

*A Practical Description of Herron's Patent Trellis Railway Structure, etc., etc.* By JAMES HERRON, Civil Engineer. 1 vol. Carey and Hart, and J. Dobson, Philadelphia, 1841.

This is an able treatise. The main object of the author is to explain his Patent Trellis Railway Structure — an invention which is peculiarly adapted to the frosty climates of the middle and northern states; but, as collateral to this, he has discussed the subject of mineralizing wood, of an improved method of joining the ends of railway bars, and of the defective nature of railway structures in use.

The length to which we have extended some of the preceding reviews, forbids us to go at large into the contents of this volume; but we recommend it to the attention of the public, and to that of rail-road companies in particular. The volume is accompanied by four large plates of working plans to illustrate the author's remarks. The invention of Mr. Herron has received the sanction of the very highest authorities, and will, in our opinion, supercede all other modes of rail-way structure.

Mr. Strickland, so well known as an architect and engineer, speaks of it as follows:

"Among the various methods now used for the superstructure of railways in this country and in Europe, I know of none to compare with Mr. Herron's patent horizontal truss, or diagonal braced floor. It has the great advantages of surface-bearing lateral connection, and longitudinal combination of strength, and evenness of level. It is calculated to rest secure in all the various characters of soil . . . will be found to resist with the utmost degree of permanency all the vicissitudes of the caved and washed embankments which undermine the present mud-sills and cross-ties of the road-beds now in use."

The Franklin Institute says of it:

"Mr. Herron has fully understood and appreciated the evils inseparably connected with the plans of railway superstructure so much in use here and in Europe, in which the rails are supported upon isolated blocks of stone or sleepers of timber . . . His object has been to devise a plan in which all the parts forming the structure shall be adequately supported; while, at the same time, they shall be so connected that no portion will be liable to independent displacement, either laterally or vertically."

*Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home.* By the author of "The Linwoods," etc. 2 vols. Harper and Brothers: New York, 1841.

MISS SEDGWICK has given us, in these volumes, her notes of travel through England, Italy, and other parts of Europe. The book is written in an easy, almost conversational style; it abounds in anecdote and what we should call allowable gossip; and, if it were only a little racier, would be a model for tourists. We like particularly the little details of persons and manners, in which our author has indulged — one gets, in perusing them, an excellent idea of the society in other countries. This is what we want, and where the author does not intrude on privacy, we cannot see that he or she is to be condemned. Miss Sedgwick's choice of words might — to our minds — be purer: her style is often disfigured by provincial phrases of the worst kind.

*The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox, the Ventriloquist.* By H. COCKTON. With numerous illustrations, by Phiz. 1 vol. Carey and Hart.

This is a work of considerable humor — one of that class, which, without much originality, manages to become popular, as much from the fun it contains, as from the style in which the story is told. The illustrations are not as happy as those of Phiz in general. The book is neatly printed, in the style of the Nickleby series.

## SECRET WRITING.

On the tenth of August, a letter addressed to us by some gentleman who had assumed the *nom de guerre* of Timotheus Whackemwell, was received at this office, from Baltimore. It enclosed a cypher, and says, "if you succeed with it I will set you down as perfect in the art." Thinking that in the chirography we recognized the hand of our friend, Mr. J. N. McJilton, of Baltimore, we addressed *him* by return of mail, with the solution desired. Mr. McJilton, it appears, however, was not the correspondent. The solution ran thus —

"This specimen of secret writing is sent you for explanation. If you succeed in divining its meaning, I will believe that you are some kin to Old Nick."

Mr. Whackemwell, whoever or wherever he is, will acknowledge this reading to be correct.

The cypher submitted through Mr. F. W. Thomas, by Dr. Frailey, of Washington, and decyphered by us, also in return of mail, as stated in our August number, has not yet been read by any of our innumerable readers. We now append its solution, together with the whole of that letter of the Doctor's, of which we gave only a portion in the August number.

## SOLUTION.

In one of those peripatetic circumrotations I obviated a rustic whom I subjected to catachetical interrogation respecting the nosocomical characteristics of the edifice to which I was approximate. With a volubility uncongealed by the frigorific powers of villatic bashfulness, he ejaculated a voluminous replication from the universal tenor of whose contents I deduce the subsequent amalgamation of heterogeneous facts. Without dubiety incipient pretension is apt to terminate in final vulgarity, as parturient mountains have been fabulated to produce muscupular abortions. The institution the subject of my remarks, has not been without cause the theme of the ephemeral columns of quotidian journals, and enthusiastic encomiations in conversational intercourse.

The key to this cipher is as follows — *But find this out and I give it up.*

The appended letter, however, from Dr. Frailey, will show the means used by him to embarrass the reading. Arbitrary characters were made to stand for *whole words*. When we take this circumstance into consideration, with other facts mentioned in the letter, and regard also the nonsensical character of the phrasology employed, we shall be the better enabled to appreciate the extreme difficulty of the puzzle.

WASHINGTON, July 6, 1841.

Dear Sir,

It gives me pleasure to state, that the reading by Mr. Poe, of the cryptograph which I gave you a few days since for transmission to him, is correct.

I am the more astonished at this, since for various words of two, three and four letters, a distinct character was used for each, in order to prevent the discovery of some of those words, by their frequent repetition in a cryptograph of any length and applying them to other words. I also used a distinct character for the terminations *tion* and *sion*, and substituted in every word where it was possible, some of the characters above alluded to. Where the same word of two of those letters occurred frequently, the letters of the key phrase and the characters were alternately used, to increase the difficulty.

As ever, yours, &c.

CHAS. S. FRAILEY.

To F. W. THOMAS, Esq.