

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction Vol. XIX. No. 532. Saturday, February 4, 1832

Various

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THE MIRROR OF LITERATURE, AMUSEMENT, AND INSTRUCTION.

VOL. XIX. No. 532.] SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1832. [PRICE 2_d_.

[Illustration: CASTLE OF ROBERT THE DEVIL.]

[Illustration: CAVERN OF ROBERT THE DEVIL.]

ROBERT THE DEVIL.

All the town, and the country too, by paragraph circumstantial, and puff direct, must have learned that every theatre in this Metropolis, and consequently, every stage in the country, is to have its version of the splendid French opera *Robert le Diable*. Its success in Paris has been what the good folks there call *magnifique*, and playing the devil has been the theatrical order of day and night since the Revolution. As we know nothing of its merits, and do not write of what we neither see nor hear, nor believe any report of, we do not put up our hopes for its success. But, as the story of the opera is a pretty piece of Norman

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romance, some fair penciller has sent us the sketches of the annexed cuts, and our Engraver has thus pitted himself with Grieve, Stanfield, Roberts, and scores of minor scene-painters, who are building canvass castles, and scooping out caverns for the King's Theatre, Covent Garden, and Drury Lane Theatres. Theirs will be but candle-light glories: our scenes will be the same by all lights. But as scenes are of little use without actors, and cuts of less worth without description, we append our fair Correspondent's historical notices of the sites and the _dram. pers._ of "this our tragedy."

CASTLE OF ROBERT LE DIABLE, OR ROBERT THE DEVIL.

The founder of this ancient castle bears the name of _Robert the Devil_. It is a wonderful relic of old Norman fortification, being so defended by nature, as to bid defiance to its enemies, and could only have fallen by stratagem. It is situated on the left side of the River Seine and in the province of Normandy. The subterranean caverns by their amazing extent sufficiently attest the ancient importance of this structure; tradition says they extend to the banks of the Seine. Its antiquity is fully proved by some of the architectural fragments bearing the stamp of 912. On arriving at the summit of the mountain, the tourist receives an impression like enchantment: the castle seems to have been conveyed there by fairies; and at the base the eye is charmed by the fine and picturesque forest of Bourgheroulde: villages elegantly grouped, enrich with their beautiful fabrics each bank of the Seine which majestically traverses a luxurious landscape. Romance, fable, and the tradition of shepherds and peasants describe Robert the Devil as Governor of Neustria, and a descendent of Rollo the celebrated Norman chief, whose name was changed to Robert, Duke of Normandy in 923, on his marriage with the daughter of Charles the simple, King of France. His great and valiant achievements are remembered in that country so renowned by his race, and where his name still awakens every sentiment of superstitious awe. All in the environs of the castle recount his wonderful and warlike exploits; his numerous amours; and his rigid penitence by which he hoped to appease the wrath of offended Heaven. The moans of his victims are said to resound in the Northern subterranean caverns; the peasantry also believe that the spirit of Robert is condemned to haunt the ruins of his castle, and the tombs of his "Ladies Fair." In justice to his memory be it remembered, that his acts of cruelty were alone aimed at the rapacious and guilty, and that in him helpless innocence ever found a protector.

Robert the Devil was cotemporary with our Danish King Harold, 1065; he assisted Henry, the eldest son of Robert of Normandy, in gaining possession of the crown, and accompanied him with a large army into the capital of France, where they ravaged the territory of the rebels, by burning the towns and villages, and putting the inhabitants to the sword: on this account he was called Robert the Devil.

When tranquillity was restored, and Henry freed from his enemies, Robert made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with other powerful potentates. On his return he was taken ill, and appointed an illegitimate son his successor, whose mother was the daughter of a dealer in skins at Falaise, and this son became that celebrated William of Normandy, our renowned conqueror! The Normans instigated the people to reject him, on the plea of his illegitimacy; but Henry I., then King of France, gratefully remembered the good offices of Robert the Devil, William's Father: therefore espoused his cause, and raised an army of three thousand men to invade Normandy; long and obstinate wars continued, which did not terminate till William had accomplished the successful invasion of England; he was the grandson of Rollo, known after his marriage as Robert the 1st., Duke of Normandy, who died 935. Thus from one of his numerous amours sprung our new dynasty of kings, which totally changed the aspect of the times. By some historians he is called Robert the 11nd., Duke of Normandy, but the name by which he is generally known, is that dignified one of William the Conqueror.

CAVERN OF ROBERT LE DIABLE.

The remains of this cavern (situated in Normandy) command the attention of the lovers of history, not only from its antiquity, but also from its gloomy recesses, having afforded a safe shelter to our weak and cruel King John. Here he bade farewell to this province which he abandoned to the French Knights, and from whom he carefully concealed every trace of his retreat. The entrance is almost obscured, and tradition says it is so artfully managed as to have the appearance of a passage to another. The spot is barren, and it appears as if a thunder-bolt had burnt up the verdure. The spirit of _Robert le Diable_ is supposed to haunt the cavern in the form of a wolf, and advances uttering piteous cries, and steadfastly gazing on its place of defence (the caverns extending to the River Seine) reviews his former glory and conquests, and seems bitterly to lament the present decay. In vain the peasants commence the chase; they assert that the wolf though closely pursued always eludes the vigilance of the huntsman. On the death of Richard I. of England, 1199, his Brother John was proclaimed King of Normandy and Aquitaine; the Duchies of Brittany, the Counties of Anjou, Maine, Tours and others, acknowledged Arthur, John's nephew, as their sovereign, and claimed the protection of the King of France, Philip II., surnamed Augustus; but he despairing of being able to retain these provinces against the will of their inhabitants, sacrificed Arthur and his followers to John, who in a skirmish with some of the Norman Lords, carried them all prisoners into Normandy, where Arthur soon disappeared: the Britons assert that he was murdered by his uncle; and the Normans that he was accidentally killed in endeavouring to escape. The death of their favourite Prince stung the Britons to madness, as in him centered their last hope of regaining independence: an ardent imagination led them to believe their future destiny connected with this child, which inspired them with a wild affection for Philip, as being the enemy of his murderer. They accused John before the French King of Arthur's murder, and he was summoned as a Vassal of Normandy to appear and defend himself before the twelve Peers of France. This command being treated with contempt, the lands John held under the French crown were declared forfeit, and an army levied to put it into execution. It was on this emergency that John found a safe place of concealment in the cavern of Robert the Devil.

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LACONICS, &c.

(_Continued from page 53_)

Generosity is not the virtue of the multitude, and for this reason: selfishness is often the consequence of ignorance, and it requires a cultivated mind to discern where the rights of others interfere with our own wishes.

If commerce has benefited, it has also injured the human race; and the invention of the compass has brought disease as well as wealth in its train.

The days of joy are as long and perhaps as frequent as those of grief; but either the memory is treacherous or the mind is too morbid to admit this to be the case.

Without occasional seriousness and even melancholy, mirth loses its magic, and pleasure becomes unpalatable.

It is unlucky that experience being our best teacher, we have only learnt its lessons perfectly, when we no longer stand in need of them; and have provided ourselves armour we can never wear.

Chastity in women may be said to arise more from attention to worldly motives than deference to moral obligation: there is not so much continence amongst men, because there is not the same restriction.

A resolution to put up calmly with misfortune, invariably has the effect of lightening the load.

Conceit is usually seen during our first investigations after knowledge; but time and more accurate research teach us that not only is our comprehension limited, but knowledge itself is so imperfect, as not to warrant any vanity upon it at all.

Extravagance is of course merely comparative: a man may be a spendthrift in copper as well as gold.

We had rather be made acquainted at any time with the reality and certainty of distress, than be tortured by the feverish and restless anxiety of doubt.

A too great nicety about diet is being over scrupulous, and is converting moderation into a fault; but on the other hand it is little better than gluttony, if we cannot refrain from what may by possibility be even slightly injurious.

A celebrated traveller who had been twice round the world and visited every remarkable country, declared, that though he had seen many wonderful things, he had never chanced to see a handsome old woman.

It is difficult enough to persuade a fool, but persuasion is not all the difficulty: obstinacy still remains to be brought under subjection.

A prejudiced person is universally condemned and yet many of our prejudices are excusable, and some of them necessary: if we do not indulge a few of our prejudices, we shall have to go on doubting and inquiring for ever.

Scepticism has ever been the bugbear of youthful vanity, and it is considered knowing to quarrel with existing institutions and established truths; our experienced reflection regrets this inclination and we become weary of distracting ourselves with endless difficulties.

In dreaming, it is remarkable how easily and yet imperceptibly the mind connects events altogether differing in their nature; and if we hear any noise during sleep, how instantaneously the sound is woven in with the events of our dream and as satisfactorily accounted.

The unpleasant sensation that is produced by modesty, is amply compensated by the prepossession it creates in our favour.

Public virtue prospers by the vices of individuals. The spendthrift gives a circulation to the coin of the realm, while the miser is equally useful in gleaning and scraping together what others have too profusely scattered. Luxury gives a livelihood to thousands, and the numbers supported by vanity are beyond calculation.

There is a distinction to be drawn between self-love and selfishness, though they are usually confounded. Self-love is the effect of instinct, and is necessary for our preservation in common with other animals; but selfishness is a mental defect and is generated by narrowness of soul.

The difference between honour and honesty is this: honour is dictated by a regard to character, honesty arises from a feeling of duty.

It is difficult to avoid envy without laying ourselves open to contempt;

for in being too scrupulous not to trespass on others we lay ourselves open to be trifled with and trampled on.

That "familiarity breeds contempt" does not only mean, that he who is too familiar with us incurs our contempt; but also that novelty being indispensably necessary to our happiness we cease to admire what habit has familiarized.

Poverty, like every thing else has its fair side. The poor man has the gratification of knowing that no one can have any interest in his death; and in his intercourse with the world he can be certain that wherever he is welcome, it is exclusively on his own account.

If the poor have but few comforts, they are free from many miseries, mental as well as personal, that their superiors are subjected to: they have no physicians who live by their sufferings, and they never experience the curse of sensibility.

Eloquence, engaging as it is, must always be regarded with suspicion. The great use made of it in the history of literature, has been to mislead the head by an appeal to the heart, and it was for this reason the Athenians forbid their orators the use of it.

Conceit is generally proportionate with high station, and the greatest geniuses have not been entirely free from it: what indeed is ambition but an immoderate love of praise?

When we call to mind the humiliating necessities of human nature as far as the body is concerned, and in our intellectual resolves the meanness or paltriness of many of our motives to action, we may well be surprised that man who has so much cause to be humble should indulge for a moment in pride.

It is not so easy as philosophers tell us to lay aside our prejudices; mere volition cannot enable us to divest ourselves of long established feelings, and even reason is averse to laying aside theories it has once been taught to admire.

A man may start at impending danger or wince at the sensation of pain: and yet he may be a true philosopher and not be afraid of death.

The epicure, the drunkard, and the man of loose morals are equally contemptible: though the brutes obey instinct, they never exceed the bounds of moderation; and besides, it is beneath the dignity of man to place felicity in the service of his senses.

A passionate man should be regarded with the same caution as a loaded blunderbuss, which may unexpectedly go off and do us an injury.

There are many fools in the world and few wise men; at any rate there are more false than sound reasoners; wherefore it would seem more politic to adopt the opinion of the minority on most occasions.

Those who are deficient in any particular accomplishment usually contrive either openly or indirectly to express their contempt for it: thus removing that obstacle which removes them from the same level.

(To be concluded in our next.)

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TRANSLATION OF DELLA CASA'S SONNET TO THE CITY OF VENICE.

(For the Mirror.)

Where these rich palaces and stately piles
Now rear their marble fronts, in sculptur'd pride,
Stood once a few rude scatter'd huts, beside
The desert shores of some poor clust'ring isles.
Yet here a hardy band, from vices free,
In fragile barks, rode fearless o'er the sea:
Not seeking over provinces to stride,
But here to dwell, afar from slavery.
They knew not fierce ambition's lust of power,
And while their hearts were free from thirst of gold,
Rather than falsehood--death they would behold.
If heaven hath granted thee a mightier dower,
I honour not the fruits that spring from thee
With thy new riches:--Death and Tyranny.

E.L.J.

* * * * *

THE HOUSE OF UNDER.

(_For the Mirror._)

There are few families more ancient, more generally known, or more widely diffused throughout the known world, than that of Under: indeed, in every nation, though bearing different names, some branch of this family is extant; and there is no doubt that the Dessous of France, the Unters of Germany, and the Onders of the Land-under-water, belong to the same ancient and venerable house. The founders of the house, however, were of low origin, and generally down in the world. Undergo was the job of the family, as patient as a lamb: he encouraged the blessed martyrs in times of yore, and is still in existence, though his patience has somewhat diminished. Underhand is a far different character to the preceding, a double-dealing rascal, and as sly as a fox; he greets you with a smiling countenance, and while one hand is employed in shaking yours, he is disembarassing you of the contents of your pocket with the other. Underline is a gentleman of some literary attainments, though not entirely divested of quackery; he is particularly noted for the emphasis he gives to certain points in his discourse, and though in some cases, perhaps, he is a little too prodigal of this kind of effect, yet we could not well do without him. Undermine is a greater rascal than Underhand, and had it not been for the counter-acting influence of Underproof, our house had fallen to the ground; to the ground it might have fallen, but had it gone farther, it would have been only to be revived in the person of Underground, a gentleman well known in the kitchens and pantries of the metropolis, the pantries in particular, he being a constant companion to the Under-butler. Understand is the pride of the house, and by his shining qualities, has raised himself to an eminence never reached by any other member of the family. He is a conspicuous exception to the downcast looks of so many of his relations. Undertake is an enterprising fellow, but he is often deceived and fails in his schemes; not so Undertaker, (whose similarity in name would make some folks believe there was some connexion;) no, his affairs are calculated to a wonderful nicety, and every tear is priced. Underwriter is a speculative genius, and--but the less we say of him the better. Underrate is a character I cannot avoid mentioning, though I wish with all my heart he was dead: his greatest pleasure consists in detracting from the good qualities of his neighbours.

I have only mentioned the English part of "Our House," although there are even some of that branch, whom I cannot at present call to mind, except Underdone, a lover of raw beef-steaks, and Undervalue, a person who has proved himself a great friend to custom-house officers, having some of the cunning of Underhand, but not quite so much luck, and subjecting

his goods to seizure, for having tried to cheat the king. But I must leave this subject, and take my leave, till a fitter opportunity occurs for giving you further particulars of the "House of Under;" in the meanwhile, believe me, courteous reader, yours, sincerely,

UNDER THE ROSE.

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THE SELECTOR; AND LITERARY NOTICES OF _NEW WORKS_.

FRENCH REVOLUTION OF 1830.

We quote a page or two from the second and concluding volume of _Paris and its Historical Scenes_, in the _Library of Entertaining Knowledge_, which gives the best account of _la Grande Semaine_ that has yet appeared. The editor has taken Lord Bacon's advice--to read, not to take for granted--but to weigh and consider; and amidst the discrepancies of contemporary pamphleteers and journalists, his reader will not be surprised at the difficulty of obtaining correct information of what happens beneath our very window, as one of the great men of history confessed upwards of two centuries since. In this respect, mankind has scarcely progressed a jot, though men be more sceptical in not taking for granted.

Our extract is, we hope, to the point:

"It is curious to what an extent opposite feelings and opinions will colour even material scenes and objects to the eyes of different observers. Count Tasistro was also present at the capture of the Tuileries; and gives us in his narrative a description of what he witnessed of the conduct of the people after they had established themselves within the palace. Before presenting the reader, however, with what he says upon this subject, we will transcribe part of his account of his adventures in the earlier part of this day. 'The morning of the 29th,' he says, 'was ushered in by the dismal ringing of bells, the groans of distant guns, and the savage shouts of the populace; and I arose from a long train of dreams, which defied recollection as well as interpretation. The rabble, headed by a few beardless boys just let loose from the Polytechnic School and other seminaries, had been pleased to fix their head-quarters in our street. About half-past eleven, however, those of them who were collected here having heard that the popular forces who were fighting before the Louvre were nearly disabled by the cannon of the troops occupying that palace, their Polytechnic chief called upon them to follow him to the assistance of their brethren. Having entreated them to refrain from extravagant excesses, he rushed forward, and soon arrived at the scene of action. Here I saw him turn round and address his followers thus, 'Le cannon a deja exterminé plusieurs de vos camarades; dans un instant il est a vous; suivez moi, et apprenez comme il faut mourir;' (_the cannon has already destroyed numbers of your brethren; the next instant it will be directed against you: follow me, and learn how to die_.) Having uttered these words, he darted forward, just as the gun which was pointed at him was discharged, and was blown into atoms. The people, however, following where he had led, in the enthusiasm of the moment seized the gun, and turned it immediately against the Swiss and the Guards that were stationed at the balconies of the Louvre. Other guns were afterwards taken--and the consequence was that the soldiers at last retreated with great precipitation, and concentrated their strength on the Place du Carrousel. The tricolour was already waving over the Louvre. I observed a little, insignificant urchin climb up the walls, and plant it during the contest.

"The last struggle made by the Guards for their royal master was to save

the proud palace of his ancestors; but, alas, the attempt was vain. A storm of balls was poured in upon them from so many sides, that the little presence of mind they had preserved until now, deserted them at this trying moment; and after a few ineffectual discharges, they retreated toward the Champs Elysees; and the populace, unchecked by any power but their own will, rushed *en masse* into the regal mansion.

"During this attack, short as it was, I happened to be in a situation far more critical than that of the generality of the combatants on either side. On entering the Place du Carrousel by the archway leading from the Quays, we found the confusion extreme--and, as the fire besides grew every moment hotter and hotter, I felt the necessity of taking refuge somewhere, and in my agitation ran forward and sheltered myself under the Triumphal Arch. Here I passed the short interval during which the combat lasted in a confusion of all the senses, which extended minutes to months, and gave to something less than half a quarter of an hour the importance of a century; for I was all the time between the two fires. Fortunately, as I have said, the affair did not last very long; and when the victorious rabble at last rushed into the Tuileries, I followed the general movement, and soon after found myself in the throne hall, where I was joined by my two missing friends."

The Count now proceeds to inveigh in general terms against what he describes as the atrocious conduct of the unruly rabble--the devastation, pillage, and other enormities of which they were guilty. Having concluded this diatribe, he goes on with his narrative as follows: "Indeed the passion of mischief had taken such strong possession of the minds of all--the temptation was so widely thrown open wherever one went--that even I felt a touch of the desire; and, as I passed along the library hall, where a most splendid stock of books had been thrown on the floor, spying among many precious treasures a beautifully ornamented little volume, which, to say nothing of its gay appearance, promised to occupy no great room in the pocket, with the conviction that I was doing a good action, I picked it up. On opening it I found that it was neither a bible, nor a poem, nor a *congrare* (*?*), as I had anticipated, but simply a pocket memorandum-book in which his Majesty had been accustomed to note his *parties de chasse*, and the numbers of game he killed. I immediately thrust it into my pocket, and have since preserved it as a keepsake--but shall be most happy to restore it to the owner, should that august personage at any time feel disposed to claim it. Would that all the rest of the many articles that were this day pilfered were held as sacred, and ready to be as punctually surrendered!

"Tolerably tired at last of looking on the grim faces that surrounded us, we agreed to make our retreat; and descended into the garden, intending to pass out by the gate leading to the Quays. Here, however, we were met by a figure, at the sight of which we found it almost impossible to restrain our risibility. It was a man keeping watch at the gate as a sentinel, dressed for the most part as we commonly see the masters of chimney-sweeps, without a vestige of either shoes or shirt, and what were intended for coat and trousers having very doubtful pretensions to those designations--but, to make amends for this condition of his general habiliments, having a highly polished musket in his hand, a most splendid sword dangling by his side, and on his head a superb Marshal's hat! 'Ou allez vous?' was the imperious demand of this extraordinary looking personage. 'Ou nous voulons' was the instant and haughty reply of my friend M. The fellow, not being accustomed to such insubordination, ordered us to take off our hats to show whether we carried anything away with us. M. at this would have struck him down but for the sudden appearance of six men, whose looks and dress were not much better than those of the sentinel. These men, on being informed of our *hauteur* (as it was termed), insisted on our helping them, by way of penalty for our offence, to carry off the dead. This was more than I, with all my disposition to forbearance, could submit to; so, addressing myself to the ugliest of them, who seemed to be the commanding officer of the party, I

told him scornfully and in good French, that we were foreign gentlemen, who had nothing to do either with the dead or the living of their country--and that it was a very _despotic_ act to stop peaceable passengers in that manner. But this expostulation served only to irritate the raggamuffins; and one of them taking hold of my arm tried to force me into compliance with his orders. This was our trying moment; we all three made one desperate effort 'for liberty;' and, each of us having dealt his opponent a severe blow on the cheek, we broke from them, and ran off at our best speed. Three shots were immediately fired, and still we galloped on unhurt;--another went off, and I felt it--not that I was mortally wounded; it was only a spent ball that lodged itself in the flesh of my leg. The accident lamed me, however, for the time, and consequently put an end to my adventures. I was carried to my hotel, and the ball was extracted; but still the wound confined me to my room for two months."

The battle-pieces, and head and tail-cuts, well bespeak the ups and downs and bursts of the Revolution. They are as plentiful in this volume, as the balls were about Paris in _La Grande Semaine_.

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TIME'S TELESCOPE FOR 1832

Is, as usual, a multifarious volume, and abounds with reading that must please all tastes. It has, moreover, to meet the exigencies of the day, a pretty sprinkling of cuts and plates, respecting the number of which we do not quarrel; in the choice of some of them we must, however, dissent from the editor. The Astronomical portion, by Mr. Barker, is unusually copious, and the cometary plates are well executed. We quote a passage:

On the probability of a concussion of a Comet with the earth.

It has been stated that the comet of 1770, passed through the system of the planet Jupiter, without in the slightest degree affecting the motions of either the primary or his satellites; also, that it passed sufficiently near our planet to have shortened the length of the year had its mass been equal to that of the earth. No effect whatever was produced, from whence it may be concluded, that the neighbourhood of a comet is not of sufficient importance to excite any alarming apprehensions for the safety of the habitation of man.

Most of the calculations that have been made respecting the effect of the proximity of a comet to our earth have proceeded on erroneous principles,--over-rating the quantity of matter in comets, and losing sight of their great velocity when in this part of the system. For a comet to produce any direful effect, it ought to contain not merely a considerable quantity of matter, but also ought to be vertical and stationary to the earth's surface for several hours; instead of which, we have sufficient reason to believe that though vast in volume, comets contain but little matter in proportion, consequently, their attractive energy would be inconsiderable; also their velocity would, in a very short period, carry them beyond the limit of exerting any influence on the waters of the globe. Of course, this general statement would be modified by the rate and direction of a comet's motion, and also the earth's rotation.

It may, then, be asserted with safety that the close appulse of a comet would not be attended with any fatal results; and that this security principally consists in its great velocity, which would so swiftly remove it to a distance. But, the very circumstance which, in the case of _proximity_, would be the security of our globe, (its velocity,) would, in the event of a _contact_, be attended with the direst effects. It is true that the probability of a contact is less, in an almost infinite degree, than the proximity of a comet, which, notwithstanding, is an event which

every astronomer is fully aware, is within the verge of possibility.

The effects of a contact would be greatly modified by circumstance. Should the comet strike the earth obliquely, it would glance off, and the consequences would be partial. If the point of collision were on a continent of the globe, mountains would be hurled from their bases, and new ones would elevate their ridges towards the clouds. Were the place of meeting on either of the great oceans, some regions would be deserted, and others would be inundated by the waters of the sea. These dreadful consequences would be increased, in an indefinite proportion, if the point of contact were in the direction of the earth's centre; the meeting would be terrific; the earth's period of revolution would, in all probability, be altered, either by carrying it nearer to or farther from the sun; a different inclination of the axis might be given, and there would be a consequent change of seasons; the diurnal motion might be either accelerated or retarded, by which the length of the day would be affected; the vast continents of the globe would be again covered with the ocean, which, deserting its bed, would rush towards the new equator.

Infinitely more tremendous would be the catastrophe if the earth were struck by a _retrograde comet_ in the direction of the terrestrial centre, the comet making up, by its velocity, the deficiency of mass: in this case the centrifugal force of both bodies might be annihilated,—the centripetal principle alone obeyed, and both comet and earth rush to the sun!

It must, however, be stated, that the probability of such an event is all but infinitely removed: the most likely of any that is known, to effect such a consummation, is the comet of Encke, which it has been calculated would come in collision with our earth after a lapse of 219 millions of years! This calculation proceeds on the soundest principles of reasoning, and proves not so much the safety of our globe from cometary destruction, (for some comet, hitherto unseen by mortal eyes, may _now_ be winging its flight directly towards our globe,) as the astonishing powers of the mind of man, which can thus essay to penetrate the veil of futurity, and read the destiny of a world.

But destruction to this terrestrial orb and its teeming inhabitants, may be more speedily brought about than by a concussion with these celestial agents. A single principle of motion annihilated, evaporation suspended, or a component part of the atmosphere abstracted, and "final ruin would drive her ploughshare o'er creation;" universal conflagration would instantly ensue from the separation of the oxygen from the nitrogen of the atmosphere,—the former exerting its native energies without control wherever it extends,—solid rocks, ponderous marble, metals, and even water itself, would burst into an intensity of flame, and change the aspect of all sublunary things.

But all these vast bodies of the universe are, doubtless, kept in their prescribed limits as with so many "reins and bridles," and when this earth has completed its destined circles, and fulfilled the purposes for which it was called out of nothing, it will need but the command of the glorious Creator who at first spoke this beautiful frame into being, bliss, and light, to return it to its primeval gloom, or bid it shine forth with new resplendent beauty and lustre.

The "Notes of a Naturalist" are stated to be by Professor Rennie; but we question if they have been written expressly for this volume, as we recognise many passages from other works.

* * * * *

NOTES OF A READER.

SCOTTISH LITERARY DINNER.

As reported by Three Hands.

It is a miserable thing to quarrel or even differ over a dinner, although the whole affair be but a matter of taste. It is likewise a miserable thing to differ after dinner, since it lamentably disturbs the digestion of the food, as in this case it may the temper of the feeders. Yet respecting the dinner to celebrate the Birthday of Burns in Freemasons' Hall, there is a remarkable difference among the critical craft; which difference, by the way, no shades of opinion can reconcile. As we were not of the party, (and we congratulate ourselves on the escape from a Scottish half-dinner,) it may be well to quote from three of the reports that have appeared, rather than let the affair pass unnoticed in our pages. We do so from a wish to preserve certain traits and anecdotes which the occasion drew forth,—to give the pleasant rather than the "untoward" events of the day: though we must own the whole appears to have been a very droll business, always excepting the semi-pransus.

We start with an extract from Dr. Granville's Catechism of Health :--

Q. What should a dinner consist of?

A. Of any wholesome food that is in season, plainly dressed.

Q. Should the dinner be composed of many dishes?

A. The most wholesome dinner is that which consists of a single dish of meat, with a proper quantity of vegetables.

Whether the Scottish dinner was as aforesaid, we know not. Call the evidence.

Court Journal.--A public dinner at a public-house (this is a court sneer)--provided by Scotch booksellers, presided at by a Scotch baronet, accompanied by Scotch bagpipes, and prepared for two hundred Scotch appetites, there being four hundred of the said appetites admitted to partake of it.

Athenaeum.--Nearly five hundred persons were present at a dinner ordered for two hundred and fifty.

Literary Gazette.--The stewards provided for 300 guests: another hundred coming without notice of their intention, were speedily accommodated; and surely the exertion to accomplish this is more to be praised, than any little partial failure or inconvenience (such as attends all large public dinners) is to be cavilled at and blamed. The dinner and wines were of the first order, and at least nine-tenths of those present were highly gratified by their entertainment.

But we will first quote the Athenaeum account, from its being the most brief as well as more circumstantial, and then add the variorum opinions.

"Little else has been talked of these ten days, in the literary world of London, but the Festival in memory of the birthday of Burns and the visit of the Ettrick Shepherd. The names of stewards, noble and learned, were announced in the newspapers: hopes were held out that verses in honour of the occasion, written by Campbell, would be recited by Reding: and it was moreover added, that Captain Burns was to be present, and that the punch-bowl of Murray marble, filled with the liquor which his great father loved, would be smoking on the table. The Festival took place in Freemasons' Hall on Wednesday last, and though arrangements were made for two hundred and fifty guests, such was the curiosity, and such the crush,

that by six o' clock, four hundred and fifty tickets were disposed of, and the like number of gentlemen sat down, amid no little confusion, about seven o' clock, to dinner. Sir John Malcolm, well known for his 'History of Central India,' was in the chair; on his left hand sat the eldest and youngest sons of Burns; the former like his father, the latter more resembling his mother; and on the other hand sat James Hogg, accompanied by many gentlemen distinguished in science and literature. The punch-bowl of Burns, now the property of Mr. Hastie, stood before the chair, and beside it, a drinking quaigh, formed from the Wallace Oak of the Torwood, brimmed with silver, and bearing on the bottom the grim visage of the northern hero."

"Sir John Malcolm having consumed some time in introductory toasts, which the company received with impatience, proceeded to propose 'the Memory of ROBERT BURNS:' he dwelt less on his history than on the wide influence of his works, and recited many verses with taste and feeling. He related how deeply his fame had taken root in the East, and instanced the admiration of Byron in proof of his wonderful genius: but no such testimony is at all wanting; the songs of Burns are sung in every quarter of the globe, and his poems are treasured in millions of memories, so that his fame may set fate at defiance. All this was rapturously received; nor was the approbation of the company less coldly manifested when the chairman proposed 'the health of the ETRICK SHEPHERD;' it appeared, however, that he was much less familiar with his works than with those of Burns, and though a native of a pastoral district, made sad work among the romances and ballads of the imaginative shepherd. This want was, however, in some degree supplied, by a most characteristic speech from Hogg himself, in which he related how the inspiration of the muse came upon him, in consequence of his being born, like Burns, on the 25th of January; how, on the evening of his birth, a man and horse were dispatched for the midwife, but the night being wild, and Ettrick deep in flood, the rider was lost; nevertheless, the familiar spirit called Brownie--the Lubber-Fiend of Milton--supplied his place, and brought the marvelling midwife in time to achieve the adventure of the future poet of Kilmeny. All this, and much more he related in a way hovering between jest and earnest, and in a strong Ettrick tone, to the consternation of the English part of the meeting, for whom it was rather peculiar and learned. The audience evidently, one and all, regarded the Shepherd with wonder, and hundreds were on tiptoe to have a look at him as he stood on a table to relate his own varied fortunes.

"But on the banks of Tweed the chairman was aware that a wizard, still more enchanting than him of Yarrow, lived, or rather, lately lived; and he accordingly gave the health of 'SIR WALTER SCOTT, and a safe return to his native country.' It is needless to say with what rapture the health of this most illustrious of all the sons of Scotland was drunk. This honour--such is the word--was acknowledged by Mr. Lockhart, in a speech worth any two chapters in the whole range of British Biography;--it was clear and concise--vigorous and picturesque--and abounding with anecdote. Of his illustrious father-in-law, he told how Burns predicted his future fame, in the house of Adam Ferguson; and of Hogg he related how Scott found him, thirty-five years ago, with his plaid and dog, watching his sheep on Ettrick Banks, with more old border ballads on his memory than any traditionary dame of the district, and with more true poetry in his heart than was usual to the lot of poets. Of Hogg himself he said much that was amusing and instructive: one anecdote will not soon be forgotten. The Shepherd was at the dinner-table of a duchess, when her Grace said, 'Mr. Hogg, where you ever here before?' 'Madam,' said the poet, 'I have driven cattle often past your gates, but I never was within them till now.'"

"But we must have done with this splendid Festival: we cannot, however, conclude without a remark:--the health of 'Lord Porchester and the Poets of England,' was drunk; and when his Lordship made his acknowledgments, he

was interrupted by the titter of a hundred tongues and sat down, no doubt, feeling that the spirit of nationality was a little too exclusive. We forgot to mention that neither Campbell nor his poem made their appearance, which we regretted for several reasons, and also that the memory of Burns was not drunk out of his punch-bowl. For this relique of the bard, a Jew of the name of Isaac, gave 60_l_ in pledge, and begged the key to keep in memory of the poet, when it was bought by its present possessor; and an Irish gentleman, not long ago, sent a 300_l_ check for it, and threatened Mr. Hastie with the law when he refused to give him up the punch-bowl."

"We are indebted to a friend for this very pleasant notice, and must, in our predominant love of truth, say so. As far as the presence of numbers could testify general affection for the memory of Burns and respect for the Ettrick Shepherd, the meeting was most satisfactory; in every other respect it was a failure."

Now let us turn to the Court Journal, which in its first column decides the Burns' Dinner to have been "the most ill-conceived, ill-concocted, ill-managed, and ill-attended affair of its kind that ever flung disgrace and ridicule on the public hospitality of the most inhospitable public on record." The advertised list of stewards is described as "hoax the first." Their names were used as baits--their presence being represented under the ominous forms of half-a-dozen well-known illustrious unknowns, headed by two "enterprising" booksellers! there being not a single distinguished writer present, except Mr. Lockhart, and he evidently cutting the whole affair,--so far I mean as relates to taking any part in the (mis)management of it. Nevertheless, I see by the Papers, that "all the leading characters of the Metropolis were present! the poetical department of them being represented by Lord Porchester, and the prose department by Lord Mahon." Our Court visiter bears his lot with good humour: but, observes he "not small must have been the contemptuous pity felt for me, by those superior intelligences who, on my entering the Dinner Room, I found had already secured their seats, probably by the only practical method--that of taking possession of them overnight! And there is no denying the wit of this proceeding, on the part of those who were in the secret, that the repast was ordered for two hundred individuals, (nine-tenths of them probably Scotch individuals) and was to be partaken of by four hundred." This proportion is probably correct, since "nine-tenths," are the precise proportion of the company gratified.--(See the Gazette.)

Among the elite, or the company at the upper table, "Sir Peter Laurie was one, and Mr. Lockhart was not one: for he sat among the undistinguished at a side table." Our Court guest also sat at a side table though he pleads guilty to "foul" means--"that of displacing an engine-turned and satine-ed card, which had been deposited therein, as the worthy locum tenens and representative of its owner."

But the contradictions circumstantial appear to (dis)advantage in the Literary Gazette, as will be seen among our quotations. The health of Burns being drunk "Both the sons of the poet standing up, the eldest expressed their gratitude for the tribute to their father's genius." The Gazette states the Shepherd's health to have been prefaced by an "apt and interesting address," but the Athenaeum represents the chairman to have "made sad work among the romances, &c." Upon the health of the poets of England being drunk, Lord Porchester is stated in the Gazette to have spoken "eloquently in reply, and pronounced a beautiful eulogium upon the ameliorating effects produced upon individuals and communities by the cultivation of the Muses:" a very pretty subject for a school theme, to be sure, but unfortunate in comparison with the "titter of a hundred tongues" by which Lord Porchester is elsewhere stated to have been silenced.

"The toast of 'Sir George Murray, and the military heroes of Scotland,' called up that gallant officer, who addressed his applauding countrymen in a manner which seemed to be peculiarly grateful to their feelings. While

he disclaimed it for his own humble services, he nobly awarded the laurel to his glorious companions in arms,—a Hopetoun, an Abercrombie, a Moore, and a Graham. He then mentioned his early recollection of Burns, whom he considered his father's house to have been honoured by receiving within its walls; and playfully alluded to what the chairman had stated of his sister being the 'Phemy' of the poet,

"a bonnier lass
Than braes of Yarrow ever saw;"

and expressed his hope, as every bard was in duty bound to maintain the peerless beauty of the fair whom he selected for his theme, that the Ettrick Shepherd (whose acquaintance he this night rejoiced to have made), would not be provoked to jealousy in consequence of this comparison above the beauties of Yarrow."

After a few more toasts, the Gazette observes "the night was wearing late, and the rest of the proceedings were obliged to be hurried through in rather a tumultuous manner." The unluckiest occurrence of all followed by Captain Basil Hall's mention of the word "politics," which "let slip the dogs of war," or at least led to much confusion. This was explained away; but the Captain was "put out," and "he was again unfortunate in attempting to pay a pleasant compliment, upon the excellence of his dinners, to Sir George Warrender, whose health was next drunk, in conjunction with the Scottish members of the legislature.—Sir George Warrender said he had no claim to have his name introduced on this occasion, and, however kindly intended, it had been done in a manner alike unexpected and painful to him. He came there as a Scotchman, proud to assist at a festival in honour of one of those eminent men who, in giving an imperishable fame to the poetry of Scotland, obtained for their country triumphs far more noble, far more durable, than even those which his gallant friend, who had lately addressed them, or than any other statesman or warrior, could achieve; for when the contests of individuals, and even of nations, for power had passed away, and were heard of no more, the verses of Burns and Walter Scott would still live in every quarter of the globe, to perpetuate their own glory, and to inspire ardent patriotism and intense love of native land into every Scottish heart.—Mr. P.S. Stewart, as another of the Scottish members, addressed the company with much energy, and restored harmony by remarking, that if he was not tried by his dinners, he hoped to be always tried by his deserts. In conclusion, he drank the health of Mr. Galt, whose literary talents shed a lustre on the west of Scotland, with which he was particularly connected. It was now, however, near the witching hour of night, or we might say of night's black arch, the key stane; and many from the lower parts of the hall had crowded up to the top; so that regularity of speech, or bumper, or song, there could be none. Galt's thanks died in embryo; and the concluding toasts of Mr. Murchison and Mr. Sedgewick, and the sciences of Scotland and England; the London Burns' Club, the stewards, and even the ladies, had but their cheers, and passed away. At length the pipes droned forth, and the festive drama closed.

"We ought to record that it was enlivened by many bowls of punch brewed by Hogg in Burns' bowl, and in general very kindly and socially helped into the many glasses sent up for it by Lord Mahon: there was also some beautiful singing by Broadhurst, Wilson, Templeton, and Messrs. Jolly, Stansbury, Chapman, and other vocalists. The Shepherd, too, treated us with an original song, the burden of which was 'Robin's awa.' It is a lament for Burns as the best of the minstrels; but it was brought in by a laugh, in consequence of the toast-master calling for silence for a song from _Mr_. Shepherd."

By the _Gazette_ report we conclude the Festival must have ended as many such meetings do; and never better expressed than by Lord Byron in his facetious moments—"then talky, then argumentative, then disputatious, then unintelligible, then altogether, then inarticulate, and then"—but we

have done.

There is some talk of an annual national meeting on this day among the parties with whom this "Festival" originated: but we think others will say it were better to leave ill-done alone, lest it become worse. Probably the next "Noctes" of *Blackwood's Magazine* will set the matter at rest by giving the world the only true and faithful account of this memorable meeting.

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RETROSPECTIVE GLEANINGS.

LACONIC JUSTICE.

Over the door of the town-hall, in Zante, one of the Greek Islands (the better to instruct the magistrates in their public duty) these verses are inscribed:--

Hic locus 1 odit, 2 amat, 3 punit, 4 conservat, 5 honorat,
1 Nequitiam, 2 pacem, 3 crimina, 4 jura, 5 probos.

Thus Englished by G. Sandys.

This place doth 1 hate, 2 love, 3 punish, 4 keep, 5 requite,
1 voluptuous not, 2 peace, 3 crimes, 4 laws, 5 th' upright

From Heylyn's Cosmographie.

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FLOATING SCHEME.

In George the Third's collection of tracts, now in the British Museum, is a broadside of one page, commencing thus:--"In the name of God, amen! John Bulmer, of London, esquire, Master and Surveyor of the King's Majesties Mines, &c. &c. propoundeth--by God's assistance, that he the said John Bulmer, shall and will, at and in a flowing water, set out a boat or vessel with an engine, floating with a man or boy, in and on board the said boat, in the River of Thames, over against the Tower-wharf, or lower. Which said boat, with the said man or boy, in or aboard her, shall the same tide before low-water again, by art of the said John Bulmer, and help of the said engine, be advanced and elevated so high, as that the same shall pass and be delivered over London Bridge, together with this said man or boy, in and on board her, and float again in the said River of Thames, on the other side the said bridge in safety." He then proceeds to covenant for himself, his heirs, &c., to perform this within the space of one month, &c., or so soon as the undertakers, wagering against him six for one, should have deposited in the assurance office such a sum as he should consider sufficient to countervail his charges of contriving the boat and engine. Captain Bulmer was also to deposit his proportion of money, &c. This scheme was brought out in 1643.

W.G.C.

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THE GREEK SAILORS

Still preserve the custom mentioned by Homer, of hauling their vessels on shore with the prows resting on the beach; having done this, they place the mast lengthwise across the prow and the poop, and spread the sail over it, so as to form a tent; beneath these tents they sing their songs, drinking wine freely, and accompanying their voices with the lyre, or three-stringed viol.

T.G.

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BILLS OF MORTALITY.

"Bills of Mortality took rise," says Pennant, "in 1592; in which year began a great pestilence; which continued till the 18th of December, 1595. During this period they were kept, in order to ascertain the number of persons who died; but, when the plague ceased, the bills were discontinued. They were resumed again in 1603. At their original institution there were only 109 in parishes; others were gradually added; and, by the year 1681, the number was 132. Since that time, 14 more have been added, so that the whole amounts to 146, viz. 97 within the walls; 16 without the walls; 23 out-parishes in Middlesex and Surrey; and 10 in the City and Liberties of Westminster."

W.G.C.

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TAILORS.

Sir John Hawkwood, (the first English general,) was usually styled Joannes Acutus, from the sharpness, it is said, of his needle or his sword. Fuller, the historian, says, he "turned his needle into a sword, and his thimble into a shield. He was the son of a tanner, and was bound apprentice to a tailor, and was pressed for a soldier." He served under Edward III., and was knighted, distinguished himself at the battle of Poitiers, where he gained the esteem of the Black Prince, and finished his military career in the pay of the Florentines, in 1394, at his native place, Hedingham, in Essex. There is a monument to his memory in the parish church.

Sir Ralph Blackwell was his fellow apprentice, knighted for his bravery by Edward III.; married his master's daughter, and founded Blackwell Hall.

John Speed, the historian, was a Cheshire tailor.

John Stowe, the antiquary, was also a tailor; he was born in London, in 1525, and lived to the age of 80.

Benjamin Robins was the son of a tailor, of Bath; he compiled Lord Anson's Voyage round the World.

Elliott's regiment of light-horse was chiefly composed of tailors; and the first man who suggested the idea of abolishing the Slave Trade, was Thomas Woolman, a quaker, and tailor, of New Jersey. He published many tracts on this species of traffic, went great distances to consult individuals on the subject, on which business he came to England, and went to York, where he caught the small-pox, and died October 7, 1772.

T.G.

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HINTS TO COCKNEY EQUESTRIANS.

The following hints are offered "in the milk of human kindness" to all "young gentlemen" who hire a horse, or a horse and gig, to go the amazing distance of Kew or Richmond, on Sundays; and may be compelled to flog the "tired jade" the last three miles back, in order to get it home before midnight; also to prevent the annoying necessity of pulling up in a street adjacent to the livery-stables, to cut off the frayed end of the whip thong, that the ostler may not detect their flagellation.

M.A.S.

I. _How to make a horse go that is utterly tired._

Dismount from thy horse and prick his sides all over with little holes with a nayle or fine awle, in the spurring place. Take then window glass and stamp it unto a subtil powder, which rub into his pricked sides; then mounting, but touch him not with the spur, and you shall have your desire, for be sure if he have any life in him he will not fayle to go.

II. _Here followeth another torment._

Dismount from thy horse and get a stick, which with your knife, jag and cut like unto the notches of a saw, make then a slit with your knife in the ear of the horse, thrust therein the stick, and when you find him to tyre, by working the stick backwards and forwards in the ear, you will have your desire, for be sure if he have any life in him, he will not fayle to go.

III. _Another torment may be used as follows_--

Dismount from thy horse (or gig) and take two round, smooth pebbles, which put into one ear of your horse, and tye up the ear, that they escape not, then mounting and proceeding on thy journey, thou shall have thy desire, for the noise of the stones jingling in his ear, will not fayle to make him go, until he is utterly tired.--_Markham's Farriery_.

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SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.

BEAUTIES OF THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

The characteristic peculiarity of the Pilgrim's Progress is, that it is the only work of its kind which possesses a strong human interest. Other allegories only amuse the fancy. The allegory of Bunyan has been read by many thousands with tears. There are some good allegories in Johnson's works, and some of still higher merit by Addison. In these performances there is, perhaps, as much wit and ingenuity as in the Pilgrim's Progress. But the pleasure which is produced by the Vision of Mirza, or the Vision of Theodore, the genealogy of Wit, or the contest between Rest and Labour, is exactly similar to the pleasure which we derive from one of Cowley's Odes, or from a Canto of Hudibras. It is a pleasure which belongs wholly to the understanding, and in which the feelings have no part whatever. Nay, even Spencer himself, though assuredly one of the greatest poets that ever lived, could not succeed in the attempt to make allegory interesting. It was in vain that he lavished the riches of his mind on the House of Pride, and the House of Temperance. One unpardonable fault, the fault of tediousness, pervades the whole of the Fairy Queen. We become sick of

Cardinal Virtues and Deadly Sins, and long for the society of plain men and women. Of the persons who read the first Canto, not one in ten reaches the end of the first book, and not one in a hundred perseveres to the end of the poem. Very few and very weary are those who are in at the death of the Blatant Beast. If the last six books, which are said to have been destroyed in Ireland, had been preserved, we doubt whether any heart less stout than that of a commentator would have held out to the end.

It is not so with the Pilgrim's Progress. That wonderful book, while it obtains admiration from the most fastidious critics, is loved by those who are too simple to admire it. Doctor Johnson, all whose studies were desultory, and who hated, as he said, to read books through, made an exception in favour of the Pilgrim's Progress. That work, he said, was one of the two or three works which he wished longer. It was by no common merit that the illiterate sectary extracted praise like this from the most pedantic of critics, and the most bigoted of Tories. In the wildest parts of Scotland the Pilgrim's Progress is the delight of the peasantry. In every nursery the Pilgrim's Progress is a greater favourite than Jack the Giant-Killer. Every reader knows the straight and narrow path as well as he knows a road in which he has gone backward and forward a hundred times. This is the highest miracle of genius,—that things which are not should be as though they were,—that the imaginations of one mind should become the personal recollections of another. And this miracle the tinker has wrought. There is no ascent, no declivity, no resting-place, no turn-stile, with which we are not perfectly acquainted. The wicket gate, and the desolate swamp which separates it from the City of Destruction,—the long line of road, as straight as a rule can make it,—the Interpreter's house, and all its fair shows,—the prisoner in the iron cage,—the palace, at the doors of which armed men kept guard, and on the battlements of which walked persons clothed all in gold,—the cross and the sepulchre,—the steep hill and the pleasant arbour,—the stately front of the House Beautiful by the wayside,—the low green valley of Humiliation, rich with grass and covered with flocks,—all are as well known to us as the sights of our own street. Then we come to the narrow place where Apollyon strode right across the whole breadth of the way, to stop the journey of Christian, and where afterwards the pillar was set up to testify how bravely the pilgrim had fought the good fight. As we advance, the valley becomes deeper and deeper. The shade of the precipices on both sides falls blacker and blacker. The clouds gather overhead. Doleful voices, the clanking of chains, and the rushing of many feet to and fro, are heard through the darkness. The way, hardly discernible in gloom, runs close by the mouth of the burning pit, which sends forth its flames, its noisome smoke, and its hideous shapes, to terrify the adventurer. Thence he goes on, amidst the snares and pitfalls, with the mangled bodies of those who have perished lying in the ditch by his side. At the end of the long dark valley, he passes the dens in which the old giants dwelt, amidst the bones and ashes of those whom they had slain.

Then the road passes straight on through a waste moor, till at length the towers of a distant city appear before the traveller; and soon he is in the midst of the innumerable multitudes of Vanity Fair. There are the jugglers and the apes, the shops and the puppet-shows. There are Italian Row, and French Row, and Spanish Row, and Britain Row, with their crowds of buyers, sellers, and loungers, jabbering all the languages of the earth.

Thence we go on by the little hill of the silver mine, and through the meadow of lilies, along the bank of that pleasant river which is bordered on both sides by fruit-trees. On the left side, branches off the path leading to that horrible castle, the courtyard of which is paved with the skulls of pilgrims; and right onwards are the sheepfolds and orchards of the Delectable Mountains.

From the Delectable Mountains, the way lies through the logs and briers of the Enchanted Ground, with here and there a bed of soft cushions spread under a green arbour. And beyond is the land of Beulah, where the flowers,

the grapes, and the songs of birds never cease, and where the sun shines night and day. Thence are plainly seen the golden pavements and streets of pearl, on the other side of that black and cold river over which there is no bridge.

All the stages of the journey,--all the forms which cross or overtake the pilgrims,--giants and hobgoblins, ill-favoured ones, and shining ones,--the tall, comely, swarthy Madam Bubble, with her great purse by her side, and her fingers playing with the money,--the black man in the bright vesture,--Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, and my Lord Hategood,--Mr. Talkative, and Mrs. Timorous,--all are actually existing beings to us. We follow the travellers through their allegorical progress with interest not inferior to that with which we follow Elizabeth from Siberia to Moscow, or Jeanie Deans from Edinburgh to London. Bunyan is almost the only writer that ever gave to the abstract the interest of the concrete. In the works of many celebrated authors, men are mere personifications. We have not an Othello, but jealousy; not an Iago but perfidy; not a Brutus, but patriotism. The mind of Bunyan, on the contrary, was so imaginative, that personifications, when he dealt with them, became men. A dialogue between two qualities, in his dream, has more dramatic effect than a dialogue between two human beings in most plays.

The Pilgrim's Progress undoubtedly is not a perfect allegory. The types are often inconsistent with each other; and sometimes the allegorical disguise is altogether thrown off. The river, for example, is emblematic of death; and we are told that every human being must pass through the river. But Faithful does not pass through it. He is martyred, not in shadow, but in reality, at Vanity Fair. Hopeful talks to Christian about Esau's birthright, and about his own convictions of sin, as Bunyan might have talked with one of his own congregation. The damsels at the House Beautiful catechise Christiana's boys, as any good ladies might catechise any boys at a Sunday School. But we do not believe, that any man, whatever might be his genius, and whatever his good luck, could long continue a figurative history without falling into many inconsistencies.

The passages which it is most difficult to defend, are those in which he altogether drops the allegory, and puts into the mouth of his pilgrims religious ejaculations and disquisitions, better suited to his own pulpit at Bedford or Reading, than to the Enchanted Ground or the Interpreter's Garden. Yet even these passages, though we will not undertake to defend them against the objection of critics, we feel that we could ill spare. We feel that the story owes much of its charm to these occasional glimpses of solemn and affecting subjects, which will not be hidden, which force themselves through the veil, and appear before us in their native aspect. The effect is not unlike that which is said to have been produced on the ancient stage, when the eyes of the actor were seen flaming through his mask, and giving life and expression to what would else have been an inanimate and uninteresting disguise.

The style of Bunyan is delightful to every reader, and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. The vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. There is not an expression, if we except a few technical terms of theology, which would puzzle the rudest peasant. We have observed several pages which do not contain a single word of more than two syllables. Yet no writer has said more exactly what he meant to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this homely dialect--the dialect of plain working men--was perfectly sufficient. There is no book in our literature on which we would so readily stake the fame of the old unpolluted English language--no book which shows so well how rich that language is in its own proper wealth, and how little it has been improved by all that it has borrowed.

Cowper said, forty or fifty years ago, that he dared not name John Bunyan

in his verse, for fear of moving a sneer. To our refined forefathers, we suppose, Lord Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse, and the Duke of Buckinghamshire's Essay on Poetry, appeared to be compositions infinitely superior to the allegory of the preaching tinker. We live in better times; and we are not afraid to say, that, though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two great creative minds. One of those minds produced the Paradise Lost, the other the Pilgrim's Progress.--_Edinburgh Review_.

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THE GATHERER.

A London publisher advertises a collection of Nursery Tales as a "handsome present for _youth_." Here the schoolmaster is surely behind-hand.

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IMPROMPTU.--TO A LADY.

(_From the Italian_.)

Think not thy _faults_, my pretty scold,
Like transient clouds will pass away;
Thine image in the rose behold,
Whose leaves fade ere the _thorns_ decay.

E.L.J.

This trifle was sent to the _Mirror_ a few days since, and last Saturday it appeared in the _Literary Gazette_, with the same signature, E.L.J.--Is not this double-dealing?

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Pantomimes--Four hundred persons are nightly employed in the pantomime at Covent Garden Theatre, on the stage, behind the scenes, and in the orchestra. Of this number are 90 carpenters in the machinery, property, and scenic department. The usual cost of one of these relics of olden Christmas at a patent theatre is L2,000.; and upwards of L10,000. are annually expended in producing pantomimes for the amusement of the large and little children of this great metropolis.

How to keep away the Cholera--Fear has proved at all times, but more particularly during the prevalence of cholera, a fruitful predisposing cause of disease; be firm, therefore, and confident. Cheerfulness of disposition, equanimity and serenity of mind, are essential means of preservation from epidemic disorders, cholera especially. You have now the consoling assurance of the New Board of Health, in confirmation of what we, the anti-contagionists, in regard to cholera, had long before declared and contended for, that the disease _does not pass to those about the sick_, and seldom spreads in families. Cholera, therefore, is thus disarmed of one of its worst terrors. You only run the average share of risk of one in 1,200,000 individual inhabitants of the metropolis, of being affected by the epidemic influence of the atmosphere, while that influence lasts; and as you are put in possession of several means to counteract that influence, the chances are greatly in your favour that you will not be attacked by cholera at all. To this conclusion I am authorized to come by my experience, which has been very considerable, and my observations, in more

than one general epidemic, and by what I have read in all the authors (twenty or thirty of them) who have treated of cholera.--_Dr. Granville_.

The Cholera.--An interesting experiment was tried at Newcastle last week, on the state of the atmosphere. A kite was sent up, having attached to it a piece of fresh butcher's meat, a fresh haddock, and a small loaf of bread. The kite ascended to a considerable height, and remained at that elevation for an hour and a quarter. When brought to the ground, it was found that the fish and the piece of meat were both in a putrid state, particularly the fish; and the loaf, when examined through a microscope, was discovered to be pervaded with legions of animalculae. It may be worth while to repeat the experiment in other places to which cholera may unfortunately extend itself.--_Evening Paper_.

Foreign Books.--From official accounts it appears that the foreign books imported into the United Kingdom in the year 1830, weighed 3,441 cwt. 3 qrs. 13 lbs. the amount of duty upon which was L11,865 4_s_ 4_d_. We find this in a paper on the Duties on Foreign Books in the _Foreign Quarterly Review_, just published; in which the imported old books have obtained a considerable ascendancy over the new ones.

* * * * *

The lovers of the Fine Arts will hear with sorrow, the destruction by fire of Mr. Wilmshurst's splendid Painted Window of the Tournament of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, described at page 246, vol. xv. of _The Mirror_. It was completed about two years since at a cost of nearly 2,000_l_., and three years' labour of the artist.

* * * * *

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