

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction eBook

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WILTON CASTLE.

[Illustration: Wilton Castle.]

Here is one of the ivy-mantled relics that lend even a charm to romantic nature on the banks of the Wye. Its shattered tower and crumbling wall, combine with her wild luxuriance, to form a scene of great picturesque beauty, though, as Gilpin observes, "the scene wants accompaniments to give it grandeur."

These ruins stand opposite to Ross, on the western bank of the Wye. The Castle was for several centuries the baronial residence of the Greys of the south, who derived from it their first title, and who became owners in the time of Edward the First. It may therefore be presumed to have been one of the strongholds, in the great struggles for feudal superiority with Wales, which were commenced by Edward, whose "active and splendid reign may be considered as an attempt to subject the whole island of Great Britain to his sway." [1] Or, in earlier times, being situated on the ancient barrier between England and Wales, it may have been a station of some importance, from its contiguity to Hereford, which city was destroyed by the Welsh, but rebuilt and fortified by Harold, who also strengthened the castle. The whole district is of antiquarian interest, since, at the period of the Roman invasion, Herefordshire was inhabited by the Silures, who also occupied the adjacent counties of Radnor, Monmouth, and Glamorgan, together with that part of Gloucestershire which lies westward of the Severn. The Silures, in conjunction with the Ordovices, or inhabitants of North Wales, retarded, for a considerable period, the progress of the Roman victors, whose grand object seems to have been the conquest of these nations, who had chosen the gallant Caractacus as their chieftain, and resolutely exhausted every effort in defence of the independence of their country.

[1] Mackintosh's Hist. England, vol. i, p. 247.

The present demolished state of the Castle is referred to the Royalist Governors of Hereford, by whose orders it was burnt to the bare walls during the reign of Charles I. in the absence of its then possessor, Sir J. Brydges.

The scenery of the Wye, at this point is thus described by tourists: "From Hereford to Ross, its features occasionally assume greater boldness; though more frequently their aspect is placid; but at the latter town wholly emerging from its state of repose," it resumes the brightness and rapidity of its primitive character, as it forms the admired curve which the churchyard of Ross commands. The celebrated spire of Ross church, peeping over a noble row of elms, here fronts the ruined Castle of Wilton, beneath the arches of whose bridge, the Wye flows through a charming succession of meadows, encircling at last the lofty and well-wooded hill, crowned with the majestic fragments of Gooderich Castle, and opposed by the waving eminences of the forest of Dean. The



mighty pile, or peninsula, of Symonds' Rock succeeds, round which the river flows in a circuit of seven miles, though the opposite points of the isthmus are only one mile asunder. Shortly afterwards, the Wye quits the county, and enters Monmouthshire at the New Wear.

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The Rev. Mr. Gilpin, in his charming little volume on Picturesque Beauty,[2] has a few appropriate observations: after passing Wilton—

[2] Observations on the River Wye, &c. By William Gilpin, M.A.—Fifth Edition.

“We met with nothing for some time during our voyage but grand, woody banks, one rising behind another; appearing and vanishing by turns, as we doubled the several capes. But though no particular objects characterized these different scenes, yet they afforded great variety of pleasing views, both as we wound round the several promontories, which discovered new beauties as each scene opened, and when we kept the same scene a longer time in view, stretching along some lengthened reach, where the river is formed into an irregular vista by hills shooting out beyond each other and going off in perspective.”

We ought not to forget to mention Ross, and its association with one of the noblest works of *god*—honest John Kyrle, celebrated as the Man of Ross. Pope, during his visits at Holm-Lacey, in the vicinity, obtained sufficient knowledge of his beneficence, to render due homage to his worth in one of the brightest pages of the records of human character.

* * * * *

“*Mother Carey’s chickens*”—Eggs.

(*For the Mirror.*)

In a paper on the *Superstitions of the Sea*, a few years ago,[3] I slightly alluded to the nautical belief that the appearance of the Stormy Petrel, and other marine birds at sea, was often considered to be the forerunner of peril and disaster; and as your excellent correspondent, *M.L.B.*, in a recent number, expresses a wish to know the origin of the *soubriquet* of *Mother Carey’s Chickens*, which the former birds have obtained, I now give it with all the brevity which is consistent with so important a narration. It appears that a certain outward-bound Indiaman, called the *Tiger*, (but in what year I am unable to state,) had encountered one continued series of storms, during her whole passage; till on nearing the Cape of Good Hope, she was almost reduced to a wreck. Here, however, the winds and waves seemed bent on her destruction; in the midst of the storm, flocks of strange looking birds were seen hovering and wheeling in the air around the devoted ship, and one of the passengers, a woman called “Mother Carey,” was observed by the glare of the lightning to laugh and smile when she looked at these foul-weather visitants; on which she was not only set down as a witch, but it was also thought that they were her familiars, whom she had invoked from the *Red Sea*; and “all hands” were seriously considering on the propriety of getting rid of the old beldam, (as is usual in such cases,) by setting her afloat, when she saved them the trouble, and at

that moment jumped overboard, surrounded by flames; on which the birds vanished, the storm cleared away, and the tempest-tossed *Tiger* went peacefully on her course! Ever since the occurrence of this “astounding yarn,” the birds have been called “Mother Carey’s Chickens,” and are considered by our sailors to be the most unlucky of all the feathered visitants at sea.

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[3] See Mirror, No. 205, vol. xi.

To turn by a not unnatural transition from *birds* to *eggs*, permit me to inform your Scottish correspondent, S.S. (see No. 536,) where he asserts that the plan of rubbing eggs with grease in order to preserve them, "is not so much as known in our own boasted land of stale eggs and bundlewood;" that the said *discovery* has long been known and practised in many parts of old England; and that the repeated experience of several friends warrants me in giving a decided negative to his assertion that eggs so prepared "*will keep any length of time perfectly fresh.*" If kept for a considerable period, though they do not become absolutely bad, yet they turn *very stale*. I happen to know something of Scotland, and was never before aware that the raw clime of our northern neighbours was so celebrated for its poultry. *M.L.B.* is certainly misinformed in speaking of the trade in *Scotch* eggs to *America*. The importation of eggs from the continent into England is very extensive: the duty in 1827 amounted at the rate of 10_d_. per 120, to 23,062_l_. 19_s_. 1_d_.; since which period there has, we believe, been an increase. The importation of eggs from Ireland is also very large. If S.S. resides in London, he may have occasion to sneer at "our boasted land of stale eggs;" but he should rather sneer at the preserved French eggs, with which the London dealers are principally supplied.

VYVYAN.

* * * * *

THE CURFEW BELL.

(To the Editor.)

In addition to the remarks made by *Reginald*, in No. 543, and by *M.D.*, and *G.C.*, in No. 545 of *The Mirror*, let me add that the Curfew is rung every night at eight, in my native town, (Winchester,) and the bell, a large one, weighing 12 cwt., is appropriated for the purpose, (not belonging to a church) but affixed in the tower of the Guildhall, and used only for this occasion, or on an alarm of fire.

In that city the Curfew was first established under the command of the Conqueror, and the practice has continued to the present day. I have been assured by many old residents, that it formerly was the custom to ring the bell every morning at four o'clock, but the practice being found annoying to persons living near, the Corporation ordered it to be discontinued.

To such of your readers who, like myself, are fond of a solitary ramble along the sea shore by moonlight, I would say, go to Southampton or the Isle of Wight; take an evening walk from Itchen through the fields to Netley, thence to the Abbey and Fort



ruins, under woods that for a considerable distance skirt the coast; or on the opposite side, through the Forest of Oaks, from Eling to Dibden, and onwards over the meadows to Hythe: there they may, in either, find ample food for reflection, connected with the Curfew Bell.



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Seated on a fragment of the towers of Netley Abbey, whose pinnacles were so often hailed by seamen as well known landmarks, but whose Curfew has for centuries been quiet, the spectator may see before him the crumbling remains of a fort, erected hundreds of years ago. On the left is an expanse of water as far as the eye can reach, and in his front the celebrated New Forest,—

Majestic woods of ever vigorous green,
Stage above stage, high waving o'er the bills;
Or to the far horizon wide diffus'd,
A boundless deep immensity of shade—

the scene of William's tyranny and atrocity, the spot where his children met their untimely end, and where may be seen the *tumuli* erected over the remains of the Britons who fell in defence of their country.

In the deep recesses of a wood in the south-east prospect, the eye may faintly distinguish the mouldering remains of the Abbey of Beaulieu, famed in days of yore for its Sanctuary, the name of which is now only recorded in history. Even the site of the tower is unknown, whose Curfew has long ceased to warn the seamen, or draw the deep curse from the forester.

There they may

“On a plat of rising ground,
Hear the far off Curfew sound,
Over the wide watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar.”

The Curfew is rung at Southampton, Downton, Ringwood, and many other towns in the west, every night at eight.

P.Q.

* * * * *

THE SELECTOR; AND LITERARY NOTICES OF NEW WORKS.

* * * * *

SPANISH SCENERY.

The following is from the delightful pencil of Washington Irving: it will be seen to bear all the polish of his best style:—

“Many are apt to picture Spain to their imaginations as a soft southern region, decked out with all the luxuriant charms of voluptuous Italy. On the contrary, though there are exceptions in some of the maritime provinces, yet, for the greater part, it is a stern, melancholy country, with rugged mountains, and long sweeping plains, destitute of trees, and indescribably silent and lonesome, partaking of the savage and solitary character of Africa. What adds to this silence and loneliness, is the absence of singing-birds, a natural consequence of the want of groves and hedges. The vulture and the eagle are seen wheeling about the mountain-cliffs, and soaring over the plains, and groups of shy bustards stalk about the heaths; but the myriads of smaller birds, which animate the whole face of other countries are met with in but few provinces in Spain, and in those chiefly among the orchards and gardens which surround the habitations of man.

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“In the interior provinces the traveller occasionally traverses great tracts cultivated with grain as far as the eye can reach, waving at times with verdure, at other times naked and sunburnt, but he looks round in vain for the hand that has tilled the soil. At length, he perceives some village on a steep hill, or rugged crag, with mouldering battlements and ruined watch tower; a stronghold, in old times, against civil war, or Moorish inroad; for the custom among the peasantry of congregating together for mutual protection, is still kept up in most parts of Spain, in consequence of the maraudings of roving freebooters.

“But though a great part of Spain is deficient in the garniture of groves and forests, and the softer charms of ornamental cultivation, yet its scenery has something of a high and lofty character to compensate the want. It partakes something of the attributes of its people; and I think that I better understand the proud, hardy, frugal, and abstemious Spaniard, his manly defiance of hardships, and contempt of effeminate indulgences, since I have seen the country he inhabits.

“There is something, too, in the sternly simple features of the Spanish landscape, that impresses on the soul a feeling of sublimity. The immense plains of the Castiles and of La Mancha, extending as far as the eye can reach, derive an interest from their very nakedness and immensity, and have something of the solemn grandeur of the ocean. In ranging over these boundless wastes, the eye catches sight here and there of a straggling herd of cattle attended by a lonely herdsman, motionless as a statue, with his long, slender pike tapering up like a lance into the air; or, beholds a long train of mules slowly moving along the waste like a train of camels in the desert; or, a single herdsman, armed with blunderbuss and stiletto, and prowling over the plain. Thus the country, the habits, the very looks of the people, have something of the Arabian character. The general insecurity of the country is evinced in the universal use of weapons. The herdsman in the field, the shepherd in the plain, has his musket and his knife. The wealthy villager rarely ventures to the market-town without his trabuco, and, perhaps, a servant on foot with a blunderbuss on his shoulder; and the most petty journey is undertaken with the preparation of a warlike enterprise.

“The dangers of the road produce also a mode of travelling, resembling, on a diminutive scale, the caravans of the east. The arrieros, or carriers, congregate in convoys, and set off in large and well-armed trains on appointed days; while additional travellers swell their number, and contribute to their strength. In this primitive way is the commerce of the country carried on. The muleteer is the general medium of traffic, and the legitimate traverser of the land, crossing the peninsula from the Pyrenees and the Asturias to the Alpuxarras, the Serrania de Ronda, and even to the gates of Gibraltar. He lives frugally

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and hardily: his alforjas of coarse cloth hold his scanty stock of provisions; a leathern bottle, hanging at his saddle-bow, contains wine or water, for a supply across barren mountains and thirsty plains. A mule-cloth spread upon the ground, is his bed at night, and his pack-saddle is his pillow. His low, but clean-limbed and sinewy form betokens strength; his complexion is dark and sunburnt; his eye resolute, but quiet in its expression, except when kindled by sudden emotion; his demeanour is frank, manly, and courteous, and he never passes you without a grave salutation: 'Dios guarde a usted!' 'Va usted con Dios, Caballero!' 'God guard you! God be with you, Cavalier!'

"As these men have often their whole fortune at stake upon the burthen of their mule, they have their weapons at hand, slung to their saddles, and ready to be snatched out for desperate defence. But their united numbers render them secure against petty bands of marauders, and the solitary bandolero, armed to the teeth, and mounted on his Andalusian steed, hovers about them, like a pirate about a merchant convoy, without daring to make an assault.

"The Spanish muleteer has an inexhaustible stock of songs and ballads, with which to beguile his incessant wayfaring. The airs are rude and simple, consisting of but few inflexions. These he chants forth with a loud voice, and long, drawling cadence, seated sideways on his mule, who seems to listen with infinite gravity, and to keep time, with his paces, to the tune. The couplets thus chanted, are often old traditional romances about the Moors, or some legend of a saint, or some love-ditty; or what is still more frequent, some ballad about a bold contrabandista, or hardy bandolero, for the smuggler and the robber are poetical heroes among the common people of Spain. Often the song of the muleteer is composed at the instant, and relates to some local scenes or some incident of the journey. This talent of singing and improvising is frequent in Spain, and is said to have been inherited from the Moors. There is something wildly pleasing in listening to these ditties among the rude and lonely scenes that they illustrate; accompanied, as they are, by the occasional jingle of the mule-bell.

"It has a most picturesque effect also to meet a train of muleteers in some mountain-pass. First you hear the bells of the leading mules, breaking with their simple melody the stillness of the airy height; or, perhaps, the voice of the muleteer admonishing some tardy or wandering animal, or chanting, at the full stretch of his lungs, some traditionary ballad. At length you see the mules slowly winding along the cragged defile, sometimes descending precipitous cliffs, so as to present themselves in full relief against the sky, sometimes toiling up the deep arid chasms below you. As they approach, you descry their gay decorations of worsted tufts, tassels, and saddle-cloths, while, as they pass by, the ever-ready trabuco slung behind the packs and saddles, gives a hint of the insecurity of the road.

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“The ancient kingdom of Granada, into which we are about to penetrate, is one of the most mountainous regions of Spain. Vast sierras, or chains of mountains, destitute of shrub or tree, and mottled with variegated marbles and granites, elevate their sun-burnt summits against a deep-blue sky; yet in their rugged bosoms lie engulfed the most verdant and fertile valley, where the desert and the garden strain for mastery, and the very rock is, as it were, compelled to yield the fig, the orange, and the citron, and to blossom with the myrtle and the rose.

“In the wild passes of these mountains the sight of walled towns and villages, built like eagles’ nests among the cliffs, and surrounded by Moorish battlements, or of ruined watch-towers perched on lofty peaks, carries the mind back to the chivalric days of Christian and Moslem warfare, and to the romantic struggle for the conquest of Granada. In traversing these lofty sierras the traveller is often obliged to alight and lead his horse up and down the steep and jagged ascents and descents, resembling the broken steps of a staircase. Sometimes the road winds along dizzy precipices, without parapet to guard him from the gulfs below, and then will plunge down steep, and dark, and dangerous declivities. Sometimes it straggles through rugged barrancos, or ravines, worn by winter torrents, the obscure path of the contrabandista; while, ever and anon, the ominous cross, the monument of robbery and murder, erected on a mound of stones at some lonely part of the road, admonishes the traveller that he is among the haunts of banditti, perhaps at that very moment under the eye of some lurking bandolero. Sometimes, in winding through the narrow valleys, he is startled by a hoarse bellowing, and beholds above him on some green fold of the mountain side a herd of fierce Andalusian bulls, destined for the combat of the arena. There is something awful in the contemplation of these terrific animals, clothed with tremendous strength, and ranging their native pastures in untamed wildness, strangers almost to the face of man: they know no one but the solitary herdsman who attends upon them, and even he at times dares not venture to approach them. The low bellowing of these bulls, and their menacing aspect as they look down from their rocky height, give additional wildness to the savage scenery around.”

(From *The Alhambra*, or *New Sketch Book*, to which we propose to return in a *Supplement* in a fortnight.)

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ANECDOTE GALLERY.

* * * * *

THE UNLUCKY PRESENT: A TALE.

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A Lanarkshire minister (who died within the present century) was one of those unhappy persons, who, to use the words of a well known Scottish adage, “can never see green cheese but their een reels.” He was *extremely covetous* and that not only of nice articles of food, but of many other things which do not generally excite the cupidity of the human heart. The following story is in corroboration of this assertion:—Being on a visit one day at the house of one of his parishioners, a poor lonely widow, living in a moorland part of the parish, he became fascinated by the charms of a little cast-iron pot, which happened at the time to be lying on the hearth, full of potatoes for the poor woman’s dinner, and that of her children. He had never in his life seen such a nice little pot—it was a perfect conceit of a thing—it was a gem—no pot on earth could match it in symmetry—it was an object altogether perfectly lovely. “Dear sake! minister,” said the widow, quite overpowered by the reverend man’s commendations of her pot; “if ye like the pot sae weel as a’ that, I beg ye’ll let me send it to the manse. It’s a kind o’ orra (*superfluous*) pot wi’ us; for we’ve a bigger ane, that we use for ordinar, and that’s mair convenient every way for us. Sae ye’ll just tak a present o’t. I’ll send it ower the morn wi’ Jamie, when he gangs to the schule.” “Oh!” said the minister, “I can by no means permit you to be at so much trouble. Since you are so good as to give me the pot, I’ll just carry it home with me in my hand. I’m so much taken with it, indeed, that I would really prefer carrying it myself.” After much altercation between the minister and the widow, on this delicate point of politeness, it was agreed that he should carry home the pot himself.

Off then he trudged, bearing this curious little culinary article, alternately in his hand and under his arm, as seemed most convenient to him. Unfortunately the day was warm, the way long, and the minister fat; so that he became heartily tired of his burden before he got half-way home. Under these distressing circumstances, it struck him, that, if, instead of carrying the pot awkwardly at one side of his person, he were to carry it on his head, the burden would be greatly lightened; the principles of natural philosophy, which he had learned at college, informing him, that when a load presses directly and immediately upon any object, it is far less onerous than when it hangs at the remote end of a lever. Accordingly, doffing his hat, which he resolved to carry home in his band, and having applied his handkerchief to his brow, he clapped the pot, in inverted fashion, upon his head, where, as the reader may suppose, it figured much like Mambrino’s helmet upon the crazed capital of Don Quixote, only a great deal more magnificent in shape and dimensions. There was, at first, much relief and much comfort in this new mode of carrying the pot; but mark the result. The unfortunate

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minister having taken a by-path, to escape observation, found himself, when still a good way from home, under the necessity of leaping over a ditch, which intercepted him, in passing from one field to another. He jumped; but surely no jump was ever taken so completely *in*, or, at least *into*, the dark as this. The concussion given to his person in descending caused the helmet to become a hood; the pot slipped down over his face, and resting with the rim upon his neck, stuck fast there; enclosing his whole head as completely as ever that of a new born child was enclosed by the filmy bag, with which nature, as an indication of future good fortune, sometimes invests the noddles of her favourite offspring. What was worst of all, the nose, which had permitted the pot to slip down over it, withstood every desperate attempt, on the part of its proprietor, to make it slip back again; the contracted part, or neck, of the *patera*, being of such a peculiar formation as to cling fast to the base of the nose, although it had found no difficulty in gliding along its hypotenuse. Was ever minister in a worse plight? Was there ever *contretemps* so unlucky? Did ever any man—did ever any minister, so effectually hoodwink himself, or so thoroughly shut his eyes, to the plain light of nature? What was to be done? The place was lonely; the way difficult and dangerous; human relief was remote, almost beyond reach. It was impossible even to cry for help; or, if a cry could be uttered, it might reach, in deafening reverberation, the ear of the utterer, but it would not travel twelve inches farther in any direction. To add to the distresses of the case, the unhappy sufferer soon found great difficulty in breathing. What with the heat occasioned by the beating of the sun on the metal, and what with the frequent return of the same heated air to his lungs, he was in the utmost danger of suffocation. Every thing considered, it seemed likely that, if he did not chance to be relieved by some accidental wayfarer, there would soon be *death in the pot*.

The instinctive love of life, however, is omni-prevalent; and even very stupid people have been found, when put to the push by strong and imminent peril, to exhibit a degree of presence of mind, and exert a degree of energy, far above what might have been expected from them, or what they were ever known to exhibit, or exert, under ordinary circumstances. So it was with the pot-ensconced minister. Pressed by the urgency of his distresses, he fortunately recollected that there was a smith's shop at the distance of about a mile across the fields, where, if he could reach it before the period of suffocation, he might possibly find relief. Deprived of his eyesight, he acted only as a man of feeling, and went on as cautiously as he could, with his hat in his hand. Half crawling, half sliding, over ridge and furrow, ditch and hedge, somewhat like Satan floundering over chaos, the unhappy minister travelled with all possible

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speed, as nearly as he could guess, in the direction of the place of refuge. I leave it to the reader to conceive the surprise, the mirth, the infinite amusement of the smith, and all the hangers-on of the *smiddy*, when, at length, torn and worn, faint and exhausted, blind and breathless, the unfortunate man arrived at the place, and let them know (rather by signs than by words) the circumstances of his case. In the words of an old Scottish song,

“Out cam the gudeman, and high he shouted;
Out cam the gudewife, and low she louted;
And a’ the town neighbours were gathered about it:
And there was he, I trow.”

The merriment of the company, however, soon gave way to considerations of humanity. Ludicrous as was the minister, with such an object where his head should have been, and with the feet of the pot pointing upwards, like the horns of the great Enemy, it was, nevertheless, necessary that he should be speedily restored to his ordinary condition, if it were for no other reason than that he might continue to live. He was accordingly, at his own request led into the smithy, multitudes flocking around to tender him their kindest offices, or to witness the process of release; and, having laid down his head upon the anvil, the smith lost no time in seizing and poising his goodly forehammer. “Will I come sair on, minister?” exclaimed the considerate man of iron, in at the brink of the pot. “As sair as ye like,” was the minister’s answer; “better a chap i’ the chafts than die for want of breath.” Thus permitted, the man let fall a blow, which fortunately broke the pot in pieces, without hurting the head which it enclosed, as the cook-maid breaks the shell of the lobster, without bruising the delicate food within. A few minutes of the clear air, and a glass from the gudewife’s bottle, restored the unfortunate man of prayer; but, assuredly, the incident is one which will long live in the memory of the parishioners of C——.—*Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal*.

* * * * *

THE NATURALIST.

* * * * *

LOUDON’S MAGAZINE OF NATURAL HISTORY.

Sundry and manifold are our obligations to this delightful Journal. From the Number (26) for the present month we glean the following:

The Gurnard and Sprat.

Mr. J. Couch, in an interesting paper on the fishes of Cornwall, has the following notes:

“Ray observes that the word gurnard, which may be regarded as the English term, is derived a *grunnitu*, from grunting like a hog. In this, however, I venture to think this eminent naturalist mistaken. Pengurn is the ancient Cornu-British name for these fishes, and signifies hard head; and its English translation is now sometimes given to the grey gurnard. From the Cornish word *gurn* (hard), I therefore derive

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the name, as descriptive of the head of these species. This is a common fish at all seasons; but in December and January it sometimes abounds to such a degree, that, as they are not much esteemed, I have known them sold at thirty for a penny. It keeps near the bottom commonly, at no great distance from land; but sometimes multitudes will mount together to the surface; and move along with the first dorsal fin above the water: they will even quit their native element, and spring to the distance of a yard; thus imitating the flying gurnard, though not to the same extent. In summer they are found basking in the sun, perhaps asleep, as they will at times display no signs of animation, until an attempt is made to seize them.

“In reference to some observations by Mr. Yarrell, in the *Zoological Journal*, relative to the distinction between the sprat and the young of the pilchard and herring, I can state that Cornish fishermen term the young of both the latter fishes sprats; but, how far this should go in determining the judgment of a naturalist will appear, when I add that I have never seen above one specimen of the genuine sprat in Cornwall, and that was brought me by a fisherman, to be informed what fish it was. In taking fish out of his net by night, he felt it to be neither a pilchard nor a herring, and supposed it something rare.”

* * * * *

STRUCTURE OF BIRDS.

Birds may be said to constitute an isolated class of beings. They are distinguished by certain characters from all other animals: their classification does not pass into any other, and cannot, therefore, be consistently introduced into the supposed chain or gradation of natural bodies.

The skeleton or bony frame of birds is in general lighter than in quadrupeds. They have the largest bones of all animals, in proportion to their weight; and their bones are more hollow than those of animals that do not fly: air-vessels also enable them to blow out the hollow parts of their bodies, when they wish to make their descent slower, rise more swiftly, or float in the air. The spine is immovable, but the neck has a greater number of bones, (never less than nine, and varying from that to twenty-four,) and consequently of joints, and more varied motion, than in quadrupeds. The breast-bone is very large, with a prominent keel down the middle, and is formed for the attachment of very strong muscles: the bones of the wings are analagous to those of the fore-legs in quadrupeds, but the termination is in three joints or fingers only, of which the exterior is very short. This will be better understood by the annexed:

[Illustration: Skeleton of a Turkey.]

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The muscles that move the wings downwards, in many instances, are a sixth part of the weight of the whole body; whereas those of a man are not in proportion one hundredth part so large. The centre of gravity of their bodies is always below the insertion of their wings to prevent them falling on their backs, but near that point on which the body is, during flight, as it were, suspended. The positions assumed by the head and feet are frequently calculated to accomplish these ends, and give to the wings every assistance in continuing the progressive motion. The tail also is of great use, in regulating the rise and fall of birds and even their lateral movements. What are commonly called the legs are analogous to the hind legs in quadrupeds, and they terminate, in general, in four toes, three of which are usually directed forwards, and one backwards; but in some birds there are only two toes, in others three.

Birds exceed quadrupeds in the quantity of their respiration, for they have not only a double circulation, and an aerial respiration, but they respire also through other cavities beside the lungs, the air penetrating through the whole body, and bathing the branches of the aorta, or great artery of the body, as well as those of the pulmonary artery.

Birds are usually classed according to the forms of their bills and feet, from those parts being connected with their mode of life, food, &c. and influencing their total habit very materially.

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THE RHINOCEROS BIRD.

This curious bird is of the order *Picae*, or Pies, and of the genus *Buceros*, consisting of birds of rather large size, and distinguished by the disproportionate forms of their beaks, which are often still further remarkable for some kind of large prominence on the upper mandible. The most conspicuous species is the *Buceros Rhinoceros* of Linnaeus, commonly called the Rhinoceros Bird.

[Illustration: The Rhinoceros Bird.]

Its general size is that of a Turkey, but with a much more slenderly proportioned body. Its colour is black, with the tail white, crossed by a black bar: the beak is of enormous size, of a lengthened, slightly curved, and pointed shape, and on the upper mandible, towards the base, is an extremely large process, equal in thickness to the bill itself, and turning upwards and backwards in the form of a thick, sharp-pointed horn, somewhat resembling the horn of the rhinoceros. The use of this strange proboscis is by some supposed to be that of enabling the bird more easily to tear out the entrails of its prey; but others affirm that it is not of a predaceous nature, feeding only on vegetable substances. This bird is principally found in the East Indian Islands. A remarkably fine specimen was preserved in the Leverian Museum.

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THE SKETCH-BOOK.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A WANDERER.

A scene on the coast of Cornwall.

A short time before my departure from the hamlet of Landwithiel,[4] I was awoke early one morning by the roaring of the wind in the huge old chimney of my room—the whole tenement, indeed, occasionally shook as a violent gust swept down the valley, tossing the branches of the stout old tree before the door to and fro in a way that threatened at last to level them with the dust. The very briny scent of the atmosphere convinced me there was some sea running in the bay; and it was the more unexpected as we had had no tokens of a storm for several days previous. From the peninsular situation of this county, surrounded on almost every side with the restless ocean and exposed to the wide sweep of the Atlantic, it may be supposed that storms are of frequent occurrence. As on the present occasion, they often come with little or no warning; and the effects of a hurricane in the distant main, far outstripping the wind, sometimes rolls with tremendous fury towards our western shores, on which the sea is encroaching in every part.

[4] See “Recollections of a Wanderer,” *Mirror*, Nos. 430-475.

Landwithiel was a wild little place. It was essentially a “fishing village.” The people ploughed the deep, not the land; and the constant exposure—blow high, blow low—on the restless sea, endued its inhabitants, and the Cornish fishermen generally, with a fearlessness of danger and boldness of character almost unequalled in these islands. The lives and pursuits of the two great classes in this county—the maritime and mining population—are widely opposite to each other. The one class pass their existence on the stormy waters of the deep, whilst the other labour far below the surface of the earth; each being continually exposed to numberless perils and dangers.

When I descended below I found my host already astir; so after attending well to the inward man, I lost no time in starting towards the harbour. As I formerly described, this comes abruptly in sight round a sharp angle, at some elevation from the beach. On the upper part of the descent the road was flanked on each side with a row of cottages, the street being so steep that steps were formed in many parts to aid the progress of the passenger. This gave an air of singularity and wildness to the place, which was aided by the boldness of the surrounding scenery. The street bore all the marks of the occupation of the inhabitants—nets hanging to dry—strings of fish—an old oar—or a “fisher’s wife” broiling fish for her husband’s breakfast—met the eye on either side.

On clearing the street, I observed a larger throng on the old pier than was wont to gather there on ordinary occasions. There was obviously some unusual subject of interest agitated amongst them; so I turned from my course and joined the group.

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A gale is an important event in a fishing town. Independent of the interest naturally felt for the various craft belonging to the place which may happen to be afloat, there may be wrecks or other marine casualties to excite the interest or cupidity of the observer.

There was a tremendous tumbling sea rolling into the little bay, when I drew towards the pier. At the further end was a group of persons in earnest conversation, whom I distinguished as the knowing ones and long-heads of the place; while their younger companions were engaged in parties walking briskly to and fro on the pier. A tier of boats had been carefully drawn up high and dry beyond the wreck left by the last spring tide. Four or five, however, were afloat, and lurching heavily alongside the pier, whither the tide had not long reached; the wind rattling amongst the masts, shrouds, and half-bent sails of some craft which had just run in for shelter from the impending storm. My recent adventure had made me pretty well acquainted with most of the persons around: and I learned that a *ground swell* had been observed along shore the preceding night. This phenomenon is generally occasioned by a storm in the Atlantic, with a westerly wind; and it affords to the old fishermen an almost certain indication of approaching foul weather.

“A stiff bit of a gale, this same, Master Charles,” said an old tar, giving an energetic jerk to his trousers, “Ay, ay, old boy,” he replied, “this wind is not blowing for nothing, you may take my word for it; but if the Jane and the Susan hove in sight I’d not mind a bit for all that; we’ve not a stick afloat but her.”

“What! is Sam Clovelly^[5] out this morning, Helston?” I anxiously inquired of the pilot, who was a manly, excellent sort of fellow. He had grown grey with service, and there was something in the steady eye and calm decision of his look that marked him out as no common character.

[5] See *Mirror*, No. 475. “Dawlish’s Hole.”

“Yes, sir, we have no tidings of him yet, and the sky looking as black, yonder, as the face of a negro; but we’ll hope that he’s run out of harm’s way before now.”

As the morning waxed apace, the interest in the fate of the Jane and Susan became more evident amongst the by-standers. Every stick that came in sight cut out conversation; but many an eye was cast anxiously to windward in vain for poor Sam Clovelly and his brother Arthur, who had been out since the preceding night. Presently the two little orphan sisters of the missing men came upon the pier, and Helstone, the pilot, and some of the others anxiously endeavoured to cheer and console them.

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"I'll be bound they've run for — port long ago, darlings, so don't cry now, Jane; the old craft's stood many a stronger breeze than this; now, wipe your eyes, there. Poor things," he said, turning to me, as the children went farther on the pier, "their two brothers are the only friends they have got in the world, and if they are gone who is to take care of them? Their father, old Sam Clovelly, was lost—I recollect the time well—somewhere off Milford; leaving his wife, with two stiff tidy bits of lads, and likely to increase the family; well, sir, she took to her bed, with the shock, and never rose from it more, after giving birth to these two little girls, leaving poor Sam and Arthur to struggle on like a cutter in a heavy sea. But God Almighty never deserts the innocent, sir—you've seen that, I dare say? Sam's been a steady lad, and has prospered, and he and Arthur have never forgotten their mother's dying words, and have been very kind to their sisters; but, come what will, the orphans shall never want a friend as long as Charley Helston has a home or a bit of bread to offer them."

We now again reverted to the state of the day. As the gale swept on, numberless craft were running along the coast towards — port, for shelter. A crack Fowey-man now making a board till she "eat out" of the wind a North-countryman right ahead—now with her helm-a-lea, and now careering along with a heavy following sea on either quarter—kept our attention on the alert. Presently a steamer came in sight bearing up across the bay towards — Head. The white rush of steam from her safety-valves was well made out by the blackness of the windward horizon; and contrasted with the dense puffs of smoke from her funnel, which were instantly dispersed or carried in heavy patches to leeward. The glory of modern discoveries is unpopular with our coasting-seamen, and the mate of a coaster, who was watching her movements, observed that "we should not have a lad fit to hand a sail or man a yard soon with their cursed machinery."

As she passed on her course "cleaving blast and breaker right ahead," with her weather-wheel often spinning in the air, and as the sky darkened and the waves roared louder, I thought with deep interest on what might even now be the fate of those, without whose friendly aid I should have been lying on a rocky pillow and seaweed for my shroud, near Dawlish's Hole. The weather now became entitled to the formidable name of a storm, but some time had yet to elapse before darkness added its horrors to the scene of desolation.

Heavy masses of breakers were continually striking the pier-head with fearful crashes; now bursting over, amid seas of spray, with resistless impetuosity, drenching every one under its lee; now recoiling for a brief moment, as if to gather strength, leaving a smooth, hollow waste of oily sea—like the treacherous pauses of human passion,—and then returning with wilder haste and tenfold added fury to the onset.

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The morning was waning away. I left the pier, and bent my course away from Landwithiel.

The path I pursued led along the summit of the cliffs; oftentimes winding so close round the edge of a projecting acclivity, that it required a clear head and a steady foot, for one false step would have been instant destruction. The coast below me was justly entitled to take its place amongst the finest rock-scenery in the island; and exhibited in its grandest form, the peculiarly wild and picturesque nature of the coast of Cornwall. After working my way against a head-wind for three or four miles, I took shelter in Dawlish's Watch Tower, an old half-ruined building, which commanded an almost boundless look-out. Nearly right opposite to this station lay the Wolf-stone, an insular, and almost inaccessible rock, which rose in deep water about three-quarters of a mile from land. Whilst scanning with my glass the windward horizon, I accidentally rested on this islet, and I had not looked long before my gaze was rivetted to it. Two individuals I fancied were standing near a pole which was erected on the highest point. These lone and unusual tenants of the sea-birds' home were obviously, from their motions, much agitated. A heavy driving shower, for a few minutes, wrapped it in mist. When this cleared off, the black and dreary front of the Wolf-stone became dimly visible through the tumultuous assemblage of gigantic breakers, that were every instant grappling with the steep which defied them. Another minute's observation and I was running at my utmost speed back to Landwithiel. The captives could be no other than Sam and Arthur Clovelly.

My arrival caused universal stir and interest in Landwithiel. The Dasher, the best sea-boat in the harbour was instantly manned, with directions to pull to Carn Cove, almost opposite the rock, whither the rest of the men rapidly proceeded along the heights. Helston and myself also went thither to consult in the first instance, as to the best plan for relief; for no boat could live, in such a day as this, within some distance of the rock.

The anxious group gathered on the edge of the cliff; and while a white flag was running up a boat's mast which we had erected on the tower, we cheered loudly and repeatedly to assure the distant captives that aid was nigh.

"It is Sam—God be praised," sang out Helston, who was steadily looking out through his glass—and every one crowded around. "And is Arthur there too, Charles?"—"Yes, I see.—Death! I thought that wave would sweep over all. Now they wave their neckcloths—they beckon us to use haste. High water is drawing fast on, and what man ever lived on the Wolfstone in a spring flood. They wave again; sing away there, my lads, cheerily!" and a tumultuous shout of human voices again mingled with the blast.

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Almost every eye was now cast out for the Dasher, and she was seen pulling with great difficulty—for a handkerchief of canvass would have been madness—towards the shelter of a projecting mass of rock, in Carne Cove, in the comparatively smooth water behind which, Helston and myself were enabled with some difficulty to get aboard. It was a moment of some excitement. Accustomed from childhood fearlessly to brave an element they might truly call their own, the gallant little crew steadily seated themselves, and taking off their hats manfully answered the encouraging cheers from aloft. The men now shipped their oars, and all having been made snug, I seated myself in the stern-sheets, near Helston, who had taken the helm. There was something fine in his weather-beaten countenance, and grey hair streaming in the breeze, as he steadily scanned the dark masses of the distant Wolf-stone—he was a true seaman.

The Dasher was a boat that would live in almost any weather on this coast, head to wind; but when she was put about, there was no little danger of her being pooped in a heavy following sea. Ours was now the former case, and as the crew put her through the contending sea, which at every stroke hit our bows and soaked us with spray, I anxiously consulted with Helston on the best means of shipping the captives on making the Wolf-stone. Keeping his eye fixed on the rock, which was grimly visible on our larboard bow, he shook his head as the portentous darkness of the sky again claimed our attention. “If we had been delayed a quarter of an hour longer they would have been food for fishes;” I remarked, “but it will be close run; our men are doing all that strength and skill can do, but it avails little when opposed to such a power as this.”

“Never fear, sir, we shall do yet—you are not so cool as I—how should you? when I have braved the storms of nearly sixty winters:—but the Wolf-stone’s a spot, I will frankly confess, with which I had rather make acquaintance with a clearer sky and a flowing sheet, than on such a night as this. Just give a look-out a-head, sir,” he added, as we were mounting a heavy sea, “and tell me how things are aloft on the rock.”

However formidable this dreary steep might have appeared at a distance, now we were drawing near to it, the wildness and sublimity of the scene surpassed my calculations. The fugitives, who by their gestures were urging us onward, had been driven for shelter to a hollow on the leeward side of the rock, which indeed was almost the only spot that now afforded an asylum from danger. The waves as they came rolling onwards with aggravated force from the main, ever and anon burst against the isle with terrific violence, now breaking into gigantic masses, then driven in columns of sparkling spray to a vast height in the air, and now closing on every side around their victims. The isle, indeed, appeared to be menaced with total annihilation.

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As we could now distinguish both the brothers, we instinctively cheered them on drawing towards the landward side of the rock. They were compelled every minute to crouch and cling to the cliff under which they had taken shelter, as a huge wave burst below their feet, and struck them in its upward violence. The Wolf-stone could no longer raise its head in dominion over the main. The surf ran so high immediately around it, that to approach at all closely would only have ended in the destruction of every soul. We, therefore, hailed them as we stood under its lee, and found that in consequence of their having remained almost all night on this dreary spot, drenched with wet, and chilled with cold, any effort to swim through the surf would probably be fatal in their exhausted state. What then remained to be done? We had ropes on board which would be of infinite service, could we only devise means to convey them to the rock. At this juncture, the services of my old Newfoundlander, Retriever, came forcibly to my mind. The poor animal had refused to be separated from me when we embarked, and lay at my feet in the boat. On his exertions therefore depended the lives of our friends. He soon understood the task he was to perform, and in another second was dashing onwards through the waves. An affecting scene now took place between the brothers, as to who should first avail himself of the approaching aid. A gigantic rush of tide, which almost swept entirely over the rock, told them, however, that time was precious. But Sam was firm. The younger brother then plunged forward and was soon drawn safely on board. He informed us, as Retriever again swam away with the rope, that he feared his brother was much more exhausted than himself. With breathless interest, therefore, we watched Sam tie the rope round his body, and enter the water. The violence of the gale, at this instant, compelled us to stand further off the rock; indeed, within a few minutes we foresaw that its presence would only be indicated by a low black mass indistinctly seen, amidst the boiling and restless waves of the ocean; an appearance, I was told, which it only presents in the most violent storms. Poor Sam, now seen, now lost, amid the foaming ridges of the sea, came gradually along till within about forty paces from the boat, when it was evident his strength had failed him. An arm was shot into the air, then his head and shoulders rose rapidly, and there was a sudden blank in the waters. "Pull away, my lads, for your lives," we shouted, "or he is gone!"

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"It was a hard run thing, I reckon, sirs," said Mr. Habbakuk Sheepshanks, who was rather top-heavy that evening, to a numerous party who were assembled round his capacious hearth at the "Ship-aground," "but all's well, they say, that ends well, so we'll even drink the health of the brothers in a glass of the free genuine Cognac." "What is that you say!" said the exciseman....

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VYVYAN.

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SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.

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LONDON AND THE PROVINCES COMPARED.

It is the nature of prosperous communities, and the fashion of modern times, to centralize too much their numbers and their powers. But the question of distribution and proportion is almost as important in politics as that of production itself. Money and manure are not the only things which are the better for being spread. London and the country would both be gainers by transplanting bodily, a hundred miles off, some dozens of its streets—inhabitants and all. There are whole counties which we should like to colonize with the surplus talent of the metropolis. That surplus talent comprises scores of men, waiting on Providence, feeding on foolish speculations, hanging on the skirts of some frivolous circle, doing nothing there, or worse than nothing, spoiling and wasting daily, who, planted out into a sphere of more favourable opportunities, are capable of being a blessing to a neighbourhood. However, it is not a case for violent measures. We do not propose that London should be compressed into *London proper*,—within the bills of mortality; or that its clubs should be called out on country service. Patriots, philosophers, and diners out, rusticated by royal proclamation, and under the *surveillance* of the police, would not come with a temper very suitable to our purpose. An experiment of that sort was made under more likely circumstance, and failed;—as all experiments must, which seek to remove the symptoms, instead of trying to act upon the cause. It was in vain that James I. pulled down the new houses as fast as they were built; and that Charles I. ordered home the country gentlemen.

Although there seems something artificial, and almost monstrous, in the actual size of London, the means which have led to this result are altogether natural. Indeed, whatever forcing has been at any time used, or prejudice fostered, has told the other way. Nothing has existed which can be called a court or courtiers for the last two hundred years; and a sort of feudal feeling still keeps our squires faithful to their halls. Two exceptions only can be set down to our institutions. The distinction of local courts obliges the English Bar to reside near Westminster; and the duration of a modern session substitutes a house for the family of a Member of Parliament, in the place of lodgings for himself. Under these circumstances, as “the wen” has not been produced, so is it not likely to be dispersed by any direct legislative application. To say the truth, the grievance, in our opinion, is not in the *absolute*, but in the *relative* amount of the wealth, intelligence, and virtue, squeezed together on those marvellous square miles upon which the capital stands. We do not grudge it the pretty

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country which is hid under its basement stories, any more than the social activity and happiness which live along its crowded streets. We serve ejectments upon nobody. The only question is, whether some would not do well to move of themselves. Among the hopes and objects by whose influence 1,200,000 human beings are collected on the same spot, a certain proportion will be found, which have not been at all,—and more still, which have not been very judiciously or magnanimously, considered. There are many in the higher classes of its inhabitants especially, who, we suspect, on examining into their principles and habits, will have some difficulty in satisfying themselves that they have not chosen ill for their real happiness; and, for all real usefulness, a great deal worse. But the mistaken notion which most strips the country of its natural guardians, is the fallacy, on the part of young and sanguine dispositions, of believing that the motives and sphere of individual action rise in proportion to the apparent magnitude of the scene. These are the absentees most to be regretted. In the single line of professional practice, and in its most successful instances, that may be the case. But in taking ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, and in every other of the varied departments of social duty, the sphere of useful action, however nominally extended, will be found to be strictly and substantially reduced.

There can be as little fear that London will ever want any of the elements of an enlightened and well-constituted community, as that it will not be large enough. It is very different with the provinces. The capital offers so many real, and still more, so many plausible attractions to all that is active and refined, as well as to all that is idle and selfish in human nature, that a long list of supernumeraries and expectants is sure, in every case, always to be at hand. It is the lottery into which the credulous are eager to put in;—it is the theatre on whose stage ambition and vanity are impatient to appear;—it is the land of Cockayne, in whose crowded mazes the selfish escape from every duty, and reduce their intercourse with their fellow-creatures to the sympathies of visiting and of shopping. It is the seat also of liberal society, and independent existence, among the friends and occupations of one's choice. Lord Falkland, the love of his age, admitted, that quitting London was the only thing which he was not sufficiently master of himself ever to manage without a struggle. In this state of things, it is plain that nobody can be of such consequence there but that he is easily spared. The death of a town wit is handsomely celebrated, if it furnishes five minutes' conversation for the table where he dined the day before. He is replaced with the same regularity and indifference as fresh snuff is put into a snuff-box, or fresh flowers are set out upon the epergne. Nobody misses him. The machine goes on without perceiving that the blue-bottle or the gnat has fallen from its wheel.

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The vastness and multiplicity and complexity of the organization by which the movements of the capital proceed, as it were mechanically, do not act merely by diminishing the general importance of individuals to the system. Except in the case of very happy, and universal, and flowing natures, or under the influence of accidental counteractions, a personal risk, between extreme vagueness and extreme narrowness of character, is incurred by the individual himself. In respect of employment, the division of intellectual labour is so complete, that most persons in such a situation are tempted to do their own piece of work, and no more;—to rest satisfied with manufacturing the pin's head which happens to have fallen to their share. Does a London life tend to quicken the moral pulse and expand the heart? The forms of society are thrown into too large a scale, and its pace is too rapid, to afford an opportunity for the sort of intercourse by which alone a real acquaintance with, understanding of, and affection for, each other can be obtained. No means exist of getting there at any thing further than talents in men, and beauty or accomplishments in women.

Qualities which can be exhibited as a show are discovered and appreciated accordingly. But wisdom and virtue, which are to the mind what breath is to the body, have no part assigned or assignable to them on such a stage. A man may pass a life in London without an occasion arising by which his neighbours can learn whether he is an honest fellow or a rogue. The consequence is, that a good deal of such a man's moral nature gets imperfectly developed, and dies away. The appropriate object is not brought sufficiently close and home to him to stimulate and call forth his latent powers. Charity is perhaps better off than most. By a satisfactory compromise, it falls into the hands of a mendicity society. But there are other virtues which do not admit of being compounded for, and their burden transferred to a committee, for two guineas a-year. In these cases the moral tax is too often evaded altogether. We are well aware that men of pleasure are far from being the only persons who have turned into a maxim of life the sentence which the Duke of Buckingham passed upon the dog which barked after him,—“Would to God you were married and settled in the country!” It is evident that the word *provincial* is often felt, by characters of a higher strain and object, to imply an imputation or admission of mediocrity. Now, greatly as nations differ, it is generally admitted that all capitals are pretty much alike. It follows therefore, that the characteristic spirit and principle of a nation do not appear there to most advantage. Enow worthy representatives of that spirit and principle are doubtless there; but they are there too much as though they were not. It is an atmosphere which no individual powers can penetrate, and where it needs more than an ordinary sun to make itself felt or seen.

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We are satisfied that, on a just estimate of the whole case, the provinces, as distinguished from the metropolis, would be found in many instances, perhaps in most, to be the home which a wise lover of himself, and a sincere lover of his kind, would do well to fix in;—not indeed as the scene of a brilliant or sybarite existence, but as the post of that salutary influence which sinks deepest; and of that usefulness and happiness which last the longest; as most visibly incorporated with, and represented by, our fellow-beings.—*Edinburgh Review*.

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INFANCY.

(*From the Feuilles d'Automne of Victor Hugo, translated in the Foreign Quarterly Review.*)

In the dusky court,
Near the altar laid,
Sleeps the child in shadow,
Of his mother's bed:
Softly he reposes,
And his lids of roses.
Closed to earth, uncloses
On the heaven o'erhead.

Many a dream is with him,
Fresh from the fairy land,
Spangled o'er with diamonds
Seems the ocean sand;
Suns are gleaming there.
Troops of ladies fair
Souls of infants bear
In their charming hand.

O, enchanting vision,
Lo, a rill up-springs,
And, from out its bosom
Comes a voice that sings.
Lovelier there appear
Sire and sisters dear,
While his mother near,
Plumes her new-born wings.



But a brighter vision
Yet his eyes behold;
Roses all, and lilies,
Every path enfold;
Lakes in shadow sleeping,
Silver fishes leaping,
And the waters creeping,
Through the reeds of gold.

Slumber on, sweet infant.
Slumber peacefully;
Thy young soul yet knows not
What thy lot may be.
Like dead leaves that sweep
Down the stormy deep,
Thou art borne in sleep,
What is all to thee?

Thou canst slumber by the way;
Thou hast learnt to borrow
Naught from study, naught from care;
The cold hand of sorrow,
On thy brow unwrinkled yet,
Where young truth and candour sit,
Ne'er with rugged nail hath writ
That sad word, "To-morrow."

Innocent, thou sleepest—
See the heavenly band.
Who foreknow the trials
That for man are planned;
Seeing him unarmed,
Unfearing, un-alarmed,
With their tears have warmed
His unconscious hand.

Angels, hovering o'er him,
Kiss him where he lies.
Hark, he sees them weeping,
"Gabriel," he cries;
"Hush," the angel says,
On his lip be lays
One finger, one displays
His native skies.

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STATE OF SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

The following exhibits but a lamentable picture of the “milk and honey” of this favoured land:

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"The morals of the colony of New South Wales are of an exceedingly depraved description. It is so far from being a country where men begin a new life and enter upon a fresh course with resolutions of amendment, that the testimony of all respectable men examined on the subject unites in asserting that the habits of the freed men, even of those who have acquired property and have families, are of the most dissipated character. Of the emancipists, to whom grants of land have been made and who are often wealthy, very few, not more it is said than half a dozen, can be selected whose lives are not of a vicious description, who do not indulge in dishonest practices of one sort or another, and who have not risen to wealth by fostering and practising some species of villany. These men procure convicts to be assigned to them, who become members of the families, and assist them in carrying on their various frauds. In Sydney the grog shops are very numerous, and grog shops are receiving houses. A constant trade in stolen goods is going on between Sydney and the remotest parts of the colony, and even between Sydney and this country. The convicts in remote settlements have no means generally of indulging in licentiousness, but they see constantly before them the freed labourer who has, and they burn to enjoy similar privileges: and should their place of occupation be too remote from a theatre of indulgence, they get a week of holiday at Sydney, where they arrive in numbers, and, for the time they stay, wallow in every species of debauchery. In such a state of society the public standard of morality must necessarily fall to a very low degree. The leaven spreads from the corrupted part into the whole mass. Just as the slang of London thieves is become the classical language of Sydney, so do necessarily a familiarity with crime, hatred to law, and contempt for virtue, make their way into the minds and hearts of those who are untainted with actual crime. So far from a reformation being even begun in New South Wales, it would seem that roguery had been carried a degree beyond even the perfection it has reached here. Property is very insecure in Sydney, and the most extraordinary robberies take place. Mr. James Walker, in his evidence before a committee of the House of Commons, says 'the colony has a curious effect upon the most practised thieves in this country; one of the most experienced thieves in London has *something to learn* when he comes out there; probably he would be robbed the first night he came into his hut.' This was the answer given by an experienced settler to the question, whether he thought any considerable degree of reformation took place among the convicts residing at a distance from Sydney. It is nearly impossible that it should be otherwise. The master can only punish his servant by travelling with him some twenty or thirty miles to a police magistrate, by which he loses his own time, the labour of his servant, perhaps for months,

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if he is condemned to a road gang, and after his return has little advantage from his services. Unwillingness to work for a master who has been the cause of his punishment is a difficult feeling to counteract. The convict has the game in his own hands: he either does no work, wounds himself, falls sick, or perhaps, and it is not uncommon, spoils either the materials entrusted to him, or the tools which have been put into his hands.

“Mr. Busby, when asked respecting the prevalence of bush-rangers, who are escaped convicts and others who have taken to the bush, says, in his Evidence (5th Aug. 1831,) that within the last twelve months, or two years, bush-rangers have been so numerous that it was scarcely possible to travel a hundred miles on the road without being stopped: there was scarcely a newspaper, in which there were not two or three instances of persons, of every rank, being stopped. It was quite an unusual thing formerly—but of late there has been a regular system of highway robbery. The laws that have been enacted to put down this horrible state of things, will serve for an index of the condition of the colony. They do away with every appearance of personal liberty. ‘One act empowered magistrates to issue a warrant, authorizing constables to enter or break into any house, within their district or county, by day or night, at their own discretion; and to seize any person they might suspect to be highway robbers or burglars; or any individual in the colony, without any warrant or authority, may take another into custody, on the mere suspicion that he is a convict illegally at large: if it appear to the magistrate that he had a just or probable cause for suspicion, he is justified in doing so. The onus of proving that he is not a convict illegally at large, is thrown upon the suspected person, and if that is not established to the satisfaction of the magistrate, he is liable to be retained in custody, or sent to Sydney to be examined and dealt with.’

“The number of executions in New South Wales in the year 1830 exceeded the whole number of executions in England and Wales, in the same year; which, taking the proportion of the populations of the countries, makes capital punishments upwards of three hundred and twenty-five times as frequent as in the mother country. This horrid fact is pretty well, of itself, an answer to all argument drawn from the idea of Reformation. But direct testimony is abundant. Major McArthur, the son of one of the wealthiest and most extensive settlers in the colony, and to whom it owes so much for its present progress in production and commerce, states, ‘It is painful to know that those whose sentences have expired, or to whom pardons have been granted, seldom or ever incline to reform, even when they have acquired property. Intoxication and fraud are habitual to them; and hardly six persons can be named throughout the colony, who, being educated men, and having been transported for

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felonies, have afterwards become sober, moral, and industrious members of the community. Crime is of constant occurrence, and so completely organized, that cattle are carried off from the settlers in large numbers, and slaughtered for the traders in Sydney, who contract with the commissariat. It is not, therefore, the vicious habits alone of the town which are to be dreaded, but the effects that are communicated and felt throughout the country. The agricultural labourer is encouraged to plunder his master, by finding a ready sale for the property he steals, and whenever his occupations call him to the towns, he sees and yields himself to the vicious habits around him. He returns intoxicated and unsettled to his employer's farm, and incites his comrades to the same sensual indulgences, with equal disregard of the risk and the consequences. To these causes the present vitiated and disorganized state of the convicts in New South Wales is chiefly attributable; and the extent of the evil maybe in some degree estimated, when it is stated *that the expense of the police establishment amounts to more than 20,000_l_. per annum for a population of 40,000 souls.*"

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THE GATHERER

Premiers.—The following list of premiers, from the accession of George III. to 1832, with the number of peers created during their respective premierships, may be acceptable at the present period:—Lord Chatham, 9; Lord Bute, 9; George Grenville, 4; Lord Rockingham, 4; Duke of Grafton, none; Lord North, 27; Lord Shelburn, none; Mr. Fox, 7; Mr. Pitt, 90; Mr. Addington, 24; Lord Grenville, 3; Duke of Portland, 4; Mr. Perceval, none; Lord Liverpool, 50; Mr. Canning, 7; Lord Goderich, 6; Duke of Wellington, 2; and Earl Grey, 25.—W.G.C.

Peers.—Number of peers (in the present peerage) created by each sovereign, from the reign of Henry III. (1264) to the accession of his present majesty:—Henry III., 2; Edward I., 7; Edward II., 6; Edward III., 1; Henry VI., 5; Henry VII, 1; Henry VIII., 6; Edward VI., 2; Mary, 2; Elizabeth, 8; James I., 15; Charles I., 10; Charles II., 16; James II., 1; William III., 7; Anne, 14; George I., 15; George II., 20; George III., 145; George IV., 46. W.G.C.

Theatrical Property in France.—A dramatic author in France is entitled, every night that his play is performed, to a fixed sum per act, viz. 10 francs, for Paris; 5 francs for the large theatres in the country; 3 francs for the second-rate provincial theatres; and 2 francs for the third-rate. A bureau is established by government, to receive the contributions, and any manager neglecting to make a return, is punished by a heavy fine; the amount of which goes to the author. The advantages arising from this system

are also enjoyed by the widow and children of the author. It is calculated that the author of the *Ecole des Viellards*, derives nightly, from the performance of that piece, in Paris, and the provinces, about 500 francs. Scribe, a successful *vaudeville* writer, is in receipt of a handsome income; and Merle was able, from the contributions upon his pieces, to open the Port St. Martin Theatre, upon a liberal scale, and thus to lay the foundation of a brilliant fortune. T. GILL.

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A Magdalene.—A French bishop preaching, exclaimed, “A Magdalene is present, she is looking at me, I will not mention her name, but I will throw my book at her.” He then raised his arm as if to put his threat into execution, when all the women in the church ducked their heads. “What,” said he, “all Magdalenes.” SWAINE.

Unwelcome Title.—Charles Incledon, the vocalist, being asked if he had ever read Murray’s *Sermons to Asses*, replied, “he had not, he did not like the book, the title was too personal.”

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