

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction eBook

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Page 1

REGENT'S PARK.

A visit to these Gardens is one of the most delightful of the rational recreations of the metropolis. The walk out is pleasant enough: though there is little rural beauty on the road, the creations of art assume a more agreeable appearance than in the city itself; and, with cottages, park-like grounds, and flourishing wood, the eye may enjoy a few picturesque groupings.

The *Garden* of the Society is one of the prettiest in the vicinity of the metropolis; the *Menagerie* is certainly the most important ever collected in this country. It is a charming sight to behold myriads of tiny flowers fringing our very paths, and little groves of shrubs and young trees around us; yet it is a gratification of the highest order, to witness the animals of almost every country on the earth assembled within a few acres; and it is indeed a sublime study to observe how beautifully the links in the great chain of nature are wrought, and how admirably are the habits and structure of some of these animals adapted to the wants of man, while all are subservient to some great purpose in the scale of creation. How clearly are these truths taught by the science of Zoology; and how attractively are they illustrated in the Menagerie of the Zoological Gardens. Consider but for a moment that the cat which crouches by our fireside is of the same tribe with "the lordly lion," whose roar is terrific as an earthquake, and the tiger who often stays but to suck the blood of his victims: that the faithful dog, "who knows us personally, watches for us, and warns us of danger," is but a descendant from the wolf, who prowls through the wintry waste with almost untameable ferocity. Yet how do we arrive at the knowledge of these interesting facts—but by zoological study.

Two of the Cuts in the annexed page will furnish our country friends with the improved plan of keeping the animals in large open cages. The first represents that of the *Polar Bear*, of strong iron-work, with a dormitory adjoining. The enclosed area is flagged with stone, and in the centre is a tank, or pool, of water, in which the bear makes occasional plungings. The present occupant is but small in comparison with the usual size of the species. "Its favourite postures," observes Mr. Bennett, "are lying flat at its whole length; sitting upon its haunches with its fore legs perfectly upright, and its head in a dependent position; or standing upon all fours with its fore-paws widely extended and its head and neck swinging alternately from side to side, or upwards and downwards in one continued and equable libration." [1]

[1] The Gardens and Menagerie of the Zoological Society delineated. Vol. I.

The second Cut represents the tunnelled communication between the two Gardens, beneath the carriage-road of the Park. Above, the archway is a pediment, supported by two neat columns, and a terraced walk, with balustrades. The whole is handsomely executed in cement or imitative stone. The decorative vases are by Austin, of the New

Road. A lion's head, in bold relief, forms an appropriate key-stone embellishment to the arch. The sloping banks are formed of mimic rock-work profusely intermingled with plants and flowers.

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The third Cut is the Monkey House, of substantial iron-work, with dormitories and winter apartments in the rear. In fine sunny weather the monkeys may be here seen disporting their recreant limbs to the delight of crowds of visitors. Their species are too numerous but for a catalogue. Among them are the Negro and Sooty Monkeys,—the Mone Monkey: “the name of *Monkey* is supposed to be derived from the African appellation of this species, *Mone* corrupted into *Monachus*.” Bonneted, pig-tailed, and Capuchin Monkeys; the last named from their dark crowns, like the capuch or hood of a Capuchin friar; and black and white-fronted Spider Monkeys, named from their great resemblance to large spiders.

By the way, there is an abundance of still life in the Gardens at this ungenial season. We find the Elephant, the Antelopes, and the Zebra, in their winter quarters, and their mightinesses, the large cats, as the lions, tiger, and leopards, accommodated with a snug fire. The tropical birds, as the parrots, maccaws, &c., have been removed from the extremity of the north garden to warmer quarters; and the hyaenas, leopards, and a host of smaller carnivorous quadrupeds have taken their places. The upper end is occupied by four roomy dens, with a lordly black-maned lion and a lioness, from Northern Africa; above them are a fine lioness and a leopard from Ceylon: these we take to have been among the recent arrivals from the Tower Menagerie.

* * * * *

FRAGMENTS ON HUMAN LIFE.

(*For the Mirror.*)

“Call not earth a barren spot,
Pass it not ungrateful by,
'Tis to man a lovely lot.”

There is no subject on which such a variety of opinions exist, as on the question “Whether man is happy;” and that it is not easy to be settled, is certain. Many persons have been so far contented with their lot as to wish to have their life over again, and yet as many have expressed themselves to the contrary.

Dr. Johnson, who always spoke of human life in the most desponding terms, and considered earth a vale of tears,

“Yet hope, not life from pain or sorrow free,
Or think the doom of man reversed for thee—”

declared that he would not live over again a single week of his life, had it been allowed him.[2] Such was his opinion on the past; but so great is the cheering influence with

which Hope irradiates the mind, that in looking forward to the future, he always talked with pleasure on the prospect of a long life.

[2] Chamfort observes, that the writers on physics, natural history, physiology, and chemistry, have been generally men of a mild, even, and happy temperament, while the writers on politics, legislation, and even morals, commonly exhibited a melancholy and fretful spirit. It is to be expected that an inspection of the beauty and order of nature should affect the mind with peculiar pleasure.—*Gaieties and Gravities*.

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When he was in Scotland, Boswell told him that after his death, he intended to erect a memorial to him. Johnson, to whom the very mention of death was unpleasant, replied, "Sir, I hope to see your grand-children." On his death-bed he observed to the surgeon who was attending him, "*I want life*, you are afraid of giving me pain."

It has been supposed that this question had been settled by the authority of Scripture. "Man is born to trouble," says Job, "as the sparks fly upward." In turning over a few pages more, we find ourselves in doubt again. "*The latter end of Job was more blessed than his beginning*; for he had 14,000 sheep, and 6,000 camels, and 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 she-asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. So Job died being old and full of days."

It may not be unpleasant to place before the reader the opinions of several celebrated men, on Life, that he may choose his side, and either like the bee or the spider, extract the poison or gather the honey. We will begin with Sterne, one who well knew the human heart.

"What is the life of man? is it not to shift from side to side!
from sorrow to sorrow!"

"When I consider how oft we eat the bread of affliction, when one runs over the catalogue of all the cross reckonings and sorrowful items with which the heart of man is overcharged, 'tis wonderful by what hidden resources the mind is enabled to stand it out, and bear itself up, as it does, against the impositions laid upon our nature."—*T. Shandy*.

"A man has but a bad bargain of it at the best."—*Chesterfield*.

"No scene of human life but teems with mortal woe."—*Sir Walter Scott*.

In opposition to these sentiments, Franklin, in writing on the death of a friend, gives us his opinion, "*It is a party of pleasure*, some take their seats first."

And Lord Byron, describing Sunrise, in the second canto of *Lara*, says

"But mighty nature bounds as from her birth,
The sun is in the heavens, and life on earth;
Flowers in the valley, splendour in the beam.
Health on the gale, and freshness in the stream.
Immortal Man! Behold her glories shine,
And cry exultingly, 'They are thine'
Gaze on, while yet thy gladdened eyes may see,
A morrow comes when they are not for thee."

In the same spirit Cowper begins his poem on Hope:

“See Nature gay as when she first began,
With smiles alluring her admirer, man,
She spreads the morning over eastern hills.
Earth glitters with the drops the night distils.
The sun obedient at her call appears
To fling his glories o’er the robe she wears,
... to proclaim
His happiness, her dear, her only aim.”

“The Thracians,” says Cicero, “wept when a child was born, and feasted and made merry when a man went out of the world, and with reason. Show me the man who knows what life is, and dreads death, and I’ll show thee a prisoner who dreads his liberty.”

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Of the misery of human life, Gray speaks in similar terms:

“To all their sufferings all are men,
Condemn’d alike to groan,
The feeling for another’s pain,
The unfeeling for his own.”

Audi alteram partem:

“It’s a happy world after all.”—*Paley*.

And Gray himself:

“For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This careful, anxious being e’er resigned,
E’er left the precincts of the *cheerful day*
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind.”

And another popular author:

“A world of pleasure is continually streaming in on every side. It only depends on man to be a demi-god, and to convert this world into Elysium.”—*Gaieties and Gravities*.

It is doubtless wise to incline to the latter sentiment.

Of the instability of human happiness and glory, a fine picture is drawn by Appian, who represents Scipio weeping over the destruction of Carthage. “When he saw this famous city, which had flourished seven hundred years, and might have been compared to the greatest empires, on account of the extent of its dominions, both by sea and land, its mighty armies, its fleets, elephants and riches; and that the Carthaginians were even superior to other nations, by their courage and greatness of soul, as, notwithstanding their being deprived of arms and ships, they had sustained for three whole years, all the hardships and calamities of a long siege; seeing, I say, this city entirely ruined, historians relate that he could not refuse his tears to the unhappy fate of Carthage. He reflected that cities, nations, and empires are liable to revolutions, no less than particular men; that the like sad fate had befallen Troy, once so powerful; and in later times, the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians, whose dominions were once of so great an extent; and lastly, the Macedonians, whose empire had been so glorious throughout the world.” Full of these mournful ideas, he repeated the following verse of Homer:

“The day shall come, that great avenging day,
Which Troy’s proud glories in the dust shall lay,
When Priam’s powers, and Priam’s self shall fall,
And one prodigious ruin swallow all—”



thereby denouncing the future destiny of Rome, as he himself confessed to Polybius, who desired Scipio to explain himself on that occasion.

* * * * *

THE SKETCH-BOOK

* * * * *

A COASTING SCRAP.

(For the Mirror.)

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It was a bright summer afternoon: the estuary of Poole Harbour lay extended before me; its broad expanse studded with inlands of sand and furze bushes, of which Brownsea is the most considerable. A slight ripple marked the deeper channels which were of a blue colour, and the shallow mud banks being but barely covered by the tide, appeared like sheets of molten silver. The blue hills of Purbeck bounded the distant heath-lands to the westward, and the harbour extended itself inland towards the town of Wareham, becoming more and more intricate in its navigation, although it receives the contributions of two rivers, the Piddle and the Froome, arising probably from the soil carried down by the streams, and the faint action of the tide at a distance of eight or ten miles from the mouth of the harbour. The Wareham clay boats added life to the scene. Some were wending their way through the intricate channels close hauled upon a wind; others were going right away with a flowing sheet. On the eastern side was the bold sweep of the shore, extending to the mouth of the harbour, and terminating in a narrow point of bright sand hills, separating the quiet waters of the harbour from the boisterous turmoilings of the English Channel.

Sauntering along the Quay of Poole, indulging in a kind of reverie, thinking, or in fact, thinking of nothing at all, (a kind of waking dream, when hundreds of ideas, recollections, and feelings float with wonderful rapidity through the brain,) my attention was attracted by a stout, hardy-faced pilot, with water boots on his legs, and a red, woollen night-cap on his head, who was driving a very earnest bargain for a "small, but elegant assortment," of dabs and flounders. "Dree and zixpence if you like," said he. "I could a bought vour times as much vor one and zixpence coast-ways, if I'd a mind, and I'll give thee no more, and not a word of a lie." His oratory conquered the coyness of the fishy damsel; and he invited the lady to take a glass of "zomat avore he topped his boom for Swanwidge."

Having before me the certainty of a dull, monotonous afternoon, and cheerless evening, without any visible means of amusement, I instantly closed a bargain with Dick Hart (for such was the pilot's name) to give me a cast to Swanwidge. In a short time I found myself on board a trim, little pilot boat, gliding along the waters as the sun was sliding his downward course, and shedding a mellow radiance over the distant scenery towards Lytchett. The white steeple of Poole church was lighted by the rays, while the town presented a neat and picturesque appearance with the masts of the shipping cutting against the blue sky.

Dick Hart formed no small feature in the scene as he stood at the helm with his red cap and black, curly hair, smoking a short, clay pipe, which like his own face, had become rather brown in service. He looked around him with an air of independence and unconcern, as the "monarch of all he surveyed," casting his eye up now and then at the trim of his canvass, but more frequently keeping it on me. Dick began to open his budget of chat, and I found him as full of fun as his mainsail was full of nettles.

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A voice from the forecastle called out to Dick, who was so intent on his story that the helm slipped from his hand, and the ship flew up in the wind, "Mind, skipper, or you will run down Old Betty." I was astonished at the insinuation against my noble captain that he was likely to behave rude to a lady, but my suspicions were soon removed, when I saw Old Betty was a buoy, floating on the waters, adorned with a furze bush. Old Betty danced merrily on the rippling wave with her furze bush by way of a feather, with shreds of dried sea weed hanging to it forming ribbons to complete the head dress of the lady buoy. The nearer we approached, the more rapid did Betty dance, and when we passed close alongside of her, she curtsied up and down as if to welcome our visit. Dick narrated why a buoy placed at the head of a mud bank obtained the name of a *lady fair*, and I briefly noted it down.

Many years ago a single lady resided at Poole, of plain manners, unaffected simplicity, affable, yet retiring, and—

"Passing rich with forty pounds a-year."

The gentry courted her, but she still adhered to her secluded habits. Year after year rolled on, and though some may have admired her, she was never led to the altar, and consequently her condition was *unaltered*. Kind and friendly neighbours kept a vigilant eye upon her proceedings, but her character was unimpeachable; and they all agreed that she was a very suspicious person, because they could not slander her. She lived a blameless single lady.

Her attentions were directed to an orphan boy. He was her constant companion, and the object of her tenderest solicitude. As he grew up he excelled the youth of his own age in manly exercises; could thrash all of his own size, when insulted, but never played the tyrant, or the bully. He could make the longest innings at cricket, and as for swimming in all its various branches, none could compare with William. It was finally arranged by a merchant to send William a voyage to Newfoundland, and the news soon spread round the town that William (for he was a general favourite) was to see the world by taking to the sea.

The time arrived when the ship was to be warped out from the Quay, and to sail for her destination. The crew and the passengers were all on board, and William was, by his absence, rather trespassing on the indulgence of the captain; but who could be angry with the boy whom every body loved?

The town gossips, and many a fair maiden, were on the Quay to see young William embark. The tide had already turned, and the captain was about to give the word "to cast off and let all go;" to send the vessel, as it were, adrift, loose and unfettered upon the waters, to struggle as a thing of life with the billows of the Atlantic, but animated and controlled by the energies of men. Just at this moment William appeared at the end of the Quay, walking slowly to the scene of embarkation with his kind and benevolent

benefactress leaning, and leaning heavily, for her heart was heavy, upon the arm of her dutiful and beloved William. As they approached, the crowd made way with profound respect, not the cringing respect paid to superior wealth, but with that respect which worth of character and innate virtue can and will command, though poverty may smite and desolate.

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They walked unconscious of the notice they attracted. Their hearts were too full to heed the sympathies of others. The youth kept his eye fixed upon the loosening topsails of his ship; his benefactress grasped his arm almost convulsively, and looked, or rather stared, upon the ground. She dreaded the last, the hurried “fare well,” the last look, the last word from her William, and she tottered as she approached the side of the ship. They stood locked hand in hand at the edge of the Quay; not a word was uttered by either; but they gazed at each other with a fondness which showed that their souls were in communion.

“Now, William, jump on board—cast off there forward,” exclaimed the captain; “swing her head round—heave away my boys—come, William, come my boy.”

The youth awoke as from a startled sleep. He imprinted a kiss, the last kiss, upon the cold cheeks of his benefactress, and dashing away with the sleeve of his jacket a tear, of which he felt ashamed, in a moment he was on the quarter deck of his commander. He durst not look again upon the Quay; but had he looked he would have seen many a weeping maiden who had never told her love, and he would have seen his affectionate benefactress borne away in a fainting fit. All this he saw not, for he braced his courage up before his future messmates, and he looked forward to his duties, considering the past as but a dream.

Months elapsed and tidings were frequently received of William. He had distinguished himself by his activity and docility. His townsmen heard with pleasure of his good conduct, and looked forward with satisfaction to welcome his return; when at length a pilot boat brought intelligence that the ship was lying at anchor at the mouth of the harbour, waiting the next tide with loss of foremast in a heavy gale the preceding night off the Bill of Portland. His benefactress, impatient of delay, immediately hired a boat, and preceded to the ship before the tide had turned; but she no sooner reached the deck than she was informed by the captain that William was aloft when the foremast went by the board on the preceding night, and that he fell into the raging waves without the possibility of relief being afforded him.

“God’s will be done,” murmured the unhappy woman as she clasped her hands, and taking her station at the gangway, she continued gazing on the water as it rippled by, in a state of unconsciousness to every passing object. In the meantime the vessel was under weigh, and was coming once more in sight of Brownsea, when a plunge was heard—“she’s overboard,” exclaimed a sailor—“cut away some spars—lower the boats—over with the hen coops—down with the helm, and back the topsails”—roared out many voices; but she had sunk to rise no more! Her corpse was found a few days after when the tide receded, lying on a mud bank, close to the buoy which has ever since been known by every sailor and every pilot of Poole under the name of Old Betty. But to complete the sad narrative, it appeared that William, as he excelled in swimming, succeeded in gaining the shore of Portland, and arrived in time at Poole to attend the remains of his benefactress to the grave in character of chief mourner.

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On opening her papers it was discovered that in losing his benefactress he had lost his mother! That she had been privately married to a widower of considerable fortune, who had one son by his first wife, and that on his demise the estate would devolve on William, provided his half brother had no children. A few days afterwards the death of Henry ——, Esq. of —— Hall, Worcestershire, was formally announced in the daily Journals, and the unexpected claims of William being acknowledged, he succeeded to a very fine property and estate, and died as much respected in a good old age as he was beloved in his buoyant childhood, when the gossips and the maidens of Poole agreed that the orphan boy promised to be a “nice young man.”—“And not word of a lie in it,” said Dick Hart, as he finished his story, his pipe, and his grog.

We were now steering across Studland Bay. Banks of dark clouds were gathering majestically on the eastern horizon, and the sun was rapidly sinking in a flood of golden light. Behind us was the Isle of Brownsea, with its dark fir plantations and lofty, cold-looking, awkward castle. On the left was the line of low sand hills, stretching away towards Christchurch, and seeming to join the Needles’ Rocks, situated at the western extremity of the Isle of Wight, the high chalk cliffs of which reflected the sun’s last rays, giving a rich and placid feeling to the cold and distant grey. On the right, and closer to us, was the brown and purple heath-land of Studland Bay. Here barren, there patches of verdure, and the thin smoke threading its way from a cluster of trees, denoted where the village hamlet lay embosomed from the storms of the southwest gales, close at the foot and under the shelter of a lofty chalk range which abuts abruptly on the sea, and before which stands a high, detached pyramidal rock, rising out of the waters like a sheeted spectre, and known to mariners under the suspicious name of *Old Harry*.

This coast was once notorious for smuggling, but those days of nautical chivalry have ceased, if Dick Hart is to be credited, who shook his head very mournfully as he alluded to “the *Block-head* service.”

JAMES SILVESTER.

* * * * *

SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.

* * * * *

SCENE FROM A FRENCH DRAMA.

No. XVII. of the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, contains a paper of much interest to the playgoer as well as to the lover of dramatic literature—on two French dramas of great celebrity—*La Marechale d’Ancre*, by de Vigny; and *Marion Delorme*, by Victor Hugo. We quote a scene from the former. Concini, the principal character, is a favourite of

Louis XIII.; the Marechale, his wife, has a first love, Borgia, a Corsican, who, disappointed in his early suit by the stratagems of Concini, has married the beautiful but uncultivated Isabella Monti.

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On the conflicting feelings of this strange personage, his hatred to the husband, and his relenting towards the wife; and the licentious plans of Concini for the seduction of Isabella, whom he has seen without knowing her to be the wife of his deadly enemy, the interest of the piece is made to turn. The jealous Isabella is at last persuaded that the Marechale has robbed her of the attachment of her husband, and appears as a witness against her on the pretended charge of witchcraft and sorcery.

While the Marechal, even in the dungeon of the Bastile, is awing her oppressors into silence, bands of murderers are seeking Concini through the streets of Paris. As he issues from the house of the Jew which contains Isabella, he hears through the obscurity of the tempestuous night the cries of the populace, but he thinks they are but the indications of some passing tumult. He rests for a moment against a pillar on the pavement, but recoils again, as from a serpent, for he perceives it is the stone on which Ravallac had planted his foot when he assassinated Henry, and in that murder it is darkly insinuated he had a share. Through the darkness of the Rue de la Ferronnerie, Michael Borgia is seen advancing, conducting the two children of his rival. He has promised to the Marechale to save them from the dangers of the night, and has brought them in safety to his own threshold. But his promise of safety extended not to Concini. The wild ferocity of the following scene has many parallels in the actual duels of the time, as delineated in Froissart and Brantome.

*Borgia (with the children.)—*Poor children! come in; you will be safer here than in the houses to which they have pursued us.

*The Boy.—*Ah! there is a man standing up.

*Borgia (turning the lantern which the child holds towards Concini.)—*Concini!

*Concini.—*Borgia! *(Each raises his dagger, and seizes with the left arm the right of his enemy. They remain motionless, and gazing at each other. The children escape into the street and disappear.)*

*Concini.—*Let go my arm, and I will liberate yours.

*Borgia.—*What shall be my security?

*Concini.—*Those children whom you have with you.

*Borgia.—*I am labouring to save them. Your palace is on fire—your wife is arrested—your fortune is wrecked—base, senseless adventurer!

*Concini.—*Have done—let go—let us fight!



*Borgia (pushing him from him.)—*Back, then, and draw your sword.

*Concini (draws.)—*Begin.

*Borgia.—*Remove those children—they would be in our way.

*Concini.—*They are gone.

*Borgia.—*Take these letters, assassin! I had promised to restore them to you. (*He hands to Concini a black portfolio.*)

*Concini.—*I would have taken them from your body.

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Borgia.—I have performed my promise—and now, ravisher! look to yourself.

Concini.—Base seducer, defend *thyself*.

Borgia.—The night is dark, but I shall feel you by my hate: Plant your foot against the wall, that you may not retreat.

Concini.—Would I could chain yours to the pavement, that I might be sure of my mark!

Borgia.—Agree that the first who is wounded shall inform the other.

Concini.—Yes, for we should not see the blood. I swear it by the thirst I feel for yours. —But not that the affair should end there.

Borgia.—No, only to begin again with more spirit.

Concini.—To continue till we can lift the sword no longer.

Borgia.—Till the death of one or other of us.

Concini.—I see you not. Are you in front of me?

Borgia.—Yes, wretch! Parry that thrust. Has it sped?

Concini.—No; take that in return.

Borgia.—I am untouched.

Concini.—What, still? Oh! would I could but see thy hateful visage. (*They continue to fight desperately, but without touching each other. Both rest for a little.*)

Borgia.—Have you a cuirass on, Concini?

Concini.—I had, but I left it with your wife in her chamber.

Borgia.—Liar! (*He rushes on him with his sword. Their blades are locked for a moment, and both are wounded.*)

Concini.—I feel no sword opposed to mine. Have I wounded you?

Borgia, (leaning on his sword, and staunching the wound in his breast with, his handkerchief.) No, let us begin again. There!

Concini (binding his scarf round his thigh.)—One moment and I am with you. (*He staggers against the pillar.*)



Borgia, (sinking on his knees.)—Are you not wounded yourself?

Concini.—No, no! I am resting. Advance, and you shall see.

Borgia (endeavouring to rise, but unable.)—I have struck my foot against a stone—wait an instant.

Concini (with delight.)—Ah! you are wounded!

Borgia.—No, I tell you—'tis you who are so. Your voice is changed.

Concini, (feeling his sword.)—My blade smells of blood.

Borgia.—Mine is dabbled in it.

Concini.—Come then, if you are not—come and finish me.

Borgia, (with triumph.)—Finish! then you are wounded.

Concini, (with a voice of despair.)—Were I not, would I not have already stabbed you twenty times over? But you are at least as severely handled.

Borgia—It maybe so, or I should not be grovelling here.

Concini.—Shall we now have done?



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Borgia, (enraged.)—Both wounded—yet both living!

Concini.—What avails the blood I have drawn, while a drop remains.

Borgia.—O! were I but beside thee! Enter Vitry, followed by the Guards walking slowly. He holds the young Count de la Pene by the hand; the boy leads his sister.

Vitry, (a pistol in his hand.)—Well, my child, which is your father?

Count de la Pene.—Oh! protect him, sir,—that is he leaning against the pillar.

Vitry, (aloud.)—Draw tip—remain at that gate—Guards! (The Guards advance with lanterns and flambeaux.) Sir, I arrest you—your sword.

Concini, (thrusting at him.)—Take it. (Vitry fires his pistol—Du Hallier, D'Ornano, and Person fire at the same time—Concini falls dead.)

The malice of Du Luynes, the inveterate enemy of the D'Ancres, and afterwards the minion of Louis, contrives that the Marechale, in her way to execution, shall be conducted to this scene, where her husband lies dead, on the spot which had been stained with the blood of Henry, like Caesar at the foot of Pompey's statue; and the play concludes with her indignant and animated denunciation of this wretch, who stands calm and triumphant, while the Marechale exacts from her son, over the body of Concini, an oath of vengeance against the destroyer of her house."

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THE MARTYR-STUDENT.

I am sick of the bird,
And its carol of glee;
It brings the voices heard
In boyhood back to me:
Our old village hall,
Our church upon the hill,
And the mossy gates—all
My darken'd eyes fill.

No more gladly leaping
With the choir I go,
My spirit is weeping
O'er her silver bow:
From the golden quiver
The arrows are gone,



The wind from Death's river
Sounds in it alone!

I sit alone and think
In the silent room.
I look up, and I shrink
From the glimmering gloom.
O, that the little one
Were here with her shout!—
O, that my sister's arm
My neck were roundabout!

I cannot read a book,
My eyes are dim and weak;
To every chair I look—
There is not one to speak!
Could I but sit once more
Upon that well-known chair,
By my mother, as of yore,
Her hand upon my hair!

My father's eyes seeking,
In trembling hope to trace
If the south wind had been breaking
The shadows from my face;—
How sweet to die away
Beside our mother's hearth,
Amid the balmy light
That shone upon our birth!

A wild and burning boy,
I climb the mountain's crest,
The garland of my joy
Did leap upon my breast;
A spirit walk'd before me
Along the stormy night,
The clouds melted o'er me,
The shadows turn'd to light.

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Among my matted locks
The death-wind is blowing;
I hear, like a mighty rush of plumes,
The Sea of Darkness flowing!
Upon the summer air
Two wings are spreading wide;
A shadow, like a pyramid,
Is sitting by my side!

My mind was like a page
Of gold-wrought story,
Where the rapt eye might gaze
On the tale of glory;
But the rich painted words
Are waxing faint and old,
The leaves have lost their light,
The letters their gold!

And memory glimmers
On the pages I unrol,
Like the dim light creeping
Into an antique scroll.
When the scribe is searching
The writing pale and damp,
At midnight, and the flame
Is dying in the lamp.

FRASER'S MAGAZINE.

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THE SELECTOR; AND LITERARY NOTICES OF NEW WORKS

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THE ITALIAN REPUBLICS.

M.J.C.L. De Sismondi, has, to suit the plan of the *Cabinet Cyclopaedia*, endeavoured to include in one of its volumes—a summary of Italian history from the fall of the Roman empire to the end of the Middle Age—a period of about six and a half centuries. What a succession of stirring scenes does this volume present; what fields of bloody action; what revelry of carnage; what schemes of petty ambition; what trampling on necks, what



uncrowning of heads; what orgies of fire, sword, famine, and slaughter; what overtoppling of thrones, and unseating of rulers; what pantings after freedom; what slavery of passion; what sunny scenes of fortune to be shaded with melancholy pictures of desolation and decay—are comprised in these few pages of the history of a comparatively small portion of the world for a short period—a narrow segment of the cycle of time. What Sismondi so ably accomplished in sixteen volumes, he has here comprised in one. He tells us that he could sacrifice episodes and details without regret. The present is not, however, an abridgment of his great work, “but an entirely new history, in which, with my eyes fixed solely on the free people of the several Italian states, I have studied to portray their first deliverance, their heroism, and their misfortunes.”

We quote a few sketchy extracts.

Last Struggle of Rome for Liberty.

“1453. Stefano Porcari, a Roman noble, willing to profit by the interregnum which preceded the nomination of Nicholas V., to make the Roman citizens demand the renewal and confirmation of their ancient rights and privileges, was denounced to the new pope as a dangerous person; and, so far from obtaining what he had hoped, he had the grief to see the citizens always more strictly excluded from any participation in public affairs. Those were entrusted only to prelates, who, being prepared for it neither by their studies nor sentiments, suffered the administration to fall into the most shameful disorder.

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“In an insurrection of the people in the Piazza Navona, arising from a quarrel, which began at a bull-fight, Stefano Porcari endeavoured to direct their attention to a more noble object, and turn this tumult to the advantage of liberty. The pope hastily indulged all the fancies of the people, with respect to their games or amusements; but firmly rejected all their serious demands, and exiled Porcari to Bologna. The latter hoped to obtain by conspiracy what he had failed to accomplish by insurrection. There were not less than 400 exiled Roman citizens: he persuaded them all to join him, and appointed them a rendezvous at Rome, for the 5th of January, 1453, in the house of his brother-in-law. Having escaped the vigilance of the legate of Bologna, he proceeded there himself, accompanied by 300 soldiers, whom he had enlisted in his service. The whole band was assembled on the night of the appointed 5th of January; and Stefano Porcari was haranguing them, to prepare them for the attack of the capitol,—in which he reckoned on re-establishing the senate of the Roman republic,—when, his secret having been betrayed, the house was surrounded with troops, the doors suddenly forced, and the conspirators overcome by numbers before their arms had been distributed. Next morning, the body of Stefano Porcari, with those of nine of his associates, were seen hanging from the battlements of the castle of St. Angelo. In spite of their ardent entreaties, they had been denied confession and the sacrament. Eight days later, the executions, after a mockery of law proceedings, were renewed, and continued in great numbers. The pope succeeded in causing those who had taken refuge in neighbouring states to be delivered up to him; and thus the last spark of Roman liberty was extinguished in blood.”

General Mildness of Italian Warfare.

“1492. The horses and armour of the Italian men at arms were reckoned superior to those of the transalpine nations against which they had measured themselves in France, during “the war of the public weal.” The Italian captains had made war a science, every branch of which they thoroughly knew. It was never suspected for a moment that the soldier should be wanting in courage: but the general mildness of manners, and the progress of civilization, had accustomed the Italians to make war with sentiments of honour and humanity towards the vanquished. Ever ready to give quarter, they did not strike a fallen enemy. Often, after having taken from him his horse and armour, they set him free; at least, they never demanded a ransom so enormous as to ruin him. Horsemen who went to battle clad in steel, were rarely killed or wounded, so long as they kept their saddles. Once unhorsed, they surrendered. The battle, therefore, never became murderous. The courage of the Italian soldiers, which had accommodated itself to this milder warfare, suddenly gave way before the new dangers and ferocity of barbarian enemies. They became terror-struck when they perceived that the French caused dismounted horsemen to be put to death by their valets, or made prisoners only to extort from them, under the name of ransom, all they possessed. The Italian cavalry, equal in courage, and superior in military science, to the French, was for some time unable to make head against an enemy whose ferocity disturbed their imaginations.”

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Battle of Marignano.

“1515.—Francis I. succeeded Louis XII. on the 1st of January; on the 27th of June he renewed his predecessor’s treaty of alliance with Venice; and on the 15th of August, entered the plains of Lombardy, by the marquisate of Saluzzo, with a powerful army. He met but little resistance in the provinces south of the Po, but the Swiss meanwhile arrived in great force to defend Maximilian Sforza, whom, since they had reseatd him on the throne, they regarded as their vassal. Francis in vain endeavoured to negotiate with them; they would not listen to the voice of their commanders; democracy had passed from their *landsgemeinde* into their armies, popular orators roused their passions; and on the 13th of September they impetuously left Milan to attack Francis I. at Marignano. Deep ditches lined with soldiers bordered the causeway by which they advanced; their commanders wished by some manoeuvre to get clear of them, or make the enemy change his position; but the Swiss, despising all the arts of war, expected to command success by mere intrepidity and bodily strength. They marched to the battery in full front; they repulsed the charge of the knights with their halberds, and threw themselves with fury into the ditches which barred their road. Some rushed on to the very mouths of the cannon, which guarded the king, and there fell. Night closed on the combatants; and the two armies mingled together fought on for four hours longer by moonlight. Complete darkness at length forced them to rest on their arms; but the king’s trumpet continually sounded, to indicate to the bivouac where he was to be found; while the two famous horns of Uri and Unterwalden called the Swiss together. The battle was renewed on the 14th at daybreak: the unrelenting obstinacy was the same; but the French had taken advantage of the night to collect and fortify themselves. Marshal Trivulzio, who had been present at eighteen pitched battles, declared that every other seemed to him children’s play in comparison with this “battle of giants,” as he called it: 20,000 dead already covered the ground; of these two-thirds were Swiss. When the Swiss despaired of victory they retreated slowly,—but menacing and terrible. The French did not dare to pursue them.”

The concluding paragraph of the volume is beautifully enthusiastic: it may almost be regarded as prophetic in connexion with events that are at this moment shaking Italy to her very base:

“Italy is crushed; but her heart still beats with the love of liberty, virtue, and glory: she is chained and covered with blood; but she still knows her strength and her future destiny: she is insulted by those for whom she has opened the way to every improvement; but she feels that she is formed to take the lead again: and Europe will know no repose till the nation which, in the dark ages, lighted the torch of civilization with that of liberty, shall be enabled herself to enjoy the light which she created.”

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CHILD'S ARITHMETICAL TABLES.

The Seventh Edition, besides being well adapted for Schools, will be found useful in the business of life. It includes the monies, weights, and measures, mentioned in Scripture, the length of miles in different countries, astronomical signs, and other matters computed with great care.

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THE GEORGIAN ERA.

This work is intended to comprise Memoirs of the most eminent characters who have flourished in Great Britain during the reigns of the four Georges: the present volume being only a fourth of its extent, and containing the Royal Family, the Pretenders and their adherents, churchmen, dissenters, and statesmen. The importance of the chosen period is prefatorily urged by the editor: "In comparison with the Elizabethan or the Modern Augustan, (as the reign of Anne has been designated) that which may be appropriately termed the Georgian Era, possesses a paramount claim to notice; for not only has it been equally fertile in conspicuous characters, and more prolific of great events, but its influence is actually felt by the existing community of Great Britain."

The several memoirs, so far as a cursory glance enables us to judge, are edited with great care. Their uniformity of plan is very superior to hastily compiled biographies. Each memoir contains the life and labours of its subject, in the smallest space consistent with perspicuity; the dryness of names, dates, and plain facts being admirably relieved by characteristic anecdotes of the party, and a brief but judicious summary of character by the editor. In the latter consists the original value of the work. The reader need not, however, take this summary "for granted:" he is in possession of the main facts from which the editor has drawn his estimate, and he may, in like manner, "weigh and consider," and draw his own inference. The anecdotes, to borrow a phrase from Addison, are the "sweetmeats" of the book, but the caution with which they are admitted, adds to their worth. The running reader may say that much of this portion is not entirely new to him: granted; but it would be unwise to reject an anecdote for its popularity; as Addison thought of "Chevy Chase," its commonness is its worth. But, it should be added, that such anecdotes are not told in the circumlocutory style of gossip, nor nipt in the bud by undeveloped brevity. We have Selden's pennyworth of spirit without the glass of water: the quintessence of condensation, which, we are told, is the result of time and experience, which rejects what is no longer essential. Here circumspection was necessary, and it has been well exercised. The anecdotes are not

merely amusing but useful, since only when placed in juxtaposition with a man's whole life, can such records be of service in appreciating his character.

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Let us turn to the volume for a few examples, and take George the Fourth and Sheridan, for their contemporary interest; though the earlier characters are equally attractive. In the former the reader may better compare the editor's inference with his own impression.

GEORGE THE FOURTH.

"Endowed by nature with remarkably handsome features, and a form so finely proportioned, that at one period of his life it was deemed almost the best model of manly beauty in existence, George the Fourth, during the early part of his manhood, eclipsed the whole of his gay associates in fashion and gallantry, as much by personal attractions, as pre-eminence in birth. Byron describes him as having possessed "fascination in his very bow;" and it is said, that a young peeress, on hearing of the prince's attentions to one of her fair friends, exclaimed, "I sincerely hope that it may not be my turn next, for to repel him is impossible." Towards the middle period of his life, he became so enormously fat, that four life-guardsmen could not, without difficulty, lift him on horseback; but, as he advanced in years, although still corpulent, his inconvenient obesity gradually diminished.

"He scarcely ever forgot an injury, an affront, or a marked opposition to his personal wishes. The cordiality which had previously subsisted between his majesty and Prince Leopold, entirely ceased, when the latter volunteered a visit to Queen Caroline on her return to this country, in 1820: Brougham and Dentum, for the zeal with which they had advocated the cause of their royal client, were, during a long period, deemed unworthy of those legal honours to which their high talents and long standing at the bar, justly entitled them: and Sir Robert Wilson was arbitrarily dismissed from the service, for his interference at her majesty's funeral. On account of his unpopular reception, by the mob, when he accompanied the allied sovereigns to Guildhall, in 1814, he never afterwards honoured the city with his presence; and when Rossini rudely declined the repetition of a piece of music, in which the king had taken a conspicuous part, at a court concert, his majesty turned his back on the composer, to whose works, from that moment, he displayed the most unequivocal dislike. But, on the other hand, some cases have been recorded, in which his conduct was unquestionably tolerant and forgiving. He allowed Canning, an avowed supporter of the queen, to retain office, without taking any part in the ministerial proceedings against her majesty; and at the last stage of his earthly career, sent the Duke of Sussex, with whom he had long been at variance, his own ribbon of the order of St. Patrick, with an assurance of his most sincere affection. Erskine, while attorney-general to the prince, had so offended his royal highness, by accepting a retainer from Paine, on a prosecution being instituted against the latter for publishing the Rights of Man, that his immediate resignation was required. But, sometime

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afterwards, Erskine was desired to attend at Carlton house, where the prince received him with great cordiality, and, after avowing his conviction that, 'in the instance that had separated them, his learned and eloquent friend had acted from the purest motives, he wished to give publicity to his present opinion on the subject, by appointing Mr. Erskine his chancellor.' On one occasion, at the opening of a session of parliament by George the Third in person, his royal highness, who was then very much in debt, having gone down to the house of lords in a superb military uniform with diamond epaulettes, Major Doyle subsequently remarked to him, that his equipage had been much noticed by the mob. 'One fellow,' added the major, 'prodigiously admired, what he termed 'the fine things which the prince had upon his shoulders.' 'Mighty fine, indeed,' replied another; 'but, mind me, they'll soon be *upon our shoulders*, for all that.' 'Ah, you rogue!' exclaimed the prince, laughing, 'that's a hit of your own, I am convinced:—but, come, take some wine.'

"He had some inclination for scientific pursuits, and highly respected those who were eminent for mechanical inventions. He contributed largely towards the erection of a monument to the memory of Watt. Of his medical information, slight as it undoubtedly was, he is said to have been particularly proud. Carpue had demonstrated to him the general anatomy of the human body, in his younger days; and for a number of years, the ingenious Weiss submitted to his inspection all the new surgical instruments, in one of which the king suggested some valuable improvements.

"His talents were, undoubtedly, above the level of mediocrity: they have, however, been greatly overrated, on the supposition that several powerfully written documents, put forth under his name, but composed by some of his more highly-gifted friends, were his own productions. His style was, in fact, much beneath his station: it was inelegant, destitute of force, and even occasionally incorrect. He read his speeches well, but not excellently: he possessed no eloquence, although, as a convivial orator, he is said to have been rather successful.

"At one time, while an associate of Sheridan, Erskine, Fox, &c., he affected, in conversation, to be brilliant, and so far succeeded, as to colloquial liveliness, that during their festive intercourse, according to the witty barrister's own admission, 'he fairly kept up at saddle-skirts' even with Curran. Notwithstanding this compliment, his pretensions to wit appear to have been but slender; the best sayings attributed to him being a set of middling puns, of which the following is a favourable selection:—When Langdale's distillery was plundered, during the riots of 1780, he asked why the proprietor had not defended his property. 'He did not possess the means to do so,' was the reply. 'Not the means of defence!' exclaimed the prince, 'and he a brewer—a man who has been all his life at *cart* and *tierce*!—Sheridan

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having told him that Fox had *cooed* in vain to Miss Pulteney, the prince replied, 'that his friend's attempt on the lady's heart was a *coup maoque*.'—He once quoted from Suetonius, the words, '*Jure caesus videtur*,' to prove, jestingly, that trial by jury was as old as the time of the first Caesar.—A newspaper panegyric on Fox, apparently from the pen of Dr. Parr, having been presented to his royal highness, he said that it reminded him of Machiavel's epitaph, '*Tanto nomini nullum Par eulogium*.'—A cavalry officer, at a court ball, hammered the floor with his heels so loudly, that the prince observed, 'If the war between the mother country and her colonies had not terminated, he might have been sent to America as a republication of the *stamp* act.'—While his regiment was in daily expectation of receiving orders for Ireland, some one told him, that country quarters in the sister kingdom were so filthy, that the rich uniforms of his corps would soon be lamentably soiled: 'Let the men act as dragoons, then,' said his royal highness, 'and *scour the country*.' When Horne Tooke, on being committed to prison for treason, proposed, while in jail, to give a series of dinners to his friends, the prince remarked, that 'as an inmate of Newgate, he would act more consistently by establishing a *Ketch-club*.'—Michael Kelly having turned wine-merchant, the prince rather facetiously said, 'that Mick *imported* his music, and *composed* his wine!'"

We reluctantly break off here till next week.

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THE TOPOGRAPHER

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BRIGHTON AS IT WAS.

(*Concluded from page 90.*)

This immunity, however, deprived them of the privileges which the people of the adjacent towns enjoyed; and was probably the true reason, why this town did not obtain a place among those called Cinque ports. It lies in their neighbourhood, is more ancient, and was always more considerable than most included in that number.

To reduce its consequence still more, the tithes were in this period taken from the incumbent, appropriated to the use of the Priory at Lewes, and have never since been restored; and a Convent of mendicant friars, more burthensome than ten endowed ones of monks, was founded and dedicated to St. Bartholomew.

Struggling under these difficulties, nothing but the Reformation could enable the inhabitants of this place to emerge from their wretchedness. And accordingly we find,

that, in the happier days of Queen Elizabeth, their affairs put on a new face. They then applied themselves with vigour to their old employments of fishing, and fitting out vessels for trade; seeking subsistence from their darling element the sea.

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Persecution prevailing at this juncture in many parts of Europe, numbers fled to this island as to an asylum, and many settled in this town, bringing with them industry, and an attachment to maritime affairs; or soon learning them here. The number of its inhabitants being thus increased, its trade became proportionably greater: so that in 1579, a record now subsisting says, "There are in the said town of Brighthelmston of fishing-boats four-score in number, and of able mariners four hundred in number, with ten thousand fishing-nets, besides many other necessities belonging to their mystery." [3] And the descendants of many of these French, Dutch, and Spanish families still reside here. [4]

[3] It is a melancholy reflection to compare the present state of the fishery with its prosperity in 1579, or in more modern periods. Within the recollection of the editor, there were 60 boats employed in catching mackerel, and in a propitious season, that species of fish has produced in Billingsgate market a sum of L10,000, with which the town was enriched. In the autumn, 20 of these boats were fitted out for the herring voyage, and one boat has been known to land during the season from 20 to 30 lasts of herrings, each last containing 10,000 fish, computing 132 to the 100.

[4] The families of Mighell and Wichelo are all that appear to remain as of Spanish origin.

From this record we likewise learn, that the town was fortified to the sea by a flint wall, and that the fort, called the Block-house, had been then lately erected. The east-gate of this wall, in a line with the Block-house was actually standing last year, and has been since taken down to open a more convenient entrance to a battery lately built. [5]

[5] The kindness of a friend has enabled me to supply this work, with a view of the town taken from the sea in 1743, when the wall, Block house, and East gate were partly standing.

The town at present consists of six principal streets, many lanes, and some spaces surrounded with houses, called by the inhabitants squares. The great plenty of flint stones on the shore, and in the corn-fields near the town, enabled them to build the walls of their houses with that material, when in their most impoverished state; and their present method of ornamenting the windows and doors with the admirable brick which they burn for their own use, has a very pleasing effect. The town improves daily, as the inhabitants, encouraged by the late great resort of company, seem disposed to expend the whole of what they acquire in the erecting of new buildings, or making the old ones convenient. And should the increase of these, in the next seven years, be equal to what it has been in the last, it is probable there will be but few towns in England, that will excel this in commodious buildings. [6]

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[6] The recent publications on the present state of the town, will amply establish the prophecy of our historian.

Here are two public rooms, the one convenient, the other not only so, but elegant; not excelled perhaps by any public room in England, that of York excepted: and the attention of the proprietor in preparing every thing that may answer for the conveniency and amusement of the company, is extremely meritorious.

For divine service there is a large Church, pleasantly situated on a rising ground above the town; but at a distance that is inconvenient to the old and infirm. The Dissenters, who, of all denominations, amount to but forty families, have a Presbyterian, a Quaker's, and an Anabaptist's meeting-house.

The men of this town are busied almost the whole year in a succeeding variety of fishing; and the women industriously dedicate part of their time, disengaged from domestic cares, to the providing of nets adapted to the various employments of their husbands.

The spring season is spent in dredging for oysters, which are mostly bedded in the Thames and Medway, and afterwards carried to the London market; the mackerel fishery employs them during the months of May, June, and July; and the fruits of their labour are always sent to London; as Brighthelmston has the advantage of being its nearest fishing sea-coast, and as the consumption of the place, and its environs, is very inconsiderable. In the early part of this fishery they frequently take the red mullet; and near the close of it, abundance of lobsters and prawns. August is engaged in the trawl-fishery, when all sorts of flat fish are taken in a net called by that name. In September they fish for whiting with lines; and in November the herring fishery takes place, which is the most considerable and growing fishery of the whole. Those employed in this pursuit show an activity and boldness almost incredible, often venturing out to sea in their little boats in such weather as the largest ships can scarce live in. Part of their acquisition in this way is sent to London, but the greatest share of it is either pickled, or dried and made red. These are mostly sent to foreign markets, making this fishery a national concern.[7]

[7] There are 300 fishermen, 11 vessels, and 57 fishing boats belonging to this place.

In examining the ancient and modern descriptions of the Baiae in Campania, where the Romans of wealth and quality, during the greatness of that empire, retired for the sake of health and pleasure, when public exigencies did not require their attendance at Rome, and comparing them with those of Brighthelmston, I can perceive a striking resemblance; and I am persuaded, that every literary person who will impartially consider this matter on the spot, will concur with me in opinion, giving, in some measure, the preference to our own Baiae, as exempt from the inconvenient steams of

hot sulphureous baths, and the dangerous vicinity of Mount Vesuvius. And I have no doubt but it will be equally frequented, when the healthful advantages of its situation shall be sufficiently made known.

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SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY.

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A NIGHT ON THE NIGER.

(From the Landers' Travels; Unpublished.)

We made no stop whatever on the river, not even at meal-times, our men suffering the canoe to glide down with the stream while they were eating their food. At five in the afternoon they all complained of fatigue, and we looked around us for a landing-place, where we might rest awhile, but we could find none, for every village which we saw after that hour was unfortunately situated behind large thick morasses and sloughy bogs, through which, after various provoking and tedious trials, we found it impossible to penetrate. We were employed three hours in the afternoon in endeavouring to find a landing at some village, and though we saw them distinctly enough from the water, we could not find a passage through the morasses, behind which they lay. Therefore we were compelled to relinquish the attempt, and continue our course on the Niger. We passed several beautiful islands in the course of the day, all cultivated and inhabited, but low and flat. The width of the river appeared to vary considerably, sometimes it seemed to be two or three miles across, and at others double that width. The current drifted us along very rapidly, and we guessed it to be running at the rate of three or four miles an hour. The direction of the stream continued nearly east. The day had been excessively warm, and the sun set in beauty and grandeur, shooting forth rays tinged with the most heavenly hues, which extended to the zenith. Nevertheless, the appearance of the firmament, all glorious as it was, betokened a coming storm; the wind whistled through the tall rushes, and darkness soon covered the earth like a veil. This rendered us more anxious than ever to land somewhere, we cared not where, and to endeavour to procure shelter for the night, if not in a village, at least under a tree. Accordingly, rallying the drooping spirits of our men, we encouraged them to renew their exertions by setting them the example, and our canoe darted silently and swiftly down the current. We were enabled to steer her rightly by the vividness of the lightning, which flashed across the water continually, and by this means also we could distinguish any danger before us, and avoid the numerous small islands with which the river is interspersed, and which otherwise might have embarrassed us very seriously. But though we could perceive almost close to us several lamps burning in comfortable-looking huts, and could plainly distinguish the voices of their occupants, and though we exerted all our strength to get at them, we were foiled in every attempt, by reason of the sloughs and fens, and we were at last obliged to abandon them in despair. Some of these lights, after leading us a long way, eluded our search, and vanished

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from our sight like an *ignis fatuus*, and others danced about we knew not how. But what was more vexatious than all, after we had got into an inlet, and toiled and tugged for a full half hour against the current, which in this little channel was uncommonly rapid, to approach a village from which we thought it flowed, both village and lights seemed to sink into the earth, the sound of the people's voices ceased of a sudden, and when we fancied we were actually close to the spot, we strained our eyes in vain to see a single hut,—all was gloomy, dismal, cheerless, and solitary. It seemed the work of enchantment; every thing was as visionary as “sceptres grasped in sleep.” We had paddled along the banks a distance of not less than thirty miles, every inch of which we had attentively examined, but not a bit of dry land could any where be discovered which was firm enough to bear our weight. Therefore, we resigned ourselves to circumstances, and all of us having been refreshed with a little cold rice and honey, and water from the stream, we permitted the canoe to drift down with the current, for our men were too much fatigued with the labours of the day to work any longer. But here a fresh evil arose which we were unprepared to meet. An incredible number of hippopotami arose very near us, and came plashing, snorting, and plunging all round the canoe, and placed us in imminent danger. Thinking to frighten them off, we fired a shot or two at them, but the noise only called up from the water and out of the fens, about as many more of their unwieldy companions, and we were more closely beset than before. Our people, who had never in all their lives been exposed in a canoe to such huge and formidable beasts, trembled with fear and apprehension, and absolutely wept aloud; and their terror was not a little increased by the dreadful peals of thunder which rattled over their heads, and by the awful darkness which prevailed, broken at intervals by flashes of lightning, whose powerful glare was truly awful. Our people told us, that these formidable animals frequently upset canoes in the river, when every one in them was sure to perish. These came so close to us, that we could reach them with the butt-end of a gun. When I fired at the first, which I must have hit, every one of them came to the surface of the water, and pursued us so fast over to the north bank, that it was with the greatest difficulty imaginable we could keep before them. Having fired a second time, the report of my gun was followed by a loud roaring noise, and we seemed to increase our distance from them. There were two Bornou men among our crew who were not so frightened as the rest, having seen some of these creatures before on Lake Tchad, where, they say, there are plenty of them. However, the terrible hippopotami did us no kind of mischief whatever; they were only sporting and wallowing in the river for their own amusement, no doubt, at first when we interrupted them; but had they upset our canoe,

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we should have paid dearly for it. We observed a bank on the north side of the river shortly after this, and I proposed halting on it for the night, for I wished much to put my foot on firm land again. This, however, not one of the crew would consent to, saying, that if the Gewo Roua, or water elephant, did not kill them, the crocodiles certainly would do so before the morning, and I thought afterwards that we might have been carried off like the Cumbrie people on the islands near Yaoorie, if we had tried the experiment. Our canoe was only large enough to hold us all when sitting, so that we had no chance of lying down. Had we been able to muster up thirty thousand cowries at Rabba, we might have purchased one which would have carried us all very comfortably. A canoe of this sort would have served us for living in entirely, we should have had no occasion to land excepting to obtain our provisions; and having performed our day's journey, might have anchored fearlessly at night. Finding we could not induce our people to land, we agreed to continue on all night. The eastern horizon became very dark, and the lightning more and more vivid; indeed, I never recollect having seen such strong fork lightning before in my life. All this denoted the approach of a storm. At eleven P.M. it blew somewhat stronger than a gale, and at midnight the storm was at its height. The wind was so strong, that it washed over the sides of the canoe several times, so that she was in danger of filling. Driven about by the wind, our frail little bark became unmanageable; but at length we got near a bank, which in some measure protected us, and we were fortunate enough to lay hold of a thorny tree against which we were driven, and which was growing nearly in the centre of the stream. Presently we fastened the canoe to its branches, and wrapping our cloaks round our persons, for we felt overpowered with fatigue, and with our legs projecting half over the sides of the little vessel, which, for want of room, we were compelled to do, we lay down to sleep. There is something, I believe, in the nature of a tempest which is favourable to slumber, at least so thought my brother; for though the thunder continued to roar, and the wind to blow,—though the rain beat in our faces, and our canoe lay rocking like a cradle, still he slept soundly. The wind kept blowing hard from the eastward till midnight, when it became calm. The rain then descended in torrents, accompanied by thunder and lightning of the most awful description. We lay in our canoe drenched with water, and our little vessel was filling so fast, that two people were obliged to be constantly baling out the water to keep her afloat. The water-elephants, as the natives term the hippopotami, frequently came snorting near us, but fortunately did not touch our canoe. The storm continued until three in the morning of the 17th, when it became clear, and we saw the stars sparkling like gems over our heads. Therefore, we again proceeded on our

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journey down the river, there being sufficient light for us to see our way, and two hours after, we put into a small, insignificant, fishing village, called *Dacannie*, where we landed very gladly. Before we arrived at this island, we had passed a great many native towns and villages, but in consequence of the early hour at which we were travelling, we considered it would be imprudent to stop at any of them, as none of the natives were out of their huts. Had we landed earlier, even near one of these towns, we might have alarmed the inhabitants, and been taken for a party of robbers; or, as they are called in the country, *jacallees*. They would have taken up arms against us, and we might have lost our lives; so that for our safety we continued down the river, although we had great desire to go on shore. In the course of the day and night, we travelled, according to *our* estimation, a distance little short of a hundred miles. Our course was nearly east. The Niger in many places, and for a considerable way, presented a very magnificent appearance, and, we believe, to be nearly eight miles in width.—*Lit. Gaz.*

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THE GATHERER.

Ancient Trade.—Alexandria was formerly the chief commercial city in the world. We may judge of its wealth and prosperity by the circumstance, that, after the defeat of Queen Zenobia, a single merchant of this city, undertook to raise and pay an army out of the profits of his trade. Delos was the richest city in the Archipelago, it was a free port, where nations warring with each other, resorted with their goods, and traded. Strabo calls it one of the most frequented emporiums in the world; and Pliny tells us, that all the commodities of Europe and Asia were sold, purchased, or exchanged there. Trade was much encouraged at Athens; and if any one ridiculed it, he was liable to an action of slander. A fine of a thousand drachmas (about £37. 10s.) was inflicted on him who accused a merchant of any crime which he was unable to prove. Solon was engaged in merchandize; the founder of the city of Messilia was a merchant; Thales and Hippocrates, the mathematician, traded; Plato sold oil in Egypt; Maximinus the Roman emperor, traded with the Goths in the produce of his estate in Thracia; Vespasian farmed the privies at Rome; and the Emperor Pertinax, originally dealt in charcoal.

P.T.W.

Unnecessary fears about the Cholera.—Nothing is more calculated to allay unnecessary and groundless fear, in the case of the cholera, than the undeniable fact of the smallness of the mortality in proportion to the whole population, where it has raged with most violence. In addition to which, if it be borne in mind, that the disease invariably attacks those who are most predisposed to engender any malady, it is not unreasonable to infer, that of those to whom it has proved mortal, many would have died within the same period, had cholera not attacked them.—*Morning Herald.*

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King Regner died singing the pleasure of falling in battle: his words are, "The hours of my life are passed away, I shall die laughing."—*Britain's Historical Drama*.

On a very Fat Man.

All flesh is grass, so do the Scriptures say,
And grass, when mown, is shortly turn'd to hay.
When Time, to mow you down, his scythe doth take,
Good Man! how large a stack you then will make.

J.J.

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