

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction eBook

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Page 1

THE PENITENT'S RETURN.

By Mrs. Hemans.

Can guilt or misery ever enter here?
All! no, the spirit of domestic peace,
Though calm and gentle as the brooding dove,
And ever murmuring forth a quiet song,
Guards, powerful as the sword of Cherubim,
The hallow'd Porch. She hath a heavenly smile,
That sinks into the sullen soul of vice,
And wins him o'er to virtue.

WILSON.

My father's house once more,
In its own moonlight beauty! Yet around,
Something, amidst the dewy calm profound,
Broods, never mark'd before.

Is it the brooding night?
Is it the shivery creeping on the air,
That makes the home, so tranquil and so fair,
O'erwhelming to my sight?

All solemnized it seems,
And still'd and darken'd in each time-worn hue,
Since the rich clustering roses met my view,
As now, by starry gleams.

And this high elm, where last
I stood and linger'd—where my sisters made
Our mother's bower—I deem'd not that it cast
So far and dark a shade.

How spirit-like a tone
Sighs through yon tree! My father's place was was there
At evening-hours, while soft winds waved his hair:
Now those grey locks are gone.

My soul grows faint with fear,—
Even as if angel-steps had mark'd the sod.
I tremble where I move—the voice of God
Is in the foliage here.



Is it indeed the night
That makes my home so awful? Faithless hearted!
'Tis that from thine own bosom hath departed
The in-born gladdening light.

No outward thing is changed;
Only the joy of purity is fled,
And, long from Nature's melodies estranged,
Thou hear'st their tones with dread.

Therefore, the calm abode
By thy dark spirit is o'erhung with shade,
And, therefore, in the leaves, the voice of God
Makes thy sick heart afraid.

The night-flowers round that door
Still breathe pure fragrance on the untainted air;
Thou, thou alone, art worthy now no more
To pass, and rest thee there.

And must I turn away?
Hark, hark!—it is my mother's voice I hear,
Sadder than once it seem'd—yet soft and clear—
Doth she not seem to pray?

My name!—I caught the sound!
Oh! blessed tone of love—the deep, the mild—
Mother, my mother! Now receive thy child,
Take back the Lost and Found!

Blackwood's Magazine.

* * * * *

[Illustration: AUBERGE ON THE GRIMSEL.]

AUBERGE ON THE GRIMSEL.

(For the Mirror.)

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The Grimsel is one of the stupendous mountains of Switzerland, 5,220 feet in height, as marked on Keller's admirable map of that country. It is situated within the Canton of Berne, but bordering on that of the Valais, and not far from Uri. The auberge represented in the sketch, although not quite upon the very summit of the mountain, is almost above the limit of vegetation, and far remote from any other dwelling. Indeed, excepting a few *chalets*, used as summer shelter for the attendants upon the mountain cattle, but deserted in winter, there is no human habitation for many miles round; and it is one of the very few spots where the traveller has an opportunity of reposing for the night, under a comfortable roof, in so lofty a region of the atmosphere, amidst scenes of Alpine desolation—or rather, the primitive elements of Nature, “the naked bones of the earth waiting to be clothed.”

The proprietor of this simple, but agreeable, auberge, is what Jeannie Deans called her father, “a man of substance,” and amongst other sources of wealth possesses about three hundred goats, which contrive to pick up their living from the scanty verdure of the surrounding hills. Three times a-day they regularly assemble in front of the auberge to be milked, affording the raw material for a considerable manufacture of cheese. While we were lounging about before dinner, admiring the beautiful shapes of the rocky peaks, which even in the beginning of September were blanched with the previous night's snow, we were pleasantly surprised by the sound of a cheerful bleating, which was echoed on every side; and one after another the graceful creatures, as small and playful as our kids, popped up amongst the fragments of rocks from all quarters until the “gathering” was complete, and our meal was enlivened by the treble of their voices as the milking proceeded. When the operation was over, off they scampered again, “the hills before them were to choose”—again to return in due season with their bounteous store for the benefit of man. “This is not solitude.” The milk is rich, but tastes rather too strong of the goat to be agreeable to every one at first, although probably we should soon have thought cow's milk comparatively insipid. On the day's journey we had seen some of these goats at a considerable distance from the auberge, and a young man who carried our luggage, after giving chase to several, at length caught one, and in spite of her remonstrances, milked her by main force into the cup of a pocket flask, that we might enjoy a draught of the beverage. Still holding the animal, he then filled the vessel more than once for himself, and it was amusing to see the *gusto* with which he drank it off. We afterwards had the milk with coffee; indeed both here and on the Righi it was “Hobson's choice,” goat's milk or none at all.

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This auberge has been built on the Grimsel of late years for the accommodation of travellers across the mountain passes; and it forms a convenient night's resting place in a two day's journey on foot or horseback (the only modes of threading these Alpine paths) between the valley of Meyringen and that of Urseren. It may be useful briefly to notice this route, in which the traveller will be charmed with a succession of scenery on Nature's grandest scale. After leaving Meyringen and its beautiful valley, called the Vale of Hasli, he looks down from the top of a mountain pass upon a small compact, oval-shaped valley, named, we believe Hasligrund, into which he descends, and then climbs the mountains on the opposite side. Proceeding onward, he reaches a small place, Handek, formed of a few wood chalets, and giving its name to one of the finest waterfalls in Switzerland. The accessories of the sublimest scenery give additional interest to the beauty of the fall, at which our traveller will feel inclined to linger; he should endeavour to be there about noon, when the sun irradiates the spray like dancing rainbows. The rest of the day's route is, in general, ascending, and partly across splendid sweeps of bare granite, until his eyes are gladdened with the sight of the auberge.

On the second morning he crosses the remaining summit of the mountain, and rises to cross the Furca, passing beside the Glacier of the Rhone; perhaps the finest in all the Alps, which looks like a vast torrent suddenly frozen in its course while tossing its waves into the most fantastic forms. The traveller afterwards descends into the Valley of Urseren, which extends straight before him for the distance of perhaps twelve miles, with the Reuss winding through it, and the neat town of Andermatt shining out from the opposite extremity. He passes through the singular village of Realp, where he may refresh himself with a draught of delicious Italian red wine, and afterwards arrives at the little bleak town of Hospital, situated at the foot of the St. Gothard, over which a new carriage-road into Italy has lately been made, with galleries winding up the mountain as far as the eye can reach. He may either take up his quarters for the night at Hospital, or proceed about a mile farther to Andermatt, where the road turns off at right angles, and where he may hire a car, if he wishes to go on the same evening across the romantic Devil's Bridge to Amstag, a pretty village in the bend of the splendid valley of the Reuss, whence the road leads on to Altorf and Fluellen, on the bank of the lake of the Four Cantons, the scene of the heroic exploits of William Tell.

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Connecting the above sketch with one of the Fall of the Staubbach, in the Valley of Lauterbrun, in a former *Mirror*, (No. 403,) we may add, that the distance between the latter and Meyringen may also be performed in two days, amidst scenes, if possible, of sublimer character than the journey now described. From Lauterbrun across the Wengern Alp to the Valley of Grindenwald is the first day, the route passing in front of the Jungfrau, which throws up its magnificent ice-covered summits with more enchanting effect than the imagination can conceive. From Grindenwald, with its two fine glaciers, the path proceeds across the great Sheidech, by the baths of Rosenlauri, one of the most beautiful spots on this beautiful earth; and by the fall or rather falls, of the Rippenbach, (for there are no less than eleven in succession beneath each other,) to Meyringen.

We have thus pointed attention to a journey of four days, comprising the chief points in the Oberland, or Highlands, through this region of romantic wonders.

W.G.

* * * * *

THE SELECTOR; AND LITERARY NOTICES OF *NEW WORKS*.

* * * * *

THE EMPEROR'S ROUT.

Who does not remember the Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast in the halcyon days of their childhood? These toyful trifles, "light as air," doubtless suggested the *Emperor's Rout*. Do not start, expectant reader; this is no downfall of a royal dynasty, no burning of palaces, or muster of rebel ranks—no scamper "all on the road from Moscow"—or *saute qui peut* at Waterloo; but a pleasant, little verse tale of the Emperor Moth inviting the *haut ton* of the Moths to a splendid rout—with notes intended as a tempting introduction to the fascinating study of entomology.

There are four Engravings: 1.—The Invitation, with the Emperor and the Empress, and the Buff-tip Moth writing the Cards.—2. The Dance, with the Sphinx Hippophæes, the Pease Blossom, the Mouse, the Seraph, Satellite, Magpie, Gold Spangle, Foresters, Cleap Wings, &c.—3. The Alarm.—4. The Death's Head Moth. These are beautifully lithographed by Gauci. Their colouring, after Nature, is delightfully executed: the finish, too, of the gold-spangle is good, and the winged brilliancy of the company are exquisite pieces of pains-taking—sparkling as they are beneath a trellis-work rotunda, garlanded with roses, and lit with a pine-pattern lustre of perfumed wax. What a close simile could we draw of life from these dozen dancing creatures in their rainbow hues—their holiday

and every-day robes—flitting through life's summer, and then forgotten. Yet how fares it with us in the stream of life!

By the way, this trifle, though so prettily coloured, is in price what was once called “a trifle”—yet what kings and queens have often quarrelled for—half-a-crown.

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SATAN IN SEARCH OF A WIFE

Is a little Poem, with much of the grotesque in its half-dozen Embellishments, and some tripping work in its lines. "The End," with "Who danced at the Wedding?" and the tail-piece—a devil-bantling, rocked by imps, and the cradle lit by torches—is droll enough.

Here is an invitation that promises a warm reception:

Merrily, merrily, ring the bells
From each Pandemonian steeple;
For the Devil hath gotten his beautiful bride,
And a Wedding Dinner he will provide,
To feast all kinds of people.

* * * * *

THE FAMILY CABINET ATLAS

Has reached its Ninth part, and unlike some of its periodical contemporaries, without any falling-off in its progress. The Nine Parts contain thirty-six Maps, all beautifully perspicuous. The colouring of one series is delicately executed.

* * * * *

MOORE'S LIFE OF BYRON. VOL. II.

Letter to Mr. Murray.

Bologna, June 7th, 1819.

* * * * * "I have been picture-gazing this morning at the famous Domenichino and Guido, both of which are superlative. I afterwards went to the beautiful cemetery of Bologna, beyond the walls, and found, besides the superb burial ground, an original of a Custode, who reminded one of the grave-digger in Hamlet. He has a collection of capuchins' skulls, labelled on the forehead, and taking down one of them, said, 'This was Brother Desiderio Berro, who died at forty—one of my best friends. I begged his head of his brethren after his decease, and they gave it me. I put it in lime, and then boiled it. Here it is, teeth and all, in excellent preservation. He was the merriest, cleverest fellow I ever knew. Wherever he went, he brought joy; and whenever any one was melancholy, the sight of him was enough to make him cheerful again. He walked so actively, you might

have taken him for a dancer—he joked—he laughed—oh! he was such a Frate as I never saw before, nor ever shall again!’

“He told me that he had himself planted all the cypresses in the cemetery; that he had the greatest attachment to them and to his dead people; that since 1801 they had buried fifty-three thousand persons. In showing some older monuments, there was that of a Roman girl of twenty, with a bust by Bernini. She was a princess Barlorini, dead two centuries ago: he said that, on opening her grave, they had found her hair complete, and ‘as yellow as gold.’ Some of the epitaphs at Ferrar pleased me more than the more splendid monuments at Bologna; for instance—

’Martini Lugi

Implora pace!

’Lucrezia Picini

Implora eterna quiete.’

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Can any thing be more full of pathos? Those few words say all that can be said or sought: the dead had had enough of life; all they wanted was rest, and this they *implore*! There is all the helplessness, and humble hope, and death-like prayer, that can arise from the grave—'implora pace'[2] I hope whoever may survive me, and shall see me put in the foreigners' burying-ground at the Lido, within the fortress by the Adriatic, will see those two words, and no more put over me. I trust they won't think of 'pickling and bringing me home to Clod or Blunderbuss Hall.' I am sure my bones would not rest in an English grave, or my clay mix with the earth of that country. I believe the thought would drive me mad on my death-bed, could I suppose that any of my friends would be base enough to convey my carcass back to your soil.—I would not even feed your worms, if I could help it.

"So, as Shakspeare says of Mowbray, the banished Duke of Norfolk, who died at Venice, (see Richard II.) that he, after fighting

Against black Pagans, Turks, and Saracens,
And toil'd with works of war, retired himself
To Italy, and there, at *Venice*, gave
His body to that *pleasant* country's earth,
And his pure soul unto his captain, Christ,
Under whose colours he had fought so long.

"Before I left Venice, I had returned to you your late, and Mr. Hobhouse's, sheets of Juan. Don't wait for further answers from me, but address yours to Venice, as usual. I know nothing of my own movements; I may return there in a few days, or not for some time. All this depends on circumstances. I left Mr. Hoppner very well. My daughter Allegra was well too, and is growing pretty; her hair is growing darker, and her eyes are blue. Her temper and her ways, Mr. Hoppner says, are like mine, as well as her features; she will make, in that case, a manageable young lady.

"I have never heard anything of Ada, the little Electra of my Mycenae. * * * But there will come a day of reckoning, even if I should not live to see it. I have at least, seen ----- shivered, who was one of my assassins. When that man was doing his worst to uproot my whole family, tree, branch, and blossoms—when, after taking my retainer, he went over to them—when he was bringing desolation on my hearth, and destruction on my household gods—did he think that, in less than three years, a natural event—a severe domestic, but an expected and common calamity—would lay his carcass in a cross-road, or stamp his name in a Verdict of Lunacy! Did he (who in his sexagenary * * *) reflect or consider what my feeling must have been, when wife, and child, and sister, and name, and fame, and country, were to be my sacrifice on his legal altar—and this at a moment when my health was declining, my fortune embarrassed, and my mind had been shaken by many kinds of disappointment—while I was yet young, and might have reformed what might be wrong in my conduct, and retrieved what was perplexing in my affairs! But he is in his grave, and * * * What a long letter I have scribbled!"

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(Here is a random string of poetical gems:)—

So, we'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright;
For the sword out-wears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And Love itself have rest.
Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a roving
By the light of the moon.

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story.
The days of our youth are the days of our glory;
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.

What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
'Tis but as a dead flower with May-dew besprinkled.
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary!
What care I for the wreaths that can *only* give glory?

Oh, Fame! if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear One discover
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

There chiefly I sought thee—*there* only I found thee; Her glance was the best of the rays
that surround thee; When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story, I knew it was
love, and I felt it was glory.

TO THE COUNTESS OF B——.

You have asked for a verse,—the request
In a rhymer 'twere strange to deny,
But my Hippocrene was but my breast,
And my feelings (its fountain) are dry.

Were I now as I was, I had sung
What Lawrence has painted so well;



But the strain would expire on my tongue,
And the theme is too soft for my shell.

I am ashes where once I was fire,
And the bard in my bosom is dead;
What I loved I *now* merely admire,
And my heart is as grey as my head.

My Life is not dated by years—
There are *moments* which act as a plough,
And there is not a furrow appears
But is deep in my soul as my brow.

Let the young and brilliant aspire
To sing what I gaze on in vain;
For sorrow has torn from my lyre
The string which was worthy the strain.

[2] Though Lord Byron, like most other persons, in writing to different friends, was some times led to repeat the same circumstances and thoughts, there is, from the ever ready fertility of his mind, much less repetition in his correspondence than in that, perhaps, of any other multifarious letter-writer; and, in the instance before us, where the same facts and reflections are, for the second time, introduced,

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it

is with such new touches, both of thought and expression, as render them, even a second time, interesting; what is wanting in the novelty of the matter being made up by the new aspect given to it.

* * * * *

DISCOURSE ON THE STUDY OF NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

(*Cabinet Cyclopaedia*. Vol. xiv.)

The arrangement of Dr. Lardner's *Cyclopaedia*, as it becomes more and more developed, will be proportionally appreciated. Its *system* is a marked contrast with the heterogeneous lists of the Family and National Libraries, which, as books of reference and authority, are little worth.

The *Cyclopaedia* plan is to form a series of *Cabinets* of the principal departments of human knowledge. Those already commenced are History, Biography, Natural Philosophy, Geography, and the Useful Arts. Each of these divisions is to be preceded by a prefatory discourse on "the objects and advantages" of the branch of knowledge which is treated of in the series or cabinet. Thus, the work before us is such a volume for the Cabinet of *Natural Philosophy*; that for History is promised by Sir James Mackintosh; and that for the Useful Arts, by the Baron Charles Dupin. The present *Discourse* is by J.F.W. Herschel, Esq., A.M. It is divided into three parts:—1. On the general nature and advantages of the study of Physics. 2. The rules and principles of Physical Science, with illustrations of their influence, in the history of its progress. 3. The subdivision of Physics. These parts are divided into chapters, and these chapters again divided into sectional illustrations, of which latter there are nearly four hundred. Such an arrangement can hardly fail to attract the listless reader. The style is lucid and popular, and the writer's reasonings and bearings are brought out with much point and vigour. Even a drawing-room reader must be caught by their attractions, and no better means was probably ever devised for bringing superficial readers into the way of knowledge, and setting forth its pleasantness. It has been said that such works as the present satisfy the reader, and disqualify him for the study of science. This opinion is hardly worth controverting: since that mind must be weak indeed which would not be *stimulated* as well as gratified in this case; and it is still more improbable that the great truths of science should at once take root in such a barren soil without any preparation for their reception.

We conclude with a few specimen extracts. The *how*, the *why*, the *wherefore*, and the *because*, of such wonders as they relate to, belong rather to the treatises themselves.

Mechanical Power of Coals.

It is well known to modern engineers, that *there is virtue* in a bushel of coals properly consumed, to raise seventy millions of pounds weight a foot high. This is actually the *average* effect of an engine at this moment working in Cornwall.

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The ascent of Mont Blanc from the Valley of Chamouni is considered, and with justice, as the most toilsome feat that a strong man can execute in two days. The combustion of two pounds of coal would place him on the summit.

The Wonders of Physics.

What mere assertion will make any man believe that in one second of time, in one beat of the pendulum of a clock, a ray of light travels over 192,000 miles, and would therefore perform the tour of the world in about the same time that it requires to wink with our eyelids, and in much less than a swift runner occupies in taking a single stride? What mortal can be made to believe, without demonstration, that the sun is almost a million times larger than the earth? and that, although so remote from us, that a cannon ball shot directly towards it, and maintaining its full speed, would be twenty years in reaching it, it yet affects the earth by its attraction in an inappreciable instant of time?—Who would not ask for demonstration, when told that a gnat's wing, in its ordinary flight, beats many hundred times in a second? or that there exist animated and regularly organised beings, many thousands of whose bodies laid close together would not extend an inch? But what are these to the astonishing truths which modern optical inquiries have disclosed, which teach us that every point of a medium through which a ray of light passes is affected with a succession of periodical movements, regularly recurring at equal intervals, no less than 500 millions of millions of times in a single second! that it is by such movements, communicated to the nerves of our eyes, that we see—nay more, that it is the difference in the frequency of their recurrence which affects us with the sense of the diversity of colour; that, for instance, in acquiring the sensation of redness our eyes are affected 482 millions of millions of times; of yellowness, 542 millions of millions of times; and of violet, 707 millions of millions of times per second. Do not such things sound more like the ravings of madmen, than the sober conclusions of people in their waking senses? They are, nevertheless, conclusions to which any one may most certainly arrive, who will only be at the trouble of examining the chain of reasoning by which they have been obtained.

Extraordinary Property of Shadows.

An eminent living geometer had proved by calculations, founded on strict optical principles, that in the *centre of the shadow* of a small circular plate of metal, exposed in a dark room to a beam of light emanating from a *very small brilliant point*, there ought to be no darkness,—in fact, *no shadow* at that place; but, on the contrary, a degree of illumination precisely as bright as if the metal plate were away. Strange and even impossible as this conclusion may seem, it has been put to the trial, and found perfectly correct.

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THE NATURALIST.

* * * * *

RAINING TREES.

(By John Murray, Esq. F.S.A. &c.)

The secretions of trees form a curious part of their physiology, but the influence of vegetation on the atmosphere seems to have been entirely overlooked, at least as far as it regards its meteorology.

In the case of that curious genus of plants the *Sarracen_ia_*, in which the *S. adunca* is most conspicuous, the foliaceous pouch is a mere reservoir, or cistern, to catch and retain the falling dew or rain. In the *Nepenthes distillatoria*, or pitcher plant, the case is different; and analysis proves it to be an evident secretion from the plant itself, independent altogether of the fact that it is found in the pitcher before the lid has yet opened. I may here state, *en passant*, that the results, I obtained from a chemical examination of this liquid differ materially from those of Dr. Edward Turner. The *Cornus mascula* is very remarkable for the amount of fluid matter which evolves from its leaves, and the willow and poplar, when grouped more especially, exhibit the phenomenon in the form of a gentle shower. Prince Maximilian, in his *Travels in the Brazils*, informs us that the natives in these districts are well acquainted with the peculiar property of those hollow leaves that act as recipients of the condensed vapours of the atmosphere; and, doubtless, these are sources where many tropical animals, as well as the wandering savage, sate their thirst "in a weary land." The *Tillands_ia_* exhibits a watery feature of a different complexion: here the entire interior is charged with such a supply of liquid, that, when cut, it affords a copious and refreshing beverage to man. That these extraordinary sources of "living springs of water" are not unknown to inferior creation, is a fact interestingly confirmed to us in the happy incidents detailed by Mr. Campbell, in his *Travels in South Africa*, where a species of mouse is described to us, as storing up supplies of water contained in the berries of particular plants; and, in Ceylon, animals of the *Simia* tribe are said to be well acquainted with the *Nepenthes distillatoria*, and to have frequent recourse to its pitcher. The mechanism of the "rose of Jericho" (*Anastatica hierochuntina*) shows the susceptibility of plants to moisture in a very remarkable manner; and I have submitted some experiments made with this extraordinary exotic, the inhabitant of an arid sandy soil, to the Horticultural Society of London. That succulents should be found clothing in patches the surface of the burning desert is a phenomenon not the least wonderful in the geographical history of vegetation.

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In Cockburn's *Voyages* we find an interesting account of a tree in South America, which yielded a plentiful supply of water by a kind of distillatory process: this tree was met with near the mountainous district of Vera Paz. The party were attracted to it from a distance, the ground appearing wet around it; and the peculiarity was the more striking, as no rain had fallen for six months previous. "At last," says he, "to our great astonishment, as well as joy, we saw water dropping, or, as it were, distilling fast from the end of every leaf of this wonderful tree; at least it was so with us, who had been labouring four days through extreme heat without receiving the least moisture, and were now almost expiring for want of it." The testimony of travellers is too often enshrined among the fabulous; and their credentials either altogether rejected by some, or at least received "cum grano salis." Bruce of Kinnaird forms the most remarkable example of this kind, and the caricature of Baron Munchausen consigned the whole to sarcasm and ridicule; and yet the time is come when the more remarkable circumstances and phenomena mentioned by this traveller, verified by Lord Valentia, Mr. Salt, &c. are received as well accredited facts. The curious phenomenon mentioned by Cockburn finds an interesting and beautiful counterpart in two plants—namely, the *Calla Aethiopica* and *Agapanthus umbellatus*, in both of which, after a copious watering, the water will be seen to drop from the tips of the leaves; a phenomenon, as far as I know, not hitherto recorded.

The great rivers of the continent of Europe have their source of supply in the glaciers; but many of the rivers in the New World owe their origin to the extensive forests of America, and their destruction might dry up many a rivulet, and thus again convert the luxuriant valley into an arid and sterile waste; carried farther, the principle extends to the great features of the globe. What the glaciers effect among the higher regions of the Alps, the *Pinus Cembra*. and *Larix communis* accomplish at lower elevations; and many a mountain rivulet owes its existence to their influence. It rains often in the woodlands when it rains no where else; and it is thus that trees and woods modify the hygrometric character of a country; and I doubt not but, by a judicious disposal of trees of particular kinds, many lands now parched up with drought—as, for example, in some of the Leeward Islands—might be reclaimed from that sterility to which they are unhappily doomed.

In Glass' *History of the Canary Islands* we have the description of a peculiar tree in the Island of Hierro, which is the means of supplying the inhabitants, man as well as inferior animals, with water; an island which, but for this marvellous adjunct, would be uninhabitable and abandoned. The tree is called *Til* by the people of the island, and has attached to it the epithet *garse*, or *sacred*. It is situated on the top of a rock, terminating the district called *Tigulatre*, which leads from the shore. A cloud of vapour, which seems to rise from the sea, is impelled towards it; and being condensed by the foliage of the tree, the rain falls into a large tank, from which it is measured out by individuals set apart for that purpose by the authorities of the island.

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In confirmation of a circumstance *prima facie* so incredible, I have here to record a phenomenon, witnessed by myself, equally extraordinary. I had frequently observed, in avenues of trees, that the entire ground engrossed by their shady foliage was completely saturated with moisture; and that during the prevalence of a fog, when the ground without their pale was completely parched, the wet which fell from their branches more resembled a gentle shower than anything else; and in investigating the phenomenon which I am disposed to consider entirely *electrical*, I think the *elm* exhibits this feature more remarkably than any other tree of the forest. I never, however, was more astonished than I was in the month of September last, on witnessing a very striking example of this description. I had taken an early walk, on the road leading from Stafford to Lichfield: a dense fog prevailed, but the *road was dry and dusty*, while it was quite otherwise with the line of a few *Lombardy poplars*; for from them it rained so plentifully, and so fast, that any one of them might have been used as an admirable shower bath, and the constant stream of water supplied by the aggregate would (had it been directed into a proper channel) have been found quite sufficient to turn an ordinary mill.—*Mag. Nat. Hist.*

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THE GATHERER.

A snapper of unconsidered trifles.
SHAKSPEARE.

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HUMAN TIMEPIECE.

J.D. Chevalley, a native of Switzerland, has arrived at an astonishing degree of perfection in reckoning time by an internal movement. In his youth he was accustomed to pay great attention to the ringing of bells and vibrations of pendulums, and by degrees he acquired the power of continuing a succession of intervals exactly equal to those which the vibrations or sounds produced.—Being on board a vessel, on the Lake of Geneva, he engaged to indicate to the crowd about him the lapse of a quarter of an hour, or as many minutes and seconds as any one chose to name, and this during a conversation the most diversified with those standing by; and farther, to indicate by the voice the moment when the hand passed over the quarter minutes, or half minutes, or any other sub-division previously stipulated, during the whole course of the experiment. This he did without mistake, notwithstanding the exertions of those about him to distract his attention, and clapped his hands at the conclusion of the time fixed. His own account of it is thus given:—"I have acquired, by imitation, labour, and patience, a movement which neither thoughts, nor labour, nor any thing can stop: it is similar to that

of a pendulum, which at each motion of going and returning gives me the space of three seconds, so that twenty of them make a minute—and these I add to others continually.”

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HISTORICAL FACT.

During the troubles in the reign of Charles I., a country girl came to London, in search of a situation; but not succeeding, she applied to be allowed to carry out beer from a brewhouse. These females were then called “tub-women.” The brewer observing her to be a very good-looking girl, took her out of this low situation into his house, and afterwards married her. He died, however, while she was yet a very young woman, and left her a large fortune. She was recommended, on giving up the brewery, to Mr. Hyde, a most able lawyer, to settle her husband’s affairs; he, in process of time, married the widow, and was afterwards made Earl of Clarendon. Of this marriage there was a daughter, who was afterwards wife to James II. and mother of Mary and Anne, queens of England.

ZANGA.

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LAWYERS.

In 1454, an Act of Parliament notices, “that there had used formerly six or eight attorneys only, for Suffolk, Norfolk, and Norwich together; that this number was now increased to more than eighty, most of whom being not of sufficient knowledge, came to fairs, &c. inciting the people to suits for small trespasses, &c. wherefore there shall be hereafter but six for Suffolk, six for Norfolk, and two for the city of Norwich.”

H.B.A.

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THE DYERS.

Inscription on a Tombstone in a Churchyard at Truro, Cornwall.

A dyer born, a dyer bred,
Lies numbered here among the dead;
Dyers, like mortals doomed to die,
Alike fit food for worms supply.
Josephus Dyer was his name;
By dyeing he acquired fame;
'Twas in his forty-second year



His neighbours kind did him inter.
Josephus Dyer, his first son,
Doth also lie beneath this stone;
So likewise doth his second boy,
Who was his parents' hope and joy.
His handywork all did admire,
For never was a better dyer.
Both youths were in their fairest prime,
Ripe fruitage of a healthful clime;
But nought can check Death's lawless aim,
Whosoever' life he choose to claim:
It was God's edict from his throne,
"My will shall upon earth be done."
Then did the active mother's skill
The vacancy with credit fill
Till she grew old, and weak, and blind,
And this last wish dwelt on her mind—
That she, when dead, should buried be
With her loved spouse and family.
At last Death's arm her strength defied;
Thus all the dyeing Dyers died!

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HALCYON DAYS.



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Halcyon-days denote a time of peace and tranquillity. The expression takes its rise from a sea-fowl, called among naturalists *halcyon*, or *alcyon*, which is said to build its nest about the winter solstice, when the weather is usually observed to be still and calm. Aristotle and Pliny tell us that this bird is most common in the seas of Sicily, that it sat only a few days, and those in the depth of winter, and during that period the mariner might sail in full security; for which reason they were styled *Halcyon-days*.

P.T.W.

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USE OF TIME.

Dr. Cotton Mather, who was a man of uncommon dispatch and activity in the management of his numerous affairs, and improved every minute of his time, that he might not suffer by silly, impertinent, and tedious visitors, wrote over his study-door, in large letters, "Be short."

Ursinus, a professor in the University of Heidelburgh, and a diligent scholar, to prevent gossips and idlers from interrupting him in his hours of study, wrote over the door of his library the following lines—"Friend, whoever thou art that comest hither, dispatch thy business or begone."

The learned Scaliger placed the following sentence over the doors of his study—"Tempus meum est ager meus," "My time is my field or estate." And it is frequently the only valuable field which the labourer, in body or mind, possesses.

Ever hold time too precious to be spent
With babblers.—*Shakspeare*.

"Friends," says Lord Bacon, "are robbers of our time."

H.B.A.

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EPITAPH ON A POTTER.

How frail is man—how short life's longest day!
Here lies the worthy Potter, turned to clay!
Whose forming hand, and whose reforming care,
Has left us lull of flaws. Vile earthenware!

H.S.G.

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LENGTHENING OF THE DAYS.

Selden, in his *Table Talk*, says "The lengthening of days is not suddenly perceived till they are grown a pretty deal longer, because the sun, though it be in a circle, yet it seems for awhile to go in a straight line. For take a segment of a great circle especially, and you shall doubt whether it be straight or no. But when the sun has got past that line, then you presently perceive the days are lengthened. Thus it runs in the winter and summer solstice, which is indeed the true reason of them."

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