

by Various

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THE MIRROR OF LITERATURE, AMUSEMENT, AND INSTRUCTION.

VOL. 10, No. 265.] SATURDAY, JULY 21, 1827. [PRICE 2d.

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ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH CASTLE.

[Illustration]

Ashby-de-la-Zouch is a small market town in Leicestershire, pleasantly situated in a fertile vale, on the skirts of the adjoining county of Derbyshire, on the banks of a small river called the Gilwiskaw, over which is a handsome stone bridge. The original name of this town was simply Ashby, but it acquired the addition of De-la-Zouch, to distinguish it from other Ashbys, from the Zouches, who were formerly lords of this manor, which after the extinction of the male line of that family, in the first year of the reign of Henry IV. came to Sir Hugh Burnel, knight of the garter, by his marriage with Joice, the heiress of the Zouches. From him it devolved to James Butler, earl of Ormond and Wiltshire; who being attainted on account of his adherence to the party of Henry VI. it escheated to the crown, and was, in the first year of Edward IV. granted by that king to Sir William Hastings, in consideration of his great services; he was also created a baron, chamberlain of the household; captain of Calais, and knight of the garter, and had license to make a park and cranellate, or fortify several of his houses, amongst which was one at this place, which was of great extent, strength, and importance, and where he and his descendants resided for about two hundred years. It was situated on the south side of the town, on a rising ground, and was chiefly composed of brick and stone; the rooms were spacious and magnificent, attached to which was a costly private chapel. The building had two lofty towers of immense size, one of them containing a large hall, great chambers, bedchambers, kitchen, cellars, and all other offices. The other was called the kitchen tower. Parts of the wall of the hall, chapel, and kitchen, are still remaining, which display a grand and interesting mass of ruins; the mutilated walls being richly decorated with doorways, chimney-pieces, windows, coats of arms, and other devices. In this, castle, the unfortunate and persecuted Mary queen of Scots, who has given celebrity to so many castles and old mansions, by her melancholy imprisonment beneath their lofty turrets, was for some time confined, while in the custody of the earl of Huntingdon. In the year 1603, Anne,

consort of James I. and her son, prince Henry, were entertained by the earl of Huntingdon at this castle, which was at that time the seat of much hospitality. It was afterwards honoured by a visit from that monarch, who remained here for several days, during which time dinner was always served up by thirty poor knights, with gold chains and velvet gowns. In the civil wars between king Charles and his parliament, this castle was deeply involved, being garrisoned for the king; it was besieged by the parliamentary forces, and although it was never actually conquered, (from whence the garrison obtained the name of Maiden,) it was evacuated and dismantled by capitulation in the year 1648.

For the spirited engraving of the ruins of this famous castle, we acknowledge ourselves indebted to our obliging friend _S.I.B._ who supplied us with an original drawing.

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THE AUTHOR OF "LACON."

(To the Editor of the Mirror.)

SIR,--The following additional particulars respecting the celebrated author of "Lacon," may not be unacceptable to your readers, as a sequel to the interesting account of that eccentric individual inserted at p. 431, in your recently completed volume.

It will be in the recollection of many, that about the period of the murder of Weare, by Thurtel, Mr. Colton suddenly disappeared from among his friends, and no trace of him, notwithstanding the most vigilant inquiry, could be discovered. As Weare's murder produced an unprecedented sensation in the public mind, it gave rise to a variety of reports against the perpetrators of that horrible crime, imputing to them other atrocities of a similar kind. It is needless now to say that most of these suspicions were wholly without foundation.

It was at length ascertained, that Mr. C., finding himself embarrassed with his creditors, had taken his departure for America, where he remained about two years, travelling over the greater part of the United States; and it is much to be desired that he would favour the public with the result of his observations during his residence in that country; as probably no person living is qualified to execute such a task with more shrewdness, judgment, or ability.

He is now residing at Paris, where he has been about two years and a half, and where I had frequently the pleasure of meeting him during the last winter, and of enjoying the raciness of his conversation, which abounds in wit, anecdote, and an universality of knowledge. It is too well known that he is not unaddicted to the allurements of the gaming table, and it is understood among his immediate friends, that he has been--what few are--successful adventurer, having repaired in the saloons of Paris, in a great degree, the loss he sustained by the

forfeiture of his church livings. His singular coolness, calculation, and self-mastery, give him an advantage in this respect over, perhaps, every other votary of the gaming table.

Mr. Colton has an excellent taste for the fine arts, and has expended considerable sums in forming a picture gallery. Every nook of his apartment is literally covered with the treasures of art, including many of the *_chefs d'oeuvres_* of the great masters, and many valuable paintings are placed on the floor for want of room to suspend them against the wainscot. I may here observe, that his present domicile does not exactly correspond with that described as his former "castle" in London, inasmuch as it is part of a royal residence, it being on the second floor, on one side of the quadrangle of the Palais Royal, overlooking the large area of that building, and opposite to the *_jet d'eau_* in the centre. But his habits and mode of dress appear to be unchanged. He has only one room; he keeps no servant, (unless a boy to take care of his horse and cabriolet); he lights his own fire, and, I believe, performs all his other domestic offices himself. But, notwithstanding these whimsicalities, he is generous, hospitable and friendly. He still, when a friend "drops in," produces a bottle or two of the finest wines and a case of the best cigars, of which he is a determined smoker.

I will only add, that he continues to employ himself in literary composition. Among other pieces not published in England, he has written an ode on the death of Lord Byron, a copy of which he presented me, but which I unfortunately lent--and lost. A small edition was printed at Paris for private circulation. He has also written an unpublished poem in the form of a letter from Lord Castlereagh in the shades, to Mr. Canning on earth, the caustic severity of which, in the opinion of those who have heard it read, is equal to that of any satire in the English language. I remember only the two first lines--

"Dear George, from these *_Shades_*, where no wine's to be had.
But where rivers of flame run like rivers run mad."

And the following, in allusion to the instrument with which Lord C. severed the carotid artery, and which was the means of producing such a change in the destiny of the present prime minister, who was then on the eve of going out to India as governor-general,--

"Have you pensioned the Jew boy that sold me the knife?"

It is to be lamented that such a man should be an exile from his native country.--But I draw a veil over the rest, and sincerely hope that his absence from England will not be perpetual.

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THE DEAD TRUMPETER.

TO ILLUSTRATE A CELEBRATED FRENCH PICTURE.

(For the Mirror.)

'Tis evening! the red rayless sun
Glares fiercely on the battle plain;--
Morn saw the deadly fray begun,
Morn heard _thy_ bugle wake a strain,
Poor soldier! and its warning breath
Call'd _thee_, and myriads to death!

Thou wert thy mother's darling, thou,
Light to thy father's failing eyes;
Thou wert thy sisters' _dearest!_ now
What _art_ thou? something to despise
Yet tremble at; to hide, and be
Forgot, but by _their_ misery!

Thou _wert_ the beautiful! the brave!
Thou wert all joy, and love, and light;
But oh! thy grace was for the _grave,_
Thy dawning day, for mornless night!
And thou, so loving, so carest
Hast sunk--unpitied--unblest!

Yes, warrior! and the life-stream flows
Yet from thee, in thy foe-man's land,
Welling before the gate of those
Who _should_ stretch forth a kindly hand
To save th' unhonour'd, _friendless_ dead
From rushing legion's scouring tread.

Friendless poor soldier?--nay thy steed
Stands gazing on thee, with an eye
Too piteous: he _felt_ thee bleed,--
He _saw_ thee, dropping from him,--_die!_
And in thine helpless, lorn estate,
He cannot leave thee, desolate.

Nor thy poor _dog_, whose anxious gaze,
On helm and bugle's lowly place,
Speaks his deep sorrow and amaze!
He, watching yet, thine icy face
Licks thy pale forehead with a moan
To tell thee--_Thou art not alone!_

M. L. B.

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ORIGINS AND INVENTIONS.

No. XXVIII.

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THE SPHYNX.

The Sphynx is supposed to have been engendered by Typhon, and sent by Juno to be revenged on the Thebans. It is represented with the head and breasts of a woman, the wings of a bird, the claws of a lion, and the rest of the body like a dog or lion. Its office they say, was to propose dark enigmatical questions to all passers by; and, if they did not give the explication of them,--to devour them. It made horrible ravages, as the story goes, on a mountain near Thebes. Apollo told Creon that she could not be vanquished, till some one had expounded her riddle. The riddle was--_"What creature is that, which has four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three at night?"_ Oedipus expounded it, telling her it was a man,--who when a child, creepeth on all fours; in his middle age, walketh on two legs, and in his old age, two and a staff. This put the Sphynx into a great rage, who, finding her riddle solved, threw herself down and broke her neck. Among the Egyptians, the Sphynx was the symbol of religion, by reason of the obscurity of its mysteries. And, on the same account, the Romans placed a Sphynx in the pronaos, or porch, of their temples. Sphynxes were used by the Egyptians, to show the beginning of the water's rising in the Nile; with this view, as it had the head of a woman and body of a lion, it signified that the Nile began to swell in the months of July and August, when the sun passes through the signs of Leo and Virgo; accordingly it was a hieroglyphic, which taught the people the period of the most important event in the year, as the swelling and overflowing of the Nile gave fertility to Egypt. Accordingly they were multiplied without end, so that they were to be seen before all their remarkable monuments.

P. T. W.

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THE SKETCH-BOOK.

NO. XLII.

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WHITSUN-EVE.

By Miss Mitford.

The pride of my heart and the delight of my eyes is my garden. Our house, which is in dimensions very much like a bird-cage, and might, with almost equal convenience, be laid on a shelf, or hung up in a tree, would be utterly unbearable in warm weather, were it not that we have a retreat out of doors,--and a very pleasant retreat it is. To make my readers fully comprehend it, I must describe our whole territories.

Fancy a small plot of ground, with a pretty low irregular cottage at one end; a large granary, divided from the dwelling by a little court running along one side; and a long thatched shed open towards the garden, and supported by wooden pillars on the other. The bottom is bounded, half by an old wall, and half by an old paling, over which we see a pretty distance of woody hills. The house, granary, wall, and paling, are covered with vines, cherry-trees, roses, honey-suckles, and jessamines, with great clusters of tall hollyhocks running up between them; a large elder overhanging the little gate, and a magnificent bay-tree, such a tree as shall scarcely be matched in these parts, breaking with its beautiful conical form the horizontal lines of the buildings. This is my garden; and the long pillared shed, the sort of rustic arcade which runs along one side, parted from the flower-beds by a row of rich geraniums, is our out-of-door drawing-room.

I know nothing so pleasant as to sit there on a summer afternoon, with the western sun flickering through the great elder-tree, and lighting up our gay parterres, where flowers and flowering shrubs are set as thick as grass in a field, a wilderness of blossom, interwoven, intertwined, wreathy, garlandy, profuse beyond all profusion, where we may guess that there is such a thing as mould, but never see it. I know nothing so pleasant as to sit in the shade of that dark bower, with the eye resting on that bright piece of colour, lighted so gloriously by the evening sun, now catching a glimpse of the little birds as they fly rapidly in and out of their nests--for there are always two or three birds' nests in the thick tapestry of cherry-trees, honey-suckles, and China roses, which cover our walls--now tracing the gay gambols of the common butterflies as they sport around the dahlias; now watching that rarer moth, which the country people, fertile in pretty names, call the bee-bird;^[1] that bird-like insect, which flutters in the hottest days over the sweetest flowers, inserting its long proboscis into the small tube of the jessamine, and hovering over the scarlet blossoms of the geranium, whose bright colour seems reflected on its own feathery breast; that insect which seems so thoroughly a creature of the air, never at rest; always, even when feeding, self-poised, and self-supported, and whose wings in their ceaseless motion, have a sound so deep, so full, so lulling, so musical. Nothing so pleasant as to sit amid that mixture of the flower and the leaf, watching the bee-bird! Nothing so pretty to look at as my garden! It is quite a picture; only unluckily it resembles a picture in more qualities than one,--it is fit for nothing but to look at. One might as well think of walking in a bit of framed canvass. There are walks to be sure--tiny paths of smooth

gravel, by courtesy called such--but--they are so overhung by roses and lilies, and such gay encroachers--so over-run by convolvulus, and heart's-ease, and mignonette, and other sweet stragglers, that, except to edge through them occasionally, for the purpose of planting, or weeding, or watering, there might as well be no paths at all. Nobody thinks of walking in my garden. Even May glides along with a delicate and trackless step, like a swan through the wafer; and we, its two-footed denizens, are fain to treat it as if it were really a saloon, and go out for a walk towards sun-set, just as if we had not been sitting in the open air all day.

[1] *Sphinx ligustri*, privet hawk-moth.

What a contrast from the quiet garden to the lively street! Saturday night is always a time of stir and bustle in our village, and this is Whitsun Eve, the pleasantest Saturday of all the year, when London journeymen and servant lads and lasses snatch a short holiday to visit their families. A short and precious holiday, the happiest and liveliest of any; for even the gambols and merrymakings of Christmas offer but a poor enjoyment, compared with the rural diversions, the Mayings, revels, and cricket-matches of Whitsuntide.

We ourselves are to have a cricket-match on Monday, not played by the men, who, since their misadventure with the Beech-hillers, are, I am sorry to say, rather chap-fallen, but by the boys, who, zealous for the honours of their parish, and headed by their bold leader, Ben Kirby, marched in a body to our antagonist's ground the Sunday after our melancholy defeat, challenged the boys of that proud hamlet, and beat them out and out on the spot. Never was a more signal victory. Our boys enjoyed this triumph with so little moderation, that it had like to have produced a very tragical catastrophe. The captain of the Beech-hill youngsters, a capital bowler, by name Amos Stokes, enraged past all bearing by the crowing of his adversaries, flung the ball at Ben Kirby with so true an aim, that if that sagacious leader had not warily ducked his head when he saw it coming, there would probably have been a coroner's inquest on the case, and Amos Stokes would have been tried for manslaughter. He let fly with such vengeance, that the cricket-ball was found embedded in a bank of clay five hundred yards off, as if it had been a cannon shot. Tom Coper and Farmer Thackum, the umpires, both say that they never saw so tremendous a ball. If Amos Stokes live to be a man (I mean to say if he be not hanged first), he'll be a pretty player. He is coming here on Monday with his party to play the return match, the umpires having respectively engaged Farmer Thackum that Amos shall keep the peace, Tom Coper that Ben shall give no unnecessary or wanton provocation--a nicely-worded and lawyer-like clause, and one that proves that Tom Coper hath his doubts of the young gentleman's discretion; and, of a truth, so have I. I would not be Ben Kirby's surety, cautiously as the security is worded,--no! not for a white double dahlia, the present object of my ambition.

This village of our's is swarming to-night like a hive of bees, and all the church bells round are pouring out their merriest peals, as if to call them together. I must try to give some notion of the

various figures.

First, there is a groupe suited to Teniers, a cluster of out-of-door customers of the Rose, old benchers of the inn, who sit round a table smoking and drinking in high solemnity to the sound of Timothy's fiddle. Next, a mass of eager boys, the combatants of Monday, who are surrounding the shoemaker's shop, where an invisible hole in their ball is mending by Master Keep himself, under the joint superintendence of Ben Kirby and Tom Coper, Ben showing much verbal respect and outward deference for his umpire's judgment and experience, but managing to get the ball done his own way after all; whilst outside the shop, the rest of the eleven, the less-trusted commons, are shouting and bawling round Joel Brent, who is twisting the waxed twine round the handles of bats--the poor bats, which please nobody, which the taller youths are despising as too little and too light, and the smaller are abusing as too heavy and too large. Happy critics! winning their match can hardly be a greater delight--even if to win it they be doomed! Farther down the street is the pretty black-eyed girl, Sally Wheeler, come home for a day's holiday from B., escorted by a tall footman in a dashing livery, whom she is trying to curtesy off before her deaf grandmother sees him. I wonder whether she will succeed!

Ascending the hill are two couples of different description, Daniel Tubb and Sally North, walking boldly along like licensed lovers; they have been asked twice in church, and are to be married on Tuesday; and closely following that happy pair, near each other, but not together, come Jem Tanner and Susan Green, the poor culprits of the wheat-hoeing. Ah! the little clerk hath not relented! The course of true love doth not yet run smooth in that quarter. Jem dodges along, whistling "Cherry Ripe," pretending to walk by himself, and to be thinking of nobody; but every now and then he pauses in his negligent saunter, and turns round outright to steal a glance at Susan, who, on her part, is making believe to walk with poor Olive Hathaway, the lame mantua-maker, and even affecting to talk and to listen to that gentle humble creature as she points to the wild flowers on the common, and the lambs and children disporting amongst the gorse, but whose thoughts and eyes are evidently fixed on Jem Tanner, as she meets his backward glance with a blushing smile, and half springs forward to meet him; whilst Olive has broken off the conversation as soon as she perceived the preoccupation of her companion, and began humming, perhaps unconsciously, two or three lines of Burns, whose "Whistle and I'll come to thee, my love," and "Gi'e me a glance of thy bonny black ee," were never better exemplified than in the couple before her. Really it is curious to watch them, and to see how gradually the attraction of this tantalizing vicinity becomes irresistible, and the rustic lover rushes to his pretty mistress like the needle to the magnet. On they go, trusting to the deepening twilight, to the little clerk's absence, to the good humour of the happy lads and lasses, who are passing and re-passing on all sides--or rather, perhaps, in a happy oblivion of the cross uncle, the kind villagers, the squinting lover, and the whole world. On they trip, linked arm-in-arm, he trying to catch a glimpse of her glowing face under her bonnet, and she hanging down her head and avoiding his gaze with a mixture of modesty and coquetry, which well becomes the rural beauty. On they go,

with a reality and intensity of affection, which must overcome all obstacles; and poor Olive follows with art evident sympathy in their happiness, which makes her almost as enviable as they; and we pursue our walk amidst the moonshine and the nightingales, with Jacob Frost's cart looming in the distance, and the merry sounds of Whitsuntide, the shout, the laugh, and the song echoing all around us, like "noises of the air."--_Monthly Magazine._

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SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC JOURNALS.

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THE LETTER-WRITER.

Fortune surely shifted me from my birth, or first looked on me in a mood as splenetic as that of nature, when she produced that most sombre and unpleasing of trees, the olive; to pursue the simile; I may have conduced to the comfort of others, nay, even to their convenience and luxury, but it never availed aught to my own appearance or circumstances; I went on, like that unhappy-looking tree, decaying in the trunk and blighting in the branches, and yielding up the produce of a liberal education and an active nature to the public, but reaping for my own portion only misfortune and disappointment; I had sprung up in the wilderness of the world, and I was left to grow or wither as I might; every one was ready to profit by me when a fruitful season rendered me available to them, but none cared to toil to give me space for growth, or to enrich the perishing earth at my unlucky root!

I was educated for the church, but my father died while I was at college, and I lost the curacy, which was in the gift of my uncle, through the pretty face of a city merchant's daughter, who wrote a sonnet to my worthy relative on his recovery from a fit of the gout, and obtained the curacy for her brother in exchange for her effusion. What was to be done? I offered myself as tutor to a young gentleman who was to study the classics until he was of age, and then to turn fox-hunter to supply the place of his deceased father; but I was considered by his relations to be too good-looking to be domesticated in the house of a rich widow under fifty, and I had the satisfaction of seeing the vacant seat in the family coach filled by an old, sandy-haired M.A., with bow legs and a squint--handsome or ugly, it availed not; a face had twice ruined my prospects; I was at my wit's end! I could not turn fine gentleman, for I had not brass enough to make my veracity a pander to my voracity; I could not turn tradesman, for I had not gold enough even to purchase a yard measure, or to lay in a stock of tapes. My heart bounded at the idea of the army; but I thought of it like a novice--of wounds and gallant deeds; of fame and laurels; I was obliged to look closer--my relations were neither noblemen nor bankers, and I found that even the

Colonial corps were becoming aristocratical and profuse; the navy--I walked from London to Chatham on speculation; saw the second son of an earl covered with tar, out at elbows and at heels, and I returned to town, fully satisfied that here I certainly had no chance. I offered myself as clerk to a wealthy brewer, and, at length, I was accepted--this was an opening! I registered malt, hops, ale, and small-beer, till I began to feel as though the world was one vast brewhouse; and calculated, added, and subtracted pounds, shillings, and pence, until all other lore appeared "stale, flat, and unprofitable." I was in this counting-house four years, and was, finally, discharged by my prudent principal as an unthrifty servant, for having, during a day of unusual business, cut up two entire quills, and overturned the inkstand on a new ledger! Again "the world was all before me where to choose"--but enough of this; suffice it that my choice availed me nothing, and after years of struggling and striving, I found myself, as free as air, in a small market town in England, with five shillings in my pocket, and sundry grey hairs on my head. From mere dearth of occupation, I took my station at the window of a small stationer's shop, and commenced a survey of the volumes and pamphlets which were attractively opened at the title-pages to display their highly coloured frontispieces. The first which I noticed was, "The Young Gentleman's Multiplication Table, or Two and Two make Four"--I sighed as I remembered how little this promising study had availed _me_! Then came "Little Tom Tucker, he sang for his Supper"--I would have danced for one. "Young's Night Thoughts," with a well dressed gentleman in mourning, looking at the moon. "How to Grow Rich, or a Penny Saved is a Penny Got;" I would have bought the book, and learned the secret, though I had but five shillings left in the world, had not the second part of the title intimated to me that I ought to keep my money. "The Castle of St. Altobrand," where a gentleman in pea-green might be seen communing with a lady in sky-blue. "Raising the Wind"--I turned away with a shudder; I had played a part in this drama for years, and I well knew it was no farce. "The Polite Letter-Writer, or"--I did not stop to read more; an idea flashed through my mind, and in two minutes more I was beside the counter of the stationer; we soon became acquainted; I left two and sixpence in his shop, and quitted it with renewed hope; the promise of a recommendation, two quires of letter paper, twelve good quills, and some ink in a small phial. I rejoiced at having made a friend, even of the stationer, for my pride and my property had long been travelling companions, and were seldom at home. On the following day, a placard was pasted to a window on the ground floor of a neat house, in the best street, announcing that "within, letters were written on all subjects, for all persons, with precision and secrecy;" I shall never forget the tremor with which I awaited the arrival of a customer! I had sunk half of my slender capital, and encumbered myself with a lodging; I did not dare to think, so I sat down and began, resolutely, to sharpen my penknife on the sole of my fearfully dilapidated shoe; then, I spread my paper before me; divided the quires; looked carefully through a sheet of it at the light; laid it down again; began to grow melancholy; shook off reflection as I would have done a serpent, and again betook myself most zealously to the sharpening of my penknife. A single, well articulated stroke on the door of my apartment, roused me at once to action, and I shouted, "come in," with nervous eagerness; it opened, and gave egress to a staid matron, of

high stature, and sharp countenance; I would have pledged my existence on her shrewishness from the first moment I beheld her. When I had placed a chair for her, and reseated myself, this prelude to my prosperity commenced business at once.

"You're a letter-writer, Mr. What-d'ye-call-'em."

I bowed assent.

"Silent--"

"As the grave, madam."

This sufficed; the lady took a pinch of snuff--told me that she had been recommended to employ me by Mr. Quireandquill; and I prepared for action. She had a daughter young, beautiful, and innocent--but gay, affectionate, and thoughtless; she had given her heart in keeping to one who, though rich in love, lacked all other possessions; and, finally, she had bestowed her hand where affection prompted. But the chilled heart feels not like that which is warm with youth--its pulses beat not to the same measure--its impulses impel not to the same arts; the mother felt as a guardian and a parent--the daughter as a woman and a fond one; the one had been imprudent--the other was inexorable; my first task was to be the unwrenching of the holy bonds which united a child and her parent,--the announcement of an abandonment utter and irrevocable; I wrote the letter, and if I softened down a few harsh expressions, and omitted some sentences of heart-breaking severity, surely it was no breach of faith, or if, indeed, it were, it was one for which, even at this time, I do not blush.

The old lady saw her letter sealed and addressed, and departed; and I hastily partook of a scanty breakfast, the produce of my first episolatory speculation. I need not have been so precipitate in dispatching my repast, for some dreary hours intervened ere the arrival of another visiter. One, however, came at length; a tremulous, almost inaudible, stroke upon the door, and a nervous clasp of the latch, again spoke hope to my sinking spirits; and, with a swift step, I rose and gave admittance to a young and timid girl, blushing, and trembling, and wondering, as it seemed, at the extent of her own daring. This business was not so readily despatched as that of the angry matron. There were a thousand promises of secrecy to be given; a thousand tremors to be overcome.

"I am a poor girl, Sir," she said at length, "but I am an honest one; therefore, before I take up your time, I must know whether I can afford to pay for it."

"That," said I, and even amid my poverty I could not suppress a feeling of amusement, "that depends wholly on the subject of your epistle; business requires few words, and less ingenuity, and is fairly paid for by a couple of shillings; but a love letter is cheap at three and sixpence, for it requires an infinity of each."

"Then I may as well wish you good day at once, Sir, for I have but half-a-crown in the world that I can call my own, and I cannot run into debt, even to write to Charles." There was a tear in her eye as she rose to go, and it was a beautiful blue eye, better fitted to smiles than tears; this was enough, and, even poor as I was, I would not have missed the opportunity of writing this letter, though I had been a loser by the task. Happy Charles! I wrote from her dictation, and it is wonderful how well the heart prompts to eloquence, even among the uneducated and obscure. In all honesty, though I had but jested with my pretty employer, this genuine love-letter was well worth the three and sixpence--it was written, and crossed, and rewritten at right angles, and covered on the folds and under the wafer, and, finally, unsealed to insert a few "more last words." It was a very history of the heart!--of a heart untainted by error--unsophisticated by fashion--unfettered by the world's ways: a little catalogue of woman's best, and tenderest, and holiest feelings, warm from the spirit's core, and welling out like the pure waters of a ground spring. How the eye fell, and the voice sunk, as she recorded some little doubt, some fond self-created fear; how the tones gladdened, and the blue eyes laughed out in joy, as she spoke of hopes and prospects, to which she clung trustingly, as woman ever does to her first affection. What would I not have given to have been the receiver of such a letter?--What to have been the idol of such a heart? And, as she eagerly bent over me to watch the progress of her epistle, her hand resting on my arm, and her warm breath playing over my brow, while at intervals a fond sigh escaped her, she from time to time reminded me of the promises I had made never to betray her secret--beautiful innocent! I would have died first. She was with me nearly two hours, and left me with a flushed cheek, her letter in one hand and her half-crown in the other--had I robbed her of it, I should have merited the pillory.

My third customer was a stiff, tall, bony man, of about fifty-five, and for this worthy I wrote an advertisement for a wife. He was thin, and shy, and emaciated--a breathing skeleton, in the receipt of some hundred and twenty pounds a-year; a martyr to the rheumatism, and a radical. He required but little; a moderate fortune; tolerable person; good education; perfect housewifery; implicit obedience; and, finally, wound up the list of requisites from mere lack of breath, and modestly intimated that youth would not be considered an objection, provided that great prudence and rigid economy accompanied it. He was the veriest antidote to matrimony I ever beheld!

My calling prospered. I wrote letters of condolence and of congratulation; made out bills, and composed valentines; became the friend of every pretty girl and fine youth in the parish; and never breathed one of their mighty secrets in the wrong quarter. In the midst of this success, a new ambition fired me--I had been an author for months; but though I had found my finances more flourishing, the bays bloomed not upon my brow; and I was just about to turn author in good earnest, when a distant relation died, and bequeathed to me an annuity of four hundred pounds a-year; and I have been so much engaged ever since in receiving the visits of some hitherto unknown relatives and connexions, that I have only been able to compose the title-page, and to

send this hint to destitute young gentlemen who may have an epistolatory turn; and to such I offer the assurance, that there is pleasure in being the depository of a pretty girl's secrets. "There are worse occupations in the world, _Yorick_, than feeling a woman's pulse."--_The Inspector_.

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SUNRISE AT MOUNT ETNA.

Of a sunrise at Mount Etna, an acute traveller remarks, no imagination can form an idea of this glorious and magnificent scene. Neither is there on the surface of this globe any one point that unites so many awful and sublime objects:--the immense elevation from the surface of the earth, drawn as it were to a single apex, without any neighbouring mountain for the senses and imagination to rest upon, and recover from their astonishment in their way down to the world--and this point, or pinnacle raised on the brink of a bottomless gulf, often discharging rivers of fire, and throwing out burning rocks, with a noise that shakes the whole island. Add to this, the unbounded extent of the prospect, comprehending the greatest diversity, and the most beautiful scenery in nature; with the rising sun advancing in the east to illuminate the wondrous scene. The whole atmosphere by degrees kindled up, and showed dimly and faintly the boundless prospect around. Both sea and land looked dark and confused, as if only emerging from their original chaos; and light and darkness seemed still undivided, till the morning by degrees advancing, completed the separation. The stars are extinguished, and the shades disappear. The forests, which but now seemed black and bottomless gulfs, from whence no ray was reflected to show their form or colours, appear a new creation rising to the sight, catching life and beauty from every increasing beam. The scene still enlarges, and the horizon seems to widen and expand itself on all sides; till the sun appears in the east, and with his plastic ray completes the mighty scene. All appears enchantment; and it is with difficulty we can believe we are still on earth. The senses, unaccustomed to such objects, are bewildered and confounded; and it is not till after some time that they are capable of separating and judging of them. The body of the sun is seen rising from the ocean, immense tracks both of sea and land intervening; various islands appear under your feet; and you look down on the whole of Sicily as on a map, and can trace every river through all its windings, from its source to its mouth. The view is absolutely boundless on every side; nor is there any one object within the circle of vision to interrupt it; so that the sight is every where lost in the immensity; and there is little doubt, that were it not for the imperfection of our organs, the coasts of Africa, and even of Greece, would be discovered, as they are certainly above the horizon.--_Time's Telescope_.

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GARRICK'S MULBERRY CUP.

[Illustration]

In the garden attached to New Place, flourished a mulberry-tree, which Shakspeare had planted with his own hands; and in 1742, when Garrick and Macklin visited Stratford, they were regaled beneath its venerable branches by Sir Hugh Clopton, who, instead of pulling down New Place according to Malone's assertion, repaired it, and did every thing in his power for its preservation. The Rev. Francis Gastrell purchased the building from Sir Hugh Clopton's heir, and being disgusted with the trouble of showing the mulberry-tree to so many visitors, he caused this interesting and beautiful memorial of Shakspeare to be cut down, to the great mortification of his neighbours, who were so enraged at his conduct, that they soon rendered the place, out of revenge, too disagreeable for him to remain in it. He therefore was obliged to quit it; and the tree, being purchased by a carpenter, was retailed and cut out in various relics.

The catalogue of the property of the late David Garrick, Esq. sold on the 5th of May, 1825, describes the cup as follows:--"Lot 170. The original cup carved from Shakspeare's mulberry-tree, which was presented to David Garrick by the Mayor and Corporation at the time of the Jubilee at Stratford-on-Avon, lined with silver gilt, with a cover, surmounted by a bunch of mulberry leaves and fruit, also of silver gilt."

This relic acquires additional value from the circumstance of its never having changed possessors from the time it was presented to Garrick in September, 1769, to 1825, a period of nearly three score years, and during the greater part of which time it has been virtually locked up from public view. The tree was cut down about the year 1756, and could not have been less than 140 years old. It is said the mulberry was first planted in England about 1609. It is not a little singular, that at the time Garrick received this relic of the immortal bard, he resided in Southampton-street, as appears by his letter to the Mayor and Corporation of Stratford, returning thanks for having elected him a burgess of Stratford-on-Avon; and the residence of its second possessor, Mr. J. Johnson, (who bought it for 127l. 1s.,) after a lapse of nearly sixty years, is in the same street.

The cup itself is of a very chaste and handsome form; plain, but in good taste, and the wood prettily marked. The mulberry cup has also been recorded in the celebrated ballad, beginning, "Behold this fair goblet," &c. sung by Garrick at the Jubilee, holding the cup in his hand.

G.W.

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NO. X.

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THE GREEKS.

(_For the Mirror_.)

The delightful country of Greece, once the finest in the world, is inhabited by a bold and intelligent race of men, whose noble struggles to rescue themselves from an odious servitude has rendered them objects of our esteem and admiration. For more than five years has this unfortunate land been the scene of continual warfare and desolation; and though the attempts of the Turks have been many and great, they have notwithstanding entirely failed in their design,--that of exterminating the Greeks.

The Greeks are of the same religion as the Russians, and, like that nation, have monks and nuns. Great decorum is visible in their churches, the females being excluded from the sight of the males by means of lattices. Their bishops lead a life of great simplicity, as will be seen from the following account of a dinner given by the bishop of Salona to Mr. Dodwell:--"There was nothing to eat except rice and bad cheese; the wine was execrable, and so impregnated with resin, that it almost took the skin from our lips. Before sitting down to dinner, as well as afterwards, we had to perform the ceremony of the *_cheironiptron_*, or washing of the hands. We dined at a round table of copper tinned, supported upon one leg, and sat on cushions placed on the floor. The bishop insisted upon my Greek servant sitting at table with us; and on my observing that it was contrary to our custom, he answered, that he could not bear such ridiculous distinctions in his house. It was with difficulty I obtained the privilege of drinking out of my own glass, instead of out of the large goblet, which served for the whole party. The Greeks seldom drink till they have dined. After dinner, strong thick coffee, without sugar, was handed round."--The strictest frugality is observable in all the meals of these people. The higher orders live principally on fish and rice, and the common people on olives, honey, and onions. The food of the Levantine sailors, according to the Hon. Mr. Douglas, consists entirely of salted olives, called by the Greeks *_columbades_*. They dress mutton in a singular manner, it being stewed with honey. In a very rare work, published in 1686, entitled, "The Present State of the Morea," is the following account of their manner of thrashing corn:--"They have no barns, but thrashing-floors, which are situated on high grounds, and open to the winds. Here they tread it out with horses, which are made fast to a post, round which the corn is put; the horses trampling upon it make great despatch: they then cleanse it with the wind, and send it home."

The houses of the Greeks are generally built of brick, made of clay and chopped straw; those at Napoli di Romania are considered among the best,

and are spacious and convenient. The stranger, on entering, is struck with the singular appearance they present, the lower story being set apart for the _horses_, while not a bell is visible in any part of the building. When the attendance of a servant is required, it is signified by the master clapping his hands. Most of the houses in the villages have very pretty gardens, with walks round them covered with vines. The Greeks are remarkable for their love of dancing, particularly the _Romaika_, which is thus described by the Hon. Mr. Douglas:--"I never shall forget the first time I saw this dance: I had landed on a fine Sunday evening in the island of Scio, after three months spent amidst Turkish despotism, and I found most of the poorer inhabitants of the town strolling upon the shore, and the rich absent at their farms; but in riding three miles along the coast, I saw above thirty parties engaged in dancing the Romaika upon the sand; in some of these groups, the girl who led them chased the retreating wave, and it was in vain that her followers hurried their steps; some of them were generally caught by the returning sea, and all would court the laugh rather than break the indissoluble chain. Near each party was seated a group of parents and elder friends, who rekindled the last spark of their expiring gaiety and vigour in the happiness they saw around them."

Though the Greeks are an oppressed nation, yet, as Sir William Gell testifies, they cannot be called uncleanly in their habits. The bath is in constant use among them, and a Greek peasant would on no account retire to rest without having previously washed his feet. The females, generally speaking, are kept very secluded from society, and it is seldom that their marriages are founded on mutual love or attachment. The conduct of the married women in Greece is deserving of our highest praise, both for their great virtue and goodness of heart, while instances of divorce are extremely rare.

The burial-places of the Greeks are situated without the walls of their towns, and round the tombs are a variety of plants, (principally parsley,) which they take great care to keep alive. Numerous ceremonies are observed at their funerals; but the most interesting scene is the last. "Before the body is covered with earth, the relations approach in turn, and lifting the corpse in their arms, indulge in the full pleasure of their grief, while they call in vain on the friend they have lost, or curse the fate by which that loss has been occasioned." The Greeks, when occasion requires it, make use of flowers to express their thoughts. Thus for instance, if a lover wishes to convey any private intelligence to his mistress, he has only to make a selection of certain flowers, the signification of which is perfectly understood if once seen by the object of his love. The manners of the Greeks in many cases bear a striking resemblance to those of the Turks. Like that nation, they smoke with long pipes, and write with the left hand. The inhabitants of Napoli di Romania have still further imitated their oppressors by wearing the turban trimmed with white, together with the red _papouches_, or slippers. The costume of the Greek soldiers is thus described by the author of "Letters from the East:--"The costume of these soldiers was light and graceful; a thin vest, sash, and a loose pantaloon, which fell just below the knee. The head was covered with a small and ugly cap. They had most of them pistols and muskets, to which many added sabres or

ataghans." The dress of the females is very elegant; over the head is worn a veil, called *_macrama_*, and between the eyelid and the pupil is inserted a black powder, named *_surme_*, which, according to the Hon. Mr. Douglas, gives a pleasing expression to the countenance. On their hair (generally of a beautiful auburn) they bestow great pains, adorning it with a variety of ornaments, and suffering it to hang down in long tresses or ringlets, which present a most graceful appearance. In stature the men are tall and well made; but their countenances, though expressive, have generally an air of dejection, which no change of time or circumstances have power to remove. The Greek women are very beautiful, and remarkable for vivacity and intelligence of mind.

The character of the Greeks consists of a singular mixture of good and bad qualities. They are vain, fickle, treacherous, and turbulent; but, on the other hand, are industrious, bold, polite, moderate in their living, with a lively and ingenious disposition. If it be asserted that they are in some cases too much given to wine, it may be replied to in the words of Cicero, *_Necessitatis crimen est, non voluntatis_*. When we consider that from the earliest age they are accustomed to witness among the Turks the most disgusting scenes of profligacy and villany, that, like wandering pilgrims, they have no fixed abode, and are continually subject to all the miseries attendant on war and poverty, can it be wondered if in their character we find something worthy of reprehension?

W. C--Y

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THE SELECTOR; AND LITERARY NOTICES OF NEW WORKS.

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PERSONAL CHARACTER OF BONAPARTE.

Sir Walter Scott observes, on closing the history of Napoleon Bonaparte, that the reader may be disposed to pause a moment to reflect on the character of that wonderful person, on whom fortune showered so many favours in the beginning and through the middle of his career, to overwhelm its close with such deep and unwonted afflictions.

The external appearance of Napoleon was not imposing at the first glance, his stature being only five feet six inches English. His person, thin in youth, and somewhat corpulent in age, was rather delicate than robust in outward appearance, but cast in the mould most capable of enduring privation and fatigue. He rode ungracefully, and without the command of his horse which distinguishes a perfect cavalier; so that he showed to disadvantage when riding beside such a horseman as Murat. But he was fearless, sat firm in his seat, rode with rapidity, and was capable of enduring the exercise for a longer time than most men. We

have already mentioned his indifference to the quality of his food, and his power of enduring abstinence. A morsel of food, and a flask of wine hung at his saddle-bow, used, in his earlier campaigns, to support him for days. In his latter wars, he more frequently used a carriage; not, as has been surmised, from any particular illness, but from feeling in a frame so constantly in exercise the premature effects of age.

The countenance of Napoleon is familiar to almost every one from description, and the portraits which are found everywhere. The dark-brown hair bore little marks of the attentions of the toilet. The shape of the countenance approached more than is usual in the human race to a square. His eyes were grey, and full of expression, the pupils rather large, and the eye-brows not very strongly marked. The brow and upper part of the countenance was rather of a stern character. His nose and mouth were beautifully formed. The upper lip was very short. The teeth were indifferent, but were little shown in speaking.[2] His smile possessed uncommon sweetness, and is stated to have been irresistible. The complexion was a clear olive, otherwise in general colourless. The prevailing character of his countenance was grave, even to melancholy, but without any signs of severity or violence. After death, the placidity and dignity of expression which continued to occupy the features, rendered them eminently beautiful, and the admiration of all who looked on them.

[2] When at St. Helena, he was much troubled with toothache and scurvy in the gums.

Such was Napoleon's exterior. His personal and private character was decidedly amiable, excepting in one particular. His temper, when he received, or thought he received, provocation, especially if of a personal character, was warm and vindictive. He was, however, placable in the case even of his enemies, providing that they submitted to his mercy; but he had not that species of generosity which respects the sincerity of a manly and fair opponent. On the other hand, no one was a more liberal rewarder of the attachment of his friends. He was an excellent husband, a kind relation, and, unless when state policy intervened, a most affectionate brother. General Gourgaud, whose communications were not in every case to Napoleon's advantage, states him to have been the best of masters, labouring to assist all his domestics wherever it lay in his power, giving them the highest credit for such talents as they actually possessed, and imputing, in some instances, good qualities to such as had them not.

There was gentleness, and even softness, in his character. He was affected when he rode over the fields of battle, which his ambition had strewn with the dead and the dying, and seemed not only desirous to relieve the victims,--issuing for that purpose directions, which too often were not, and could not be, obeyed,--but showed himself subject to the influence of that more acute and imaginative species of sympathy which is termed sensibility. He mentions a circumstance which indicates a deep sense of feeling. As he passed over a field of battle in Italy, with some of his generals, he saw a houseless dog lying on the body of his slain master. The creature came towards them, then returned to the

dead body, moaned over it pitifully, and seemed to ask their assistance. "Whether it were the feeling of the moment," continued Napoleon, "the scene, the hour, or the circumstance itself, I was never so deeply affected by any thing which I have seen upon a field of battle. That man, I thought, has perhaps had a house, friends, comrades, and here he lies deserted by every one but his dog. How mysterious are the impressions to which we are subject! I was in the habit, without emotion, of ordering battles which must decide the fate of a campaign, and could look with a dry eye on the execution of manoeuvres which must be attended with much loss, and here I was moved--nay, painfully affected--by the cries and the grief of a dog. It is certain that at that moment I should have been more accessible to a suppliant enemy, and could better understand the conduct of Achilles in restoring the body of Hector to the tears of Priam." [3] The anecdote at once shows that Napoleon possessed a heart amenable to humane feelings, and that they were usually in total subjection to the stern precepts of military stoicism. It was his common and expressive phrase, that the heart of a politician should be in his head; but his feelings sometimes surprised him in a gentler mood.

[3] Las Cases, Vol. I partie 2de, p. 5.

A calculator by nature and by habit, Napoleon was fond of order, and a friend to that moral conduct in which order is best exemplified. The libels of the day have made some scandalous averments to the contrary, but without adequate foundation. Napoleon respected himself too much, and understood the value of public opinion too well, to have plunged into general or vague debauchery.--_Scott's Life of Napoleon._

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THE FESTIVAL OF THE MOON AT MEMPHIS.

The rising of the moon, slow and majestic, as if conscious of the honours that awaited her upon earth, was welcomed with a loud acclaim from every eminence, where multitudes stood watching for her first light. And seldom had she risen upon a scene more beautiful. Memphis,--still grand, though no longer the unrivalled Memphis, that had borne away from Thebes the crown of supremacy, and worn it undisputed through so many centuries,--now, softened by the moonlight that harmonised with her decline, shone forth among her lakes, her pyramids, and her shrines, like a dream of glory that was soon to pass away. Ruin, even now, was but too visible around her. The sands of the Libyan desert gained upon her like a sea; and, among solitary columns and sphynxes, already half sunk from sight, Time seemed to stand waiting, till all that now flourished around, should fall beneath his desolating hand, like the rest.

On the waters all was life and gaiety. As far as eye could reach, the lights of innumerable boats were seen, studding, like rubies, the surface of the stream. Vessels of all kinds,--from the light coracle,

built for shooting down the cataracts, to the large yacht that glides to the sound of flutes,--all were afloat for this sacred festival, filled with crowds of the young and the gay, not only from Memphis and Babylon, but from cities still farther removed from the scene.

As I approached the island, could see, glittering through the trees on the bank, the lamps of the pilgrims hastening to the ceremony. Landing in the direction which those lights pointed out, I soon joined the crowd; and passing through a long alley of sphynxes, whose spangling marble shone out from the dark sycamores around them, in a short time reached the grand vestibule of the temple, where I found the ceremonies of the evening already commenced.

In this vast hall, which was surrounded by a double range of columns, and lay open over-head to the stars of heaven, I saw a group of young maidens, moving, in a sort of measured step, between walk and dance, round a small shrine, upon which stood one of those sacred birds, that, on account of the variegated colour of their wings, are dedicated to the moon. The vestibule was dimly lighted,--there being but one lamp of naphta on each of the great pillars that encircled it. But, having taken my station beside one of those pillars, I had a distinct view of the young dancers, as in succession they passed me.

Their long, graceful drapery was as white as snow; and each wore loosely, beneath the rounded bosom, a dark-blue zone, or bandelet, studded, like the skies at midnight, with little silver stars. Through their dark locks was wreathed the white lily of the Nile,--that flower being accounted as welcome to the moon, as the golden blossoms of the bean-flower are to the sun. As they passed under the lamp, a gleam of light flashed from their bosoms, which, I could perceive, was the reflection of a small mirror, that, in the manner of the women of the East, each wore beneath her left shoulder.

There was no music to regulate their steps; but as they gracefully went round the bird on the shrine, some, by the beat of the Castanet, some, by the shrill ring of the sistrum,--which they held uplifted in the attitude of their own divine Isis,--harmoniously timed the cadence of their feet; while others, at every step, shook a small chain of silver, whose sound, mingling with those of the castanets and sistrums, produced a wild, but not an displeasing harmony.

They seemed all lovely; but there was one--whose face the light had not yet reached, so downcast she held it,--who attracted, and at length rivetted all my attention--_The Epicurean, by Thomas Moore, Esq._

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MATERIALS OF ANCIENT BOOKS.

No material for books has, perhaps, a higher claim to antiquity than the skin of the calf or goat tanned soft, and usually dyed red or yellow:

the skins were generally connected in lengths, sometimes of a hundred feet, sufficient to contain an entire book, which then formed one roll or *_volume_*. These soft skins seem to have been more in use among the Jews and other Asiatics than among the people of Europe. The copies of the law found in the synagogues are often of this kind: the most ancient manuscripts extant are some copies of the Pentateuch on rolls of leather.

Parchment--Pergamena, so called long after the time of its first use, from Pergamus, a city of Mysia, where the manufacture was improved and carried on to a great extent, is mentioned by Herodotus and Ctesias as a material which had been from time immemorial used for books: it has proved to be of all others, except that abovementioned, the most durable. The greater part of all manuscripts that are of higher antiquity than the sixth century are on parchment; as well as, generally, all carefully written and curiously decorated manuscripts of later ages. The palimpsests are usually parchments: "It often happened," says Montfaucon, "that from the scarcity of parchment, the copyists, having erased the writing of ancient books, wrote upon them anew: these rewritten parchments were called palimpsests--scraped a second time, and often the ancient work was one of far greater value than that to which it gave place: this we have on many occasions had opportunity to observe in the MSS. of the king's library, and in those of Italy. In some of these rescripts, the first writing is so much obliterated as to be scarcely perceptible; while in others, though not without much labour, it may still be read."

The practice, still followed in the east, of writing upon the leaves of trees, was common in the remotest ages. The leaves of the mallow or of the palm were most used for this purpose: they were sometimes wrought together into larger surfaces; but it is probable that this fragile and inconvenient material was only employed for ordinary purposes of business, letter-writing, or the instruction of children.

The inner bark of the linden or teal tree, and perhaps of some others, railed by the Romans *_liber_*, by the Greeks *_biblos_*,^[4] was so generally used as a material for writing as to have given its name to a book in both languages. Tables of solid wood called *_codices_*, whence the term *_codex_* for a manuscript on any material, has passed into common use, were also employed, but chiefly for legal documents, on which account a system of laws came to be called a code. Leaves or tablets of lead or ivory are frequently mentioned by ancient authors as in common use for writing. But no material or preparation seems to have been so frequently employed on ordinary occasions as tablets covered with a thin coat of coloured wax, which was readily removed by an iron needle, called a *_style_*; and from which the writing was as readily effaced by the blunt end of the same instrument.

[4] The word *biblos* or *byblos*, was afterwards almost appropriated to books written upon the paper of Egypt.

But during many ages the article most in use, and of which the consumption was so great as to form a principal branch of the commerce

of the Mediterranean, was that manufactured from the papyrus of Egypt. Many manuscripts written upon this kind of paper in the sixth, and some even so early as the fourth century, are still extant. It formed the material of by far the larger proportion of all books from very early times till about the seventh or eighth century, when it gradually gave place to a still more convenient manufacture.

The papyrus, or Egyptian reed, grew in vast quantities in the stagnant pools formed by the inundations of the Nile. The plant consists of a single stem, rising sometimes to the height of ten cubits; this stem, gradually tapering from the root, supports a spreading tuft at its summit. The substance of the stem is fibrous, and the pith contains a sweet juice. Every part of this plant was put to some use by the Egyptians. The harder and lower part they formed into cups and other utensils; the upper part into staves, or the ribs of boats; the sweet pith was a common article of food; while the fibrous part of the stem was manufactured into cloth, sails for ships, ropes, strings, shoes, baskets, wicks for lamps, and, especially, into paper. For this purpose the fibrous coats of the plant were peeled off, the whole length of the stem. One layer of fibres was then laid across another upon a block, and being moistened, the glutinous juice of the plant formed a cement, sufficiently strong to give coherence to the fibres; when greater solidity was required, a size made from bread or glue was employed. The two films being thus connected, were pressed, dried in the sun, beaten with a broad mallet, and then polished with a shell. This texture was cut into various sizes, according to the use for which it was intended, varying from thirteen to four fingers' breadth, and of proportionate length.

By progressive improvements, especially in the hands of the Roman artists, this Egyptian paper was brought to a high degree of perfection. In later ages it was manufactured of considerable thickness, perfect whiteness, and an entire continuity and smoothness of surface. It was, however, at the best, so friable that when durability was required the copyists inserted a page of parchment between every five or six pages of the papyrus. Thus the firmness of the one substance defended the brittleness of the other; and great numbers of books so constituted have resisted the accidents and decays of twelve centuries.

Three hundred years before the Christian era the commerce in this article had extended over most parts of the civilized world; and long afterwards it continued to be a principal source of wealth to the Egyptians. But at length the invention of another manufacture, and the interruption of commerce occasioned by the possession of Egypt by the Saracens, banished the paper of Egypt from common use. Comparatively few manuscripts on this material are found of later date than the eighth or ninth century; though it continued to be occasionally used long afterwards.

The charta bombycina or cotton paper, often improperly called *_silk_* paper, was unquestionably manufactured in the east as early as the ninth century, possibly much earlier; and in the tenth it came into general use throughout Europe. This invention, not long afterwards, became still

more available for general purposes by the substitution of old linen or cotton rags for the raw material; by which means both the price of the article was reduced, and the quality improved. The cotton paper manufactured in the ancient mode is still used in the east, and is a beautiful fabric.

From this brief account of the materials successively employed for books, it will be obvious, that a knowledge of the changes which these several manufactures underwent will often serve, especially when employed in subservience to other evidence, to ascertain the age of manuscripts; or at least to furnish the means of detecting fabricated documents.

The preservation of books, framed as they are of materials so destructible, through a period of twelve, or even fifteen hundred years, is a fact which might seem almost incredible; especially as the decay of apparently more durable substances within a much shorter period, is continually presented to our notice. The massive walls of the monasteries of the middle ages are often seen prostrate, and fast mingling with the soil; while manuscripts penned within them, or perhaps when their stones were yet in the quarry, are still fair and perfect, glittering with their gold and silver, their cerulean and cinnabar.

But the materials of books, though destructible, are so far from being in themselves perishable that, while defended from positive injuries, they appear to suffer scarcely at all from any intrinsic principle of decay, or to be liable to any perceptible process of decomposition. "No one," says Father Mabillon,[5] "unless totally unacquainted with what relates to antiquity, can call in question the great durability of parchments; since there are extant innumerable books, written on that material, in the seventh and sixth centuries; and some of a still more remote antiquity, by which all doubt on that subject might be removed. It may suffice here to mention the Virgil of the Vatican Library, which appears to be of more ancient date than the fourth century; and another in the King's Library little less ancient; also the Prudentius, in the same library, of equal age; to which you may add several, already mentioned, as the Psalter of S. Germanus, the book of the councils, and others, which are all of parchment. Many other instances I might name if it were proper to dwell upon a matter so well known to every one who is acquainted with antiquity.

[5] De Re Diplomatica.

"The paper of Egypt, being more frail and brittle, may seem to be open to greater doubt; yet there are not wanting books of great antiquity, by which its durability may be established. To go no further, there is in the Royal Library a very old codex written upon the philyra (or bark of the linden tree) containing the homilies of Avitus, I mean the copy from which the celebrated Jac. Sirmundus prepared his edition; we have also seen two other codices of the same material in the Petavian Library, containing some sermons of S. Augustine, which, in the opinion of the learned, are about 1100 years old. Of the same kind is that rare and very ancient codex in the Ambrosian Library, mutilated indeed, but

consisting of many leaves of Egyptian paper, which contain some portions of the Jewish history of Josephus. These examples are sufficient to demonstrate the durability of the Egyptian paper in ancient books." The author then goes on to mention several instances of deeds and chartas written upon the paper of Egypt, still extant, though executed in the fourth and fifth centuries.

Books have owed their conservation, not merely to the durability of the material of which they were formed, but to the peculiarity of their being at once precious, and yet not (in periods of general ignorance) marketable articles; of inestimable value to a few, and absolutely worthless in the opinion of the multitude. They were also often indebted for their preservation in periods of disorder and violence to the sacredness of the roofs under which they were lodged.--_Taylor's History of the Transmission of Ancient Books to Modern Times._

* * * * *

A PERSIAN'S DESCRIPTION OF AN ENGLISH THEATRE.

In Europe the manner in which plays are acted, and balls and musical parties conducted, is (entirely) different from that of Hindoostan. The people of this country (India) send for the singers to their own houses, where they view the entertainments, and squander away a large sum of money for one night's (amusement.) In Europe it is usual for a few individuals to enter into partnership, (or) as it is called in English, a company. They fit up a house in which dancing girls, skilful musicians, singers, and actors, are engaged to perform. The audience consists of from three to four thousand people. The lower orders, who sit above all, give one shilling, equal in value to half a rupee; the middle classes, who sit lowest off all, a rupee and a half; and the great folks and noblemen, who sit (round) the middle of the house, give two rupees and a half. Separate rooms (boxes) are allotted for them. The place where the king sits is in front of the dancers. His majesty sits there along with one or two of the princes, and these give each an ashrufee. Now it is to be understood, that a poor man for eight anas, and a rich individual for two rupees and a half, see a spectacle which is fit for royalty itself, and which the people of this country have not even seen in their dreams. In one night the dancers and musicians collect five or six thousand rupees, which cover the expenses, and the audience is sufficiently amused.

It is the aim of this _caste_ to accomplish great undertakings at little expense. In Hindoostan, luxurious young men, for seeing a nautch [dance,] squander away, in one night, one or two hundred rupees; and lakhs of rupees of patrimony, which they may succeed to, in a short time take wing.

How can I describe the dances, the melodious sound of violins and guitars, and the interesting stories which I heard, and (all the things) which I saw? My pen lacks ability to write even a short panegyric.

From amongst all the spectacles, that of the curtains of seven colours (the scenes) is exceedingly wonderful, for every instant a new painting is exhibited. Then people, disguised like angels and fairies, the one moment come upon the stage and dance, and the next vanish from the sight. There is also a man with a black face, who is a kind of devil, and called harlequin; at one time he appears, and at another time hides himself, and sometimes attaches himself to the others, and taking the hands of the dancing girls, he dances with them; he then scampers off, and taking a leap, he jumps through a window. At seeing this sport I laughed very heartily. In a word, the (whole) entertainment is excellent and wonderful.

Talking is not permitted in the theatre, although the crowd is great, yet there is neither noise nor clamour. When a pleasing storey or adventure is heard or witnessed, and they wish to express their approbation, instead of saying _shabash!_ [excellent] or _wah! wah!_ [bravo! bravo!] they beat the floor with their feet, or they clap their hands, by which they signify their approval.--_Travels of Mirza Itesa Modeen in Great Britain and France._

* * * * *

MISCELLANIES.

* * * * *

LANDING IN INDIA.

Nothing can be more ludicrous than a young Englishman's first landing in Calcutta. The shore is thronged with the swarthy natives, eagerly awaiting his arrival. Innumerable palanquins are brought down to the boat, and the bearers, like the Paddington stagecoach men, are all violently struggling to procure a passenger. The bewildered stranger is puzzled which to choose; and when he has made up his mind, he finds it no easy matter to jostle through the countless rival conveyances which completely surround him. He is also sure to make some laughable mistake in entering the palanquin. It requires a certain tact to steady the vehicle as you throw yourself into it, or it is apt to turn over, like a tailor's swinging cot. Another ridiculous error which a stranger is liable to, is his endeavouring to seat himself on the little drawer inside, supposing it to be intended for that purpose. But he soon finds, after having doubled himself up, like people passing on a coach top under a low gateway, that it would be utterly impossible to remain long in that position, unless the human back were as pliable as a piece of whalebone. After all, perhaps, the bearers are compelled to rest the palanquin on the ground, and the abashed stranger, creeping hastily in, is glad to escape from the ill suppressed smiles of the surrounding multitude.

INCUBATION AND AGE OF BIRDS.

The full period of incubation by the hen in this country, is well known to be twenty-one days. In warmer climates it is said to be a day or two less. The periods of incubation vary much in different species of birds. We introduce the following table, which has been compiled from different authors by Count Morozzo, in a letter from him to Lacepepe, to show the periods of incubation compared with those of the life of certain birds.

Names of Birds.	Periods of Incu- bation	Duration of Life.	Authority
	Days.	Years.	
Swan	42	About 200	Aldrovande
Parrot	40	About 100	Wulmaer
Goose	30	80 or more	Willoughby
Eagle	30 }	Period of	
Bustard	30 }	life not	
Duck	30 }	known.	
Turkey	30 }		
Peacock	26 to 27	25 to 28	Aristot. & Pliny
Pheasant	20 to 25	18 to 20	A Treatise on Pheasants
Crow	20	100 or more	Hesiod
Nightingale	19 to 20	17 to 18	Buffon
Hen	18 to 19	16 to 18	Buffon
Pigeon	17 or 18	16 to 17	Several observations
Linnet	14	13 to 14	Willoughby
Canary	13 to 14	13 to 14	A Treatise on these birds
Goldfinch	13 to 14	18 to 20	Buffon

* * * * *

THE GATHERER

"I am but a _Gatherer_ and disposer of other men's stuff."--_Wotton._

* * * * *

One of the band of Covent-Garden, who played the French horn, was telling some anecdote of Garrick's generosity. Macklin, who heard him at the lower end of the table, and who always fired at the praises of Garrick, called out, "Sir, I believe you are a _trumpeter._" -- "Well,

sir," said the poor man, quite confounded, "and if I am, what then?"--"Nothing more, sir, than being a trumpeter, you are a dealer in _puffs_ by profession."

* * * * *

An Irish dignitary of the church (not remarkable for veracity) complaining that a tradesman of his parish had called him a _liar_, Macklin asked him what reply he made him. "I told him," says he, "that a lie was amongst the things I _dared_ not commit."--"And why, doctor," replied Macklin, "did you give the rascal _so_ mean an opinion of your courage?_"

* * * * *

In the neighbourhood of Yeovil are now living, in the same house, and at the same board, a man and his wife, two sons, three daughters, two grandsons, one grand-daughter, one grandfather, two fathers, two mothers, one father-in-law, one son-in-law, three brothers, three sisters, two brothers-in-law, two sisters-in-law, two uncles, two aunts, two nephews, three nieces, three first cousins, one great uncle, two great nephews, and one great niece; the whole consisting of seven individuals only.

* * * * *

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