

# **The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction eBook**

## **The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction**

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# Page 1

## TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

[Illustration: *Tunbridge Wells in 1748*. With sketches of Dr. Johnson, Cibber, Garrick, Lyttleton, Richardson, &c. &c. *For Explanation, see the annexed page.*]

*References to the Characters in the Engraving.*

1. Dr. Johnson.—2. Bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Gilbert.)—3. Lord Harcourt.—4. Cotley Cibber.—5. Mr. Garrick.—6. Mrs. Frasi, the singer.—7. Mr. Nash.—8. Miss Chudleigh (Duchess of Kingston.)—9. Mr. Pitt (Earl of Chatham.)—10. A. Onslow, Esq. (the Speaker.)—11. Lord Powis.—12. Duchess of Norfolk.—13. Miss Peggy Banks—14. Lady Lincoln—15. Mr. (afterwards Lord) Lyttleton.—16. The Baron (a German gamester.)—17. Samuel Richardson.—18. Mrs. Onslow.—20. Mrs. Johnson (the Doctor's wife.)—21. Mr. Whiston—22. Loggan, the artist.—23. Woman of the Wells.

Tunbridge, or as old folks still call it, “the Wells,” was a gay, anecdotal resort of the last century, and about as different from the fashionable haunts of the present, as St. James's is to Russel Square, or an old English mansion to the egg-shell architecture of yesterday. In its best days, it was second only to Bath, and little did its belles and beaux dream of the fishified village of Brighthelmstone, in the adjoining county, spreading to a city, and being docked of its syllabic proportions to the *Brighton* of ears polite.

The annexed Engraving represents Tunbridge Wells about 80 years ago, or in the year 1748. It is copied from a drawing which belonged to Samuel Richardson, the novelist, and was found among his papers at his death in 1761. The original is in the possession of Sir Richard Phillips, who published Richardson's *Correspondence*, in 1804; it contains portrait figures of all the celebrated characters who were at Tunbridge Wells, in August, 1748, at which time Richardson was likewise there, and beneath the drawing is the above key, or the names of the characters, in the hand-writing of the novelist.

But the pleasantest illustration that we can supply is the following extract from one of Richardson's Letters to Miss Westcomb, which represents the gaiety and flirtation of the place in very attractive colours. At this time Richardson was at Tunbridge Wells for the benefit of his health; but he says, “I had rather be in a desert, than in a place so public and so giddy, if I may call the place so from its frequenters. But these waters were almost the only thing in medicine that I had not tried; and, as my disorder seemed to increase, I was willing to try them. Hitherto, I must own, without effect is the trial. But people here, who slide in upon me, as I traverse the outermost edges of the walks, that I may stand in nobody's way, nor have my dizziness increased by the swimming triflers, tell me I shall not give them fair play under a month or six weeks; and that I ought neither to read nor write; yet I have all my town concerns upon me here, sent me every post and coach, and cannot help it. Here are great numbers of people got together. A very full season, and more coming every day—Great comfort to me.”

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“What if I could inform you, that among scores of belles, flatterers, triflers, who swim along these walks, self-satisfied and pleased, and looking defiances to men (and to modesty, I had like to have said; for bashfulness seems to be considered as want of breeding in all I see here); a pretty woman is as rare as a black swan; and when one such starts up, she is nicknamed a Beauty, and old fellows and young fellows are set a-spinning after her.”

“*Miss Banks* (Miss Peggy Banks) was the belle when I came first down—yet she had been so many seasons here, that she obtained but a faint and languid attention; so that the smarts began to put her down in their list of had-beens. New faces, my dear, are more sought after than fine faces. A piece of instruction lies here—that women should not make even their faces cheap.”

“*Miss Chudleigh* next was the triumphant toast: a lively, sweet-tempered, gay, self-admired, and not altogether without reason, generally-admired lady—she moved not without crowds after her. She smiled at every one. Every one smiled before they saw her, when they heard she was on the walk. She played, she lost, she won—all with equal good-humour. But, alas, she went off, before she was wished to go off. And then the fellows’ hearts were almost broken for a new beauty.”

“Behold! seasonably, the very day that she went away entered upon the walks Miss L., of Hackney!—Miss Chudleigh was forgotten (who would wish for so transient a dominion in the land of fickledom!)—And have you seen the new beauty?—And have you seen Miss L.? was all the inquiry from smart to smartless. But she had not traversed the walks two days, before she was found to want spirit and life. Miss Chudleigh was remembered by those who wished for the brilliant mistress, and scorned the wifelike quality of sedateness—and Miss L. is now seen with a very silly fellow or two, walking backwards and forwards unmolested—dwindled down from the new beauty to a very quotes pretty girl; and perhaps glad to come off so. For, upon my word, my dear, there are very few pretty girls here.”

“But here, to change the scene, to see Mr. W——sh at eighty (Mr. Cibber calls him papa), and Mr. Cibber at seventy-seven, hunting after new faces; and thinking themselves happy if they can obtain the notice and familiarity of a fine woman!—How ridiculous!—If you have not been at Tunbridge, you may nevertheless have heard that here are a parcel of fellows, mean traders, whom they call touters, and their business, touting—riding out miles to meet coaches and company coming hither, to beg their custom while here.”

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“Mr. Cibber was over head and ears in love with Miss Chudleigh. Her admirers (such was his happiness!) were not jealous of him; but, pleased with that wit in him which they had not, were always for calling him to her. She said pretty things—for she was Miss Chudleigh. He said pretty things—for he was Mr. Cibber; and all the company, men and women, seemed to think they had an interest in what was said, and were half as well pleased as if they had said the sprightly things themselves; and mighty well contented were they to be secondhand repeaters of the pretty things. But once I faced the laureate squatted upon one of the benches, with a face more wrinkled than ordinary with disappointment ‘I thought,’ said I, ‘you were of the party at the tea-treats—Miss Chudleigh has gone into the tea-room.’—‘Pshaw!’ said he, ‘there is no coming at her, she is so surrounded by the toupets.’—And I left him upon the fret—But he was called to soon after; and in he flew, and his face shone again, and looked smooth.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Another extraordinary old man we have had here, but of a very different turn; the noted *Mr. Whiston*, showing eclipses, and explaining other phaenomena of the stars, and preaching the millennium, and anabaptism (for he is now, it seems, of that persuasion) to gay people, who, if they have white teeth, hear him with open mouths, though perhaps shut hearts; and after his lecture is over, not a bit the wiser, run from him, the more eagerly to C——r and W——sh, and to flutter among the loud-laughing young fellows upon the walks, like boys and girls at a breaking-up.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Your affectionate and paternal friend and servant, *S. Richardson*.”

Richardson has mentioned only a few of the characters introduced in the Engraving. Johnson was at that time but in his fortieth year, and much less portly than afterwards. Cibber is the very picture of an old beau, with laced hat and flowing wig; half-a-dozen of his pleasantries were worth all that is heard from all the playwrights and actors of our day—on or off the stage: Garrick too, probably did not keep all his fine conceits within the theatre. Nos. 7, 8, and 9, in the Engraving, are a pretty group: Miss Chudleigh (afterwards Duchess of Kingston,) between Beau Nash and Mr. Pitt (Earl of Chatham,) both of whom are striving for a side-long glance at the sweet tempered, and as Richardson calls her, “generally-admired” lady. No. 17, Richardson himself is moping along like an invalid beneath the trees, and avoiding the triflers. Mrs. Johnson is widely separated from the Doctor, but is as well dressed as he could wish her; and No. 21, Mr. Whiston is as unexpected among this gay crowd as snow in harvest. What a *coterie* of wits must Tunbridge have possessed at this time: what assemblies and whistparties among scores of spinsters, and ogling, dangling old bachelors; with high-heeled shoes, silken hose, court hoops, embroidery, and point ruffles—only compare the Tunbridge parade of 1748 with that of 1829.

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We have room but for a brief sketch of Tunbridge Wells. The Springs, or the place itself, is a short distance from the town of Tunbridge. The discovery of the waters was in the reign of James I. Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I. staid here six weeks after the birth of the prince, afterwards Charles II.; but, as no house was near, suitable for so great a personage, she and her suite remained under tents pitched in the neighbourhood. The Wells, hitherto called Frant, were changed to Queen's Mary's Wells: both have given place to Tunbridge Wells; though the springs rise in the parish of Speldhurst.

Waller, in his Lines to Saccharissa,[1] celebrates the Tunbridge Waters; and Dr. Rowzee[2] wrote a treatise on their virtues. During the civil wars, the Wells were neglected, but on the Restoration they became more fashionable than ever.[3] Hence may be dated assembly rooms, coffee houses, bowling greens, &c.; about which time, to suit the caprice of their owners, many of the houses were wheeled upon sledges: a chapel[4] and a school were likewise erected. The accommodations have been progressively augmented; and the population has greatly increased. The trade of the place consists chiefly in the manufacture of the articles known as Tunbridge-ware. The Wells have always been patronized by the royal family; and are still visited by some of their branches.

Our Engraving represents the Upper, or principal walk, where are one of the assembly rooms, the post-office, Tunbridge-ware, milliners, and other shops, with a row of spreading elms on the opposite side. It is not uninteresting to notice the humble style of the shops, and the wooden portico and tiled roofs, in the Engraving, and to contrast them with the ornamental shop-architecture of our days: yet our forefathers, good old souls, thought such accommodations worthy of their patronage, and there was then as much gaiety at Tunbridge Wells as at Brighton in its best days.

[1] Saccharissa, or the Lady Dorothy Sydney, resided at Penshurst, near Tunbridge.

[2] He prescribed eighteen pints of the water for a morning's dose.

[3] Grammont, in his fascinating "Memoirs," thus describes the Wells at his period, 1664, when Catherine, Queen of Charles II. was here for two months, with all the beauties of the court:

"Tunbridge is the same distance from London that Fontainebleau is from Paris, and is, at the season, the general rendezvous of all the gay and handsome of both sexes. The company, though always numerous, is always select; since those who repair thither for diversion, even exceed the number of those who go thither for health. Every thing here breathes mirth and pleasure; constraint is banished; familiarity is established upon the first acquaintance; and joy and pleasure are the sole sovereigns of the place. The

company are accommodated with lodgings in little clean and convenient habitations, that lie straggling

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and separated from each other, a mile and a half round the Wells, where the company meet in the morning. The place consists of a long walk, shaded by pleasant trees, under which they walk while they are drinking the waters. On one side of this walk is a long row of shops, plentifully stocked with all manner of toys, lace, gloves, stockings, and where there is raffling, as at Paris, in the Foire de Saint Germain. On the other side of the Walk is the Market and as it is the custom here for every person to buy their own provisions, care is taken that nothing offensive appears upon the stalls. Here young, fair, fresh-coloured country girls, with clean linen, small straw hats, and neat shoes and stockings, sell game, vegetables, flowers, and fruit. Here one may live as one pleases. Here is likewise deep play, and no want of amorous intrigues. As soon as the evening comes, every one quits his little palace to assemble on the bowling-green, where, in the open air, those who choose, dance upon a turf more soft and smooth than the finest carpet in the world."

[4] "This chapel," says Hasted, "stands remarkably in three parishes—the pulpit in Speldhurst, the altar in Tunbridge, and the vestry in Frant. The stream also, which parted the counties of Kent and Sussex, formerly ran underneath it, but is now turned to a greater distance."  
—*Hist. Kent*, vol. iii.

\* \* \* \* \*

## LOVE.

(*For the Mirror.*)

Sing ye love? ye sing it not,  
It was never sung, I wot.  
None can speak the power of love,  
Tho' 'tis felt by all that move.  
It is known—but not reveal'd,  
'Tis a knowledge ever seal'd!  
Dwells it in the tearful eye  
Of congenial sympathy?  
'Tis a radiance of the mind,  
'Tis a feeling undefin'd,  
'Tis a wonder-working spell,  
'Tis a magic none can tell,  
'Tis a charm unutterable.

*Lear.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## GRAYSTEIL.[1]

*An historical ballad.*

*(For the Mirror.)*

Beneath the Douglas plaid, he wore a grinding shirt of mail;  
Yet, spite of pain and weariness, press'd on that gallant Gael:  
On, on, beside his regal foe, with eyes which more express'd  
Than *words*, expecting favour still, from him who *once* caress'd!

"'Tis," quoth the prince, "my poor Graysteil!" and spurr'd his steed  
amain,  
Striving, ere toiling Kilspindie, the fortalice to gain;  
But Douglas, (and his wither'd heart, with hope and dread, beat high)  
Stood at proud Stirling's castle-gate, as soon as royalty!

Stood, on his ingrate *friend* to gaze; no answ'ring love-look came;  
Then, mortal grief his spirit shook, and bow'd his war-worn frame;  
Faith, *innocence*, avail'd not *him!* he suffer'd for his line,  
And fainting by the gate he sunk, but feebly call'd for *wine!*

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The menials came, "*wine?* up! begone! we marvel who thou art!  
Our *monarch* bids to France, Graysteil, his trusty *friend* depart!"  
Blood to the Douglas' cheek uprush'd: proud blood! away he hied,  
And soon afar, the "poor Graysteil," the *broken hearted*, DIED!

M.L.B.

*Note*—Graysteil (so called after the champion of a romance then popular) had returned from banishment in the hope, as he was perfectly innocuous, of renewing his ancient friendship with the Scottish king; and James declared that he would again have received him into his service, but for his oath, never more to countenance a Douglas. He blamed his servants for refusing refreshment to the veteran, but did not escape censure from our own Henry VIII. for his cruel conduct towards his "poor Graysteil," upon this occasion.

[1] Archibald, of Kilspindie, a noble Douglas, and until the disgrace of his clan, a personal friend and favourite of James V. of Scotland. For the incidents of this ballad, vide *Tales of a Grandfather*, 1st Series, vol. 3.

\* \* \* \* \*

## TO THE MEMORY OF SIR HUMPHRY DAVY, BART.

(*For the Mirror.*)

To this low orb is lost a shining light.  
Useful, resplendent, and tho' transient, bright!  
For scarce has soaring genius reach'd the blaze  
Of fleeting life's meridian hour,  
Than Death around the naming meteor plays,  
And spreads its cypress o'er the short liv'd flower.  
The great projector of that grand design,[1]  
In time's remotest annals, long will shine;  
While sons of toil aloud proclaim his name,  
And *life preserv'd* perpetuate his *fame*.

[1] The Safety Lamp

\* \* \* \* \*

## SODA WATER.

(*To the Editor of the Mirror.*)

The following extract from a medical periodical on *Soda Water*, will not perhaps be deemed *mal-a-propos* at the present period of the year, and by being inserted in your widely circulated work may be of some service to those who are not aware of the evil effects produced by a *too free* use of that beverage.

M.M.M.

On this fashionable article, the editor remarks, Dr. Paris makes the following observations:—"The modern custom of drinking this inviting beverage during, or immediately after dinner, has been a pregnant source of indigestion. By inflating the stomach at such a period, we inevitably counteract those *muscular* contractions of its coats which are essential to chymification, whilst the quantity of soda thus introduced scarcely deserves notice; with the exception of the carbonic acid gas, it may be regarded as water; more mischievous only in consequence of the *exhilarating* quality, inducing us to take it at a period at which we would not require the more simple fluid."

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In all the waters we have obtained from fountains in London and other places, under the names of "Soda Water" and "*double Soda Water*," we have not been able to discover any soda. It is common water mechanically super-saturated with fixed air, which on being disengaged and rarified in the stomach, may, as Dr. Paris observes, so over distend the organ as to interrupt digestion, or diminish the powers of the digestive organs. When acid prevails in the stomach, which is generally the case the day after too free an indulgence in wine, true soda water, taken two or three hours before dinner, or an hour before breakfast, not only neutralizes the acid, but the fixed air, which is disengaged, allays the irritation, and even by distending the organ, invigorates the muscular coat and nerves. As the quantity of soda, in the true soda water, is much too small to neutralize the acid, it is a good practice to add fifteen or twenty grains of the carbonate of soda, finely powdered, to each bottle, which may be done by pouring the contents of a bottle on it in a large glass.

Of all the soda water we have examined, we have found that made by Mr. Johnson, to contain the greatest quantity of soda. For the purpose of cooling the body during warm weather, and quieting the stomach, which is generally in a state of increased irritation when the temperature of the air is equal or within a few degrees of that of the body, it is preferable to any of the vegetable or mineral acids.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE COSMOPOLITE.

### SISTERS OF CHARITY.[1]

All the world, that is, one out of the two millions of people in this great town, know, that the above is the title of a somewhat romantic drama, in which Miss Kelly is fast monopolizing the tears and sympathies of the public by her impersonation of a *Sister of Charity*. To witness it will do every heart good; and this is the highest aim of a dramatic representation. The performance has had the effect of drawing our attention to the original of the character, which is intensely interesting, though at the same time overtinged with romance.

Every six weeks' tourist has seen or heard of the *Sisters of Charity* on the Continent. They are nurses in the hospitals there, but on a system very different from the hireling attendants in similar institutions in England. Indeed, they may be said to have quitted the world to devote themselves to the relief of those unfortunate persons, who people the abodes of misery and distress. They form, it appears, a numerous body, consisting of several thousand members, who are said to perform or superintend the administration of 300 hospitals in France. They are united under several denominations, as nuns of those monastic communities which escaped the storms of

the revolution. Many of them are in the prime of life, and though not bound by absolute vows, devote

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the whole of their time, and even die in the act of doing good. In spiritual matters, they are under the jurisdiction of the bishop of the district in which the hospital is situated; in temporal concerns they are subject to the authority of the heads of the establishment to which they belong; but they are chiefly under the guidance of the superior of their order. They are fed and lodged at the expense of the hospital, and receive in addition, a certain stipend for the purchase of clothes. In the hospital at Lyons, (which forty or fifty years ago, was the only hospital in France which was not in a barbarous state), there are about 150 of these *Sisters*, wearing a uniform dress of dark worsted, and remarkably clean. They receive the trifling sum of forty francs a year for pocket-money, and sit up one night in each week; the following is a day of relaxation, and the only one they have. During the siege of Lyons, when cannon-balls passed through the windows, and struck the walls every moment, not one abandoned her post near the sick.

Every one will rejoice at the existence of such offices as *the Sisters of Charity*—benign, nay almost divine; and until this moment, we thought that such had been their real character. Our belief has, however, been somewhat staggered by an article in the last number of *the London Review*; in which the services of the *Sisters* are represented in a much less amiable light than we have been accustomed to view them. This notice occurs in a paper on a work by Dr. David Johnston, of Edinburgh, on the Public Charities of France. The Doctor, whose book abounds with evidence of considerable research, thus speaks of the *Sisters of Charity*:—

“The inmate of an hospital is alone qualified to speak with justice of the blessings which such attendance affords. Possessed of superior education, and from their religious profession placed above many of the worldly considerations which affect nurses in general, the Sisters of Charity act at once as temporal and spiritual comforters, watch over the sick bed, soothe the prisoner in his confinement, and penetrate into the worst abodes of misery, to comfort the distress, and instruct the ignorant.”

Such we also thought had been their portraiture, although we could not so far speak from personal evidence. But the reviewer gainsays all this, and even does more. After drawing a comparison, and not altogether a just one, between the “Sisters of Charity in France,” and ladies of fortune who unostentatiously visit the sick poor in England, he says—

“It is matter of fact, generally observable in the instances of the *soeurs de charite*, that in the performance of their duties towards the sick, during the first three or four months, they display all that tender solicitude and devotedness, which romance ascribes to them as constant and habitual. After the first feelings have subsided, the *soeurs* are found to consult, in all their actions, first,

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their own interests, in ease and comfort; next, those of their order, and of the servants on the establishment personally connected with them; and, last of all, those of the patients. On an unprejudiced examination it will be found, that a body so constituted as the *soeurs*, are extremely unfit for the performance of such functions as are entrusted to them in these establishments. It is essential to the good performance of the duties of a nurse, that she should be responsible to the medical officer for their omission. The *soeurs* are entirely independent of any such control, and their usual answer to any complaint is, '*Je reponds a mon crucifix.*'"

"It is a great mistake to suppose that these nuns are enlightened, or well born, or well educated. In general they are ignorant women, too poor and too deficient in personal qualities to find husbands. They are proud, arrogant, and bigoted; and, with a few interesting exceptions, it may be said of them, that they become nuns for want of better occupations; that they are characterized by the ill temper of disappointment, at the world having neglected or rejected them, rather than by any sublime elevation of feeling, which could have led them to reject the world. It is a delusion to suppose that all the more important duties, on the due performance of which the success of medical treatment mainly depends, devolve upon the *soeurs*. The fact is, that it is one of the most serious defects of the French hospitals, that proper persons are not procured to perform these services: such as waiting upon the patients, changing their linen, moving them, and administering to their little wants, in a proper manner. In Paris there is a class of men, the refuse of the working classes, who, when all means of support fail, apply to the hospitals, and become *infirmieres*. It will scarcely be believed, that to these men are entrusted the important duties to which we have adverted, and which the Doctor seems to suppose are chiefly performed by the *soeurs*. These *infirmieres* receive for their services only six-and-eightpence per month, besides their board and lodging in the house; and, as they can earn more at any other occupation, they seldom remain long in their situations. The *infirmieres*, or female servants, are much of the same description: badly appointed, badly paid, negligent and rapacious, often pilfering a portion of the allowance of provisions and wine prescribed to the patient for his recovery. The general interference of the *soeurs* is prejudicial. Frequently, on the strength of their own medical opinions, they will neglect the prescriptions; frequently they harass a patient about his confession, when a calm state of mind is indispensable for his recovery. They also often exercise their united influence against a medical man, to protect favourite servants. They encumber all exertions for improvement, so that, whenever any change is discussed, one of the first

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subjects for consideration is, whether the *soeurs* are likely to interfere. Of late, however, their power has been somewhat checked. Under good regulations they might, no doubt, be rendered serviceable; but every alteration of their condition, with regard to the hospitals, to be an improvement, must bring them nearer to the superior condition of responsible nurses, chosen for their aptitude, and remunerated according to their merits."

"We have been compelled to state thus much of these orders. The associations connected with persons of their sex and supposed rank, who have taken the veil; their apparent devotedness to such amiable and pre-eminently serviceable duties; their solemnity of exterior, and other incidents—are so calculated to strike the eye and possess the imagination of the beholder, that we are not surprised to perceive that they have misled the judgment of the Doctor, since they constantly impose on others, who have better opportunities for observation. The *soeur de charite* is too fine an object for the effusion of sentiment and romance, not to be made the most of in these worldly and unpoetic times; and were it not that the illusions thrown around this object might lead to practical errors, we should have refrained from disturbing them."

Feelings similar to those professed by the reviewer, have induced us to present the reader with his new light, which we hope is a just one. Of the little system of plunder carried on in some institutions at home, we can speak of one instance with certainty:—A relative near and dear to us as life's blood, had by money and comforts, (which but for this incident would have been kept secret), for many months relieved an inmate of a London hospital. The patient was a poor, old female, in the last stage of decrepitude, and fast sinking beneath the sorrows of life. She had seen happier days, and the only relic which she possessed of better fortune, was a pair of silver framed spectacles; which, on her death-bed, she bequeathed to her benefactress. The poor old woman's relations were dead, and this guardian-spirit who soothed her path to the grave, was her only friend. Such an act of gratitude was, therefore, extremely affecting, and her benefactress was anxious to possess the legacy—heaven knows, not for its intrinsic value—but as a testimony of rare and unaffected gratitude; yet, will it be believed, that the tempting bit of silver had not escaped the clutches of the nurses of the ward, and the spectacles were not to be found! Our informant related the circumstance with tears of indignation; we threatened to investigate the matter, yet her meek and mild spirit implored us to withhold: she too passed from us a short time after, and is, we hope, gone where her good deeds will not be forgotten.

PHILO.

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[1] We give this paper as an illustration of the office of the *Sisters of Charity*. The incidents upon which the Drama is founded, are those of the Two Sisters of Ancona, a pretty little tale in the Juvenile Keepsake, by Mrs. Godwin. One sister in an attempt to carry provisions and intelligence to her lover, is taken prisoner by the French, and condemned to die; the other is a nun, who effects her escape by changing dresses, and remains, and actually perishes in her stead. On the stage, the sister is made the daughter of the Sister of Charity, and the fruit of a secret and unhappy connexion with a French officer, who proves to be the commander of the detachment—hence both their lives are saved.

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## NOTES OF A READER.

### MONT BLANC.

The most interesting night of the late season of the Royal Institution, was the lecture or narrative, given by Dr. Clarke of his ascent of Mont Blanc in 1825. Dr. Clarke led his audience from Geneva to the summit, detailing the enterprise, which, however, he considers not by any means so dangerous as has been represented. At 9,000 feet above the level of the Mediterranean the air becomes extremely rarified, and the sky exhibits a blue-black appearance. He does not consider it at all safe for persons to attempt the ascent, having a tendency to apoplexy, for at the height of 15,000 feet above the level of the sea, the extremely rarified state of the air, as well as the almost unbearable oppression of the sun's rays, though surrounded with snow, would increase that tendency to an alarming extent. So oppressive is the sun, that on sitting down in the shade he was asleep instantly. The passage, just above the Grande Plateau (a surface of ice and snow, many acres in extent, 10,000 feet above the level of the sea) is a point of great difficulty. This chink is about seven feet wide and of immeasurable depth. To get over it the guides first proceed to render the passage more easy. He cautions travellers to pay implicit attention to guides, as the accident in 1822, when three persons sunk into the caverns of snow, was occasioned by this want of caution. It is appalling, said Dr. Clarke, to be carried over an abyss of unknown depth, slung upon cords and drawn over. On arriving at the summit of Mont Blanc the toils are amply repaid. Language cannot depict the scene before the traveller. The eye wanders over immeasurable space. The sky appears to recede, and the vision possesses double power. The Alpine scenery here is awfully grand, and the alternate thaw and freezing (for when the sun is down it freezes rapidly) produces the most grotesque figures. The only living creature found on the summit of Mont Blanc is a small white butterfly (the *ansonias*), which flits over the snow. The chamois is found 10,000 feet above the level of

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the sea; Mont Blanc is 15,500 feet above the Mediterranean. Specimens were exhibited of the compositions of all the mountains round Mont Blanc. Periodically an immense quantity of snow falls down from the summit of the Mont, enough, as the guide said, to crush all Europe like flies. "On throwing stones down the precipices, thousands of feet deep, the traveller feels an almost irresistible desire to throw himself after them!"— *Monthly Magazine*.

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### FURIOUS DRIVING.

In going upon the road, in the United States, it is looked upon as a sort of slur on one, if another pass him, going in the same direction; and this folly prevails to as great a degree as amongst our break-neck coachmen; and you will see an old Quaker, whom, to look at, as he sits perched in his wagon, you would think had been cut out of stone a couple of hundred years ago; or hewed out of a log of wood, with the axe of some of the first settlers—if he hear a rattle behind him, you will see him gently turn his head; if he be passing a tavern at the time he pays little attention, and refrains from laying the whip upon the "creatures," seeing that he is morally certain that the rattler will stop to take "a grog" at the tavern; but if no such invitation present itself, and especially if there be a tavern two or three miles a-head, he begins immediately to make provision against the consequences of the impatience of his rival, who, he is aware, will push him hard, and on they go as fast as they can scamper, the successful driver talking of the "*glorious achievement*" for a week.— *Cobbett*.

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### VILLAGE BELLS.

-----'To the heart the solemn sweetness steals,  
Like the heart's voice, unfelt by none who feels  
That God is love, that man is living dust;  
Unfelt by none, whom ties of brotherhood  
Link to his kind; by none who puts his trust  
In naught of earth that hath surviv'd the flood,  
Save those mute charities, by which the good  
Strengthen poor worms, and serve their Maker best.

*Village Patriarch.*

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## **CURIOUS CONTRIVANCE.**

In the Pampas, when the natives want a granary, they sew the legs of a whole skin up, and fill it full of corn; it is then tied up to four stakes, with the legs hanging downwards, so that it has the appearance of an elephant hanging up; the top is again covered with hides, which prevent the rats getting in. In stretching a skin to dry, wood is so scarce in many parts of the Pampas, that the rib bones are carefully preserved to supply its place, and used as pegs to fix it in the ground. When a new-born infant is to be cradled, a square sheepskin is laced to a small rude frame of wood, and suspended like a scale to a beam or rail.—*Brand's Peru.*

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### **SOUTH AMERICAN DINNER.**

A recent traveller thus describes a dinner party at Mendoza:—The day of days arrived; the carriage was flying about the town with a couple of mules, to bring all the ladies to dinner, in order to meet the foreign gentlemen. We were all seated higgledy-piggledy at table, dish after dish came in; every one helped themselves, no carving was required, being all made dishes. The master of the house was walking round the room with his coat off, very comfortably smoking his cigar, and between every fresh dish, of which there were some thirty or forty, the ladies amused themselves with eating olives soaked in oil, and the colonel, (one of the military pedlars), to prove that he understood foreign manners and customs, got the ladies one after another to ask the foreign gentlemen to drink wine with them, which was no small ordeal for us to run through. After these half hundred dishes, came the sweets; then the gentlemen's flints and steels were going, the room soon filled with smoke, and the ladies retired to dress for the ball.

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### **EARLY HOURS.**

We learn that Mr. Cobbett dines at twelve o'clock on suppawn and butcher's meat, that he sups on bread and milk at six, that he goes to bed at nine, that he rises every morning of his life at four; that before ten o'clock he has finished his writing for the day, and, that though no man has written more than he has, that he never knew any one who enjoyed more leisure than he does, and has done. "Now is there a man on earth who sits at a table, on an average, so many hours in the day as I do? I do not believe that there is: and I say it, not with pride, but with gratitude, that I do not believe that the whole world contains a man who is more constantly blessed with health than I am. In winter I go to bed at nine, and I rise, if I do not oversleep myself, at four, or between four and five. I have always a clear head; I am ready to take the pen, or begin dictating, the moment I have lighted the fire, or it has been lighted for me, and, generally speaking, I am seldom more than five minutes in bed before I am asleep."

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### **AN IRISH VILLAGE INN.**

The form and plan in all parts of the country are pretty nearly the same, though the furniture varies; the hospitable door (inns are proverbially hospitable) stands always open, but the guests are sheltered from the thorough air by a screen, composed like the rest of the mansion, of mud; the partition walls which separate it from the adjoining

rooms reach no higher than the spring of the roof, so that warmth and air, not to mention the grunting of pigs, and other domestic sounds, are equally diffused through all parts of

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the tenement; from the rafters, well blackened and polished with smoke, depend sundry flitches of bacon, dried salmon, and so forth, and above them, if you know the ways of the house “may be you couldn’t find (maybe you *couldn’t* means, maybe you *could*) a horn of malt or a cag of poteen, where the gauger couldn’t smell it.” If you are very ignorant, you must be told, that poteen is the far famed liquor which the Irish, on the faith of the proverb, “stolen bread is sweetest,” prefer, in spite of law, and—no—not of lawgivers, they drink it themselves, to its unsuccessful rival, parliament whisky. Beneath the ample chimney, and on each side of the fire-place, run low stone benches, the fire of turf or bog is made on the ground, and the pot for boiling the “mate, or potaties” as the chance may be, suspended over it by an iron chain; so that sitting on the aforesaid stone benches, you may inhale, like the gods, the savour of your dinner, while your frostbitten shins are soothed at the same time by the fire which dresses it.—*Monthly Magazine*.

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### THE TRUE GENTLEMAN.

By a gentleman, we mean not to draw a line that would be invidious between high and low, rank and subordination, riches and poverty. The distinction is in the mind. Whoever is open, loyal, and true; whoever is of humane and affable demeanour; whoever is honourable in himself, and in his judgment of others, and requires no law but his word to make him fulfil an engagement—such a man is a gentleman: and such a man may be found among the tillers of the earth. But high birth and distinction, for the most part, insure the high sentiment which is denied to poverty and the lower professions. It is hence, and hence only, that the great claim their superiority; and hence, what has been so beautifully said of honour, the law of kings, is no more than true:—

It aids and strengthens virtue where it meets her,  
And imitates her actions where she is not.

*De Vere*.

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### ROYAL PLANTERS.

Among the earliest and most successful planters was Count Maurice, of Nassau, who flourished in the seventeenth century. This prince had the advantage of operating in the genial clime, and with the fruitful soil of Brazil, of which in the year 1636, he was



governor. He was a man of taste and elegance, and adorned his palaces and gardens in that country with a magnificence worthy of the satraps of the east. His residence was upon an island formed by the confluence of two rivers, a place which before he commenced his improvements presented no very promising subject, being a dreary, waste, and uncultivated plain, equally worthless and unattractive. On this spot, however, he erected a splendid palace, laid out gardens around it of extraordinary

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extent and magnificence; salubrity, seclusion, horticultural ornament were all studiously and tastefully combined in the arrangement of the buildings; the choicest fruits of a tropical climate, the orange, the citron, the ananas, with many others unknown to us, solicited at once the sight, the smell, and the taste; artificial fountains of water preserved the coolness of the air, and maintained the verdure of the earth; thirteen bastions and turrets flanked and defended the gardens; and seven hundred trees of various sizes, of which some rose to thirty, some to forty, and some to fifty feet high to the lowermost branches, were removed to the spot, and arranged by the designer's skill in such a manner as to produce the most striking and splendid effect. Some of these trees were of seventy and others of eighty years growth. Being skilfully taken up they were placed carefully in carriages, conveyed over a space of from three to four miles in extent, transported on rafts across both the rivers, and on being replanted in the island, so favourable were both soil and vegetation in that genial climate, that they immediately struck root, and even bore fruit during the first year after their removal.

Louis XIV. who, by the good efforts of the learned Jesuits, had been taught that the practice of transplanting was well known to the Greeks and Romans, resolved to rival, and if possible, to eclipse whatever had been achieved in this art by these distinguished nations. Accordingly, among the stupendous changes made on the face of nature at Versailles and other royal residences, immense trees were taken up by the roots, erected on carriages, and removed at the royal will and pleasure. Almost the whole Bois de Boulogne was in this way said to be transported from Versailles to its present site, a distance of about two leagues and a half. To order the march of an army was the effort of common men, and every day commanders; to order the removal of a forest seemed to suit the magnificent conception of a prince, who, in all his enterprises, affected to act upon a scale immeasurably greater than that of his contemporaries. In the Bois de Boulogne, in spite of military devastation, the curious eye may still distinguish, in the rectilinear disposition of the trees, the traces of this extraordinary achievement.

At Potsdam, Frederick II., and at Warsaw, the last king of Poland transferred some thousands of large trees, in order to embellish the royal gardens at those places; and at Lazenki, in the suburbs of Warsaw, the far famed and unfortunate Stanislaus laid out the palace and grounds in a style of luxuriance and magnificence which has, perhaps, never been surpassed since the days of the Roman emperors. To add to the charm of this favourite spot, he removed some thousands of trees and bushes with which the gardens and the park were adorned; both were frequently thrown open to the public, and on these occasions, entertainments of unexampled splendour and gaiety were given to the court and to the principal inhabitants of the capital, which are still recollected with feelings of delight.—*Stuart's Planter's Guide*.—*Westminster Review*.

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### THE SKETCH-BOOK

#### MY FIRST INTERVIEW WITH SIR WALTER SCOTT.

*By the Ettrick Shepherd.*

One fine day in the summer of 1801, as I was busily engaged working in the field at Ettrick House, Wat Shiel came over to me and said, that “I boud gang away down to the Ramseycleuch as fast as my feet could carry me, for there war some gentlemen there wha wantit to speak to me.”

“Wha can be at the Ramseycleuch that wants me, Wat?”

“I couldna say, for it wasna me that they spak to i’ the byganging. But I’m thinking it’s the Shirra an’ some o’ his gang.”

I was rejoiced to hear this, for I had seen the first volumes of “The Minstrelsy of the Border,” and had copied a number of old things from my mother’s recital, and sent them to the editor preparatory for a third volume. I accordingly went towards home to put on my Sunday clothes, but before reaching it I met with THE SHIRRA and Mr. William Laidlaw coming to visit me. They alighted and remained in our cottage for a space better than an hour, and my mother chanted the ballad of Old Maitlan’ to them, with which Mr. Scott was highly delighted. I had sent him a copy, (not a very perfect one, as I found afterwards, from the singing of another Laidlaw,) but I thought Mr. Scott had some dread of a part being forged, that had been the cause of his journey into the wilds of Ettrick. When he heard my mother sing it he was quite satisfied, and I remember he asked her if she thought it had ever been printed, and her answer was, “Oo, na, na, sir, it was never printed i’ the world, for my brothers an’ me learned it frae auld Andrew Moor, an’ he learned it, an’ mony mae, frae are auld Baby Mettlin, that was housekeeper to the first laird o’ Tushilaw.”

“Then that must be a very auld story, indeed, Margaret,” said he.

“Ay, it is that! It is an auld story! But mair nor that, except George Warton and James Steward, there was never ane o’ my sangs prentit till ye prentit them yoursell, an’ ye hae spoilt them a’thegither. They war made for singing, an’ no for reading; and they’re neither right spelled nor right setten down.”

“Heh—heh—heh! Take ye that, Mr. Scott,” said Laidlaw.

Mr. Scott answered by a hearty laugh, and the recital of a verse, but I have forgot what it was, and my mother gave him a rap on the knee with her open hand, and said, "It was true enough, for a' that."

We were all to dine at Ramseycleuch with the Messrs. Brydon, but Mr. Scott and Mr. Laidlaw went away to look at something before dinner, and I was to follow. On going into the stable-yard at Ramseycleuch I met with Mr. Scott's liveryman, a far greater original than his master, whom I asked if the Shirra was come?

"O, ay, lad, the Shirra's come," said he. "Are ye the chiel that mak the auld ballads and sing them?"

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"I said I fancied I was he that he meant, though I had never made ony very *auld* ballads."

"Ay, then, lad, gae your ways in an' speir for the Shirra. They'll let ye see where he is. He'll be very glad to see you."

During the sociality of the evening, the discourse ran very much on the different breeds of sheep, that curse of the community of Ettrick Forest. The original black-faced Forest breed being always called *the short sheep*, and the Cheviot breed *the long sheep*, the disputes at that period ran very high about the practicable profits of each. Mr. Scott, who had come into that remote district to preserve what fragments remained of its legendary lore, was rather bored with the everlasting question of the long and the short sheep. So at length, putting on his most serious calculating face, he turned to Mr. Walter Brydon and said, "I'm rather at a loss regarding the merits of this very important question. How long must a sheep actually measure to come under the denomination of *a long sheep*?"

Mr. Brydon, who, in the simplicity of his heart, neither perceived the quiz nor the reproof, fell to answer with great sincerity,—*"It's the woo, sir—it's the woo that makes the difference. The lang sheep hae the short woo, and the short sheep hae the lang thing; and these are just kind o' names we gie them like."* Mr. Scott could not preserve his grave face of strict calculation; it went gradually away, and a hearty guffaw followed. When I saw the very same words repeated near the beginning of the *Black Dwarf*, how could I be mistaken of the author? It is true, Johnnie Ballantyne persuaded me into a nominal belief of the contrary, for several years following, but I could never get the better of that and several similar coincidences.

The next day we went off, five in number, to visit the wilds of Rankleburn, to see if on the farms of Buccleuch there were any relics of the Castles of Buccleuch or Mount-Comyn, the ancient and original possession of the Scotts. We found no remains of either tower or fortalice, save an old chapel and churchyard, and a mill and mill-lead, where corn never grew, but where, as old Satchells very appropriately says,

Had heather-bells been corn of the best,  
The Buccleuch mill would have had a noble grist.

It must have been used for grinding the chief's blackmails, which it is known, were all paid to him in kind. Many of these still continue to be paid in the same way; and if report says true, he would be the better of a mill and kiln on some part of his land at this day, as well as a sterling conscientious miller to receive and render.

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Besides having been mentioned by Satchells, there was a remaining tradition in the country, that there was a font stone of blue marble, in which the ancient heirs of Buccleuch were baptized, covered up among the ruins of the old church. Mr. Scott was curious to see if we could discover it; but on going among the ruins we found the rubbish at the spot, where the altar was known to have been, dug out to the foundation,—we knew not by whom, but no font had been found. As there appeared to have been a kind of recess in the eastern gable, we fell a turning over some loose stones, to see if the font was not concealed there, when we came upon one half of a small pot, encrusted thick with rust. Mr. Scott's eyes brightened, and he swore it was an ancient consecrated helmet. Laidlaw, however, scratching it minutely out, found it covered with a layer of pitch inside, and then said, "Ay, the truth is, sir, it is neither mair nor less than a piece of a tar pat that some o' the farmers hae been buisting their sheep out o', i' the auld kirk langsyne." Sir Walter's shaggy eyebrows dipped deep over his eyes, and suppressing a smile, he turned and strode away as fast as he could, saying, that "We had just rode all the way to see that there was nothing to *be* seen."

I remember his riding upon a terribly high spirited horse, who had the perilous fancy of leaping every drain, rivulet, and ditch that came in our way; the consequence was, that he was everlastingly bogging himself, while sometimes his rider kept his seat despite of his plunging, and at other times he was obliged to extricate himself the best way he could. In coming through a place called the Milsey Bog, I said to him, "Mr. Scott, that's the maddest deil of a beast I ever saw. Can ye no gar him tak a wee mair time? He's just out o' ae lair intil another wi' ye."

"Ay," said he, "we have been very oft, these two days past, like the Pechs; we could stand straight up and tie our shoes." I did not understand the joke, nor do I yet, but I think these were his words.

We visited the old castles of Thirlestane and Tushilaw, and dined and spent the afternoon, and the night, with Mr. Brydon, of Crosslee. Sir Walter was all the while in the highest good-humour, and seemed to enjoy the range of mountain solitude, which we traversed, exceedingly. Indeed I never saw him otherwise. In the fields—on the rugged mountains—or even toiling in Tweed to the waist, I have seen his glee not only surpass himself, but that of all other men. I remember of leaving Altrive Lake once with him, accompanied by the same Mr. Laidlaw, and Sir Adam Fergusson, to visit the tremendous solitudes of The Grey Mare's Tail, and Loch Skene. I conducted them through that wild region by a path, which, if not rode by Clavers, was, I daresay, never rode by another gentleman. Sir Adam rode inadvertently into a gulf, and got a sad fright, but Sir Walter, in the very worst paths, never dismounted, save at Loch Skene to take some dinner. We went to Moffat that night, where we met with some of his family, and such a day and night of glee I never witnessed. Our very perils were matter to him of infinite merriment; and then there was a short-tempered boot-boy at the inn, who wanted to pick a quarrel with him, at which he laughed till the water ran over his cheeks.

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I was disappointed in never seeing some incident in his subsequent works laid in a scene resembling the rugged solitude around Loch Skene, for I never saw him survey any with so much attention. A single serious look at a scene generally filled his mind with it, and he seldom took another; but here he took the names of all the hills, their altitudes, and relative situations with regard to one another, and made me repeat them several times. It may occur in some of his works which I have not seen, and I think it will, for he has rarely ever been known to interest himself, either in a scene or a character, which did not appear afterwards in all its most striking peculiarities.

There are not above five people in the world who, I think, know Sir Walter better, or understand his character better, than I do; and if I outlive him, which is likely, as I am five months and ten days younger, I will draw a mental portrait of him, the likeness of which to the original shall not be disputed. In the meantime, this is only a reminiscence, in my own line, of an illustrious friend among the mountains.

The enthusiasm with which he recited, and spoke of our ancient ballads, during that first tour of his through the forest, inspired me with a determination immediately to begin and imitate them, which I did, and soon grew tolerably good at it. Of course I dedicated The Mountain Bard to him:

Blest be his generous heart for aye;  
He told me where the relic lay,  
Pointed my way with ready will,  
Afar on Ettrick's wildest hill,  
Watched my first notes with curious eye,  
And wonder'd at my minstrelsy:  
He little ween'd a parent's tongue  
Such strains had o'er my cradle sung.

*Edinburgh Literary Journal.*

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## RETROSPECTIVE GLEANINGS.

### NOTES OF A BOOKWORM.

*(For the Mirror.)*

Robberies and iniquities of all kinds were so uncommon in the reign of Alfred, that it is said, he hung up golden bracelets near the highways, and no man dared to touch them.

Earl Godwin, in order to appease Hardicanute, (whose brother he had been instrumental in murdering,) made him a magnificent present of a galley with a gilt stern,

rowed by fourscore men, who wore each of them a golden bracelet on his arm, weighing sixteen ounces, and were clothed and armed in the most sumptuous manner. Hardicanute pleased with the splendour of the spectacle, quickly forgot his brother's murder, and on Godwin's swearing that he was innocent of the crime, allowed him to be acquitted.

The cities of England appear by *Domesday Book*, to have been at the conquest little better than villages; York itself, though it was always the second, at least the third city in England, contained only 1,418 families; Norwich contained 738 houses; Exeter, 315; Ipswich, 538; Northampton, 60; Hertford, 146; Bath, 64; Canterbury, 262; Southampton, 84; and Warwick, 225.

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As the extreme ignorance of the age made deeds or writings very rare, the county or hundred courts were the places where the most remarkable civil transactions were finished. Here testaments were promulgated, slaves manumitted, bargains of sale concluded; and sometimes for greater security, the most remarkable of these deeds were inserted in the blank leaves of the parish Bible, which thus became a register too sacred to be falsified. It was not unusual to add to the deed an imprecation on all such as should be guilty of that crime.

The laws of Alfred enjoin, that if any one know that his enemy or aggressor, after doing him an injury, resolves to keep within his own house and his own lands, he shall not fight him till he require compensation for the injury. If he be strong enough, he may besiege him in his house for seven days without attacking him, and if the aggressor be willing, during that time to surrender himself and his arms, his adversary may detain him thirty days; but is compelled afterwards to restore him safe to his friends, and *be content with the compensation*.

The price of the King's head or his weregild, as it was then called, was by law, 30,000 thrismas, near L1,300. of our present money. The price of the prince's head was 15,000 thrismas; a bishop's or *alderman's* HEAD (quere, ought not the STOMACH to have been the part thus valued?) was valued at 8,000; a sheriff's, 4,000; a thane's, or clergyman's, 2,000; a ceorles, or husband-man's, 266. It must be understood that when a person was unwilling, or unable to pay the fine, he was outlawed, and the kindred of the deceased might punish him as they thought proper.

Gervase, of Tilbury, says, that in Henry the First's time, bread sufficient for 100 men, for a day, was rated at THREE SHILLINGS, or a shilling of that age.

By the laws of Ethelbert, any one who committed adultery with his neighbour's wife, was obliged to pay him a fine, AND BUY HIM ANOTHER WIFE.

The tenants in the King's demesne lands, in the reign of Henry II., were compelled to supply, GRATIS, the court with provisions and carriages, when the King went into any of the counties. These exactions were so grievous, and levied in so licentious a manner, that at the approach of the court, the farmers often deserted their houses, and sheltered themselves and families in the woods, from the insults of the King's retinue.

John Baldwin held the manor of Oterasfree, in Aylesbury, of the King, in soccage, by this service of finding litter for the King's bed, *viz.* in summer, *grass or herbs*, and two grey geese; and in winter, *straw*, and three eels, throughout the year, if the King should come thrice in the year to Aylesbury.

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Prince Henry, son of William I. disgusted at the little attention his brothers, Robert and William, paid to him in an accommodation respecting the succession to the throne, retired to St. Michael's Mount, in Normandy, and infested the neighbourhood with his forces. Robert and William, with their joint forces, besieged him in this place, and had nearly reduced him by the scarcity of water; when the elder hearing of his distress, permitted him to supply himself, and also sent him some pipes of wine for his own table. Being reproved by William for his ill-timed generosity, he replied, "*What, shall I suffer my brother to die of thirst? Where shall we find another when he is gone?*"

CLARENCE.

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## SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.

### COBBETT'S CORN.

The most interesting article in the last Number of the *Westminster Review*, is a paper on Cobbett's Corn, headed with the title of Mr. Cobbett's Treatise on the cultivation of the plant. The reviewer has there interwoven some choice extracts from Mr. Cobbett's book, which together with the connecting observations, we have abridged to suit our columns:—

The value of Indian Corn has never been disputed: it could not, by men who had ever seen the corn of America, or the maize of the more southern districts of France. Its introduction into England has not been speculated upon; for it was supposed there was an *in limine* objection, that in our climate it would not ripen. In the more northern part of France, for the same reason, its cultivation is not known, and in the map prefixed to Arthur Young's Travels in France and other countries, may be seen a line drawn across the country, which line he considered was the limit of the maize country. Neither has this experiment till now been tried, for Cobbett's corn is a different variety of Indian or American, from that cultivated either in the new or old world. It appears that it is a dwarfish species, and one which will not only ripen in this country, but produce results of fertility beyond that calculated upon in the United States in the most prosperous seasons. It was an accident which threw it into Mr. Cobbett's hands: his son brought some seeds from plants growing in a gentleman's garden in the French province of Artois, and it was only at his son's repeated entreaty that he was prevailed upon to try its effects. And even this entreaty from a son might not have prevailed, had not the influence of a sleepless night from the heat of summer, led to a conversation to be followed by results so important.

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"In the month of June, 1827," says Mr. Cobbett, "my son and I slept one night in the same room in the garden-house at Barn-elm. The night was very hot, and neither his bed nor mine was cool enough to permit us to get to sleep, in a case like which, people generally get to talking; and I, in a mood, half between restlessness and laziness, asked him, whether Mr. Walker had planted his corn. He said he had; and that led him off into a train of arguing, the object of which was, to maintain his former opinion relative to the great benefits that would attend the cultivation of this crop. He entered into a calculation of the distances, the space of ground required by each plant, the number of plants upon an acre, the number of ears upon a plant, the quantity of seed upon an ear, ending in a statement of the amount of the crop per acre. He then dwelt upon the quantity and value of the fodder, upon the facility of cultivation, upon the small quantity of seed required for an acre; and, finally, upon the preparation which the growing of the crop would make for a succeeding crop of wheat.

"I do confess, that I was very hard to be convinced; I became interested to be sure, and I resolved to give the thing a trial immediately, if possible, or rather to set about it immediately; but, I confess, that if the thing had been urged upon me by almost any other person, I should not have done it. 'Well, then,' said I, 'William, we will give your little corn a trial, for it is not too late yet.' But now a difficulty that appeared to be insuperable arose; namely, that the seed was all gone! The seed was all planted in Sussex. As soon as I reflected on this, I became really eager to make the experiment; so true it is, that we seldom know the full value of what we have had, till we have lost it. I recollected, however, that I had rather recently seen an ear or two of this corn in some seed-drawers that I had in the garden-house, not being quite sure, however, that they were of the true sort; and now I, who had so long turned from the subject rather with indifference, could not go to sleep for my doubts, my hopes, and fears, about these two bits of ears of corn. We had no light, or I should have got up to go and hunt the boxes, which I did as soon as day-light appeared, and there, to my great joy, I found two bits of ears of corn, which from the size and shape of the cobb, I knew to be of the true sort. This was upon the 8th of June in the morning."

Indian corn is a kind of corn tree, so that it would be exempt from the sneer of the Tartars who despise the men that live on "the top of a weed." The top of Indian Corn supplies the place of hay or of straw for fodder: it is the flower of the plant, and bears the farina like the wheat-ear, but the grains are deposited in the ears which come out of the stalk lower down. These ears are enveloped in their leaves which are called the husk. The number of ears varies in different plants, three is

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the common number. Seven are a curiosity. One stalk in Mr. Cobbett's field bore seven ears, and Mr. Cobbett, jun. sent it as a present to the king's gardener at Kew, comparing it to that "one stalk mentioned in Pharaoh's dream of the seven years of plenty." For it must not be forgotten that Mr. Cobbett maintains that Indian corn is the true corn of scripture, and defends this opinion by many plausible arguments. We have no room to discuss them, and shall only observe in contravention, that Indian corn is not now known in Palestine or Syria, and that it is dangerous to raise a verbal discussion founded upon a translation. His argument is, however, well worth the attention of all our biblical readers. In America the Indian corn alone monopolizes the name of corn: all other corn is called grain: so important is the cultivation of it there, that it puzzles the Yankees exceedingly to know how the old country can get on without corn; and so identified is the great roll of grain, with the name of an ear of corn, that when Mr. Cobbett once read an account to an American farmer, of a young English lord lying dangerously ill from having swallowed an ear of corn; the man started up and exclaimed, a whole ear of corn! no wonder that poor John Bull is in such a miserable state, when his lords have got swallows like that.

The Indian corn being a large plant requires both air and space: it is consequently raised in hills far apart, after the manner of our hop plants; and reckons upon a deep ploughing between the hills after it is partly grown up for a supply of health and vigour. This great distance between the hills, sometimes placed four feet apart one way, and five feet apart another way, and the height of the plant with its lofty top and its lateral ears form a far different picture than that presented by an English corn field. Cobbett's or the dwarf corn is, however, only four feet high: he planted his in rows three feet apart, which distance he is inclined to think is too small. "Three feet do not give room for good, true, and tolerably deep ploughing: and that is the main thing in the cultivation of corn, which indeed will not thrive well, if the ground be not deeply moved, and very near to the plants to which they are growing. You will see in America a field of corn late in June, perhaps, which has not been ploughed, looking to-day sickly and fallow. Look at it only in four days' time, if ploughed the day after you saw it, and its colour is totally changed. Five feet are accordingly recommended as the distance between the rows, and six inches only between the plants."

A great advantage of Indian or Cobbett's corn is, that it occupies the ground for little more than half the year: it is planted in May or June, and ripens in November. Unlike common corn or grain, where there is generally a superabundance of blades, every plant of Indian corn is of importance: it cannot be spared; and as the sweetness of the early growth renders it a tempting prey to birds, insects, and rabbits, it becomes necessary to guard against their encroachments with the most lively care.

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Weeds are to be instantly put down on their first appearance, or corn is not to be expected; "the poor corn-plant, if left to itself, will soon be like Gulliver when bound down by the Lilliputians." The hoe is the instrument to be used on this occasion, and then the plough; the latter operation is repeated twice; two double ploughings are the death of weeds, and the life of the plants; the first takes place when the corn is from six to eight inches high, and the second, about the middle of July, or earlier, when the plants are about a foot and a half high, or from that to two feet. "Let no one," says Cobbett, "be afraid of their tearing about the roots of the plants, when they are at this advanced age and height;" and in encouraging them to pursue the work resolutely and fearlessly, he tells them of the way in which the Yankee farmer manages the matter, and digresses, as he loves to digress, into a picture of manners, or an old recollection.

"Ninety-nine of my readers out of a hundred, and I dare say, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand, will shudder at the thought of tearing about in this manner; thinking that breaking-off, tearing-off, cutting-off the roots of such large plants, just as they are coming into bloom, must be a sort of work of destruction. Let them read the book of Mr. Tull; or let them go and see my friends the Yankees, who generally drive the thing off to the last moment, especially if they be young enough to have a 'frolic' stand between them and the ploughing of the corn; or if the wife want the horses to go ten or twenty miles to have a gossip with a neighbour over a comfortable cup of tea; but they, to do them justice, do not forget the beef steaks, or the barbecued fowls, on these occasions; that is to say, a fowl caught up in the yard, scalded in a minute, cleaned the next, and splitted down the back, and clapped upon the *gridiron* (favourite implement of mine,) and then upon the table, along with the hot cakes, the preserved peaches, and the comfortable cup of tea. If a wife want the horses for this purpose, or for any other, and should continue too long a time in a visiting or frolicing humour, the poor corn gives signs of the consequence, by becoming yellow, and sharp-pointed at the blade. By and by, however, the Yankee comes with his plough; and it would frighten an English farmer out of his senses to see how he goes on, swearing at the horses, and tearing about the ground, and tumbling it up against the plants; but, at any rate, moving it all pretty deeply, somehow or other. I have seen them do this when the tassel was nearly at its full height, and when the silk was appearing from the ears. One rule is invariable; that is, that if the corn be not ploughed at all there will be no crop; there will be tassel, and the semblance of ears; but (upon ordinary land, at least,) there will be no crop at all."

*(To be concluded in our next.)*

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### THE GATHERER.

"A snapper-up of unconsidered trifles."

SHAKSPEARE.

### ONE WAY TO DIE FOR LOVE.

A lady, nearly related to the writer, having a great partiality (though married) for the feline race, particularly lavished favours upon a young and beautiful cat, whom she constantly fed, taught to perform several pleasing tricks, and in short made of the animal such a companion, that she never liked it to be out of her sight. She had also in her service a cook, who boasted not of partialities for any living creature, save a village youth, for whom she cherished a flame that rivalled the bright and ardent fire of her own kitchen; to him she generously assigned as a hiding place and rendezvous, the corner of an out-house, to which she frequently stole in order to enjoy a *tete a tete* with her admirer. Thither also stole puss, either in gratitude for past savoury benefactions, or in anticipation of future. But the lady of the house, frequently missing her favourite, and tracing her one day into the place of rendezvous, thus unluckily effected the discovery of cook and her swain. The damsel apprehending that such interruptions to their interviews might, from the gourmandizing propensities of the favourite, be frequent, determined to prevent them for ever; the very next time that puss, as usual, followed her, seizing with savage exultation the harmless creature, she severed with a huge carving knife, its head from its body! An exploit truly worthy of the *tender* passion, and the *gentle* sex!

M.L.B.

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George I. was remarkably fond of seeing the play of *Henry VIII.* which had something in it that seemed to hit the taste of that monarch. One night being very attentive to that part of the play where Henry VIII. commands his minister, Wolsey, to write circular letters of indemnity to every county where the payment of certain heavy taxes had been disputed, and remarking the manner in which the minister artfully communicated these commands to his secretary, Cromwell, whispering thus:—

"A word with you:

Let there be letters writ to every shire

Of the King's grace and pardon; the griev'd commons

Hardly conceive of me—Let it be nois'd

That thro' *our intercession* this revokement

And pardon comes."——

—The king could not help smiling at the craft of the minister, in filching from his master the merit of the action, though he himself had been the author of the evil complained of; and turning to the Prince of Wales, said, “You see, George, what you have one day to expect; an English minister will be an English minister in every age and in every reign.”

W.C.R.R.

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**AN “INDWELLING” JOKE.**

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A certain would-be bibliopole, desirous of emulating the Constables, Boyds, and Colburns of this century, lately opened a couple of windows at Johnston, and exhibited the beautiful wood-cuts on the title page of the Shorter Catechism to the wondering amateurs of the fine arts there with so much success, as to induce him to become printer and publisher. Forthwith he set to throwing off an impression of a thousand copies—he was fond of round numbers—of a work “*on Indwelling Sin*.” It threatened to be an indwelling sore in his shop; and he set off to Campbelton to sell a few in that pious place. A tobacco-seller and grocer gave him a cask of whisky for the lot—which, on his return, he disposed of to a popular publican; and now, when the wags of the place seek to wet their whistle, they gravely call for “a gill of indwelling sin!”—*Edinburgh Literary Journal*.

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Learning is like mercury, one of most powerful and excellent things in the world in skilful hands; in unskilful, the most mischievous.—*Pope*.

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