

# **The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction eBook**

## **The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction**

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# Contents

<a href="#">The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction eBook.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Table of Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Page 1.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Page 2.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Page 3.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Page 4.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Page 5.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Page 6.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Page 7.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Page 8.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Page 9.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Page 10.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Page 11.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Page 12.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Page 13.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Page 14.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Page 15.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Page 16.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Page 17.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Page 18.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>
<a href="#">Page 19.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">Page 20.....</a>	<a href="#">38</a>
<a href="#">Page 21.....</a>	<a href="#">39</a>
<a href="#">Page 22.....</a>	<a href="#">40</a>



<a href="#">Page 23.....</a>	<a href="#">42</a>
<a href="#">Page 24.....</a>	<a href="#">43</a>
<a href="#">Page 25.....</a>	<a href="#">45</a>
<a href="#">Page 26.....</a>	<a href="#">47</a>

# Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
RELICS OF ARIOSTO.		1
FANNY.		5
THE "HALCYON" BIRD.		6
HOUSE OF COMMONS.		7
THE LEGACY OF THE SWORD.		7
SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.		8
THE TOPOGRAPHER.		13
W.		16
THE SUNDAY LIBRARY.		16
VENETIAN HISTORY.		19
MANNERS & CUSTOMS OF ALL NATIONS.		22
THE GATHERER.		24
EPITAPH.		25
PATRIOTISM.		25
SILK MANUFACTURE.		25
INN RHYMES.		25
G. ST. CLAIR.		26

# Page 1

## RELICS OF ARIOSTO.

[Illustration: Inkstand.]

[Illustration: Chair.]

We need not bespeak the reader's interest in these "trivial fond" relics—these consecrated memorials—of one of the most celebrated poets of Italy. They are preserved with reverential care at Ferrara, the poet's favourite residence, though not his birthplace. The Ferrarese, however, claim him "exclusively as their own" Lord Byron, in the Notes[1] to *Childe Harold*, canto 4, says, "the author of the Orlando is jealously claimed as the Homer, not of Italy, but Ferrara. The mother of Ariosto was of Reggio, and the house in which he was born is carefully distinguished by a tablet with these words:—'*Qui nacque Ludovico Ariosto il giorno 8 di Settembre dell' anno 1474.*' But the Ferrarese make light of the accident by which their poet was born abroad, and claim him exclusively for their own. *They possess his bones, they show his arm-chair, and his inkstand, and his autographs.* The house where he lived, the room where he died, are designated by his own replaced memorial, and by a recent inscription."

Ferrara, we should here mention, is a fortified town, and a day's journey, *en voiturier*, from Florence to Vienna. The Tomb, as well as the above relics, a bronze Medallion of the great Poet, and an account of his last illness and death—the two latter found in his tomb—are in the public library at Ferrara. This library also contains the original MSS. of *Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata*, and Guarini's *Pastor Fido*; and in the Hospital of St. Anne, at Ferrara, travellers are shown the cell where Tasso was confined.

The *inkstand* is of bronze, and its singular device is said to refer to the Poet's amorous caution. In his Life,[2] we are told that "The amours of Ariosto are a difficult theme for both his eulogists and his biographers. He has alluded in his Poems to several ladies with whose charms he was captivated, but, with the exception of Alessandra and Genevra, the names under which they are mentioned are fictitious. His caution in this respect is thought to have been hinted at in the device placed on his favourite inkstand, and which consisted of *a little Cupid having his forefinger on his lip in token of secrecy.*" The evidence in proof of Alessandra's being his wife is little short of unanswerable.

Reverting to the early life of the Poet—he studied at Ferrara, but losing his tutor, who was called from thence, and appointed preceptor to the son of Isabella of Naples, Ariosto was left without the present means of gaining instruction in Greek. To this period Mr. Stebbing thus alludes:—

"To the regret he experienced at losing his master, was added that of hearing soon after of his decease; but scarcely had he recovered from the distress he felt at this circumstance, when the death of his father put an end for some time to all his literary

thoughts and pursuits. He has pathetically described his situation at this period in his sixth Satire, which contains several allusions both to the present and previous circumstances of his life.

## Page 2

“My father dies; thenceforth with care oppressed  
New thoughts and feelings fill my harass’d breast;  
Homer gives way to lawyers and their deeds,  
And all a brother’s love within me pleads;  
Fit suitors found, two sisters soon are wed,  
And to the altar without portions led.  
With all the wants and wishes of their age  
My little brothers next my thoughts engage,  
And in their father’s place I strive untired  
To do whate’er that father’s love inspired.  
Thus watching how their several wills incline  
In courts, in study, or in arms to shine;  
No toil I shun their fair pursuits to aid,  
Still of the snares that strew their path afraid.  
Nor this alone—though press we quick to land,  
The bark’s not safe till anchor’d on the strand.”

Passing over the commencement of the Orlando Furioso, which soon followed the above melancholy event—“To be the freer from interruptions, and at the same time render his moderate income equal to his support, he left Ferrara, and took up his residence on an estate belonging to his kinsman Malaguzzo, between Reggio and Rubiera. He has described this retreat, and the pleasant manner in which he spent his time during his short residence there, in his fifth Satire; but it is disputed whether the account alludes to this or an earlier period of his life:

“Time was when by sweet solitude inclines  
The storied page I fill’d with, ready mind;  
Those gentle scenes of Reggio’s fair domain,  
Our own dear nest, where peace and nature reign;  
The lovely villa and the neighbouring Rhone,  
Whose banks the Naiads haunt serene and lone;  
The lucid pool whence small fresh streams distil  
That glad the garden round and turn the mill;  
Still memory loves upon these scenes to dwell,  
Still sees the vines with fruit delicious swell,  
Luxurious meadows blooming spread around,  
Low winding vales and hills with turrets crown’d.’

“The Duke Alphonso, seeing him left without a patron, and provided with so small an income, invited him to return to Ferrara, which he did, and found no reason, it is said, to regret that he had once more put himself under the protection of the house of Este. Alphonso, knowing his love of retirement and the peculiarity of his habits, promised to leave him at perfect liberty to pursue his studies and live in the way that most suited his wishes. He kept his promise, and there is reason to believe that the presents he

bestowed on the poet enabled him to build the cottage in which he resided, with few interruptions, till his death. This favourite house of Ariosto's was situated near the church of S. Benedetto, and stood in the midst of a spacious garden which formed both his pride and delight. Here he continued to compose additional cantos to the 'Orlando Furioso,' and occasionally, to relax his mind with lighter species of poetry, sometimes writing a satire, and at others reverting to the comedies composed in his younger years, and which he subsequently made fit for the stage."



## Page 3

He again quitted Ferrara, on an appointment “by Alphonso, but again soon returned:—

“On his return he established himself, with his two unmarried sisters, in the house he had built near the church of Saint Benedict, and resumed his former occupations. Of his lighter amusements, gardening was that in which he took most pleasure; and it is curious to know that he was as fond of altering the plan of both his house and grounds, as he was of remodelling the stanzas of the Orlando. His son, Virginio proposed writing an account of his illustrious father’s life; but unfortunately, he never pursued his design beyond the commencement, and a few memorandums are all that have come down to us. From these, however, we learn the singular fastidiousness of Ariosto in his horticultural amusements, and some other traits of his character, which render him not the less an object of our veneration, by showing us the simplicity as well as power of his mind. ‘In gardening,’ says Virginio, ‘he pursued the same plan as with his verses, never leaving any thing he had planted more than three months in the same place: and, if he set a fruit-tree, or sowed seed of any kind, he would go so often to examine it, and see if it were growing, that he generally ended with spoiling or breaking off the bud.’

“We learn, from the same interesting document, that he had at first no intention of building a house for constant residence in this garden, but that, having raised a mere cottage for temporary shelter, he grew so fond of the spot, that he wished never to leave it. The structure, after all, was not fully suited to his taste, and he felt as great an inclination to improve it by continual alterations as his garden. His constant lamentation was, that he could not change the arrangement of his house as he could that of his verses: and a person having asked him one day, how it happened that he who could describe castles and palaces so magnificently, had built such a cottage, he replied, that he made his verses without the aid of money.

“In his favourite garden he passed many hours of the day, deriving new inspiration from its green and refreshing solitudes. The Orlando was still in progress, and still under correction, his confidence in himself, it seems, having been little increased either by years or practice. In speaking, however, on this subject, he was accustomed to say, that poetry might be compared to a laurel, which sprung up of itself, and which might be greatly improved by cultivation, but would lose all its natural beauty if too much meddled with:—this is the case, he would continue, with stanzas, which come into the mind, we know not how, and which may be improved by the correction of a little original roughness, but are deprived of all their grace and freshness by too nice a handling.”—  
(*Stebbing’s Life.*)

## Page 4

The life-time of Ariosto was shortened by the intensity with which he applied himself to the production of his works. One of his last labours was a corrected and enlarged edition of his splendid *Orlando Furioso*. The printing was, however, so badly executed, as to cause him to say "he had been assassinated by his printer." Mr. Stebbing observes, "it is probable that this circumstance, combined with the fatigue attending his close application while preparing the edition for the press, had a serious effect on his health, which now began to exhibit signs of rapid decline." [3] In the spring of 1533 he was seriously attacked with indigestion. The constant application of medicine to remove this complaint brought on a consumption, and on the night of June 6, in the same year, he breathed his last, "his death, it is worthy of mention, having been preceded only a few hours by the total destruction of Alphonso's splendid theatre by fire;" which theatre, it should be added, the poet had designed for his noble patron a few years before: "so superb and convenient was the structure, when finished, that it was the admiration of all Italy."

"Ferrara, all Italy, and even Europe, lamented Ariosto as the first poet of the age, and as worthy of being enrolled in the same chart of fame with the greatest that had ever lived. His funeral was rendered remarkable by the attendance of a large body of monks, who to honour his memory, followed him, contrary to the rules of their order, to the grave. His son, Virginio, shortly after built a small chapel in his garden, and formed a mausoleum to which he intended to remove his remains, but the same monks prohibited it, and the body was left in the humble tomb in which it was originally deposited, till the new church of S. Benedetto was built, when Agostino Mosti, a gentleman of Ferrara, raised above it a monument more worthy of the poet. In 1612 his great grandson, Ludovico, erected a still nobler one, and removed the ashes of his ancestor from the tomb of Agostino, as the latter had done from the one in which they were originally deposited. This monument of Ludovico, which still exists, is built of the most costly marble, and adorned with two statues representing Glory and Poetry, together with an effigy of the poet in alabaster."

Lord Byron illustrates a singular circumstance respecting the tomb of Ariosto. "Before the remains were removed from the Benedictine Church to the Library of Ferrara, his bust, which surmounted the tomb, was struck by lightning, and a crown of iron laurels melted away:—

"The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust  
The iron crown of laurels' mimic'd leaves;  
Nor was the ominous element unjust,  
For the true laurel-wreath which glory weaves  
Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves,  
And the false semblance but disgraced his brow;  
Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,  
Know, that the lightning sanctifies below  
Whate'er it strikes;—yon head is doubly sacred now." [4]

## Page 5

The transfer of these sacred ashes on the 6th of June, 1801, was one of the most brilliant spectacles of the short-lived Italian republic, and to consecrate the memory of the ceremony, the once famous fallen *Intrepidi* were revived, and re-formed into the Ariostean academy. The large public place through which the procession paraded, was then for the first time called Ariosto Square.[5]

We must return to Mr. Stebbing's delightful *Lives of the Italian Poets*, which work has so frequently aided us in the previous columns.

[1] For these Lord B. acknowledges his obligation to his excellent friend J.C. Hobhouse, Esq. M.P.

[2] In "Lives of the Italian Poets." By the Rev. Henry Stebbing, vol. ii.

[3] Few persons will be disposed to question this extreme sensitiveness, since instances of similar effects on men of genius are by no means rare. Whoever has read Mr. Moore's *Life of Byron* must have remarked the asperity with which he inveighs against blundering printers in the Letters to Mr. Murray, his publisher.

[4] "Childe Harold," canto 4, st. xli.

[5] Notes to lines 1 and 2 of the preceding stanza.

\* \* \* \* \*

## FANNY.

(*For the Mirror.*)

"I saw thy form in youthful prime,  
Nor thought that pale decay  
Would steal before the steps of time,  
And waste thy bloom away."—MOORE.

Her place of rest is mantled o'er  
With dews of early morning;  
She heeds not now the winter's roar,  
Nor flowery spring's adorning.

Alike to her, when summer's heat  
Glows on her verdant bed,



Or when the snows of winter beat,  
And a fleecy covering shed.

And rarely do they mention *her*,  
Who most her fate should mourn;  
And little did they weep for her,  
Who never can return.

But back to memory let me bring  
Her laughing eyes of blue:  
She was, on earth, as fair a thing  
As fancy ever drew.

She lov'd and was beloved again!  
And quickly flew the winged hours;  
Love seem to wreath his fairy chain  
Of blooming amaranthine flow'rs.

She deem'd not time could ever blight  
That whisper'd tale she lov'd to hear;  
Alas! there came a gloomy night,  
That threw its shadows on her bier.

He told her time should never see  
The hour he would forget her—  
That future years should only be  
Fresh links to bind him to her;

That distant lands his steps might trace,  
And lovely forms he'd see,  
But Fanny's dear, remembered face,  
His polar-star should be.

"O! ever shall I be the same,  
Whatever may betide me,—  
Remembrance whispers Fanny's name,  
And brings her form beside me.

## Page 6

"Believe, believe, when far away,  
Distance but closer draws the chain;  
When twilight veils the 'garish day,'  
Remembrance turns to thee again."

He's gone!—but Fancy in her ear  
Still murmurs on his last farewell,  
While Hope dries in her eye the tear,  
And bids her on each promise dwell.

And long she hop'd—from day to day,—  
From early morn to dusky eve  
Her thoughts were wand'ring far away,  
Nor deem'd that he could e'er deceive.

Fond maid'—he thinks no more on thee—  
He mocks at thy enduring faith;  
While the foul tongue of calumny  
Accelerates thy early death.

This world to her a desert grew,  
The sunny heavens no more were fair;  
Fast gathering tears obscured her view,  
And only night's dark clouds were there.

Faded and chang'd the glorious dream,  
The vision bright that floated round her;  
And death was in the ghastly gleam  
That gave her eyes unearthly splendour.

She lingered not, to feel that earth  
Is rife with Disappointment's thorn—  
That vows of faith are little worth,  
And fleeting as the hues of morn.

Farewell! farewell! pale lilies drooping  
On her low bed as emblems wave;—  
And see!—the angel Pity stooping  
To shed her tear on Fanny's grave!

*Kirton Lindsey.*

ANNE R.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE “HALCYON” BIRD.

(To the Editor.)

The Halcyon is now only known by the name of the King Fisher (*ispida*, the *alcedo ispida* of Linnaeus), a very beautiful bird, frequenting waters, and feeding on fish. It builds in deep holes in the banks of rivers, and lays five, or, according to some, nine eggs. It much approaches to the Picus, or Woodpecker, in many points; but wants its great character, which is, the having two toes behind. The legs of this bird are very short, and are black before and red behind; its colours, particularly its green and blue, which are its general ones, are extremely bright and beautiful. It takes its prey after the manner of the Osprey, balancing itself at a certain distance over the water for a considerable space, and then darting below the surface, brings up the prey in its feet. While it remains suspended in the air, on a bright day, the plumage exhibits a most beautiful variety of very dazzling and brilliant colours.

This bird was called Halcyon by the ancients. Aristotle has described the bird and its nest; which, according to him, resembled those concretions that are formed by the sea water, and fashioned in the shape of a long necked gourd, hollow within, but so narrow at the entrance, that if it overset the water could not enter. This nest was called Halcyoneum, and had medical virtues ascribed to it: it was also

## Page 7

a floating one; and therefore it was necessary for the poets who have described it to place it on a tranquil sea, and to supply the bird with charms to allay the fury of a turbulent element during its incubation, for it had at that season power over the seas and winds. During the days of this bird's incubation, in the depth of winter, the mariner might sail in full security; and therefore they were called "Halcyon Days."

*Lambeth.*

WALTER E.C.

\* \* \* \* \*

*(From another Correspondent.)*

In the agreeable communications of your correspondents, they seem in their quotations to have overlooked the following, from Dryden:—

"Secure as when the halcyon breeds, with these  
He that was born to drown might cross the seas."  
*Astraea Redux.*

And again, in his stanzas on the death of Oliver Cromwell—

"And wars have that respect for his repose  
As winds for halcyons when they breed at sea."

Cowley likewise, in his preface to his Miscellanies, says, talking of his mind, "It must, like the halcyon, have fair weather to breed in."

The story of Ceyx and Alcyone is beautifully told in Ovid, Met. 11. fab. 10.

\* \* \* \* \*

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

*(For the Mirror.)*

In the vale of Evesham, was fought the most memorable battle recorded in the annals of English history, between Simon de Mountfort, the powerful Earl of Leicester, and Prince Edward, afterwards King Edward the First; in which the earl was completely defeated, and the refractory barons, with most of their adherents taken or slain. This important battle restored Henry the Third to his throne and liberty. When he had ascended the

throne, he determined to still further curtail the enormous power of the barons; and by his writs summoned together, as his advisers, representatives from numerous cities and boroughs, as well as counties; the battle of Evesham therefore may be considered, says a modern writer, "*as the origin of our present House of Commons.*"

The learned John Selden says, "All are involved in a parliament. There was a time when all men had their voice in choosing knights. About Henry the Sixth's time they found the inconvenience, so one parliament made a law, that only he that had forty shillings per annum should give his voice, they under should be excluded." "In a word (says Chamberlayne) a parliament's authority is most absolute; a parliament can do all that *Senatus populusque Romanus* could do, *centuriatis Comitibus seu Tributis*; it represents the whole kingdom, so that the consent of the parliament is presumed to be the consent of every man in England."

P.T.W.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE LEGACY OF THE SWORD.





## Page 8

*(For the Mirror.)*

It is thine—it shall win thee a wreath for thy brow  
When thy spirit seems more energetic than now;—  
It is thine in the war-cloud of gloom and of fire,  
The pride of thy kindred—the sword of thy sire!

It is thine—let the bright rose around it entwine,—  
Let it glance in the sunbeam which smiles on the shrine,  
And sheathe it triumphant when cravens retire,  
The pride of thy household—the sword of thy sire!

It is thine—but the warrior who bore it is laid  
Where the rose throws its balm, and the cypress its shade,  
And churls and marauders have ceased to retire  
From the star of the battle—the sword of thy sire!

It is thine—thou shall wave it with banner and plume  
When the trumpet is heard in the war-cloud of gloom:  
It is thine to defend thee when rebels conspire,  
The choice of thy childhood—the sword of thy sire!

*Deal.*

G.R.C. OR, REGINALD AUGUSTINE.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.

\* \* \* \* \*

### MAVROVITCH, THE POLE.

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

It seems that Valodimir Mavrovitch, the fratricide, was the second son of Count Baileskow, the representative of one of the oldest and most renowned families in Poland. In his youth, Valodimir was the most elegant boy almost ever seen, and scarcely less remarkable for talent than beauty; but he had a peculiar enthusiasm about him, in which, as his tutor, Father Theophilus, often said, lay his destiny. “In all other respects, he is only,” said the father, “a nobler youth than common; but in this singular endowment he has something supernatural to man. He is without fear—he knows not

what it is; and, with a dexterity inconceivable, accomplishes the most abstruse and difficult purposes. In his lessons, such is his aptitude, that he learns as if he had brought knowledge with him into the world; and in field-sports, the chase, and all exercises, he possesses an ardour and courage by which he outstrips every competitor. His generosity is equally unbounded; and whatever he undertakes is pursued with an indefatigable eagerness that knows not impediment; but amidst this unexampled energy in purpose there is cause for fear. It matters not to him, when once interested, whether his object be good or bad; and in this fatal inability to discriminate the value of his aims lies his danger.”

(We are compelled considerably to abridge this story to suit our limits.—The mystical portion of it, or “the story of the Demon,” as the narrator, a Pole, calls it, is thus told to an English tourist:)—

“When I was on the eve of my departure from the castle of Baileskow, my paternal inheritance, and the residence of my mother, to make a tour through Germany and Italy, the carriage being at the gate, and the servants with torches around—for it was then before the dawn of day—as I crossed the court from the hall-door to embark, an old man met me. He had the air of a priest, but not exactly the garb, and his eyes, I thought—or it might be an after fancy—were luminous.

## Page 9

“‘Valodimir Mavrovitch,’ said the stranger, ‘THINK!’—I would have answered, but the torch-light which shone through the gateway upon him shifted, and I was surprised that he too had disappeared, like one of the shadows of the servants on the castle wall.

“I was surprised at the brief and emphatic admonition of the Demon, for it was no less; but instead of obeying his injunction, after embarking in the carriage, I fell asleep.

“In the course of the journey, I met with neither accident nor adventure; but in the evening of the afternoon that I reached Munich, I strolled out from the hotel at which I had put up, and entered, after a short walk, a coffee-house, in which several persons were smoking, with ices and liquors before them. One table only was vacant—it was near the door, and it had no light upon it. I entered and sat down at this table, and ordered a cigar; which being brought, with a candle, I began to smoke, and was thinking on the admonition of the mysterious stranger in the court of the castle. My back was towards the door, when presently feeling as it were a hand laid on my shoulder, I hastily turned round, and at my elbow beheld the stranger again. ‘BEWARE!’ said he, and withdrew.

“This incident affected me more than the former: it seemed to be couched with anxiety, as if some danger impended; but at the same moment two young officers came in, and seeing no vacant places, seated themselves opposite to me at the same table. They were about my own age, of a gallant air, and observing that I was a stranger, they addressed me in a generous, gentlemanly manner. I was much pleased with their conversation, and they professed themselves equally so with mine. Like other young men, we became, while I stayed at Munich, friends, and in their agree, able society both the ‘THINK!’ and ‘BEWARE!’ were forgotten. On my departure for Vienna, they gave me letters to their friends in that metropolis, by whom I was received with marked distinction.

“I had not, however, been many days in Vienna, when one evening, returning from a party on foot, my servant having neglected to bring my carriage, a sudden stream of light from a window fell upon a figure which I perceived walking before me. He turned round at the same moment, and I beheld my warden.—‘STOP!’ said the apparition; I did so; but in a moment the light vanished, and he was gone.

“This third warning took some effect: it was mystical, and I pondered in a vain endeavour to ascertain to what it could allude. My conjectures were fruitless: I could only recall that in the course of the evening I had been much excited by the beauty of a young countess, for whom, on account of her marriage, the ball had been given. The count, her husband, was a noble and elegant young man, and their mutual attachment had been a theme of admiration from their childhood in their respective families.—‘STOP!’ I repeated to myself, as I entered my lodgings, ‘what can that have to do with aught that I have undertaken?’ But in the course of a few days I became myself again, the admonisher was forgotten, and I could think only of the beautiful countess. I have

just told my confessor that in less than a month her husband shot himself, and she fled from my arms to a nunnery.

## Page 10

“This affair obliged me to quit Vienna more abruptly than I intended; but instead of going to Venice, I went to Paris, taking Frankfort in my way. Being entirely unknown at Frankfort, I hastily visited alone every thing remarkable in the city, resolving to leave it in the morning; but the day was sultry, and in the evening, partly owing to fatigue, I felt myself tired and indisposed, and remained there next day. In the afternoon I found myself better; and as a public pleasure-garden was near the hotel where I stopped, I went to amuse myself for a few minutes there. Whether custom or any festival had that evening assembled an unusual concourse of people I never inquired, but the garden was crowded with a gay multitude, and music with great hilarity enlivened the entertainment. I walked about delighted with the scene.

“In the course of my sauntering amidst the arbours, I came to an alcove a little remote from the more stirring cloud, and in it were several gentlemen playing cards: two were at chess, and by their side a little boy, seemingly one of their sons, amusing himself with throwing dice. After looking for a minute or two, I went to the child, and in sheer playfulness challenged the boy for a throw. At the same instant that I took the box in my hand, some one touched my elbow; I looked round, and the old man was there—— ‘PAUSE!’ said he. In that instant a rope-dancer at some distance fell, a shriek rose, my attention was roused, and I missed again the stranger; but when tranquillity was restored, my desire to play at dice returned, and I again challenged the child to whom I lost several pieces of money, which the lucky boy was as proud of gaining as the conqueror at the Battle of Prague.

“That was the first time I had ever played at dice. My education was recluse. I had no companions, and we had no dice in the castle. The idle game pleased me. When I returned to the hotel, I ordered dice, and amused myself all the evening with casting them, actuated by a persuasion that there must be a mode of doing so by which any desired number may be thrown. This notion took possession of my mind, and I stayed several days at Frankfort, employed in attempts to make the discovery; at last I did succeed. With a pair of dice I attained a sleight by which I could cast what I pleased; but with it I also made another discovery: it was only with perfect cubes I could be so successful. I tried many, but all, in any degree imperfect, could not be so commanded.

“I then went to Paris, where, being well introduced, I became a favourite. The ladies could not make enough of me, and I felt no *ennui* to lead me to the gaming-tables. But one night, on which I had an appointment with a fascinating favourite, when I went to her house I found she had been seized with the small-pox. To shun reflection on the loathsome disease, I went to a house which I knew was much frequented by some of my friends, and, as I expected, met several. They invited me to play, and as I was ignorant of cards, they consented to throw dice, because, not aware of my art with them, they supposed, seeing me out of spirits, that it would rouse me. We played for trifling stakes, and to their indescribable astonishment, I won every throw, and, doubling our stakes, at last, a large sum of money.

## Page 11

"Next day the lady died. My grief was such that I could not but look upon her. Her waiting gentlewoman consented, and I was shown into the apartment where she lay, at the moment when the attendants were preparing the body. Such a spectacle! I flew in anguish again to the gaming-house; I dived again, as if a furor had possessed me; I staked largely, and won every thing. All the guests and the plundered were amazed at my success, and collected in crowds around. The pressure upon me was inconvenient. I turned to request the spectators would stand back. At my elbow again stood the Demon, 'GO ON,' were his words. I was petrified, and he was away.

"Unable to proceed with the effects of the surprise, my losing antagonist imagined that I was making some sign to a secret confidant, but not daring to express his suspicion, only requested the dice should be changed. They were so. The new ones were not cubes, and they were uneven in weight. I lost back the greatest part of my winnings; and I also lost character. It was observed that I threw the casts in a different manner from that in which I had thrown the first dice. A suspicion arose among the spectators that I did so on purpose to lose, and in a few evenings I was stripped of the greater part of my fortune, for every evening the dice were changed, and sometimes often in the course of a night. At last I quitted Paris, with the matured character of a thorough libertine and an unfair gamester.

"I took my passage at Marseilles, for Naples, and at the time appointed for embarkation, went to the mole to go on board.

"It was evening; the sun had set some time; the beacon of the port was lighted; and the dawn of the moon was brightening the eastern horizon. The populace, who were enjoying the cool air, had not however dispersed, but were standing in numerous groups around. A feeling at the moment came upon me that the Demon was near, and I resolved if it appeared again to employ my sword, although at the time persuaded that it was but a form impalpable. In the same moment I saw it before me; out flew my sword, and in the instant I felt that it pierced a mortal heart; but instead of the old visionary-man, I beheld a boatman dead and bleeding at my feet. A wild cry arose. The mob seized me, and I was carried to prison. Next day the case was investigated before the court of justice. I related the simple fact. A glib advocate doubted my asseverations; but the spectators, who were numerous, gave the fullest credit to the story, and I was spared the doom of a murderer, because the judges were of opinion that I could have no motive to commit the crime, and had perpetrated the deed under some influence of temporary lunacy.

"That was the wanton assassination with which all Europe rang at the time, and was ascribed to the extravagance of my reprobate nature.

## Page 12

“After my liberation, I proceeded to Naples, and mingling in all the pleasures of that luxurious city, in addition to my dexterity with the dice, I acquired equal skill at the cards. In the study of them I found my sight possessed of a faculty not before imagined. The sharpness of my sight soon enable me to discover at once all the cards of a pack distinctly from each other, and I speedily was master of every popular game. This superiority made me heedless of my disbursements; I could at any time supply my purse at the gaming-table, and as a consequence of that independence, I surrendered myself to enjoyment, and for years lived in riot and revelry, unmolested by the Demon.

“An unvaried career of licentiousness was not, however, my lot. An irascible countryman of yours, a lieutenant of the royal navy, who was introduced to me at a party, suddenly seemed to scowl at me with the visage of the demon, as we were in the heat of an argument, and I struck him in the face. A duel was the consequence, and he disabled me in the right arm. That accident destroyed my sleight-of-hand with the dice. Thus was one source of my income cut off; a slight fever soon afterwards left its dregs in my eyes, I could no longer distinguish the cards with my wonted accuracy, and thus fell into poverty.

“Disturbed at the blight which had fallen on my fortunes, I shunned the haunts of the gay and reckless, and became a cicerone to the travellers; for my reputation as a libertine had reached Poland, and I was ashamed to return home.

“One day, when I had conducted an English family to Herculaneum, I felt myself a little indisposed while showing them the theatre, and, with much charitable feeling, they insisted on my going up to the fresh air, and leave them with the common guide. Glad to avail myself of their kindness, I instantly retired, and at a short distance from the opening where we descended, I sat down on the capital of a defaced Corinthian column, to wait their return.

“While sitting on that spot, I cast my eyes accidentally towards the summit of Vesuvius, then emitting, as if panting for breath, occasional volumes of white smoke. As they rolled along the speckless expanse of the calm blue firmament, they assumed various beautiful forms, and I was watching their progress, forgetful of all but the visible poesy of their appearance, when the voice of the Demon whispered, as if its dreadful lips were at my ear—‘YOUR BROTHER.’

“I started from my seat, and looked behind me in horror; but only the bay, with its romantic shores, was in sight.

“When I had shaken off the consternation of the moment, I resumed my seat, and began to examine myself as to the purpose suggested by the portentous words. My cogitation was not long. The count was unmarried, and was the only impediment between me and the family estates.



“You can imagine what followed: here I am, and this night I shall be with the Demon; but I should continue the remainder of my story. When the English travellers returned, they spoke to me with a friendly tenderness, and something in my appearance and manners had so interested them in my favour, that the old gentleman presented me with a purse of guineas. That money enabled me at once to return to Warsaw, where I consummated the instigation of the Demon.”



## Page 13

Such was the tale told me by the unhappy man—wonderful certainly in its circumstances, but widely different from the terrific chaos of the popular belief, and simple in its incidents, compared to the incantations with which the apparitions of the tremendous visitant were invested by the people.

I would have questioned him more particularly, but our interview was interrupted by the arrival of the ecclesiastical procession, and I was obliged to leave the prison. After the clergy, all but one, who remained with him to the last, had left him, nobody was admitted. The crowd, however, round the scaffold continued all day to increase, and the bells to toll. At last the sun set, the guards lighted their torches, and only the black scaffold and the upturned faces of the multitude were visible from where I stood. The prison gate was soon after opened; the culprit, wrapped in a winding sheet, came forth, attended by the municipal officers, and proceeded with the funereal sound of trumpets to the dreadful spot where the two executioners, with their arms and throats bare, lifted a covering from the rack, and took their stations beside it, holding the handspikes, for turning the rending wheels, like muskets, on their shoulders. The moment that Mavrovitch mounted the scaffold, the trumpets and the tolling bells ceased; all was silent, and he walked with a firm tread towards the engine of torture. The executioners stepped forward, each took him by the arm. At the same moment a wild shriek rose; but what ensued is so well known, that I may spare myself from further recital.—*New Mon. Mag.*—(abridged.)

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## THE TOPOGRAPHER.

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### MONMOUTHSHIRE.

(*For the Mirror.*)

Soon round us spread the hill and dales  
Where Geoffrey spun his magic tales  
And call'd them history. The land  
Whence Arthur sprung, and all his band  
Of gallant knights.

### BLOOMFIELD'S BANKS OF WYE.

This county, the inland parts of which consist of verdant meadow or arable land, is bounded on all sides excepting that which joins the Severn, by ranges of hills which have generally either been covered with woods or devoted to the feeding of cattle. The

southern or Severn side presents to the view well cultivated lands, gently rising from the shore.

Monmouth, the capital town, is situated at the confluence of the Wye and Munnow, “in a vale,” says Gray, “which is the delight of my eyes, and the very seat of pleasure.” It is surrounded on all sides by hills, which by affording the lowlands shelter from the bleak winds, promote vegetation, and present a beautiful prospect of hanging woods, interspersed with corn and pasture land.

## Page 14

The town consists principally of one long and handsome street, at the end of which is an old tower, which formerly defended the Munnow Bridge. There are a few remains of the castle in which Henry V. was born; an elegant and highly ornamented residence "the Castle House," has been built within its site, and partly of its materials. Monmouth is supposed to be the ancient Blestium. Abergavenny on the Usk is situated in a spot which partakes still more of the character of Welsh scenery: on the south west rises the Blorench mountain, in height 1,720 feet; to the north west the still higher mountain of the Sugar Loaf towers amidst the clouds. To the north east lies St. Michael's Mountain, or the Great Skyrrid, at one end of which is a remarkable chasm about 300 feet in breadth. The castle at Abergavenny formerly belonged to the Nevilles. The Welsh chroniclers have celebrated the Mountains of Carno, near this place, as having been bedewed with the blood of the Saxons.

The magnificent ruins of Ragland Castle lie half way between Monmouth and Abergavenny. Charles I. was entertained here during the first troubles of his reign, with noble hospitality by the aged Marquess of Worcester, who surrendered the castle, after a siege of almost three months, to the Parliamentary army under Sir Thomas Fairfax, in 1646:

"Majestic Ragland! Harvests wave  
Where thundering hosts their watchword gave,  
When cavaliers, with downcast eye,  
Struck the last flag of loyalty."

BLOOMFIELD.

His son Edward, the second Marquess, was the author of the celebrated "Century of Inventions," in which the first hint of the steam engine appeared, which he calls "By divine providence, and heavenly inspiration, a stupendous water commanding engine, boundless for height or quantity;" and so delighted was he at the discovery of what he terms "The most stupendous work in the whole world," that he returned thanks to God for having vouchsafed him an insight into so great a secret of nature. He died in 1667, and his remains were conveyed with mournful solemnity to the cemetery of the Beaufort family in Ragland Church.

The town of Caerleon on the Usk, abounds with Roman remains, and is supposed to have been built on the site of a British town. Giraldus Cambrensis writes that "very eminent men were brought up and taught here," which countenances the supposition that its real name may have been Cathain Leigean, "the city of learning."

About two miles to the east of the mouth of the Usk rises Goldcliff, a solitary hill amidst the moors on the banks of the Severn. It derives its name from its glittering appearance when the sun beams on it. "I cannot be persuaded," says Camden, that "there is a

flower here without fruit, were any man to search into the veins, and using the direction of art enter into the inmost and most secret bowels of the earth.”

## Page 15

Caerwent, the Venta Silurum of the Romans, is now an inconsiderable village; it was once a seaport, but at present is two miles distant from the Severn; it occupies a gently inclining plain. Mr. Coxe, in his "Tour through Monmouthshire," has given a plan of the Roman town, which was defended on all sides except the southern, by a deep fosse. The walls are from twelve to twenty-four feet in height, and from nine to twelve in thickness. Many curious figures which have been discovered in the pavements, have been destroyed through the ignorance of the country people. The mounds and mouldering walls in the adjacent fields, present melancholy memorials of the former grandeur of this place.

The village of Trelech is remarkable for three Druidical stones, which give name to it. Harold here defeated the Britons, and from an inscription on a pedestal in the village, we may suppose that a large tumulus near this spot, contains the bones of the slain.

At the mansion of Courtfield, at Welsh Bicknor, the seat of the Roman Catholic family of Vaughan, Henry V. is traditionally reported to have been nursed, under the care of the Countess of Salisbury; a monumental effigy of a lady in accordance with the style of that age, is in the church.

The celebrated ruins of Tintern Abbey, on the banks of the Wye, which are kept in high preservation by the Duke of Beaufort, afford a noble specimen of Gothic architecture, and retain marks of their ancient magnificence:

"The fair wrought shaft all ivy bound  
The tow'ring arch with foliage crown'd  
That trembles on its brow sublime,  
Triumphant o'er the spoils of Time."

These remains acquire additional beauty from their romantic situation. The roof has fallen in; but the pillars and tracery of many of the windows are perfect. The green lawn is covered with fragments of sculpture and memorials of those who once dwelt within this magnificent pile:

"But all is still. The chequer'd floor,  
Shall echo to the step no more;  
Nor airy roof the strain prolong  
Of vesper chant or choral song."

BLOOMFIELD.

In the year 1634, Colonel Sandys attempted to make the Wye navigable by means of locks, but as this experiment was unsuccessful, they were afterwards removed. This river from the confluence of its mountain streams after heavy rains, is subject to sudden inundations, which though in many respects injurious to the farmer, greatly fertilize the

meadows in its vicinity, and especially those near Monmouth, by the valuable matter it deposits. The tide of the Severn, from the peculiar projection of the rocks at the mouth of the Wye, flows up the latter river with great rapidity, to the height of more than forty feet. "The highest tide," says Mr. Coxe, "within the memory of the present generation, rose to fifty-six feet."

To the admirers of the architecture of the baronial mansions of the middle ages, the remains of the numerous castles which have been erected on the banks of the Wye to repel the incursions of the Welsh, by the Talbots and Strongbows, and other renowned families of former days, will afford the highest gratification, and give a silent though powerful admonition, that human grandeur endureth but for a day:

## Page 16

“On the Gwentian shore  
The regal banner streams no more.  
Nettles and vilest weeds that grow,  
To mock poor grandeur’s head laid low,  
Creep round the turret’s valour rais’d,  
And flaunt where youth and beauty gazed.”

W.

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

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## THE SUNDAY LIBRARY.

This work is intended to consist of “*Manuals of Religious Edification*, more especially adapted for the LORD’S DAY; as containing the sentiments of many of the more eminent Divines of the Church of England in the *Discourses* delivered from their pulpits:” or, in plain terms, it is to comprise a Selection of Sermons from the most eminent Divines of the Church of England, chiefly within the last half century. Its editorship is entrusted to the learned and accomplished Dr. Dibdin, who enforces the publication of a *religious* Library, in these energetic words:—“Let it be specially impressed upon the minds of Christians of EVERY persuasion, that at NO moment can a work, similar to the present, have stronger claims upon their attention and support, than at *this precise period*, when the elements of civil society seem to be agitated in a variety of directions, and when a sound and sober exposition of Scriptural Truths may essentially contribute to the support of the best interests of the COUNTRY.”

The two volumes before us contain the incomparable Mount Sermon by Bishop Porteus; Bishop Bloomfield on the Choice of a Religion; two Sermons by Paley; prefixed to the latter is a Memoir, concluding with these excellent observations by the Editor:—

“The Sermons of Paley were chiefly a posthumous publication. They were preached to, as they were written for, a country congregation; they are therefore divested of studied ornament of style, and elaboration of argument. But they bear the peculiar impress of the author’s own powerful and unsophisticated mind; and for strength of conception, and clearness and sometimes vigour of expression, it may be questioned whether many in them have been ever surpassed. They are not, strictly speaking, eloquent; but there is a force, as well as a novelty of treatment, in many of them, that put them above all comparison. They are familiar without coarseness, and terse without obscurity. Their



main charm may be said to consist in the simplicity and strength with which religious and moral truths are handled; the uncompromising and straightforward manner in which human frailties and sins are exposed; the kindliness of exhortation to repentance and godliness of living; the power, purity, and comfort of the Gospel-dispensation; and, above all, the perfect absence of fanaticism, of an overheated fancy, and of a persecuting spirit. But these



## Page 17

qualities, which so eminently distinguish the *writer*, ought in some degree to possess the *reader*, of the sermons in question. For the kindly *reception* of the scriptural truths enforced by Paley, there must be nothing ascetic, nothing morose, nothing self-willed and intolerant, in the mind of him who sets himself in right earnest to the task of their perusal. In like manner, all highly wrought, impassioned, and uncontrollable emotions, which carry the infatuated understanding into a wide and wild sea of doubt and distraction, must be absent from the reader. It cannot be dissembled that, when read with a proper spirit, we rise from the perusal of Paley's Sermons not less convinced of the necessity of putting a guard upon the unruliness of our passions, than of living in peace, goodwill, and brotherly love with all mankind."

Among the remainder in the first volume (in all 16,) is Bishop Horne's *Life a Journey*, upon that touching line in Psalm cxix.—

"I am a stranger upon the earth."

How beautifully are the consolations of our blessed religion set forth in the imagery of the subsequent extract:—

"Although the traveller's first and chief delight is the recollection of his home, which lies as a cordial at his heart, and refreshes him every where and at all seasons, this does by no means prevent him from taking that pleasure in the several objects presenting themselves on the road, which they are capable of affording, and were indeed intended to afford. He surveys, in passing, the works and beauties of nature and art, meadows covered with flocks, valleys waving with corn, verdant woods, blooming gardens, and stately buildings. He surveys and enjoys them, perhaps, much more than their owners do, but leaves them without a sigh, reflecting on the far greater and sincerer joys that are waiting for him at home. Such exactly is the temper and disposition with which the Christian traveller should pass through the world. His religion does not require him to be gloomy and sullen, to shut his eyes, or to stop his ears; it debars him of no pleasure, of which a thinking and reasonable man would wish to partake. It directs him not to shut himself up in a cloister, alone, there to mope and moan away his life; but to walk abroad, to behold the things which are in heaven and earth, and to give glory to him who made them; reflecting, at the same time that if, in this fallen world, which is soon to be consumed by fire, there are so many objects to entertain and delight him, what must be the pleasures of that world which is to endure for ever, and to be his eternal home; Flocks feeding in green meadows, by rivers of water, remind him of the future happy condition of the righteous, when 'they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, for the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water.' From fading plantations he carries his thoughts to the paradise

## Page 18

of God, where, in immortal youth and beauty, grows the tree of life, whose tree never withers, and which bears its fruit through the unnumbered ages of eternity. Earthly cities and palaces cause him to remember thee, O thou holy city, heavenly Jerusalem, whose walls are salvation, and thy gates praise, and the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple in the midst of thee! He who sees the world in this light will draw its sting, and disarm it of its power to hurt; he will so use it as not to abuse it, because the fashion of it passes away; he will so enjoy it, as to be always ready to leave it for a better; he will not think of settling at his inn, because it is pleasantly situated. He remembers that he is a traveller; he forgets not that he is a stranger in the earth."

What will the scoffers and scorers, the haters of good works, say to the sacred truths—the soft-breathing simplicity—of this extract. How painful then is it to turn to the idle speculations and feverish fancies of their philosophical unbelief.

Dr. Dibdin has supplied the sketches of the Reverend Authors and the Notes. One of the latter on a passage in the Sermon, *Scripture Difficulties Vindicated*, by the Rev. C. Benson, relates to a noble, but lamentably sceptical, poet.

We have looked through the second volume, which contains twenty-three Sermons, and notice this beautiful passage from a Sermon by Dr. Townson:

"And, to take up once more the comparison of life to a voyage, in like manner it fares with those, who have steadily and religiously pursued the course which heaven pointed out to them. We shall sometimes find, by their conversation towards the end of their days, that they are filled with hope, and peace, and joy; which, like those refreshing gales and reviving odours to the seaman, are breathed forth from Paradise upon their souls; and give them to understand with certainty, that God is bringing them unto their desired haven."

(*Note by the Editor.*) The poetical spirit of this paragraph is not less remarkable, than its discriminative piety. It seems probable, that Dr. Townson had in view the fine passage of Milton:

And of pure, now purer air,  
Meets his approach; and to the heart inspires  
Vernal delight and joy:  
now gentle gales,  
Fanning their odoriferous wings dispense  
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole  
Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail  
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past  
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow



Sabean odours, from the spicy shore  
Of Araby the bless'd; with such delay  
Well pleas'd, they slack their course; and many a league  
Cheer'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles:  
So entertain'd those odorous sweets

*Paradise Lost*, iv. 152.

Another passage, scarcely less poetical, and, in moral beauty, far superior, affords a still more striking coincidence:

## Page 19

The merchant, who towards spicy regions sails,  
Smells their perfume far off, in adverse gales;  
With blasts which thus against the faithful blow,  
Fresh odorous breathings of God's goodness flow.

*Bp. Ken. Works, i. 494.*

It is an interesting proof of the fertility of Dr. Townson's mental resources, that in the original manuscript, he has left behind, on a separate leaf, an equally fine illustration; to be occasionally substituted for that which has called forth these remarks. It were injustice to withhold it from the reader:

"In this situation, the devout Christian may be compared to a traveller journeying towards some fair city, in which he has beforehand established a good correspondence. He has climbed the hill that stands next to it; and, though the distance still forbids him to take a distinct survey of it, yet the prospect of its towers and buildings rising before him, of its spires and pinnacles glittering in the air, and of peace and pleasantness in its borders, revives his heart. The consideration of his past perils and fatigues now gives him pleasure. He is thankful to a gracious Providence, that has led him almost through them, and brought him to a point, whence he has a downward and direct way to a place of rest and abode; in which he will meet with a cordial reception, and be delighted with new scenes of beauty, magnificence, and wonder. With such satisfaction doth faith fill the heart of the religious pilgrim and stranger, when he has nearly travelled through the changes and chances of this mortal life, and feels himself approaching to the heavenly Jerusalem, the abiding city."

The accomplished author, himself, like Milton, a traveller, here blends his own observation of foreign lands, with his recollections of our great poet:—

As when a scout  
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone  
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn,  
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,  
Which to his eye discovers unaware  
The goodly prospect of some foreign land  
First seen, or some renown'd metropolis,  
With glitt'ring spires and pinnacles adorn'd,  
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams.

*Paradise Lost, iii. 543.*

The *Sunday Library*, it should be added, is printed in correspondent style with the *Cabinet Cyclopaedia*, and each volume has a finely engraved Frontispiece Portrait.

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## **VENETIAN HISTORY.**

## Page 20

The *Family Library* Editor has judiciously enough filled his 20th volume with “Sketches” from the History of Venice. Another volume is promised, the present extending from the settlement of the Veneti in Italy to the year 1406. The intention is stated to be, “to present in detail some of the most striking incidents of the History of this great Republic, connecting them with each other by a brief and rapid survey of minor events;” for which purpose the Editor has freely taxed Sismondi and the late Count Daru. The result is one of the most enchanting volumes of historiettes that has ever fallen into our hands; illustrating, to be sure, numberless dark points, or “damned spots” of human history; “much of atrocious guilt, of oppression, cruelty, fraud, treachery, baseness, and ingratitude;” yet the very heinousness of these characteristics carries on and keeps up the intense interest of the volume.

We select for extract the “tragical tragedy” of Marino Faliero—not so much for its novelty to the reader, as for correcting an erroneous view into which the license of poetry may have led him:—

The name of Marino Faliero is familiar to English ears; but the reader who borrows his conception of the Doge of Venice from the modern drama in our language which purports to relate his story, will wander as far from historic truth as from nature and probability. The *Chronicle* of Sanuto, which the poet has avowed to be his basis, presents no trace of that false, overwrought, and unintelligible passion which, in the tragedy, is palmed upon us for nice sensitiveness to injured honour. We are told, indeed, that the angry old man had once so far indulged his choleric humour as to fell to the ground a somewhat tardy bishop during the celebration of a holy solemnity. We hear of a fiery temper, accustomed to command, elated by success, and in which, on the confession of Petrarch, who was personally well informed regarding it, valour predominated over prudence. These are the unsettled elements upon which the Tempter best loves to work; but the insanity and extravagance with which we must charge Faliero, if we suppose his attempt to overthrow the government of which he was chief, arose solely from an outrageous desire of revenge for a petty insult, are entirely gratuitous, and belong altogether to the poet. Madness of another kind, however, that of ambition, is clearly ascribable to him; and, if we take this as our key, much of the obscurity attendant upon a catastrophe which has been imperfectly and inadequately developed will be cleared away; we shall obtain a character little indeed awakening our sympathy, but yet not wholly at variance with our judgment; and although we may be astonished at, and recoil from the motives which prompted his crime, they will not be altogether of a class which sets our comprehension at defiance.[6]

## Page 21

At a banquet, which it was customary for the doge to celebrate in his palace, after the bull-hunt, on the Carnival Thursday, a squabble had arisen from some too pressing familiarity offered by one of the young gallants of the court to his mistress. Michele Steno, a gentleman of poor estate, was enamoured of a lady in attendance upon the dogaressa; and, presuming upon her favour, he was guilty of some freedom which led the doge to order his exclusion.—This command appears to have been executed with more than necessary violence; and the youth, fired by the indignity which disgraced him in the eyes of his mistress, sought revenge by assailing Faliero in that point in which he conceived him to be most vulnerable. He wrote on the doge's chair, in the council chamber, a few words reflecting upon the dogaressa: "Marino Faliero, husband of the lovely wife; he keeps, but others kiss her." [7] The offence was traced to its author; it was pitiful and unmanly; yet it scarcely deserved heavier punishment than that which the XL adjudged to it—namely, that Steno should be imprisoned for two months, and afterwards banished from the state for a year. But, to the morbid and excited spirit of Faliero, the petty affront of this rash youth appeared heightened to a state crime; and the lenient sentence with which his treason (for so he considered it) had been visited, was an aggravation of every former indignity offered to the chief magistrate by the oligarchy which affected to control him. Steno, he said, should have been ignominiously hanged, or at least condemned to perpetual exile.

On the day after the sentence, while the doge was yet hot in indignation, an event occurred which seems to have confirmed the chronicler whose steps we are following, in his belief in the doctrine of necessity. "Now it was fated," he tells us, "that my Lord Duke Marino was to have his head cut off. And as it is necessary, when any effect is to be brought about, that the cause of that effect must happen, it therefore came to pass"—that Bertuccio Israello, Admiral of the Arsenal, [8] a person apparently of no less impetuous passions than the doge himself, and who is described as possessed also of egregious cunning, approached him to seek reparation for an outrage. A noble had dishonoured him by a blow; and it was vain to ask redress for this affront from any but the highest personage in the state. Faliero, brooding over his own imagined wrongs, disclaimed that title, and gladly seized occasion to descant on his personal insignificance. "What wouldst thou have me do for thee?" was his answer: "Think upon the shameful gibe which hath been written concerning me, and think on the manner in which they have punished that ribald Michele Steno, who wrote it; and see how the Council of XL respect our person!" Upon this, the admiral returned—"My Lord Duke, if you would wish to make yourself a prince, and cut all those cuckoldy gentlemen to pieces, I have the heart, if you do but help me, to make you prince of all the state, and then you may punish them all." Hearing this, the duke said—"How can such a matter be brought about?" and so they discoursed thereon.

## Page 22

(To be concluded in our next.)

[6] Lord Byron's conception of Faliero's character and motives appears to us to be mistaken; but what is to be said to the countless impertinences and ingraftments upon history which M. de la Vigne has introduced into his French play on the same subject?

[7] "*Marin Falieri, dalla bella moglie, altri la gode, ed egli la mantiene.*"

[8] This officer was chief of the artisans of the Arsenal, and commanded the Bucentaur—for the safety of which, even if an accidental storm should arise, he was responsible with his life. He mounted guard at the Ducal Palace during an interregnum, and bore the red standard before the new doge on his inauguration; for which service his perquisites were the Ducal Mantle, and the two silver basins from which the doge scattered the regulated pittance which he was permitted to throw among the people.—*Amelot de la Houssaye*, 79.

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## MANNERS & CUSTOMS OF ALL NATIONS.

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### CAMBRIAN SUPERSTITIONS.

We noticed the preparation of this work at p. 315 of our last volume, and there gave a few anticipatory extracts. The author is Mr. W. Howells, of Tipton, whose good fortune it has been to secure a list of Subscribers to his work, of gratifying length and flattering rank. The origin of the volume is curious enough, and is thus explained in the Preface:

"My inducement for presenting to the public these tales of 'by-gone days' was the advertisement of the very Rev. Archdeacon Beynon, which appeared in the Carmarthen Journal, of May 21, 1830, proposing a reward of twenty guineas, with a medal value three guineas, for the *best printed* English Essay, 8vo. containing 500 pages, on the Superstitions, Ghosts, Legends, &c. of *all parts* of the principality, to be delivered *before February 3*, 1831. Now when the limited period proposed for the collection of 500 pages of matter, and the above little adjective *all* is considered, it must appear obvious that such an Herculean labour is not capable of being accomplished by *one* individual alone.—Imagining it, therefore, to be a matter of impossibility to perform what the very



reverend gentleman requires, I cannot consistently with propriety offer myself as a candidate, but will say—'*Palmarum qui meruit ferat.*'

“I have had considerable trouble to collect the stories which appear in the work, being also two years from attaining my majority, and having so short a period to collect them, as the book is hastily ushered before a discerning public, I trust they will overlook any imperfections which may appear.”

## Page 23

The production of the work is creditable to the enthusiasm of, legally speaking, the infant author; and we should be happy to learn that our insertion in the *Mirror* of some of the pieces in this volume has fostered its growth. We quote an interesting passage on

*Fairy Rings.*

In the youthful days of an aged friend of mine, the belief in fairies existed in many parts of Wales; and, when a “schoolboy, with his satchel,” unwillingly trudging to school, he has often observed, in a meadow near Conwil, Carmarthenshire, three small circles of grass, which appeared to have been weaved round the edges. Wondering much for what purpose they were ordained, he once asked his mother the use of them, when she gave him a severe injunction not to *approach* on any account, much less *enter* the rings, for, said she, they belong to the Bendith eu mammau (a species of fairies), and whoever enters them can never get out, it being enchanted ground.

These rings have not only been noticed by the illiterate, but by philosophers and learned characters, who have advanced two opinions respecting them. Some, among whom are Dr. Priestly and Mr. Jessop, upon practical and scientific observations, attributed them to lightning, but their experiments did not prove altogether satisfactory. Drs. Wollaston, Withering, and others, who had *duly* examined these spots, ascribed them to the growth of fungi, which opinion seems undoubtedly the best.—The rings vary in size and shape, some having seven yards of *bare*, with a patch of *green* grass a foot broad in the middle; others, of various sizes, are encompassed with grass much greener than that in the interior. It is rather remarkable that no beasts will eat of them, although some persons suppose that *sheep* will greedily devour the *grass*. Shakspeare thus speaks in his Tempest:

“Ye elves of hills, brooks, stagnant lakes, and groves,  
And ye that on the sands with printless foot,  
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him  
When he comes back; you demi puppets that  
By moonshine do the *green sour* ringlets make,  
Whereof the *ewe not bites*, and you whose pastime  
Is to make midnight mushrooms——.”

The following story is well known in Carmarthenshire:—A farmer going out one morning very early to fetch his horses from pasture, heard some delicious music, far sweeter he thought (no doubt) than ever bard produced from his *telyn* (harp); and being allured by it, as we read of men being allured of old by the enchanting voices of Sirens, he proceeded to the place whence the strains seemed to issue, and in a sequestered retreat beheld the elves footing it merrily. Wishing perhaps to obtain more extensive knowledge of these “dear little creatures,” he had the magnanimity to enter the ring, with the intention of joining their matachin, and soon had his desire gratified, for there

## Page 24

they kept him, dancing away, night and day, without intermission. His relatives at home were at a loss to know what had become of him, and immediately concluded that he had terminated his existence, or had gone on a journey; but days, weeks, and months rolled on, and no farmer appeared, nor were any tidings heard respecting him, until it chanced one day that a man passing by the lonely spot, saw him knocking his legs about as if he was bereft of his reason; and going up to him, inquired what caused him to be so merry, which broke the spell; and the farmer, as if waking out of a dream, exclaimed, "O dear! where are my horses?" and stepping out of the magical circle, fell down, and mingled his dust with the earth: no wonder, for he had been dancing without nourishment or food for more than a twelvemonth. If every fair dancer joined the Tylwyth teg's dance, how many beings would be danced out of the world?

This is credited, he informs me, in some parts of North Wales, at the present day. Two men travelling together, happened to be benighted soon after entering a wood, and one of them being fatigued, sat down and slept, but when he awoke could no where discover his companion; thinking he had travelled on, he proceeded, but when he arrived at home, was astonished at the inquiries respecting his fellow, and related that he had lost him while he slept. As there seemed to be a mystery in the case, the relatives of the absent individual went to the village wizard, who informed them that he was in the power and hands of the fairies, but if they would go to the place where he was missed by his companion, just a year after that time, they would see him dancing with them, when they were to rescue him. After the year had elapsed, they went and found it as the conjuror had said;—whereupon one of them dragged the man out of the ring, who immediately asked if it was not better to proceed home, imagining it was the same night, and that he was with his companion. One of the people presented him with some victuals, which he began to eat, but had no sooner done so, than he mouldered away.

Wishing the juvenile author all success in his future essays, we commend his present work to the lovers of superstitious lore, and to the substantial notice of the very reverend personage already alluded to.

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## THE GATHERER.

A snapper up of unconsidered trifles.  
SHAKSPEARE.

\* \* \* \* \*

**THE REFORM BILL.**

*(For the Mirror.)*

## Page 25

The debate relating to the Reform Bill lasted *seven* nights. There are many curious circumstances attached to the number *seven*—viz. the *seven* golden candlesticks, the *seven* wise men of the east, the *seven* colours, the *seven* sounds, the *seven* stars, the *seven* wonders of the world. Ancient Rome was built upon *seven* hills, &c. The gift of prophecy and the power of healing is attributed to the *seventh* son of a *seventh* son. When the several members rose late, or rather early in the morning on the *seventh* night's debate on the Reform Bill, the House caught the idea of Macbeth, and exclaimed, "Another yet! a *seventh*! I'll see no more!"—and the *House of Russell dispersed the House of Commons*.

P.T.W.

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### EPITAPH.

The following lines were written by my father, on the death of his first child, who died in infancy:—W.H.H.

Nipt in the bud, the father's hope here sleeps,  
And o'er her first-born child the mother weeps.  
Why weep! the disencumber'd soul that's flown  
Now shines another cherub round the throne!  
Ah! who can tell what cares, what hopes, what fears,  
Had been the portion of its lengthen'd years?

A better lot proportion'd Heaven design'd,  
And bade it leave this sin-fraught world behind!

\* \* \* \* \*

### PATRIOTISM.

When Admiral Sir George Rooke, who took Gibraltar, in the reign of Queen Anne, came to make his will, it surprised those that were present; but Sir George exclaimed—"I do not leave much, but what I have was honestly gotten; it never cost a sailor a tear, or the nation a farthing."

JAC-CO.

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## **SILK MANUFACTURE.**

In 1734, Sir Thomas Lambe erected, in an island on the Derwent, near Derby, a curious mill for the manufacture of silk. He brought the model, the only one of the kind in the kingdom, from Italy, at the hazard of his life. This machine was deemed so important, that, at the expiration of Sir Thomas's patent, parliament voted him 14,000*l.* for the risk he had incurred, and the expense attending its completion.

T.S.

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## **INN RHYMES.**

The following was written under the sign of the White Horse, on the Old Bath Road, but which has since disappeared. I believe the origin of it was, "a poor devil of an author, who, after having had a good filling out, found that he had not wherewith to pay; at which 'mine host' was of course in a 'way' (as he had a right to be); when the author told him, that if he would get a sign painted, he would try to put some lines upon it which should ensure him custom. He did so, and the following was the result. He had a White Horse for his sign:

## Page 26

"My *White Horse* shall beat the *Bear*,  
And make the *Angel* fly,  
Shall turn the *Ship* quite bottom up,  
And drink the *Three Cups* dry."

The *Bear*, *Angel*, *Ship*, and *Three*. *Cups*, were public-houses in the neighbourhood. He succeeded, and got their custom.

On one of the windows also is—

"His liquor's good, his pot is just,  
The landlord's poor, and cannot trust,  
For he has trusted to his sorrow,—  
So pay to day, he'll trust to-morrow."

### G. ST. CLAIR.

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### ROYAL FAVOUR.

The Prince of Orange was defeated by the French under Luxemburg, in 1677: in attempting to rally his dispersed troops, the prince struck one of the runaways across the face with his sword. "Rascal!" cried he, "I will set a mark on you at present, that I may hang you afterwards."

JAC-CO.

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