

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction eBook

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VOL. XIX.

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1832.

* * * * *

Preface.

Here we are with our Nineteenth Volume complete. We do not carry it to Court to gain patronage, neither do we preface it with a costly dedication to a purse-proud patron; but we present it at the levee of the people, as a production in which the information and amusement of one and all are equally kept in view. We know that instances have occurred of authors tiring out their patrons. A pleasant story is told of Spencer, who sent the manuscript of his *Faery Queen* to the Earl of Southampton, the Mecaenas of those days; when the earl reading a few pages, ordered the poet to be paid twenty pounds; reading further, another twenty pounds; and proceeding still, twenty pounds more; till losing all patience, his lordship cried, "Go turn that fellow out of the house, for if I read on I shall be ruined." We have no fear this will be our fate; especially as we strive to effect all that can be accomplished in our economical form to follow as well as direct the public taste.

Experience has taught us in the conduct of nineteen volumes of this Miscellany, that the most effectual method of conveying instruction, or aiding the progress of knowledge, is by combining it with amusement; or, in other words by at once aiming at the head and heart. The world is already too full of precept upon precept; and a smattering of principles is too often found in the place of practice. How can this order of things be improved but by setting forth duties as innocent pleasures, sweetening utility with entertainment, and garnishing fact with fancy. A man need not study Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* to become rich, nor seek the glories of nature in artificial Systems. But the contrary notion has probably given rise to the observation, that, "what the present generation have gained in head, they have lost in heart." It should not, however, be so, with the abundance of materials we have for social improvement.

We hope the reader has recognised the influence of these feelings in the many illustrations of men, manners, and times, which it has ever been our object to garner into the pages of *the mirror*. Hence the traits of domestic life in all ages, and the tales and traditions of the family hearth, when pointed with a moral, receive our special attention. In this department, as well as in the playful fancies of poetry, in embellishing the softer sympathies of nature,—we have been materially aided by our Correspondents; to all of whom we proffer our best thanks.

In the present volume, the Public Journals of the day have not been disregarded; while sterling literature, of the *utile cum dulce* character, has been studied; and new books have been consulted, not so much for the purpose of exposing their defects, as exhibiting their perfections. Art has contributed its novelties; and the progress of Natural Science has developed many new beauties appreciable by every reader.

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The *engravings* are somewhat more numerous than usual; in all numbering sixty-three; and they are accompanied by illustrative letter-press of concise, but we trust, entertaining character.

In Popular Antiquities we may mention Old Fishmongers' Hall, which has disappeared since the date of our last volume; the Castles of Pontefract, Wilton, and Dunheved, with traits of their historic lore; the Lady Chapel, in Southwark, and its changing history; Brighton about a hundred years since; the Arbalest, or Cross-bow explained with Cuts; Old Bankside, and the First Theatres; the venerable Melrose on the Tweed; St. Pancras (Old) Church; and the castellated palace of the Alhambra, in Spain.

Among the Architectural novelties are the Law Institution, in Chancery Lane; the Lowther Arcade, in the Strand; Staines New Bridge; and two scenes of the picturesque wonders of the Colosseum, in the Regent's Park.

In Zoology, the most popular study of the day, there are upwards of a score of novelties. Among them are a dozen Vignettes from the Zoological Gardens in the Regent's Park, and in Surrey; and illustrations of Rare Arctic Birds observed during the last overland expedition to the Polar Sea, by Captain Sir John Franklin.

In the ensuing volume, we have determined upon enlarging our letter-press page; whilst a new and handsome type has been cast expressly for this work. By these improvements, as well as by the renewed vigour of our artists, and a like zeal on our own part, *the mirror* will be found still worthy of its old friends, and attractive to new patrons. Its economy need not be again enforced, although in this respect, our contemplated alterations cannot but be received as additional points for the encouragement of a discerning public.

London, June 28, 1832.

* * * * *

MEMOIR OF THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES GREY, EARL GREY, K.G.,

First lord of his majesty's treasury, &c. &c.

* * * * *

De Bon VOULOIR SERVIR Le Roi.—Family Motto.

* * * * *

The family of *Grey*—the Greys of the North, as they are styled distinctively from the Greys of the South,[1]—is of Saxon origin.[2] They have held manors in Northumberland from the earliest records to the present time. The direct founder of the present branch was Baron Grey of Werke, ennobled by James I. and advanced to the earldom of Tankerville by William III. which titles became extinct in 1710; and the heiress carried the estates by marriage to Charles Bennet, Lord Ossulston, who was, in consequence, created Earl of Tankerville, in 1714.

[1] Wilton Castle, on the Wye, was for several centuries the baronial residence of the Greys of the South, who derived from it their first title, and became its owners in the time of Edward I.—See *Mirror*, vol. xiv. p. 305.

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[2] The barony of Werke was given to the family of Ros, Barons of Hemsley, in Yorkshire, by Henry I. for the service of two knights' fees, and was in their possession till 1399; but in the next year was found to belong to Sir Thomas Grey, of Heton. It gave title of baron in 1622, to Sir William Grey, who died in 1674. The village of Werke, and its ruined castle, are all that remain of the possessions of the barony; the former consisting of a miserable cluster of thatched cottages; the latter of mere fragments of ashlar work, near its foundations and lines of its moat. The village stands on the margin of the Tweed: and the castle is celebrated in the border annals. Heton, of which we have just spoken, in Edward the First's reign, belonged to William de Heton; and in the next reign, to Sir Thomas Grey, captain of Norham Castle. Sir John Grey, of Heton, in 1420, was graced with the order of St. George, or the Garter; and from him the estate descended to the Tankervilles.

The father of Earl Grey was Sir Charles Grey, who entered the army at an early age, had a command in the American war, and commanded in chief the military forces in the expeditions against the French West India Islands, the successful result of which was the annexing of Martinique, St. Lucie, Guadeloupe, &c. to our empire. He married, in 1762, Elizabeth, daughter of George Grey, Esq. of Southwick, in Durham, (of a different family,) by whom he had five sons and two daughters. He was created Lord Grey of Howick, in 1801; and Viscount Howick, and Earl Grey, in 1806. He died in the following year, and was succeeded by his son, Charles, second and present earl.

Mr. Grey was born March 13, 1764, and educated at Eton, in the same class with the late Mr. Lambton, (father of the present Lord Durham,) Mr. Whitbread, and others, with whom he afterwards acted in political life. He was then sent to King's College, Cambridge, where he displayed first-rate abilities. On his leaving the University, he set out on the tour of Europe, though only eighteen years of age. In Italy, he was introduced to the late Duke of Cumberland, in whose household he obtained an appointment. He returned to England in 1786, and soon after his arrival, was, by the interest of his family, returned to parliament for the county of Northumberland, when he joined the Whigs, it has been stated, to the surprise of his family, whose principles were those of Toryism.

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At a subsequent general election, as an expensive contest was expected for Northumberland, Mr. Grey declined nomination, and was returned to parliament for Appleby, which borough he represented till his succession to the peerage. In the House of Commons his great talents soon shone forth; and, in conjunction with Fox, Sheridan, Lambton, Ponsonby, and others, he maintained an intrepid opposition to the doctrines of that darling of fame, Mr. Pitt. Immediately after his entrance into Parliament, his discussion of the minister's important treaty of commerce, may be said to have established his reputation, by the force of his eloquence, as well as by the enlarged views which he seemed to have acquired of commercial relations; which knowledge is more frequently the result of gradual experience than of early attainment.

In these stormy times Mr. Grey ranked among the head and front of contending politics. He was appointed one of the managers of that magnificent political drama—the impeachment of Warren Hastings, when he displayed great acumen in that part of the accusation termed the Benares Charge.

In 1791, we find Mr. Grey taking the lead in a measure, which, in the language of a great orator (Burke) “shed a lustre on the character and humanity of the nation.” The subject to which we allude, was the melancholy situation of those who were unable to satisfy the demands of importunate creditors, and consequently subjected to the operation of a rigorous code of laws. His observation in moving for a parliamentary committee to inquire into the present practice and effect of imprisonment for debt is worthy of quotation: “it was desirable to distinguish the unfortunate debtor from the knavish one, to place the creditor in that situation which afforded the fairest and the speediest means of compensation, and to regulate the jails of this country in such a manner as to prevent unnecessary hardship and restraint. Whether they considered the practice of confining for debt men who had no means of discharging such debt, or, on the contrary, fraudulent debtors, whose creditors by no process could compel them to pay; these circumstances were alone sufficient to constitute an inquiry into the state of the laws relating to debtor and creditor.” This motion being acceded to, a committee consisting of Mr. Grey, Mr. Pitt, Sir John Sinclair, Mr. Vansittart, Mr. Martin, the Attorney and Solicitor Generals, and other legal gentlemen, was immediately appointed. The origin of this inquiry is an indicative of the liberal policy of the statesman as it is of the humanity of the mover.

In 1792, Mr. Grey instituted an inquiry into the conduct of ministers with regard to the recently threatened hostilities with Russia. His animadversion upon the vacillating and ruinous measures of government were characterized by that fearless intrepidity, truth, energy, and eloquence, which have distinguished his political career. The motion for the inquiry was lost, though the powerful remarks of the mover drew from Mr. Pitt the following memorable confession: “All unlimited confidence is unconstitutional; and I hope the inglorious moment will never arrive, when this house will abandon the privilege of examining, condemning, and correcting the abuses in the executive government. It is the dearest privilege you possess, and should never be relinquished.”

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During the schisms occasioned in this country by the French revolution, Mr. Grey enrolled himself in a political society, called the Friends of the People. He also became a member of the Whig Club, then in the zenith of its celebrity. His active advocacy of the cause of a reform in parliament was equal within and without the house of commons. To quote one of his Lordship's most recent speeches, "In 1786 he had voted for reform. He had supported Mr. Pitt in his motion for shortening the duration of parliaments. He had given his best assistance to the measure of reform introduced by Mr. Flood, before the French revolution; and, on one or two different occasions, he had originated motions on the subject." [3] One of these was in 1793, when he presented a petition for reform and a shorter duration of parliament, from the Society of the Friends of the People: his motion for a committee was lost by 280 to 41. Another occasion to which his Lordship alludes, was in 1797, when he proposed, in his plan of parliamentary reform, to give to the county of York four new members; to divide each county into two districts, each returning a member. Copyholders and leaseholders were to have equal rights of voting with freeholders, as were all householders paying taxes in cities and boroughs; and parliaments were to be triennial. This motion was, however, negatived by 149 votes.

[3] Speech on the second reading of the Reform Bill, in the House of Lords, Oct. 4, 1831.

In 1795, Mr. Grey opposed with great firmness, Mr. Pitt's motion for the adjustment of the Prince of Wales's debts, and moved for the reduction of the Prince's income. He professed himself ready to support the real splendour of the royal family "as any slippery sycophant of a court;" but said he thought there was more true dignity in manifesting a heart alive to the distresses of millions, than in all those trappings which encumber royalty without adorning it. He asked whether the legislature should give an example of encouraging extravagance at a moment when the prevailing fashion of prodigality among people of fortune was rapidly destroying their independence, and making them the tools of the court, and the contempt of the people. He knew the refusal to pay his debts would be a severe privation to the Prince of Wales; but it would be a just penalty for the past, a useful lesson for the future, and a proper deference to the severe pressure and privations endured by the people. Mr. Grey's amendment was supported by what was then a strong majority—99 to 260; and the original motion carried: his conduct on this occasion seems never to have been forgotten by the Prince of Wales, the Regent or the King. It should here be mentioned, that, with equal justice, Mr. Grey subsequently defended the rights of His Royal Highness from the shackles proposed to be laid on him as Regent.

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Mr. Grey's opposition to Mr. Pitt's measures continued unabated for many years, while he remained equally steady in his attachment to Mr. Fox. His bitter hostility to the union between Ireland and England may be said to have produced one of his most celebrated speeches. Neither was he dazzled, nor misled by the splendid talents of Burke, at this time in highest repute. When Mr. Fox was deserted by Lords Fitzwilliam, Carlisle, and other alarmists, Mr. Grey unchangingly adhered to him; and when Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville formed a Whig ministry, in 1806, Mr. Grey, then, by his father's elevation to the peerage, become Lord Howick, was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, and one of the Cabinet Council. He next succeeded Mr. Fox as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and leader in the House of Commons. This ministry was ill-formed, and wanted unity of purpose: their abolition of the Slave Trade was a redeeming measure, in which Lord Howick bore a conspicuous part; but his lordship's motion for the emancipation of the Catholics brought about his dismissal from the ministry.

Lord Howick, soon after, by the death of his father, succeeded to the title of Earl Grey; and by the death of his uncle, Sir Henry Grey, to the family estate. Ill health, for a time, kept his lordship from public life: he retired with no place but that of a Governor of the Charter House, and without pension or sinecure. Upon the resignation of the Duke of Portland, in 1809, his successor, Mr. Perceval, proposed a coalition with Lords Grenville and Grey, which was at once rejected by the latter. In the following year, his lordship "felt it his duty to arraign and to expose the gross mismanagement of the government, and their repeated and dangerous misconduct," in Parliament. In the same session, he charged the lord chancellor (Eldon) with a crime little short of treason, in having set the great seal, in 1801 and 1804, to commissions for giving the royal assent to several bills, whilst the King was in a state of mental infirmity, under medical care, and subject to personal control. The motion was negatived by a majority of 189 to 64; "but Lord Eldon has not forgotten the accusation, or forgiven the mover." [4] In 1812, another attempt was made to bring Lord Grey, with Lord Grenville, into the cabinet; but this was rejected as promptly as before.

[4] Life and Reign of George IV. by William Wallace, Esq. 3 vols. 1831.

Lord Grey again retired to private life. In 1817, his lordship reappeared, and moved an amendment to the parliamentary address to the throne, urging rigid economy, retrenchment, and an inquiry into the state of the nation. In the same year he brought before the House of Lords, the notable circular of Lord Sidmouth for the prosecution of libels by magistrates. "It is a singular fact," observes an acute historical writer, [5] "that Lord Grey, on this occasion, made an able and erudite law argument; which all the law lords, including Lord Ellenborough, made vain efforts to refute; and which Lord Ellenborough had the manliness to eulogize;" notwithstanding which Lord Grey's motion for a copy of the opinion of the law officers of the crown was negatived.

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[5] Life and Reign of George IV. By W. Wallace, Esq. 3 vols. 1831.

During the trial of Queen Caroline, the wisdom-tempered zeal of Lord Grey ranked him amongst the most efficient, as he was the most eloquent, of her defenders: his lordship, in conjunction with Lord King, also made successive attempts, by motions, to quash the investigation.

To the administration of the Earl of Liverpool, it need scarcely be added, Earl Grey was thoroughly hostile: his aversion to the policy of Mr. Canning was equally decided; and the same independent spirit urged him to oppose the measures of the Wellington cabinet, except the memorable measure of Catholic Emancipation, by the proposal of which he had lost office in the year 1810. His lordship's eloquent efforts in this cause must be alive in the recollection of the reader.

We are now fast approaching the consummation of one of the grand objects of his lordship's political life. By the dissolution of the Wellington cabinet, in 1830, Lord Grey became at the head of the present administration. His first act was the introduction of the grand measure for parliamentary reform, which, for sixteen months past, has interested the whole population of this mighty empire. His lordship's emphatic expressions, on this occasion, are "familiar as household words." "He made it a condition on accepting office, that Parliamentary Reform should be introduced as a government measure. That condition having been assented to by his most gracious sovereign, by this measure he was prepared to stand or fall." Gratifying as would be the task, we need not detail the incidents of the last few months of his lordship's career. Our eulogium would be poor indeed, while nine-tenths of the journals of our country are perpetuating his good deeds; while his political integrity has become exemplary to every cabinet in Europe; and millions are about to burst forth in "the loud festivity of mirth" to celebrate the virtue of their popular minister.

Earl Grey married in 1794, Mary Elizabeth Brabazon, daughter of Lord Ponsonby, by whom his lordship has had a numerous family: the eldest son and heir apparent being Viscount Howick, born in 1802. In our outline of Lord Grey's public life, the reader may have observed his Lordship's fondness for the retirement of the domestic circle. This accords with his recent declaration in parliament: "he was fond of retirement, and in domestic life he lived happy in the bosom of his family. Nothing could have tempted him to embark on these stormy seas—

Bankrupt of life, but prodigal of ease—

nothing but an overpowering sense of the duty which he owed to his country." Even apart from political distinction, Earl Grey must be considered happy indeed; but honoured in public and cherished in private life, his pre-eminence is proud indeed. Shakspeare tells of the "divinity" that "doth hedge a king:" yet who would enjoy more

than the consciousness of having been true to his sovereign, his country, and his honour.



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Hampton-wick Chapel.
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