he had that day disposed of; and going to the inn where he had left his horse, he ordered it to be saddled directly for the purpose of returning home. In those times every tradesman, salesman and a greater part of the publicans and innkeepers knew what money each other received on a market day. The innkeeper at whose house the farmer was in the habit of putting up at, said to him, "Why you are not going home to-night, are you, with all that money about you? You will stand a chance of getting a knock on the head."—"Let them knock away," answered the farmer. "I have never yet been robbed, nor do I think it likely I shall be to-night; so, Robert, get my horse ready," calling to the hostler. "Well, but have you any weapons of defence?" inquired the publican.—"No, nor none I want," responded the farmer. The innkeeper pressed him to take a pair of holster pistols; saying, "he might find them handy;" and after a great deal of persuasion, he agreed to take *one*, the publican first loading and charging it with ball. The farmer put the pistol in his great coat pocket, and was on the point of departure when he recollected that he had to get a pound of tea at a grocer's shop in the town, a few doors



from the inn. He instantly ran to the shop for the tea, and while the grocer was serving him he made the same remark as the innkeeper had done respecting his going home with so considerable a sum as he knew the farmer had about him. The farmer made answer, "I am going home to-night, but our friend the publican, has lent me a pistol; and if any one interrupts me, I intend to blow his brains out."—"Do you know," said the grocer, "I do not



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like that fellow. Will you let me look at the pistol if you have it with you.”—“O yes, look at it if you like. I never fired a pistol in my life; however, should I be stopped, I think I could manage it.” The grocer took the pistol; drew the charge; and found, to the great surprise of the farmer, it was only loaded with horse-dung, and a large bullet at the top. “I thought he was a rascal, and this confirms it.” said the grocer. “Here is evidently a plot; now leave your money with me; we will load this pistol properly, and you can, if you like, proceed on your journey: it may be the means of detecting some one.”

The farmer left his money in the hands of the grocer; went back to the inn; mounted his horse, and rode off on his journey. About a mile from Dunmow, he was stopped by a fellow, well mounted, who instantly demanded his money. “I have not got any,” replied the farmer, “but I have a pistol, with which, if you do not instantly allow me to pass on my way home, I will blow your brains out.” “You have got money—and as to the pistol, you may blow away—blow away, my fine fellow,” said the chuckling highwayman. The farmer instantly fired, and his assailant fell off his horse to the ground with a groan. The farmer galloped back to the inn, and inquired of the hostler where his master was. “He has been gone out, on horseback, about a quarter of an hour,” the hostler replied. “Well, I will tell you what,” said the farmer, “you may find your master, with his brains blown out, in the road,” describing the place where he had had the encounter with the innkeeper.

From this time a number of persons resident in and about Thaxted and Dunmow, left their places of abode, which circumstance created some surprise among the remaining inhabitants; but it was afterwards ascertained they formed the desperate gang that had so long and successfully robbed, and sometimes murdered, their unsuspecting neighbours and the different travellers who had occasion to pass the roads on which these marauders were stationed.

J.W.B.

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MANNERS & CUSTOMS OF ALL NATIONS.

(For the Mirror.)

WISE MEN OF GOTHAM.

The village of Gotham, about seven miles from Nottingham, has been rendered noted by the common proverb of “The Wise Men of Gotham.” It is observable that a custom has prevailed among many nations of stigmatizing the inhabitants of some particular



spot as remarkable for stupidity. This opprobrious district among the Asiatics was Phrygia. Among the Thracians, Abdera; among the Greeks, Boeotia; in England it is Gotham. Of the Gothamites ironically called *The Wise Men of Gotham*, many ridiculous stories are traditionally told, particularly, that often having heard the cuckoo but never seen her, they hedged in a bush from whence her note seemed to proceed, so that being confined within so small a compass, they might at length satisfy their curiosity; and at a place called Court Hill, in this parish, is a bush called Cuckoo Bush.



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HALBERT H.

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MALLARD NIGHT.

At All Souls' College, Oxford, the *Mallard Night* is celebrated annually on the 14th of January, in remembrance of a very singular circumstance, viz. the discovery of a live and excessively large mallard, or drake, supposed to have long ranged in a drain or sewer of considerable depth. The only probable conjecture respecting its extraordinary situation was, that it had fallen when young through the bars or grating at the entrance of the drain, (which was of sufficient width to receive it if very young,) but was found at a great distance from it, on digging for the foundation of the college, (A.D. 1437.) A very humorous account of this event was published some years ago by Dr. Buckler, subwarden, from a manuscript of Thomas Walsingham, the historian, and monk of St. Alban's. It is the cause of much mirth, for on the day, and in remembrance of the mallard, many an old and merry song is sung.

E.T.S.

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WELSH MARRIAGES.

It appears to me a matter of no small surprise that so economical a people as the English should not have adopted such a plan as the following by the lower classes of the Welsh. When a young couple intend offering themselves at the Temple of Hymen, if they are very poor, they generally send a man, called the bidder, round to their acquaintance and friends, who invites them, sometimes in rhyme, to the wedding; but if they can afford it, they issue circulars. The following is a copy of one:—

“*June 27, 1827.*”

“As we intend to enter the matrimonial state on Thursday, the 19th day of July next, we are encouraged by our friends to make a bidding on the occasion, the same day, at the Butchers' Arms, Carmarthen, when and where the favour of your good and agreeable company is humbly solicited; and whatever donation you may be pleased to confer on us then, will be thankfully received, warmly acknowledged, and cheerfully repaid whenever called for on a similar occasion.

“By your most obedient servants,

“JOHN JONES.

“MARY EVANS.”



The persons so invited (if they accept the invitation) generally form part of the procession to church, and are preceded by a harper or fiddler. After the nuptial knot is tied, they veer their course to the public-house mentioned in the bills, where they partake, not of a sumptuous banquet, but of the simple, though not the worst, fare of bread and cheese and kisses, at the expense of the new married folks. After this, a large plate is placed on the table in the room, and they proceed to receive the money which each person may be disposed to give, whilst one keeps account of the sum and names. They frequently receive 50_l., and sometimes, though seldom, 100_l.; and they have the privilege (by paying the duty) of selling the ale to the persons assembled. It is to be observed, that the money so deposited cannot be reclaimed by the persons who gave it until a similar occasion presents itself in their family. By this means the new married couple are enabled to procure furniture, and other things requisite for them.



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W.H.

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CURIOUS FOUNDATION.

At Spinney, in Cambridgeshire, was an abbey founded in the reign of Henry III. near which was a church, built by Lady Mary Bassingburne, and given to the Abbey of Spinney, on condition that the monks should support seven aged men with the following allowance, viz. one farthing loaf, one herring, and one pennyworth of ale per day, and two hundred dry turves, one pair of shoes, one woollen garment, and three ells of linen every year. Henry Cromwell, second son of Oliver Cromwell, is buried here.

HALBERT H.

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THE SELECTOR,

AND

LITERARY NOTICES OF

NEW WORKS

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ADVENTURES OF ALLAN-A-SOP.

By Sir Walter Scott, Bart.

The chief of the clan, MacLean of Duart, in the Isle of Mull, had an intrigue with a beautiful young woman of his own clan, who bore a son to him. In consequence of the child's being, by some accident, born in a barn, he received the name of Allan-a-Sop, or Allan of the Straw, by which he was distinguished from others of his clan. As his father and mother were not married, Allan was of course a bastard or natural son, and had no inheritance to look for, save that which he might win for himself.

But the beauty of the boy's mother having captivated a man of rank in the clan, called MacLean of Torloisk, he married her, and took her to reside with him at his castle of Torloisk, situated on the shores of the Sound, or small strait of the sea, which divides the smaller island of Ulva from that of Mull. Allan-a-Sop paid his mother frequent visits



at her new residence, and she was naturally glad to see the poor boy, both from affection, and on account of his personal strength and beauty, which distinguished him above other youths of his age. But she was obliged to confer marks of her attachment on him as privately as she could, for Allan's visits were by no means so acceptable to her husband as to herself. Indeed, Torloisk liked so little to see the lad, that he determined to put some affront on him, which should prevent his returning to the castle for some time. An opportunity for executing his purpose soon occurred.

The lady one morning, looking from the window, saw her son coming wandering down the hill, and hastened to put a girdle cake upon the fire, that he might have hot bread to his breakfast. Something called her out of the apartment after making this preparation, and her husband entering at the same time, saw at once what she had been about, and determined to give the boy such a reception as should disgust him for the future. He snatched the cake from the girdle, thrust it into his step-son's hands, which he forcibly closed on the scalding bread, saying, "Here, Allan—here is a cake which your mother has got ready for your breakfast." Allan's hands were severely burnt; and, being a sharp-witted and proud boy, he resented this mark of his step-father's ill-will, and came not again to Torloisk.



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At this time the western seas were covered with the vessels of pirates, who, not unlike the sea-kings of Denmark at an early period, sometimes settled and made conquests on the islands. Allan-a-Sop was young, strong, and brave to desperation. He entered as a mariner on board of one of these ships, and in process of time obtained the command, first of one galley, then of a small flotilla, with which he sailed round the seas and collected considerable plunder, until his name became both feared and famous. At length he proposed to himself to pay a visit to his mother, whom he had not seen for many years; and setting sail for this purpose, he anchored one morning in the Sound of Ulva, and in front of the house of Torloisk. His mother was dead, but his stepfather, to whom he was now an object of fear as he had been formerly of aversion, hastened to the shore to receive his formidable son-in-law, with great affectation of kindness and interest in his prosperity; while Allan-a-Sop, who, though very rough and hasty, does not appear to have been sullen or vindictive, seemed to take his kind reception in good part.

The crafty old man succeeded so well, as he thought, in securing Allan's friendship, and in obliterating all recollections of the former affront put on him, that he began to think it possible to employ him in executing his private revenge upon MacKinnon of Ulva, with whom, as was usual between such neighbours, he had some feud. With this purpose, he offered what he called the following good advice to his son-in-law:—"My dear Allan, you have now wandered over the seas long enough; it is time you should have some footing upon land, a castle to protect yourself in winter, a village and cattle for your men, and a harbour to lay up your galleys. Now, here is the island of Ulva, near at hand, which lies ready for your occupation, and it will cost you no trouble, save that of putting to death the present proprietor, the Laird of MacKinnon, a useless old carle, who has cumbered the world long enough."

Allan-a-Sop thanked his stepfather for so happy a suggestion, which he declared he would put in execution forthwith. Accordingly, setting sail the next morning, he appeared before MacKinnon's house an hour before noon. The old chief of Ulva was much alarmed at the menacing apparition of so many galleys, and his anxiety was not lessened by the news, that they were commanded by the redoubted Allan-a-Sop. Having no effectual means of resistance, MacKinnon, who was a man of shrewd sense, saw no alternative save that of receiving the invaders, whatever might be their purpose, with all outward demonstrations of joy and satisfaction. He caused immediate preparations to be made for a banquet as splendid as circumstances admitted, hastened down to the shore to meet the rover, and welcomed him to Ulva with such an appearance of sincerity, that the pirate found it impossible to pick any quarrel which might afford a pretence for executing the violent purpose which he had been led to meditate.



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They feasted together the whole day; and in the evening, as Allan-a-Sop was about to retire to his ships, he thanked the Laird of MacKinnon for his entertainment, but remarked, with a sigh, that it had cost him very dear. "How can that be" said MacKinnon, "when I bestowed this entertainment upon you in free good-will?"—"It is true, my friend," replied the pirate, "but then it has quite disconcerted the purpose for which I came hither; which was to put you to death, my good friend, and seize upon your house and island, and so settle myself in the world. It would have been very convenient, this island, but your friendly reception has rendered it impossible for me to execute my purpose; so that I must be a wanderer on the seas for some time longer." Whatever MacKinnon felt at hearing that he had been so near to destruction, he took care to show no emotion save surprise, and replied to his visiter,—“My dear Allan, who was it that put into your mind so unkind a purpose towards your old friend; for I am sure it never arose from your own generous nature? It must have been your father-in-law, old Torloisk, who made such an indifferent husband to your mother, and such an unfriendly stepfather to you when you were a helpless boy; but now, when he sees you a bold and powerful leader, he desires to make a quarrel betwixt you and those who were the friends of your youth. If you consider this matter rightly, Allan, you will see that the estate and harbour of Torloisk lie as conveniently for you as those of Ulva, and that, if you are to make a settlement by force, it is much better it should be at the expense of the old churl, who never showed you kindness or countenance, than at that of a friend like me, who always loved and honoured you.”

Allan-a-Sop was struck with the justice of this reasoning; and the old offence of his scalded fingers was suddenly recalled to his mind. "It is very true what you say, MacKinnon," he replied, "and, besides, I have not forgotten what a hot breakfast my father-in-law treated me to one morning. Farewell for the present; you shall soon hear news of me from the other side of the Sound." Having said thus much, the pirate got on board, and commanding his men to unmoor the galleys, sailed back to Torloisk, and prepared to land in arms. His father-in-law hastened to meet him, in expectation to hear of the death of his enemy, MacKinnon. But Allan greeted him in a very different manner from what he expected. "You hoary old traitor," he said, "you instigated my simple good-nature to murder a better man than yourself. But have you forgotten how you scorched my fingers twenty years ago, with a burning cake? The day is come that that breakfast must be paid for." So saying, he dashed out his father-in-law's brains with a battle-axe, took possession of his castle and property, and established there a distinguished branch of the clan of MacLean.—*Tales of a Grandfather—Second Series.*

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ADVANTAGES OF A GOOD HEART,

A Fragment from the "Disowned," by the author of "Pelham."

"The next day, Sir Christopher Findlater called on Clarence. 'Let us lounge into the park,' said he. 'With pleasure,' replied Clarence; and into the park they lounged. By the way they met a crowd, who were hurrying a man to prison. The good-hearted Sir Christopher stopped—'Who is that poor fellow?' said he. 'It is the celebrated'—(in England all criminals are celebrated. Thurtell was a hero, Thistlewood a patriot, and Fauntleroy was discovered to be exactly like Bonaparte)—'it is the celebrated robber, John Jefferies, who broke into Mrs. Wilson's house, and cut the throats of herself and her husband, wounded the maid-servant, and split the child's skull with the poker.' * * * 'John Jefferies!' exclaimed the baronet, 'let us come away.' 'Linden,' continued Sir Christopher, 'that fellow was my servant once. He robbed me to some considerable extent. I caught him. He appealed to my heart, and you know, my dear fellow, that was irresistible, so I let him off. Who could have thought he would have turned out so?' And the baronet proceeded to eulogize his own good nature, by which it is just necessary to remark, that one miscreant had been saved for a few years from transportation in order to rob and murder *ad libitum*, and having fulfilled the office of a common pest, to suffer on the gallows at last. What a fine thing it is to have a good heart! Both our gentlemen now sunk into a reverie, from which they were awakened, at the entrance of the park, by a young man in rags, who, with a piteous tone, supplicated charity. Clarence, who to his honour be it spoken, spent an allotted and considerable part of his income in judicious and laborious benevolence, had read a little of political morals, then beginning to be understood, and walked on. The good-hearted baronet put his hand in his pocket, and gave the beggar half-a-guinea, by which a young, strong man, who had only just commenced the trade, was confirmed in his imposition for the rest of his life; and instead of the useful support, became the pernicious incumbrance of society. Sir Christopher had now recovered his spirits. 'What's like a good action?' said he to Clarence, with a swelling breast. The park was crowded to excess; our loungers were joined by Lord St. George. His lordship was a staunch Tory. He could not endure Wilkes, liberty, or general education. He launched out against the enlightenment of domestics. 'What has made you so bitter?' said Sir Christopher. 'My valet!' cried Lord St. George; 'he has invented a new toasting-fork; is going to take out a patent, make his fortune, *and leave me*; that's what I call ingratitude, Sir Christopher; for I ordered his wages to be raised five pounds but last year.' 'It was very ungrateful,' said the ironical Clarence. 'Very!' reiterated the good-hearted Sir Christopher.



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'You cannot recommend me a valet, Findlater,' renewed his lordship; 'a good, honest, sensible fellow, who can neither read nor write?' 'N—o—o—that is to say, yes! I can; my old servant, Collard, is out of place, and is as ignorant as—as—' 'I—or you are,' said Lord St. George, with a laugh. 'Precisely,' replied the baronet. 'Well, then, I take your recommendation: send him to me to-morrow at twelve.' 'I will,' said Sir Christopher. 'My dear Findlater,' cried Clarence, when Lord St. George was gone, 'did you not tell me some time ago, that Collard was a great rascal, and closely *lie* with Jefferies? and now you recommend him to Lord St. George!' 'Hush, hush, hush!' said the baronet; 'he was a great rogue, to be sure; but poor fellow, he came to me yesterday with tears in his eyes, and said he should starve if I would not give him a character; so what could I do?' 'At least, tell Lord St. George the truth,' observed Clarence. 'But then Lord St. George would not take him!' rejoined the good-hearted Sir Christopher, with forcible *naivete*. 'No, no, Linden, we must not be so hard-hearted; we must forgive and forget;' and so saying, the baronet threw out his chest, with the conscious exultation of a man who has uttered a noble sentiment. The moral of this little history is, that Lord St. George, having been pillaged 'through thick and thin,' as the proverb has it, for two years, at last missed a gold watch, and Monsieur Collard finished his career, as his exemplary tutor, Mr. John Jefferies, had done before him. Ah! what a fine thing it is to have a good heart. But, to return, just as our wanderers had arrived at the further end of the park, Lady Westborough and her daughter passed them. Clarence excusing himself to his friend, hastened towards them, and was soon occupied in saying the prettiest things in the world to the prettiest person, at least in his eyes; while Sir Christopher, having done as much mischief as a good heart well can do in a walk of an hour, returned home to write a long letter to his mother, against 'learning and all such nonsense, which only served to blunt the affections and harden the heart.' 'Admirable young man!' cried the mother, with tears in her eyes; 'a good heart is better than all the heads in the world.' Amen!"

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SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.

QUADRANGLE OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

In the last *New Monthly Magazine* is an excellent account of this splendid structure, in *A Day at Cambridge*,—in which occurs the following exquisite little descriptive gem:—



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With the exception of a gravel walk, running near to the buildings on every side, the whole ground-plot of this quadrangle is covered by an unbroken turf, kept, by means of constant and almost hourly attention, in that exquisite order which is only to be observed in spots devoted to similar purposes, here and at Oxford. The effect of an unbroken plot of turf of this kind and quality, and in a situation like this, is perfectly unique, and perhaps indescribable. It is supposed to be, and in fact is, for all purposes of preservation and beauty, sacred from the foot of man or beast; and the feeling arising from this circumstance, added to the exquisite natural adaptation of the object itself to the purposes of rest and relief from the almost dazzling architectural splendour of the surrounding objects, is such as cannot be communicated by any other means whatever, and we might in vain attempt to describe. It is of such a kind, however, that those who are capable of experiencing it, would as soon think of treading upon the object that conveys it to them, as those who honour Nature would think of rooting up a nest of violets. Speaking for ourselves alone, there is but one thing that can disturb and deteriorate the absolute tranquillity of mind, and peace of heart, which fall upon us, like dew from heaven, on entering a place like that we have attempted to describe above; it is, to see a capped and gowned Fellow, profaning with his footsteps the floor of that, in some sort, sacred temple, merely because he can, by so doing, reach his habitation by a few footsteps less than if he kept to the path allotted for him. We look upon the act as a species of impiety; to say nothing of its proving, to a demonstration, that the person who commits it is either utterly insensible to the mysterious harmony that subsists between a certain class of natural objects and the heart of man; or utterly disregards that harmony, and sets it at naught. He is, in fact, one of whom it may in one sense be said, that

“He hath no music in his soul.”

And we are almost tempted to complete the quotation, by adding—

“Let no such man be trusted!”

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A RUSTIC PAIR.

By Miss Mitford.

Few damsels of twelve years old, generally a very pretty age, were less pretty than Hannah Bint. Short and stunted in her figure, thin in face, sharp in feature, with a muddled complexion, wild sun-burnt hair, and eyes, whose very brightness had in them something startling, over-informed, super-subtle, too clever for her age. At twelve years old she had quite the air of a little old fairy. Now, at seventeen, matters are mended. Her complexion has cleared; her countenance, her figure, has shot up into height and

brightness, and a sort of rustic grace; her bright, acute eye is softened and sweetened by the womanly wish to please; her hair is trimmed, and curled, and



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brushed with exquisite neatness; and her whole dress arranged with that nice attention to the becoming, the suitable both in form and texture, which would be called the highest degree of coquetry, if it did not deserve the better name of propriety. Never was such a transmogrification beheld. The lass is really pretty, and Ned Miles has discovered that she is so. There he stands, the rogue, close at her aide, (for he hath joined her whilst we have been telling her little story, and the milking is over!)—there he stands—holding her milk-pail in one hand, and stroking Watch with the other; whilst she is returning the compliment, by patting Neptune's magnificent head. There they stand, as much like lovers as may be; he smiling, and she blushing—he never looking so handsome, nor she so pretty, in all their lives. There they stand, in blessed forgetfulness of all except each other—as happy a couple as ever trod the earth. There they stand, and one would not disturb them for all the milk and butter in Christendom. I should not wonder if they were fixing the wedding-day.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A R*T.

(Concluded from page 365.)

Finding a detachment just setting out to join the Grand Allied Army, I thought, as a true Briton, I could do no less than accompany it, and prevailed upon all our party to do the same.

The detachment with which I marched, consisted of 80,000. As we had little baggage, having crossed the Rhine, we proceeded rapidly through a dull, uninteresting country.

The town of Coblenz is situated at the junction of the Rhine and the Moselle. Here the majestic Rhine gently flows along in all its grandeur, separating the town from the noble fortress of Ehrenbreitstein.[1] I crossed over the bridge of boats, and made a most minute inspection of this very romantic castle, which gave me great pleasure indeed. In a few days I availed myself of a passage-boat which was going to Mayence, and was quite enraptured with the view on all sides. Rhenish wines, and perhaps also the water, I found did not well agree with my stomach; and no inconsiderable annoyance, I soon experienced. They seemed, however, to have exactly the same effect upon every Englishman I saw, so I was not singular. A little brandy soon, however, put me all to rights; and by the time I reached Strasbourg, I was perfectly well again, and able to do ample justice to her Splendid Pies! I attended high mass in the great Cathedral of Strasbourg, and was surprised and pleased at the sight of 10,000 soldiers, in review order, drawn up within its walls. It was tiresome enough work mounting to the top of the spire, (which I ascertained, by the steps I took, to be exactly 490 feet high, Strasbourg

measure; and this is exactly eight feet higher than St. Peter's at Rome), but I made it out, notwithstanding the sulky looks of the jackanapes

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who lives at the top. Nothing can surpass the beauty of the view from this cathedral. At your feet you have the ancient town, with all its regular fortifications and outworks—the majestic Rhine, with its bridge of boats, and ruined Gothic bridge, sublime in its decay—and as far as the eye can reach you have an exceedingly rich country, everywhere speckled with towns, and fertilized by luxuriant streams.

[1] Apropos—our *Supplement* contains a fine Engraving of this very spot.

I made a point of visiting my venerable friend, the old Comte de Strasbourg, who, unchanged in the rolling on of centuries, lies in his glass coffin, to all appearance in the same freshness of health and vigour in which, when myself a very young man, I saw him many hundred years ago; [1] his countess, his son, and his daughter, keep him company, each in their separate place of repose. Alas, alas! the sight made me weep.

[1] The venerable count died about the year 1519. The glass coffins are still shown.

A few days afterwards, I was rather unexpectedly stopped in my tour. For a night I had taken up my residence in the carriage of a young Englishman, who that day arrived from Rome, the hostler having assured me that he would remain for some time. I did so, as I found it much quieter and cooler than the hotel “La ville de Lyon,” which was overcrowded. In the morning, I thought my friends were merely going a short drive, so I kept my seat. We, however, travelled on till night, when I heard we were bound for London; but as my companions were very agreeable, I thought I might as well accompany them the whole way. They seemed to be annoyed at every posthouse with their passports, &c.; I was never even asked about the matter. The custom-house gentry, in their searches, to be sure, occasionally gave me a little trouble, but I was soon up to their tricks. We had an avant-courier constantly galloping before us, and we travelled with such expedition that we reached London in five days; for my fellow-travellers were idle young men of fortune, who are of course always in the greatest hurry for the end of a journey, because they don’t know what to make of themselves when it is over.

I had not then an opportunity of seeing Paris, as we only changed horses in it. I have since, however, spent many months there, and have always been very much pleased with every thing I saw, particularly the Catacombs, which were my favourite lounge. When last in Paris, I made a narrow escape with my life, as I tumbled headlong into a cask of brandy. I, however, managed to scramble out, with the assistance of a bit of cord, which happened to be hanging over its side, and which my friend pushed in to me. I was little the worse of my ducking; for, as soon as I got out, I was set a-laughing

by his telling me how to spell *brandy*, in both French and English, in three letters, viz. "B.R. and Y." and "O.D.V."



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In London I made a point, as a stranger, of going everywhere, and was certainly much delighted with every thing. I must confess, however, that I thought all the acting at the Opera and Theatres, and all the eloquence of the Houses of Parliament, as nothing in comparison of what I saw and tasted at the East India and London Docks. When I was in the House of Lords, a companion whispered to me, that he had heard an act read, offering a reward of 10,000_l_ for a *male* tortoise-shell cat. This I believe, indeed, is a very safe offer, for such a thing was never heard of. And it is certainly as much worth their while as making an act that I should never have more than six dishes of meat at my dinner, or that I should not be buried in linen above twenty shillings Scots value per ell, although I wished it particularly, and could well afford to pay for it. There was, however, one restrictive act, which had sense in it; and the husbands of the present day would, I dare say, give their ears that it were still in force, whatever the dressmakers might think of it. But many of their acts of Parliament are silly enough—as they must be; for they don't like to be thought idle, and imagine that it is necessary to be always enacting something.

It is curious, indeed, how fashion should be every thing in the great city. A lady could not possibly venture to see her dearest friend on earth, or even her own sister, if she happened to live in rather an unfashionable part of the town. By so doing, she would expose herself to her own footmen, who very properly would lose all respect for her, and I suppose instantly leave her service, as, poor fellows, they have a rank in life to keep up!! John Bull certainly gives himself many airs, to say the least of it. After receiving the greatest kindness and hospitality from you in Scotland, and perhaps staying for months in your house, he will cut you dead in London. I remember once meeting with such a return, but took it, of course, very coolly. Next day, when I was arm in arm with ———, I happened again to meet my quondam friend, who immediately rushed up to me—I, however, turned on my tail, and did not know him.—Fashion is an odd thing after all. It is not rank which will do. I have seen many a spendthrift young commoner cut his uncle the duke; and being a duchess by no means will ensure admittance at Almack's. —I thank my stars, I am not fashionable, and am always happy to see my friends!

I was persuaded, soon after reaching London, to go down to Essex for a few days, to pay a visit to an old friend. When I arrived at his house, which I think they called Waltham Abbey, I was sorry to receive the melancholy accounts that he had been devoured, and that, if I did not instantly take myself off, I should be dealt with in the same manner. The truth was, that a famine had arisen; and it is well known, on those occasions, as necessity has no law, that the stronger kills the weaker. Day after day the combat is renewed, till at last all except one are destroyed, and he is then obliged to decamp, or eat himself up, as he likes best. It is in this way that castles, houses, &c. which have been long infested by us, are so suddenly entirely freed from our presence.

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I amused myself in making an excursion to Epping Forest, till I thought the civil war at my late friend's habitation might have proceeded far enough for my presence to be useful. In the forest, one day, I had the luck to kill one of those troublesome reptiles—a Tom Cat. I believe, however, it was a house one. After a hard day's hunting his highness made too free at a Valerian party. I watched my opportunity, and soon put an effectual end to his caterwauling. When I returned to the abbey, I found I was in the best possible time—the garrison being reduced to about a dozen, and they so weakened and tired out with the constant worrying work they had had, that I was myself a complete match for any two of them. In a few days the number was only four, and in other two days I was sole lord and master.

[He then returns to town.]

At a friend's house, in Berkeley Square, where I met a distinguished party, a scene took place, just such as Pope describes—

Our courtier walks from dish to dish;
Tastes, for his friend, of fowl and fish:
"That jelly's rich, that malmsey's healing,
Pray dip your whiskers and your tail in."
Was ever such a happy swain?
He stuffs, and swills, and stuffs again.
"I'm quite ashamed—'Tis mighty rude
To eat so much; but all's so good!
I have a thousand thanks to give,
My lord alone knows how to live."—
No sooner said, but from the hall
Rush chaplain, butler, dogs, and all:
"A r—t, a r—t! clap to the door!"—

I, however, made good my exit, and was nothing the worse of a practical warning to be more cautious in future.

It would be endless for me to describe all my after voyages and travels. Suffice it to say, I have been both east and west, north and south; and there is scarcely a part of the habitable globe which I have not visited. After all, I have come to this conclusion, that there is no country like Britain. Oh! how I could wish my human existence had been in such happy times and under such glorious sovereigns as a George the Third, and George the Fourth!!!

For some years I have remained in this country, enjoying (like a patriarch of old) a quiet, regular life with my family, which now amounts to above 2,000. I, however, keep very much to my own room, as I hate bustle, and like to enjoy my own reflections.



The age to which our species can exist is not ascertained, as never one of us was known to die in his bed, at least a natural death. A kind of instinct I have always had, has as yet saved me from arsenic, stewed corks, traps, stamps, &c.; and my great strength, and a good deal of science, which is of more consequence, have, as yet, preserved me in many a deadly combat, both with my own species, and with the dog, the ferret, the weasel, the hawk, and that green-eyed monster—the cat. But I am now getting somewhat stiffer, and am not so sharp as I was. I am not—



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“—qualis eram, quum primam aciem Praeneste sub ipsa
Stravi, scutorumque incendi victor acervos;
Et regem hac Herilum dextra sub Tartara misi!!”

And in some evil hour my time must come.

—I am well aware, indeed, of the fleeting existence even of this world itself, for I studied astronomy with the celebrated M. Olbers of Bremen, and assisted him in making many useful observations and discoveries, particularly regarding comets, in the course of which we came to this melancholy conclusion, that the comet which was afterwards visible in 1786 and 1795, will, in 83,000 years, approach the earth as nearly as the moon; and that in 4,000,000 years it will come to within a distance of 7,700 geographical miles;—the consequence of which will be (if its attraction be equal to that of the earth) the elevation of the waters of the ocean 13,000 feet; that is to say, above the tops of all the European mountains, except Mount Blanc. The inhabitants of the Andes and of the Himalaya mountains alone will escape this second deluge; but they will not benefit by their good fortune more than 216,000,000 years, for it is probable, that at the expiration of that time, our globe standing right in the way of the comet, will receive a shock severe enough to ensure its utter destruction!!!

Note.—After reading over the above MS., I am inclined to come to this conclusion—that our historian, while in a human form, must have been a Scottish nobleman—that he probably was born about the year 1501—and that he lived to about the age of 89.—*Ed.*

* * * * *

THE FANCY BALL.

“A visor for a visor! what care I
What curious eye doth quote deformities!”
SHAKSPEARE.

“You used to talk,” said Miss Mac Call,
“Of flowers, and flames, and Cupid;
But now you never talk at all.
You’re getting vastly stupid.
You’d better burn your Blackstone, Sir,
You never will get through it;
There’s a Fancy Ball at Winchester—
Do let us take you to it.”

I made that night a solemn vow,
To startle all beholders:



I wore white muslin on my brow,
Green velvet on my shoulders—
My trousers were supremely wide,
I learn'd to swear “by Allah”—
I stuck a poniard by my side,
And called myself “Abdallah.”

Oh! a Fancy Ball's a strange affair,
Made up of silks and leathers,
Light heads, light heels, false hearts, false hair,
Pins, paint, and ostrich feathers:
The dullest Duke in all the town,
To-night may shine a droll one—
And rakes, who have not half-a-crown,
Look royal with a whole one.

Hail, blest Confusion! here are met
All tongues, and times, and faces,
The Lancers flirt with Juliet,
The Bramin talks of races;
And where's your genius, bright Corinne?
And where your brogue, Sir Lucius?
And Chinca Ti, you have not seen
One chapter of Confucius.



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Lo! dandies from Kamschatka flirt
With beauties from the Wrekin—
And belles from Berne look very pert
On Mandarins from Pekin;
The Cardinal is here from Rome,
The Commandant from Seville—
And Hamlet's father from the tomb,
And Faustus from the Devil.

What mean those laughing Nuns, I pray,
What mean they, Nun or Fairy:
I guess they told no beads to-day,
And sang no Ave Mary.
From Mass and Matins, Priest and Pix,
Barred door, and window grated,
I wish all pretty Catholics
Were thus emancipated.

Four Seasons come to dance quadrilles,
With four well-seasoned sailors—
And Raleigh talks of rail-road bills,
With Timon, prince of railers.
I find Sir Charles of Aubyn Park
Equipp'd for a walk to Mecca—
And I run away from Joan of Arc,
To romp with sad Rebecca.

Fair Cleopatra's very plain,
Puck halts, and Ariel swaggers—
And Caesar's murder'd o'er again,
Though not by Roman daggers.
Great Charlemagne is four feet high—
Sad Stuff has Bacon spoken—
Queen Mary's waist is all awry,
And Psyche's nose is broken.

Our happiest bride, how very odd!
Is the mourning Isabella,
And the heaviest foot that ever trod
Is the foot of Cinderella.
Here sad Calista laughs outright,
There Yorick looks most grave, Sir,
And a Templar waves the cross to-night,
Who never cross'd the wave, Sir.



And what a Babel is the talk!

“The Giraffe”—“plays the fiddle”—
“Macadam’s roads”—“I hate this chalk”—
“Sweet girl”—“a charming riddle”—
“I’m nearly drunk with”—“Epsom salts”—
“Yes, separate beds”—“such cronies!”—
“Good heaven! who taught that man to valtz?”—
“A pair of Shetland ponies.”

“Lord D——” “an enchanting shape”—
“Will move for”—“Maraschino”
“Pray, Julia, how’s your mother’s ape?”—
“He died at Navarino!”
“The gout, by Jove, is”—“apple pie”—
“Don Miguel”—“Tom the tinker”—
“His Lordship’s pedigree’s as high
As ——” “Whipcord, dam by Clinker.”

“Love’s shafts are weak”—“my chestnut kicks”—
“Heart broken;”—“broke the traces”—
“What say you now of politics?”—
“Change sides and to your places”—
“A five-barred gate”—“a precious pearl”
“Grave things may all be punn’d on!”—
“The Whigs, thank God, are”—“out of curl!”—
“Her age is”—“four by London!”

Thus run the giddy hours away,
Till morning’s light is beaming,
And we must go to dream by day
All we to-night are dreaming;
To smile and sigh, to love and change—
Oh! in our heart’s recesses,
We dress in fancies quite as strange
As these our fancy-dresses.



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New Monthly Magazine.

* * * * *

THE GATHERER.

A snapper up of unconsidered trifles
SHAKSPEARE.

Tho' lang an lonely be the road
Between me an my dearie;
Yet I the gate hae aften trod,
When I've been tired and wearie.

Be't stormin rain, hail, win or snaw—
A lonely road and drearie—
There's nought wad e'er keep me awa
Frae gaun to see my dearie!!!

M.

* * * * *

FRENCH BALL CONVERSATION.

During the French revolution, parties danced as gaily as ever; the following is a ball conversation, which took place in the month of Frimare, year 7.:—Well, the Ottoman Porte has declared war against us! Oh yes, there is no doubt of it, (*En avant deux*) It is an enemy the more—(*chassez*) and the Russian fleet they say has passed the Dardanelles, (*en avant quatre*) yet the papers say that the emperor sincerely desires peace.—Yes, but Count Metternich wishes for war, (*balancez*) so we have also a new coalition against us. England, Portugal, Naples, Turkey, the Emperor, Russia, perhaps the empire of Prussia, (*Faites face et chassez tous les huit*)—well we have bayonettes, (*la poussette*) besides it is not so far from Dover to Calais, (*traversez*)—Do you belong to the conscription?—Yes, and I too; (*pirouettez*) what makes me uneasy is to know what will become of our partners when we are gone: (*La chaine des dames*)—what will be left to amuse them (*La queu du chat.*) It was thus that days of terror were preceded by evenings of amusement and pleasure.

* * * * *



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“There are three things,” said a wit, “which I have always loved without ever understanding them, painting, music, and woman.”

* * * * *

RETORT UNCOURTEOUS.

A lady, well known in the fashionable vicinity of Portland-place, always accosts a stranger, with “I think I have seen you somewhere,” which often leads to a clue for her finding out the history of the party. One evening she played off the same game on a gentleman, who replied, “Most likely, madam, for I sometimes go there.”

* * * * *

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