

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction eBook

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction

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Page 1

BURNHAM ABBEY

[Illustration: *Burnham Abbey*, From a Sketch, by a Correspondent.]

Burnham is a village of some consideration, in Buckinghamshire, and gives name to a deanery and hundred. Its prosperity has been also augmented by the privilege of holding three fairs annually. It is situated in the picturesque vicinity of Windsor, about five miles from that town, and three miles N.E. of Maidenhead. It was anciently a place of much importance. One of the few relics of its greatness is the ivy-mantled ruin represented in the above Engraving. So late as the fourteenth century, Burnham could also boast of a royal palace within its boundary: but, alas! the wand of Prospero has long since touched its gorgeousness, so as to "leave not a rack behind."

The ruin stands about one mile south of the village, and is part of an Augustine nunnery, built in the year 1228, by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and brother of Henry the Third. He was a vexatious thorn in the crown of Henry, whose long and confused reign, "were it not that for the first time it exhibits the elements of the English constitution in a state of disorderly fermentation, would scarcely deserve the consideration of the philosopher and the politician." [1] One of Richard's fraternal acts was placing himself at the head of a formidable confederacy, to which Henry was obliged to yield. The papal power was at this time at its greatest height; Richard had been elected King of the Romans, and from the spoil obtained by the monstrous exactions of his court, he may be presumed to have erected the above nunnery. Of this system of pious plunder we have many proud architectural memorials; though to rob with one hand, and found religious houses with the other, reminds one of the trade of a waterman—to look one way and row the other.

[1] Sir James Mackintosh.

The nunnery was richly endowed with several of the neighbouring manors; the remains are now used as the out-offices of an adjoining farm. Little can be traced of the "studious cloister," the "storied window," or the "high embowed roof;" but the ivy climbs with parasitic fondness over its gable, or thrusts its rootlets as holdfasts into its crumbling wall. The dates of these ruins claim the attention of the speculative antiquary. The chimney, though of great age, did not of course belong to the original building; the earliest introduction of chimneys into this country being stated, (but without proof,) to be in the year 1300. The upper window, and the arched doorway are in the early English style prevalent at the date of the foundation; the former has the elegant lancet-shape of the earliest specimens.

* * * * *



A DREAM OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

“Another scene where happiness is sought!
A festive chamber with its golden hues,
Its dream-like sounds, and languishing delights.”



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R. Montgomery.

I stood in the light of the festive hall,
Gorgeously wrought was its pictured wall;
And the strings of the lute replied in song,
To the heart-breathed lays of the vocal throng. Oh! rich were the odours that floated
there,
O'er the swan-like neck and the bosom fair;
And roses were mingled with sparkling pearls,
On the marble brow, and the cluster'd curls.

I stood in that hall, and my lips were mute,
And my spirit entranced with the elfin lute;
And the eyes that look'd on me seem'd fraught with love,
As the stars that make Night more divine above.

A sorrowful thought o'er my spirit came,
Like thunder-clouds kindling with gloom and flame;
For I knew that those forms in the dust would lie,
And no passionate lips to their songs reply. But the music recalled me, the hall glow'd
with light,
And burst like a vision of heaven on my sight;
"Oh! thus," I exclaimed, "will dark feelings depart,
When the sunshine of beauty descends on the heart!"

G.R. Carter.

* * * * *

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

It has been observed by an able and popular writer^[2] of the present day, that the following proposition, though very generally received, is far from being a true one: "Tragedy improves and exalts the nature of man, while Comedy has a tendency to lower it." Now I profess also to believe rather in the converse of this proposition, and shall endeavour in this essay to establish that belief in the minds of my readers, by the same line of argument that originally induced me to adopt it. With the generality of persons, who are not in the habit of reasoning upon subjects of this nature, this question would perhaps be decided, and the preference awarded to either species of the drama, according to the peculiar organization of each person: I mean, that those who are naturally grave, would be more gratified by being affected, and by having an appeal made to their feelings; while on the other hand, those who are of a freer temperament, and never dream of brooding over misfortune, would doubtless prefer being amused. If this remark carries any weight with it, egotism will be so far necessary to my argument,



that I may be excused for saying thus much:—I suspect myself to be classed, by nature, under the first of these divisions, and am the more entitled to a fair hearing, because I argue against feeling and natural inclination.

[2] Lord John Russell.

Perhaps I shall be able to lay more clearly before the reader, my reasoning on this interesting as well as important subject, by considering Tragedy and Comedy respectively, under three distinct heads:—1st. with respect to the particular sphere or province of each; 2ndly, their plot and characters; and 3rdly, the end or design in view.

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First, then, as to the province of Tragedy. Tragedy professes to be a representation of all the high passions that influence the mind, such as jealousy, hatred, or revenge; it can have nothing to do with vanity or any other of the petty passions, for a course of action dependent on them would appear as insignificant in Tragedy as the passions themselves. Now, what possible advantage, in the way of improvement, can be derived from witnessing a display of all the odious passions of our nature? Some benefit might indeed be derived, if a moral were attached to Tragedy, but it has no moral (at least very rarely) and for this simple reason: Tragedy professes to be a speaking picture of life,—and it is a melancholy but true reflection, that as in real life we see the deserving depressed, and the bad man flourishing in the world, so also it ought to be in Tragedy. Let us take *Macbeth* or *Richard the Third* as examples of this: we see here two men, by a succession of crime, arriving at the pinnacle of their ambition, and rewarded for giving way to their passions. There is little or no moral in the death of either, for every honest soldier in their armies was subjected to the same fate, and many of course met with it; so far from being disgraceful, falling in battle is regarded as an honourable end, and it is the death a brave man might wish to die. Secondly, let us consider the plot in Tragedy, and the characters it works with: the plot is rarely fictitious, but is generally built either on fact, or on some event that the antiquated errors of fable or history have made sacred; not having in this respect the advantage which Comedy possesses from liberty of invention, and correcting thereby the inequalities of life; and having also the additional fault of laying its scenes for the most part in a foreign country. The characters of Tragedy are always selected from high life; here is a great defect, for it is by no means a true observation, that men are inclined greatly to pity the misfortunes of their superiors; on the contrary, they are secretly rejoiced at seeing them fall from a situation so much above their own; whereas they sympathize more with their equals, and take a much greater interest in a course of events that is likely to occur to themselves. Thirdly, let us look to the end that Tragedy has in view. The main object in a tragic representation is to excite pity and terror in the spectators; in this definition I am amply borne out by authority, for not only Gibbon, Addison, and others, but Voltaire and even Aristotle, have used these very expressions; now how can we be benefited by the excitement of these feelings? Pity is at the best but a feminine virtue, and by giving way to it, the mind, if not enervated, is at any rate not strengthened; and with regard to terror, a man under its influence is incapable of any reflection whatever. When we witness, for instance, the tragedy of *Macbeth*, the mind, after such a scene of human villany is rather inclined to become morbid than to feel either dignified or improved.

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We will now turn to Comedy, which, in order to compare more satisfactorily with Tragedy, we will consider under the same view. First, then, the province of Comedy is with the follies and foibles of our nature; it is generally, and it ought always to be, a speaking picture of national faults, and should satirize the people of the country where it is represented, by which means a much greater scope is afforded for the improvement of the spectator. It is not so confined in its sphere as Tragedy is, for it may affect as well as amuse; there should be a proper mixture of gravity with mirth, and that succession of ridiculous and pathetic events with which the life of man is variegated. But the main superiority of Comedy consists in its having what Tragedy wants, a moral. It is true that the enlightened portion of the audience do not require this moral; no farther interested in the scene they witness than as being spectators of it, they sit by in silence, void of all passion, and learn in silence a lesson that speaks for itself, and will have its certain effect on their future lives; but the greater part of the audience, not being capable either of accurate reasoning or deep reflection, require to be told what is right, and to have its distinction from wrong pointed out to them; as in a fable, its point would be useless to most men without its concomitant moral. Secondly, the plot of Comedy (as I have said before) is for the most part fictitious, and refers to national manners, the advantages of both which peculiarities I have already had occasion to refer to; the characters also being selected from private as well as public life, from low as well as polite company, afford Comedy a far wider field to range in than Tragedy can boast. Comedy introduces us to the cottage as well as the palace, and displays the economy of one as well as the splendour of the other; and it can amuse us with the intrigues of a citizen's wife, as well as interest us with the passion of a princess. We see also in Comedy, as well as in the world itself, the despicable character of the rake, and the disgusting vanity of the coquette; we learn to distinguish between the different traits of character, and we soon find that those whose language is that of men of honour, often act like knaves. It is all this diversity that makes Comedy so pleasing as well as so instructive. Thirdly, the end that Comedy has in view, is to bring about improvement by exciting contempt and ridicule: by thus mixing ridicule with vice, we feel a positive enjoyment in seeing it exposed, and it is by this powerful engine that the manners of a people may be insensibly improved. A satirical exhibition will at all times explode vice better than serious argument; and it was from a conviction of this that the Lacedaemonians intoxicated their unhappy slaves in order that the children of the state, by seeing the despicable state to which drunkenness reduced a man, might learn a lesson that wanted no explanation.

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In short, I think a theatrical representation may cure our faults, but it can hardly subdue our more powerful vices; it may give a check to our follies, but it will never succeed in curbing our passions. When a man is under the sway of any particular passion, it is too firmly rooted in his disposition to be eradicated by sitting a few hours in the pit of a theatre; but with our petty foibles it is very different; ridicule can, and often does, cure them, when it can be brought into play against them; which, however, is not very often in real life, for a man is more inclined to resent an attack upon his faults than his vices, and would rather be thought the slave of his passions than be known to have given way to a single weakness.

There is another great difference between Tragedy and Comedy, and that is, with regard to diction: the language made use of by Comedy is natural and proper, while that of Tragedy is laboured and elevated; we meet not unfrequently with long declamation and sentences highly polished, whereas passion never speculates in this manner; the feelings of nature dictate the simplest language, and generally find a vent in broken sentences, as we find them in the Greek tragedians.

The unities of the drama are rules which are the result of good sense, and serve greatly to heighten the entertainment of the stage; they undoubtedly tend to keep up the necessary illusion that we are witnessing scenes in real life, and the more they are acted up to, the greater is the merit of the piece, and the more perfect the effect produced. Now, Comedy rarely breaks through these rules; for, from its nature, the events recorded are frequently comprised within the space of a day; and there is the same regard paid (as far as it is possible) to unity of place as well as time. Tragedy, at least modern Tragedy, (with the exception of *Cato* and one or two more) entirely disregards these rules, and we sometimes find the hero of the piece has grown ten years older within the short space between the acts, or else that he has travelled from one country to another in the same period of time. Thus, in *Julius Caesar*, Brutus, in one act is at Rome, and another in Thessaly. Again, in *Coriolanus*, now we find him expelled by the Romans, afterwards residing amongst the Volscians, and eventually marching an immense army to the gates of Rome; all within the space of two or three hours: this is a sad blow to any scenic illusion, and tends to weaken, if it does not entirely break, the thread of the imagination.

There is one point in which I consider both Tragedy and Comedy, in modern days, to be at fault, and that is in the constant introduction of love on our stage. We cannot frequent the theatre without being sickened by the repetition of some nauseous courtship and love-making, the particulars of which, even in real life, can be agreeable to none but the parties themselves. This blemish is said to have arisen during the earlier

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periods of the drama, from the vanity of the female sex; who, however much they were kept under control, and their opinions disregarded in ancient days, have amply made up for that restriction now, by taking matters of taste entirely under their direction. It is said, that when modern play-writing first came in fashion, the ladies refused to honour the theatre with their presence, unless their inclinations were more attended to, and love was made the burthen of the song. Accordingly, we find even the pure taste of Addison giving in to this demand, and the otherwise beautiful tragedy of *Cato* (for even the unities are preserved in it) is spoiled by two stupid love plots, that not only disfigure it, but throw a complete weariness over the whole. With the ancients it was very different, and amongst all those splendid Greek compositions which are regarded as models for the drama, we find none of them, with the exception of *Hippolitus*, in which there is any of this trifling with love affairs.

Before I close these observations, let me add, that in looking at this question, we must consent to throw off our national prejudices; and in drawing the comparison, not to regard English plays, whether tragic or comic, as the standards of perfection. English Comedy is not only considered inferior to that of most nations, but it is in many respects bad in its tendency, and may almost be looked upon as a school for vanity. To conclude, instead of regarding the drama as it is, I have rather endeavoured to consider it as it should be.

F.

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THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.

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REAL CHARACTER OF LOUIS XIV.

Concerning Louis the Fourteenth himself, the world seems at last to have formed a correct judgment. He was not a great general; he was not a great statesman; but he was, in one sense of the words, a great king. Never was there so consummate a master of what our James the First would have called king-craft,—of all those arts which most advantageously display the merits of a prince, and most completely hide his defects. Though his internal administration was bad,—though the military triumphs which gave splendour to the early part of his reign were not achieved by himself,—though his later years were crowded with defeats and humiliations,—though he was so ignorant that he scarcely understood the Latin of his mass-book,—though he fell under the control of a cunning Jesuit and of a more cunning old woman,—he succeeded in



passing himself off on his people as a being above humanity. And this is the more extraordinary, because he did not seclude himself from the public gaze like those Oriental despots whose faces are never seen, and whose very names it is a crime to pronounce lightly. It has been said that no man is a hero to his valet;—and all the world saw as much of Louis the Fourteenth

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as his valet could see. Five hundred people assembled to see him shave and put on his breeches in the morning. He then kneeled down at the side of his bed, and said his prayer, while the whole assembly awaited the end in solemn silence,—the ecclesiastics on their knees, and the laymen with their hats before their faces. He walked about his gardens with a train of two hundred courtiers at his heels. All Versailles came to see him dine and sup. He was put to bed at night in the midst of a crowd as great as that which had met to see him rise in the morning. He took his very emetics in state, and vomited majestically in the presence of all the *grandes* and *petites entrees*. Yet though he constantly exposed himself to the public gaze in situations in which it is scarcely possible for any man to preserve much personal dignity, he to the last impressed those who surrounded him with the deepest awe and reverence. The illusion which he produced on his worshippers can be compared only to those illusions to which lovers are proverbially subject during the season of courtship. It was an illusion which affected even the senses. The contemporaries of Louis thought him tall. Voltaire, who might have seen him, and who had lived with some of the most distinguished members of his court, speaks repeatedly of his majestic stature. Yet it is as certain as any fact can be, that he was rather below than above the middle size. He had, it seems, a way of holding himself, a way of walking, a way of swelling his chest and rearing his head, which deceived the eyes of the multitude. Eighty years after his death, the royal cemetery was violated by the revolutionists; his coffin was opened; his body was dragged out; and it appeared that the prince, whose majestic figure had been so long and loudly extolled, was in truth a little man.

His person and his government have had the same fate. He had the art of making both appear grand and august, in spite of the clearest evidence that both were below the ordinary standard. Death and time have exposed both the deceptions. The body of the great King has been measured more justly than it was measured by the courtiers who were afraid to look above his shoe-tie. His public character has been scrutinized by men free from the hopes and fears of Boileau and Moliere. In the grave, the most majestic of princes is only five feet eight. In history, the hero and the politician dwindles into a vain and feeble tyrant.—the slave of priests and women,—little in war, little in government,—little in every thing but the art of simulating greatness.



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He left to his infant successor a famished and miserable people, a beaten and humbled army, provinces turned into deserts by misgovernment and persecution, factions dividing the court, a schism raging in the church, an immense debt, an empty treasury, immeasurable palaces, an innumerable household, inestimable jewels and furniture. All the sap and nutriment of the state seemed to have been drawn to feed one bloated and unwholesome excrescence. The nation was withered. The court was morbidly flourishing. Yet it does not appear that the associations which attached the people to the monarchy, had lost strength during his reign. He had neglected or sacrificed their dearest interests; but he had struck their imaginations. The very things which ought to have made him most unpopular,—the prodigies of luxury and magnificence with which his person was surrounded, while, beyond the enclosure of his parks, nothing was to be seen but starvation and despair,—seemed to increase the respectful attachment which his subjects felt for him.—*Edinburgh Rev. (just published.)*

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THE GRAND SECRET OF SUCCESS IN LIFE.

For all men doubtless obstructions abound; spiritual growth must be hampered and stunted, and has to struggle through with difficulty, if it do not wholly stop. We may grant too that, for a mediocre character, the continual training and tutoring, from language-masters, dancing-masters, posture-masters of all sorts, hired and volunteer, which a high rank in any time and country assures, there will be produced a certain superiority, or at worst, air of superiority, over the corresponding mediocre character of low rank; thus we perceive, the vulgar Do-nothing, as contrasted with the vulgar Drudge, is in general a much prettier man; with a wider perhaps clearer outlook into the distance; in innumerable superficial matters, however it may be when we go deeper, he has a manifest advantage. But with the man of uncommon character, again, in whom a germ of irrepressible Force has been implanted, and *will* unfold itself into some sort of freedom,—altogether the reverse may hold. For such germs, too, there is, undoubtedly enough, a proper soil where they will grow best, and an improper one where they will grow worst. True also, where there is a will, there is a way; where a genius has been given, a possibility, a certainty of its growing is also given. Yet often it seems as if the injudicious gardening and manuring were worse than none at all; and killed what the inclemencies of blind chance would have spared. We find accordingly that few Fredericks or Napoleons, indeed none since the Great Alexander, who unfortunately drank himself to death too soon for proving what lay in him, were nursed up with an eye to their vocation; mostly with an eye quite the other way, in the midst of isolation and pain, destitution and contradiction.



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Nay, in our own times, have we not seen two men of genius, a Byron and a Burns: they both, by mandate of Nature, struggle and must struggle towards clear manhood, stormfully enough, for the space of six-and-thirty years; yet only the gifted ploughman can partially prevail therein; the gifted peer must toil, and strive, and shoot out in wild efforts, yet die at last in boyhood, with the promise of his manhood still but announcing itself in the distance. Truly, as was once written, "it is only the artichoke that will not grow except in gardens: the acorn is cast carelessly abroad into the wilderness, yet on the wild soil it nourishes itself, and rises to be an oak." All woodmen, moreover, will tell you that fat manure is the ruin of your oak; likewise that the thinner and wilder your soil, the tougher, more iron-textured is your timber,—though, unhappily, also the smaller. So too with the spirits of men: they become pure from their errors by suffering for them: he who has battled, were it only with poverty and hard toil, will be found stronger, more expert, than he who could stay at home from the battle, concealed among the provision-wagons, or even not unwatchfully "abiding by the stuff." In which sense, an observer, not without experience of our time, has said:—"Had I a man of clearly developed character (clear, sincere within its limits), of insight, courage, and real applicable force of head and of heart, to search for; and not a man of luxuriously distorted character, with haughtiness for courage, and for insight and applicable force, speculation and plausible show of force,—it were rather among the lower than among the higher classes that I should look for him."

A hard saying, indeed, seems this same; that he, whose other wants were all beforehand supplied; to whose capabilities no problem was presented except even this, How to cultivate them to best advantage, should attain less real culture than he whose first grand problem and obligation was nowise spiritual culture, but hard labour for his daily bread! Sad enough must the perversion be, where preparations of such magnitude issue in abortion: and a so sumptuous heart with all its appliances can accomplish nothing, not so much as necessitous nature would of herself have supplied! Nevertheless, so pregnant is life with evil as with good; to such height in an age rich, plethorically overgrown with means, can means be accumulated in the wrong place, and immeasurably aggravate wrong tendencies, instead of righting them, this sad and strange result may actually turn out to have been realized.—*Edinburgh Rev. (just published.)*

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SIR EGERTON BRYDGES.—THE LATE DUKE OF NORFOLK.

(From Clavering's Autobiography.)



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I saw Sir Egerton Brydges in the streets, was introduced to him, and recalled to his mind our rencontre at Mr. Carter's at Deal, thirty years ago. He walked feebly, was lame, and had been confined to his bed for many months the preceding winter. He was pale, apparently grief-worn, and had a most grave and melancholy countenance, and languid look; but now and then flashed, both with eyes and words. He amused himself with printing privately, and distributing among his friends a variety of fragments. He complained bitterly of some London agents, who had cheated him most enormously, and whom he was bringing before the Court of Chancery. His common acquaintance complained that he was too grave for them, and that he was deficient in wit and point. They said he was "all sober sadness," and that he had romantic views of life, and did not know the human character. I had not sufficient conversation with him to judge of this. He was intimate with d'Invernois, who spoke highly of him. He had certainly none of our Irish vivacity, and fulness of imagery. He was rather querulous and prolix, than piquant, and declaimed rather than said sharp things. I said to him, "Why do you not endeavour, in your writings, to accommodate yourself more to the public taste?" He answered, in despair, "I cannot—I have no turn that way. I know the value of the bon-mot, the sarcasm, and the epigram; but I have no ability that way." And it seemed true; he *had* no ability that way.

When the old lineal Duke of Norfolk died—I think it was in 1778—the pomp of that mighty house was much abased. His collateral successor, Mr. Howard, of Graystock, was a man of mean and intemperate habits, which were inherited by his son, the late duke, then known by the name of Lord Surry, and who made himself conspicuous as a Whig, and by electioneering contests and intrigues. With this last I was familiar, but soon saw that I could put no trust in him. I wrote many political squibs at his desire—not worth preserving; he was a man of a good deal of spleen, personal as well as political. Charles Fox flattered him, that he might have his aid to the party; but he did not love or respect him. He married an Irishwoman for his first wife. I think his mother's name was Brockholes. It was amusing to see him in contest with the late Lord Abingdon, whose power of speaking in the House (whatever mental eccentricities he might have) was so great, that many preferred his eloquence even to Lord Chatham's. The duke was never at rest: he always had some jobs in hand: by which he often put himself into pecuniary embarrassment. His face was very much like that of Cardinal Howard, Temp. Car. II., of whom there are so many engraved portraits. He prided himself upon a common dress, very much like that of a yeoman, or rather country schoolmaster. It was generally a grey coat, with black buttons, and black waistcoat. I once asked him to use his interest for a relation of mine; he readily promised—but



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never attempted to perform. He had a personal antipathy to Pitt and Lord Grenville; and one of the constant subjects of his jokes and raillery was the Grenville pedigree. A Mr. Dallaway, a clergyman, was his private secretary, as earl-marshal; with whom I once dined at the duke's table; a large, heavy-looking man, who, I was told, had written several books; but I presume he is deceased, as I have not seen his name announced for a long while.

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MADAME DE STAEL.

(From Lady Blessington's Conversations with Lord Byron.)

Talking of literary women, Lord Byron said that Madame de Stael was certainly the cleverest, though not the most agreeable woman he had ever known. "She declaimed to you instead of conversing with you," said he, "never pausing except to take breath; and if during that interval a rejoinder was put in, it was evident that she did not attend to it, as she resumed the thread of her discourse as though it had not been interrupted." This observation from Byron was amusing enough, as we had all made nearly the same observation on him, with the exception that he listened to, and noticed, any answer made to his reflections. "Madame de Stael," continued Byron, was very eloquent when her imagination warmed, (and a very little excited it;) her powers of imagination were much stronger than her reasoning ones, perhaps owing to their being much more frequently exercised; her language was recondite, but redundant, and though always flowery, and often brilliant there was an obscurity that left the impression that she did not perfectly understand what she endeavoured to render intelligible to others. She was always losing herself in philosophical disquisition, and once she got entangled in the mazes of the labyrinth of metaphysics; she had no clue by which she could guide her path—the imagination that led her into her difficulties, could not get her out of them; the want of a mathematical education, which might have served as a ballast to steady and help her into the port of reason, was always visible, and though she had great tact in concealing her defeat, and covering a retreat, a tolerable logician must have always discovered the scrapes she got into. Poor dear Madame de Stael, I shall never forget seeing her one day, at table with a large party, when the busk (I believe you ladies call it) of her corset forced its way through the top of the corset, and would not descend though pushed by all the force of both hands of the wearer, who became crimson from the operation. After fruitless efforts, she turned in despair to the valet de chambre behind her chair, and requested him to draw it out, which could only be done by his passing his hand from behind over her shoulder, and across her chest, when, with a desperate effort, he unsheathed the busk. Had you seen the faces of some of the English ladies of the party, you would have been like me, almost convulsed; while

Madame remained perfectly unconscious that she had committed any solecism on *la decence Anglaise*. Poor Madame de Stael verified the truth of the lines—



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“Qui de son sexe n’a pas l’esprit,
De son sexe a tout le malheur.”

She *thought* like a man, but, alas! she *felt* like a woman; as witness the episode in her life with Monsieur Rocca, which she dared not avow, (I mean her marriage with him,) because she was more jealous of her reputation as a writer than a woman, and the faiblesse de coeur, this alliance proved she had not courage to *affiche*.—*New Monthly Mag.*

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THE TOPOGRAPHER.

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REMARKABLE CAVES AT CRAVEN, IN YORKSHIRE.

The village of Malham is situated in a deep and verdant bottom, defective only in wood, at the union of two narrow valleys, respectively terminated at the distance of a mile by the Cove and Gordale. The first of these is an immense crag of limestone, 286 feet high, stretched in the shape of the segment of a large circle, across the whole valley, and forming a termination at once so august and tremendous, that the imagination can scarcely figure any form or scale of rock within the bounds of probability that shall go beyond it. The approach to this place, before the invention of machinery, was solitary and characteristic. It is now polluted by one of those manufactories, of which it would be trifling to complain as nuisances only in the eye of taste. Yet there are streams sufficiently copious, and valleys sufficiently deep, which man can neither mend nor spoil. These might be abandoned to such deformed monsters without regret; but who that has either taste or eyes can endure them, when combined with such scenery as the environs of Malham, or the Banks of the Wharf.

Coarse complexions
And cheeks of every grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the housewife’s wool;
What need a vermeil, tintured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, and tresses like the morn?

The approach to Gordale on the east side of the village, happily remains what nature left it, a stony and desolate valley, without a single object to divert the eye from the scene before it. This is a solid mass of limestone, of perhaps equal height with the Cove, cleft asunder by some great convulsion of nature, and opening its “ponderous and marble jaws” on the right and left. The sensation of horror on approaching it is increased by the projection of either side from its base, so that the two connivant rocks,



though considerably distant at the bottom, admit only a narrow line of daylight from above. At the very entrance you turn a little to the right, and are struck by a yawning mouth in the face of the opposite crag, whence the torrent pent up beyond, suddenly forced a passage, within the memory of man, which at every swell continues to spout out one of the boldest and most beautiful cataracts that can be conceived.



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Wherever a cleft in the rock, or a lodgment of earth appears, the yew-tree, indigenous in such situations, contrasts its deep and glossy green with the pale grey of the limestone; but the goat, the old adventurous inhabitant of situations, inaccessible to every other quadruped, has been lately banished from the sides of Gordale. But the wonders of this place are not confined to its surface. In mining for lapis calaminaris, two caverns have been discovered near the Tarn, which though of no easy access, will reward the enterprising visitant, not by the amplitude of their dimensions, in which they are exceeded by several in Craven, but by that rich and elaborate finishing which in the works of nature, as well as of art, is always required to give an interest to diminutive objects. The first of these resembles a small rotunda, not more than six yards in diameter, and five or six in height, but clothed with fleecy incrustations, from which depend stalactites of various depth, and tinged with various hue, from the faintest yellow to saffron. The lapidescent drops distilling from these through a long course of ages, have gradually raised the floor of the cavern, so as to render it difficult to pass between the edges of the new surface and the circumference of the cavern.

Beyond is a second excavation about fourteen yards long: ten in width, where broadest, and eight in height; proportions which an architect would have chosen. At the highest extremity of this appears a recess formed entirely of petrified matter, around which the irregular projections of native rock are covered with an incrustation white as snow; and in many parts appear stalactites suspended from point to point, like light festoons of ice, which, if struck, return all the notes of musical glasses. In the midst of this recess arises from a pedestal, clear almost as glass, an amber altar. Beneath, but still in the roof of the cavern, is another circular excavation resembling an immense helmet, which seems to be lined with rich satin, and is fringed with rows of yellow stalactite about the edges. Those who suffer their imaginations to wanton in the scenes of subterranean demonology, may here discover the cabinet of the "Swart Faery of the Mine," while the sober geologist will find matter of rational and curious speculation; he will detect nature herself at work on a process uniformly advancing; so that by piercing the perpendicular depth of the incrustation on the floor of the first cavern, and by comparing with accuracy the additional laminae, which in a few years will be superinduced, he may ascertain with tolerable exactness, the period which has elapsed since those mighty convulsions by which these caverns have been produced.—
Whitaker's History of Craven.

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SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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M. Chaptal

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[Illustration: M. Chaptal]

M. Chaptal, the celebrated chemist, born at Montpellier in 1755, died a few days since at Paris, in his 77th year. He studied medicine and natural philosophy when very young, and under promising patronage. Before the Revolution he published some valuable works, and formed two or three chemical establishments, and for his successful labours the King had given him the order of St Michael. When the Revolution began, M. Chaptal headed the insurgents at Montpellier, who took possession of the citadel in 1791.

The reputation of Chaptal as a chemist being well established, he was called to Paris in 1793, by the committee of public safety, to be consulted relative to the making of gunpowder and the production of saltpetre. It must be in the memory of all those who recollect the history of the first years of the French Revolution, that the want of saltpetre, the principal ingredient in gunpowder, had nearly put an end to the war; and as France had shut the ports of all nations against herself, no other resource remained but to produce the saltpetre at home. Before Chaptal was sent for, a manufactory, for this purpose, had been established at Grenelles, near Paris; but it was insufficient for the immense demand. Chaptal soon, by his skill and activity, so improved this establishment, that it supplied all that was wanted, and this at a time when France had about 1,400,000 soldiers.[3]

[3] The theory of this artificial formation of saltpetre is detailed by Chaptal, in *Annales de Chimie*, tom. xx.—The bulk of saltpetre used in this country is brought from the East Indies, where, at certain seasons of the year, it is found deposited on the surface of the soil. It is swept off once or twice a week, and as often renewed. At Apulia, near Naples, there is a bed containing 40 per cent. of it; and in Switzerland the farmers extract it in abundance from the earth under the stalls of the cattle. In the reign of Charles I. great attention was paid to the making of saltpetre in England. Certain patentees were authorized by royal proclamation to dig up the floors of all dove-houses, stables, &c. In France, the plaster of old walls is washed to separate the nitrate of lime, which is a soluble salt, and this, by means of potash, or muriate of potash, is afterwards converted into nitre. Mr. Bowles, in his *Introduction to the Natural History of Spain*, assures us there is enough saltpetre in that country to supply all Europe for ever.

Chaptal returned to Montpellier in 1794, and soon obtained a place in the administration of the department of Herault, and a professorship of chemistry in the university of Montpellier, which the Directory created expressly as a reward for his services. In 1798, Chaptal revisited Paris, and aided the Revolution by which, in 1799, Buonaparte became First Consul. In the following year Chaptal was made Minister of the Interior, in which important office he imparted new energy to all the manufacturing establishments of France, as well as founded many public schools upon improved systems of education. In 1804 he was dismissed from the Ministry for his refusing to sanction a report stating sugar from beet-root to be superior to that from the cane.[4]

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[4] This was twenty-eight years since. A writer in an English journal observed three years since, "it is difficult to conceive that one half of the sugar consumed in Great Britain, or in all Europe, will not, in a few years, be home-made beet-root sugar." In France the manufacture of sugar from beet-root, like that of saltpetre, was dictated by necessity, the former through the capture of the French colonies by Great Britain, during the late war. It is now an important manufacture in that country, as well as a branch of domestic economy, the sugar being made by housewives, and requiring not more skill or trouble than cheese-making or brewing.

Chaptal now retired from political life, and established a chemical manufactory in the neighbourhood of Paris; but he was soon after chosen a member of the Conservative Senate, and made grand officer of the Legion of Honour. In 1806, he was present at the placing of the trophied column in the Place Vendome, to commemorate the battle of Austerlitz. Chaptal was soon after made a Count, and received the grand cross of the Legion of Honour.

In 1813, when the Allies began to approach the French frontiers, Chaptal was dispatched to support the falling power of Napoleon; he failed to do so; and when the Austrians approached the capital, he retired to Clermont, but after the taking of Paris he hastened to the city. He was made a member of the Academy of Sciences upon its re-organization.

Upon the return of Napoleon from Elba, he named Chaptal director-general of manufactures and commerce, and immediately after minister of state, in which latter capacity he pronounced, in the name of all the ministers, a very flattering address to Napoleon. At the restoration of the Bourbons, Chaptal again retired into private life, and continued to enjoy the society of a large circle of literary and scientific friends till his death.

Upon the application of chemistry to the arts of life, Chaptal is considered to have been the most distinguished writer of his time. His works are, *Conspectus Physiologicus de Fontibus differentiarum relat. ad Scientias*, 1777; *Analytical Table of a Course of Chemistry delivered at Montpellier*, 1783; *Elements of Chemistry*; *Treatise on Saltpetre and Tar*; a *Table of the principal Earthy Salts and Substances*; an *Essay on perfecting the Chemical Art in France*; a *Theoretical and Practical Treatise on the Cultivation of the Vine*; the *Art of making Wines, &c.*; the *Art of Making, Managing, and Perfecting Wines*, a work which has been productive of great improvement in the wines of many districts in France; the *Art of Dyeing Cotton Red*; *Chemistry applied to the Arts*; the *Chemical Principles of the Arts of Dyeing and Scouring*. M. Chaptal has also furnished many excellent articles to the *Annals of Chemistry*, and the *Dictionary of Agriculture*. Among his miscellaneous productions, a paper on *Geological Changes* is entitled to special mention as one of the most beautiful compositions of its class.



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GOETHE

[Illustration: GOETHE]

John Wolfgang von Goethe was born at Frankfort, August 28, 1749, and died at Weimar, March 22, 1832, aged eighty-two years and seven months. He was a sickly child, and consequently participated but little in children's pastimes. Youth—melancholy, or early habits of reflection, and an independence on others for amusement or formation of opinions were thus generated, which, operating on his exquisite organization, contributed to make him the master-spirit of his age. Thus, in his autobiography and diary, it is highly instructive to mark the effect of the various circumstances in which he was placed, on his train of thought. Events, which on most children's minds "are only reflected as on looking-glasses but make no impression," produced an effect on him of which the influence was never effaced. The coronation of Joseph II. at Frankfort, the annual mass, and the noble old city itself, with its associations of feudalism and German art, are portrayed by him seventy years after the feelings they had excited, with all the vividness of yesterday's impressions. It is probable that no one ever possessed such acute sensibility as Goethe. He could "hang a thought on every thorn."

Goethe's father was a man of easy circumstances, and of some literary merit: he had a great love for the fine arts, and had made a small collection of objects of virtu in his travels through Italy. All this worked on the young poet, and at eight or nine years old he wrote a short description of twelve pictures, portraying the history of Joseph. At fifteen years of age he went to the university of Leipsic, where he studied law; he took the degree of doctor at Strasbourg. In 1768 he left Leipsic, and after a short tour settled for some time in Alsace, where the beautiful Gretchen won his heart, and obtained for herself in Faust and Egmont, a more lasting monument than brass. On leaving Alsace, he returned home; but soon left it again to practise in the Imperial Chamber at Wezlar. Here he witnessed the tragical event that gave rise to his romance of the Sorrows of Werter. In 1775, he went to Weimar, on an invitation from the Grand Duke, and remained there till the end of his life, loaded with all the honours a German sovereign could bestow, ennobled, a privy councillor, and for many years of his life prime minister; "a treatment of genius hitherto unknown in the annals of literature, or of Mecaenaship; and a splendid exception to the indifference with which rulers generally regard intellectual excellence."

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In 1786, Goethe travelled in Italy, from whence he went to Sicily, and then returned to Rome, where he gave himself ardently up to the study of antiquities. At the end of three years he returned to his own country, and settled at Weimar, which was then called the Athens of Germany. Here were at that time a number of celebrated men, at the head of whom were Goethe, Wieland, and Schiller. In this congenial society, Goethe resided till his death. A view of his house, with an account of an interview with the poet, about five years since, by Dr. Granville, will be found in *The Mirror*, vol. xviii. After the deaths of Wieland and Schiller, the reputation of Goethe greatly increased. To form some idea of the sort of worship that was paid to him in his own country, in his lifetime, it is only necessary to read the chapter of Madame de Stael's *Germany*, dedicated to that subject. The admirers of Goethe formed a sort of sect, a body amongst themselves, over whom, says Madame de Stael, the influence of Goethe was really incomprehensible. Among the honours paid to him by the illustrious men of Europe, must not be forgotten the tribute of Napoleon. When the Congress of Erfurt was held, Napoleon wished to see Goethe, with whom he conversed for some time, and at the close of the conversation he gave the poet the decoration of the Legion of Honour. In 1825, a splendid bronze medal was struck by order of the Grand Duke, and presented to Goethe, to commemorate the fiftieth year of the poet's residence at his court.

As Goethe wrote every sort of poem, from the simple ballad to the epic, and from a proverb to a tragedy, a mere list of his works would occupy some columns. His first appearance in print was in the annuals and literary journals. But his *Gotz of the Iron Hand*, published with his name in 1773, and his *Werther*, in the year after, called at once the attention of his country to the young master-mind. The influence of these two works on the literature of Germany was electric. Hosts of imitators sprung up among the fruitful fry of small authors, and flourished until Goethe himself, by his wit, his irony, and his eloquence, put an end to the sickly sentimentalism, which he had first called into action. *Gotz* and *Werther* alone survive the creations of which they formed the nuclei. Such a production as the first, indeed, at the age of twenty-three, at once placed Goethe at the head of his country's literature, a place which he preserved undisputed to the hour of his death.

We have referred to the multitudinous nature of the works of Goethe. Their variety was proportionate to their number. It has been well observed that "his mind never seems to have grown old, but to have presented a new phasis at each stage of his existence." Not satisfied by taking his rank amongst the first poets of his time, his ardent genius led him to study all the different branches of literature, physical science, natural history, and the fine arts. He alike delighted in the



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imaginative beauty of poetry, and the abstrusest problems in science—the romantic and the real—the creative fancy and unwearied research of a truly great mind. It is, however, a matter of regret that Goethe was no politician. The character of his mind would not lead the observer to expect this feature. “A chilling scepticism, as to the progressive improvement of man, runs through all his writings, and, of course, prevented all attempts to make human institutions more productive of human happiness.” Nevertheless, it may be urged, that social amelioration may be effected by other means than by direct problems of political economy, unfashionable as the doctrine may sound. Chateaubriand has eloquently written “there is nothing beautiful, sweet, or grand in life, but in its mysteries.” Goethe probably entertained a kindred sentiment. Thus, the calculator may reckon him “behind the age,” or his favourite views of human improvement.

Goethe remained single till his fifty-eighth year, when he married his housekeeper, by whom he had a family. His affection for his son, who died about two years since, was unbounded. After his death, Goethe was but the shadow of that which he once had been. To his daughter-in-law he was indebted for that tenderness and assiduity which soothed his declining years. When upwards of eighty years of age, he meditated literary projects with the vigour and enthusiasm of youthful genius. Indeed, his constitution was unimpaired, and seemed to promise some years of life: his death therefore excited at Weimar, a feeling of surprise as well as sorrow.

The last moments of Goethe were those of an unbroken mind—a bright light waning and glimmering out. He had not the slightest presentiment of his death. About a week before, he caught cold, which brought on a catarrh. It was thought that his powerful constitution was unattacked. He conversed with great serenity, particularly upon his theory of colours, which so powerfully occupied his mind to the last moment of his existence. On the evening of March 21, he explained to his daughter the conditions of the peace of Basle; desired that the children should be taken to the theatre; and said that he was much better; he requested that Salvandy's *Sixteen Months* might be handed to him, although his physician had forbidden him all laborious occupation; but the doctor having gone out for a few moments, he ordered lights to be brought, and attempted to read. Not being able to do so, he held the book for some moments before him, and then said, “Well, let us do at least as the Mandarins do:” he fell asleep, and his slumbers appeared light and refreshing. Next day he conversed cheerfully with his daughter, his grandchildren, and some friends. “At seven o'clock he desired his daughter to bring him a portfolio, to enable him to illustrate some phenomena of colouring, and he began with his right hand to trace some characters in the air. Towards ten o'clock he ceased almost entirely



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to speak, held firmly between his own the hand of his daughter who was by his side, and turned his eyes, already half-closed, towards her with an expression of tenderness: with her other hand she supported his head on a pillow until he breathed his last, without convulsion or suffering." [5] His daughter closed the fine eyes of the poet, and summoning her children to behold their grandfather for the last time, she rushed from the chamber of death, and gave vent to a flood of grief. Another account states that Goethe growing weaker and weaker, his hand dropped on his knee, where it still moved as if in the act of writing, till the angel of death summoned him.

[5] Monthly Magazine, July.

The remains of the poet, after lying in state in the hall of his mansion for five hours, were deposited, on March 26, in the grand ducal family vault at Weimar near to those of Schiller. On the same day, the theatre which had been closed from respect to his memory, was opened with the representation of his Tasso. An epilogue was composed for the occasion by Chancellor Muller, the intimate friend of Goethe. Its last stanza produced a profound impression upon the audience:—"The spot where great men have exercised their genius remains for ever sacred. The waves of time silently efface the hours of life; but not the great works which they have seen produced. What the power of genius has created, is rarified like the air of the Heavens,—its apparition is fugitive, —its works are eternal."

Goethe has left several MSS. for publication. Among them is a volume of his early life in Weimar, a volume of poems, the second part of "Faust," interesting letters, &c.

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NOTES OF A READER.

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BEAR-HUNTING IN CANADA.

(From a *Backwoodsman's Sketches*. [6])

[6] Published by Murray, Albemarle Street. (*To a Correspondent, J.F., Lambeth Terrace.*)

When a bear runs away with one of your pigs, there is no use in going after him, hallooing, without a gun. You may scare him away from the mutilated carcass, but it will make but indifferent pork; since not being bred in Leadenhall or Whitechapel, he has but a slovenly way of slaughtering. But trace to where he has dragged it, and near sunset



let self and friend hide themselves within easy distance, and he will be certain to come for his supper, which, like all sensible animals, he prefers to every other meal. Nay, it is highly probable, if he possesses the gallantry which a well-bred bear ought to have, he will bring Mrs. Bruin and all the children along with him, and you can transact business with the whole family at once. In hunting the bear, take all the curs in the village along with you. Game dogs are useless for this purpose; for, unless properly trained, they fly at the throat, and get torn to pieces



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or hugged to death for their pains. The curs yelp after him, bite his rump, and make him tree, where he can be shot. The bear of Canada is seldom dangerous. He is always ready to enter into a treaty, similar to what my Lord Brougham negotiated lately with Lord Londonderry, viz. let-be for let-be—but if wounded, he is dangerous in the extreme. You should always, therefore, hunt him in couples, and have a shot in reserve, or a goodly cudgel, ready to apply to the root of his nose, where he is as vulnerable as Achilles was in the heel. Some ludicrous stories are told of bear-hunting; for Bruin is rather a humorist in his way. A friend of mine, with his surveying party, ten men in all, once treed a very large one; they immediately cut clubs, and set to work to fell the tree. Bruin seemed inclined to maintain his position, till the tree began to lean, when he slid down to about fifteen feet from the ground, and then clasped his fore-paws over his head and let himself tumble amongst them. Every club was raised, but Bruin was on the alert; he made a charge, upset the man immediately in front, and escaped with two or three thumps on the rump, which he valued not one pin. When once they have killed a pig, if you do not manage to kill the bear, you will never keep one hog; for they will come back till they have taken the last of them;—they will even invade the sacred precincts of the hog-sty. An Irishman in the Newcastle district once caught a bear *flagrante delicto*, dragging a hog over the walls of the pew. Pat, instead of assailing the bear, thought only of securing his property; so he jumped into the sty, and seized the pig by the tail. Bruin having hold of the ears, they had a dead pull for possession, till the whillilooing of Pat, joined to the plaintive notes of his *protege*, brought a neighbour to his assistance, who decided the contest in Pat's favour by knocking the assailant on the head.—A worthy friend of mine, of the legal profession, and now high in office in the colony, once, when a young man, lost his way in the woods, and seeing a high stump, clambered up it with the hope of looking around him. While standing on the top of it for this purpose, his foot slipped, and he was precipitated into the hollow of the tree, beyond the power of extricating himself. Whilst bemoaning here his hard fate, and seeing no prospect before him, save that of a lingering death by starvation, the light above his head was suddenly excluded, and his view of the sky, his only prospect, shut out by the intervention of a dense medium, and by and by he felt the hairy posteriors of a bear descend upon him. With the courage of despair he seized fast hold of Bruin behind, and by this means was dragged once more into upper day. Nothing, surely, but the instinct of consanguinity could have induced Bruin thus to extricate his distressed brother.

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THE CHOLERA IN INDIA.



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Captain Skinner, in one of his Excursions, says arriving at the village of Lugrassa, I thought there was an appearance of desolation about it. I saw no people within the village, and observed merely a few stragglers about the fields. Four or five men had died during the last week, and some before: such mortality would depopulate a mountain city in a month. Nothing can be more melancholy than a pestilence among these fragments of humanity: cut off from their fellow-mountaineers by high ridges, these isolated little communities are left to perish unknown and unmourned.

I have learned from some natives, who have lately been at Badri Nath, that that neighbourhood also has been ravaged by the cholera morbus. They cannot check the disease: it seizes them in all situations—in their houses—in the fields; and in a very few hours they are its victims. As the most hardy fall first, the infants, deprived of their protectors, should they escape the infection, must die of starvation. The cattle are abandoned, the crops neglected, and every traveller shuns the “city of the plague:” and even that precaution is no security. Pilgrims die in agony on the road: to enter one of these little vales is indeed to enter “the valley of the shadow of death.”—The inhabitants resign themselves to their destiny: the same fate would await them in a neighbouring village, perhaps, should they seek refuge there. They cling to their homes to the last gasp; and the survivor of a once happy people, where all were gay but a few days before, has to steal to his grave unnoticed, or roam elsewhere for human intercourse. Could the vision of “the Last Man” be ever realized, it would be in the highest habitations of the Himalaya mountains; for there many a little world is left for its last man to mourn over!

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NEW BOOKS

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CHARLEMAGNE.

[The appearance of a *Life of Charlemagne* in these days of cobweb literature may probably be regarded as a phenomenon by booksellers. Whatever their feelings may be upon the matter, we are inclined to regard it as a valuable contribution to our substantial literature. The author, Mr. G.P.R. James has hitherto produced no work that can at all compete with the present in our esteem. He has shown his aptitude for research in three or four semi-historical novels, which will be forgotten, while his *Life of Charlemagne* will be allowed place with our standard historians. He has wisely left the novel to the titled folks of the Burlington-street press, and betaken himself to better studies, that will not only gain him a name, but maintain him a proud distinction, in the literature of his country. We trust the public—for, in these days, every man is a Mecaenas—will reward his industry and talent, and thus encourage him to proceed in



his design—to illustrate the History of France by the Lives of her Great Men; each volume, though forming a distinct work, being connected with that which preceded it, by a view of the intervening period. The portion before us has our most cordial approbation and recommendation.



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Of Charlemagne, the greatest man of the middle ages, no accurate life had ever been written. Mr. James tells us that, in his work, he believes he has corrected some of the errors to be found in former statements, and has added a few facts to the information which the world before possessed upon the subject. The Life is preceded by an Historical Introduction, from A.D. 476, to A.D. 749, recounting the state of Gaul from a little previous to the final overthrow of the Roman Empire, to the birth of Charlemagne.

The precise birthplace of Charlemagne is unknown;^[7] neither have any records come down to us of his education, nor any particulars of those early years which are generally ornamented by the imagination of after biographers, even when the subject of their writing has left his infancy in obscurity. The year of his birth, however, seems to have been A.D. 742, about seven years before his father, Pepin, the Brief, assumed the name of king. The first act of Charlemagne—a task which combined both dignity and beneficence—was to meet, as deputy for his father, the chief of the Roman Church, and to conduct him with honour to his father's presence. Charlemagne was then scarcely twelve years of age. This is the first occasion on which we find the great man mentioned in history; “but,” observes Mr. James, “the children of the Franks were trained in their very early years to robust and warlike exercises; and there is every reason to believe that great precocity, both of bodily and mental powers, fitted the prince for the office which was intrusted to him by his father.”

[7] The Monk of St. Gall implies that Aix la Chapelle was the birthplace of Charlemagne. Lib. i. c. 30.

Our admiration of the style in which Mr. James has executed his task almost tempts us to travel with the reader, page by page, through the volume. Our time will not allow this task; though we must be less chary of praise than of our space. The great events are told with elegant simplicity; the language is neither overloaded with ornament, nor made to abound with well-rounded terms, at the sacrifice of perspicuity and truth; but there is throughout the work an air of impartiality and patient investigation which should uniformly characterize historical narrative. We make a few selections from various parts of the volume towards what may be termed a personal portrait of the illustrious emperor:]

Above^[8] the ordinary height of man, Charlemagne was a giant in his stature as in his mind; but the graceful and easy proportion of all his limbs spoke the combination of wonderful activity with immense strength, and pleased while it astonished. His countenance was as striking as his figure; and his broad, high forehead, his keen and flashing eye, and bland, unwrinkled brow, offered a bright picture, wherein the spirit of physiognomy, natural to all men, might trace the expression of a powerful intellect and a benevolent heart.



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[8] Eginhard, in Vit. Car. Mag. cap. xxii. Marquhard Freher, de Statura, Car. Mag. The dissertation of Marquhard Freher on the height of Charlemagne, (and on the question whether he wore a beard or not,) does not satisfy me as to his precise stature. Eginhard declares that he was in height seven times the length of his own foot, which we have every reason to believe was not very small, at least if he bore any resemblance to his mother, who was known by the name of "Bertha with the long foot."

Gifted with a frame, the corporeal energies of which required little or no relaxation, and which, consequently, never clogged and hampered his intellect by fatigue, Charlemagne could devote an immense portion of his time to business, and, without taking more than a very small portion of sleep, could dedicate the clear thoughts of an untired mind to the regulation of his kingdom, even while other men were buried in repose. He was accustomed, we are told, to wake spontaneously, and rise from his bed four or five times in the course of each night; and so great was his economy of moments, that the brief space he employed in putting on the simple garments with which he was usually clothed, was also occupied in hearing the reports of his Count of the Palace, or the pleadings of various causes, which he decided at those times with as much clear wisdom as if listening to them on the judgment seat.

Some lighter exercise of the mind was nevertheless necessary even to him; but this was principally taken during his repasts, when he caused various works to be read to him, which did not require the severe attention that he was obliged to bestow on judicial investigations. The subject of these readings was, in general, the history of past times, and works, upon theology, amongst which the writings of St. Augustin are said to have afforded him the greatest pleasure.

By the constant employment of moments which would otherwise have been wasted to the intellect, an extraordinary mass of business was easily swept away; and, at the end of the very year in which he returned from Italy, a number of acts, diplomas, charters, letters, judgments, and affairs of all kinds, can be traced to Charlemagne himself, the despatch of which, together with all those that must have escaped research, would be utterly inconceivable, were we ignorant of what were the habits of that great and singular man.

The war dress of Charlemagne himself was wholly composed of steel, consisting of the casque, breast, and back plates, together with greaves, gauntlets, and cuissards, formed likewise of iron plates. Nor were inferior warriors less cumbrously defended; for though the arms of the earlier Franks were light, in comparison with this heavy panoply, yet we find that, in the days of Charlemagne, each man in the army, whose means permitted it, was protected by a suit of armour similar to that of the monarch.

[Mr. James's summary of the character of Charlemagne is a delightful piece of writing:]



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The character of Charlemagne can alone be appreciated by comparing it with the barbarism of the times from which he emerged; nor do his virtues or his talents acquire any fictitious grandeur from opposition with objects around; for, though "the ruins of Palmyra derive a casual splendour from the nakedness of the surrounding desert,"[9] his excellence lay not alone in adorning, but in cultivating the waste. His military successes were prepared by the wars and victories both of Pepin and Charles Martel; but one proof of the vast comprehensiveness of his mind, is to be found in the immense undertakings which he accomplished with the same means which two great monarchs had employed on very inferior enterprises. The dazzling rapidity with which each individual expedition was executed, was perhaps less wonderful, than the clear precision with which each was designed, and the continuous, persevering, unconquerable determination wherewith each general plan was pursued to its close. The materials for his wars,—the brave, the active, and the hardy soldiers,—had been formed by his father and by nature; but when those troops were to be led through desert and unknown countries, into which Pepin had never dreamed of penetrating, and in an age when geography was hardly known—when they were to be supplied at a distance from all their resources, in a land where roads were unheard of, and provisions too scanty for the inhabitants themselves—the success was attributable to Charlemagne, and the honour is his due. His predecessors had contented themselves with leading an army at once against the point they intended to assail, or against the host they proposed to combat; but Charlemagne was the first in modern Europe who introduced the great improvement in the art of war, of pouring large bodies of men, by different roads, into the hostile country; of teaching them to co-operate, though separate, to concentrate when required; and of combining their efforts and their movements for a general purpose on a preconcerted plan.

[9] Gibbon makes this observation in depreciation of the character of Charlemagne, forgetting or concealing that the great beauty of the French monarch's character appeared not from a contrast with surrounding barbarism, but from his efforts to do away that barbarism itself.

His great success in civilization was all his own. Nothing had been done by those who went before—scarcely a germ—scarcely a seed had been left him. He took possession of a kingdom torn by factions, surrounded by enemies, desolated by long wars, disorganized by intestine strife, and as profoundly ignorant as the absence of all letters could make it. By the continual and indefatigable exertion of mental and corporeal powers, such as probably were never united but in himself, he restored order and harmony, brought back internal tranquillity, secured individual safety, raised up sciences and arts; and so convinced a barbarous nation of the excellence of his own ameliorating spirit, that on their consent and approbation he founded all his efforts, and sought no support in his mighty undertaking, but the love and confidence of his people.



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He was ambitious, it is true; but his ambition was of the noblest kind. He was generous, magnanimous, liberal, humane, and brave; but he was frugal, simple, moderate, just, and prudent. Though easily appeased in his enmities, his friendships were deep and permanent; and, though hasty and severe to avenge his friends, he was merciful and placable, when personally injured.

In mind, he was blessed with all those happy facilities, which were necessary to success in the great enterprizes which he undertook. His eloquence^[10] was strong, abundant, and clear; and a great talent for acquiring foreign tongues added to his powers of expression. The same quickness of comprehension rendered every other study light, though undertaken in the midst of a thousand varied occupations, and at an age to which great capabilities of acquisition are not in general extended.

[10] He is described by Eginhard as “apice capitis rotundo,” which roundness or fullness of the top of the head must have been very peculiar to have deserved such especial mention.

His person was handsome and striking. His countenance was fine, open, and bland, his features high, and his eyes large and sparkling. His figure was remarkable for its fine proportions; and though somewhat inclined to obesity in his latter years, we are told that, whether sitting or standing, there was always something in his appearance which breathed of dignity, and inspired respect.

He was sober and abstemious in his food, and simple to an extreme in his garments. Passionately fond of robust exercises, they formed his great relaxation and amusement; but he never neglected the business of the public for his private pleasure, nor yielded one moment to repose or enjoyment which could be more profitably employed. His activity, his quickness, and his indefatigable energy in conducting the affairs of state, having already been spoken of at large, it only remains to be said, that in private life he was gentle, cheerful, affectionate, and kind; and that—with his dignity guarded by virtues, talents, and mighty renown—he frequently laid aside the pomp of empire, and the sternness of command.

No man, perhaps, that ever lived, combined in so high a degree those qualities which rule men and direct events, with those which endear the possessor and attach his contemporaries. No man was ever more trusted and loved by his people, more respected and feared by other kings, more esteemed in his lifetime, or more regretted at his death.

[The illustrations to this volume, though few, are of the highest character. The frontispiece portrait has been procured by a friend, for Mr. James, from the original illumination in the monastery of Saint Calisto, in Rome. We recommend it to the manufacturers of school books, wherein, if our memory serve us, the great man of the middle ages is very inaccurately represented; though we could write a few pages upon

the foolish errors, which, for want of a little care, are perpetuated in “books for the instruction of youth.”]



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SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY

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THE CASHMERE SHAWL GOAT

Has been successfully introduced into England by C.T. Tower, Esq., of Weald Hall, Essex; and as that gentleman, by this time, must have some of his flock to dispose off, we think their introduction among cottagers, for their wool and also for their milk, a fair subject for some of our female readers to speculate on. This variety of the common goat (or, probably, it may be a distinct species) is a fine-looking animal, and would be very ornamental in a park, on a ruin, on the side of a rock, or in a churchyard. It would also be very pleasant to have a home-made Cashmere shawl. We shall, therefore, give all the information we can on the subject, from Mr. Tower's account, as published in the last volume (xlvi.) of the *Transactions of the Society of Arts*. The Cashmere goat was brought from Persia to France during the time of Napoleon, and under his patronage, by the celebrated M. Terneaux. In 1823, Mr. Tower, happening at that time to be in Paris, purchased four of them, two males and two females, and succeeded in conveying them safely to his residence in Essex. The soil of the park at Weald Hall, where they have been kept ever since, is moist, and the situation is much exposed. The animals have, nevertheless, continued in health, and multiplied rapidly; so that his present flock consists of twenty-seven, including the four original ones. Of these latter, a polled female, which was old when purchased by him has every year produced at least one kid, and has twice had twins. Those individuals of which the horns cross are in Persia esteemed the best; and one of Mr. Tower's last year's kids has this peculiarity. They show no impatience of cold, and are very healthy; requiring only the occasional shelter of a shed in very rough weather. In spring, summer, and autumn, they graze like sheep; and, during winter, have been fed with hay, and refuse vegetables from the garden; but their favourite food is gorse (*U'lex europae'a*), which they devour eagerly, without being annoyed by its prickles. They damage young plantations, but not more than other goats or deer will do. They breed very early: three of Mr. Tower's goats this year produced kids before they were themselves a twelvemonth old. A few produce brown wool; but that of far the greater proportion of the goats is white, and this latter is more valuable than the other. The coat is a mixture of long, coarse hair and of short fine wool: this latter begins to be loose early in April; and is collected, easily and expeditiously, by combing the animals two or three times with such a comb as is used for horses' manes. A good deal of the long hair comes off at the same time, but the manufacturer has found no difficulty in separating it. The produce of a male is about 4 oz., and



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of a female 2 oz.: 2 lbs. of wool, as it comes off the goat's back, may be estimated to make one shawl 54 in. square. It will, therefore, require ten goats, male and female, to furnish materials for one shawl. Mr. Tower has this year had three shawls made of his wool, one of which was examined by the committee of manufacturers, The yarn was spun by Messrs. Pease of Darlington and was woven by Messrs. Miller and Sons of Paisley. Mr. Tower's shawl was compared with one made in Scotland, of French shawl-goat wool, to which it was evidently far superior. It was also compared with a shawl of M. Terneaux's own make; and was considered by very competent judges to be superior to this also. (*Trans. Soc. Arts.*)

Mr. Tower's goats were visited by Mr. Riley this present summer, and he declares them to be the most interesting specimens of the pure breed he has ever seen. The flock, consisting, in 1823, of two bucks and two does, now (1832) consists of 51 animals. Mr. Riley found them "grazing promiscuously with other stock in the park, and appearing extremely docile. The climate of England renders it necessary that, at night, they should be protected in sheds; and, in winter, fed with hay," &c. "The down was at this time taking from them by a girl, with a common horse-comb; and, on comparing it with some specimens I had procured in France, received through Russia, I found not the slightest degeneration: but, on the contrary, from its very clean state, and the small proportion of hair, I should say, it would realize in Paris a much higher price than any I had seen. Mr. Tower has had some shawls made from the produce of his flock, one of which he presented to his late Majesty. It was greatly admired, and considered to rival those of Cachemire. Mr. Tower states that his flock produces an average of 2 1/3 oz. of down annually from each animal."—*Gardeners' Magazine*.

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THE GATHERER.

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Lines on finding a withered Primrose just before the opening of spring.

The primrose has gone ere the Summer's bright beam
Had enlivened the glade, or illumin'd the stream;
It died ere a bud of the forest was seen,
Or Spring had appeared in her tresses of green.

It bloom'd in simplicity's meekest of form,
The spoil of the winds and the gust of the storm;



Like the offspring of want on a pitiless shore,
No hand to upraise it—no heart to deplore!

It knew not the fostering smiles of a friend,
Or the dew-drops of pity on sorrow that 'tend;
In its solitude drooping, like one in despair,
It shrunk 'neath the blast of the wintry air.

In the wildness of nature unnoticed it grew,
No solace or warmth from companions it drew;
Forsaken—unpitied—unwept for—unknown,
Like a child of the desert, it perished alone.



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Robespierre.—Mademoiselle Gabarcos, the daughter of a Spanish banker, and one of the finest women of her time, married Talien, to save the life of her father. At the epoch of the 8th Fructidor, some deputies who had been placed on the proscription list by Robespierre, wished to delay the attack upon him in the Convention. Madame Talien, who had brought them together in her house, finding that they hesitated, addressed them in the following terms:—“Cowards, since you will not deliver France of this monster, you shall not live to see the destruction of your country, for I will immediately send him your names.” This bold declaration electrified them. Next day Robespierre ceased to exist.

W.G.C.

Who are “the uneducated?”—What is meant by *uneducated*, in a time when books have come into the world; come to be household furniture in every habitation of the civilized world. In the poorest cottage are books; is one book, wherein for several thousands of years the spirit of man has found light, and nourishment, and an interpreting response to whatever is deepest in him; wherein still, to this day, for the eye that will look well, the Mystery of Existence reflects itself, if not resolved, yet revealed, and prophetically emblemed; if not to the satisfying of the outward sense, yet to the opening of the inward sense, which is the far grander result. “In books lie the creative Phoenix’ ashes of the whole Past.” All that men have devised, discovered, done, felt, or imagined, lies recorded in books; wherein whoso has learned the mystery of spelling printed letters, may find it, and appropriate it.—*Edinburgh Review.*

A veteran dramatist now alive, distinguished for the oddness of his humour, being required to state his grounds of exemption from serving in the militia, actually wrote on the official paper, “Old, lame, and a coward!”

T. GILL.

Cogent Reasons.—Dr. Arbuthnot first began his practice at Dorchester, a situation where the air is salubrious, and the environs beautiful; but he staid no length of time there. A neighbour met him galloping to London, and asked him why he went thither? “To leave your confounded place, where I can neither live nor die.”

T. GILL.

The Foot.—Man is the only animal, in which the whole surface of the foot rests on the ground; and this circumstance arises from the erect stature which belongs exclusively to him.

The Brain.—The cavity containing the brain of a crocodile measuring thirteen or fourteen feet, will hardly admit the thumb; and the brain of the chamelion is not, according to the description of the Paris dissectors, larger than a pea.



The Tongue does not appear to be an indispensable organ of taste. Blumenbach saw an adult, and, in other respects, a well-formed man, who was born without a tongue. He could distinguish, nevertheless, very easily the tastes of solutions of salt, sugar, and aloes, rubbed on his palate, and would express the taste of each in writing.

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Vulgar Error.—In Mr. Crabb's Dictionary of General Knowledge, article, *Pelican*, we find it stated that the bird "has a peculiar tenderness for its young, and has been supposed to draw blood from its breast for their support." We thought this error had long since been expunged from natural history, and lament to find it credulously quoted in a book of the year 1830.

Eyes.—Large animals have small eye-balls in proportion to their size: this is very remarkably the case with the whales, as might be seen in the skeleton of the gigantic whale lately exhibited in London. Those animals which are much under ground have the globe of the eye also very small, as the mole and shrew: in the former of these instances its existence was long altogether denied, and it is not, in fact, larger than a pin's head.

Teeth.—The numerous teeth of crocodiles have this peculiarity of structure, that in order to facilitate their change, there are always two, (or sometimes three,) of which one is contained within the other.

Bills of Birds.—Of all bills the most extraordinary is that of the cross-bill, in which the two mandibles cross each other at a considerable angle, for this formation seems to be directly opposed to the natural purposes of a bill. The bird, however, contrives to pick out the seeds from the cones of the fir, and it is limited to that species of nourishment.

Barbel.—Captain Heaviside, of Egham Hythe, while fishing for Roach with No. 10 hook, in the deeps at Staines Bridge, a few days ago, hooked and landed a barbel; after playing him for one hour and three quarters, during which time he could not get a sight of him. The weight of this fine fish was exactly 11 lbs. 2 ozs.; he measured 2 feet 10 inches in length, and 1 foot 4 inches in girth.

C.H.

Impromptu on seeing the Monuments in St. Paul's Cathedral covered with scrawled names.

Oh! for a curse upon his head
Who dares insult the noble dead,
And basely scrawl his worthless name
Upon the records of their fame!
Nelson, arise! thy country gave
A heartfelt tear, a hallow'd grave:
Her eyes are dry, her recreant sons
Dare to profane thy mould'ring bones!
And you, ye heroes of the past,
Who serv'd your country to the last,
And bought her freedom with your blood,



Cornwallis, Duncan, Collingwood!
Rise, if ye can, and mark the wretch
Who dares his impious arm to stretch
And scrawl upon the graves of those
Who gave him freedom and repose!
And can no rev'rence for the dead
Ye heartless crew, no sense of dread
To place your names on aught so high
As e'en the tombs where heroes lie,
Force you with horror to recede
From such a sacrilegious deed?
Go, spread it to the winds of heaven,
That they, who to our isle have giv'n
Their blood, their services, their breath,
Sleep in dishonoured graves in Death.



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REX.

Eccentric Physician.—When Bailly, (physician to Henry IV. of France,) perceived he was about to die, he called his servants to him singly, and gave to each of them a portion, first of his money, then of his plate and furniture, bidding them, as soon as they had taken what he had given them, to leave the house, and see him no more. When the physicians came to visit him, they told him they had found his door open, the servants and the furniture removed and gone, nothing in fact remaining, but the bed on which he lay. Then the doctor, taking leave of his physicians, said, “Since my baggage is packed up and gone, it is time that I should also go.” He died the same day, November 5th, 1605.

P.T.W.

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