

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction - Volume 17, No. 476, Saturday, February 12, 1831

Various

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THE MIRROR OF LITERATURE, AMUSEMENT, AND INSTRUCTION.

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LORD BYRON'S PALACE, AT VENICE.

[Illustration: LORD BYRON'S PALACE, AT VENICE.]

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Scores of readers who have been journeying through Mr. Moore's concluding portion of the Life of Lord Byron, will thank us for the annexed Illustration. It presents a view of the palace occupied by Lord Byron during his residence at Venice. When, after his unfortunate marriage, he left England, "in search of that peace of mind which was never destined to be his," Venice naturally occurred to him as a place where, for a time at least, he should find a suitable residence. He had, in his own language, "loved it from his boyhood;" and there was a poetry connected with its situation, its habits, and its history, which excited both his imagination and his curiosity. His situation at this period is thus feelingly alluded to by Mr. Moore:--"The circumstances under which Lord Byron now took leave of England were such as, in the case of any ordinary person, could not be considered otherwise than disastrous and humiliating. He had, in the course of one short year, gone through every variety of domestic misery;--had seen his hearth eight or nine times profaned by the visitations of the law, and been only saved from a prison by the privileges of his rank. He had alienated, as far as they had ever been his, the affections of his wife; and now, rejected by her, and condemned by the world, was betaking himself to an exile which had not even the dignity of appearing voluntary, as the excommunicating voice of society seemed to leave him no other resource. Had he been of that class of unfeeling and self-satisfied natures from whose hard surface the reproaches of others fall pointless, he might have found in insensibility a sure refuge against reproach: but, on the contrary, the same sensitiveness that kept him so awake to the applauses of mankind rendered him, in a still more intense degree, alive to their censure. Even the strange, perverse pleasure which he felt in painting himself unamiably to the world did not prevent him from being both startled and pained when the world took him at his word; and, like a child in a mask before a looking-glass, the dark semblance which he had half in sport, put on, when reflected back upon him from the mirror of public opinion, shocked even himself. * * *

"Then came the disappointment of his youthful passion,--the lassitude and remorse of premature excess,--the lone friendlessness of his entrance into life, and the ruthless assault upon his first literary efforts,---all links in that chain of trials, errors, and sufferings, by which his great mind was gradually and painfully drawn out;--all bearing their respective shares in accomplishing that destiny which seems to have decreed that the triumphal march of his genius should be over the waste and ruins of his heart. He appeared, indeed, himself to have had an instinctive consciousness that it was out of such ordeals his strength and glory were to arise, as his whole life was passed in courting agitation and difficulties; and whenever the scenes around him were too tame to furnish such excitement, he flew to fancy or memory for 'thorns' whereon to 'lean his breast.'" At the same time, the melancholy with which his heart was filled was soothed and cherished by the associations which every object in Venice inspired. The prospects of dominion subdued, of a high spirit humbled, of splendour tarnished, of palaces sinking into ruins, was but too faithfully in accordance with the dark and mournful mind which the poet bore within him. Nor were other motives of a nature wholly different wanting to draw him to Venice.[1] How beautifully has the poet illustrated this preference:--

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,

And music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone--but Beauty still is here.
States fall, hearts fade--but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy.

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway;
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away--
The keystones of the arch! though all were o'er,
For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

Her desolation:--

Statues of glass--all shiver'd--the long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;
Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust;
Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthral,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

* * * * *

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations,--most of all,
Albion! to thee; the Ocean queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

I loved her from my boyhood--she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart;
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art
Had stamp'd her image in me, and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part,
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe
Than when she was a boast, a marvel and a show.

I can repeople with the past--and of
The present there is still for eye, and thought,
And meditation chasten'd down, enough;
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice! have their colours caught:

There are some feelings Time can not benumb,
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

Again, in the notes to *Childe Harold*, where these spirit-breathing lines occur:

"The population of Venice, at the end of the 17th century amounted to nearly two hundred thousand souls. At the last census, taken two years ago, it was no more than about one hundred and three thousand, and it diminishes daily. The commerce and the official employments, which were to be the unexhausted source of Venetian grandeur, have both expired. Most of the patrician mansions are deserted, and would gradually disappear, had not the government, alarmed by the demolition of seventy-two, during the last two years, expressly forbidden this sad resource of poverty. Many remnants of the Venetian nobility are now scattered and confounded with the wealthier Jews upon the banks of the Brenta, whose palladian palaces, have sunk, or are sinking, in the general decay. Of the 'gentil uomo Veneto,' the name is still known, and that is all. He is but the shadow of his former self, but he is polite and kind. The present race cannot be thought to regret the loss of their aristocratical forms, and too despotic government--they think only on their vanished independence. They pine away at the remembrance, and on this subject suspend for a moment their gay good humour. Venice may be said, in the words of the scripture, 'to die daily;' and so general and so apparent is the decline, as to become painful to a stranger, not reconciled to the sight of a whole nation, expiring as it were before his eyes. So artificial a creation having lost that principle which called it into life and supported its existence, must fall to pieces at once, and sink more rapidly than it rose."

Captain Medwin relates Lord Byron's detestation of Venice in unmeasured terms. He likewise tells of his Lordship performing here one of those aquatic feats in which he greatly prided himself; and the Countess Albrizzi mentions a similar incident: "He was seen, on leaving a palace situated on the grand canal, instead of entering his gondola, to throw himself, with his clothes on, into the water, and swim to his house."

The Countess, who became acquainted with his Lordship at Venice, also narrates a few particulars of the mode in which he passed his time in that city: Amongst his peculiar habits was that of never showing himself on foot. "He was never seen to walk through the streets of Venice, nor along the pleasant banks of the Brenta, where he spent some weeks of the summer; and there are some who assert that he has never seen, excepting from a window, the wonders of the Piazza di San Marco,[2] so powerful in him was the desire of not showing himself to be deformed in any part of his person. I, however," continues the Countess, "believe that he often gazed on those wonders, but in the late and solitary hour, when the stupendous edifices which surrounded him, illuminated by the soft and placid light of the moon, appeared a thousand times more lovely." "During an entire winter, he went out every morning alone, to row himself to the island of the Armenians (a small island, distant from Venice about half a league), to enjoy the society of those learned and hospitable monks, and to learn their difficult language." During the summer, Lord Byron enjoyed the exercise of riding in the evening. "No sunsets," said he, "are to be compared with those of Venice--they are too gorgeous for any painter, and defy any poet."

[1] Letter-press of the superb "Landscape Annual" for the present year, whence our Engraving is transferred. The Life of the noble Poet at Venice cannot be better described than in his own Letters, for which see pages 43-82 of the present volume.

[2] From some passages in his Lordship's Letters, this would not appear correct.

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NATURE REVIVING.

(_For the Mirror._)

The rills run free, and fetterless, and strong,
Rejoicing that their icy bonds are broke,
The breeze is burthen'd with the grateful song
Of birds innumerable: who from torpor woke,
Cleave the fine air with renovated stroke.
The teeming earth flings up its budding store
Of herbs, and flow'rs, escaping from the yoke.
That Winter's spell had cast around; and o'er
The clear and sun-lit sky, dark clouds are seen no more.

In woody dells, by shallow brooks that stand,
The modest violet, and primrose pale,
(Like youth just bursting into life,) expand,
And cast their perfumes down the dewy vale,
Till laden seems each bland, yet searching gale
That fans the cheek with odours of the Spring.
All living nature rushes to inhale:
As if this universal blossoming
Too soon would fade away, or instantly take wing.

What beauty in the swelling upland green,
On which the fleecy flock in sportive play,
And mirth, and gambol innocent, are seen.
What pleasure through the scented copse to stray,
And hear the stock dove coo its am'rous lay,
Or climb the steep hill's side, beneath whose height
Dashing afar, like drifted snow, their spray;
The waves of ocean with an angry might,
Flash in the purple dawn, majestically bright.

Yet 'midst this union of benignant tones,
How fares it with the reasonable part
Of God's created glories? Man disowns
Not to give thanks; but skilled by human art
To screen the passions of a grateful heart;
He walks encircled by philosophy, whose creed
Allows no outward semblance, to impart
One trace of joyousness that may exceed
Those coldly rigid rules on which it loves to feed.

And therefore balmy spring, with all its joys,
Its pomp of early leaves, and thrilling lays,
And ceaseless chime of song (that never cloys,
Altho' the winds be redolent of praise.)
Wakes not in man that stupor of amaze,
Bird, beast, and plant, in universal choir,
Pay to Almighty in a thousand ways,
That sterner reason's votaries would flout,
Giving _their_ tardy homage in mistrust and doubt.

Not so with me. I never feel the spring
Come on in beauty, but my swelling soul
Seems ready in its gush of joy, to fling
All trammels off, that would in aught control
Its wild pulsation. O'er it feelings roll
Too mighty for expression; and each sense
Appears to be commingled in one whole;
Whose sum of ecstasy is so intense,
It finds no home to garner it, but in omnipotence.

J.H.H.

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POLISH PATRIOT'S APPEAL.

(_For the Mirror._)

Rise fellow men! our country yet remains
By that dread name, we wave the sword on high,
And swear with her to live--for her to die.

CAMPBELL.

Have we not proved our country's worth--the country of the free?
Have we not raised the tyrant's foot--and struck for liberty--
The giant foot that on us fell, in war's tremendous fall--
The mighty weight that bore us down and held our arms in thrall?

Have we not risked our homes, our all, at Freedom's glorious shrine,
And dared the vengeance of the Russ, whose sway is yclept divine?
And have we not appealed to arms--our last and dearest right!
And is not ours a sacred cause, a just and holy fight?

Yes, on Sarmatia's bleeding form Oppression's fetters rang,
And Liberty's last dying dirge the Northern trumpet sang:
Our hopes were buried in the grave where Kosciusko lies;
There came not friendship then from earth--nor mercy from the skies!

But Heaven has roused the Polish slave and bid him rend his chains,
And now we rank among the free--"Our country yet remains:"
Again we seek our native rights by God and Nature given--
A people's right unto their soil from us unjustly riven.

We call upon the honoured brave--the free of every land--

For succour from the powerful--for aid from every strand:
We ask for every good man's prayer--we call for help on high;
Ye shades of Poland's slaughtered sons, look on propitiously.

We fight the fight of nations--bear witness field and storm
To our desert hereafter? Now we are but braggarts warm--
But by our honest cause, we swear, ere they our land retake,
Each town shall be a charnel tomb--each field a gory lake!

CYMBELINE.

* * * * *

THE NATURALIST.

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ANECDOTES OF PARROTS.

(_For the Mirror._)

"Who taught the Parrot human notes to try?
'Twas witty want, fierce hunger to appease."

DRYDEN.

A parrot belonging to the sister of the Comte de Buffon (says Bingley,) "would frequently speak to himself, and seem to fancy that some one addressed him. He often asked for his paw, and answered by holding it up. Though he liked to hear the voice of children, he seemed to have an antipathy to them; he pursued them, and bit them till he drew blood. He had also his objects of attachment; and though his choice was not very nice, it was constant. He was excessively fond of the cook-maid; followed her everywhere, sought for, and seldom missed finding her. If she had been some time out of his sight, the bird climbed with his bill and claws to her shoulders, and lavished on her caresses. His fondness had all the marks of close and warm friendship. The girl happened to have a very sore finger, which was tedious in healing, and so painful as to make her scream. While she uttered her moans the parrot never left her chamber. The first thing he did every day, was to pay her a visit; and this tender condolence lasted the whole time of the cure, when he again returned to his former calm and settled attachment. Yet this strong predilection for the girl seems to have been more directed to her office in the kitchen, than to her person; for, when another cook-maid succeeded her, the parrot showed the same degree of fondness[3] to the new comer, the very first day."

Bingley also says, "Willoughby tells us of a parrot, which when a person said to it, 'laugh, Poll, laugh,' laughed accordingly, and the instant after screamed out, 'What a fool to make me laugh.' Another which had grown old with its master, shared with him the infirmities of age. Being accustomed to hear scarcely anything but the words, 'I am sick;' when a

person asked it, 'How do you do, Poll? how d'ye do?'--'I am sick,' it replied, in a doleful tone, stretching itself along, 'I am sick.'"

Goldsmith says, "That a parrot belonging to King Henry VIII. having been kept in a room next the Thames, in his palace at Westminster, had learned to repeat many sentences from the boatmen and passengers. One day sporting on its perch, it unluckily fell into the water. The bird had no sooner discovered its situation, than it called out aloud, 'A boat, twenty pounds for a boat.' A waterman happening to be near the place where the parrot was floating, immediately took it up, and restored it to the king; demanding, as the bird was a favourite, that he should be paid the reward that it had called out. This was refused; but it was agreed, that as the parrot had offered a reward, the man should again refer to its determination for the sum he was to receive. 'Give the knave a groat,' the bird screamed aloud, the instant the reference was made."

Mr. Locke, in his "Essay on the Human Understanding," has related an anecdote concerning parrots, of which (says Bingley) however incredible it may appear to some, he seems to have had so much evidence, as at least to have believed it himself. It is taken from a writer of some celebrity; the author of Memoirs of what passed in Christendom from 1672 to 1679. The story is this:--

"During the government of Prince Maurice, in Brazil, he had heard of an old parrot that was much celebrated for answering like a rational creature, many of the common questions that were put to it. It was at a great distance; but so much had been said about it, that his curiosity was roused, and he directed it to be sent for. When it was introduced into the room where the prince was sitting in company with several Dutchmen, it immediately exclaimed in the Brazilian language, 'What a company of white men are here.' They asked it 'Who is that man?' (pointing to the prince) the parrot answered, 'Some general or other.' When the attendants carried it up to him, he asked it through the medium of an interpreter, (for he was ignorant of its language) 'From whence do you come?' the parrot answered, 'From Marignan.' The prince asked, 'To whom do you belong?' it answered, 'To a Portuguese.' He asked again, 'What do you do there?' it answered, 'I look after the chickens.' The prince, laughingly, exclaimed, 'You look after the chickens?' the parrot in answer, said, 'Yes, I; and I know well enough how to do it,' clucking at the time, in imitation of the noise made by the hen to call together her young.

"This account came directly from the prince to the above author; he said that though the parrot spoke in a language he did not understand, yet he could not be deceived, for he had in the room both a Dutchman who spoke Brazilian, and a Brazilian who spoke Dutch; that he asked them separately and privately, and both agreed very exactly in giving him the parrot's discourse. If the story is devoid of foundation, the prince must have been deceived, for there is not the least doubt that he believed it."

Parrots not only discourse, but also mimic gestures and actions. Scaliger saw one that performed the dance of the Savoyards, at the same time that it repeated their song.

P.T.W.

[3] Pot or kitchen love.

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RETROSPECTIVE GLEANINGS.

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DITTY BY QUEEN ELIZABETH.

(_For the Mirror._)

"I find, (says Puttenham,) none example in English metre so well mayntayning this figure (_Exargasia_, or the Gorgeous) as that dittie of her Majestie Queen Elizabeth's own making, passing sweete and harmonical; which figure being, as his very original name purporteth, the most beautiful and gorgeous of all others, it asketh in reason to be reserved for a last compliment, and disciphered by the arte of a ladies penne (herself being the most beautifull or rather beautie of Queens.) And this was the occasion: Our Sovereign lady perceiving how the Queen of Scots residence within this realme as to great libertie and ease (as were scarce meete for so great and dangerous a prisoner,) bred secret factions amongst her people, and made many of the nobility incline to favour her partie (some of them desirous of innovation in the state, others aspiring to greater fortunes by her libertie and life;) the Queene our Sovereigne Lady, to declare that she was nothing ignorant of those secret practices (though she had long, with great wisdom and patience, dissembled it,) writeth that dittie, most sweet and sententious; not hiding from all such aspiring minds the danger of their ambition and disloyaltie, which afterwards fell out most truly by the exemplary chastisements of sundry persons, who in favour of the said Queen of Scots, declining from her Majestie, sought to interrupt the quiet of the realm by many evill and undutifull practyses."

The ditty is as followeth:--

The dowbt of future foes exiles my present joy,
And Wit me warns to shun snares as threaten mine annoy;
For falshood now doth flowe, and subject faith doth ebbe,
Which would not be, if reason rul'd, or wisdom weav'd the webbe.
But clouds of tois untried do choake aspiring mindes,
Which turn'd to rain of late repent by course of changed windes.
The toppe of hope suppos'd, the root of ruth will be
And fruitless all their grafted guiles, as shortly ye shall see.
Then dazzled eyes, with pride which great ambition blindes,
Shall be unveil'd by worthy wights, whose foresight falshood finds.
The daughter of debate, that eke discord doth sowe,
Shall reape no gaine, where former rule hath taught still peace to growe.
No forreine banish'd wight shall ancre in this port;
Our realme it brooks no stranger's force, let them elsewhere resort.
Our rusty sword with rust shall first his edge employ,
To polle their toppes that seeke such change, and gape for joy.

J.G.B.

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NOTES OF A READER.

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QUARTERLY REVIEW. No. 87.

Character of Mr. Canning.

There have been some who equalled him in acquirements--many who have possessed sounder judgment and sounder principles; but never was there in any legislative assembly, a person whose talents were more peculiarly and perfectly adapted to the effect which he intended to produce. With all the advantages of voice and person--with all the graces of delivery--with all the charms which affability and good-nature impart to genius, he had wit at will, as well as eloquence at command. Being frank and sincere in all his political opinions, he had all that strength in his oratory which arises from sincerity, although in his political conduct the love of intrigue was one of his besetting sins. By an unhappy perversion of mind it seemed as if he would always rather have obtained his end by a crooked path than by a straight one; but his speeches had nothing of this tortuosity; there was nothing covert in them, nothing insidious--no double-dealing, no disguise. His argument went always directly to the point, and with so well-judged an aim that he was never (like Burke) above his mark--rarely, if ever, below it, or beside it. When, in the exultant consciousness of personal superiority, as well as the strength of his cause, he trampled upon his opponents, there was nothing coarse, nothing virulent, nothing contumelious, nothing ungenerous in his triumph. Whether he addressed the Liverpool electors, or the House of Commons, it was with the same ease, the same adaptation to his auditory, the same unrivalled dexterity, the same command of his subject and his hearers, and the same success. His only faults as a speaker were committed when, under the inebriating influence of popular applause, he was led away by the heat and passion of the moment. A warm friend, a placable adversary, a scholar, a man of letters, kind in his nature, affable in his manners, easy of access, playful in conversation, delightful in society--rarely have the brilliant promises of boyhood been so richly fulfilled as in Mr. Canning.

Political Economists

Are the most daring of all legislators, just (it has been well said) as "cockney equestrians are the most fearless of all riders." But the confidence with which they propose their theories is less surprising than the facility with which their propositions have been entertained, and their extravagant pretensions admitted. We need not marvel at the success of quackery in medicine and theology, when we look at the career of the St. John Longs in political life. From the time in which the bullion question came out of Pandora's Scotch mull, parliament has been wearied with the interminable discussions which they have raised there. Youths who were fresh from college, and men with or without education,

who were "in the wane of their wits and infancy of their discretion," imbibe the radiant darkness of Jeremy Bentham, and forthwith set themselves up as the lights of their generation. No professors, even in the subtlest ages of scholastic philosophy, were ever more successful in muddying what they found clear, and perplexing what is in itself intelligible. What are wages?--this, we are told, is the most difficult and the most important of all the branches of political economy, and this, we are also told, has been obscured by ambiguities and fallacies. What is rent? What is value? Upon these questions, and such as these, which no man of sincere understanding ever proposed to himself or others, they discuss and dilate with as much ardour and to as little effect, as the old philosophers disputed upon the elements of the material creation; bringing to the discussion intellects of the same kind, though as far below them in degree as in the dignity of the subjects upon which their useless subtlety is expended. But it cannot be said of them, that they, when all is said,

With much discretion and great want of wit,
Leave all as wisely as it was at first;

for they mystify those readers who are not disgusted by such ineptitudes, perplex weak minds, and pervert vain ones. Of such discussions it may be said with the son of Sirach, that "when a man hath done, then he beginneth; and when he leaveth off, then he shall be doubtful."

Homer.

Seneca reckons among the idle questions, which were unworthy of wise men, the dispute whether Homer wrote both the Iliad and Odyssey, and in what countries Ulysses wandered. Notwithstanding the "Stoic's philosophic pride," these inquiries have still an interest to minds of the highest order--such is the homage which genius extorts from the remotest countries and from the latest ages. We noticed, in an article in our last Number, the curious fact of native youths in India performing parts of Shakspeare, and thus on the shores of the Ganges countless minds are deriving delight, perhaps improvement, from the careless and unlaboured verses of the light-hearted Warwickshire deer-stealer. So, in this country, and over all the continent of Europe, which, when the songs of Homer first gladdened the halls of the chieftains on the shores of the Aegean, were vast unknown deserts, unpeopled, or wandered over by a few rude hunters; which, to the Greeks, were regions of more than Cimmerian darkness, beyond the boundaries of the living world--men of the loftiest and most powerful understanding are examining, and discussing, and disputing the most minute points which may illustrate the poetry of the blind bard; scholars are elucidating, antiquaries illustrating, philosophers reasoning upon, men of genius transfusing into their native tongues, poets honouring with despairing emulation, the whole mind of educated man feeling the transcendent power of the poet of the Iliad and Odyssey. Surely, the boasted triumph of poetry over space and time is no daring hyperbole--surely, it is little more than the boasted reality of truth.

Power of Memory.

It is indeed not easy to calculate the height to which the memory may

be cultivated. To take an ordinary case, we might refer to that of any first-rate actor, who must be prepared, at a very short warning, to "rhapsodize" night after night, parts which, when laid together, would amount to an immense number of lines. But all this is nothing to two instances of our own day. Visiting at Naples a gentleman of the highest intellectual attainments, and who held a distinguished rank among the men of letters in the last century, he informed us that the day before he had passed much time in examining a man, not highly educated, who had learned to repeat the whole *Gierusalemme Liberata* of Tasso; not only to recite it consecutively, but to repeat any given stanza of any given book; to repeat those stanzas in utter defiance of the sense, either forwards or backwards, or from the eighth line to the first, alternately the odd and even lines--in short, whatever the passage required, the memory, which seemed to cling to the words much more than to the sense, had it at such perfect command, that it could produce it under any form. Our informant went on to state, that this singular being was proceeding to learn the *Orlando Furioso* in the same manner. But even this instance is less wonderful than one as to which we may appeal to any of our readers that happened some twenty years ago to visit the town of Stirling, in Scotland. No such person can have forgotten that poor, uneducated man, Blind Jamie, who could actually repeat, after a few minutes' consideration, any verse required from any part of the Bible--even the obscurest and least important enumeration of mere proper names not excepted.

Origin of the Homeric Poems.

It is said that the art of writing, and the use of manageable writing materials, were entirely, or all but entirely, unknown in Greece and the islands at the supposed date of the composition of the *Iliad*; and that if so, this poem could not have been committed to writing during the time of such its composition; that in a question of comparative probabilities like this, it is a much grosser improbability that even the single *Iliad*, amounting, after all curtailments and expungings, to upwards of 15,000 lines, should have been actually conceived and perfected in the brain of one man, with no other help but his own or others' memory, than that it should, in fact, be the result of the labours of several distinct authors; that if the *Odyssey* be counted, the improbability is doubled; that if we add, upon the authority of Thucydides and Aristotle, the *Hymns* and *Margites*, not to say the *Batrachomyomachia*, that which was improbable becomes absolutely impossible; that all that has been so often said as to the fact of as many lines, or more, having been committed to memory, is beside the point in question, which is not whether 15,000 or 30,000 lines may be learnt by art from a book or manuscript, but whether one man can compose a poem of that length, which, rightly or not, shall be thought to be a perfect model of symmetry or consistency of parts, without the aid of writing materials; that, admitting the superior probability of such a thing in a primitive age, we know nothing analogous to such a case; and that it so transcends the common limits of intellectual power, as, at the least, to merit, with as much justice as the opposite opinion, the character of improbability.--H.N. Coleridge.

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LIBERALISM AND MUSIC.

It seems that the day is come again when musical airs are ranked in political importance with proclamations, manifestoes, &c. Everybody knows the story of the Swiss hired troops, the *_Ranz des Vaches_*, and the prohibition of this tune in France. A Polish air, the *_Dombrowski Mazourka_*, which the regiment of General Szembek played on entering Warsaw, has been forbidden by the Grand Duke Constantine, on pain of a penalty of 400 florins; the consequence of which is, that it has become the outward and audible sign of patriotism in every part of Poland; just as the *Marseilles March* and *_la Parisienne_* are in France and the Netherlands the signals of liberalism. During Mr. Pitt's administration an organ grinder was committed to Newgate for playing "Ah! ca ira" in the streets. This was a silly step; but the fellow excited little commiseration, for the tune was the war-whoop of a few savages who were at that time deluging France with blood. It affords another proof, however, of the power ascribed by statesmen to instrumental music, uninterpreted by words in exciting ideas and producing associations.-- *_Harmonicon, Feb. 1._*

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TURKISH MUSICAL GUSTO.

A modern traveller informs us, that the band of an English ambassador at Constantinople once performed a concert for the entertainment of the Sultan and his court. At the conclusion it was asked, which of the pieces he preferred. He replied, the first, which was accordingly recommenced, but stopped, as not being the right one. Others were tried with as little success, until at length the band, almost in despair of discovering the favourite air, began *_tuning_* their instruments, when his highness instantly exclaimed, "*_Inshallah_*, heaven be praised, that is it!" The Turkish prince may be excused, when it is known that at the commemoration of Handel in 1784, Dr. Burney thought the mere tuning of that host of instruments more gratifying than the ordinary performances to which he had been accustomed.-- *_Ibid._*

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RODE, THE VIOLINIST.

In 1814, he was resident at Berlin, where he gave a concert for the benefit of the poor, and on quitting that capital, returned to his native city, not again to quit it, except for one ill-starred visit to Paris in 1818. This visit threw a fatal colouring over all the rest of Rode's days, and probably contributed to shorten his life. For several years he had played only in a small circle of admiring friends, who persuaded him (nothing loth to believe) that his talents were still unabated. The habit of hearing no one but himself had extinguished emulation, and deprived him of all means of comparison. Rode suddenly determined to re-appear in the musical world, and on his arrival in Paris sought for opportunities of playing in private parties, with as much eagerness as though he had still been a young man with a reputation to make. His old admirers were at first delighted to greet him; but they soon saw with unfeigned regret that he was compromising a great and well-earned name. His tone, once so pure and beautiful, had become uncertain; his bow was as timid as his fingers, and he no longer dared to indulge fearlessly the suggestions of his imagination; in short it was too apparent that, in spite of his delusion, Rode's former

confidence in himself was gone; and we know the importance of that feeling of self-reliance which men of talent derive from the innate consciousness of their own superiority: once destroyed, everything else vanishes with it. He was applauded; respect for the last efforts of what had once been first-rate talent secured him that meed; but he was applauded because his audience considered it a kind of duty, and without any symptoms of enthusiasm. He felt the distinction; a dreadful light broke in upon him, and for the first time he became conscious that he was no longer himself. The blow was the more severe as it was unlooked for: he left Paris overwhelmed with grief; the check he had received preyed incessantly on his mind and injured his health. A paralytic stroke toward the end of 1829 deprived him of the use of one side and affected his intellect, in which state he languished for nearly twelve months, till on the 25th of November, 1830, death relieved him from his sufferings.--_From a Memoir of Rode in the Harmonicon._

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PROGRESS OF SCIENCE.

It may be considered as sufficiently proved, that the sciences had not acquired any degree of improvement until the eighth century before the Christian era; notwithstanding great nations had been formed in several parts of the earth some centuries earlier. Fifteen hundred years before Christ there were already four--the Indians, the Chinese, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians.--_Cuvier._

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SELECT BIOGRAPHY.

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THOMAS HOPE, ESQ.

(_For the Mirror._)

We regret to record the death of this distinguished scholar and munificent patron of literature and the fine arts. For some weeks past we have been awaiting the publication of his last work, entitled, "An Essay on the Origin and Prospects of Man;" and after looking with this expectation in the _Times_ of Friday, the 4th, we there read the information of Mr. Hope's death, on the 2nd instant, at his house in Duchess-street.

Mr. Hope was a nephew of the opulent Amsterdam merchant of the same name. We are not aware of his precise age, but should judge it must have verged on sixty. In early life he travelled much, especially in the East; and few Englishmen have acquired better knowledge of the manners and customs of that division of the world than had the subject of this memoir. His visits to the European continent are of much more recent date. In its various academies of fine art his name will long be cherished with grateful remembrance, since few men distributed their

patronage with so much munificence and judgment.

Possessing an ample fortune and exquisite taste, Mr. Hope judiciously applied his knowledge of the fine arts to the internal decoration of houses: thus producing, in numberless instances, the rare combination of splendour and convenience. On this subject, Mr. Hope published, in 1805, an illustrative folio work, entitled "Household Furniture and Internal Decorations." He also published two very superb works on costume, entitled, "The Costumes of the Ancients," two vols. 8vo. 1809; and "Designs of Modern Costume," folio, 1812: in which he displayed high classical attainments and love of the picturesque.

Mr. Hope, however, subsequently appeared before the literary world in a work which at once places him in the highest list of eloquent writers and superior men--viz. *Anastasius; or, the Memoirs of a Modern Greek*: published in the year 1819. There are, indeed, few books in the English language which contain passages of greater power, feeling, and eloquence than this work, which delineate frailty and vice with more energy and acuteness, or describe historical scenes with such bold imagery and such glowing language. We remember the opinion of a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, soon after the publication of *Anastasius*. With a degree of pleasantry and acumen peculiar to northern criticism, he asks, "Where has Mr. Hope hidden all his eloquence and poetry up to this hour? How is it that he has, all of a sudden, burst out into descriptions which would not disgrace the pen of Tacitus, and displayed a depth of feeling and vigour of imagination which Lord Byron could not excel? We do not shrink from one syllable of this eulogy." The subjects upon which Mr. Hope had previously written were not calculated to call forth his eloquent feeling; and, such excellence was not expected from him, who, to use the harmless satire of the *Edinburgh reviewer*, "meditated muffineers and planned pokers."

This was no praise of party: contemporary criticism universally allowed *Anastasius* to be a work in which great and extraordinary talent is evinced. It abounds in sublime passages--in sense--in knowledge of history, and in knowledge of human character;--and the rapid sale of three editions has proved these superior characteristics to have been amply recognised by the reading public. The work in its fourth edition still enjoys a good sale. In each reprint the nicety of the writer is traceable: the corrections and alterations in the metaphysical portions on such passages as illustrate points of character, are elaborated with exquisite skill, and fresh turns of scholarly elegance are observable throughout each volume of the work. Memory has probably in some instances enabled the author to re-touch his pictures of Eastern scenery, and rearrange his grouping of particular incidents. What a delightful labour of leisure must this have been for so ingenious a mind! One of his similes--a weeping lady's eyes compared to violets steeped in dew--has never been out of our recollection; and one of his battle scenes almost makes the reader imagine himself transfixed to the spot by a weapon of the contest.

Mr. Hope married, in 1806, the Hon. Louisa Beresford, daughter of the late Lord Decies, Archbishop of Tuam, and sister of the present peer, by whom he has left three sons, the eldest of whom, Mr. Henry Hope, was groom of the bedchamber to the late king, and recently took his seat in parliament for the borough of West Looe. Of their highly-gifted and accomplished mother we know many amiable traits; and, however bright may have been her fashionable splendour in high life, it is more than counterbalanced by her active benevolence in the county, in visiting the

homes and relieving the distresses of the poor of the neighbourhood.

Of Mr. Hope's literary acquirements and his patronage of the liberal arts we have already spoken. It is, however, grateful to be enabled to refer to special acts of such patronage. It should not, therefore, be forgotten, that to the liberality of Mr. Hope, Thorwaldsen, the celebrated Danish sculptor, is chiefly indebted for a fostering introduction to the world: we have seen at the liberal patron's seat, Deepdene, a stupendous boar of spotless marble, for which the sculptor received a commission of one thousand guineas. Mr. Hope, too, was one of the earliest of the patrons of Mr. George Dawe, R.A. In a memoir of this fortunate and distinguished painter we find that "Andromache soliciting the Life of her Son," from a scene in the French play entitled "Andromache," was purchased by Mr. Hope, "who, in the most liberal manner, marked his approbation of Dawe's talents by favouring him with several commissions for family portraits, especially a half-length of Mrs. Hope, with two of her children, and two whole-lengths of the lady singly." To the useful as well as elegant arts Mr. Hope's encouragement was extended; and for the last ten years he has filled the office of one of the Vice-presidents of the Society of Arts and Sciences in the Adelphi.

Mr. Hope usually passed "the season" at his superb mansion in Duchess-street, Portland-place, where he had assembled a valuable collection of works of art, altogether unrivalled, and comprising paintings, antique statues, busts, vases, and other relics of antiquity, arranged in apartments, the furniture and decorations of which were in general designed after classic models, by the ingenious possessor himself. Among the sculpture is the exquisite Venus rising from the Bath, by Canova. The whole of these valuables were open to the public, under certain restrictions, during "the season." Mr. Hope likewise possessed one of the most delightful estates in the county of Surrey--viz. the Deepdene, near Dorking, to which he annexed Chart Park, purchased from the devisees of the late Sir Charles Talbot, Bart. On the last-mentioned estate is a spacious mausoleum, erected by Mr. Hope about thirteen years since, and capable of containing upwards of twenty bodies. Two of his sons, who died in their youth, are buried here.

In the retirement of the Deepdene, Mr. Hope passed much time in embellishing the mansion, and improving the gardens, grounds, &c. "Here," observes the author of the *Promenade round Dorking*, "I was much gratified with landscape gardening, the quiet of echoing dells, and the refreshing coolness of caverns--all which combined to render this spot a kind of fairy region. Flower-gardens laid out in parterres, with much taste, here mingle trim neatness with rude uncultivated nature, in walks winding through plantations and woods, with ruined grottoes and hermitages, well adapted, by their solitary situations, for study and reverie." Adjoining the mansion, Mr. Hope likewise constructed a classical sculpture gallery, which he enriched with several antiques from his town residence. Notwithstanding all these additions, we are bound to confess, that, compared with the beauty of the situation, they were but unsuccessful efforts of art to embellish bountiful Nature.

The conveniences of the Deepdene are upon a scale of magnificence similar to that of the mansion in Duchess-street. Their present Majesties, before their accession, were occasional visitors at the Deepdene; and upon the formation of the Queen's Household, Mrs. Hope was appointed a Lady of the Bedchamber.

Few men, even in the philanthropic neighbourhood of Dorking, were more beloved than the late Mr. Hope. His patronage by money and otherwise, was never vainly sought for a good object; and with this high merit we close our humble tribute to his public and private excellence.

PHILO.

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SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.

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BACCHANALIAN SONG.

(_From the "Noctes" of Blackwood._)

NORTH.--The air, you know, is my own, James. I shall sing it to-night to some beautiful words by my friend Robert Folkestone Williams, written, he tells me, expressly for the Noctes.

Oh! fill the wine-cup high,
The sparkling liquor pour;
For we will care and grief defy,
They ne'er shall plague us more.
And ere the snowy foam
From off the wine departs,
The precious draught shall find a home,
A dwelling in our hearts.

Though bright may be the beams
That woman's eyes display;
They are not like the ruby gleams
That in our goblets play.
For though surpassing bright
Their brilliancy may be,
Age dims the lustre of their light,
But adds more worth to thee.

Give me another draught,
The sparkling, and the strong;
He who would learn the poet craft--
He who would shine in song--
Should pledge the flowing bowl
With warm and generous wine;
'Twas wine that warm'd Anacreon's soul,
And made his songs divine.

And e'en in tragedy,
Who lives that never knew
The honey of the Attic Bee
Was gather'd from thy dew?
He of the tragic muse,

Whose praises bards rehearse:
What power but thine could e'er diffuse
Such sweetness o'er his verse?

Oh! would that I could raise
The magic of that tongue;
The spirit of those deathless lays,
The Swan of Teios sung!
Each song the bard has given,
Its beauty and its worth,
Sounds sweet as if a voice from heaven
Was echoed upon earth.

How mighty--how divine
Thy spirit seemeth when
The rich draught of the purple vine
Dwelt in these godlike men.
It made each glowing page,
Its eloquence and truth,
In the glory of their golden age,
Outshine the fire of youth.

Joy to the lone heart--joy
To the desolate--oppress'd
For wine can every grief destroy
That gathers in the breast.
The sorrows, and the care,
That in our hearts abide,
'Twill chase them from their dwellings there,
To drown them in its tide.

And now the heart grows warm,
With feelings undefined,
Throwing their deep diffusive charm
O'er all the realms of mind.
The loveliness of truth
Flings out its brightest rays,
Clothed in the songs of early youth,
Or joys of other days.

We think of her, the young
The beautiful, the bright;
We hear the music of her tongue,
Breathing its deep delight.
We see again each glance,
Each bright and dazzling beam,
We feel our throbbing hearts still dance,
We live but in a dream.

From darkness, and from woe,
A power like lightning darts;
A glory cometh down to throw
Its shadow o'er our hearts.
And dimm'd by falling tears,
A spirit seems to rise,
That shows the friend of other years
Is mirror'd in our eyes.

But sorrow, grief, and care,

Had dimm'd his setting star;
And we think with tears of those that _were_,
To smile on those that _are_.
Yet though the grassy mound
Sits lightly on his head,
We'll pledge, in solemn silence round,
THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD!

The sparkling juice now pour,
With fond and liberal hand;
Oh! raise the laughing rim once more,
Here's to our FATHER LAND!
Up, every soul that hears,
Hurra! with three times three;
And shout aloud, with deafening cheers,
The "ISLAND OF THE FREE."

Then fill the wine-cup high,
The sparkling liquor pour;
For we will care and grief defy,
They ne'er shall plague us more.
And ere the snowy foam
From off the wine departs,
The precious draught shall find a home--
A dwelling in our hearts.

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THE SNOW-WHITE VIRGIN.

(_From a Winter Rhapsody. By Christopher North. Fytte III_.)

There is a charm in the sudden and total disappearance even of the grassy green. All the "old familiar faces" of nature are for awhile out of sight, and out of mind. That white silence shed by heaven over earth carries with it, far and wide, the pure peace of another region--almost another life. No image is there to tell of this restless and noisy world. The cheerfulness of reality kindles up our reverie ere it becomes a dream; and we are glad to feel our whole being complexioned by the passionless repose. If we think at all of human life, it is only of the young, the fair, and the innocent. "Pure as snow" are words then felt to be most holy, as the image of some beautiful and beloved being comes and goes before our eyes--brought from a far distance in this our living world, or from a distance--far, far, farther still--in the world beyond the grave--the image of a virgin growing up sinlessly to womanhood among her parents' prayers, or of some spiritual creature who expired long ago, and carried with her her native innocence unstained to heaven.

Such Spiritual Creature--too spiritual long to sojourn below the skies--wert Thou, whose rising and whose setting--both most starlike--brightened at once all thy native vale, and at once left it in darkness. Thy name has long slept in our heart--and there let it sleep unbreathed--even as, when we are dreaming our way through some solitary place, without speaking, we bless the beauty of some sweet wild-flower, pensively smiling to us through the snow!

The Sabbath returns on which, in the little kirk among the hills, we saw thee baptized. Then comes a wavering glimmer of seven sweet years, that to Thee, in all their varieties, were but as one delightful season, one blessed life--and, finally, that other Sabbath, on which, at thy own dying request--between services thou wert buried!

How mysterious are all thy ways and workings, O gracious Nature! Thou who art but a name given by our souls, seeing and hearing through the senses, to the Being in whom all things are and have life! Ere two years old, she, whose dream is now with us, all over the small silvan world, that beheld the revelation, how evanescent! of her pure existence, was called the "Holy Child!" The taint of sin--inherited from those who disobeyed in Paradise--seemed from her fair clay to have been washed out at the baptismal font, and by her first infantine tears. So pious people almost believed, looking on her so unlike all other children, in the serenity of that habitual smile that clothed the creature's countenance with a wondrous beauty, at an age when on other infants is but faintly seen the dawn of reason, and their eyes look happy, just like the thoughtless flowers. So unlike all other children--but unlike only because sooner than they--she seemed to have had given to her--even in the communion of the cradle--an intimation of the being and the providence of God. Sooner, surely, than through any other clay that ever enshrouded immortal spirit, dawned the light of reason and of religion on the face of the "Holy Child."

Her lisping language was sprinkled with words alien from common childhood's uncertain speech, that murmurs only when indigent nature prompts;--and her own parents wondered whence they came in her simplicity, when first they looked upon her kneeling in an unbidden prayer. As one mild week of vernal sunshine covers the braes with primroses, so shone with fair and fragrant feelings--unfolded, ere they knew, before her parents' eyes--the divine nature of her who, for a season, was lent to them from the skies. She learned to read out of the Bible--almost without any teaching--they knew not how--just by looking gladly on the words, even as she looked on the pretty daisies on the green--till their meanings stole insensibly into her soul, and the sweet syllables, succeeding each other on the blessed page, were all united by the memories her heart had been treasuring every hour that her father or her mother had read aloud in her hearing from the Book of Life. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven"--how wept her parents, as these the most affecting of our Saviour's words dropt silver-sweet from her lips, and continued in her upward eyes among the swimming tears!

Be not incredulous of this dawn of reason, wonderful as it may seem to you, so soon becoming morn--almost perfect daylight--with the "Holy Child."--Many such miracles are set before us; but we recognise them not, or pass them by, with a word or a smile of short surprise. How leaps the baby in its mother's arms, when the mysterious charm of music thrills through its little brain! And how learns it to modulate its feeble voice, unable yet to articulate, to the melodies that bring forth all round its eyes a delighted smile! Who knows what then may be the thoughts and feelings of the infant awakened to the sense of a new world, alive through all its being to sounds that haply glide past our ears, unmeaning as the breath of the common air! Thus have mere infants sometimes been seen inspired by music, till like small genii they warbled spell-strains of their own, powerful to sadden and subdue our hearts. So, too, have infant eyes been so charmed by the rainbow irradiating the earth, that almost infant hands have been taught, as if

by inspiration, the power to paint in finest colours, and to imitate with a wondrous art, the skies so beautiful to the quick-awakened spirit of delight. What knowledge have not some children acquired, and gone down scholars to their small untimely graves! Knowing that such things have been--are--and will be--why art thou incredulous of the divine expansion of soul--so soon understanding the things that are divine--in the "Holy Child?"

Thus grew she in the eye of God, day by day waxing wiser and wiser in the knowledge that tends towards the skies, and as if some angel visitant were nightly with her in her dreams, awakening every morn with a new dream of thought that brought with it a gilt of more comprehensive speech. Yet merry she was at times with her companions among the woods and braes, though while they all were laughing, she only smiled; and the passing traveller, who might pause a moment to bless the sweet creatures in their play, could not but single out one face among the many fair, so pensive in its paleness, a face to be remembered, coming from afar, like a mournful thought upon the hour of joy!

Sister or brother of her own had she none--and often both her parents--who lived in a hut by itself up among the mossy stumps of the old decayed forest--had to leave her alone--sometimes even all the day long, from morning till night. But she no more wearied in her solitariness than does the wren in the wood. All the flowers were her friends--all the birds. The linnet ceased not his song for her, though her footsteps wandered into the green glade among the yellow broom, almost within reach of the spray from which he poured his melody--the quiet eyes of his mate feared her not when her garments almost touched the bush where she brooded on her young. Shyest of the winged silvans, the cushat clapped not her wings away on the soft approach of her harmless footsteps to the pine that concealed her slender nest. As if blown from heaven, descended round her path the showers of the painted butterflies, to feed, sleep, or die--undisturbed by her--upon the wild flowers--with wings, when motionless, undistinguishable from the blossoms. And well she loved the brown, busy, blameless bees, come thither for the honey-dews from a hundred cots sprinkled all over the parish, and all high over-head sailing away at evening, laden and wearied, to their straw-roofed skeps in many a hamlet-garden. The leaf of every tree, shrub, and plant, she knew familiarly and lovingly in its own characteristic beauty; and was loath to shake one dew-drop from the sweetbriar-rose. And well she knew that all nature loved her in return--that they were dear to each other in their innocence--and that the very sunshine, in motion or in rest, was ready to come at the bidding of her smiles. Skilful those small white hands of hers among the reeds, and rushes, and osiers--and many a pretty flower-basket grew beneath their touch, her parents wondering on their return home to see the handiwork of one who was never idle in her happiness. Thus, early--ere yet but five years old--did she earn her mite for the sustenance of her own beautiful life! The russet garb she wore she herself had won--and thus Poverty, at the door of that hut, became even like a Guardian Angel, with the lineaments of heaven on her brow, and the quietude of heaven beneath her feet.

But these were but her lonely pastimes, or gentle task-work self-imposed among her pastimes; and itself, the sweetest of them all, inspired by a sense of duty, that still brings with it its own delight--and hallowed by religion, that even in the most adverse lot changes slavery into freedom--till the heart, insensible to the bonds of necessity, sings aloud for joy. The life within the life of the "Holy Child," apart from

even such innocent employments as these, and from such recreations as innocent, among the shadows and the sunshine of those silvan haunts, was passed, let us fear not to say the truth, wondrous as such worship was in one so very young--was passed in the worship of God; and her parents--though sometimes even saddened to see such piety in a small creature like her, and afraid, in their exceeding love, that it betokened an early removal from this world of one too perfectly pure ever to be touched by its sins and sorrows--forbore, in an awful pity, ever to remove the Bible from her knees, as she would sit with it there, not at morning and at evening only, or all the Sabbath long as soon as they returned from the kirk, but often through all the hours of the longest and sunniest week-days, when there was nothing to hinder her from going up to the hillside, or down to the little village, to play with the other children, always too happy when she appeared--nothing to hinder her but the voice she heard speaking to her in that Book, and the hallelujahs that, at the turning over of each blessed page, came upon the ear of the "Holy Child" from white-robed saints all kneeling before His throne in heaven!

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THE SELECTOR; AND LITERARY NOTICES OF _NEW WORKS_.

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ROMANCE OF HISTORY.

France. By Leitch Ritchie.

The design of moulding the romantic annals of different countries into so many series of Tales--is one of unquestionable beauty. It originated, we believe, with the late Mr. Henry Neele, who was in every sense well qualified for so poetical an exercise of ingenuity. He commenced with "England;" but, unfortunately, did not live to complete a Second Series; neither had he the gratification of seeing his design fully appreciated by the public. The "Romantic Annals of England," on their first appearance, made but slow progress in popularity: the author trusted, and the publisher hoped, and, to use a publishing phrase, the work gradually made its way--slow but sure--if we may judge from the wished-for "new editions." How unlike is this course of favour to the blaze of fashionable annals, or novels of high life, that are born and die in a day, or with one reading circle of a subscription library. They strut and fume in the publisher's newspaper puffs; but their light is put out within a few brief hours, and they are laid to sleep on the capacious shelves of the publisher's warehouse. Not so with the Tales of Historical Romance: they have fancy enough to embellish sober fact.

The _second_ series--_Spain_--is from a Spanish hand of some pretension, but less power than that of Mr. Neele.

The _third_ series--_France_--by another hand, is now before us. In his advertisement, the author says, when he undertook the present series, "he proposed to himself to fulfil what 'the Romance of History' seemed to require, by presenting a succession of romantic pictures

illustrative of the historical manners of the French Nation." We incline to his conception of the task. He further notes that "he has taken pains to go for information to the original sources of French History. These he found in reasonable abundance, in the old Collegiate Library of Caen, and in the British Museum." There are in the Series nineteen Tales, with historical summaries where requisite for their elucidation. The titles are irresistible invitations--as Bertha, or the Court of Charlemagne--Adventures of Eriland--the Man-Wolf--the Phantom Fight--the Magic Wand--the Dream Girl, &c. Their style may be called spirit-stirring, while it has much of the graceful prettiness of love-romance.--The author, too, has caught the very air of chivalric times, and his pages glitter with the points of their glories;--not unseasonably mixed with the delightful quaintnesses and descriptive minuteness of the old chroniclers.

To condense either of the stories would be neither advantageous to the author nor reader. We therefore extract a scene or two from "the Bondsman's Feast," and an exquisite portrait of "the Dream Girl:"--

The Bondsman's Feast.

Arthault's only child was a son, who owed nothing to his father but the prospect of a fair inheritance, for he was little like him in form, and not at all in mind: he was a fine, manly, generous, and high-spirited youth--such as would have been thought too early born, had his appearance been made before the hereditary servility of his family was forgotten. The knight, too, had an only child, a daughter; who, in personal appearance and moral qualities, contrasted in as remarkable a manner with her father. She was little almost to a fault, in the standard of beauty, if there be such a thing; her form was moulded with a delicacy, which gave the idea of one of those aerial shapes that dance in the beam of poesy: and there was that gentle and refined playfulness of expression in her fair countenance, which artists have loved to picture in the nymphs of some silvan goddess, whose rudest employment is to chase one another on the green bank, or sport in the transparent wave.

Guillaume loved the beautiful bourgeoisie before he knew that such love was a condescension; and Amable, when, on being desired by her father to refuse her heart to Guillaume, she thought of inquiring whether she possessed such a thing at all, started with surprise to find that she had given it away to the knight's son long ago. But where was the use of repining? Guillaume was young, and handsome, and generous, and brave; and what harm could befall her heart in such keeping? Amable turned away from her father with a light laugh, and a light step, and stealing skippingly round the garden wall--for already the paternal prohibitions had gone forth--bounded towards a grove of wild shrubs at the farther end.

The trees were bathed in sunlight; the air was filled with the song of birds; the face of heaven was undimmed by a single spot of shade, and the earth was green, and sparkling, and beautiful beneath. Such was the scene around her; but in Amable's mind, a warmer and brighter sun shed its light upon her maiden dreams, and the voice of the sweet, rich singer Hope drowned the melody of the woods. "Away!" she thought; "it cannot be that this strange, unkindly mood can endure; my father loves his friend in spite of all, and the noble and generous knight could not hate if he would. They shall not be a week apart when they will both

regret what has passed; and when they meet again, I will laugh them into a confession that they have done so. Then the two friends will embrace; and then Guillaume and I will sing, and dance, and read together again--and then--and then--and then--" It seemed as if her thoughts had run her out of breath; for at this point of the reverie she paused, and hung back for a moment, while a sudden blush rose to her very eyes. Soon, however, she recovered; she threw back her head gaily, and yet proudly; legends of happy love crowded upon her memory, and minstrel songs echoed in her ear; she bounded lightly into the wood, and as some one, darting from behind a tree, caught her while she passed, Amable, with the stifled scream of alarm, which maidens are wont to give when they wish it unheard by all save one, found herself in the arms of Guillaume. * * * *

This was a proud and a happy day for Arthault. His head was in the clouds; he scarcely seemed to touch the earth with his feet; but yet, with the strong control which worldly men are wont to exercise over their feelings, he schooled his aspect into the bland and lowly expression of grateful humility. When, in the early part of the morning, the echoes of Nogent (the chateau) were awakened by a flourish of trumpets, which proclaimed the approach of the Count, instead of waiting to receive him in the arcade under the belfry, according to the common usage of lords at that period,[4] he walked bare-headed to the gate of the outer court, and, kneeling, held the prince's stirrup as he dismounted.

The breakfast was served in cups and porringers of silver, set on a magnificent gold tray, and consisted chiefly of milk made thick with honey, peeled barley, cherries dried in the sun, and preserved barberries. The bread was of the _mias_ cakes, composed of rye-flour, cream, orange-water, and new-laid eggs;[5] and the whole was distributed among the guests by Guillaume; the host himself having been compelled to take his seat at table by the Count.

The morning was spent in viewing the improvements of the place, and riding about the neighbourhood; and at ten o'clock the company partook of a dinner served in the same style of tasteful magnificence. The viands included, among other things, a lamb roasted whole, the head of a wild boar covered with flowers, fried trouts, and poached eggs, which were eaten with boiled radishes, and peas in their shells.[6]

A profusion of the precious metals graced the table, more especially in drinking cups; those of horn, which were formerly in general use, having about this period gone out of vogue. The luxury of forks, it is true, had not yet been invented; but when it is remembered that the hands were washed publicly, before and after meals, not as a fashionable form, but in absolute earnest, it will not be feared that any indelicacy in the feasters contrasted with the taste and splendour of the feast.[7]

The wines filled by Guillaume, who waited particularly on the Count, besides the fashionable vin d'Ai of the district,[8] included the vin de Beaume of Burgundy, the vin d'Orleans, so much prized by Louis le Jeune, and the powerful vin de Rebrechien (another Orleans wine) which used formerly to be carried to the field by Henry I. to animate his courage.[9]

After dinner the guests partook of the amusement of the chase, which afforded Arthault an opportunity of exhibiting, in all its extent, his newly-acquired estates--and which, indeed, comprehended a great part of

the family property of Sansavoir; although the Count did not observe, and therefore no one else was so ill-bred as to do so, an old blackened building mouldering near the garden-wall, which Sir Launcelot had still preserved, and where he continued to reside in a kind of dogged defiance of his enemy.

The festivities of the day were closed by a splendid supper, attended by music and minstrel songs; and when the sleeping cup had passed round, the Count Henri retired to the chamber prepared for him, which he found to be not at all inferior to his own in luxury and magnificence. Vessels of gold, filled with rose-water, were placed on his dressing-table; the curtains of the ample bed were ornamented with partridge plumes, supposed to ensure to the sleeper a long and peaceful life; and, in short, nothing was wanting that might have been deemed pleasing either to the taste or superstition of the age.

We halt for the present with this foretaste of the gratification we may calculate on receiving from nearly every page of the whole Series. By the way, "the references to authorities for manners, &c. have been introduced throughout the work, and occasionally, illustrative and literary notes," at the request of the publisher; and we must not lose this opportunity of complimenting the sense and good taste of the suggestion.

[4] Gerard de Rousillon, MS. cited in Tristan le Voyageur.

[5] The paste formed of these materials was spread upon broad cabbage leaves, which came out of the oven covered with a slight golden crust, composing the mias cakes.--Tristan le Voyageur.

[6] Tristan le Voyageur. Boiled radishes, it may be important to know, are an excellent substitute for asparagus!

[7] Forks did not come into use till the time of Charles V. in the latter half of the fourteenth century. In France, these instruments, both in silver and tinned iron, are made so as to bear some resemblance to the fingers, of which they are the substitutes, and they are used exclusively in the business of conveying food to the mouth; while the knives, being narrow and sharp-pointed, can answer no purpose but that of carving.--In England the case is different. The steel forks, in common use among the people, are incapable of raising thin viands to the mouth: while the broad, round-pointed knife was obviously intended for this business.

[8] The vin d'Ai, in Champagne, according to Patin, was called "Vinum Dei," by Dominicus Bandius. It was the common drink of kings and princes.--Paumier, Traite du Vin.

[9] Mabillon, Annales Benedictines.

* * * * *

THE GATHERER.

A snapper up of unconsidered trifles.
SHAKSPEARE.

A clergyman of the name of Mathson was minister of Patteesdale, in Westmoreland, sixty years, and died at the age of ninety. During the early part of his life, his benefice brought him in only twelve pounds a-year; it was afterwards increased (perhaps by Queen Anne's bounty) to eighteen, which it never exceeded. On this income he married, brought up four children, and lived comfortably with his neighbours, educated a son at the university, and left behind him upwards of one thousand pounds. With that singular simplicity and inattention to forms which characterize a country life, thus he himself read the burial service over his mother, he married his father to a second wife, and afterwards buried him also. He published his own banns of marriage in the church, with a woman he had formerly christened, and he himself married all his four children.

W.G.C.

* * * * *

THE POPE PUZZLED.

Pope Alexander the sixth asked the Venetian ambassador at Rome, "What right his republic had to the dominion of the Adriatic See?" "It will be found," replied he, "on the back of the donation of the patrimony of St. Peter to his successors."

W.A.R.

* * * * *

CHANGING SIDES.

"I am come from Naples to support you," said one of the old opposition one night to a member on the ministerial benches. "From Naples!" was the ready rejoinder; "much farther--you are come from the other side of the House!"

* * * * *

TO MOLLY.

Mollis abuti,
Has an acuti,
No lasso finis,
Molli divinis.
Omi de armistres,
Imi na distres.
Cant u discover,
Meas alo ver.--SWIFT.

* * * * *

KINGS OF FRANCE.

It is worthy of remark, that none of the Kings of France have been succeeded by their sons for nearly two centuries. Phillippe, the present King of the French, succeeded to the regal sway in consequence of the dethronement of Charles the Tenth; who succeeded his brother, Louis the Eighteenth; who succeeded his brother, Louis the Sixteenth; who succeeded his grandfather, Louis the Fifteenth; who likewise succeeded his grandfather, Louis the Fourteenth, when only five years of age.

H.B.A.

* * * * *

PANDORA'S BOX.

The Prince of Piedmont was not quite seven years old, when his preceptor, Cardinal (then Father) Glendel, explained to him the fable of Pandora's Box. He told him that all evils which afflict the human race were shut up in that fatal box; which Pandora, tempted by Curiosity, opened, when they immediately flew out, and spread themselves over the surface of the earth.

"What, Father!" said the young prince, "were all the evils shut up in that box?"

"Yes," answered the preceptor.

"That cannot be," replied the prince, "since Curiosity tempted Pandora; and that evil, which could not have been in it, was not the least, since it was the origin of all."

J.G.B.

* * * * *

SQUALL AT SEA.

The other evening a surgeon in the navy stated the following curious circumstance:--

While off Madagascar, in the ship Scorpion, he with the other officers of the ship were dining with the Captain (Johnson) who had just looked at the glass; it being a very fine day no one had any apprehension of a squall. The dinner was hardly over when the captain's eye caught the glass: he suddenly rose from table and hurrying on deck, ordered "All hands to turn up, and furl all sail immediately." They had just completed the order and were descending, when the ship was laid on her beam-ends, most of the men had a ducking, but that was all the mischief that happened. Three or four East Indiamen had already been destroyed by the same accident; and if the above order had not been complied with immediately as it was, nothing could have saved the ship, it being only a quarter of an hour since the first notice of it. The captain was afterwards made commissioner of Bombay, where he died.

GEO. ST. CLAIR.

* * * * *

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