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CURIOSITIES
OF
LITERATURE.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

Isaac Disraeli

CURIOSITIES

OF

L I T E R A T U R E .

SEVENTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1823.

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1823

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TO
FRANCIS DOUCE, ESQ.
THESE VOLUMES
OF SOME LITERARY RESEARCHES
ARE INSCRIBED;
AS A GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
TO
A LOVER OF LITERATURE,
BY HIS FRIEND
I. D'ISRAELI.

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PREFACE.

THIS miscellany was first formed, many years ago, when two of my friends were occupied in those anecdotal labours, which have proved so entertaining to themselves, and their readers *. I conceived that a collection of a different complexion, though much less amusing, might prove somewhat more instructive; and that literary history afforded an almost unexplored source of interesting facts. The work itself has been well enough received by the public to justify its design.

Every class of readers requires a book

* The late William Seward, Esq. and James Pettit Andrews, Esq.

adapted to itself; and that book which interests, and perhaps brings much new information to a multitude of readers, is not to be contemned, even by the learned. More might be alleged in favour of works like the present than can be urged against them. They are of a class which was well known to the Ancients. The Greeks were not without them, the Romans loved them under the title of *Varia Eruditio*, and the Orientalists, more than either, were passionately fond of these agreeable collections. The fanciful titles, with which they decorated their variegated miscellanies, sufficiently express their delight.

The design of this work is to stimulate the literary curiosity of those, who, with a taste for its tranquil pursuits, are impeded in their acquirement. The characters, the events, and the singularities of modern literature, are not always familiar

even to those who excel in classical studies. But a more numerous part of mankind, by their occupations, or their indolence, both unfavourable causes to literary improvement, require to obtain the materials for thinking, by the easiest and readiest means. This work has proved useful : it has been reprinted abroad, and it has been translated ; and the honour which many writers at home have conferred on it, by referring to it, has exhilarated the zealous labour which seven editions have necessarily exacted.

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CURIOSITIES

OF

Literature.

LIBRARIES.

THE passion for forming vast collections of books has necessarily existed in all periods of human curiosity; but long it required royal munificence to found a national library. It is only since the art of multiplying the productions of the mind has been discovered, that men of letters have been enabled to rival this imperial and patriotic honour. The taste for books, so rare before the fifteenth century, has gradually become general only within these four hundred years: in that small space of time the public mind of Europe has been created.

Of LIBRARIES, the following anecdotes seem most interesting, as they mark either the affection, or the veneration, which civilized men have ever felt for these perennial repositories of their minds.

The first national library founded in Egypt seemed to have been placed under the protection of the divinities, for their statues magnificently adorned this temple, dedicated at once to religion and to literature. It was still further embellished by a well-known inscription, for ever grateful to the votary of literature; on the front was engraven "The nourishment of the soul;" or, according to Diodorus, "The medicine of the mind."

The Egyptian Ptolemies founded the vast library of Alexandria, which was afterwards the emulative labour of rival monarchs; the founder infused a soul into the vast body he was creating, by his choice of the librarian Demetrius Phalereus, whose skilful industry amassed from all nations their choicest productions. Without such a librarian, a national library would be little more than a literary chaos. His well-exercised memory and critical judgment are its best catalogue. One of the Ptolemies refused supplying the famished Athenians with wheat, until they presented him with the original manuscripts of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; and in returning copies of these originals, he allowed them to retain the fifteen talents which he had pledged with them as a princely security.

Even when tyrants, or usurpers, possessed

sense as well as courage, they have proved the most ardent patrons of literature; they know it is their interest to turn aside the public mind from political speculations, and to afford their subjects the inexhaustible occupations of curiosity, and the consoling pleasures of the imagination. Thus Pisistratus is said to have been among the earliest of the Greeks, who projected an immense collection of the works of the learned, and is believed to have been the collector of the scattered works, which passed under the name of Homer.

The Romans, after six centuries of gradual dominion, must have possessed the vast and diversified collections of the writings of the nations they conquered; among the most valued spoils of their victories, we know that manuscripts were considered as more precious than vases of gold. Paulus Emilius, after the defeat of Perseus, king of Macedon, brought to Rome a great number which he had amassed in Greece, and which he now distributed among his sons, or presented to the Roman people. Sylla followed his example. After the siege of Athens, he discovered an entire library in the temple of Apollo, which having carried to Rome, he appears to have been the founder of the first Roman public library. After the taking of Carthage, the Roman senate rewarded the family

of Regulus with the books found in that city. A library was a national gift, and the most honourable they could bestow. From the intercourse of the Romans with the Greeks, the passion for forming libraries rapidly increased, and individuals began to pride themselves on their private collections.

Of many illustrious Romans, their magnificent taste in their *libraries* has been recorded. Asinius Pollio, Crassus, Cæsar, and Cicero, have, among others, been celebrated for their literary splendor. Lucullus, whose incredible opulence exhausted itself on more than imperial luxuries, more honourably distinguished himself by his vast collections of books, and the happy use he made of them by the liberal access he allowed the learned. "It was a library," says Plutarch, "whose walks, galleries, and cabinets, were open to all visitors; and the ingenious Greeks, when at leisure, resorted to this abode of the Muses to hold literary conversations, in which Lucullus himself loved to join." This library, enlarged by others, Julius Cæsar once proposed to open for the public, having chosen the erudite Varro for its librarian; but the daggers of Brutus and his party prevented the meditated projects of Cæsar. In this museum, Cicero frequently pursued his studies, during the time his friend Faustus had the charge of it;

which he describes to Atticus in his 4th Book, Epist. 9. Amidst his public occupations and his private studies, either of them sufficient to have immortalized one man, we are astonished at the minute attention Cicero paid to the formation of his libraries, and his cabinets of antiquities.

The Emperors were ambitious at length to give *their names* to the *libraries* they founded; they did not consider the purple as their chief ornament. Augustus was himself an author, and in one of those sumptuous buildings called *Thermes*, ornamented with porticos, galleries, and statues, with shady walks, and refreshing baths, testified his love of literature by adding a magnificent library. One of these libraries he fondly called by the name of his sister Octavia; and the other, the temple of Apollo, became the haunt of the poets, as Horace, Juvenal, and Persius have commemorated. The successors of Augustus imitated his example, and even Tiberius had an imperial library chiefly consisting of works concerning the empire and the acts of its sovereigns. These Trajan augmented by the Ulpian library, so denominated from the family name of this prince. In a word, we have accounts of the rich ornaments the ancients bestowed on their libraries; of their floors paved with marble, their walls covered with

glass and ivory, and their shelves and desks of ebony and cedar.

The first *public library* in Italy, says Tiraboschi, was founded by a person of no considerable fortune: his credit, his frugality, and fortitude, were indeed equal to a treasury. This extraordinary man was Nicholas Niccoli, the son of a merchant, and in his youth himself a merchant; but after the death of his father he relinquished the beaten roads of gain, and devoted his soul to study, and his fortune to assist students. At his death he left his library to the public, but his debts being greater than his effects, the princely generosity of Cosmo de Medici realised the intention of its former possessor, and afterwards enriched it, by the addition of an apartment, in which he placed the Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Chaldaic, and Indian mss. The intrepid resolution of Nicholas V. laid the foundations of the Vatican; the affection of Cardinal Bessarion for his country first gave Venice the rudiments of a public library; and to Sir T. Bodley we owe the invaluable one of Oxford. Sir Robert Cotton, Sir Hans Sloane, Dr. Birch, Mr. Cracherode, and others of this race of lovers of books, have all contributed to form these literary treasures, which our nation owe to the enthusiasm of individuals,

who have found such pleasure in consecrating their fortunes and their days to this great public object; or, which in the result produces the same public good, the collections of such men have been frequently purchased on their deaths, by government, and thus have entered whole and entire into the great national collections.

LITERATURE, like virtue, is its own reward, and the enthusiasm some experience in the permanent enjoyments of a vast library, have far outweighed the neglect or the calumny of the world, which some of its votaries have received. From the time that Cicero poured forth his feelings in his oration for the poet Archias, innumerable are the testimonies of men of letters of the pleasurable delirium of their researches; that delicious beverage which they have swallowed, so thirstily, from the magical cup of literature. Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham, chancellor and high treasurer of England so early as 1341, perhaps raised the first private library in our country. He purchased thirty or forty volumes of the Abbot of St. Albans for fifty pounds weight of silver. He was so enamoured of his large collection, that he expressly composed a treatise on his love of books, under the title of *Philobiblion*, an honourable tribute paid to literature, in an age not literary.

To pass much of our time amid such vast resources, that man must indeed be not more animated than a leaden Mercury, who does not aspire to make some small addition to his library, were it only by a critical catalogue! He must be as indolent as that animal called the sloth, who perishes on the tree he climbs, after he has eaten all its leaves.

Henry Rantzau, a Danish gentleman, the founder of the great library at Copenhagen, whose days were dissolved in the pleasures of reading, discovers his taste and ardour in the following elegant effusion :

Salvete aureoli mei libelli,
 Meæ deliciæ, mei lepores!
 Quam vos sæpe oculis juvat videre,
 Et tritos manibus tenere nostris!
 Tot vos eximii, tot eruditi,
 Prisci lumina sæculi et recentis,
 Confecere viri, suasque vobis
 Ausi credere lucubrationes:
 Et sperare decus perenne scriptis;
 Neque hæc irrita spes fefellit illos.

IMITATED.

Golden volumes! richest treasures!
 Objects of delicious pleasures!
 You my eyes rejoicing please,
 You my hands in rapture seize!

Brilliant wits and musing sages,
Lights who beam'd through many ages!
Left to your conscious leaves their story,
And dared to trust you with their glory;
And now their hope of fame achiev'd,
Dear volumes!—you have not deceived!

This passion for the acquisition and enjoyment of *books*, has been the occasion of their lovers embellishing their outsides with costly ornaments; a rage which ostentation may have abused; but when these volumes belong to the real man of letters, the most fanciful bindings are often the emblems of his taste and feelings. The great Thuanus was eager to purchase the finest copies for his library, and his volumes are still eagerly purchased, bearing his autograph on the last page. A celebrated amateur was Grolier, whose library was opulent in these luxuries; the Muses themselves could not more ingeniously have ornamented their favourite works. I have seen several in the libraries of our own curious collectors. He embellished their outside with taste and ingenuity. They are gilded and stamped with peculiar neatness, the compartments on the binding are drawn, and painted, with different inventions of subjects, analogous to the works themselves; and they are further adorned by that amiable inscription, *Jo. Grolierii et ami-*

corum! purporting that these literary treasures were collected for himself and for his friends!

The family of the Fuggers had long felt an hereditary passion for the accumulation of literary treasures: and their portraits, with others in their picture gallery, form a curious quarto volume of 127 portraits, excessively rare even in Germany, entitled "Fuggerorum Pinacotheca." Wolfius, who daily haunted their celebrated library, pours out his gratitude in some Greek verses, and describes this bibliotheque as a literary heaven, furnished with as many books as there were stars in the firmament; or as a literary garden, in which he passed entire days in gathering fruit and flowers, delighting and instructing himself by perpetual occupation.

In 1364 the royal library of France did not exceed twenty volumes. Shortly after Charles V. increased it to nine hundred, which by the fate of war, as much at least as that of money, the Duke of Bedford afterwards purchased and transported to London, where libraries were smaller than on the continent, about 1440. It is a circumstance worthy observation, that the French sovereign, Charles V. surnamed the Wise, ordered that thirty portable lights, with a silver lamp suspended from the centre, should be illuminated at night, that students

might not find their pursuits interrupted at any hour. Many among us, at this moment, whose professional avocations admit not of morning studies, find that the resources of a public library are not accessible to them from the omission of the regulation of the zealous Charles V. of France. An alarming objection to night-studies in public libraries is the danger of fire, and in our own British Museum not a light is permitted to be carried about on any pretence whatever. The history of the "Bibliothèque du Roi" is a curious incident in literature; and the progress of the human mind and public opinion might be traced by its gradual accessions, noting the changeable qualities of its literary stores chiefly from theology, law and medicine, to philosophy and elegant literature. In 1789 Neckar reckoned the literary treasures to amount to 225,000 printed books, 70,000 manuscripts, and 15,000 collections of prints. By a curious little volume published by M. Le Prince in 1782, it appears that it was first under Louis XIV. that the productions of the art of engraving were collected and arranged; the great minister Colbert purchased the extensive collections of the Abbé De Marolles, who may be ranked among the fathers of our print-collectors. Two hundred and sixty-four ample port-folios laid

the foundations, and the catalogues of his collections, printed by Marolles himself, are rare, curious, and high-priced. Our own national print-gallery is yet an infant establishment.

Mr. Hallam has observed, that in 1440 England had made comparatively but little progress in learning—and Germany was probably still less advanced. However there was in Germany a celebrated collector of books in the person of Trithemius, the celebrated abbot of Spanheim, who died in 1516; he had amassed about two thousand manuscripts, a literary treasure which excited such general attention, that princes and eminent men of that day travelled to visit Trithemius and his library. About this time six or eight hundred volumes formed a royal collection, and their high value in price could only be furnished by a prince. This was indeed a great advancement in libraries, when at the beginning of the fourteenth century the library of Louis IX. contained only four classical authors, and that of Oxford, in 1300, consisted of “a few tracts kept in chests.”

The pleasures of study are classed by Burton among those exercises or recreations of the mind which pass *within doors*. Looking about this “world of books,” he exclaims, “I could even

live and die with such meditations, and take more delight and true content of mind in them, than in all thy wealth and sport! There is a sweetness, which, as Circe's cup, bewitcheth a student, he cannot leave off, as well may witness those many laborious hours, days and nights, spent in their voluminous treatises. So sweet is the delight of study. The last day is *prioris discipulus*." "Heinsius was mewed up in the library of Leyden all the year long, and that which to my thinking should have bred a loathing, caused in him a greater liking. I no sooner, saith he, come into the library, but I bolt the door to me, excluding Lust, Ambition, Avarice, and all such vices, whose nurse is Idleness, the mother of Ignorance and Melancholy. In the very lap of eternity, amongst so many divine souls, I take my seat with so lofty a spirit, and sweet content, that I pity all our great ones and rich men, that know not this happiness." Such is the incense of a votary who scatters it on the altar less for the ceremony than from the devotion.

There is, however, an intemperance in study, incompatible often with our social or more active duties. The illustrious Grotius exposed himself to the reproaches of some of his contemporaries for having too warmly pursued his studies, to the

detriment of his public station. It was the boast of Cicero, that his philosophical studies had never interfered with the services he owed the republic, and that he had only dedicated to them the hours which others give to their walks, their repasts, and their pleasures. Looking on his voluminous labours, we are surprised at this observation: how honourable is it to him, that his various philosophical works bear the titles of the different villas he possessed; which shows that they were composed in their respective retirements. Cicero must have been an early riser; and practised that magic art of employing his time, as to have multiplied his days.

THE BIBLIOMANIA.

THE preceding article is honourable to literature, yet impartial truth must show that even a passion for collecting books is not always a passion for literature.

The BIBLIOMANIA, or the collecting an enormous heap of books without intelligent curiosity, has, since libraries have existed, infected weak minds, who imagine that they themselves acquire knowledge when they keep it on their shelves. Their

motley libraries have been called the *mad-houses of the human mind*; and again, the *tomb of books* when the possessor will not communicate them, and coffins them up in the cases of his library—and as it was facetiously observed, these collections are not without a *Lock on the human Understanding**.

The BIBLIOMANIA has never raged more violently than in the present day. It is fortunate that literature is in no ways injured by the follies of collectors, since though they preserve the worthless, they necessarily defend the good.

Some collectors place all their fame on the *view* of a splendid library, where volumes arrayed in all the pomp of lettering, silk linings, triple gold bands and tinted leather, are locked up in wire cases, and secured from the vulgar hands of the *mere reader*, dazzling our eyes like eastern beauties peering through their jealousies!

BRUYERE has touched on this mania with humour: "Of such a collector," says he, "as soon as

* An allusion and pun which occasioned the French translator of the present work an unlucky blunder: puzzled no doubt by my *facetiously*, he translates "met-tant comme on l'a *tres-judicieusement* fait observer, l'entendement humain sous la Clef." The book, and the author alluded to, quite escaped him.

I enter his house, I am ready to faint on the staircase, from a strong smell of Morocco leather: in vain he shows me fine editions, gold leaves, Etruscan bindings, &c. naming them one after another, as if he were showing a gallery of pictures! a gallery by the by which he seldom traverses when *alone*, for he rarely reads, but me he offers to conduct through it! I thank him for his politeness, and, as little as himself, care to visit the tan-house, which he calls his library."

LUCIAN has composed a biting invective against an ignorant possessor of a vast library. Like him, who in the present day, after turning over the pages of an old book, chiefly admires the *date*. LUCIAN compares him to a pilot, who was never taught the science of navigation; to a rider who cannot keep his seat on a spirited horse; to a man who not having the use of his feet, wishes to conceal the defect by wearing embroidered shoes; but, alas! he cannot stand in them! He ludicrously compares him to Thersites wearing the armour of Achilles, tottering at every step; leering with his little eyes under his enormous helmet, and his hunch-back raising the cuirass above his shoulders. Why do you buy so many books? he says:—you have no hair, and you purchase a comb; you are blind, and you will have a grand mirror; you are

deaf, and you will have fine musical instruments! Your costly bindings are only a source of vexation, and you are continually discharging your librarians for not preserving them from the silent invasion of the worms, and the nibbling triumphs of the rats!

Such *collectors* will contemptuously smile at the *collection* of the amiable Melancthon. He possessed in his library only four authors, Plato, Pliny, Plutarch, and Ptolemy the geographer.

Ancillon was a great collector of curious books, and dexterously defended himself when accused of the *Bibliomania*. He gave a good reason for buying the most elegant editions; which he did not consider merely as a literary luxury. He said the less the eyes are fatigued in reading a work, the more liberty the mind feels to judge of it: and as we perceive more clearly the excellencies and defects of a printed book than when in *ms.*; so we see them more plainly in good paper and clear type than when the impression and paper are both bad. He always purchased *first editions*, and never waited for second ones; though it is the opinion of some that a first edition is generally the least valuable, and only to be considered as an imperfect essay, which the author proposes to finish after he has tried the sentiments of the lite-

rary world. Bayle approves of Ancillon's plan. Those who wait calmly for a book, says he, till it is reprinted, show plainly that they are resigned to their ignorance, and prefer the saving of a pistole to the acquisition of useful knowledge. With one of these persons, who waited for a second edition, which never appeared, a literary man argued, that it was much better to have two editions of a book than to deprive himself of the advantage which the reading of the first might procure him; and it was a bad economy to prefer a few crowns to that advantage. It has frequently happened, besides, that in second editions, the author omits, as well as adds, or makes alterations from prudential reasons; the displeasing truths which he *corrects*, as he might call them, are so many losses incurred by Truth itself. There is an advantage in comparing the first with subsequent editions; for among other things, we feel great satisfaction in tracing the variations of a work, when a man of genius has revised it. There are also other secrets, well known to the intelligent curious, who are versed in affairs relating to books. Many first editions are not to be purchased for the treble value of later ones. Let no lover of books be too hastily censured for his passion, which, if he indulges with judgment, is useful. The col-

lector we have noticed frequently said, as is related of Virgil, "I collect gold from Ennius's dung." I find, added he, in some neglected authors, particular things, not elsewhere to be found. He read them, indeed, not with equal attention, but many, "*Sicut canis ad Nilum bibens et fugiens,*" like a dog at the Nile, drinking and running.

Fortunate are those who only consider a book for the utility and pleasure they may derive from its possession. Those students, who, though they know much, still thirst to know more, may require this vast sea of books; yet in that sea they may suffer many shipwrecks. Great collections of books are subject to certain accidents besides the damp, the worms, and the rats; one not less common is that of the borrowers, not to say a word of the purloiners.

LITERARY JOURNALS.

WHEN writers were not numerous, and readers rare, the unsuccessful author fell insensibly into oblivion; he dissolved away in his own weakness; if he committed the private folly of printing what no one would purchase, he was not arraigned at the public tribunal—and the awful terrors of his

day of judgment consisted only in the retributions of his publisher's final accounts. At length, a taste for literature spread through the body of the people, vanity induced the inexperienced and the ignorant to aspire to literary honours. To oppose these forcible entries into the haunts of the Muses, periodical criticism brandished its formidable weapon; and the fall of many, taught some of our greatest geniuses to rise. Multifarious writings produced multifarious strictures, and public criticism reached to such perfection, that taste was generally diffused, enlightening those whose occupations had otherwise never permitted them to judge of literary compositions.

The invention of REVIEWS, in the form which they have at length gradually assumed, could not have existed but in the most polished ages of literature; for without a constant supply of authors, and a refined spirit of criticism, they could not excite a perpetual interest among the lovers of literature. These publications are the chronicles of taste and science, and present the existing state of the public mind, while they form a ready resource for those idle hours, which men of letters do not choose to pass idly.

Their multiplicity has undoubtedly produced much evil; puerile critics, and venal drudges, ma-

manufacture reviews; hence that shameful discordance of opinion, which is the scorn and scandal of criticism. Passions hostile to the peaceful truths of literature have likewise made tremendous inroads in the republic, and every literary virtue has been lost! In "Calamities of Authors" I have given the history of a literary conspiracy, conducted by a solitary critic Gilbert Stuart, against the historian Henry.

These works may disgust by vapid panegyric, or gross invective; weary by uniform dulness, or tantalize by superficial knowledge. Sometimes merely written to catch the public attention, a malignity is indulged against authors, to season the caustic leaves. A reviewer has admired those works in private, which he has condemned in his official capacity. But good sense, good temper, and good taste, will ever form an estimable journalist, who will inspire confidence, and give stability to his decisions.

To the lovers of literature these volumes when they have outlived their year, are not unimportant. They constitute a great portion of literary history, and are indeed the annals of the republic.

To our own reviews, we must add the old foreign journals, which are perhaps even more valuable to the man of letters. Of these the variety is considerable; and many of their writers are now

known. They delight our curiosity by opening new views, and light up in observing minds many projects of works, wanted in our own literature. GIBBON feasted on them; and while he turned them over with constant pleasure, derived accurate notions of works, which no student can himself have verified: of many works a notion is sufficient, but this notion is necessary.

The origin of so many literary journals was the happy project of DENIS de SALLO, a counsellor in the parliament of Paris. In 1665 appeared his *Journal des Sçavans*. He published his essay in the name of the Sieur de Hedouville, his footman! Was this a mere stroke of humour, or designed to insinuate that the freedom of his criticism could only be allowed to his footman? The work, however, met with so favourable a reception, that SALLO had the satisfaction of seeing it, the following year, imitated throughout Europe, and his journal, at the same time, translated into various languages. But as most authors lay themselves open to an acute critic, the animadversions of SALLO were given with such asperity of criticism, and such malignity of wit, that this new journal excited loud murmurs, and the most heart-moving complaints. The learned had their plagiarisms detected, and the wit had his claims disputed. Sarasin called the gazettes of this new Aristarchus,

Hedbomadary Flams! *Billevezès hebdomadaries!* and Menage, having published a law-book, which Sallo had treated with severe raillery, he entered into a long argument to prove, according to Justinian, that a lawyer is not allowed to defame another lawyer, &c. *Senatori maledicere non licet, remaledicere jus fasque est.* Others loudly declaimed against this new species of imperial tyranny, and this attempt to regulate the public opinion by that of an individual. Sallo, after having published only his third volume, felt the irritated wasps of literature thronging so thick about him, that he very gladly abdicated the throne of criticism. The journal is said to have suffered a short interruption by a remonstrance from the nuncio of the pope, for the energy with which Sallo had defended the liberties of the Gallican church.

Intimidated by the fate of SALLO, his successor, Abbé GALLOIS, flourished in a milder reign. He contented himself with giving the titles of books, accompanied with extracts; and he was more useful than interesting. The public, who had been so much amused by the raillery and severity of the founder of this dynasty of new critics, now murmured at the want of that salt and acidity by which they had relished the fugitive collation. They were not satisfied in having the most beau-

To pass much of our time amid such vast resources, that man must indeed be not more animated than a leaden Mercury, who does not aspire to make some small addition to his library, were it only by a critical catalogue! He must be as indolent as that animal called the sloth, who perishes on the tree he climbs, after he has eaten all its leaves.

Henry Rantzau, a Danish gentleman, the founder of the great library at Copenhagen, whose days were dissolved in the pleasures of reading, discovers his taste and ardour in the following elegant effusion :

Salvete aureoli mei libelli,
 Meæ deliciæ, mei lepores!
 Quam vos sæpe oculis juvat videre,
 Et tritos manibus tenere nostris!
 Tot vos eximii, tot eruditi,
 Prisci lumina sæculi et recentis,
 Confecere viri, suasque vobis
 Ausi credere lucubrationes:
 Et sperare decus perenne scriptis;
 Neque hæc irrita spes fefellit illos.

IMITATED.

Golden volumes! richest treasures!
 Objects of delicious pleasures!
 You my eyes rejoicing please,
 You my hands in rapture seize!

Brilliant wits and musing sages,
Lights who beam'd through many ages!
Left to your conscious leaves their story,
And dared to trust you with their glory;
And now their hope of fame achiev'd,
Dear volumes!—you have not deceived!

This passion for the acquisition and enjoyment of *books*, has been the occasion of their lovers embellishing their outsides with costly ornaments; a rage which ostentation may have abused; but when these volumes belong to the real man of letters, the most fanciful bindings are often the emblems of his taste and feelings. The great Thuanus was eager to purchase the finest copies for his library, and his volumes are still eagerly purchased, bearing his autograph on the last page. A celebrated amateur was Grollier, whose library was opulent in these luxuries; the Muses themselves could not more ingeniously have ornamented their favourite works. I have seen several in the libraries of our own curious collectors. He embellished their outside with taste and ingenuity. They are gilded and stamped with peculiar neatness, the compartments on the binding are drawn, and painted, with different inventions of subjects, analogous to the works themselves; and they are further adorned by that amiable inscription, *Jo. Grollierii et ami-*

corum! purporting that these literary treasures were collected for himself and for his friends!

The family of the Fuggers had long felt an hereditary passion for the accumulation of literary treasures: and their portraits, with others in their picture gallery, form a curious quarto volume of 127 portraits, excessively rare even in Germany, entitled "Fuggerorum Pinacotheca." Wolfius, who daily haunted their celebrated library, pours out his gratitude in some Greek verses, and describes this bibliotheque as a literary heaven, furnished with as many books as there were stars in the firmament; or as a literary garden, in which he passed entire days in gathering fruit and flowers, delighting and instructing himself by perpetual occupation.

In 1364 the royal library of France did not exceed twenty volumes. Shortly after Charles V. increased it to nine hundred, which by the fate of war, as much at least as that of money, the Duke of Bedford afterwards purchased and transported to London, where libraries were smaller than on the continent, about 1440. It is a circumstance worthy observation, that the French sovereign, Charles V. surnamed the Wise, ordered that thirty portable lights, with a silver lamp suspended from the centre, should be illuminated at night, that students

might not find their pursuits interrupted at any hour. Many among us, at this moment, whose professional avocations admit not of morning studies, find that the resources of a public library are not accessible to them from the omission of the regulation of the zealous Charles V. of France. An alarming objection to night-studies in public libraries is the danger of fire, and in our own British Museum not a light is permitted to be carried about on any pretence whatever. The history of the "Bibliotheque du Roi" is a curious incident in literature; and the progress of the human mind and public opinion might be traced by its gradual accessions, noting the changeable qualities of its literary stores chiefly from theology, law and medicine, to philosophy and elegant literature. In 1789 Neckar reckoned the literary treasures to amount to 225,000 printed books, 70,000 manuscripts, and 15,000 collections of prints. By a curious little volume published by M. Le Prince in 1782, it appears that it was first under Louis XIV. that the productions of the art of engraving were collected and arranged; the great minister Colbert purchased the extensive collections of the Abbé De Marolles, who may be ranked among the fathers of our print-collectors. Two hundred and sixty-four ample port-folios laid

the foundations, and the catalogues of his collections, printed by Marolles himself, are rare, curious, and high-priced. Our own national print-gallery is yet an infant establishment.

Mr. Hallam has observed, that in 1440 England had made comparatively but little progress in learning—and Germany was probably still less advanced. However there was in Germany a celebrated collector of books in the person of Trithemius, the celebrated abbot of Spanheim, who died in 1516; he had amassed about two thousand manuscripts, a literary treasure which excited such general attention, that princes and eminent men of that day travelled to visit Trithemius and his library. About this time six or eight hundred volumes formed a royal collection, and their high value in price could only be furnished by a prince. This was indeed a great advancement in libraries, when at the beginning of the fourteenth century the library of Louis IX. contained only four classical authors, and that of Oxford, in 1300, consisted of “a few tracts kept in chests.”

The pleasures of study are classed by Burton among those exercises or recreations of the mind which pass *within doors*. Looking about this “world of books,” he exclaims, “I could even

live and die with such meditations, and take more delight and true content of mind in them, than in all thy wealth and sport! There is a sweetness, which, as Circe's cup, bewitcheth a student, he cannot leave off; as well may witness those many laborious hours, days and nights, spent in their voluminous treatises. So sweet is the delight of study. The last day is *prioris discipulus*." "Heinsius was mewed up in the library of Leyden all the year long, and that which to my thinking should have bred a loathing, caused in him a greater liking. I no sooner, saith he, come into the library, but I bolt the door to me, excluding Lust, Ambition, Avarice, and all such vices, whose nurse is Idleness, the mother of Ignorance and Melancholy. In the very lap of eternity, amongst so many divine souls, I take my seat with so lofty a spirit, and sweet content, that I pity all our great ones and rich men, that know not this happiness." Such is the incense of a votary who scatters it on the altar less for the ceremony than from the devotion.

There is, however, an intemperance in study, incompatible often with our social or more active duties. The illustrious Grotius exposed himself to the reproaches of some of his contemporaries for having too warmly pursued his studies, to the

detriment of his public station. It was the boast of Cicero, that his philosophical studies had never interfered with the services he owed the republic, and that he had only dedicated to them the hours which others give to their walks, their repasts, and their pleasures. Looking on his voluminous labours, we are surprised at this observation: how honourable is it to him, that his various philosophical works bear the titles of the different villas he possessed; which shows that they were composed in their respective retirements. Cicero must have been an early riser; and practised that magic art of employing his time, as to have multiplied his days.

THE BIBLIOMANIA.

THE preceding article is honourable to literature, yet impartial truth must show that even a passion for collecting books is not always a passion for literature.

The BIBLIOMANIA, or the collecting an enormous heap of books without intelligent curiosity, has, since libraries have existed, infected weak minds, who imagine that they themselves acquire knowledge when they keep it on their shelves. Their

motley libraries have been called the *mad-houses of the human mind*; and again, the *tomb of books* when the possessor will not communicate them, and coffins them up in the cases of his library—and as it was facetiously observed, these collections are not without a *Lock on the human Understanding**.

The BIBLIOMANIA has never raged more violently than in the present day. It is fortunate that literature is in no ways injured by the follies of collectors, since though they preserve the worthless, they necessarily defend the good.

Some collectors place all their fame on the *view* of a splendid library, where volumes arrayed in all the pomp of lettering, silk linings, triple gold bands and tinted leather, are locked up in wire cases, and secured from the vulgar hands of the *mere reader*, dazzling our eyes like eastern beauties peering through their jealousies!

BRUYERE has touched on this mania with humour: “Of such a collector,” says he, “as soon as

* An allusion and pun which occasioned the French translator of the present work an unlucky blunder: puzzled no doubt by my *facetiously*, he translates “*mettant comme on l’a tres-judicieusement fait observer, l’entendement humain sous la Clef.*” The book, and the author alluded to, quite escaped him.

I enter his house, I am ready to faint on the staircase, from a strong smell of Morocco leather: in vain he shows me fine editions, gold leaves, Etruscan bindings, &c. naming them one after another, as if he were showing a gallery of pictures! a gallery by the by which he seldom traverses when *alone*, for he rarely reads, but me he offers to conduct through it! I thank him for his politeness, and, as little as himself, care to visit the tan-house, which he calls his library."

LUCIAN has composed a biting invective against an ignorant possessor of a vast library. Like him, who in the present day, after turning over the pages of an old book, chiefly admires the *date*. LUCIAN compares him to a pilot, who was never taught the science of navigation; to a rider who cannot keep his seat on a spirited horse; to a man who not having the use of his feet, wishes to conceal the defect by wearing embroidered shoes; but, alas! he cannot stand in them! He ludicrously compares him to Thersites wearing the armour of Achilles, tottering at every step; leering with his little eyes under his enormous helmet, and his hunch-back raising the cuirass above his shoulders. Why do you buy so many books? he says:—you have no hair, and you purchase a comb; you are blind, and you will have a grand mirror; you are

deaf, and you will have fine musical instruments ! Your costly bindings are only a source of vexation, and you are continually discharging your librarians for not preserving them from the silent invasion of the worms, and the nibbling triumphs of the rats !

Such *collectors* will contemptuously smile at the *collection* of the amiable Melancthon. He possessed in his library only four authors, Plato, Pliny, Plutarch, and Ptolemy the geographer.

Ancillon was a great collector of curious books, and dexterously defended himself when accused of the *Bibliomania*. He gave a good reason for buying the most elegant editions ; which he did not consider merely as a literary luxury. He said the less the eyes are fatigued in reading a work, the more liberty the mind feels to judge of it : and as we perceive more clearly the excellencies and defects of a printed book than when in ms. ; so we see them more plainly in good paper and clear type than when the impression and paper are both bad. He always purchased *first editions*, and never waited for second ones ; though it is the opinion of some that a first edition is generally the least valuable, and only to be considered as an imperfect essay, which the author proposes to finish after he has tried the sentiments of the lite-

rary world. Bayle approves of Ancillon's plan. Those who wait calmly for a book, says he, till it is reprinted, show plainly that they are resigned to their ignorance, and prefer the saving of a pistole to the acquisition of useful knowledge. With one of these persons, who waited for a second edition, which never appeared, a literary man argued, that it was much better to have two editions of a book than to deprive himself of the advantage which the reading of the first might procure him; and it was a bad economy to prefer a few crowns to that advantage. It has frequently happened, besides, that in second editions, the author omits, as well as adds, or makes alterations from prudential reasons; the displeasing truths which he *corrects*, as he might call them, are so many losses incurred by Truth itself. There is an advantage in comparing the first with subsequent editions; for among other things, we feel great satisfaction in tracing the variations of a work, when a man of genius has revised it. There are also other secrets, well known to the intelligent curious, who are versed in affairs relating to books. Many first editions are not to be purchased for the treble value of later ones. Let no lover of books be too hastily censured for his passion, which, if he indulges with judgment, is useful. The col-

lector we have noticed frequently said, as is related of Virgil, "I collect gold from Ennius's dung." I find, added he, in some neglected authors, particular things, not elsewhere to be found. He read them, indeed, not with equal attention, but many, "*Sicut canis ad Nilum bibens et fugiens,*" like a dog at the Nile, drinking and running.

Fortunate are those who only consider a book for the utility and pleasure they may derive from its possession. Those students, who, though they know much, still thirst to know more, may require this vast sea of books; yet in that sea they may suffer many shipwrecks. Great collections of books are subject to certain accidents besides the damp, the worms, and the rats; one not less common is that of the borrowers, not to say a word of the purloiners.

LITERARY JOURNALS.

WHEN writers were not numerous, and readers rare, the unsuccessful author fell insensibly into oblivion; he dissolved away in his own weakness; if he committed the private folly of printing what no one would purchase, he was not arraigned at the public tribunal—and the awful terrors of his

day of judgment consisted only in the retributions of his publisher's final accounts. At length, a taste for literature spread through the body of the people, vanity induced the inexperienced and the ignorant to aspire to literary honours. To oppose these forcible entries into the haunts of the Muses, periodical criticism brandished its formidable weapon; and the fall of many, taught some of our greatest geniuses to rise. Multifarious writings produced multifarious strictures, and public criticism reached to such perfection, that taste was generally diffused, enlightening those whose occupations had otherwise never permitted them to judge of literary compositions.

The invention of REVIEWS, in the form which they have at length gradually assumed, could not have existed but in the most polished ages of literature; for without a constant supply of authors, and a refined spirit of criticism, they could not excite a perpetual interest among the lovers of literature. These publications are the chronicles of taste and science, and present the existing state of the public mind, while they form a ready resource for those idle hours, which men of letters do not choose to pass idly.

Their multiplicity has undoubtedly produced much evil; puerile critics, and venal drudges, ma-

nufacture reviews; hence that shameful discordance of opinion, which is the scorn and scandal of criticism. Passions hostile to the peaceful truths of literature have likewise made tremendous inroads in the republic, and every literary virtue has been lost! In "Calamities of Authors" I have given the history of a literary conspiracy, conducted by a solitary critic Gilbert Stuart, against the historian Henry.

These works may disgust by vapid panegyric, or gross invective; weary by uniform dulness, or tantalize by superficial knowledge. Sometimes merely written to catch the public attention, a malignity is indulged against authors, to season the caustic leaves. A reviewer has admired those works in private, which he has condemned in his official capacity. But good sense, good temper, and good taste, will ever form an estimable journalist, who will inspire confidence, and give stability to his decisions.

To the lovers of literature these volumes when they have outlived their year, are not unimportant. They constitute a great portion of literary history, and are indeed the annals of the republic.

To our own reviews, we must add the old foreign journals, which are perhaps even more valuable to the man of letters. Of these the variety is considerable; and many of their writers are now

known. They delight our curiosity by opening new views, and light up in observing minds many projects of works, wanted in our own literature. GIBBON feasted on them; and while he turned them over with constant pleasure, derived accurate notions of works, which no student can himself have verified: of many works a notion is sufficient, but this notion is necessary.

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MATY's son produced here a review known to the curious; his style and decisions often discover haste and heat, with some striking observations: alluding to his father, Maty, in his motto, applies Virgil's description of the young Ascanius, "*Sequitur patrem non passibus æquis.*" He says he only holds a *monthly conversation* with the public; but criticism demands more maturity of reflection and more terseness of style. In his obstinate resolution of carrying on this review without an associate, he has shown its folly and its danger; for a fatal illness produced a cessation, at once, of his periodical labours and his life.

Other reviews, are the *Memoires de Trevoux*, written by the Jesuits. Their caustic censure and vivacity of style made them redoubtable in their day; they did not even spare their brothers. The *Journal Litteraire*, printed at the Hague, and chiefly composed by Prosper Marchand, Sallengre, Van Effen, who were then young writers. This list may be augmented by other journals, which sometimes merit preservation in the history of modern literature.

Our early English journals notice only a few publications, with but little acumen. Of these, the "*Memoirs of Literature*," and the "*Present State of the Republic of Letters*," are the best.

The Monthly Review, the venerable mother of our journals, commenced in 1749.

It is impossible to form a literary journal in a manner such as might be wished; it must be the work of many of different tempers and talents. An individual, however versatile and extensive his genius, would soon be exhausted. Such a regular labour occasioned Bayle a dangerous illness, and Maty fell a victim to his review. A prospect always extending as we proceed, the frequent novelty of the matter, the pride of considering one's self as the arbiter of literature, animate a journalist at the commencement of his career; but the literary Hercules becomes fatigued; and to supply his craving pages he gives copious extracts, till the journal becomes tedious, or fails in variety. Abbé Gallois was frequently diverted from continuing his journal, and Fontenelle remarks, that this occupation was too restrictive for a mind so extensive as his; the Abbé could not resist the charms of revelling in a new work, and gratifying any sudden curiosity which seized him; which interrupted perpetually that regularity the public expects from a journalist.

To describe the character of a perfect journalist, would be only an ideal portrait! There are however some acquirements which are indispensa-

ble. He must be tolerably acquainted with the subjects he treats on; no *common* acquirement! He must possess the *literary history of his own times*; a science which Fontenelle observes, is almost distinct from any other. It is the result of an active curiosity, which leads us to take a lively interest in the tastes and pursuits of the age, while it saves the journalist from some ridiculous blunders. We often see the mind of a reviewer half a century remote from the work reviewed. A fine feeling of the various manners of writers, with a style, adapted to fix the attention of the indolent, and to win the untractable; but candour is the brightest gem of criticism! He ought not to throw every thing into the crucible, nor should he suffer the whole to pass as if he trembled to touch it. Lampons, and satires, in time will lose their effect, as well as panegyrics. He must learn to resist the seductions of his own pen; the pretensions of composing a treatise on the *subject*, rather than on the *book* he criticises, proud of insinuating that he gives in a dozen pages, what the author himself has not been able to perform in his volumes. Should he gain confidence by a popular delusion and by unworthy conduct, he may chance to be mortified by the pardon or the chastisement of insulted genius. The most noble criticism is

that, in which the critic is not the antagonist so much as the rival of the author.

RECOVERY OF MANUSCRIPTS.

OUR ancient classics had a very narrow escape from total annihilation. Many, we know, have perished: many we possess are but fragments; and chance, blind arbiter of the works of genius, has given us some, not of the highest value; which, however, have proved very useful, serving as a test to show the pedantry of those who adore antiquity not from true feeling, but from traditional prejudice.

One reason, writes the learned compiler of *L'Esprit des Croisades*, why we have lost a great number of ancient authors, was the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens, which deprived Europe of the use of the *papyrus*. The ignorance of that age could find no substitute; they knew no other expedient but writing on parchment, which became every day more scarce and costly. Ignorance and barbarism unfortunately seized on Roman manuscripts, and industriously defaced pages once imagined to have been immortal! The most elegant compositions of classic Rome were converted into

the psalms of a breviary, or the prayers of a missal. Livy and Tacitus "hide their diminished heads" to preserve the legend of a saint, and immortal truths were converted into clumsy fictions. It happened that the most voluminous authors were the greatest sufferers; these were preferred, because their volume being the greatest, it most profitably repaid their destroying industry, and furnished ampler scope for future transcription. A Livy or a Diodorus was preferred to the smaller works of Cicero or Horace; and it is to this circumstance that Juvenal, Persius, and Martial have come down to us entire, rather probably than to these pious personages preferring their obscenities, as some have accused them. Not long ago at Rome, a part of a book of Livy was found, between the lines of a parchment but half effaced, on which they had substituted a book of the Bible.

That, however, the monks had not in high veneration the *profane* authors, appears by a facetious anecdote. To read the classics was considered as a very idle recreation, and some held them in great horror. To distinguish them from other books, they invented a disgraceful sign; when a monk asked for a pagan author, after making the general sign they used in their manual and silent language when they wanted a book, he added a particular one, which consisted in scratch-

known. They delight our curiosity by opening new views, and light up in observing minds many projects of works, wanted in our own literature. GIBBON feasted on them; and while he turned them over with constant pleasure, derived accurate notions of works, which no student can himself have verified: of many works a notion is sufficient, but this notion is necessary.

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d'Italia, from 1710 to 1733, is valuable. GIBBON resorted to Le Clerc's volumes at his leisure, "as an inexhaustible source of amusement and instruction."

BEAUSOBRE and L'ENFANT, two learned Protestants, wrote a *Bibliothèque Germanique*, from 1720 to 1740, in 50 volumes; our own literature is interested by the "*Bibliothèque Britannique*," written by some literary Frenchmen, noticed by La Croze in his "Voyage littéraire," who designates the writers in this most tantalising manner: "Les auteurs sont gens de mérite et qui entendent tous parfaitement l'Anglois; Messrs. S. B. le M. D. et le savant Mr. D." Posterity has been partially let into the secret; De Missy was one of the contributors, and Warburton communicated his project of an edition of Velleius Paterculus. This useful account of only English books begins in 1733, and closes at 1747, Hague, 23 vols.: to this we must add *The Journal Britannique*, in 18 volumes, by Dr. MATY, a foreign physician residing in London; this Journal exhibits a view of the state of English literature from 1750 to 1755. GIBBON bestows a high character on the Journalist, who sometimes "aspires to the character of a poet and a philosopher; one of the last disciples of the school of Fontenelle."

MATY'S son produced here a review known to the curious; his style and decisions often discover haste and heat, with some striking observations: alluding to his father, Maty, in his motto, applies Virgil's description of the young Ascanius, "*Sequitur patrem non passibus æquis.*" He says he only holds a *monthly conversation* with the public; but criticism demands more maturity of reflection and more terseness of style. In his obstinate resolution of carrying on this review without an associate, he has shown its folly and its danger; for a fatal illness produced a cessation, at once, of his periodical labours and his life.

Other reviews, are the *Memoires de Trevoux*, written by the Jesuits. Their caustic censure and vivacity of style made them redoubtable in their day; they did not even spare their brothers. The *Journal Litteraire*, printed at the Hague, and chiefly composed by Prosper Marchand, Sallengre, Van Effen, who were then young writers. This list may be augmented by other journals, which sometimes merit preservation in the history of modern literature.

Our early English journals notice only a few publications, with but little acumen. Of these, the "Memoirs of Literature," and the "Present State of the Republic of Letters," are the best.

The Monthly Review, the venerable mother of our journals, commenced in 1749.

It is impossible to form a literary journal in a manner such as might be wished; it must be the work of many of different tempers and talents. An individual, however versatile and extensive his genius, would soon be exhausted. Such a regular labour occasioned Bayle a dangerous illness, and Maty fell a victim to his review. A prospect always extending as we proceed, the frequent novelty of the matter, the pride of considering one's self as the arbiter of literature, animate a journalist at the commencement of his career; but the literary Hercules becomes fatigued; and to supply his craving pages he gives copious extracts, till the journal becomes tedious, or fails in variety. Abbé Gallois was frequently diverted from continuing his journal, and Fontenelle remarks, that this occupation was too restrictive for a mind so extensive as his; the Abbé could not resist the charms of revelling in a new work, and gratifying any sudden curiosity which seized him; which interrupted perpetually that regularity the public expects from a journalist.

To describe the character of a perfect journalist, would be only an ideal portrait! There are however some acquirements which are indispensa-

ble. He must be tolerably acquainted with the subjects he treats on; no *common* acquirement! He must possess the *literary history of his own times*; a science which Fontenelle observes, is almost distinct from any other. It is the result of an active curiosity, which leads us to take a lively interest in the tastes and pursuits of the age, while it saves the journalist from some ridiculous blunders. We often see the mind of a reviewer half a century remote from the work reviewed. A fine feeling of the various manners of writers, with a style, adapted to fix the attention of the indolent, and to win the untractable; but candour is the brightest gem of criticism! He ought not to throw every thing into the crucible, nor should he suffer the whole to pass as if he trembled to touch it. Lampons, and satires, in time will lose their effect, as well as panegyrics. He must learn to resist the seductions of his own pen; the pretensions of composing a treatise on the *subject*, rather than on the *book* he criticises, proud of insinuating that he gives in a dozen pages, what the author himself has not been able to perform in his volumes. Should he gain confidence by a popular delusion and by unworthy conduct, he may chance to be mortified by the pardon or the chastisement of insulted genius. The most noble criticism is

that, in which the critic is not the antagonist so much as the rival of the author.

RECOVERY OF MANUSCRIPTS.

OUR ancient classics had a very narrow escape from total annihilation: Many, we know, have perished: many we possess are but fragments; and chance, blind arbiter of the works of genius, has given us some, not of the highest value; which, however, have proved very useful, serving as a test to show the pedantry of those who adore antiquity not from true feeling, but from traditional prejudice.

One reason, writes the learned compiler of *L'Esprit des Croisades*, why we have lost a great number of ancient authors, was the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens, which deprived Europe of the use of the *papyrus*. The ignorance of that age could find no substitute; they knew no other expedient but writing on parchment, which became every day more scarce and costly. Ignorance and barbarism unfortunately seized on Roman manuscripts, and industriously defaced pages once imagined to have been immortal! The most elegant compositions of classic Rome were converted into

the psalms of a breviary, or the prayers of a missal. Livy and Tacitus "hide their diminished heads" to preserve the legend of a saint, and immortal truths were converted into clumsy fictions. It happened that the most voluminous authors were the greatest sufferers; these were preferred, because their volume being the greatest, it most profitably repaid their destroying industry, and furnished ampler scope for future transcription. A Livy or a Diodorus was preferred to the smaller works of Cicero or Horace; and it is to this circumstance that Juvenal, Persius, and Martial have come down to us entire, rather probably than to these pious personages preferring their obscenities, as some have accused them. Not long ago at Rome, a part of a book of Livy was found, between the lines of a parchment but half effaced, on which they had substituted a book of the Bible.

That, however, the monks had not in high veneration the *profane* authors, appears by a facetious anecdote. To read the classics was considered as a very idle recreation, and some held them in great horror. To distinguish them from other books, they invented a disgraceful sign; when a monk asked for a pagan author, after making the general sign they used in their manual and silent language when they wanted a book, he added a particular one, which consisted in scratch-

ing under his ear, as a dog, which feels an itching, scratches himself in that place with his paw—because, said they, an unbeliever is compared to a dog! In this manner they expressed an *itching* for those *dogs*, Virgil or Horace!

There have been ages when for the possession of a manuscript, some would transfer an estate; or leave in pawn for its loan hundreds of golden crowns; and when even the sale or loan of a manuscript was considered of such importance as to have been solemnly registered in public acts. Absolute as was Louis XI. he could not obtain the ms. of Rasis, an Arabian writer, to make a copy, from the library of the faculty of Paris, without pledging a hundred golden crowns; and the president of his treasury, charged with this commission, sold part of his plate to make the deposit. For the loan of a volume of Avicenna, a baron offered a pledge of ten marks of silver, which was refused: because it was not considered equal to the risk incurred of losing a volume of Avicenna! These events occurred in 1471. One cannot but smile at an anterior period, when a countess of Anjou bought a favourite book of homilies, for two hundred sheep, some skins of martins, and bushels of wheat and rye.

In these times, manuscripts were important articles of commerce; they were excessively scarce,

and preserved with the utmost care. Usurers themselves considered them as precious objects for pawn: a student of Pavia, who was reduced by his debaucheries, raised a new fortune by leaving in pawn a manuscript of a body of law; and a grammarian, who was ruined by a fire, rebuilt his house with two small volumes of Cicero.

At the restoration of letters, the researches of literary men were chiefly directed to this point; every part of Europe and Greece was ransacked, and the glorious end considered, there was something sublime in this humble industry, which often produced a lost author of antiquity, and gave one more classic to the world. This occupation was carried on with enthusiasm, and a kind of mania possessed many who exhausted their fortunes in distant voyages, and profuse prices. In reading the correspondence of the learned Italians of these times, much of which has descended to us, their adventures of manuscript-hunting are very amusing, and their raptures, their congratulations, or at times their condolence, and even their censures, are all immoderate and excessive. The acquisition of a province would not have given so much satisfaction as the discovery of an author little known, or not known at all. "Oh, great gain! Oh, unexpected felicity!

I intreat you, my Poggio, send me the manuscript as soon as possible, that I may see it before I die!" exclaims Aretino, in a letter overflowing with enthusiasm, on Poggio's discovery of a copy of Quintilian. Some of the half-witted, who joined in this great hunt, were often thrown out, and some paid high for manuscripts not authentic; the knave played on the bungling amateur of manuscripts, whose credulity was greater than his purse. But even among the learned, much ill blood was inflamed; he who had been most successful in acquiring manuscripts was envied by the less fortunate, and the glory of possessing a manuscript of Cicero, seemed to approximate to that of being its author. It is curious to observe that in these vast importations into Italy of manuscripts from Asia, John Aurispa, who brought many hundreds of Greek manuscripts, laments that he had chosen more profane than sacred writers; which circumstance he tells us was owing to the Greeks, who would not so easily part with theological works, but they did not highly value profane writers!

These manuscripts were discovered in the obscurest recesses of monasteries; they were not always imprisoned in libraries, but rotting in oblivion: in dark unfrequented corners with rubbish.

It required no less ingenuity to find out places where to examine, than to understand the value of the acquisition, when obtained. An universal ignorance then prevailed in the knowledge of ancient writers. A scholar of those times gave the first rank among the Latin writers to one Valerius, whether he meant Martial or Maximus is uncertain; he placed Plato and Tully among the poets, and imagined that Ennius and Statius were cotemporaries. A library of six hundred volumes was then considered as an extraordinary collection.

Among those whose lives were devoted to this purpose, Poggio the Florentine stands distinguished; but he complains that his zeal was not assisted by the great. He found under a heap of rubbish in a decayed coffer, in a tower belonging to the monastery of St. Gallo, the work of Quintilian. He is indignant at its forlorn situation; at least, he cries, it should have been preserved in the library of the monks; but I found it *in teterimo quodam et obscuro carcere*—and to his great joy drew it out of its grave! The monks have been complimented as the preservers of literature, but by facts like the present, their real affection may be doubted.

The most valuable copy of Tacitus, of whom so much is wanting, was likewise discovered in a

monastery of Westphalia. It is a curious circumstance in literary history, that we should owe Tacitus to this single copy; for the Roman emperor of that name had copies of the works of his illustrious ancestor placed in all the libraries of the empire, and every year had ten copies transcribed; but the Roman libraries seem to have been all destroyed, and the imperial protection availed nothing against the teeth of time.

The original manuscript of Justinian's code was discovered by the Pisans, accidentally, when they took a city in Calabria; that vast code of laws had been in a manner unknown from the time of that emperor. This curious book was brought to Pisa, and when Pisa was taken by the Florentines, was transferred to Florence, where it is still preserved.

It sometimes happened that manuscripts were discovered in the last agonies of existence. Papius Masson found, in the house of a bookbinder of Lyons, the works of Agobart; the mechanic was on the point of using the manuscripts to line the covers of his books. A page of the second decade of Livy it is said was found by a man of letters in the parchment of his battledore, while he was amusing himself in the country. He hastened to the maker of the battledore—but

arrived too late! The man had finished the last page of Livy—about a week before!

Many works have undoubtedly perished in this manuscript state. By a petition of Dr. Dee to Queen Mary, in the Cotton library, it appears that Cicero's treatise *de Republica* was once extant in this country. Huet observes that Petronius was probably entire in the days of John of Salisbury, who quotes fragments, not now to be found in the remains of the Roman bard. Raimond Soranzo, a lawyer in the papal court, possessed two books of Cicero on *Glory*, which he presented to Petrarch, who lent them to a poor aged man of letters, formerly his preceptor. Urged by extreme want, the old man pawned them, and returning home died suddenly without having revealed where he had left them. They have never been recovered. Petrarch speaks of them with extasy, and tells us that he had studied them perpetually. Two centuries afterwards this treatise on *Glory* by Cicero was mentioned in a catalogue of books bequeathed to a monastery of nuns, but when inquired after was missing; it was supposed that Petrus Alcyonius, physician to that household, purloined it, and after transcribing as much of it as he could into his own writings, had destroyed the original. Alcyonius, in his book *de Exilio*, the critics ob-

served, had many splendid passages which stood isolated in his work, and were quite above his genius. The beggar, or in this case the thief, was detected by mending his rags with patches of purple and gold.

In this age of manuscript, there is reason to believe, that when a man of letters accidentally obtained an unknown work, he did not make the fairest use of it, and cautiously concealed it from his contemporaries. Leonard Aretino, a distinguished scholar at the dawn of modern literature, having found a Greek manuscript of Procopius *de Bello Gothico*, translated it into Latin, and published the work, but concealing the author's name, it passed as his own, till another manuscript of the same work being dug out of its grave, the fraud of Aretino was apparent. Barbosa, a bishop of Ugento, in 1649, has printed among his works a treatise, which, it is said, he obtained by having perceived one of his domestics bringing in a fish rolled in a leaf of written paper, which his curiosity led him to examine. He was sufficiently interested to run out and search the fish market, till he found the manuscript out of which it had been torn. He published it under the title *de Officio Episcopi*. Machiavelli acted more adroitly in a similar case; a manuscript of the Apophthegms of the ancients

by Plutarch having fallen into his hands, he selected those which pleased him the best, and put them into the mouth of his hero Castrucio Castricani.

In more recent times, we might collect many curious anecdotes concerning manuscripts. Sir Robert Cotton one day at his tailor's, discovered that the man was holding in his hand, ready to cut up for measures—an original Magna Charta, with all its appendages of seals and signatures. He bought the singular curiosity for a trifle, and recovered in this manner what had long been given over for lost! This anecdote is told by Colomiés, who long resided, and died in this country. An original Magna Charta is preserved in the Cottonian library; it exhibits marks of dilapidation, but whether from the invisible scythe of time, or the humble scissors of the tailor, I leave to archaiological inquiry.

Cardinal Granvelle carefully preserved all his letters; he left behind him several chests filled with a prodigious quantity, written in different languages, commented, noted, and under-lined by his own hand. These curious manuscripts, after his death, were left in a garret to the mercy of the rain and the rats. Five or six of these chests the steward sold to the grocers. It was then that a discovery was made of this treasure.

Several learned men occupied themselves in collecting as many of these literary relics as they possibly could. What were saved formed eighty thick folios. Among these original letters, are found great numbers written by almost all the crowned heads in Europe, with instructions for ambassadors, and many other state-papers.

Recently a valuable secret history by Sir George Mackenzie, the king's advocate in Scotland, has been rescued from a mass of waste paper sold to a grocer, who had the good sense to discriminate it, and communicated this curious memorial to Dr. M'Crie; the original, in the hand-writing of its author, has been desposited in the advocates' library. There is an hiatus, which contained the history of six years. This work excited inquiry after the rest of the MSS., which were found to be nothing more than the sweepings of an attorney's office.

Montaigne's journal of his travels into Italy have been but recently published. A prebendary of Perigord, travelling through this province to make researches relative to its history, arrived at the ancient *chateau* of Montaigne, in possession of a descendant of this great man. He inquired for the archives, if there had been any. He was shown an old worm-eaten coffer, which had long held papers untouched by the incurious genera-

tions of Montaigne. The prebendary, with philosophical intrepidity, stifled himself in clouds of dust, and at length drew out the original manuscript of the travels of Montaigne. Two thirds of the work are in the hand-writing of Montaigne, and the rest is written by a servant, who served as his secretary, and who always speaks of his master in the third person. But he must have written what Montaigne dictated, as the expressions and the egotisms are all Montaigne's. The bad writing and orthography made it almost unintelligible. It proves also, says the editor, how true is Montaigne's observation, that he was very negligent in the correction of his works.

Our ancestors were great hidiers of manuscripts; Dr. Dee's singular MSS. were found in the secret drawer of a chest, which had passed through many hands undiscovered; and that vast collection of state-papers of Thurloe's, the secretary of Cromwell, which formed about seventy volumes in the original manuscripts, accidentally fell out of the false ceiling of some chambers in Lincoln's-Inn.

A considerable portion of Lady Mary Wortley Montague's letters I discovered in the hands of an attorney. There are now many valuable manuscripts in the family papers of the descendants of celebrated persons; but posthumous publications of this kind are usually made from the most sordid

motives: discernment, and taste, would only be detrimental to the views of bulky publishers.

SKETCHES OF CRITICISM.

It may perhaps be some satisfaction to show the young writer, that the most celebrated ancients have been as rudely subjected to the tyranny of criticism as the moderns. Detraction has ever poured the "waters of bitterness."

It was given out, that Homer had stolen from anterior poets whatever was most remarkable in the Iliad and Odyssey. Naucrates even points out the source in the library at Memphis in a temple of Vulcan, which according to him the blind bard completely pillaged. Undoubtedly there were good poets before Homer; how absurd to conceive that a finished and elaborate poem could be the first! We have indeed accounts of anterior poets, and apparently of epics, before Homer; their names have come down to us. *Ælian* notices *Syagrus*, who composed a poem on the Siege of Troy; and *Suidas* the poem of *Corinnus*, from which it is said Homer greatly borrowed. Why did Plato so severely condemn the great bard, and imitate him?

Sophocles was brought to trial by his children

as a lunatic; and some, who censured the inequalities of this poet, have also condemned the vanity of Pindar; the rough verses of Æschylus; and Euripides, for the conduct of his plots.

Socrates, considered as the wisest and the most moral of men, Cicero treated as an usurer, and the pedant Athenæus as illiterate; the latter points out as a Socratic folly, our philosopher disserting on the nature of justice before his judges, who were so many thieves. The malignant buffoonery of Aristophanes, who, as Jortin says, was a great wit, but a great rascal, treats him much worse; but though some would revive this calumny, such modern witnesses may have their evidence impeached in the awful court of history.

Plato, who has been called, by Clement of Alexandria, the Moses of Athens; the philosopher of the Christians, by Arnobius; and the god of philosophers, by Cicero; Athenæus accuses of envy; Theopompus, of lying; Suidas, of avarice; Aulus Gellius, of robbery; Porphyry, of incontinence; and Aristophanes, of impiety.

Aristotle, whose industry composed more than four hundred volumes, has not been less spared by the critics; Diogenes Laertius, Cicero, and Plutarch, have forgotten nothing that can tend to show his ignorance, his ambition, and his vanity.

It has been said, that Plato was so envious of the celebrity of Democritus, that he proposed burning all his works; but that Amydis and Clinias prevented it, by remonstrating that there were copies of them every where; and Aristotle was agitated by the same passion against all the philosophers his predecessors!

Virgil is destitute of invention, if we are to give credit to Pliny, Carbilius, and Seneca. Caligula has absolutely denied him even mediocrity; Herennus has marked his faults; and Perilius Faustinus has furnished a thick volume with his plagiarisms. Even the author of his apology has confessed, that he has stolen from Homer his greatest beauties; from Apollonius Rhodius, many of his pathetic passages; from Nicander, hints for his Georgics; and this does not terminate the catalogue.

Horace censures the coarse humour of Plautus; and Horace, in his turn, has been blamed for the free use he made of the Greek minor poets.

The majority of the critics regard Pliny's Natural History only as a heap of fables; and seem to have quite as little respect for Quintus Curtius, who indeed seems to have composed little more than an elegant romance.

Pliny cannot bear Diodorus and Vopiscus; and

in one comprehensive criticism, treats all the historians as narrators of fables.

Livy has been reproached for his aversion to the Gauls; Dion, for his hatred of the republic; Velleius Paterculus, for speaking too kindly of the vices of Tiberius; and Herodotus and Plutarch, for their excessive partiality to their own country; while the latter has written an entire treatise on the malignity of Herodotus. Xenophon and Quintus Curtius have been considered rather as novelists than historians; and Tacitus has been censured for his audacity in pretending to discover the political springs and secret causes of events. Dionysius of Halicarnassus has made an elaborate attack on Thucydides for the unskilful choice of his subject and his manner of treating it. Dionysius would have nothing written but what tended to the glory of his country and the pleasure of the reader; as if history were a song! adds Hobbes; while he also shows that there was a personal motive in this attack. The same Dionysius severely criticises the style of Xenophon, who, he says, whenever he attempts to elevate his style shows he is incapable of supporting it. Polybius has been blamed for his frequent introduction of moral reflections, which interrupt the thread of his

narrative; and Sallust has been blamed by Cato for indulging his own private passions, and studiously concealing many of the glorious actions of Cicero. The Jewish historian Josephus is accused of not having designed his history for his own people so much as for the Greeks and Romans, whom he takes the utmost care never to offend. Josephus assumes a Roman name, Flavius; and considering his nation as entirely subjugated, he only varies his story to make them appear venerable and dignified to their conquerors, and for this purpose, alters what he himself calls the *Holy books*. It is well known how widely he differs from the scriptural accounts. Some have said of Cicero, that there is no connexion, and, to adopt their own figures, no *blood* and *nerves*, in what his admirers so warmly extol. Cold in his extemporaneous effusions, artificial in his exordiums, trifling in his strained raillery, and tiresome in his digressions. This is saying a good deal about Cicero!

Quintilian does not spare Seneca; and Demosthenes, called by Cicero the prince of orators, has, according to Hermippus, more of art than of nature. To Demades, his orations appear too much laboured; others have thought him too dry;

and, if we may trust Æschines, his language is by no means pure.

The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius, and the Deipnosophists of Athenæus, while they have been extolled by one party, have been degraded by another. They have been considered as botchers of rags and remnants; their diligence has not been accompanied by judgment; and their taste inclined more to the frivolous than to the useful. Compilers, indeed, are liable to a hard fate, for little distinction is made in their ranks; a disagreeable situation, in which honest Burton seems to have been placed; for he says of his work, that some will cry out, "This is a thinge of meere industrie; a *collection* without wit or invention; a very toy! So men are valued! their labours vilified by fellowes of no worth themselves, as things of nought; who could not have done as much. Some understande too little, and some too much."

Should we proceed with this list to our own country, and to our own times, it might be curiously augmented, and show the world what men the critics are! but, perhaps, enough has been said to sooth irritated genius, and to shame fastidious criticism. "I would beg the critics to remember," the Earl of Roscommon writes, in his preface to Horace's Art of Poetry, "that Horace owed his

favour and his fortune to the character given of him by Virgil and Varius; that Fundanius and Pollio are still valued by what Horace says of them; and that in their golden age, there was a good understanding among the ingenious, and those who were the most esteemed were the best natured."

THE PERSECUTED LEARNED.

THOSE who have laboured most zealously to instruct mankind, have been those who have suffered most from ignorance; and the discoverers of new arts and sciences have hardly ever lived to see them accepted by the world. With a noble perception of his own genius, Lord Bacon, in his prophetic will, thus expresses himself. "For my name and memory, I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages." Before the times of Galileo and Harvey the world believed in the stagnation of the blood, and the diurnal immovability of the earth; and for denying these the one was persecuted and the other ridiculed.

The intelligence and the virtue of Socrates were punished with death. Anaxagoras, when he attempted to propagate a just notion of the Supreme

Being, was dragged to prison. Aristotle, after a long series of persecution, swallowed poison. Heraclitus, tormented by his countrymen, broke off all intercourse with men. The great geometricians and chymists, as Gerbert, Roger Bacon, and others, were abhorred as magicians. Pope Gerbert, as Bishop Otho gravely relates, obtained the pontificate by having given himself up entirely to the devil: others suspected him too of holding an intercourse with demons; but this was indeed a devilish age.

Virgilius, Bishop of Saltzburg, having asserted that there existed antipodes, the archbishop of Mentz declared him a heretic, and consigned him to the flames; and the Abbot Trithemius, who was fond of improving steganography, or the art of secret writing, having published several curious works on this subject, they were condemned, as works full of diabolical mysteries; and Frederick II. Elector Palatine, ordered Trithemius's original work, which was in his library, to be publicly burnt.

Galileo was condemned at Rome publicly to disavow sentiments, the truth of which must have been to him abundantly manifest. "Are these then my judges?" he exclaimed in retiring from the inquisitors, whose ignorance astonished him.

He was imprisoned, and visited by Milton, who tells us he was then *poor* and *old*. The confessor of his widow, taking advantage of her piety, perused the mss. of this great philosopher, and destroyed such as in his *judgment* were not fit to be known to the world!

Gabriel Naudé, in his apology for those great men who have been accused of magic, has recorded a melancholy number of the most eminent scholars, who have found, that to have been successful in their studies was a success which harassed them with continued persecution, a prison, or a grave!

Cornelius Agrippa was compelled to fly his country, and the enjoyment of a large income, merely for having displayed a few philosophical experiments, which now every school-boy can perform; but more particularly having attacked the then prevailing opinion, that St. Anne had three husbands, he was so violently persecuted, that he was obliged to fly from place to place. The people beheld him as an object of horror; and not unfrequently, when he walked, he found the streets empty at his approach. He died in an hospital.

In these times, it was a common opinion to suspect every great man of an intercourse with

some familiar spirit. The favourite black dog of Agrippa was supposed to be a demon. When Urban Grandier, another victim to the age, was led to the stake, a large fly settled on his head: a monk, who had heard that Beelzebub signifies in Hebrew, the God of Flies, reported that he saw this spirit come to take possession of him. Mr. De Langear, a French minister, who employed many spies, was frequently accused of diabolical communication. Sixtus the Fifth, Marechal Faber, Roger Bacon, Cæsar Borgia, his son Alexander VI. and others, like Socrates, had their diabolical attendant.

Cardan was believed to be a magician. The fact is, that he was for his time a very able naturalist; and he who happened to know something of the arcana of nature was immediately suspected of magic. Even the learned themselves, who had not applied to natural philosophy, seem to have acted with the same feelings as the most ignorant; for when Albert, usually called the Great, an epithet he owed to his name *De Groot*, constructed a curious piece of mechanism, which sent forth distinct vocal sounds, Thomas Aquinas was so much terrified at it, that he struck it with his staff, and to the mortification of Albert annihilated the curious labour of thirty years!

Petrarch was less desirous of the laurel for the honour, than for the hope of being sheltered by it from the thunder of the priests, by whom both he and his brother poets were continually threatened. They could not imagine a poet, without supposing him to hold an intercourse with some demon. This was, as Abbé Resnel observes, having a most exalted idea of poetry, though a very bad one of poets. An anti-poetic Dominican was notorious for persecuting all verse-makers; the power of which he attributed to the effects of *heresy* and *magic*. The lights of philosophy have dispersed all these accusations of magic, and have shown a dreadful chain of perjuries and conspiracies.

Descartes was horribly persecuted in Holland, when he first published his opinions. Voetius, a bigot of great influence at Utrecht, accused him of atheism, and had even projected in his mind to have this philosopher burnt at Utrecht in an extraordinary fire, which, kindled on an eminence, might be observed by the seven provinces. Mr. Hallam has observed, that "the ordeal of fire was the great purifier of books and men." This persecution of science and genius lasted till the close of the seventeenth century.

"If the metaphysician stood a chance of being burnt as a heretic, the natural philosopher was

not in less jeopardy as a magician," is an observation of the same writer, which sums up the whole.

POVERTY OF THE LEARNED.

FORTUNE has rarely condescended to be the companion of genius: others find a hundred by-roads to her palace; there is but one open, and that a very indifferent one, for men of letters. Were we to erect an asylum for venerable genius, as we do for the brave and the helpless part of our citizens, it might be inscribed, a Hospital for Incurables! When even Fame will not protect the man of genius from Famine, Charity ought. Nor should such an act be considered as a debt incurred by the helpless member, but a just tribute we pay in his person to Genius itself. Even in these enlightened times such have lived in obscurity while their reputation was widely spread; and have perished in poverty, while their works were enriching the booksellers.

Of the heroes of modern literature the accounts are as copious as they are melancholy.

Xylander sold his notes on Dion Cassius for a dinner. He tells us, that at the age of eighteen

he studied to acquire glory, but at twenty-five he studied to get bread.

Cervantes, the immortal genius of Spain, is supposed to have wanted bread; Camoens, the solitary pride of Portugal, deprived of the necessaries of life, perished in a hospital at Lisbon. This fact has been accidentally preserved in an entry in a copy of the first edition of the *Lusiad*, in the possession of Lord Holland. In a note written by a friar, who must have been a witness of the dying scene of the poet, and probably received the volume which now preserves the sad memorial, and which recalled it to his mind, from the hands of the unhappy poet. "What a lamentable thing to see so great a genius so ill rewarded! I saw him die in an hospital in Lisbon, without having a sheet or shroud, *una sawana*, to cover him, after having triumphed in the East Indies, and sailed 5500 leagues! What good advice for those who weary themselves night and day in study without profit." Camoens, when some fidalgo complained that he had not performed his promise in writing some verses for him, replied, "When I wrote verses I was young, had sufficient food, was a lover, and beloved by many friends and by the ladies; then I felt poetical ardour; now I have no spirits, no peace of mind. See there my Javanese who asks

me for two pieces to purchase firing, and I have them not to give him." The Portuguese, after his death, bestowed on the man of genius they had starved the appellation of Great! Vondel, the Dutch Shakspeare, after composing a number of popular tragedies, lived in great proverty, and died at ninety years of age; then he had his coffin carried by fourteen poets, who without his genius probably partook of his wretchedness.

The great Tasso was reduced to such a dilemma, that he was obliged to borrow a crown from a friend to subsist through the week. He alludes to his distress in a pretty sonnet, which he addresses to his cat, entreating her to assist him, during the night, with the lustre of her eyes—
“*Non avendo candele per iscrivere i suoi versi!*”
having no candle to see to write his verses!

When the liberality of Alphonso enabled Ariosto to build a small house, it seems that it was but ill furnished. When told that such a building was not fit for one who had raised so many fine palaces in his writings, he answered, that the structure of *words* and that of *stones* was not the same thing.
“*Che porvi le pietre, e porvi le parole, non è il medesimo!*” At Ferrara this house is still shown. “*Parva sed apta*” he calls it, but exults that it was paid with his own money. This was in a moment

of good-humour, which he did not always enjoy; for in his Satires he bitterly complains of the bondage of dependence and poverty. Little thought the poet the *commune* would order this small house to be purchased with their own funds, that it might be dedicated to his immortal memory!

The illustrious Cardinal Bentivoglio, the ornament of Italy and of literature, languished, in his old age, in the most distressful poverty; and having sold his palace to satisfy his creditors, left nothing behind him but his reputation. The learned Pomponius Lætus lived in such a state of poverty, that his friend Platina who wrote the lives of the popes, and also a book of cookery, introduces him into the cookery book by a facetious observation, that if Pomponius Lætus should be robbed of a couple of eggs, he would not have wherewithal to purchase two other eggs. The history of Aldrovandus is noble and pathetic; having expended a large fortune in forming his collections of natural history, and employing the first artists in Europe, he was suffered to die in the hospital of that city, to whose fame he had eminently contributed.

Du Ryer, a celebrated French poet, was constrained to labour with rapidity, and to live in the cottage of an obscure village. His bookseller

bought his heroic verses for one hundred sols the hundred lines, and the smaller ones for fifty sols. What an interesting picture has a contemporary given of his reception by a poor and ingenious author in a visit he paid to Du Ryer! "On a fine summer day we went to him, at some distance from town. He received us with joy, talked to us of his numerous projects, and showed us several of his works. But what more interested us was, that though dreading to show us his poverty, he contrived to give us some refreshments. We seated ourselves under a wide oak, the tablecloth was spread on the grass, his wife brought us some milk, with fresh water and brown bread, and he picked a basket of cherries. He welcomed us with gaiety, but we could not take leave of this amiable man, now grown old, without tears, to see him so ill treated by fortune, and to have nothing left but literary honour!"

Vaugelas, the most polished writer of the French language, who devoted thirty years to his translation of Quintus Curtius (a circumstance which modern translators can have no conception of), died possessed of nothing valuable but his precious manuscripts. This ingenious scholar left his corpse to the surgeons, for the benefit of his creditors!

Louis the Fourteenth honoured Racine and

Boileau with a private monthly audience. One day, the king asked what there was new in the literary world? Racine answered, that he had seen a melancholy spectacle in the house of Corneille, whom he found dying, deprived even of a little broth! The king preserved a profound silence: and sent the dying poet a sum of money.

Dryden, for less than three hundred pounds, sold Tonson ten thousand verses, as may be seen by the agreement which has been published.

Purchas, who, in the reign of our First James, had spent his life in travels and study to form his *Relation of the World*, when he gave it to the public, for the reward of his labours was thrown into prison, at the suit of his printer. Yet this was the book which, he informs us in his dedication to Charles the First, his father read every night with great profit and satisfaction.

The Marquis of Worcester, in a petition to parliament, in the reign of Charles II. offered to publish the hundred processes and machines, enumerated in his very curious "Centenary of Inventions," on condition that money should be granted to extricate him from the *difficulties in which he had involved himself, by the prosecution of useful discoveries*. The petition does not appear to have been attended to! Many of these

admirable inventions were lost. The *steam engine* and the *telegraph* may be traced among them.

It appears by the Harleian mss. 7524, that Rushworth, the author of "Historical Collections," passed the last years of his life in jail, where indeed he died. After the Restoration, when he presented to the king several of the privy council's books, which he had preserved from ruin, he received for his only reward, the *thanks of his majesty*.

Rymer, the collector of the *Fœdera*, must have been sadly reduced, by the following letter, I found addressed by Peter le Neve, Norroy, to the Earl of Oxford.

"I am desired by Mr. Rymer, historiographer, to lay before your lordship the circumstances of his affairs. He was forced some years back to part with all his choice printed books to subsist himself; and now, he says, he must be forced, for subsistence, to sell all his mss. collections to the best bidder, without your lordship will be pleased to buy them for the queen's library. They are fifty volumes, in folio, of public affairs, which he hath collected, but not printed. The price he asks is five hundred pounds."

Simon Ockley, a learned student in Oriental literature, addresses a letter to the same earl, in

which he paints his distresses in glowing colours. After having devoted his life to Asiatic researches, then very uncommon, he had the mortification of dating his preface to his great work from Cambridge Castle, where he was confined for debt; and, with an air of triumph, feels a martyr's enthusiasm in the cause for which he perishes.

He published his first volume of the History of the Saracens, in 1708; and ardently pursuing his oriental studies, published his second volume ten years afterwards without any patronage. Alluding to the encouragement necessary to bestow on youth, to remove the obstacles to such studies, he observes, that "young men will hardly come in on the prospect of finding leisure, in a prison, to transcribe those papers for the press, which they have collected with indefatigable labour, and oftentimes at the expense of their rest, and all the other conveniences of life, for the service of the public. No, though I were to assure them from my own experience, that *I have enjoyed more true liberty, more happy leisure, and more solid repose, in six months HERE, than in thrice the same number of years before. Evil is the condition of that historian who undertakes to write the lives of others, before he knows how to live himself.*—Not that I speak thus as if I thought I had any just cause to

be angry with the world—I did always in my judgment give the possession of *wisdom* the preference to that of *riches*!”

Spenser, the child of Fancy, languished out his life in misery. “Lord Burleigh,” says Granger, “who it is said prevented the queen giving him a hundred pounds, seems to have thought the lowest clerk in his office a more deserving person.” Mr. Malone attempts to show that Spenser had a small pension; but the poet’s querulous verses must not be forgotten—

“ Full little knowest thou, that hast not try’d
“ What Hell it is, in suing long to hide.”

To lose good days—to waste long nights—and as he feelingly exclaims,

“ To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
“ To speed, to give, to want, to be undone!”

How affecting is the death of Sydenham, who had devoted his life to a laborious version of Plato. He died in a spunging-house, and it was his death which appears to have given rise to the Literary Fund “for the relief of distressed authors.”

Who shall pursue important labours when they read these anecdotes? Dr. Edmund Castell spent

a great part of his life in compiling his *Lexicon Heptaglotton*, on which he bestowed incredible pains, and expended on it no less than £12,000, and broke his constitution, and exhausted his fortune. At length it was printed, but the copies remained *unsold* on his hands. He exhibits a curious picture of literary labour in his preface. "As for myself, I have been unceasingly occupied for such a number of years in this mass," *Molendino* he calls them, "that that day seemed, as it were, a holiday in which I have not laboured so much as sixteen or eighteen hours in these enlarging lexicons and Polygot Bibles."

Le Sage resided in a little cottage while he supplied the world with their most agreeable novels, and appears to have derived the sources of his existence in his old age from the filial exertions of an excellent son, who was an actor of some genius. I wish, however, that every man of letters could apply to himself the epitaph of this delightful writer :

Sous ce tombeau git LE SAGE abattu
 Par le ciseau de la Parque importune ;
 S'il ne fut pas ami de la fortune,
 Il fut toujours ami de la vertu.

Many years after this article had been written, I published "Calamities of Authors," confining

myself to those of our own country; the catalogue is very incomplete, but far too numerous.

IMPRISONMENT OF THE LEARNED.

IMPRISONMENT has not always disturbed the man of letters in the progress of his studies, but often unquestionably has greatly promoted them.

In prison Boethius composed his work on the Consolations of Philosophy; and Grotius wrote his Commentary on Saint Matthew, with other works: the detail of his allotment of time to different studies, during his confinement, is very instructive.

Buchanan, in the dungeon of a monastery in Portugal, composed his excellent Paraphrases of the Psalms of David.

Cervantes composed the most agreeable book in the Spanish language during his captivity in Barbary.

Fleta, a well-known law production, was written by a person confined in the Fleet for debt: the name of the *place*, though not that of the *author*, has thus been preserved; and another work, "Fleta Minor, or the Laws of Art and Nature in knowing the Bodies of Metals, &c. by Sir John

Pettus, 1683;" who gave it this title from the circumstance of his having translated it from the German during his confinement in this prison.

Louis the Twelfth, when Duke of Orleans, was long imprisoned in the Tower of Bourges, applying himself to his studies, which he had hitherto neglected: he became, in consequence, an enlightened monarch.

Margaret, queen of Henry the Fourth, king of France, confined in the Louvre, pursued very warmly the studies of elegant literature, and composed a very skilful apology for the irregularities of her conduct.

Charles the First, during his cruel confinement at Holmsby, wrote the Eikon Basilike, *The Royal Image*, addressed to his son; this work has, however, been attributed by his enemies to Dr. Gauden, who was incapable of writing the book, though not of disowning it.

Queen Elizabeth, while confined by her sister Mary, wrote several poems, which we do not find she ever could equal after her enlargement: and it is said Mary Queen of Scots, during her long imprisonment by Elizabeth, produced many pleasing poetic compositions.

Sir Walter Raleigh's unfinished History of the World, which leaves us to regret that later ages

had not been celebrated by his sublime eloquence, was the fruits of eleven years of imprisonment. It was written for the use of Prince Henry, as he and Dallington, who also wrote "Aphorisms" for the same prince, have told us; the prince looked over the manuscript. Of Rawleigh it is observed, to employ the language of Hume, "They were struck with the extensive genius of the man, who, being educated amidst naval and military enterprises, had surpassed, in the pursuits of literature, even those of the most recluse and sedentary lives; and they admired his unbroken magnanimity which at his age, and under his circumstances, could engage him to undertake and execute so great a work as his History of the World." He was, however, assisted in this great work by the learning of several eminent persons; a circumstance which has not been noticed.

The plan of the *Henriade* was sketched, and the greater part composed, by Voltaire, during his imprisonment in the Bastile; and "the Pilgrim's Progress" of Bunyan was produced in a similar situation.

Howel, the author of "Familiar Letters," wrote the chief part of them, and almost all his other works, during his long confinement in the Fleet-prison; he employed his fertile pen for sub-

sistence; and in all his books we find much entertainment.

Lydiat, while confined in the King's Bench for debt, wrote his Annotations on the Parian Chronicle, which were first published by Prideaux. This was that learned scholar whom Johnson alludes to: an allusion not known to Boswell and others.

The learned Selden, committed to prison for his attacks on the divine right of tithes and the king's prerogative, prepared during his confinement his history of Eadmer, enriched by his notes.

Cardinal Polignac formed the design of refuting the arguments of the sceptics which Bayle had been renewing in his dictionary; but his public occupations hindered him. Two exiles at length fortunately gave him the leisure; and the *Anti-Lucretius* is the fruit of the court disgraces of its author.

Freret, when imprisoned in the Bastile, was permitted only to have Bayle for his companion. His dictionary was always before him, and his principles were got by heart. To this circumstance we owe his works, animated by all the powers of scepticism.

Sir William Davenant finished his poem of *Gondibert* during his confinement by the rebels in Carisbroke Castle.

De Foe, when imprisoned in Newgate for a political pamphlet, began his Review; a periodical paper, which was extended to nine thick volumes in quarto, and it has been supposed served as the model of the celebrated papers of Steele. There he also composed his *Jure Divino*.

Wicquefort's curious work on "Ambassadors" is dated from his prison, where he had been confined for state affairs. He softened the rigour of those heavy hours by several historical works.

One of the most interesting facts of this kind is the fate of an Italian scholar, of the name of Maggi. Early addicted to the study of the sciences, and particularly to the mathematics and military architecture, he defended Famagusta, besieged by the Turks, by inventing machines which destroyed their works. When that city was taken in 1571, they pillaged his library and carried him away in chains. Now a slave, after his daily labours he amused a great part of his nights by literary compositions; *De Tinnabulis*, on Bells, a treatise still read by the curious, was actually composed by him when a slave in Turkey, without any other resource than the erudition of his own memory, and the genius of which adversity could not deprive him.

AMUSEMENTS OF THE LEARNED.

AMONG the jesuits it was a standing rule of the order, that after an application to study for two hours, the mind of the student should be unbent by some relaxation, however trifling. When Petavius was employed in his *Dogmata Theologica*, a work of the most profound and extensive erudition, the great recreation of the learned father was at the end of every second hour, to twirl his chair for five minutes. After protracted studies Spinosa would mix with the family-party where he lodged, and join in the most trivial conversations, or unbend his mind by setting spiders to fight each other; he observed their combats with so much interest, that he was often seized with immoderate fits of laughter. A continuity of labour deadens the soul, observes Seneca, in closing his treatise on "The Tranquillity of the Soul," and the mind must unbend itself by certain amusements. Socrates did not blush to play with children; Cato, over his bottle, found an alleviation from the fatigues of government; a circumstance, he says in his manner, which rather gives honour to this defect, than the defect dishonours Cato. Some men of

letters portioned out their day between repose and labour. Asinius Pollio would not suffer any business to occupy him beyond a stated hour; after that time he would not allow any letter to be opened during his hours of relaxation, that they might not be interrupted by unforeseen labours. In the senate, after the tenth hour, it was not allowed to make any new motion.

Tycho Brahe diverted himself with polishing glasses for all kinds of spectacles, and making mathematical instruments; an amusement too closely connected with his studies to be deemed as one.

D'Andilly, the translator of Josephus, after seven or eight hours of study every day, amused himself in cultivating trees; Barclay, the author of the *Argenis*, in his leisure hours was a florist; Balzac amused himself with a collection of crayon portraits; Peiresc found his amusement amongst his medals and antiquarian curiosities; the Abbé de Maroles with his prints; and Politian in singing airs to his lute. Descartes passed his afternoons in the conversation of a few friends, and in cultivating a little garden; in the morning, occupied by the system of the world, he relaxed his profound speculations by rearing delicate flowers.

Conrad ab Uffenbach, a learned German, re-created his mind, after severe studies, with a collection of prints of eminent persons, methodically arranged; he retained this ardour of the *Grangerite* to his last days.

Rohault wandered from shop to shop to observe the mechanics labour; Count Caylus passed his mornings in the *studios* of artists, and his evenings in writing his numerous works on art. This was the true life of an amateur.

Granville Sharp, amidst the severity of his studies, found a social relaxation in the amusement of a barge on the Thames, which was well known to the circle of his friends; there, was festive hospitality with musical delight. It was resorted to by men of the most eminent talents and rank. His little voyages to Putney, to Kew, and to Richmond, and the literary intercourse they produced, were singularly happy ones. "The history of his amusements cannot be told without adding to the dignity of his character," observes Mr. Prince Hoare, in the very curious life of this great philanthropist.

Some have found amusement in composing treatises on odd subjects. Seneca wrote a burlesque narrative of Claudian's death. Pierius Valerianus has written an eulogium on beards; and we

have had a learned one recently, with due gravity and pleasantry, entitled "Eloge de Perruques."

Holstein has written an eulogium on the North Wind; Heinsius, on "the Ass;" Menage, "the Transmigration of the Parasitical Pedant to a Parrot;" and also the "Petition of the Dictionaries."

Erasmus composed, to amuse himself when travelling in a post-chaise, his panegyric on *Moria*, or Folly; which, authorized by the pun, he dedicated to Sir Thomas More.

Sallengre, who would amuse himself like Erasmus, wrote, in imitation of his work, a panegyric on *Ebriety*. He says, that he is willing to be thought as drunken a man as Erasmus was a foolish one. Synesius composed a Greek panegyric on *Baldness*; these burlesques were brought into great vogue by Erasmus's *Moriæ Encomium*.

It seems, Johnson observes in his life of Sir Thomas Browne, to have been in all ages the pride of art to show how it could exalt the low and amplify the little. To this ambition perhaps we owe the frogs of Homer; the gnat and the bees of Virgil; the butterfly of Spenser; the shadow of Wowerus; and the quincunx of Browne.

Cardinal de Richelieu, amongst all his great occupations, found a recreation in violent exercises; and he was once discovered jumping with

his servant, to try who could reach the highest side of a wall. De Grammont, observing the cardinal to be jealous of his powers, offered to jump with him; and, in the true spirit of a courtier, having made some efforts which nearly reached the cardinal's, confessed the cardinal surpassed him. This was jumping like a politician; and by this means is said to have ingratiated himself with the minister.

The great Samuel Clarke was fond of robust exercise; and this profound logician has been found leaping over tables and chairs: once perceiving a pedantic fellow, he said, "Now we must desist, for a fool is coming in."

What ridiculous amusements passed between Dean Swift and his friends, in Ireland, some of his prodigal editors have revealed to the public. He seems to have outlived the relish of fame, when he could level his mind to such perpetual trifles.

An eminent French lawyer, confined by his business to a Parisian life, amused himself with collecting from the classics all the passages which relate to a country life. The collection was published after his death.

Contemplative men seem to be fond of amusements which accord with their habits. The thoughtful game of chess, and the tranquil delight

of angling, have been favourite recreations with the studious. Paley had himself painted with a rod and line in his hand; a strange characteristic for the author of "Natural Theology." Sir Henry Wotton called angling "idle time not idly spent:" we may suppose that his meditations and his amusements were carried on at the same moment.

The amusements of the great Daguesseau, chancellor of France, consisted in an interchange of studies: his relaxations were all the varieties of literature. "Le changement de l'étude est mon seul delassement," said this great man; and Thomas observes, "that in the age of the passions, his only passion was study."

Seneca has observed on amusements proper for literary men, in regard to robust exercises, that these are a folly, an indecency to see a man of letters exult in the strength of his arm, or the breadth of his back! Such amusements diminish the activity of the mind. Too much fatigue exhausts the animal spirits, as too much food blunts the finer faculties; but elsewhere he allows his philosopher an occasional slight inebriation; an amusement which was very prevalent among our poets formerly, when they exclaimed,

Fetch me Ben Jonson's scull, and fill't with sack,
Rich as the same he drank, when the whole pack

Of jolly sisters pledged, and did agree
It was no sin to be as drunk as he!

Seneca concludes admirably, "whatever be the amusements you choose, return not slowly from those of the body to the mind; exercise the latter night and day. The mind is nourished at a cheap rate; neither cold nor heat, nor age itself can interrupt this exercise; give therefore all your cares to a possession which ameliorates even in its old age!"

An ingenious writer has observed, that "a garden just accommodates itself to the perambulations of a scholar, who would perhaps rather wish his walks abridged than extended." There is a good characteristic account of the mode in which the literati take exercise in Pope's letters. "I, like a poor squirrel, am continually in motion indeed, but it is about a cage of three foot; my little excursions are like those of a shopkeeper, who walks every day a mile or two before his own door, but minds his business all the while." A turn or two in a garden will often very happily close a fine period, mature an unripened thought, and raise up fresh associations, when the mind like the body becomes rigid by preserving the same posture. Buffon often quitted the apartment he studied in, which was placed in the midst of his garden, for a walk in it; Evelyn loved "books and a garden."

PORTRAITS OF AUTHORS.

WITH the ancients, it was undoubtedly a custom to place the portraits of authors before their works. Martial's 186th epigram of his fourteenth book is a mere play on words, concerning a little volume containing the works of Virgil, and which had his portrait prefixed to it. The volume and the characters must have been very diminutive.

“ *Quam brevis immensum cepit membrana Maronem!*
 “ *Ipsius Vultus prima tabella gerit.*”

Martial is not the only writer who takes notice of the ancients prefixing portraits to the works of authors. Seneca, in his ninth chapter on the Tranquillity of the Soul, complains of many of the luxurious great, who, like so many of our own collectors, possessed libraries as they did their estates and equipages. “ It is melancholy to observe how the portraits of men of genius, and the works of their divine intelligence, are used only as the luxury and the ornaments of walls.”

Pliny has nearly the same observation, *Lib. xxxv. cap. 2.* He remarks, that the custom was rather modern in his time; and attributes to Asinius Pollio the honour of having introduced it into

Rome. "In consecrating a library with the portraits of our illustrious authors, he has formed, if I may so express myself, a republic of the intellectual powers of men." To the richness of book-treasures, Asinius Pollio had associated a new source of pleasure, in placing the statues of their authors amidst them, inspiring the minds of the spectators even by their eyes.

A taste for collecting portraits, or busts, was warmly pursued in the happier periods of Rome; for the celebrated Atticus, in a work he published of illustrious Romans, made it more delightful, by ornamenting it with the portraits of those great men; and the learned Varro, in his biography of Seven Hundred celebrated Men, by giving the world their true features and their physiognomy, *in some manner, aliquo modo imaginibus* is Pliny's expression, showed that even their persons should not entirely be annihilated; they indeed, adds Pliny, form a spectacle which the gods themselves might contemplate; for if the gods sent those heroes to the earth, it is Varro who secured their immortality, and has so multiplied and distributed them in all places, that we may carry them about us, place them wherever we choose, and fix our eyes on them with perpetual admiration. A spectacle that every day becomes more

varied and interesting, as new heroes appear, and as works of this kind are spread abroad.

But as printing was unknown to the ancients (though *stamping an impression* was daily practised, and, in fact, they possessed the art of printing without being aware of it) how were these portraits of Varro so easily propagated? If copied with a pen, their correctness was in some danger, and their diffusion must have been very confined and slow; perhaps they were outlines. This passage of Pliny excites curiosity, which it may be difficult to satisfy.

Amongst the various advantages which attend a collection of the portraits of illustrious characters, Oldys observes, that they not only serve as matters of entertainment and curiosity, and preserve the different modes or habits of the fashions of the time, but become of infinite importance, by settling our floating ideas upon the true features of famous persons; they fix the chronological particulars of their birth, age, death, sometimes with short characters of them, besides the names of painter, designer, and engraver. It is thus a single print, by the hand of a skilful artist, may become a varied banquet. To this Granger adds, that in a collection of engraved portraits, the contents of many galleries are reduced into the narrow com-

pass of a few volumes ; and the portraits of eminent persons, who distinguished themselves for a long succession of ages, may be turned over in a few hours.

“ Another advantage,” Granger continues, “ attending such an assemblage is, that the methodical arrangement has a surprising effect upon the memory. We see the celebrated contemporaries of every age almost at one view ; and the mind is insensibly led to the history of that period. I may add to these, an important circumstance, which is, the power that such a collection will have in *awakening genius*. A skilful preceptor will presently perceive the true bent of the temper of his pupil, by his being struck with a Blake or a Boyle, a Hyde or a Milton.”

A circumstance in the life of Cicero confirms this observation. Atticus had a gallery adorned with the images or portraits of the great men of Rome, under each of which, Cornelius Nepos says, he had severally described their principal acts and honours in a few concise verses of his own composition. It was by the contemplation of two of these portraits (Old Brutus and a venerable relative in one picture) that Cicero seems to have incited Brutus by the example of these his great ancestors, to dissolve the tyranny

of Cæsar. Fairfax made a collection of engraved portraits of warriors. A story much in favour of portrait-collectors is that of the Athenian courtesan, who, in the midst of a riotous banquet with her lovers, accidentally casting her eye on the *portrait* of a philosopher that hung opposite to her seat, the happy character of temperance and virtue struck her with so lively an image of her own unworthiness, that she instantly quitted the room, and retired for ever from the scene of debauchery. The orientalist has felt the same charm in their pictured memorials; for "the imperial Akber," says Mr. Forbes, in his *Oriental Memoirs*, "employed artists to make portraits of all the principal omrahs and officers in his court; they were bound together in a thick volume, wherein, as the *Ayeen Akbery* or the *Institutes of Akber* expresses it, "The PAST are kept in lively remembrance; and the PRESENT are insured immortality."

Leonard Aretin, when young and in prison, found a portrait of Petrarch, on which his eyes were perpetually fixed; and this sort of contemplation inflamed the desire of imitating this great man: Buffon hung the portrait of Newton before his writing-table.

On this subject, how sublimely Tacitus expresses himself at the close of his admired bio-

graphy of Agricola. "I do not mean to censure the custom of preserving in brass or marble, the shape and stature of eminent men; but busts and statues, like their originals, are frail and perishable. The soul is formed of finer elements, its inward form is not to be expressed by the hand of an artist with unconscious matter; our manners and our morals may in some degree trace the resemblance. All of Agricola that gained our love and raised our admiration still subsists, and ever will subsist, preserved in the minds of men, the register of ages and the records of fame."

What is more agreeable to the curiosity of the mind and the eye than the portraits of great characters? An old philosopher whom Marville invited to see a collection of landscapes by a celebrated artist, replied, "landscapes I prefer seeing in the country itself, but I am fond of contemplating the pictures of illustrious men." This opinion has some truth; Lord Orford preferred an interesting portrait, to either landscape or historical painting. "A landscape," said he, "however excellent in its distributions of wood, and water, and buildings, leaves not one trace in the memory; historical painting is perpetually false in a variety of ways, in the costume, the grouping, the portraits, and is nothing more than fabulous painting; but a real

portrait is truth itself; and calls up so many collateral ideas as to fill an intelligent mind more than any other species.

Marville justly reprehends the fastidious feelings of those ingenious men who have resisted the solicitations of the artist, to sit for their portraits. In them it is sometimes as much pride as it is vanity in those who are less difficult in this respect. Of Gray, Shenstone, Fielding, and Akenside, we have no heads for which they sat; a circumstance regretted by their admirers, and by physiognomists.

To an arranged collection of PORTRAITS, we owe several interesting works. Granger's justly esteemed volumes originated in such a collection. Perrault's *Eloges* of "the illustrious men of the seventeenth century," were drawn up to accompany the engraved portraits of the most celebrated characters of the age, which a fervent lover of the fine arts and literature had had engraved as an elegant tribute to the fame of those great men. They are confined to his nation, as Granger's to ours. The parent of this race of books may perhaps be the *Eulogiums* of Paulus Jovius, which originated in a beautiful CABINET, whose situation he has described with all its amenity.

Paulus Jovius had a country house, in an insular

situation of a most romantic aspect. It was built on the ruins of the villa of Pliny; and in his time the foundations were still to be traced. When the surrounding lake was calm, in its lucid bosom were still viewed sculptured marbles, the trunks of columns, and the fragments of those pyramids which had once adorned the residence of the friend of Trajan. Jovius was an enthusiast of literary leisure; an historian, with the imagination of a poet; a bishop nourished on the sweet fictions of pagan mythology. His pen colours like a pencil. He paints rapturously, his gardens bathed by the waters of the lake, the shade and freshness of his woods, his green hills, his sparkling fountains, the deep silence, and the calm of solitude. He describes a statue raised in his gardens to NATURE; in his hall an Apollo presided with his lyre, and the Muses with their attributes; his library was guarded by Mercury, and an apartment devoted to the three Graces was embellished by Doric columns, and paintings of the most pleasing kind. Such was the interior! Without, the pure and transparent lake spread its broad mirror, rolled its voluminous windings, while the banks were richly covered with olives and laurels, and in the distance, towns, promontories, hills rising in an amphitheatre

blushing with vines, and the elevations of the Alps covered with woods and pasturage and sprinkled with herds and flocks.

In the centre of this enchanting habitation stood the CABINET, where Paulus Jovius had collected, at great cost, the PORTRAITS of celebrated men of the fourteenth and two succeeding centuries. The daily view of them animated his mind to compose their eulogiums. These are still curious, both for the facts they preserve, and the happy conciseness with which Jovius delineates a character. He had collected these portraits as others form a collection of natural history; and he pursued in their characters what others do in their experiments.

One caution in collecting portraits must not be forgotten: it respects their authenticity. We have too many supposititious heads, and ideal personages. Conrad ab Uffenbach, who seems to have been the first collector who projected a methodical arrangement, condemned those portraits which were not genuine, as fit only for the amusements of children. The painter does not always give a correct likeness, or the engraver misses it in his copy. The faithful Vertue refused to engrave for Houbraken's set, because they did not authenticate their originals; and some of these are spurious. Busts are not so liable to these accidents. It is to be

regretted that men of genius have not been careful to transmit their own portraits to their admirers ; it forms a part of their character : a false delicacy has interfered. Erasmus did not like to have his own diminutive person sent down to posterity, but Holbein was always affectionately painting his friend ; Bayle and others have refused ; but Montesquieu once sat to Dacier, after repeated denials, won over by the ingenious argument of the artist ; “ Do you not think,” said Dacier, “ that there is as much pride in refusing my offer as in accepting it ?”

DESTRUCTION OF BOOKS.

THE literary treasures of antiquity have suffered from the malice of men, as well as that of time. It is remarkable that conquerors, in the moment of victory, or in the unsparing devastation of their rage, have not been satisfied with destroying *men*, but have even carried their vengeance to *books*.

Ancient history records how the Persians, from hatred of the religion of the Phœnicians and the Egyptians, destroyed their books, of which Eusebius notices they possessed a great number. A

remarkable anecdote is recorded of the Grecian libraries; one at Gnidus was burnt by the sect of Hippocrates, because the Gnidians refused to follow the doctrines of their master. If the followers of Hippocrates formed the majority, was it not very unorthodox in the Gnidians to prefer taking physic their own way? The anecdote may be suspicious, but faction has often annihilated books.

The Romans burnt the books of the Jews, of the Christians, and the philosophers; the Jews burnt the books of the Christians and the Pagans; and the Christians burnt the books of the Pagans and the Jews. The greater part of the books of Origen and other heretics were continually burnt by the orthodox party. Gibbon pathetically describes the empty library of Alexandria, after the Christians had destroyed it. "The valuable library of Alexandria was pillaged or destroyed; and near twenty years afterwards the appearance of the *empty shelves* excited the regret and indignation of every spectator, whose mind was not totally darkened by religious prejudice. The compositions of ancient genius, so many of which have irretrievably perished, might surely have been excepted from the wreck of idolatry, for the amusement and instruction of succeeding ages; and either the zeal

or avarice of the archbishop might have been satiated with the richest spoils which were the rewards of his victory."

The curious narrative of Nicetas Choniates of the ravages committed by the Christians of the thirteenth century in Constantinople, was fraudulently suppressed in the printed editions; it has been preserved by Dr. Clarke. We cannot follow this painful history, step by step, of the pathetic Nicetas, without indignant feelings. Dr. Clarke observes, that the Turks have committed fewer injuries to the works of art than the barbarous Christians of that age.

The reading of the Jewish Talmud has been forbidden by various edicts, of the Emperor Justinian, of many of the French and Spanish kings, and numbers of popes. All the copies were ordered to be burnt; the intrepid perseverance of the Jews themselves preserved that work from annihilation. In 1569 twelve thousand copies were thrown into the flames at Cremona. John Reuchlin interfered to stop this universal destruction of Talmuds; for which he became hated by the monks, and condemned by the Elector of Mentz, but appealing to Rome, the prosecution was stopped; and the traditions of the Jews were considered as not necessary to be destroyed.

Conquerors at first destroy with the rashest zeal the national records of the conquered people; hence it is that the Irish deplore the irreparable losses of their most ancient national memorials, which their invaders have been too successful in annihilating. The same event occurred in the conquest of Mexico; and the interesting history of the New World must ever remain imperfect, in consequence of the unfortunate success of the first missionaries, who too late became sensible of their error. Clavigero, the most authentic historian of Mexico, continually laments this affecting loss. Every thing in that country had been painted, and painters abounded there, as scribes in Europe. The first missionaries, suspicious that superstition was mixed with all their paintings, attacked the chief school of these artists, and collecting, in the market-place, a little mountain of these precious records, they set fire to it, and buried in the ashes the memory of many most interesting events. Afterwards, sensible of their error, they tried to collect information from the mouths of the Indians; but the Indians were indignantly silent: when they attempted to collect the remains of these painted histories, the patriotic Mexican usually buried in concealment the remaining records of his country.

The story of the Caliph Omar proclaiming throughout the kingdom, at the taking of Alexandria, that the Koran contained every thing which was useful to believe and to know, and he therefore ordered all the books in the Alexandrian library to be distributed to the masters of the baths, amounting to 4000, to be used in heating their stoves during a period of six months, modern paradox would attempt to deny. But the tale would not be singular even were it true: it perfectly suits the character of a bigot, a barbarian, and a blockhead. A similar event happened in Persia. When Abdoolah, who in the third century of the Mohammedan æra governed Khorasan, was presented at Nishapoor with a ms. which was shown as a literary curiosity, he asked the title of it, and was told it was the tale of Wamick and Oozra, composed by the great poet Noshirwan. On this Abdoolah observed, that those of his country and faith had nothing to do with any other book than the Koran; and that the composition of an idolater must be detestable! Not only he declined accepting it, but ordered it to be burnt in his presence; and further issued a proclamation commanding all Persian mss. which should be found within the circle of his government to be burned! Much of the most ancient poetry of the Persians perished by this fanatical edict.

Cardinal Ximenes seems to have retaliated a little on the Saracens; for at the taking of Granada he condemned to the flames five thousand Korans.

The following anecdote respecting a Spanish missal, called St. Isidore's, is not incurious; hard fighting saved it from destruction. In the Moorish wars, all these missals had been destroyed excepting those in the city of Toledo. There in six churches, the Christians were allowed the free exercise of their religion. When the Moors were expelled several centuries afterwards from Toledo, Alphonsus the sixth ordered the Roman missal to be used in those churches; but the people of Toledo insisted on having their own preferred, as being drawn up by the most ancient bishops, and revised by St. Isidore. It had been used by a great number of saints, and having been preserved pure during Moorish times, it seemed to them that Alphonsus was more tyrannical than the Turks. The contest between the Roman and the Toletan missals came to that height, that at length it was determined to decide their fate by single combat; the champion of the Toletan missal felled by one blow the knight of the Roman missal. Alphonsus still considered this battle as merely the effect of the heavy arm of the doughty Toletan, and ordered a fast to be proclaimed, and a great fire to be pre-

pared, into which, after his majesty and the people had joined in prayer for heavenly assistance in this ordeal, both the rivals (not the men, but the missals) were thrown into the flames—again St. Isidore's missal triumphed, and this iron book was then allowed to be orthodox by Alphonsus, and the good people of Toledo were allowed to say their prayers as they had long been used to do. However, the copies of this missal at length became very scarce; for now, when no one opposed the reading of St. Isidore's missal, none cared to use it. Cardinal Ximenes found it so difficult to obtain a copy, that he printed a large impression, and built a chapel, consecrated to St. Isidore, that this service might be daily chanted as it had been by the ancient Christians.

The works of the ancients were frequently destroyed at the instigation of the monks. They appear sometimes to have mutilated them, for passages have not come down to us, which once evidently existed; and occasionally their interpolations and other forgeries formed a destruction in a new shape, by additions to the originals. They were indefatigable in erasing the best works of the most eminent Greek and Latin authors, in order to transcribe their ridiculous lives of saints on the obliterated vellum. One of the books of

Livy is in the Vatican most painfully defaced by some pious father for the purpose of writing on it some missal or psalter, and there have been recently others discovered in the same state. Inflamed with the blindest zeal against every thing pagan, Pope Gregory VII. ordered that the library of the Palatine Apollo, a treasury of literature formed by successive emperors, should be committed to the flames! He issued this order under the notion of confining the attention of the clergy to the holy scriptures! From that time all ancient learning which was not sanctioned by the authority of the church, has been emphatically distinguished as *profane*—in opposition to *sacred*. This pope is said to have burnt the works of Varro, the learned Roman, that Saint Austin should escape from the charge of plagiarism, being deeply indebted to Varro for much of his great work, “the City of God.”

The jesuits, sent by the Emperor Ferdinand to proscribe Lutheranism from Bohemia, converted that flourishing kingdom comparatively into a desert, from which it never recovered; convinced that an enlightened people could never be long subservient to a tyrant, they struck one fatal blow at the national literature: every book they condemned was destroyed, even those of antiquity;

the annals of the nation were forbidden to be read, and writers were not permitted even to compose on subjects of Bohemian literature. The mother tongue was held out as a mark of vulgar obscurity, and domiciliary visits were made for the purpose of inspecting books and the libraries of the Bohemians. With their books and their language they lost their national character and their independence.

The destruction of libraries in the reign of Henry VIII. at the dissolution of the monasteries is wept over by John Bale; those who purchased the religious houses took the libraries as part of the booty, with which they scoured their furniture, or sold the books as waste paper, or sent them abroad in ship-loads to foreign bookbinders.

The fear of destruction induced many to hide manuscripts under ground, and in old walls. At the Reformation popular rage exhausted itself on illuminated books, or mss. that had red letters in the title-page: any work which was decorated was sure to be thrown into the flames as a superstitious one. Red letters and embellished figures were sure marks of being papistical and diabolical. We still find such volumes mutilated of the gilt letters and elegant flourishes, but the greater number were annihilated. Many have been found under

ground, being forgotten; what escaped the flames were obliterated by the damp: such is the deplorable fate of books during a persecution!

The puritans burnt every thing they found which bore the vestige of popish origin. We have on record many curious accounts of their pious depredations, of their maiming images and erasing pictures. The heroic expeditions of one Dowsing are journalised by himself; a fanatical Quixote, to whose intrepid arm many of our noseless saints sculptured on our cathedrals owe their misfortunes.

The following are some details from the diary of this redoubtable Goth, during his rage for reformation. His entries are expressed with a laconic conciseness, and it would seem with a little dry humour. "At *Sunbury*, we brake down ten mighty great angels in glass. At *Barham*, brake down the twelve apostles in the chancel, and six superstitious pictures more there; and eight in the church, one a lamb with a cross (+) on the back; and digged down the steps and took up four superstitious inscriptions in brass," &c. "*Lady Bruce's house*, the chapel, a picture of God the Father, of the Trinity, of Christ, the Holy Ghost, and the cloven tongues, which we gave orders to take down, and the lady promised to do it." At another

place they "brake six hundred superstitious pictures, eight Holy Ghosts, and three of the Son." And in this manner he and his deputies scoured one hundred and fifty parishes! It has been humorously conjectured, that from this ruthless devastator originated the phrase to *give a Dowsing*. Bishop Hall saved the windows of his chapel at Norwich from destruction, by taking out the heads of the figures, and this accounts for the many faces in church windows which we see supplied by white glass.

In the various civil wars in our country, numerous libraries have suffered both in mss. and printed books. "I dare maintain," says Fuller, "that the wars betwixt York and Lancaster, which lasted sixty years, were not so destructive as our modern wars in six years." He alludes to the parliamentary feuds in the reign of Charles I. "For during the former their differences agreed in the *same religion*, impressing them with reverence to all sacred muniments; whilst our *civil wars*, founded in *faction* and *variety* of pretended *religions*, exposed all naked church records a prey to armed violence; a sad vacuum, which will be sensible in our *English historie*."

The scarcity of books concerning the catholics in this country is owing to two circumstances; the

destruction of catholic books and documents by the pursuivants in the reign of Charles I., and the destruction of them by the catholics themselves, from the dread of the heavy penalties in which their mere possession involved their owners.

When it was proposed to the great Gustavus of Sweden to destroy the palace of the Dukes of Bavaria, that hero nobly refused, observing, "Let us not copy the example of our unlettered ancestors, who by waging war against every production of genius, have rendered the name of GOTH universally proverbial of the rudest state of barbarity."

Even the civilization of the eighteenth century could not preserve from the savage and destructive fury of a disorderly mob, in the most polished city of Europe, the valuable mss. of the great Earl Mansfield, which were madly consigned to the flames during the riots of 1780.

In the year 1599, the hall of the stationers underwent as great a purgation as was carried on in Don Quixote's library. Warton gives a list of the best writers who were ordered for immediate conflagration by the prelates Whitgift and Bancroft, urged by the puritanic and calvinistic factions. Like thieves and outlaws, they were ordered *to be taken wheresoever they may be found.*—"It was also decreed that no satires or epigrams should

be printed for the future. No plays were to be printed without the inspection and permission of the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London; nor any *Englishe historyes*, I suppose novels and romances, without the sanction of the privy council. Any pieces of this nature, unlicensed, or now at large and wandering abroad, were to be diligently sought, recalled, and delivered over to the ecclesiastical arm at London-house."

At a later period, and by an opposite party, among other extravagant motions made in the parliament, one was to destroy all the records in the Tower, and to settle the nation on a new foundation. The very same principle was attempted to be acted on in the French revolution by the true "sans-culottes." With us Sir Matthew Hale showed the weakness of the proposal, and while he drew on his side "all sober persons, stopped even the mouths of the frantic people themselves."

To descend to the losses incurred by individuals, whose name ought to have served as an amulet to charm away the demons of literary destruction. One of the most interesting is the fate of Aristotle's library; he who by a Greek term was first saluted as a collector of books! His works have come down to us accidentally, but not without irreparable

injuries, and with no slight suspicion respecting their authenticity. The story is told by Strabo in his thirteenth book. The books of Aristotle came from his scholar Theophrastus to Neleus, whose posterity, an illiterate race, kept them locked up without using them, buried in the earth! One Apellion, a curious collector, purchased them, but finding the mss. injured by age and moisture, conjecturally supplied their deficiencies. It is impossible to know how far Apellion has corrupted and obscured the text. But the mischief did not end here; when Sylla at the taking of Athens brought them to Rome, he consigned them to the care of one Tyrannio, a grammarian, who employed scribes to copy them; he suffered them to pass through his hands without corrections, and took great freedoms with them; the words of Strabo are strong. “Ibique Tyrannionem grammaticum iis vsum atque (ut fama est) *intercidisse, aut invertisse.*” He gives it indeed as a report; but the fact seems confirmed by the state in which we find these works; Averroes declared that he read Aristotle forty times over before he succeeded in perfectly understanding him; he pretends he did at the one and fortieth time! And to prove this has published five folios of commentary.

We have lost much valuable literature by the

illiterate or malignant descendants of learned and ingenious persons. Many of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters have been destroyed, I am informed, by her mother, who did not approve that she should disgrace her family by adding to it literary honours; and a few of her best letters, recently published, were found buried in an old family chest. It would have mortified her ladyship's mother, to have heard that her daughter was the *Seigné* of Britain.

At the death of the learned Peiresc, a chamber in his house filled with letters from the most eminent scholars of the age was discovered: the learned in Europe had addressed Peiresc in their difficulties, who was hence called "the *Avocat general*" of the republic of letters. Such was the disposition of his niece, that although repeatedly entreated to permit them to be published, she preferred to regale herself occasionally with burning these learned epistles to save the expense of fire-wood!

The mss. of Leonardo da Vinci have equally suffered from his relatives. When a curious collector discovered some, he generously brought them to a descendant of the great painter, who coldly observed, that "he had a great deal more in the garret, which had lain there for many years, if the rats had not destroyed them!" Nothing which

this great artist wrote but showed an inventive genius.

Menage observes on a friend having had his library destroyed by fire, in which several valuable mss. had perished, that such a loss is one of the greatest misfortunes that can happen to a man of letters. This gentleman afterwards consoled himself with composing a little treatise *De Bibliothecæ incendio*. It must have been sufficiently curious. Even in the present day men of letters are subject to similar misfortunes; for though the fire-offices will insure books, they will not allow *authors to value their own manuscripts*.

A fire in the Cottonian library shrivelled and destroyed many Anglo-Saxon mss. a loss now irreparable. The antiquary is doomed to spell hard and hardly at the baked fragments that crumble in his hand.

Meninsky's famous Persian dictionary met with a sad fate. Its excessive rarity is owing to the siege of Vienna by the Turks; a bomb fell on the author's house, and consumed the principal part of his indefatigable labours. There are few sets of this high-priced work which do not bear evident proofs of the bomb; while many parts are stained with the water sent to quench the flames.

The sufferings of an author for the loss of his manuscripts is nowhere more strongly described

than in the case of Anthony Urceus, one of the most unfortunate scholars of the fifteenth century. The loss of his papers seems immediately to have been followed by madness. At Forli, he had an apartment in the palace, and had prepared an important work for publication. His room was dark, and he generally wrote by lamp light. Having gone out, he left the lamp burning; the papers soon kindled, and his library reduced to ashes. As soon as he heard the news, he ran furiously to the palace, and knocking his head violently against the door, uttered this blasphemous language: "Jesus Christ, what great crime have I done! who of those who believed in you have I ever treated so cruelly? Hear what I am saying, for I am in earnest, and am resolved. If by chance I should be so weak as to address myself to you at the point of death, don't hear me, for I will not be with you, but prefer hell and its eternity of torments." To which, by the by, he gave little credit. Those who heard these ravings tried to console him, but they could not. He quitted the town, and lived frantically, wandering about the woods!

Ben Jonson's *Execration on Vulcan* was composed on a like occasion; the fruits of twenty years' study were consumed in one short hour; our literature suffered, for among some works of imagination there were many philosophical collections, a

commentary on the poetics, a complete critical grammar, a life of Henry V., his journey into Scotland with all his adventures in that poetical pilgrimage, and a poem on the ladies of Great Britain. What a catalogue of losses!

Castelvetro, the Italian commentator on Aristotle, having heard that his house was on fire, ran through the streets exclaiming to the people, *alla Poetica! alla Poetica! To the Poetic! to the Poetic!* He was then writing his commentary on the Poetic of Aristotle.

Several men of letters have been known to have risen from their death-bed, to destroy their mss. So solicitous have they been not to venture their posthumous reputation in the hands of undiscerning friends. Marmontel relates a pleasing anecdote of Colardeau, the elegant versifier of Pope's epistle of Eloisa to Abelard.

This writer had not yet destroyed what he had written of a translation of Tasso. At the approach of death, he recollected this unfinished labour; he knew that his friends would not have the courage to annihilate one of his works; this was reserved for him. Dying, he raised himself, and as if animated by an honourable action, he dragged himself along, and with trembling hands seized his papers, and consumed them in one sacrifice.—I recollect another instance of a man of letters, of our own

country, who acted the same part. He had passed his life in constant study, and it was observed that he had written several folio volumes, which his modest fears would not permit him to expose to the eye even of his critical friends. He promised to leave his labours to posterity; and he seemed sometimes, with a glow on his countenance, to exult that they would not be unworthy of their acceptance. At his death his sensibility took the alarm; he had the folios brought to his bed; no one could open them, for they were closely locked. At the sight of his favourite and mysterious labours, he paused; he seemed disturbed in his mind, while he felt at every moment his strength decaying; suddenly he raised his feeble hands by an effort of firm resolve, burnt his papers, and smiled as the greedy Vulcan licked up every page. The task exhausted his remaining strength, and he soon afterwards expired. The late Mrs. Inchbald had written her life in several volumes; on her death-bed, from a motive perhaps of too much delicacy to admit of any argument, she requested a friend to cut them into pieces before her eyes—not having sufficient strength herself to perform this funeral office. These are instances of what may be called the heroism of authors.

The republic of letters has suffered irreparable losses by shipwrecks. Guarino Veronese, one of

those learned Italians who travelled through Greece for the recovery of MSS. had his perseverance repaid by the acquisition of many valuable works. On his return to Italy he was shipwrecked, and unfortunately for himself and the world, says Mr. Roscoe, he lost his treasures! So pungent was his grief on this occasion that, according to the relation of one of his countrymen, his hair became suddenly white.

About the year 1700, Hudde, an opulent burgo-master of Middleburgh, animated solely by literary curiosity, devoted himself and his fortune. He went to China to instruct himself in the language, and in whatever was remarkable in this singular people. He acquired the skill of a mandarine in that difficult language; nor did the form of his Dutch face undeceive the physiognomists of China. He succeeded to the dignity of a mandarine; he travelled through the provinces under this character, and returned to Europe with a collection of observations, the cherished labour of thirty years; and all these were sunk in the bottomless sea!

The great Pinellian library after the death of its illustrious possessor, filled three vessels to be conveyed to Naples. Pursued by corsairs, one of the vessels was taken; but the pirates finding nothing on board but books, they threw them all

into the sea; such was the fate of a great portion of this famous library. National libraries have often perished at sea, from the circumstance of conquerors transporting them into their own kingdoms.

SOME NOTICES OF LOST WORKS.

ALTHOUGH it is the opinion of some critics that our literary losses do not amount to the extent which others imagine, they are however much greater than they allow. Our severest losses are felt in the historical province, and particularly in the earliest records; which might not have been the least interesting to philosophical curiosity.

The history of Phœnicia by Sanchoniathon, supposed to be a contemporary with Solomon, is only known to us by a few valuable fragments preserved by Eusebius. The same ill fortune attends Manetho's history of Egypt, and Berosus's history of Chaldea. The researches of the philosopher are therefore limited: and it cannot be doubted that the histories of these most ancient nations, however veiled in fables, or clouded by remoteness, would have presented to the philosopher singular objects of contemplation.

Of the history of Polybius, which once contained

forty books, we have now only five; of the historical library of Diodorus Siculus fifteen books only remain out of forty; and half of the Roman antiquities of Dionysius Halicarnassensis has perished. Of the eighty books of the history of Dion Cassius, twenty-five only remain. The present opening book of Ammianus Marcellinus is entitled the fourteenth. Livy's history consisted of one hundred and forty books, and we only possess thirty-five of that pleasing historian. What a treasure has been lost in the thirty books of Tacitus! little more than four remain. Murphy elegantly observes that "the reign of Titus, the delight of human kind, is totally lost, and Domitian has escaped the vengeance of the historian's pen." Yet Tacitus in fragments is still the colossal torso of history. It is curious to observe that Velleius Paterculus, of whom a fragment only has reached us, we owe to a single copy: no other having ever been discovered, and which occasions the text of this historian to remain incurably corrupt. Taste and criticism have certainly incurred an irreparable loss in that *Treatise on the causes of the Corruption of Eloquence*, by Quintilian; which he has himself noticed with so much satisfaction in his "Institutes." Petrarch declares, that in his youth he had seen the works of Varro, and the second Decad of Livy; but all his endeavours to recover them were fruitless.

These are only some of the most known losses which have occurred in the republic of letters; but in reading contemporary writers we are perpetually discovering new and important ones. We have lost two precious works in ancient biography: Varro wrote the lives of seven hundred illustrious Romans, and Atticus, the friend of Cicero, composed another on the actions of the great men among the Romans; these works were enriched with portraits. When we consider that these writers lived familiarly with the finest geniuses of their times, and were opulent, hospitable, and lovers of the fine arts, their biography and their portraits are felt as an irreparable loss to literature. I suspect likewise we have had great losses of which we are not always aware; for in that curious letter in which the younger Pliny describes in so interesting a manner the sublime industry, for it seems sublime by its greatness, of his uncle (Book III. Letter V. of Melmoth's translation) it appears that his Natural History, that vast register of the wisdom and folly of the ancients, was not his most extraordinary labour. Among his other works we find a history in twenty books, which has entirely perished. We discover also the works of writers, which by the accounts of them, appear to have equalled in genius those which have descended to us. I refer the curious reader to such a poet whom Pliny, in Book I. Letter XVI. has feelingly described. He

tells us that "his works are never out of my hands; and whether I sit down to write any thing myself, or to revise what I have already wrote, or am in a disposition to amuse myself, I constantly take up this agreeable author; and as often as I do so, he is still new." He had before compared this poet to Catullus; and in a critic of so fine a taste as Pliny, to have cherished so constant an intercourse with the writings of this author, indicates high powers. Instances of this kind frequently occur.

The losses which the poetical world has sustained are sufficiently known by those who are conversant with the few invaluable fragments of Menander, who would have interested us much more than Homer: for he was evidently the domestic poet, and the lyre he touched was formed of the strings of the human heart. He was the painter of manners, and the historian of the passions. The opinion of Quintilian is confirmed by the golden fragments preserved for the English reader in the elegant versions of Cumberland. Even of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, who each wrote about one hundred dramas, seven only have been preserved, and nineteen of Euripides. Of the one hundred and thirty comedies of Plautus, we only inherit twenty imperfect ones.

I believe that a philosopher would consent to lose any poet to regain an historian; nor is this

unjust, for some future poet may arise to supply the vacant place of a lost poet, but it is not so with the historian. Fancy may be supplied; but Truth once lost in the annals of mankind leaves a chasm never to be filled!

QUODLIBETS, OR SCHOLASTIC DIS- QUISITIONS.

MENAGE observes that the scholastic questions were called *Questiones Quodlibeticæ*; and they were generally so ridiculous that we have retained the word *Quodlibet* in our vernacular language, to express any thing ridiculously subtile; something which comes at length to be distinguished into nothingness,

“ With all the rash dexterity of wit.”

The history of the scholastic philosophy might furnish a philosophical writer with an instructive theme; it would enter into the history of the human mind, and fill a niche in our literary annals; the works of the scholastics, with the debates of these *Quodlibetarians*, would at once show the greatness and the littleness of the human intellect; for though they often degenerated into incredible absurdities, those who have examined the works of

Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus have confessed their admiration of that Herculean texture of brain which they exhausted in demolishing their aërial fabrics.

The following is a slight sketch of the school divinity.

The christian doctrines in the primitive ages of the gospel were adapted to the simple comprehension of the multitude; metaphysical subtilties were not even employed by the Fathers, of whom several are eloquent. Even the Homilies explained by an obvious interpretation some scriptural point, or inferred by artless illustration some moral doctrine. When the Arabians became the only learned people, and their empire extended over the greatest part of the known world, they impressed their own genius on those nations with whom they were allied as friends, or revered as masters. The Arabian genius was fond of abstruse studies; it was highly metaphysical and mathematical, for the fine arts their religion did not admit them to cultivate; and it appears that the first knowledge which modern Europe obtained of Euclid and Aristotle was through the medium of Latin translations after Arabic versions. The Christians in the west received their first lessons from the Arabians in the east; and Aristotle, with his Arabic commentaries, was enthroned in the schools of Christendom.

Then burst into birth from the dark cave of

metaphysics a numerous and ugly spawn of monstrous sects; unnatural children of the same foul mother, who never met but to destroy each other. Religion became what is called the study of divinity; and they all attempted to reduce the worship of God into a system! the creed into a thesis! and every point relating to religion was debated through an endless chain of infinite questions, incomprehensible distinctions, with differences mediate and immediate, the concrete and the abstract, a perpetual civil war carried on against common sense in all the Aristotelian severity. There existed a rage for Aristotle; and Melancthon complains that in sacred assemblies the ethics of Aristotle were read to the people instead of the gospel. Aristotle was placed a-head of St. Paul; and St. Thomas Aquinas in his works distinguishes him by the title of "The Philosopher;" inferring doubtless that no other man could possibly be a philosopher who disagreed with Aristotle. Of the blind rites paid to Aristotle, the anecdotes of the Nominalists and Realists are noticed in the article "Literary controversy" in this work.

Had their subtile questions and perpetual wranglings only been addressed to the metaphysician in his closet, and had nothing but strokes of the pen occurred, the scholastic divinity would only have formed an episode in the calm narrative of literary history; but it has claims to be re-

gistered in political annals, from the numerous persecutions and tragical events with which they too long puzzled their followers, and disturbed the repose of Europe. The Thomists, and the Scotists, the Occamites, and many others, soared into the regions of mysticism.

Peter Lombard had laboriously compiled after the celebrated Abelard's "Introduction to Divinity," his four books of "Sentences," from the writings of the Fathers; and for this he is called "The Master of Sentences." These Sentences, on which we have so many commentaries, are a collection of passages from the Fathers, the real or apparent contradictions of whom he endeavours to reconcile. But his successors were not satisfied to be mere commentators on these "Sentences," which they now only made use of as a row of pegs to hang on their fine-spun metaphysical cobwebs. They at length collected all these quodlibetical questions into enormous volumes, under the terrifying form, for those who have seen them, of *Summaries of Divinity*. They contrived by their chimerical speculations, says their modern adversary Grimaldi, to question the plainest truths, to wrest the simple meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and give some appearance of truth to the most ridiculous and monstrous opinions.

One of the subtile questions which agitated the world in the tenth century, relating to dialectics,

was concerning *universals* (as for example, man, horse, dog, &c.) signifying not *this* or *that* in particular, but *all* in general. They distinguished *universals*, or what we call abstract terms, by the *genera* and *species rerum*; and they never could decide whether these were *substances*—or *names*! That is whether the abstract idea we form of a horse was not really a *being* as much as the horse we ride! All this and some congenial points respecting the origin of our ideas, and what ideas were, and whether we really had an idea of a thing before we discovered the thing itself—in a word, what they called *universals*, and the essence of *universals*; of all this nonsense on which they at length proceeded to accusations of heresy, and for which many learned men were excommunicated, stoned, and what not, the whole was derived from the reveries of Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno, about the nature of ideas; than which subject to the present day no discussion ever degenerated into such insanity. A modern metaphysician infers that we have no ideas at all!

Of these scholastic divines, the most illustrious was Saint THOMAS AQUINAS, styled the Angelical Doctor. Seventeen folio volumes not only testify his industry, but even his genius. He was a great man busied all his life with making the charades of metaphysics.

My learned friend Sharon Turner has favoured

me with a notice of his greatest work—his “Sum of all Theology,” *Summa totius Theologiæ*, Paris, 1615. It is a metaphysiological treatise, or the most abstruse metaphysics of theology. It occupies above 1250 folio pages, of very small close print in double columns. It may be worth noticing that to this work are appended 19 folio pages of double columns of errata, and about 200 of additional index!

The whole is thrown into an Aristotelian form; the difficulties or questions are proposed first, and the answers are then appended. There are 168 articles on Love—358 on Angels—200 on the Soul—85 on Demons—151 on the Intellect—134 on Law—3 on the Catamenia—237 on Sins—17 on Virginity, and others on a variety of topics.

The scholastic tree is covered with prodigal foliage, but is barren of fruit; and when the scholastics employed themselves in solving the deepest mysteries, their philosophy became nothing more than an instrument in the hands of the Roman Pontiff. Aquinas has composed 358 articles on angels, of which a few of the heads have been culled for the reader.

He treats of angels, their substance, orders, offices, natures, habits, &c.—as if he himself had been an old experienced angel!

Angels were not before the world!

Angels might have been before the world!

Angels were created by God—They were created immediately by him—They were created in the Empyrean sky—They were created in grace—They were created in imperfect beatitude. After a severe chain of reasoning he shows that angels are incorporeal compared to us, but corporeal compared to God.

An angel is composed of action and potentiality; the more superior he is, he has the less potentiality. They have not matter properly. Every angel differs from another angel in species. An angel is of the same species as a soul. Angels have not naturally a body united to them. They may assume bodies; but they do not want to assume bodies for themselves, but for us.

The bodies assumed by angels are of thick air.

The bodies they assume have not the natural virtues which they show, nor the operations of life, but those which are common to inanimate things.

An angel may be the same with a body.

In the same body there are, the soul formally giving being, and operating natural operations; and the angel operating supernatural operations.

Angels administer and govern every corporeal creature.

God, an angel, and the soul, are not contained in space, but contain it.

Many angels cannot be in the same space.

The motion of an angel in space is nothing else than different contacts of different successive places.

The motion of an angel is a succession of his different operations.

His motion may be continuous and discontinuous as he will.

The continuous motion of an angel is necessary through every medium, but may be discontinuous without a medium.

The velocity of the motion of an angel is not according to the quantity of his strength, but according to his will.

The motion of the illumination of an angel is threefold, or circular, straight, and oblique.

In this account of the motion of an angel we are reminded of the beautiful description of Milton, who marks it by a continuous motion,

“ Smooth-sliding without step.”

The reader desirous of being *merry* with Aquinas's angels may find them in Martinus Scriblerus, in Ch. VII. who inquires if angels pass from one extreme to another without going through the *middle*? And if angels know things more clearly in a morning? How many angels can dance on

the point of a very fine needle, without hurting the mother.

All the questions are answered with a subtlety and nicety of distinction more difficult to comprehend and remember than many problems in Euclid, and perhaps a few of the best might still be selected for youth as curious exercises of the understanding. However, a great part of these peculiar productions are loaded with the most trifling, irreverent, and even scandalous discussions. Even Aquinas could gravely inquire, Whether Christ was not in Hermapudolite? Whether there are excrements in Paradise? Whether the pious in the resurrection will rise with their bowels? Others again inquired—Whether the angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary in the shape of a serpent, of a dove, of a man, or of a woman? Did he seem to be young or old? In what dress was he? Was his garment white or of two colours? Was his linen clean or foul? Did he appear in the morning, noon, or evening? What was the colour of the Virgin Mary's hair? Was she acquainted with the mechanic and liberal arts? Had she a thorough knowledge of the Book of Sentences, and all it contains? that is, Peter Lombard's compilation from the works of the Fathers, written 1200 years after her death.—But these are only trifling matters; they also agitated, Whether when

during her conception the Virgin was seated, Christ too was seated, and whether when she lay down, Christ also lay down? The following question was a favourite topic for discussion, and thousands of the acutest logicians, through more than one century, never resolved it: "When a hog is carried to market with a rope tied about its neck, which is held at the other end by a man, whether is the *hog* carried to market by the *rope* or the *man*?"

In the tenth century (says Jortin in his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. V. p. 17.) after long and ineffectual controversy about the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament, they at length universally agreed to strike a peace! Yet it must not be imagined that this mutual moderation and forbearance should be ascribed to the prudence and virtue of those times. It was mere ignorance and incapacity of reasoning which kept the peace, and deterred them from entering into debates to which they were unequal!

Lord Lyttelton in his *Life of Henry II.* laments the unhappy effects of the scholastic philosophy on the progress of the human mind. The minds of men were turned from classical studies to the subtleties of school divinity, which Rome encouraged as more profitable for the maintenance of her doctrines. It was a great misfortune to religion and

the annals of the nation were forbidden to be read, and writers were not permitted even to compose on subjects of Bohemian literature. The mother tongue was held out as a mark of vulgar obscurity, and domiciliary visits were made for the purpose of inspecting books and the libraries of the Bohemians. With their books and their language they lost their national character and their independence.

The destruction of libraries in the reign of Henry VIII. at the dissolution of the monasteries is wept over by John Bale; those who purchased the religious houses took the libraries as part of the booty, with which they scoured their furniture, or sold the books as waste paper, or sent them abroad in ship-loads to foreign bookbinders.

The fear of destruction induced many to hide manuscripts under ground, and in old walls. At the Reformation popular rage exhausted itself on illuminated books, or mss. that had red letters in the title-page: any work which was decorated was sure to be thrown into the flames as a superstitious one. Red letters and embellished figures were sure marks of being papistical and diabolical. We still find such volumes mutilated of the gilt letters and elegant flourishes, but the greater number were annihilated. Many have been found under

ground, being forgotten; what escaped the flames were obliterated by the damp: such is the deplorable fate of books during a persecution!

The puritans burnt every thing they found which bore the vestige of popish origin. We have on record many curious accounts of their pious depredations, of their maiming images and erasing pictures. The heroic expeditions of one Dowsing are journalised by himself; a fanatical Quixote, to whose intrepid arm many of our noseless saints sculptured on our cathedrals owe their misfortunes.

The following are some details from the diary of this redoubtable Goth, during his rage for reformation. His entries are expressed with a laconic conciseness, and it would seem with a little dry humour. "At *Sunbury*, we brake down ten mighty great angels in glass. At *Barham*, brake down the twelve apostles in the chancel, and six superstitious pictures more there; and eight in the church, one a lamb with a cross (+) on the back; and digged down the steps and took up four superstitious inscriptions in brass," &c. "*Lady Bruce's house*, the chapel, a picture of God the Father, of the Trinity, of Christ, the Holy Ghost, and the cloven tongues, which we gave orders to take down, and the lady promised to do it." At another

place they "brake six hundred superstitious pictures, eight Holy Ghosts, and three of the Son." And in this manner he and his deputies scoured one hundred and fifty parishes! It has been humorously conjectured, that from this ruthless devastator originated the phrase to *give a Dowsing*. Bishop Hall saved the windows of his chapel at Norwich from destruction, by taking out the heads of the figures, and this accounts for the many faces in church windows which we see supplied by white glass.

In the various civil wars in our country, numerous libraries have suffered both in mss. and printed books. "I dare maintain," says Fuller, "that the wars betwixt York and Lancaster, which lasted sixty years, were not so destructive as our modern wars in six years." He alludes to the parliamentary feuds in the reign of Charles I. "For during the former their differences agreed in the *same religion*, impressing them with reverence to all sacred muniments; whilst our *civil wars*, founded in *faction* and *variety* of pretended religions, exposed all naked church records a prey to armed violence; a sad vacuum, which will be sensible in our *English historie*."

The scarcity of books concerning the catholics in this country is owing to two circumstances; the

destruction of catholic books and documents by the pursuivants in the reign of Charles I., and the destruction of them by the catholics themselves, from the dread of the heavy penalties in which their mere possession involved their owners.

When it was proposed to the great Gustavus of Sweden to destroy the palace of the Dukes of Bavaria, that hero nobly refused, observing, "Let us not copy the example of our unlettered ancestors, who by waging war against every production of genius, have rendered the name of GOTH universally proverbial of the rudest state of barbarity."

Even the civilization of the eighteenth century could not preserve from the savage and destructive fury of a disorderly mob, in the most polished city of Europe, the valuable mss. of the great Earl Mansfield, which were madly consigned to the flames during the riots of 1780.

In the year 1599, the hall of the stationers underwent as great a purgation as was carried on in Don Quixote's library. Warton gives a list of the best writers who were ordered for immediate conflagration by the prelates Whitgift and Bancroft, urged by the puritanic and calvinistic factions. Like thieves and outlaws, they were ordered *to be taken wheresoever they may be found*.—"It was also decreed that no satires or epigrams should

be printed for the future. No plays were to be printed without the inspection and permission of the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London; nor any *Englishe historyes*, I suppose novels and romances, without the sanction of the privy council. Any pieces of this nature, unlicensed, or now at large and wandering abroad, were to be diligently sought, recalled, and delivered over to the ecclesiastical arm at London-house."

At a later period, and by an opposite party, among other extravagant motions made in the parliament, one was to destroy all the records in the Tower, and to settle the nation on a new foundation. The very same principle was attempted to be acted on in the French revolution by the true "sans-culottes." With us Sir Matthew Hale showed the weakness of the proposal, and while he drew on his side "all sober persons, stopped even the mouths of the frantic people themselves."

To descend to the losses incurred by individuals, whose name ought to have served as an amulet to charm away the demons of literary destruction. One of the most interesting is the fate of Aristotle's library; he who by a Greek term was first saluted as a collector of books! His works have come down to us accidentally, but not without irreparable

injuries, and with no slight suspicion respecting their authenticity. The story is told by Strabo in his thirteenth book. The books of Aristotle came from his scholar Theophrastus to Neleus, whose posterity, an illiterate race, kept them locked up without using them, buried in the earth! One Apellion, a curious collector, purchased them, but finding the mss. injured by age and moisture, conjecturally supplied their deficiencies. It is impossible to know how far Apellion has corrupted and obscured the text. But the mischief did not end here; when Sylla at the taking of Athens brought them to Rome, he consigned them to the care of one Tyrannio, a grammarian, who employed scribes to copy them; he suffered them to pass through his hands without corrections, and took great freedoms with them; the words of Strabo are strong. "Ibique Tyrannionem grammaticum iis vsum atque (ut fama est) *intercidisse, aut invertisse.*" He gives it indeed as a report; but the fact seems confirmed by the state in which we find these works; Averroes declared that he read Aristotle forty times over before he succeeded in perfectly understanding him; he pretends he did at the one and fortieth time! And to prove this has published five folios of commentary.

We have lost much valuable literature by the

illiterate or malignant descendants of learned and ingenious persons. Many of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters have been destroyed, I am informed, by her mother, who did not approve that she should disgrace her family by adding to it literary honours; and a few of her best letters, recently published, were found buried in an old family chest. It would have mortified her ladyship's mother, to have heard that her daughter was the *Seigné* of Britain.

At the death of the learned Peiresc, a chamber in his house filled with letters from the most eminent scholars of the age was discovered: the learned in Europe had addressed Peiresc in their difficulties, who was hence called "the *Avocat general*" of the republic of letters. Such was the disposition of his niece, that although repeatedly entreated to permit them to be published, she preferred to regale herself occasionally with burning these learned epistles to save the expense of fire-wood!

The mss. of Leonardo da Vinci have equally suffered from his relatives. When a curious collector discovered some, he generously brought them to a descendant of the great painter, who coldly observed, that "he had a great deal more in the garret, which had lain there for many years, if the rats had not destroyed them!" Nothing which

this great artist wrote but showed an inventive genius.

Menage observes on a friend having had his library destroyed by fire, in which several valuable mss. had perished, that such a loss is one of the greatest misfortunes that can happen to a man of letters. This gentleman afterwards consoled himself with composing a little treatise *De Bibliothecæ incendio*. It must have been sufficiently curious. Even in the present day men of letters are subject to similar misfortunes; for though the fire-offices will insure books, they will not allow *authors to value their own manuscripts*.

A fire in the Cottonian library shrivelled and destroyed many Anglo-Saxon mss. a loss now irreparable. The antiquary is doomed to spell hard and hardly at the baked fragments that crumble in his hand.

Meninsky's famous Persian dictionary met with a sad fate. Its excessive rarity is owing to the siege of Vienna by the Turks; a bomb fell on the author's house, and consumed the principal part of his indefatigable labours. There are few sets of this high-priced work which do not bear evident proofs of the bomb; while many parts are stained with the water sent to quench the flames.

The sufferings of an author for the loss of his manuscripts is nowhere more strongly described

than in the case of Anthony Urceus, one of the most unfortunate scholars of the fifteenth century. The loss of his papers seems immediately to have been followed by madness. At Forli, he had an apartment in the palace, and had prepared an important work for publication. His room was dark, and he generally wrote by lamp light. Having gone out, he left the lamp burning; the papers soon kindled, and his library reduced to ashes. As soon as he heard the news, he ran furiously to the palace, and knocking his head violently against the door, uttered this blasphemous language: "Jesus Christ, what great crime have I done! who of those who believed in you have I ever treated so cruelly? Hear what I am saying, for I am in earnest, and am resolved. If by chance I should be so weak as to address myself to you at the point of death, don't hear me, for I will not be with you, but prefer hell and its eternity of torments." To which, by the by, he gave little credit. Those who heard these ravings tried to console him, but they could not. He quitted the town, and lived frantically, wandering about the woods!

Ben Jonson's *Execration on Vulcan* was composed on a like occasion; the fruits of twenty years' study were consumed in one short hour; our literature suffered, for among some works of imagination there were many philosophical collections, a

commentary on the poetics, a complete critical grammar, a life of Henry V., his journey into Scotland with all his adventures in that poetical pilgrimage, and a poem on the ladies of Great Britain. What a catalogue of losses!

Castelvetro, the Italian commentator on Aristotle, having heard that his house was on fire, ran through the streets exclaiming to the people, *alla Poetica! alla Poetica! To the Poetic! to the Poetic!* He was then writing his commentary on the Poetic of Aristotle.

Several men of letters have been known to have risen from their death-bed, to destroy their mss. So solicitous have they been not to venture their posthumous reputation in the hands of undiscerning friends. Marmontel relates a pleasing anecdote of Colardeau, the elegant versifier of Pope's epistle of Eloisa to Abelard.

This writer had not yet destroyed what he had written of a translation of Tasso. At the approach of death, he recollected this unfinished labour; he knew that his friends would not have the courage to annihilate one of his works; this was reserved for him. Dying, he raised himself, and as if animated by an honourable action, he dragged himself along, and with trembling hands seized his papers, and consumed them in one sacrifice.—I recollect another instance of a man of letters, of our own

country, who acted the same part. He had passed his life in constant study, and it was observed that he had written several folio volumes, which his modest fears would not permit him to expose to the eye even of his critical friends. He promised to leave his labours to posterity; and he seemed sometimes, with a glow on his countenance, to exult that they would not be unworthy of their acceptance. At his death his sensibility took the alarm; he had the folios brought to his bed; no one could open them, for they were closely locked. At the sight of his favourite and mysterious labours, he paused; he seemed disturbed in his mind, while he felt at every moment his strength decaying; suddenly he raised his feeble hands by an effort of firm resolve, burnt his papers, and smiled as the greedy Vulcan licked up every page. The task exhausted his remaining strength, and he soon afterwards expired. The late Mrs. Inchbald had written her life in several volumes; on her death-bed, from a motive perhaps of too much delicacy to admit of any argument, she requested a friend to cut them into pieces before her eyes—not having sufficient strength herself to perform this funeral office. These are instances of what may be called the heroism of authors.

The republic of letters has suffered irreparable losses by shipwrecks. Guarino Veronese, one of

those learned Italians who travelled through Greece for the recovery of mss. had his perseverance repaid by the acquisition of many valuable works. On his return to Italy he was shipwrecked, and unfortunately for himself and the world, says Mr. Roscoe, he lost his treasures! So pungent was his grief on this occasion that, according to the relation of one of his countrymen, his hair became suddenly white.

About the year 1700, Hudde, an opulent burgo-master of Middleburgh, animated solely by literary curiosity, devoted himself and his fortune. He went to China to instruct himself in the language, and in whatever was remarkable in this singular people. He acquired the skill of a mandarine in that difficult language; nor did the form of his Dutch face undeceive the physiognomists of China. He succeeded to the dignity of a mandarine; he travelled through the provinces under this character, and returned to Europe with a collection of observations, the cherished labour of thirty years; and all these were sunk in the bottomless sea!

The great Pinellian library after the death of its illustrious possessor, filled three vessels to be conveyed to Naples. Pursued by corsairs, one of the vessels was taken; but the pirates finding nothing on board but books, they threw them all

into the sea; such was the fate of a great portion of this famous library. National libraries have often perished at sea, from the circumstance of conquerors transporting them into their own kingdoms.

SOME NOTICES OF LOST WORKS.

ALTHOUGH it is the opinion of some critics that our literary losses do not amount to the extent which others imagine, they are however much greater than they allow. Our severest losses are felt in the historical province, and particularly in the earliest records, which might not have been the least interesting to philosophical curiosity.

The history of Phœnicia by Sanchoniathon, supposed to be a contemporary with Solomon, is only known to us by a few valuable fragments preserved by Eusebius. The same ill fortune attends Manetho's history of Egypt, and Berosus's history of Chaldea. The researches of the philosopher are therefore limited: and it cannot be doubted that the histories of these most ancient nations, however veiled in fables, or clouded by remoteness, would have presented to the philosopher singular objects of contemplation.

Of the history of Polybius, which once contained

forty books, we have now only five; of the historical library of Diodorus Siculus fifteen books only remain out of forty; and half of the Roman antiquities of Dionysius Halicarnassensis has perished. Of the eighty books of the history of Dion Cassius, twenty-five only remain. The present opening book of Ammianus Marcellinus is entitled the fourteenth. Livy's history consisted of one hundred and forty books, and we only possess thirty-five of that pleasing historian. What a treasure has been lost in the thirty books of Tacitus! little more than four remain. Murphy elegantly observes that "the reign of Titus, the delight of human kind, is totally lost, and Domitian has escaped the vengeance of the historian's pen." Yet Tacitus in fragments is still the colossal torso of history. It is curious to observe that Velleius Paterculus, of whom a fragment only has reached us, we owe to a single copy: no other having ever been discovered, and which occasions the text of this historian to remain incurably corrupt. Taste and criticism have certainly incurred an irreparable loss in that *Treatise on the causes of the Corruption of Eloquence*, by Quintilian; which he has himself noticed with so much satisfaction in his "Institutes." Petrarch declares, that in his youth he had seen the works of Varro, and the second Decad of Livy; but all his endeavours to recover them were fruitless.

These are only some of the most known losses which have occurred in the republic of letters; but in reading contemporary writers we are perpetually discovering new and important ones. We have lost two precious works in ancient biography: Varro wrote the lives of seven hundred illustrious Romans, and Atticus, the friend of Cicero, composed another on the actions of the great men among the Romans; these works were enriched with portraits. When we consider that these writers lived familiarly with the finest geniuses of their times, and were opulent, hospitable, and lovers of the fine arts, their biography and their portraits are felt as an irreparable loss to literature. I suspect likewise we have had great losses of which we are not always aware; for in that curious letter in which the younger Pliny describes in so interesting a manner the sublime industry, for it seems sublime by its greatness, of his uncle (Book III. Letter V. of Melmoth's translation) it appears that his Natural History, that vast register of the wisdom and folly of the ancients, was not his most extraordinary labour. Among his other works we find a history in twenty books, which has entirely perished. We discover also the works of writers, which by the accounts of them, appear to have equalled in genius those which have descended to us. I refer the curious reader to such a poet whom Pliny, in Book I. Letter XVI. has feelingly described. He

tells us that "his works are never out of my hands; and whether I sit down to write any thing myself, or to revise what I have already wrote, or am in a disposition to amuse myself, I constantly take up this agreeable author; and as often as I do so, he is still new." He had before compared this poet to Catullus; and in a critic of so fine a taste as Pliny, to have cherished so constant an intercourse with the writings of this author, indicates high powers. Instances of this kind frequently occur.

The losses which the poetical world has sustained are sufficiently known by those who are conversant with the few invaluable fragments of Menander, who would have interested us much more than Homer: for he was evidently the domestic poet, and the lyre he touched was formed of the strings of the human heart. He was the painter of manners, and the historian of the passions. The opinion of Quintilian is confirmed by the golden fragments preserved for the English reader in the elegant versions of Cumberland. Even of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, who each wrote about one hundred dramas, seven only have been preserved, and nineteen of Euripides. Of the one hundred and thirty comedies of Plautus, we only inherit twenty imperfect ones.

I believe that a philosopher would consent to lose any poet to regain an historian; nor is this

unjust, for some future poet may arise to supply the vacant place of a lost poet, but it is not so with the historian. Fancy may be supplied; but Truth once lost in the annals of mankind leaves a chasm never to be filled!

QUODLIBETS, OR SCHOLASTIC DIS- QUISITIONS.

MENAGE observes that the scholastic questions were called *Questiones Quodlibeticæ*; and they were generally so ridiculous that we have retained the word *Quodlibet* in our vernacular language, to express any thing ridiculously subtile; something which comes at length to be distinguished into nothingness,

“ With all the rash dexterity of wit.”

The history of the scholastic philosophy might furnish a philosophical writer with an instructive theme; it would enter into the history of the human mind, and fill a niche in our literary annals; the works of the scholastics, with the debates of these *Quodlibetarians*, would at once show the greatness and the littleness of the human intellect; for though they often degenerated into incredible absurdities, those who have examined the works of

Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus have confessed their admiration of that Herculean texture of brain which they exhausted in demolishing their aërial fabrics.

The following is a slight sketch of the school divinity.

The christian doctrines in the primitive ages of the gospel were adapted to the simple comprehension of the multitude; metaphysical subtilities were not even employed by the Fathers, of whom several are eloquent. Even the Homilies explained by an obvious interpretation some scriptural point, or inferred by artless illustration some moral doctrine. When the Arabians became the only learned people, and their empire extended over the greatest part of the known world, they impressed their own genius on those nations with whom they were allied as friends, or revered as masters. The Arabian genius was fond of abstruse studies; it was highly metaphysical and mathematical, for the fine arts their religion did not admit them to cultivate; and it appears that the first knowledge which modern Europe obtained of Euclid and Aristotle was through the medium of Latin translations after Arabic versions. The Christians in the west received their first lessons from the Arabians in the east; and Aristotle, with his Arabic commentaries, was enthroned in the schools of Christendom.

Then burst into birth from the dark cave of

metaphysics a numerous and ugly spawn of monstrous sects; unnatural children of the same foul mother, who never met but to destroy each other. Religion became what is called the study of divinity; and they all attempted to reduce the worship of God into a system! the creed into a thesis! and every point relating to religion was debated through an endless chain of infinite questions, incomprehensible distinctions, with differences mediate and immediate, the concrete and the abstract, a perpetual civil war carried on against common sense in all the Aristotelian severity. There existed a rage for Aristotle; and Melancthon complains that in sacred assemblies the ethics of Aristotle were read to the people instead of the gospel. Aristotle was placed a-head of St. Paul; and St. Thomas Aquinas in his works distinguishes him by the title of "The Philosopher;" inferring doubtless that no other man could possibly be a philosopher who disagreed with Aristotle. Of the blind rites paid to Aristotle, the anecdotes of the Nominalists and Realists are noticed in the article "Literary controversy" in this work.

Had their subtle questions and perpetual wranglings only been addressed to the metaphysician in his closet, and had nothing but strokes of the pen occurred, the scholastic divinity would only have formed an episode in the calm narrative of literary history; but it has claims to be re-

gistered in political annals, from the numerous persecutions and tragical events with which they too long puzzled their followers, and disturbed the repose of Europe. The Thomists, and the Scotists, the Occamites, and many others, soared into the regions of mysticism.

Peter Lombard had laboriously compiled after the celebrated Abelard's "Introduction to Divinity," his four books of "Sentences," from the writings of the Fathers; and for this he is called "The Master of Sentences." These Sentences, on which we have so many commentaries, are a collection of passages from the Fathers, the real or apparent contradictions of whom he endeavours to reconcile. But his successors were not satisfied to be mere commentators on these "Sentences," which they now only made use of as a row of pegs to hang on their fine-spun metaphysical cobwebs. They at length collected all these quodlibetical questions into enormous volumes, under the terrifying form, for those who have seen them, of *Summaries of Divinity*. They contrived by their chimerical speculations, says their modern adversary Grimaldi, to question the plainest truths, to wrest the simple meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and give some appearance of truth to the most ridiculous and monstrous opinions.

One of the subtle questions which agitated the world in the tenth century, relating to dialectics,

was concerning *universals* (as for example, man, horse, dog, &c.) signifying not *this* or *that* in particular, but *all* in general. They distinguished *universals*, or what we call abstract terms, by the *genera* and *species rerum*; and they never could decide whether these were *substances*—or *names*! That is whether the abstract idea we form of a horse was not really a *being* as much as the horse we ride! All this and some congenial points respecting the origin of our ideas, and what ideas were, and whether we really had an idea of a thing before we discovered the thing itself—in a word, what they called universals, and the essence of universals; of all this nonsense on which they at length proceeded to accusations of heresy, and for which many learned men were excommunicated, stoned, and what not, the whole was derived from the reveries of Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno, about the nature of ideas; than which subject to the present day no discussion ever degenerated into such insanity. A modern metaphysician infers that we have no ideas at all!

Of these scholastic divines, the most illustrious was Saint THOMAS AQUINAS, styled the Angelical Doctor. Seventeen folio volumes not only testify his industry, but even his genius. He was a great man busied all his life with making the charades of metaphysics.

My learned friend Sharon Turner has favoured

me with a notice of his greatest work—his “*Sum of all Theology*,” *Summa totius Theologiæ*, Paris, 1615. It is a metaphysicological treatise, or the most abstruse metaphysics of theology. It occupies above 1250 folio pages, of very small close print in double columns. It may be worth noticing that to this work are appended 19 folio pages of double columns of errata, and about 200 of additional index!

The whole is thrown into an Aristotelian form; the difficulties or questions are proposed first, and the answers are then appended. There are 168 articles on Love—358 on Angels—200 on the Soul—85 on Demons—151 on the Intellect—134 on Law—3 on the Catamenia—237 on Sins—17 on Virginity, and others on a variety of topics.

The scholastic tree is covered with prodigal foliage, but is barren of fruit; and when the scholastics employed themselves in solving the deepest mysteries, their philosophy became nothing more than an instrument in the hands of the Roman Pontiff. Aquinas has composed 358 articles on angels, of which a few of the heads have been culled for the reader.

He treats of angels, their substance, orders, offices, natures, habits, &c.—as if he himself had been an old experienced angel!

Angels were not before the world!

Angels might have been before the world!

Angels were created by God—They were created immediately by him—They were created in the Empyrean sky—They were created in grace—They were created in imperfect beatitude. After a severe chain of reasoning he shows that angels are incorporeal compared to us, but corporeal compared to God.

An angel is composed of action and potentiality; the more superior he is, he has the less potentiality. They have not matter properly. Every angel differs from another angel in species. An angel is of the same species as a soul. Angels have not naturally a body united to them. They may assume bodies; but they do not want to assume bodies for themselves, but for us.

The bodies assumed by angels are of thick air.

The bodies they assume have not the natural virtues which they show, nor the operations of life, but those which are common to inanimate things.

An angel may be the same with a body.

In the same body there are, the soul formally giving being, and operating natural operations; and the angel operating supernatural operations.

Angels administer and govern every corporeal creature.

God, an angel, and the soul, are not contained in space, but contain it.

Many angels cannot be in the same space.

The motion of an angel in space is nothing else than different contacts of different successive places.

The motion of an angel is a succession of his different operations.

His motion may be continuous and discontinuous as he will.

The continuous motion of an angel is necessary through every medium, but may be discontinuous without a medium.

The velocity of the motion of an angel is not according to the quantity of his strength, but according to his will.

The motion of the illumination of an angel is threefold, or circular, straight, and oblique.

In this account of the motion of an angel we are reminded of the beautiful description of Milton, who marks it by a continuous motion,

“ Smooth-sliding without step.”

The reader desirous of being *merry* with Aquinas's angels may find them in Martinus Scriblerus, in Ch. VII. who inquires if angels pass from one extreme to another without going through the *middle*? And if angels know things more clearly in a morning? How many angels can dance on

the point of a very fine needle, without jostling one another?

All the questions are answered with a subtlety and nicety of distinction more difficult to comprehend and remember than many problems in Euclid; and perhaps a few of the best might still be selected for youth as curious exercises of the understanding. However, a great part of these peculiar productions are loaded with the most trifling, irreverend, and even scandalous discussions. Even Aquinas could gravely debate, Whether Christ was not an Hermaphrodite? Whether there are excrements in Paradise? Whether the pious at the resurrection will rise with their bowels? Others again debated—Whether the angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary in the shape of a serpent, of a dove, of a man, or of a woman? Did he seem to be young or old? In what dress was he? Was his garment white or of two colours? Was his linen clean or foul? Did he appear in the morning, noon, or evening? What was the colour of the Virgin Mary's hair? Was she acquainted with the mechanic and liberal arts? Had she a thorough knowledge of the Book of Sentences, and all it contains? that is, Peter Lombard's compilation from the works of the Fathers, written 1200 years after her death.—But these are only trifling matters; they also agitated, Whether when

during her conception the Virgin was seated, Christ too was seated, and whether when she lay down, Christ also lay down? The following question was a favourite topic for discussion, and thousands of the acutest logicians, through more than one century, never resolved it: "When a hog is carried to market with a rope tied about its neck, which is held at the other end by a man, whether is the *hog* carried to market by the *rope* or the *man*?"

In the tenth century (says Jortin in his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. V. p. 17.) after long and ineffectual controversy about the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament, they at length universally agreed to strike a peace! Yet it must not be imagined that this mutual moderation and forbearance should be ascribed to the prudence and virtue of those times. It was mere ignorance and incapacity of reasoning which kept the peace, and deterred them from entering into debates to which they were unequal!

Lord Lyttelton in his *Life of Henry II.* laments the unhappy effects of the scholastic philosophy on the progress of the human mind. The minds of men were turned from classical studies to the subtleties of school divinity, which Rome encouraged as more profitable for the maintenance of her doctrines. It was a great misfortune to religion and

to learning, that men of such acute understanding as Abelard and Lombard, who might have done much to reform the errors of the church, and to restore science in Europe, should have depraved both, by applying their admirable parts to weave these cobwebs of sophistry, and to confound the clear simplicity of evangelical truths by a false philosophy and a captious logic.

FAME CONTEMNED.

ALL men are fond of glory, and even those philosophers who write against that noble passion prefix their *names* to their own works. It is worthy of observation that the authors of two *religious books*, universally received, have concealed their names from the world. The "Imitation of Christ" is attributed, without any authority, to Thomas A'Kempis; and the author of the "Whole Duty of Man" still remains undiscovered. Millions of their books have been dispersed in the christian world.

To have revealed their *names*, would have given them as much worldly fame as any moralist has obtained—but they contemned it! Their religion was the purest, and raised above all worldly passions! Some profane writers indeed have also concealed

their names to great works, but their *motives* were of a very different cast.

THE SIX FOLLIES OF SCIENCE.

NOTHING is so capable of disordering the intellects as an intense application to any one of these six things: the Quadrature of the Circle; the Multiplication of the Cube; the Perpetual Motion; the Philosophical Stone; Magic; and Judicial Astrology. In youth we may exercise our imagination on these curious topics, merely to convince us of their impossibility; but it shows a great defect in judgment to be occupied on them in an advanced age. "It is proper, however," Fontenelle remarks, "to apply one's self to these inquiries; because we find, as we proceed, many valuable discoveries of which we were before ignorant." The same thought Cowley has applied, in an address to his mistress, thus—

“ Although I think thou never wilt be found,
Yet I'm resolved to search for thee :
The search itself rewards the pains.
So though the chymist his great secret miss,
(For neither it in art or nature is)
Yet things well worth his toil he gains ;
And does his charge and labour pay
With good unsought experiments by the way.”

The same thought is in Donne. Perhaps Cowley did not suspect, that he was an imitator. Fontenelle could not have read either; he struck out the thought by his own reflection; it is very just. Glauber searched long and deeply for the philosopher's stone, which though he did not find, yet in his researches he discovered a very useful purging salt, which bears his name.

Maupertuis, in a little volume of *Letters* written by him, observes on the *Philosophical Stone*, that we cannot prove the impossibility of obtaining it, but we can easily see the folly of those who employ their time and money in seeking for it. This price is too great to counterbalance the little probability of succeeding in it. However it is still a bantling of modern chemistry, who has nodded very affectionately on it!—Of the *Perpetual Motion*, he shows the impossibility, at least in the sense in which it is generally received. On the *Quadrature of the Circle*, he says he cannot decide if this problem is resolvable or not: but he observes, that it is very useless to search for it any more; since we have arrived by approximation to such a point of accuracy, that on a large circle, such as the orbit which the earth describes round the sun, the geometrician will not mistake by the thickness of a hair. The quadrature of the circle is still, however, a favourite game of some visionaries, and several are still imagining that they have discovered

the perpetual motion; the Italians nick-name them *matto perpetuo*; and Bekker tells us of the fate of one Hartmann of Leipsic, who was in such despair at having past his life so vainly, in studying the perpetual motion, that at length he became himself one in the long letter of Erasmus, by means of the fatal triangle; that is, he hanged himself; for the long letter of Erasmus is the Greek *phi* ϕ , which is imagined to bear some resemblance to the suspension of an unlucky mortal.

IMITATORS.

SOME writers, usually pedants, imagine they can supply by the labours of industry the deficiencies of nature. It is recorded of Paulus Manutius, that he frequently spent a month in writing a single letter. He affected to imitate Cicero. But although he has painfully attained to something of the elegance of his style, he is still destitute of the native graces of unaffected composition. He was one of those whom Erasmus bantered in his *Ciceronianus*, so slavishly devoted to Cicero's style, that they ridiculously employed the utmost precautions when they were seized by a Ciceronian fit. The *Nosoponus* of Erasmus tells us of his devotion to Cicero; of his three indexes to all his words, and his never

writing but in the dead of night; employing months upon a few lines, and his religious veneration for *words*, with his total indifference about the *sense*.

Le Brun, a Jesuit, was a singular instance of such unhappy imitation. He was a Latin poet, and his themes were religious. He formed the extravagant project of substituting a *religious Virgil* and *Ovid* merely by adapting his works to their titles. His *Christian Virgil* consists, like the Pagan *Virgil*, of *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and of an *Epic* of twelve books, with this difference, that devotional subjects are substituted for fabulous ones. His epic is the *Ignaciad*, or the pilgrimage of Saint Ignatius. His *Christian Ovid* is in the same taste; every thing wears a new face. The *Epistles* are pious ones; the *Fasti* are the six days of the Creation; the *Elegies* are the Lamentations of Jeremiah; a poem on *the Love of God* is substituted for the *Art of Love*; and the history of some *Conversions* supplies the place of the *Metamorphoses*! This is much in the style of those who have projected the substitution of *a family Shakespeare*!

A poet of far different character, the elegant Sannazarius, has done much the same thing in his poem *De partu Virginis*. The same servile imitation of ancient taste appears. It professes to celebrate the birth of *Christ*, yet his name is not

once mentioned in it! The *Virgin* herself is styled *spes deorum!* The hope of the Gods! The *In-carnation* is predicted by *Proteus*—The *Virgin*, instead of consulting the *sacred writings*, reads the *Sybilline oracles!* Her attendants are *Dryads*, *Nereids*, &c. This monstrous mixture of polytheism with the mysteries of Christianity appeared in every thing he had about him. In a chapel at one of his country seats he had two statues placed at his tomb, *Apollo* and *Minerva*; catholic piety found no difficulty in the present case, as well as in innumerable others of the same kind, to inscribe the statue of *Apollo* with the name of *David*, and that of *Minerva* with the female one of *Judith!*

Seneca, in his 114th Epistle, gives a curious literary anecdote of that sort of imitation by which an inferior mind becomes the monkey of an original writer. At Rome, when Sallust was the fashionable writer, short sentences, uncommon words, and an obscure brevity, were affected as so many elegancies. Arruntius, who wrote the history of the Punic Wars, painfully laboured to imitate Sallust. Expressions which are rare in Sallust are frequent in Arruntius, and, of course, without the motive that induced Sallust to adopt them. What rose naturally under the pen of the great historian, the minor one must have run after with a ridiculous

anxiety. Seneca adds several instances of the servile affectation of Arruntius, which seem much like those we once had of Johnson, by the undiscerning herd of his monkeys.

One cannot but smile at these imitators; we have abounded with them. In the days of Churchill, every month produced an effusion which tolerably imitated his rough and slovenly versification, his coarse invective, and his careless mediocrity—but the genius remained with the English Juvenal. Sterne had his countless multitude, and in Fielding's time, Tom Jones produced more bastards in wit than the author could ever suspect. To such literary echoes, the reply of Philip of Macedon to one who prided himself on imitating the notes of the nightingale, may be applied; "I prefer the nightingale herself!" Even the most successful of this imitating tribe must be doomed to share the fate of Silius Italicus in his cold imitation of Virgil, and Cawthorne in his empty harmony of Pope.

To all these imitators I must apply an Arabian anecdote. Ebn Saad, one of Mahomet's amanuenses, when writing what the prophet dictated, cried out by way of admiration—Blessed be God the best Creator! Mahomet approved of the expression, and desired him to write those words down also as part of the inspired passage.—The consequence was, that Ebn Saad began to think

himself as great a prophet as his master, and took upon himself to imitate the Koran according to his fancy; but the imitator got himself into trouble, and only escaped with life by falling on his knees, and solemnly swearing he would never again imitate the Koran, for which he was sensible God had never created him.

CICERO'S PUNS.

“I SHOULD,” says Menage, “have received great pleasure to have conversed with Cicero, had I lived in his time. He must have been a man very agreeable in conversation, since even Cæsar carefully collected his *bon mots*. Cicero has boasted of the great actions he has done for his country, because there is no vanity in exulting in the performance of our duties; but he has not boasted that he was the most eloquent orator of his age, though he certainly was; because nothing is more disgusting than to exult in our intellectual powers.”

Whatever were the *bon mots* of Cicero, of which few have come down to us, it is certain that Cicero was an inveterate punster; and he seems to have been more ready with them than with repartees. He said to a senator, who was the son of a tailor, “*Rem acu tetigisti.*” You have touched the thing

with sharpness. To the son of a cook, "*Ego quoque tibi jure favebo.*" The ancients pronounced *cocce* and *quoque* like *co-ke*, which alludes to the Latin *cocus*, cook, besides the ambiguity of *jure*, which applies to *broth* or *law—jus*. A Sicilian suspected of being a Jew, attempted to get the cause of Verres into his own hands; Cicero, who knew that he was a creature of the great culprit, opposed him, observing, "What has a Jew to do with swine's flesh?" The Romans called a boar pig *verres*. I regret to afford a respectable authority for forensic puns; but to have degraded his adversaries by such petty personalities, only proves that Cicero's taste was not exquisite.

There is something very original in Montaigne's censure of this great man. Cotton, the Frenchman's translator, has not ill expressed the peculiarities of his author, though he has blundered on a material expression.

"Boldly to confess the truth, his way of writing, and that of all other long-winded authors, appears to me very tedious; for his preface, definitions, divisions, and etymologies, take up the greatest part of his work; whatever there is of life and marrow, is smothered and lost in the preparation. When I have spent an hour in reading him, which is a great deal for me, and recollect what I have thence extracted of juice and substance, for the

most part I find nothing but wind ; for he is not yet come to the arguments that serve to his purpose, and the reasons that should properly help to loose the knot I would untie. For me, who only desired to become more wise, not more learned or eloquent, these logical or Aristotelian disquisitions of poets are of no use. I look for good and solid reasons at the first dash. I am for discourses that give the first charge into the heart of the doubt ; his, languish about the subject, and delay our expectation. Those are proper for the schools, for the bar, and for the pulpit, where we have leisure to nod, and may awake a quarter of an hour after, time enough to find again the thread of the discourse. It is necessary to speak after this manner to judges, whom a man has a design, right or wrong, to incline to favour his cause ; to children and common people, to whom a man must say all he can. I would not have an author make it his business to render me attentive ; or that he should cry out fifty times *O yes!* as the clerks and heralds do.

“ As to Cicero, I am of the common opinion that, learning excepted, he had no great natural parts. He was a good citizen, of an affable nature, as all fat heavy men—(*gras et gausseurs* are the words in the original, meaning perhaps broad jokers, for Cicero was not fat)—such as he was, usually are ;

but given to ease, and had a mighty share of vanity and ambition. Neither do I know how to excuse him for thinking his poetry fit to be published. 'Tis no great imperfection to write ill verses; but it is an imperfection not to be able to judge how unworthy bad verses were of the glory of his name. For what concerns his eloquence, that is totally out of comparison, and I believe will never be equalled."

PREFACES.

A PREFACE, being the entrance to a book, should invite by its beauty. An elegant porch announces the splendour of the interior. I have observed, that ordinary readers skip over these little elaborate compositions. The ladies consider them as so many pages lost, which might better be employed in the addition of a picturesque scene, or a tender letter to their novels. For my part, I always gather amusement from a preface, be it awkwardly or skilfully written; for dulness, or impertinence, may raise a laugh for a page or two. A preface is frequently a superior composition to the work itself; for, long before the days of Johnson, it had been a custom with many authors to solicit for this department of their work the orna-

mental contribution of a man of genius. Cicero tells his friend Atticus, that he had a volume of prefaces or introductions always ready by him to be used as circumstances required. These must have been like our periodical essays. A good preface is as essential to put the reader into good humour, as a good prologue is to a play, or a fine symphony to an opera, containing something analogous to the work itself; so that we may feel its want as a desire not elsewhere to be gratified. The Italians call the preface *La salsa del libro*, the sauce of the book, and if well seasoned it creates an appetite in the reader to devour the book itself. A preface badly composed prejudices the reader against the work. Authors are not equally fortunate in these little introductions; some can compose volumes more skilfully than prefaces, and others can finish a preface who could never be capable of finishing a book.

On a very elegant preface prefixed to an ill-written book, it was observed that they ought never to have *come together*; a sarcastic wit remarked that he considered such *marriages* were allowable, for they were *not of kin*.

In prefaces an affected haughtiness or an affected humility are alike despicable. There is a deficient dignity in Robertson's; but the haughtiness is now to our purpose. This is called by

the French "*La Morgue litteraire*," the surly pomposity of literature. It is sometimes used by writers who have succeeded in their first work, while the failure of their subsequent productions appears to have given them a literary hypochondriasm. Dr. Armstrong, after his classical poem, never shook hands cordially with the public for not relishing his barren labours. In the *preface* to his lively "Sketches" he tells us, "he could give them much bolder strokes as well as more delicate touches, but that he *dreads the danger of writing too well*, and feels the value of his own labour too sensibly to bestow it upon the *mobility*." This is pure milk compared to the gall in the *preface* to his poems. There he tells us, "that at last he has taken the *trouble to collect them!* What he has destroyed would, probably enough, have been better received by the *great majority of readers*. But he has always *most heartily despised their opinion*." These prefaces remind one of the *prologi galeati*, prefaces with a helmet! as St. Jerome entitles the one to his Version of the Scriptures. These *armed prefaces* were formerly very common in the age of literary controversy; for half the business of an author consisted then, either in replying, or anticipating a reply, to the attacks of his opponent.

Prefaces ought to be dated, as these become

after a series of editions leading and useful circumstances in literary history.

Fuller with quaint humour observes on INDEXES —“ An INDEX is a necessary implement, and no impediment of a book, except in the same sense wherein the carriages of an army are termed *Impedimenta*. Without this, a large author is but a labyrinth without a clue to direct the reader therein. I confess there is a lazy kind of learning which is *only Indical*; when scholars (like adders which only bite the horse's heels) nibble but at the tables, which are *calces librorum*, neglecting the body of the book. But though the idle deserve no crutches (let not a staff be used by them, but on them), pity it is the weary should be denied the benefit thereof, and industrious scholars prohibited the accommodation of an index, most used by those who most pretend to contemn it.”

THE ANCIENTS AND MODERNS.

FREQUENT and violent disputes have arisen on the subject of the preference to be given to the ancients, or the moderns. The controversy of Perrault and Boileau makes a considerable figure in French literature; the last of whom said that the ancients had been moderns, but that it was by

no means clear the moderns would become ancients. The dispute extended to England; Sir William Temple raised even his gentle indolence against the bold attacks of the rough Wotton. The literary world was pestered and tired with this dispute, which at length got into the hands of insolence and ignorance. Swift's "Battle of the books," by his irresistible vein of keen satire, seems to have laid this "perturbed spirit." Yet, surely, it had been better if these acrid and absurd controversies had never disgraced the republic of letters. The advice of Sidonius Apollinaris is excellent; he says, that we should read the ancients with *respect*, and the moderns without *envy*.

SOME INGENIOUS THOUGHTS.

APULEIUS calls those neck-kerchiefs so glassy fine, (may I so express myself?) which, in veiling, discover the beautiful bosom of a woman, *ventum textilem*; which may be translated *woven air*. It is an expression beautifully fanciful.

A Greek poet wrote this inscription for a statue of Niobe—

The Gods, from living, turned me to stone;
Praxiteles, from stone, restored me to life.

P. Commire, a pleasing writer of Latin verse, says of the flight of a butterfly,

Florem putares nare per liquidum æthera.

It FLIES, and swims a *flower* in liquid air!

Voiture, in addressing Cardinal Richelieu, says, —How much more affecting is it to hear one's praises from the mouth of the *people*, than from that of the *poets*.

Cervantes, with an elevation of sentiment, observes that one of the greatest advantages which princes possess above other men, is that of being attended by servants as great as themselves.

——— Lususque salesque,

Sed lectos pelago, quo Venus orta, sales.

This is written by a moden Latin poet; but is in Plutarch, in the comparison of Aristophanes and Menander; “In the comedies of Menander there is a natural and divine salt, as if it proceeded from that sea where Venus took her birth.” This beautiful thought, observes Monnoye, has been employed by seven or eight modern writers.

Seneca, amongst many strained sentiments, and trivial points, has frequently a happy thought. As this on *anger*: “I wish that the ferocity of this passion could be spent at its first appearance, so that it might injure but *once*: as in the case of

the bees, whose sting is destroyed for ever at the first puncture it occasions."

Aristænetus says of a beauty, that she seemed *most* beautiful when *dressed*; yet not *less* beautiful when *undressed*. Of *two* beauties he says, "they yielded to the *Graces* only in *number*."

Menage has these two terse and pointed lines on the portrait of a lady—

"Ce portrait ressemble à la belle,
Il est insensible comme elle!"

In this portrait, my fair, thy resemblance I see;
An insensible charmer it is—just like thee!

A French poet has admirably expressed the instantaneous sympathy of two lovers. A princess is relating to her *confidante* the birth of her passion:

"Et comme un jeune cœur est bientot enflammé,
Il me vit, il m'aima, je le vis, je l'aimai."

Soon is the youthful heart by passion moved:
He saw, and loved me—him I saw, and loved.

Calderon is more extravagant still; he says on a similar occasion—

"I saw and I loved her so nearly together, that I do not know if I saw her before I loved her, or loved her before I saw her."

An old French poet, Pichou, in his imitation of

Bonarelli's *Filli de Sciro*, has this ingenious thought. A nymph is discovered by her lover, fainting under an umbrageous oak—the conflict of beauty and horror is described by a pretty conceit—

“ Si l'amour se mouroit, on diroit, le voici !
Et si la mort aimoit, on la peindroit ainsi.”

If Love were dying, we should think him here !
If Death could love, he would be pictured thus !

The same lover consents at length that his mistress shall love his rival, and not inelegantly expresses his feelings in the perplexed situation.

“ Je veux bien que ton ame un double amour s'assemble

Tu peux aimer sans crime Aminte et Nise ensemble.
Et lors que le trepas finira mes douleurs
Avoir pour l'un des feux, et pour l'autre des pleurs.”

Yes with a double love thy soul may burn ;
Oh 'tis no crime to love Aminte and Nise !
And when in my last hour my grief shall close,
Give one your fires, and give the other tears !

It was said of Petronius, that he was *pura impuritas* ; purely impure. *Pura*, because of his style ; *impuritas*, because of his obscenities.

Quam multa ! quam paucis ! is a fine expression, which was employed to characterise a concise style pregnant with meaning.

How tenderly does Tasso, in one verse, de-

scribe his *Olindo*! So much love and so much modesty!

“ *Brama assai, poco spera, nulla chiede.*”

An exquisite verse, which Hoole entirely passes over in his version, but which Fairfax's finer feeling preserves:

—————“ He, full of bashfulness and truth,
Loved much, hoped little, and desired nought.”

It was said of an exquisite portrait, that to judge by the eye it did not want speech; for this only could be detected by the ear.

*Manca il parlar ; di vivo altro non chiedi :
Ne manca questo ancor, S'agli occhi credi.*

Perrault has very poetically informed us, that the ancients were ignorant of the circulation of the blood—

“ — Ignoroit jusqu'aux routes certaines
Du meandre vivant qui coule dans les veines.”

Unknown to them what devious course maintains
The live meander flowing in their veins.

An Italian poet makes a lover, who has survived his mistress, thus sweetly express himself—

“ *Piango la sua morte, e la mia vita.*”
Much I deplore her death, and much my life.

It has been usual for poets to say, that rivers flow to convey their tributary streams to the sea. This figure, being a mark of subjection, proved offensive to the patriotic Tasso; and he has ingeniously said of the river *Po*, because of its rapidity—

“ Pare

Che porti guerra, e non tributo al mare.”

See rapid *Po* to Ocean's empire bring

A war, and not a *tribute*, from his spring!

EARLY PRINTING.

THERE is some probability that this art originated in China, where it was practised long before it was known in Europe. Some European traveller might have imported the hint. That the Romans did not practise the art of printing cannot but excite our astonishment, since they really possessed the art, and may be said to have enjoyed it, unconscious of their rich possession. I have seen Roman stereotypes, or printing immoveable types with which they stamped their pottery. How in daily practising the art, though confined to this object, it did not occur to so ingenious a people to print their literary works, is not easily to be accounted for. Did the wise and grave

senate dread those inconveniences which attend its indiscriminate use? Or perhaps they did not care to deprive so large a body as their scribes of their business. Not a hint of the art itself appears in their writings.

When first the art of printing was discovered, they only made use of one side of a leaf; they had not yet found out the expedient of impressing the other. Specimens of these early printed books are in his Majesty's and Lord Spencer's libraries. Afterwards they thought of pasting the blank sides, which made them appear like one leaf. Their blocks were made of soft woods, and their letters were carved; but frequently breaking, the expense and trouble of carving and gluing new letters suggested our moveable types, which have produced an almost miraculous celerity in this art. Our modern stereotype consists of entire pages in solid blocks of metal, and, not being liable to break like the soft wood at first used, is profitably employed for works which require to be perpetually reprinted. Printing in carved blocks of wood must have greatly retarded the progress of universal knowledge: for one set of types could only have produced one work, whereas it now serves for hundreds.

When their editions were intended to be curious, they omitted to print the first letter of a chapter,

for which they left a blank space, that it might be painted or illuminated, to the fancy of the purchaser. Several ancient volumes of these early times have been found where these letters are wanting, as they neglected to have them printed.

The initial carved letter, which is generally a fine wood-cut, among our printed books, is evidently a remains or imitation of these ornaments. Among the very earliest books printed, which were religious, the Poor Man's Bible has wooden cuts in a coarse style, without the least shadowing or crossing of strokes, and these they inelegantly daubed over with colours, which they termed illuminating, and sold at a cheap rate to those who could not afford to purchase costly missals, elegantly written and painted on vellum. Specimens of these rude efforts of illuminated prints may be seen in Strutt's Dictionary of Engravers. The Bodleian library possesses the originals.

In the productions of early printing may be distinguished the various splendid editions they made of *Primers*, or *Prayer-books*. They were embellished with cuts finished in a most elegant taste: many of them were ludicrous, and several were obscene. In one of them an angel is represented crowning the Virgin Mary, and God the Father himself assisting at the ceremony. Sometimes St. Michael is overcoming Satan; and sometimes St.

Anthony is attacked by various devils of most clumsy forms—not of the grotesque and limber family of Callot!

Printing was gradually practised throughout Europe from the year 1440 to 1500. Caxton and his successor Wynkyn De Worde, were our own earliest printers. Caxton was a wealthy merchant, who in 1464, being sent by Edward IV. to negotiate a commercial treaty with the Duke of Burgundy, returned to his country with this invaluable art. Notwithstanding his mercantile habits he possessed a literary taste, and his first work was a translation from a French historical miscellany.

The tradition of the Devil and Dr. Faustus was derived from the odd circumstance in which the Bibles of the first printer, Fust, appeared to the world. When he had discovered this new art, and printed off a considerable number of copies of the bible, to imitate those which were commonly sold in mss., he undertook the sale of them at Paris. It was his interest to conceal this discovery, and to pass off his printed copies for mss. But as he was enabled to sell his bibles at sixty crowns, while the other scribes demanded five hundred, this raised universal astonishment; and still more when he produced copies as fast as they were wanted, and even lowered his price. The uniformity of the copies increased wonder. In-

formations were given in to the magistrates against him as a magician; and in searching his lodgings a great number of copies were found. The red ink, and Fust's red ink is peculiarly brilliant, which embellished his copies was said to be his blood; and it was solemnly adjudged that he was in league with the devil. Fust was at length obliged, to save himself from a bonfire, to reveal his art to the Parliament of Paris, who discharged him from all prosecution in consideration of this useful invention.

When the art of printing was established, it became the glory of the learned to be correctors of the press to eminent printers. Physicians, lawyers, and bishops themselves, occupied this department. The printers then added frequently to their names those of the correctors of the press; and editions were then valued according to the abilities of the corrector.

The *prices* of books in these times were considered as an object worthy of the animadversions of the highest powers. This anxiety in favour of the studious, appears from a privilege of Pope Leo X. to Aldus Manutius for printing Varro, dated 1553, signed Cardinal Bembo. Aldus is exhorted to put a moderate price on the work, lest the Pope should withdraw the privilege, and accord it to others.

Robert Stephens, one of the early printers, surpassed in correctness those who exercised the same profession. It is said that to render his editions immaculate, he hung up the proofs in public places, and generously recompensed those who were so fortunate as to detect any errata.

Plantin, though a learned man, is more famous as a printer. His printing-office claims our admiration: it was one of the wonders of Europe. This grand building was the chief ornament of the city of Antwerp. Magnificent in its structure, it presented to the spectator a countless number of presses, characters of all figures and all sizes, matrixes to cast letters, and all other printing materials; which Baillet assures us amounted to immense sums.

In Italy, the three Manutii were more solicitous of correctness and illustrations than of the beauty of their printing. It was the character of the scholar, not of the printer, of which they were ambitious.

It is much to be regretted that our publishers are not literary men. Among the learned printers formerly a book was valued because it came from the presses of an Aldus or a Stephens; and even in our time the names of Bowyer and Dodsley sanctioned a work. Pelisson in his history of the French academy tells us that Camusat was selected as their bookseller, from his reputation for publish-

ing only valuable works. "He was a man of some literature and good sense, and rarely printed an indifferent work; when we were young I recollect that we always made it a rule to purchase his publications. His name was a test of the goodness of the work." A publisher of this character would be of the greatest utility to the literary world; at home he would induce a number of ingenious men to become authors, for it would be honourable to be inscribed in his catalogue; and it would be a direction for the continental reader.

So valuable an union of learning and printing did not, unfortunately, last. The printers of the seventeenth century became less charmed with glory than with gain. Their correctors and their letters, evinced as little delicacy of choice.

The invention of what is now called the *Italic* letter in printing was made by Aldus Manutius, to whom learning owes much. He observed the many inconveniences resulting from the vast number of *abbreviations*, which were then so frequent among the printers, that a book was difficult to understand; a treatise was actually written on the art of reading a printed book, and this addressed to the learned! He contrived an expedient, by which these abbreviations might be entirely got rid of, and yet books suffer little increase in bulk. This he effected by introducing what is now called

Italic letter, though it formerly was distinguished by the name of the inventor, hence called the *Aldine*.

ERRATA.

BESIDES the ordinary *errata*, which happen in printing a work, others have been purposely committed that the *errata* may contain what is not permitted to appear in the body of the work. Wherever the Inquisition had any power, particularly at Rome, it was not allowed to employ the word *fatum*, or *fata*, in any book. An author, desirous of using the latter word, adroitly invented this scheme: he had printed in his book *facta*, and, in the *errata*, he put, for *facta*, read *fata*.

Scarron has done the same thing on another occasion. He had composed some verses, at the head of which he placed this dedication—*A Guillemette, Chienne de ma Sœur*; but having a quarrel with his sister, he maliciously put into the *errata*, instead of *Chienne de ma Sœur*, read *ma Chienne de Sœur*.

Lully at the close of a bad prologue said, the word *fin du prologue* was an *erratum*, it should have been *fi du prologue*.

In a book, there was printed *le docte Morel*. A

wag put into the *errata*, for *le docte Morel*, read *le docteur Morel*. This *Morel* was not the first *docteur* not *docte*.

When a fanatic published a mystical work full of unintelligible raptures, and which he entitled *Les Delices de l'Esprit*, it was proposed to print in his *errata*, for *Delices*, read *Delires*.

When the author of an idle and imperfect book ended with the usual phrase of *cetera desiderantur*, one altered it *non desiderantur sed desunt*; the rest is *wanting*, but not *wanted*.

At the close of a silly book, the author as usual printed the word FINIS—A wit put this among the *errata*, with this pointed couplet;

FINIS! an error, or a lye, my friend!
In writing foolish books—there is *no End!*

In the year 1561, was printed a work, entitled the Anatomy of the Mass. It is a thin octavo, of 172 pages, and it is accompanied by an *Errata* of 15 pages! The editor, a pious Monk, informs us that a very serious reason induced him to undertake this task: for it is, says he, to forestal the *artifices of Satan*. He supposes that the Devil, to ruin the fruit of this work, employed two very malicious frauds: the first before it was printed, by drenching the ms. in a kennel, and having reduced it to a most pitiable state, rendered several

parts illegible : the second, in obliging the printers to commit such numerous blunders, never yet equalled in so small a work. To combat this double machination of Satan he was obliged carefully to re-peruse the work, and to form this singular list of the blunders of printers, under the influence of the Devil. All this he relates in an advertisement prefixed to the *Errata*.

A furious controversy raged between two famous scholars from a very laughable but accidental *Erratum* ; and threatened serious consequences to one of the parties. Flavigny wrote two letters, criticising rather freely a polyglot Bible edited by Abraham Ecchellensis. As this learned editor had sometimes censured the labours of a friend of Flavigny, this latter applied to him the third and fifth verses of the seventh chapter of St. Matthew, which he printed in Latin. Ver. 3. *Quid vides festucam in Oculo fratris tui, et trabem in Oculo tuo non vides.* Ver. 5. *Ejice primum trabem de Oculo tuo, et tunc videbis ejicere festucam de Oculo fratris tui.* Ecchellensis opens his reply by accusing Flavigny of an *enormous crime* committed in this passage ; attempting to correct the sacred text of the Evangelist, and daringly to reject a word, while he supplied its place by another as *impious* as *obscene* ! This crime, exaggerated with all the virulence of an angry declaimer, closes with a

dreadful accusation. Flavigny's morals are attacked, and his reputation overturned by a horrid imputation. Yet all this terrible reproach is only founded on an *Erratum!* The whole arose from the printer having negligently suffered the *first letter* of the word *Oculo* to have dropped from the form, when he happened to touch a line with his finger which did not stand straight! He published another letter to do away the imputation of Echellensis; but thirty years afterwards his rage against the negligent printer was not extinguished; certain wits were always reminding him of it.

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It appears by a calculation made by the printer of Steevens's edition of Shakspeare, that every octavo page of that work, text and notes, contains 2680 distinct pieces of metal; which in a sheet amount to 42,880—the misplacing of any one of which would inevitably cause a blunder!—With this curious fact before us, the accurate state of our printing, in general, is to be admired, and

errata ought more freely to be pardoned than the fastidious minuteness of the insect eye of certain critics has allowed.

Whether such a miracle as an immaculate edition of a classical author does exist, I have never learnt; but an attempt has been made to obtain this glorious singularity—and was as nearly realised as is perhaps possible: the magnificent edition of *As Lusíadas* of Camoens, by Dom Joze Souza, in 1817. This amateur spared no prodigality of cost and labour, and flattered himself that by the assistance of Didot, not a single typographical error should be found in that splendid volume. But an error was afterwards discovered in some of the copies, occasioned by one of the letters in the word *Lusitano* having got misplaced during the working of one of the sheets. It must be confessed that this was an *accident* or *misfortune*—rather than an *Erratum*!

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PATRONS.

AUTHORS have too frequently received ill treatment, even from those to whom they dedicated their works.

Some who felt hurt at the shameless treatment of such mock Mæcenases have observed that no writer should dedicate his works but to his FRIENDS; as was practised by the ancients, who usually addressed theirs to those who had solicited their labours, or animated their progress.

Theodosius Gaza had no other recompense for having inscribed to Sixtus IV. his translation of the book of Aristotle on the Nature of Animals, than the price of the binding, which this charitable

father of the church munificently bestowed upon him.

Theocritus fills his Idylliums with loud complaints of the neglect of his patrons; and Tasso was as little successful in his dedications.

Ariosto, in presenting his *Orlando Furioso* to the Cardinal d'Este, was gratified with the bitter sarcasm of—" *Dove diavolo avete pigliato tante coglionerie?*" Where the devil have you found all this stuff?

When the French historian Dupleix, whose pen was indeed fertile, presented his book to the Duke d'Epemon, this Mæcenas, turning to the Pope's Nuncio, who was present, very coarsely exclaimed—" *Cadedis! ce Monsieur a un flux enragé, il chie un livre toutes les lunes!*"

Thomson, the ardent author of the *Seasons*, having extravagantly praised a person of rank, who afterwards appeared to be undeserving of eulogiums, properly employed his pen in a solemn recantation of his error. A very different conduct from that of Dupleix, who always spoke highly of Queen Margaret of France for a little place he held in her household: but after her death, when the place became extinct, spoke of her with all the freedom of satire. Such is too often the character of some of the *litterati*, who only dare to reveal the truth when they have no interest to conceal it.

Poor Mickle, to whom we are indebted for so beautiful a version of Camoens' *Lusiad*, having dedicated this work, the continued labour of five years, to the Duke of Buccleugh, had the mortification to find, by the discovery of a friend, that he had kept it in his possession three weeks before he could collect sufficient intellectual desire to cut open the first pages! and what is worse, the neglect he had experienced from this nobleman preyed on his mind, and reduced him to a state of despondency. This patron was a political economist, the pupil of Adam Smith! It is pleasing to add, in contrast with this frigid Scotch patron, that when Mickle went to Lisbon, where his translation had passed before him, he found the Prince of Portugal waiting on the quay to be the first to receive the translator of his great national poem; and during a residence of six months, Mickle was warmly regarded by every Portuguese nobleman.

"Every man believes," writes Dr. Johnson, in a letter to Baretti, "that mistresses are unfaithful, and patrons are capricious. But he excepts his own mistress, and his own patron."

A patron is sometimes obtained in an odd way. Benserade attached himself to Cardinal Mazarine; but his friendship produced nothing but civility. The poet every day indulged his easy and charming vein of amatory and panegyric poetry, while

all the world read and admired his verses. One evening the cardinal, in conversation with the king, described his mode of life when at the papal court. He loved the sciences; but his chief occupation was the belles lettres, composing little pieces of poetry; he said that he was then in the court of Rome what Benserade was now in that of France. Some hours afterwards the friends of the poet related to him the conversation of the cardinal. He quitted them abruptly, and ran to the apartment of his eminence, knocking with all his force, that he might be certain of being heard. The cardinal had just gone to bed. In vain they informed him of this circumstance, while he persisted in demanding entrance; and as he continued this incessant disturbance, they were compelled to open the door. He ran to his eminence, fell upon his knees, almost pulled off the sheets of the bed in rapture, imploring a thousand pardons for thus disturbing him, but such was his joy in what he had just heard, which he repeated, that he could not refrain from immediately giving vent to his gratitude and his pride, to have been compared with his eminence for his poetical talents! Had the door not been immediately opened, he should have expired; he was not rich, it is true, but he should now die contented! The cardinal was pleased with his *ardour*, and probably never

suspected his *flattery*; and the next week our new actor was pensioned.

On Cardinal Richelieu, another of his patrons, he gratefully made this epitaph.

Cy gist, ouy gist par la mort bleu
Le Cardinal de Richelieu,
Et ce qui cause mon ennuy
Ma PENSION avec lui.

Here lies, egad, 'tis very true!
The illustrious Cardinal Richelieu:
My grief is genuine—void of whim!
Alas! my *pension* lies with him!

Le Brun, the great French artist, painted his own portrait, holding in his hand that of his earliest patron. In this accompaniment Le Brun may be said to have portrayed the features of his soul, as his pencil had his physiognomy. If genius has too often complained of its patrons, it has often too over-valued their protection.

POETS, PHILOSOPHERS, AND ARTISTS, MADE BY ACCIDENT.

ACCIDENT has frequently occasioned the most eminent geniuses to display their powers. It was at Rome, says Gibbon, on the 15th of October,

1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind.

Father Malebranche having completed his studies in philosophy and theology without any other intention than devoting himself to some religious order, little expected the celebrity his works acquired for him. Loitering in an idle hour in the shop of a bookseller, and turning over a parcel of books, *L'Homme de Descartes* fell into his hands. Having dipt into some parts, he read with such delight, that the palpitations of his heart compelled him to lay the volume down. It was this circumstance that produced those profound contemplations which made him the Plato of his age.

Cowley became a poet by accident. In his mother's apartment he found, when very young, Spenser's *Fairy Queen*; and, by a continual study of poetry, he became so enchanted of the Muse, that he grew irrecoverably a poet.

Dr. Johnson informs us, that Sir Joshua Reynolds had the first fondness for his art excited by the perusal of Richardson's *Treatise*.

Vaucanson displayed an uncommon genius for mechanics. His taste was first determined by an accident; when young, he frequently attended his

mother to the residence of her confessor; and while she wept with repentance, he wept with weariness! In this state of disagreeable vacation, says Helvetius, he was struck with the uniform motion of the pendulum of the clock in the hall. His curiosity was roused; he approached the clock case, and studied its mechanism; what he could not discover, he guessed at. He then projected a similar machine; and gradually his genius produced a clock. Encouraged by this first success, he proceeded in his various attempts; and the genius which thus could form a clock, in time formed a fluting automaton.

“ If Shakspeare’s imprudence had not obliged him to quit his wool trade, and his town; if he had not engaged with a company of actors, and at length, disgusted with being an indifferent performer, he had not turned author; the prudent woollseller had never been the celebrated poet.”

“ Accident determined the taste of Moliere for the stage. His grandfather loved the theatre, and frequently carried him there. The young man lived in dissipation: the father observing it, asked in anger, if his son was to be made an actor. ‘ Would to God,’ replied the grandfather, ‘ he was as good an actor as Montrose.’ The words struck young Moliere; he took a disgust to his tapestry trade; and it is to this circumstance France owes her greatest comic writer.”

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Le Brun, the great French artist, painted his own portrait, holding in his hand that of his earliest patron. In this accompaniment Le Brun may be said to have portrayed the features of his soul, as his pencil had his physiognomy. If genius has too often complained of its patrons, it has often too over-valued their protection.

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senate dread those inconveniences which attend its indiscriminate use? Or perhaps they did not care to deprive so large a body as their scribes of their business. Not a hint of the art itself appears in their writings.

When first the art of printing was discovered, they only made use of one side of a leaf; they had not yet found out the expedient of impressing the other. Specimens of these early printed books are in his Majesty's and Lord Spencer's libraries. Afterwards they thought of pasting the blank sides, which made them appear like one leaf. Their blocks were made of soft woods, and their letters were carved; but frequently breaking, the expense and trouble of carving and gluing new letters suggested our moveable types, which have produced an almost miraculous celerity in this art. Our modern stereotype consists of entire pages in solid blocks of metal, and, not being liable to break like the soft wood at first used, is profitably employed for works which require to be perpetually reprinted. Printing in carved blocks of wood must have greatly retarded the progress of universal knowledge: for one set of types could only have produced one work, whereas it now serves for hundreds.

When their editions were intended to be curious, they omitted to print the first letter of a chapter,

for which they left a blank space, that it might be painted or illuminated, to the fancy of the purchaser. Several ancient volumes of these early times have been found where these letters are wanting, as they neglected to have them printed.

The initial carved letter, which is generally a fine wood-cut, among our printed books, is evidently a remains or imitation of these ornaments. Among the very earliest books printed, which were religious, the Poor Man's Bible has wooden cuts in a coarse style, without the least shadowing or crossing of strokes, and these they inelegantly daubed over with colours, which they termed illuminating, and sold at a cheap rate to those who could not afford to purchase costly missals, elegantly written and painted on vellum. Specimens of these rude efforts of illuminated prints may be seen in Strutt's Dictionary of Engravers. The Bodleian library possesses the originals.

In the productions of early printing may be distinguished the various splendid editions they made of *Primers*, or *Prayer-books*. They were embellished with cuts finished in a most elegant taste: many of them were ludicrous, and several were obscene. In one of them an angel is represented crowning the Virgin Mary, and God the Father himself assisting at the ceremony. Sometimes St. Michael is overcoming Satan; and sometimes St.

Anthony is attacked by various devils of most clumsy forms—not of the grotesque and limber family of Callot!

Printing was gradually practised throughout Europe from the year 1440 to 1500. Caxton and his successor Wynkyn De Worde, were our own earliest printers. Caxton was a wealthy merchant, who in 1464, being sent by Edward IV. to negotiate a commercial treaty with the Duke of Burgundy, returned to his country with this invaluable art. Notwithstanding his mercantile habits he possessed a literary taste, and his first work was a translation from a French historical miscellany.

The tradition of the Devil and Dr. Faustus was derived from the odd circumstance in which the Bibles of the first printer, Fust, appeared to the world. When he had discovered this new art, and printed off a considerable number of copies of the bible, to imitate those which were commonly sold in mss., he undertook the sale of them at Paris. It was his interest to conceal this discovery, and to pass off his printed copies for mss. But as he was enabled to sell his bibles at sixty crowns, while the other scribes demanded five hundred, this raised universal astonishment; and still more when he produced copies as fast as they were wanted, and even lowered his price. The uniformity of the copies increased wonder. In-

formations were given in to the magistrates against him as a magician; and in searching his lodgings a great number of copies were found. The red ink, and Fust's red ink is peculiarly brilliant, which embellished his copies was said to be his blood; and it was solemnly adjudged that he was in league with the devil. Fust was at length obliged, to save himself from a bonfire, to reveal his art to the Parliament of Paris, who discharged him from all prosecution in consideration of this useful invention.

When the art of printing was established, it became the glory of the learned to be correctors of the press to eminent printers. Physicians, lawyers, and bishops themselves, occupied this department. The printers then added frequently to their names those of the correctors of the press; and editions were then valued according to the abilities of the corrector.

The *prices* of books in these times were considered as an object worthy of the animadversions of the highest powers. This anxiety in favour of the studious, appears from a privilege of Pope Leo X. to Aldus Manutius for printing Varro, dated 1553, signed Cardinal Bembo. Aldus is exhorted to put a moderate price on the work, lest the Pope should withdraw the privilege, and accord it to others.

Robert Stephens, one of the early printers, surpassed in correctness those who exercised the same profession. It is said that to render his editions immaculate, he hung up the proofs in public places, and generously recompensed those who were so fortunate as to detect any errata.

Plantin, though a learned man, is more famous as a printer. His printing-office claims our admiration: it was one of the wonders of Europe. This grand building was the chief ornament of the city of Antwerp. Magnificent in its structure, it presented to the spectator a countless number of presses, characters of all figures and all sizes, matrixes to cast letters, and all other printing materials; which Baillet assures us amounted to immense sums.

In Italy, the three Manutii were more solicitous of correctness and illustrations than of the beauty of their printing. It was the character of the scholar, not of the printer, of which they were ambitious.

It is much to be regretted that our publishers are not literary men. Among the learned printers formerly a book was valued because it came from the presses of an Aldus or a Stephens; and even in our time the names of Bowyer and Dodsley sanctioned a work. Pelisson in his history of the French academy tells us that Camusat was selected as their bookseller, from his reputation for publish-

ing only valuable works. "He was a man of some literature and good sense, and rarely printed an indifferent work; when we were young I recollect that we always made it a rule to purchase his publications. His name was a test of the goodness of the work." A publisher of this character would be of the greatest utility to the literary world; at home he would induce a number of ingenious men to become authors, for it would be honourable to be inscribed in his catalogue; and it would be a direction for the continental reader.

So valuable an union of learning and printing did not, unfortunately, last. The printers of the seventeenth century became less charmed with glory than with gain. Their correctors and their letters, evinced as little delicacy of choice.

The invention of what is now called the *Italic* letter in printing was made by Aldus Manutius, to whom learning owes much. He observed the many inconveniences resulting from the vast number of *abbreviations*, which were then so frequent among the printers, that a book was difficult to understand; a treatise was actually written on the art of reading a printed book, and this addressed to the learned! He contrived an expedient, by which these abbreviations might be entirely got rid of, and yet books suffer little increase in bulk. This he effected by introducing what is now called

Italic letter, though it formerly was distinguished by the name of the inventor, hence called the *Aldine*.

ERRATA.

BESIDES the ordinary *errata*, which happen in printing a work, others have been purposely committed that the *errata* may contain what is not permitted to appear in the body of the work. Wherever the Inquisition had any power, particularly at Rome, it was not allowed to employ the word *fatum*, or *fata*, in any book. An author, desirous of using the latter word, adroitly invented this scheme: he had printed in his book *facta*, and, in the *errata*, he put, for *facta*, read *fata*.

Scarron has done the same thing on another occasion. He had composed some verses, at the head of which he placed this dedication—*A Guillemette, Chienne de ma Sœur*; but having a quarrel with his sister, he maliciously put into the *errata*, instead of *Chienne de ma Sœur*, read *ma Chienne de Sœur*.

Lully at the close of a bad prologue said, the word *fin du prologue* was an *erratum*, it should have been *fi du prologue*.

In a book, there was printed *le docte Morel*. A

wag put into the *errata*, for *le docte Morel*, read *le docteur Morel*. This *Morel* was not the first *docteur* not *docte*.

When a fanatic published a mystical work full of unintelligible raptures, and which he entitled *Les Delices de l'Esprit*, it was proposed to print in his *errata*, for *Delices*, read *Delires*.

When the author of an idle and imperfect book ended with the usual phrase of *cetera desiderantur*, one altered it *non desiderantur sed desunt*; the rest is *wanting*, but not *wanted*.

At the close of a silly book, the author as usual printed the word FINIS—A wit put this among the *errata*, with this pointed couplet;

FINIS! an error, or a lye, my friend!
In writing foolish books—there is *no End!*

In the year 1561, was printed a work, entitled the *Anatomy of the Mass*. It is a thin octavo, of 172 pages, and it is accompanied by an *Errata* of 15 pages! The editor, a pious Monk, informs us that a very serious reason induced him to undertake this task: for it is, says he, to forestal the *artifices of Satan*. He supposes that the Devil, to ruin the fruit of this work, employed two very malicious frauds: the first before it was printed, by drenching the ms. in a kennel, and having reduced it to a most pitiable state, rendered several

parts illegible : the second, in obliging the printers to commit such numerous blunders, never yet equalled in so small a work. To combat this double machination of Satan he was obliged carefully to re-peruse the work, and to form this singular list of the blunders of printers, under the influence of the Devil. All this he relates in an advertisement prefixed to the *Errata*.

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bull of the editorial Pope prefixed to the first volume, which excommunicates all printers who in reprinting the work should make any *alteration* in the text!

In a version of the Epistles of St. Paul into the Ethiopic language, which proved to be full of errors, the editors allege a very good-humoured reason—"They who printed the work could not read, and we could not print; they helped us, and we helped them, as the blind helps the blind."

A printer's widow in Germany, while a new edition of the Bible was printing at her house, one night took an opportunity of going into the office, to alter that sentence of subjection to her husband, pronounced upon Eve in Genesis, Chap. 3. v. 16. She took out the two first letters of the word HERR, and substituted NA in their place, thus altering the sentence from "and he shall be thy LORD," (*Herr*) to "and he shall be thy FOOL," (*Narr*). It is said her life paid for this intentional erratum; and that some secreted copies of this edition have been bought up at enormous prices.

We have an edition of the Bible, known by the name of *The Vinegar Bible*; from the erratum in the title to the 20th Chap. of St. Luke, in which "Parable of the *Vineyard*," is printed "Parable of the *Vinegar*." It was printed in 1717, at the Clarendon press.

We have had another, where "Thou shalt commit adultery" was printed, omitting the negation; which occasioned the archbishop to lay one of the heaviest penalties on the Company of Stationers that was ever recorded in the annals of literary history.

Herbert Croft used to complain of the incorrectness of our English classics, as reprinted by the booksellers. It is evident some stupid printer often changes a whole text intentionally. The fine description by Akenside of the Pantheon, "SEVERELY great," not being understood by the blockhead, was printed *serenely great*. Swift's own edition of "the City Shower," has "old ACHES throb." *Aches* is two syllables, but modern printers, who had lost the right pronunciation, have *aches* as one syllable; and then to complete the metre, have foisted in "aches *will* throb." Thus what the poet and the linguist wish to preserve is altered, and finally lost.

It appears by a calculation made by the printer of Steevens's edition of Shakspeare, that every octavo page of that work, text and notes, contains 2680 distinct pieces of metal; which in a sheet amount to 42,880—the misplacing of any one of which would inevitably cause a blunder!—With this curious fact before us, the accurate state of our printing, in general, is to be admired, and

errata ought more freely to be pardoned than the fastidious minuteness of the insect eye of certain critics has allowed.

Whether such a miracle as an immaculate edition of a classical author does exist, I have never learnt; but an attempt has been made to obtain this glorious singularity—and was as nearly realised as is perhaps possible: the magnificent edition of *As Lusíadas* of Camoens, by Dom Joze Souza, in 1817. This amateur spared no prodigality of cost and labour, and flattered himself that by the assistance of Didot, not a single typographical error should be found in that splendid volume. But an error was afterwards discovered in some of the copies, occasioned by one of the letters in the word *Lusitano* having got misplaced during the working of one of the sheets. It must be confessed that this was an *accident* or *misfortune*—rather than an *Erratum!*

One of the most remarkable complaints on ERRATA is that of Edw. Leigh, appended to his curious treatise “on Religion and Learning.” It consists of two folio pages, in a very minute character, and exhibits an incalculable number of printers’ blunders. “We have not,” he says, “Plantin nor Stephens amongst us; and it is no easy task to specify the chiefest errata; false inter-punctuations there are too many; here a letter want-

ing, there a letter too much; a syllable too much, one letter for another; words parted where they should be joined; words joined which should be severed; words misplaced; chronological mistakes, &c." This unfortunate folio was printed in 1656. Are we to infer by such frequent complaints of the authors of that day, that either they did not receive proofs from the printers, or that the printers never attended to the corrected proofs? Each single erratum seems to have been felt as a stab to the literary feelings of the poor author!

PATRONS.

AUTHORS have too frequently received ill treatment, even from those to whom they dedicated their works.

Some who felt hurt at the shameless treatment of such mock Mæcenases have observed that no writer should dedicate his works but to his FRIENDS; as was practised by the ancients, who usually addressed theirs to those who had solicited their labours, or animated their progress.

Theodosius Gaza had no other recompense for having inscribed to Sixtus IV. his translation of the book of Aristotle on the Nature of Animals, than the price of the binding, which this charitable

father of the church munificently bestowed upon him.

Theocritus fills his Idylliums with loud complaints of the neglect of his patrons; and Tasso was as little successful in his dedications.

Ariosto, in presenting his Orlando Furioso to the Cardinal d'Este, was gratified with the bitter sarcasm of—" *Dove diavolo avete pigliato tante coglionerie?*" Where the devil have you found all this stuff?

When the French historian Dupleix, whose pen was indeed fertile, presented his book to the Duke d'Epéron, this Mæcnas, turning to the Pope's Nuncio, who was present, very coarsely exclaimed—" *Cadedis! ce Monsieur a un flux enragé, il chie un livre toutes les lunes!*"

Thomson, the ardent author of the Seasons, having extravagantly praised a person of rank, who afterwards appeared to be undeserving of eulogiums, properly employed his pen in a solemn recantation of his error. A very different conduct from that of Dupleix, who always spoke highly of Queen Margaret of France for a little place he held in her household: but after her death, when the place became extinct, spoke of her with all the freedom of satire. Such is too often the character of some of the literati, who only dare to reveal the truth when they have no interest to conceal it.

Poor Mickle, to whom we are indebted for so beautiful a version of Camoens' *Lusiad*, having dedicated this work, the continued labour of five years, to the Duke of Buccleugh, had the mortification to find, by the discovery of a friend, that he had kept it in his possession three weeks before he could collect sufficient intellectual desire to cut open the first pages! and what is worse, the neglect he had experienced from this nobleman preyed on his mind, and reduced him to a state of despondency. This patron was a political economist, the pupil of Adam Smith! It is pleasing to add, in contrast with this frigid Scotch patron, that when Mickle went to Lisbon, where his translation had passed before him, he found the Prince of Portugal waiting on the quay to be the first to receive the translator of his great national poem; and during a residence of six months, Mickle was warmly regarded by every Portuguese nobleman.

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suspected his *flattery*; and the next week our new actor was pensioned.

On Cardinal Richelieu, another of his patrons, he gratefully made this epitaph.

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 Le Cardinal de Richelieu,
 Et ce qui cause mon ennuy
 Ma PENSION avec lui.

Here lies, egad, 'tis very true!
 The illustrious Cardinal Richelieu:
 My grief is genuine—void of whim!
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ACCIDENT has frequently occasioned the most eminent geniuses to display their powers. It was at Rome, says Gibbon, on the 15th of October,

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“ Accident determined the taste of Moliere for the stage. His grandfather loved the theatre, and frequently carried him there. The young man lived in dissipation: the father observing it, asked in anger, if his son was to be made an actor. ‘ Would to God,’ replied the grandfather, ‘ he was as good an actor as Montrose.’ The words struck young Moliere; he took a disgust to his tapestry trade; and it is to this circumstance France owes her greatest comic writer.”

“ Corneille loved; he made verses for his mistress, became a poet, composed *Melite*, and afterwards his other celebrated works. The discreet Corneille had remained a lawyer.”

“ Thus it is, that the devotion of a mother, the death of Cromwell, deer-stealing, the exclamation of an old man, and the beauty of a woman, have given five illustrious characters to Europe.”

We owe the great discovery of Newton to a very trivial accident. When a student at Cambridge, he had retired during the time of the plague into the country. As he was reading under an apple-tree, one of the fruit fell, and struck him a smart blow on the head. When he observed the smallness of the apple, he was surprised at the force of the stroke. This led him to consider the accelerating motion of falling bodies; from whence he deduced the principle of gravity, and laid the foundation of his philosophy.

Ignatius Loyola was a Spanish gentleman, who was dangerously wounded at the siege of Pam-paluna. Having heated his imagination by reading the Lives of the Saints, which were brought to him in his illness, instead of a romance, he conceived a strong ambition to be the founder of a religious order: whence originated the celebrated society of the Jesuits.

Rousseau found his eccentric powers first awakened by the advertisement of the singular

annual subject which the academy of Dijon proposed for that year, in which he wrote his celebrated Declamation against the arts and sciences. A circumstance which determined his future literary efforts.

La Fontaine, at the age of twenty-two, had not taken any profession, or devoted himself to any pursuit. Having accidentally heard some verses of Malherbe, he felt a sudden impulse, which directed his future life. He immediately bought a Malherbe, and was so exquisitely delighted with this poet, that after passing the nights in treasuring his verses in his memory, he would run in the day-time to the woods, where concealing himself, he would recite his verses to the surrounding dryads.

Flamsteed was an astronomer by accident. He was taken from school on account of his illness, when Sacrobosco's book de Sphæra having been lent to him, he was so pleased with it, that he immediately began a course of astronomic studies. Pennant's first propensity to natural history was the pleasure he received from an accidental perusal of Willoughby's work on birds: the same accident, of finding on the table of his professor, Reaumur's History of Insects, of which he read more than he attended to the lecture, and having been refused the loan, gave such an in-

stant turn to the mind of Bonnet, that he hastened to obtain a copy, but found many difficulties in procuring this costly work; its possession gave an unalterable direction to his future life; this naturalist indeed lost the use of his sight by his devotion to the microscope.

Dr. Franklin attributes the cast of his genius to a similar accident. "I found a work of De Foe's, entitled an 'Essay on Projects,' from which perhaps I derived impressions that have since influenced some of the principal events of my life."

I shall add the incident which occasioned Roger Ascham to write his *Schoolmaster*, one of the most curious and useful treatises among our elder writers.

At a dinner given by Sir William Cecil, during the plague in 1563, at his apartments at Windsor, where the queen had taken refuge, a number of ingenious men were invited. Secretary Cecil communicated the news of the morning, that several scholars at Eton had run away on account of their master's severity, which he condemned as a great error in the education of youth. Sir William Petre maintained the contrary; severe in his own temper, he pleaded warmly in defence of hard flogging. Dr. Wootton, in softer tones, sided with the Secretary. Sir John Mason, adopting no side, bantered both. Mr. Haddon seconded the hard-

hearted Sir William Petre, and adduced, as an evidence, that the best schoolmaster then in England was the hardest flogger. Then was it that Roger Ascham indignantly exclaimed, that if such a master had an able scholar it was owing to the boy's genius, and not the preceptor's rod. Secretary Cecil and others were pleased with Ascham's notions. Sir Richard Sackville was silent, but when Ascham after dinner went to the queen to read one of the orations of Demosthenes, he took him aside, and frankly told him that though he had taken no part in the debate, he would not have been absent from that conversation for a great deal; that he knew to his cost the truth Ascham had supported; for it was the perpetual flogging of such a schoolmaster, that had given him an unconquerable aversion to study. And as he wished to remedy this defect in his own children, he earnestly exhorted Ascham to write his observations on so interesting a topic. Such was the circumstance which produced the admirable treatise of Roger Ascham.

INEQUALITIES OF GENIUS.

SINGULAR inequalities are observable in the labours of genius; and particularly in those

which admit great enthusiasm, as in poetry, in painting, and in music. Faultless mediocrity industry can preserve in one continued degree; but excellence, the daring and the happy, can only be attained, by human faculties, by starts.

Our poets who possess the greatest genius, with, perhaps, the least industry, have at the same time the most splendid and the worst passages of poetry. Shakespeare and Dryden are at once the greatest and the least of our poets. With some, their great fault consists in having none.

Carraccio sarcastically said of Tintoret—*Ho veduto il Tintoretto hora eguale a Titiano, hora minora del Tintoretto*—"I have seen Tintoret now equal to Titian, and now less than Tintoret."

Trublet very justly observes—The more there are *beauties*, and *great beauties*, in a work, I am the less surprised to find *faults*, and *great faults*. When you say of a work—that it has many faults; that decides nothing: and I do not know by this, whether it is execrable, or excellent. You tell me of another—that it is without any faults; if your account be just, it is certain the work cannot be excellent.

CONCEPTION AND EXPRESSION.

THERE are men who have just thoughts on every subject; but it is not perceived, because their expressions are feeble. They conceive well, but they produce badly.

Erasmus acutely observed—alluding to what then much occupied his mind—that one might be apt to swear that they had been taught, in the confessional cell, all they had learnt; so scrupulous are they of disclosing what they know. Others, again, conceive ill, and produce well; for they express with elegance, frequently, what they do not know.

It was observed of one pleader, that he *knew* more than he *said*; and of another, that he *said* more than he *knew*.

The judicious Quintilian observes, that we ought at first to be more anxious in regard to our conceptions than our expressions—we may attend to the latter afterwards. While Horace thought that expressions will never fail with luminous conceptions. Yet they seem to be different things, for a man may have the clearest conceptions, and at the same time be no pleasing writer; while conceptions of no eminent merit may be very agreeably set off by a warm and colouring diction.

Lucian happily describes the works of those who abound with the most luxuriant language, void of ideas. He calls their unmeaning verbosity anemony-words (*anemonæ verborum*); for anemones are flowers, which, however brilliant, can only please the eye, leaving no fragrance. Pratt, who was a writer of flowing, but nugatory verses, was compared to the *daisy*; a flower indeed, but without the fragrance.

GEOGRAPHICAL DICTION.

THERE are many sciences, says Menage, on which we cannot, indeed, compose in a florid or elegant diction—such as geography, music, algebra, geometry, &c. When Atticus requested Cicero to write on geography, the latter excused himself, observing, that its scenes were more adapted to please the eye than susceptible of the embellishments of style. However, in these kinds of sciences, we may lend an ornament to their dryness by introducing occasionally some elegant allusion, or noticing some incident suggested by the object.

Thus when we notice some inconsiderable place, for instance, *Woodstock*, we may recall attention to the residence of *Chaucer*, the parent of our poetry;

or as a late traveller, in "an Autumn on the Rhine," when at Ingelheim, at the view of an old palace built by Charlemagne, adds, with "a hundred columns brought from Rome," and was "the scene of the romantic amours of that monarch's fair daughter, Ibertha, with Evinhard, his secretary;" and viewing the Gothic ruins on the banks of the Rhine, has noticed them as having been the haunts of those illustrious *chevaliers voleurs*, whose chivalry consisted in pillaging the merchants and towns, till, in the thirteenth century, a citizen of Mayence persuaded the merchants of more than a hundred towns to form a league against these little princes and counts; the origin of the famous Hanseatic league, which contributed so much to the commerce of Europe. This kind of erudition gives an interest to all local histories, and associates in our memory the illustrious personages who were their inhabitants.

The same principle of composition may be carried with the happiest effect into some dry investigations, though the profound antiquary may not approve of these sports of wit or fancy. Dr. Arbuthnot, in his *Tables of Ancient Coins, Weights, and Measures*, a topic extremely barren of amusement, takes every opportunity of enlivening the dulness of his task; even in these mathematical calculations he betrays his wit; and ob-

serves, that "the polite Augustus, the Emperor of the World, had neither any glass in his windows, nor a shirt to his back!" Those uses of glass and linen were, indeed, not known in his time. Our physician is not less curious and facetious in the account of the *fees* which the Roman physicians received.

LEGENDS.

THOSE wild, ludicrous, but often stupid histories entitled *Legends*, are said to have originated in the following circumstance.

Before colleges were established in the monasteries where the schools were held, the professors in rhetoric frequently gave their pupils the life of some saint for a trial of their talent at *amplification*. The students, being constantly at a loss to furnish out their pages, invented most of these wonderful adventures. Jortin observes, that the Christians used to collect out of Ovid, Livy, and other pagan poets and historians, the miracles and portents to be found there, and accommodated them to their own monks and saints. The good fathers of that age, whose simplicity was not inferior to their devotion, were so delighted with these flowers of rhetoric, that they were induced

to make a collection of these miraculous compositions; not imagining that, at some distant period, they would become matters of faith. Yet, when James de Voragine, Peter Nadal, and Peter Ribadeneira, wrote the Lives of the Saints, they sought for their materials in the libraries of the monasteries; and, awakening from the dust these manuscripts of amplification, imagined they made an invaluable present to the world, by laying before them these voluminous absurdities. The people received these pious fictions with all imaginable simplicity, and as the book is adorned with a number of cuts, these miracles were perfectly intelligible to their eyes. Tillemont, Fleury, Baillet, Launoi, and Bollandus, cleared away much of the rubbish; the enviable title of *Golden Legend*, by which James de Voragine called his work, has been disputed; iron or lead might more aptly express the character of this folio.

When the world began to be more critical in their reading, the monks gave a graver turn to their narratives; and became penurious of their absurdities. The faithful Catholic contends, that the line of tradition has been preserved unbroken; notwithstanding that the originals were lost in the general wreck of literature from the barbarians, or came down in a most imperfect state.

Baronius has given the lives of many apocryphal

saints; for instance, of a Saint *Xinoris*, whom he calls a martyr of Antioch; but it appears that Baronius having read in Chrysostom this *word*, which signifies a *couple* or *pair*, he mistook it for the name of a saint, and contrived to give the most authentic biography of a saint who never existed! The Catholics confess this sort of blunder is not uncommon, but then it is only fools who laugh! As a specimen of the happier inventions, one is given, embellished by the diction of Gibbon—

“ Among the insipid legends of ecclesiastical history, I am tempted to distinguish the memorable fable of the *Seven Sleepers*; whose imaginary date corresponds with the reign of the younger Theodosius, and the conquest of Africa by the Vandals. When the Emperor Decius persecuted the Christians, seven noble youths of Ephesus concealed themselves in a spacious cavern, on the side of an adjacent mountain; where they were doomed to perish by the tyrant, who gave orders that the entrance should be firmly secured with a pile of stones. They immediately fell into a deep slumber, which was miraculously prolonged without injuring the powers of life, during a period of one hundred and eighty-seven years. At the end of that time the slaves of Adolius, to whom the inheritance of the mountain had descended, removed the stones to supply materials for some

rustic edifice. The light of the sun darted into the cavern, and the Seven Sleepers were permitted to awake. After a slumber as they thought of a few hours, they were pressed by the calls of hunger; and resolved that Jamblichus, one of their number, should secretly return to the city to purchase bread for the use of his companions. The youth, if we may still employ that appellation, could no longer recognize the once familiar aspect of his native country; and his surprise was increased by the appearance of a large cross, triumphantly erected over the principal gate of Ephesus. His singular dress and obsolete language confounded the baker, to whom he offered an ancient medal of Decius as the current coin of the empire; and Jamblichus, on the suspicion of a secret treasure, was dragged before the judge. Their mutual inquiries produced the amazing discovery, that two centuries were almost elapsed since Jamblichus and his friends had escaped from the rage of a Pagan tyrant. The bishop of Ephesus, the clergy, the magistrates, the people, and, it is said, the Emperor Theodosius himself, hastened to visit the cavern of the Seven Sleepers; who bestowed their benediction, related their story, and at the same instant peaceably expired.

“ This popular tale Mahomet learned when he drove his camels to the fairs of Syria; and he has

introduced it, as a *divine revelation*, into the Koran."—The same story has been adopted and adorned, by the nations from Bengal to Africa, who profess the Mahometan religion.

The too curious reader may perhaps require other specimens of the more unlucky inventions of this "Golden Legend;" as characteristic of a certain class of minds, the philosopher will not condemn these grotesque fictions.

These monks imagined that holiness was often proportioned to a saint's filthiness. St. Ignatius, say they, delighted to appear abroad with old dirty shoes; he never used a comb, but let his hair clot; and religiously abstained from paring his nails. One saint attained to such piety as to have near three hundred patches on his breeches; which, after his death, were hung up in public as an *incentive to imitation*. St. Francis discovered by certain experience that the devils were frightened away by such kind of breeches, but were animated by clean clothing to tempt and seduce the wearers; and one of their heroes declares that the purest souls are in the dirtiest bodies. On this they tell a story which may not be very agreeable to fastidious delicacy. Brother Juniper was a gentleman perfectly pious on this principle; indeed so great was his merit in this species of mortification, that a brother declared he could

always nose Brother Juniper when within a mile of the monastery, provided the wind was at the due point. Once, when the blessed Juniper, for he was no saint, was a guest, his host, proud of the honour of entertaining so pious a personage, the intimate friend of St. Francis, provided an excellent bed, and the finest sheets. Brother Juniper abhorred such luxury. And this too evidently appeared after his sudden departure in the morning, unknown to his kind host. The great Juniper did this, says his biographer, having told us what he did, not so much from his habitual inclinations for which he was so justly celebrated, as from his excessive piety, and as much as he could to mortify worldly pride, and to show how a true saint despised clean sheets.

In the life of St. Francis we find, among other grotesque miracles, that he preached a sermon in a desert, but he soon collected an immense audience. The birds shrilly warbled to every sentence, and stretched out their necks, opened their beaks, and when he finished, dispersed with a holy rapture into four companies, to report his sermon to all the birds in the universe. A grasshopper remained a week with St. Francis during the absence of the Virgin Mary, and pittered on his head. He grew so companionable with a nightingale, that when a nest of swallows began

to babble, he hushed them by desiring them not to tittle-tattle of their sister, the nightingale. Attacked by a wolf, with only the sign manual of the cross, he held a long dialogue with his rabid assailant, till the wolf, meek as a lap-dog, stretched his paws in the hands of the saint, followed him through towns, and became half a Christian.

This same St. Francis had such a detestation of the good things of this world, that he would never suffer his followers to touch money. A friar having placed in a window some money collected at the altar, he desired him to take it in his mouth, and throw it on the dung of an ass! St. Philip Neri was such a *lover of poverty*, that he frequently prayed that God would bring him to that state as to stand in need of a penny, and find nobody that would give him one!

But Saint Macaire was so shocked at having *killed a louse*, that he endured seven years of penitence among the thorns and briars of a forest. A circumstance which seems to have reached Moliere, who gives this stroke to the character of his Tartuffe :

Il s'impute a peché la moindre bagatelle ;
 Jusques-la qu'il se vint, l'autre jour s'accuser
 D'avoir pris une puce en faisant sa priere,
 Et de l'avoir tué, avec trop de colere !

I give a miraculous incident respecting two

pious maidens. The night of the Nativity of Christ, after the first mass, they both retired into a solitary spot of their nunnery till the second mass was rung. One asked the other, "Why do you want two cushions, when I have only one?" The other replied, "I would place it between us, for the child Jesus; as the Evangelist says, where there are two or three persons assembled I am in the midst of them."—This being done, they sat down, feeling a most lively pleasure at their fancy; and there they remained from the Nativity of Christ to that of John the Baptist; but this great interval of time passed with these saintly maidens as two hours would appear to others. The abbess and her nuns were alarmed at their absence, for no one could give any account of them. In the eve of St. John, a cowherd passing by them, beheld a beautiful child seated on a cushion between this pair of run-away nuns. He hastened to the abbess with news of these stray sheep, who saw this lovely child playfully seated between these nymphs, who, with blushing countenances, inquired if the second bell had already rung? Both parties were equally astonished to find our young devotees had been there from the Nativity of Jesus to that of St. John. The abbess asked after the child who sat between them; they solemnly declared they saw no child between them, and persisted in their story.

parts illegible : the second, in obliging the printers to commit such numerous blunders, never yet equalled in so small a work. To combat this double machination of Satan he was obliged carefully to re-peruse the work, and to form this singular list of the blunders of printers, under the influence of the Devil. All this he relates in an advertisement prefixed to the *Errata*.

A furious controversy raged between two famous scholars from a very laughable but accidental *Erratum*; and threatened serious consequences to one of the parties. Flavigny wrote two letters, criticising rather freely a polyglot Bible edited by Abraham Ecchellensis. As this learned editor had sometimes censured the labours of a friend of Flavigny, this latter applied to him the third and fifth verses of the seventh chapter of St. Matthew, which he printed in Latin. Ver. 3. *Quid vides festucam in Oculo fratris tui, et trabem in Oculo tuo non vides.* Ver. 5. *Ejice primum trabem de Oculo tuo, et tunc videbis ejicere festucam de Oculo fratris tui.* Ecchellensis opens his reply by accusing Flavigny of an *enormous crime* committed in this passage; attempting to correct the sacred text of the Evangelist, and daringly to reject a word, while he supplied its place by another as *impious* as *obscene*! This crime, exaggerated with all the virulence of an angry declaimer, closes with a

dreadful accusation. Flavigny's morals are attacked, and his reputation overturned by a horrid imputation. Yet all this terrible reproach is only founded on an *Erratum!* The whole arose from the printer having negligently suffered the *first letter* of the word *Oculo* to have dropped from the form, when he happened to touch a line with his finger which did not stand straight! He published another letter to do away the imputation of Echellensis; but thirty years afterwards his rage against the negligent printer was not extinguished; certain wits were always reminding him of it.

One of the most egregious of all literary blunders is that of the edition of the Vulgate, by Sixtus V. His holiness carefully superintended every sheet as it passed through the press; and, to the amazement of the world, the work remained without a rival—it swarmed with errata! A multitude of scraps were printed to paste over the erroneous passages, in order to give the true text. The book makes a whimsical appearance with these patches; and the heretics exulted in this demonstration of papal infallibility! The copies were called in, and violent attempts made to suppress it; a few still remain for the raptures of the biblical collectors; at a late sale the bible of Sixtus V. fetched above sixty guineas—not too much for a mere book of blunders! The world was highly amused at the

bull of the editorial Pope prefixed to the first volume, which excommunicates all printers who in reprinting the work should make any *alteration* in the text!

In a version of the Epistles of St. Paul into the Ethiopic language, which proved to be full of errors, the editors allege a very good-humoured reason—"They who printed the work could not read, and we could not print; they helped us, and we helped them, as the blind helps the blind."

A printer's widow in Germany, while a new edition of the Bible was printing at her house, one night took an opportunity of going into the office, to alter that sentence of subjection to her husband, pronounced upon Eve in Genesis, Chap. 3. v. 16. She took out the two first letters of the word HERR, and substituted NA in their place, thus altering the sentence from "and he shall be thy LORD," (*Herr*) to "and he shall be thy FOOL," (*Narr*). It is said her life paid for this intentional erratum; and that some secreted copies of this edition have been bought up at enormous prices.

We have an edition of the Bible, known by the name of *The Vinegar Bible*; from the erratum in the title to the 20th Chap. of St. Luke, in which "Parable of the *Vineyard*," is printed "Parable of the *Vinegar*." It was printed in 1717, at the Clarendon press.

We have had another, where "Thou shalt commit adultery" was printed, omitting the negation; which occasioned the archbishop to lay one of the heaviest penalties on the Company of Stationers that was ever recorded in the annals of literary history.

Herbert Croft used to complain of the incorrectness of our English classics, as reprinted by the booksellers. It is evident some stupid printer often changes a whole text intentionally. The fine description by Akenside of the Pantheon, "SEVERELY great," not being understood by the blockhead, was printed *serenely great*. Swift's own edition of "the City Shower," has "old ACHES throb." *Aches* is two syllables, but modern printers, who had lost the right pronunciation, have *aches* as one syllable; and then to complete the metre, have foisted in "aches *will* throb." Thus what the poet and the linguist wish to preserve is altered, and finally lost.

It appears by a calculation made by the printer of Steevens's edition of Shakspeare, that every octavo page of that work, text and notes, contains 2680 distinct pieces of metal; which in a sheet amount to 42,880—the misplacing of any one of which would inevitably cause a blunder!—With this curious fact before us, the accurate state of our printing, in general, is to be admired, and

errata ought more freely to be pardoned than the fastidious minuteness of the insect eye of certain critics has allowed.

Whether such a miracle as an immaculate edition of a classical author does exist, I have never learnt; but an attempt has been made to obtain this glorious singularity—and was as nearly realised as is perhaps possible: the magnificent edition of *As Lusíadas* of Camoens, by Dom Joze Souza, in 1817. This amateur spared no prodigality of cost and labour, and flattered himself that by the assistance of Didot, not a single typographical error should be found in that splendid volume. But an error was afterwards discovered in some of the copies, occasioned by one of the letters in the word *Lusitano* having got misplaced during the working of one of the sheets. It must be confessed that this was an *accident* or *misfortune*—rather than an *Erratum*!

One of the most remarkable complaints on ERRATA is that of Edw. Leigh, appended to his curious treatise “on Religion and Learning.” It consists of two folio pages, in a very minute character, and exhibits an incalculable number of printers’ blunders. “We have not,” he says, “Plantin nor Stephens amongst us; and it is no easy task to specify the chiefest errata; false inter-punctuations there are too many; here a letter want-

ing, there a letter too much; a syllable too much, one letter for another; words parted where they should be joined; words joined which should be severed; words misplaced; chronological mistakes, &c." This unfortunate folio was printed in 1656. Are we to infer by such frequent complaints of the authors of that day, that either they did not receive proofs from the printers, or that the printers never attended to the corrected proofs? Each single erratum seems to have been felt as a stab to the literary feelings of the poor author!

PATRONS.

AUTHORS have too frequently received ill treatment, even from those to whom they dedicated their works.

Some who felt hurt at the shameless treatment of such mock Mæcenases have observed that no writer should dedicate his works but to his FRIENDS; as was practised by the ancients, who usually addressed theirs to those who had solicited their labours, or animated their progress.

Theodosius Gaza had no other recompense for having inscribed to Sixtus IV. his translation of the book of Aristotle on the Nature of Animals, than the price of the binding, which this charitable

father of the church munificently bestowed upon him.

Theocritus fills his *Idylliums* with loud complaints of the neglect of his patrons; and Tasso was as little successful in his dedications.

Ariosto, in presenting his *Orlando Furioso* to the Cardinal d'Este, was gratified with the bitter sarcasm of—" *Dove diavolo avete pigliato tante coglionerie?*" Where the devil have you found all this stuff?

When the French historian Dupleix, whose pen was indeed fertile, presented his book to the Duke d'Epemon, this Mæcnas, turning to the Pope's Nuncio, who was present, very coarsely exclaimed—" *Cadedis! ce Monsieur a un flux enragé, il chie un livre toutes les lunes!*"

Thomson, the ardent author of the *Seasons*, having extravagantly praised a person of rank, who afterwards appeared to be undeserving of eulogiums, properly employed his pen in a solemn recantation of his error. A very different conduct from that of Dupleix, who always spoke highly of Queen Margaret of France for a little place he held in her household: but after her death, when the place became extinct, spoke of her with all the freedom of satire. Such is too often the character of some of the literati, who only dare to reveal the truth when they have no interest to conceal it.

Poor Mickle, to whom we are indebted for so beautiful a version of Camoens' *Lusiad*, having dedicated this work, the continued labour of five years, to the Duke of Buccleugh, had the mortification to find, by the discovery of a friend, that he had kept it in his possession three weeks before he could collect sufficient intellectual desire to cut open the first pages! and what is worse, the neglect he had experienced from this nobleman preyed on his mind, and reduced him to a state of despondency. This patron was a political economist, the pupil of Adam Smith! It is pleasing to add, in contrast with this frigid Scotch patron, that when Mickle went to Lisbon, where his translation had passed before him, he found the Prince of Portugal waiting on the quay to be the first to receive the translator of his great national poem; and during a residence of six months, Mickle was warmly regarded by every Portuguese nobleman.

"Every man believes," writes Dr. Johnson, in a letter to Baretti, "that mistresses are unfaithful, and patrons are capricious. But he excepts his own mistress, and his own patron."

A patron is sometimes obtained in an odd way. Benserade attached himself to Cardinal Mazarine; but his friendship produced nothing but civility. The poet every day indulged his easy and charming vein of amatory and panegyric poetry, while

all the world read and admired his verses. One evening the cardinal, in conversation with the king, described his mode of life when at the papal court. He loved the sciences; but his chief occupation was the belles lettres, composing little pieces of poetry; he said that he was then in the court of Rome what Benserade was now in that of France. Some hours afterwards the friends of the poet related to him the conversation of the cardinal. He quitted them abruptly, and ran to the apartment of his eminence, knocking with all his force, that he might be certain of being heard. The cardinal had just gone to bed. In vain they informed him of this circumstance, while he persisted in demanding entrance; and as he continued this incessant disturbance, they were compelled to open the door. He ran to his eminence, fell upon his knees, almost pulled off the sheets of the bed in rapture, imploring a thousand pardons for thus disturbing him, but such was his joy in what he had just heard, which he repeated, that he could not refrain from immediately giving vent to his gratitude and his pride, to have been compared with his eminence for his poetical talents! Had the door not been immediately opened, he should have expired; he was not rich, it is true, but he should now die contented! The cardinal was pleased with his *ardour*, and probably never

suspected his *flattery*; and the next week our new actor was pensioned.

On Cardinal Richelieu, another of his patrons, he gratefully made this epitaph.

Cy gist, ouy gist par la mort bleu
 Le Cardinal de Richelieu,
 Et ce qui cause mon ennuy
 Ma PENSION avec lui.

Here lies, egad, 'tis very true!
 The illustrious Cardinal Richelieu:
 My grief is genuine—void of whim!
 Alas! my *pension* lies with him!

Le Brun, the great French artist, painted his own portrait, holding in his hand that of his earliest patron. In this accompaniment Le Brun may be said to have portrayed the features of his soul, as his pencil had his physiognomy. If genius has too often complained of its patrons, it has often too over-valued their protection.

POETS, PHILOSOPHERS, AND ARTISTS, MADE BY ACCIDENT.

ACCIDENT has frequently occasioned the most eminent geniuses to display their powers. It was at Rome, says Gibbon, on the 15th of October,

1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind.

Father Malebranche having completed his studies in philosophy and theology without any other intention than devoting himself to some religious order, little expected the celebrity his works acquired for him. Loitering in an idle hour in the shop of a bookseller, and turning over a parcel of books, *L'Homme de Descartes* fell into his hands. Having dipt into some parts, he read with such delight, that the palpitations of his heart compelled him to lay the volume down. It was this circumstance that produced those profound contemplations which made him the Plato of his age.

Cowley became a poet by accident. In his mother's apartment he found, when very young, Spenser's *Fairy Queen*; and, by a continual study of poetry, he became so enchanted of the Muse, that he grew irrecoverably a poet.

Dr. Johnson informs us, that Sir Joshua Reynolds had the first fondness for his art excited by the perusal of Richardson's *Treatise*.

Vaucanson displayed an uncommon genius for mechanics. His taste was first determined by an accident; when young, he frequently attended his

mother to the residence of her confessor; and while she wept with repentance, he wept with weariness! In this state of disagreeable vacation, says Helvetius, he was struck with the uniform motion of the pendulum of the clock in the hall. His curiosity was roused; he approached the clock case, and studied its mechanism; what he could not discover, he guessed at. He then projected a similar machine; and gradually his genius produced a clock. Encouraged by this first success, he proceeded in his various attempts; and the genius which thus could form a clock, in time formed a fluting automaton.

“ If Shakspeare’s imprudence had not obliged him to quit his wool trade, and his town; if he had not engaged with a company of actors, and at length, disgusted with being an indifferent performer, he had not turned author; the prudent woollseller had never been the celebrated poet.”

“ Accident determined the taste of Moliere for the stage. His grandfather loved the theatre, and frequently carried him there. The young man lived in dissipation: the father observing it, asked in anger, if his son was to be made an actor. ‘ Would to God,’ replied the grandfather, ‘ he was as good an actor as Montrose.’ The words struck young Moliere; he took a disgust to his tapestry trade; and it is to this circumstance France owes her greatest comic writer.”

“Corneille loved; he made verses for his mistress, became a poet, composed *Melite*, and afterwards his other celebrated works. The discreet Corneille had remained a lawyer.”

“Thus it is, that the devotion of a mother, the death of Cromwell, deer-stealing, the exclamation of an old man, and the beauty of a woman, have given five illustrious characters to Europe.”

We owe the great discovery of Newton to a very trivial accident. When a student at Cambridge, he had retired during the time of the plague into the country. As he was reading under an apple-tree, one of the fruit fell, and struck him a smart blow on the head. When he observed the smallness of the apple, he was surprised at the force of the stroke. This led him to consider the accelerating motion of falling bodies; from whence he deduced the principle of gravity, and laid the foundation of his philosophy.

Ignatius Loyola was a Spanish gentleman, who was dangerously wounded at the siege of Pampaluna. Having heated his imagination by reading the Lives of the Saints, which were brought to him in his illness, instead of a romance, he conceived a strong ambition to be the founder of a religious order: whence originated the celebrated society of the Jesuits.

Rousseau found his eccentric powers first awakened by the advertisement of the singular

annual subject which the academy of Dijon proposed for that year, in which he wrote his celebrated Declamation against the arts and sciences. A circumstance which determined his future literary efforts.

La Fontaine, at the age of twenty-two, had not taken any profession, or devoted himself to any pursuit. Having accidentally heard some verses of Malherbe, he felt a sudden impulse, which directed his future life. He immediately bought a Malherbe, and was so exquisitely delighted with this poet, that after passing the nights in treasuring his verses in his memory, he would run in the day-time to the woods, where concealing himself, he would recite his verses to the surrounding dryads.

Flamsteed was an astronomer by accident. He was taken from school on account of his illness, when Sacrobosco's book de Sphæra having been lent to him, he was so pleased with it, that he immediately began a course of astronomic studies. Pennant's first propensity to natural history was the pleasure he received from an accidental perusal of Willoughby's work on birds: the same accident, of finding on the table of his professor, Reaumur's History of Insects, of which he read more than he attended to the lecture, and having been refused the loan, gave such an in-

stant turn to the mind of Bonnet, that he hastened to obtain a copy, but found many difficulties in procuring this costly work; its possession gave an unalterable direction to his future life; this naturalist indeed lost the use of his sight by his devotion to the microscope.

Dr. Franklin attributes the cast of his genius to a similar accident. "I found a work of De Foe's, entitled an 'Essay on Projects,' from which perhaps I derived impressions that have since influenced some of the principal events of my life."

I shall add the incident which occasioned Roger Ascham to write his *Schoolmaster*, one of the most curious and useful treatises among our elder writers.

At a dinner given by Sir William Cecil, during the plague in 1563, at his apartments at Windsor, where the queen had taken refuge, a number of ingenious men were invited. Secretary Cecil communicated the news of the morning, that several scholars at Eton had run away on account of their master's severity, which he condemned as a great error in the education of youth. Sir William Petre maintained the contrary; severe in his own temper, he pleaded warmly in defence of hard flogging. Dr. Wootton, in softer tones, sided with the Secretary. Sir John Mason, adopting no side, bantered both. Mr. Haddon seconded the hard-

hearted Sir William Petre, and adduced, as an evidence, that the best schoolmaster then in England was the hardest flogger. Then was it that Roger Ascham indignantly exclaimed, that if such a master had an able scholar it was owing to the boy's genius, and not the preceptor's rod. Secretary Cecil and others were pleased with Ascham's notions. Sir Richard Sackville was silent, but when Ascham after dinner went to the queen to read one of the orations of Demosthenes, he took him aside, and frankly told him that though he had taken no part in the debate, he would not have been absent from that conversation for a great deal; that he knew to his cost the truth Ascham had supported; for it was the perpetual flogging of such a schoolmaster, that had given him an unconquerable aversion to study. And as he wished to remedy this defect in his own children, he earnestly exhorted Ascham to write his observations on so interesting a topic. Such was the circumstance which produced the admirable treatise of Roger Ascham.

INEQUALITIES OF GENIUS.

SINGULAR inequalities are observable in the labours of genius; and particularly in those

which admit great enthusiasm, as in poetry, in painting, and in music. Faultless mediocrity industry can preserve in one continued degree; but excellence, the daring and the happy, can only be attained, by human faculties, by starts.

Our poets who possess the greatest genius, with, perhaps, the least industry, have at the same time the most splendid and the worst passages of poetry. Shakespeare and Dryden are at once the greatest and the least of our poets. With some, their great fault consists in having none.

Carraccio sarcastically said of Tintoret—*Ho veduto il Tintoretto hora eguale a Titiano, hora minora del Tintoretto*—"I have seen Tintoret now equal to Titian, and now less than Tintoret."

Trublet very justly observes—The more there are *beauties*, and *great beauties*, in a work, I am the less surprised to find *faults*, and *great faults*. When you say of a work—that it has many faults; that decides nothing: and I do not know by this, whether it is execrable, or excellent. You tell me of another—that it is without any faults; if your account be just, it is certain the work cannot be excellent.

CONCEPTION AND EXPRESSION.

THERE are men who have just thoughts on every subject; but it is not perceived, because their expressions are feeble. They conceive well, but they produce badly.

Erasmus acutely observed—alluding to what then much occupied his mind—that one might be apt to swear that they had been taught, in the confessional cell, all they had learnt; so scrupulous are they of disclosing what they know. Others, again, conceive ill, and produce well; for they express with elegance, frequently, what they do not know.

It was observed of one pleader, that he *knew* more than he *said*; and of another, that he *said* more than he *knew*.

The judicious Quintilian observes, that we ought at first to be more anxious in regard to our conceptions than our expressions—we may attend to the latter afterwards. While Horace thought that expressions will never fail with luminous conceptions. Yet they seem to be different things, for a man may have the clearest conceptions, and at the same time be no pleasing writer; while conceptions of no eminent merit may be very agreeably set off by a warm and colouring diction.

Lucian happily describes the works of those who abound with the most luxuriant language, void of ideas. He calls their unmeaning verbosity anemony-words (*anemonæ verborum*); for anemonies are flowers, which, however brilliant, can only please the eye, leaving no fragrance. Pratt, who was a writer of flowing, but nugatory verses, was compared to the *daisy*; a flower indeed, but without the fragrance.

GEOGRAPHICAL DICTION.

THERE are many sciences, says Menage, on which we cannot, indeed, compose in a florid or elegant diction—such as geography, music, algebra, geometry, &c. When Atticus requested Cicero to write on geography, the latter excused himself, observing, that its scenes were more adapted to please the eye than susceptible of the embellishments of style. However, in these kinds of sciences, we may lend an ornament to their dryness by introducing occasionally some elegant allusion, or noticing some incident suggested by the object.

Thus when we notice some inconsiderable place, for instance, *Woodstock*, we may recall attention to the residence of *Chaucer*, the parent of our poetry;

or as a late traveller, in "an Autumn on the Rhine," when at Ingelheim, at the view of an old palace built by Charlemagne, adds, with "a hundred columns brought from Rome," and was "the scene of the romantic amours of that monarch's fair daughter, Ibertha, with Evinhard, his secretary;" and viewing the Gothic ruins on the banks of the Rhine, has noticed them as having been the haunts of those illustrious *chevaliers voleurs*, whose chivalry consisted in pillaging the merchants and towns, till, in the thirteenth century, a citizen of Mayence persuaded the merchants of more than a hundred towns to form a league against these little princes and counts; the origin of the famous Hanseatic league, which contributed so much to the commerce of Europe. This kind of erudition gives an interest to all local histories, and associates in our memory the illustrious personages who were their inhabitants.

The same principle of composition may be carried with the happiest effect into some dry investigations, though the profound antiquary may not approve of these sports of wit or fancy. Dr. Arbuthnot, in his *Tables of Ancient Coins, Weights, and Measures*, a topic extremely barren of amusement, takes every opportunity of enlivening the dulness of his task; even in these mathematical calculations he betrays his wit; and ob-

serves, that "the polite Augustus, the Emperor of the World, had neither any glass in his windows, nor a shirt to his back!" Those uses of glass and linen were, indeed, not known in his time. Our physician is not less curious and facetious in the account of the *fees* which the Roman physicians received.

LEGENDS.

THOSE wild, ludicrous, but often stupid histories entitled Legends, are said to have originated in the following circumstance.

Before colleges were established in the monasteries where the schools were held, the professors in rhetoric frequently gave their pupils the life of some saint for a trial of their talent at *amplification*. The students, being constantly at a loss to furnish out their pages, invented most of these wonderful adventures. Jortin observes, that the Christians used to collect out of Ovid, Livy, and other pagan poets and historians, the miracles and portents to be found there, and accommodated them to their own monks and saints. The good fathers of that age, whose simplicity was not inferior to their devotion, were so delighted with these flowers of rhetoric, that they were induced

to make a collection of these miraculous compositions; not imagining that, at some distant period, they would become matters of faith. Yet, when James de Voragine, Peter Nadal, and Peter Ribadeneira, wrote the Lives of the Saints, they sought for their materials in the libraries of the monasteries; and, awakening from the dust these manuscripts of amplification, imagined they made an invaluable present to the world, by laying before them these voluminous absurdities. The people received these pious fictions with all imaginable simplicity, and as the book is adorned with a number of cuts, these miracles were perfectly intelligible to their eyes. Tillemont, Fleury, Baillet, Launoi, and Bollandus, cleared away much of the rubbish; the enviable title of *Golden Legend*, by which James de Voragine called his work, has been disputed; iron or lead might more aptly express the character of this folio.

When the world began to be more critical in their reading, the monks gave a graver turn to their narratives; and became penurious of their absurdities. The faithful Catholic contends, that the line of tradition has been preserved unbroken; notwithstanding that the originals were lost in the general wreck of literature from the barbarians, or came down in a most imperfect state.

Baronius has given the lives of many apocryphal

saints; for instance, of a Saint *Xinoris*, whom he calls a martyr of Antioch; but it appears that Baronius having read in Chrysostom this *word*, which signifies a *couple* or *pair*, he mistook it for the name of a saint, and contrived to give the most authentic biography of a saint who never existed! The Catholics confess this sort of blunder is not uncommon, but then it is only fools who laugh! As a specimen of the happier inventions, one is given, embellished by the diction of Gibbon—

“ Among the insipid legends of ecclesiastical history, I am tempted to distinguish the memorable fable of the *Seven Sleepers*; whose imaginary date corresponds with the reign of the younger Theodosius, and the conquest of Africa by the Vandals. When the Emperor Decius persecuted the Christians, seven noble youths of Ephesus concealed themselves in a spacious cavern, on the side of an adjacent mountain; where they were doomed to perish by the tyrant, who gave orders that the entrance should be firmly secured with a pile of stones. They immediately fell into a deep slumber, which was miraculously prolonged without injuring the powers of life, during a period of one hundred and eighty-seven years. At the end of that time the slaves of Adolius, to whom the inheritance of the mountain had descended, removed the stones to supply materials for some

rustic edifice. The light of the sun darted into the cavern, and the Seven Sleepers were permitted to awake. After a slumber as they thought of a few hours, they were pressed by the calls of hunger; and resolved that Jamblichus, one of their number, should secretly return to the city to purchase bread for the use of his companions. The youth, if we may still employ that appellation, could no longer recognize the once familiar aspect of his native country; and his surprise was increased by the appearance of a large cross, triumphantly erected over the principal gate of Ephesus. His singular dress and obsolete language confounded the baker, to whom he offered an ancient medal of Decius as the current coin of the empire; and Jamblichus, on the suspicion of a secret treasure, was dragged before the judge. Their mutual inquiries produced the amazing discovery, that two centuries were almost elapsed since Jamblichus and his friends had escaped from the rage of a Pagan tyrant. The bishop of Ephesus, the clergy, the magistrates, the people, and, it is said, the Emperor Theodosius himself, hastened to visit the cavern of the Seven Sleepers; who bestowed their benediction, related their story, and at the same instant peaceably expired.

“ This popular tale Mahomet learned when he drove his camels to the fairs of Syria; and he has

introduced it, as a *divine revelation*, into the Koran."—The same story has been adopted and adorned, by the nations from Bengal to Africa, who profess the Mahometan religion.

The too curious reader may perhaps require other specimens of the more unlucky inventions of this "Golden Legend;" as characteristic of a certain class of minds, the philosopher will not condemn these grotesque fictions.

These monks imagined that holiness was often proportioned to a saint's filthiness. St. Ignatius, say they, delighted to appear abroad with old dirty shoes; he never used a comb, but let his hair clot; and religiously abstained from paring his nails. One saint attained to such piety as to have near three hundred patches on his breeches; which, after his death, were hung up in public as an *incentive to imitation*. St. Francis discovered by certain experience that the devils were frightened away by such kind of breeches, but were animated by clean clothing to tempt and seduce the wearers; and one of their heroes declares that the purest souls are in the dirtiest bodies. On this they tell a story which may not be very agreeable to fastidious delicacy. Brother Juniper was a gentleman perfectly pious on this principle; indeed so great was his merit in this species of mortification, that a brother declared he could

always nose Brother Juniper when within a mile of the monastery, provided the wind was at the due point. Once, when the blessed Juniper, for he was no saint, was a guest, his host, proud of the honour of entertaining so pious a personage, the intimate friend of St. Francis, provided an excellent bed, and the finest sheets. Brother Juniper abhorred such luxury. And this too evidently appeared after his sudden departure in the morning, unknown to his kind host. The great Juniper did this, says his biographer, having told us what he did, not so much from his habitual inclinations for which he was so justly celebrated, as from his excessive piety, and as much as he could to mortify worldly pride, and to show how a true saint despised clean sheets.

In the life of St. Francis we find, among other grotesque miracles, that he preached a sermon in a desert, but he soon collected an immense audience. The birds shrilly warbled to every sentence, and stretched out their necks, opened their beaks, and when he finished, dispersed with a holy rapture into four companies, to report his sermon to all the birds in the universe. A grasshopper remained a week with St. Francis during the absence of the Virgin Mary, and pittered on his head. He grew so companionable with a nightingale, that when a nest of swallows began

to babble, he hushed them by desiring them not to tittle-tattle of their sister, the nightingale. Attacked by a wolf, with only the sign manual of the cross, he held a long dialogue with his rabid assailant, till the wolf, meek as a lap-dog, stretched his paws in the hands of the saint, followed him through towns, and became half a Christian.

This same St. Francis had such a detestation of the good things of this world, that he would never suffer his followers to touch money. A friar having placed in a window some money collected at the altar, he desired him to take it in his mouth, and throw it on the dung of an ass! St. Philip Neri was such a *lover of poverty*, that he frequently prayed that God would bring him to that state as to stand in need of a penny, and find nobody that would give him one!

But Saint Macaire was so shocked at having *killed a louse*, that he endured seven years of penitence among the thorns and briars of a forest. A circumstance which seems to have reached Moliere, who gives this stroke to the character of his Tartuffe :

Il s'impute a peché la moindre bagatelle ;
 Jusques-la qu'il se vint, l'autre jour s'accuser
 D'avoir pris une puce en faisant sa priere,
 Et de l'avoir tué, avec trop de colere !

I give a miraculous incident respecting two

pious maidens. The night of the Nativity of Christ, after the first mass, they both retired into a solitary spot of their nunnery till the second mass was rung. One asked the other, "Why do you want two cushions, when I have only one?" The other replied, "I would place it between us, for the child Jesus; as the Evangelist says, where there are two or three persons assembled I am in the midst of them."—This being done, they sat down, feeling a most lively pleasure at their fancy; and there they remained from the Nativity of Christ to that of John the Baptist; but this great interval of time passed with these saintly maidens as two hours would appear to others. The abbess and her nuns were alarmed at their absence, for no one could give any account of them. In the eve of St. John, a cowherd passing by them, beheld a beautiful child seated on a cushion between this pair of run-away nuns. He hastened to the abbess with news of these stray sheep, who saw this lovely child playfully seated between these nymphs, who, with blushing countenances, inquired if the second bell had already rung? Both parties were equally astonished to find our young devotees had been there from the Nativity of Jesus to that of St. John. The abbess asked after the child who sat between them; they solemnly declared they saw no child between them, and persisted in their story.

Such is one of these miracles of "the Golden Legend," which a wicked wit might comment on, and see nothing extraordinary in the whole story. The two nuns might be missing between the Nativities, and be found at the last with a child seated between them.—They might not choose to account either for their absence or their child—the only touch of miracle is, that they asseverated, they *saw no child*—that I confess is a *little (child) too much*.

The lives of the saints by Alban Butler is a learned work, and the most sensible history of these legends; Ribadenaira's lives of the saints exhibit more of the legendary spirit, for wanting judgment and not faith, he is more voluminous in his details, and more ridiculous in his narratives.

THE PORT-ROYAL SOCIETY.

EVERY lover of letters has heard of this learned society, which, says Gibbon, contributed so much to establish in France a taste for just reasoning, simplicity of style, and philosophical method. Their "Logic, or the Art of Thinking," for its lucid, accurate, and diversified matter, is still an admirable work; notwithstanding the writers at that time had to emancipate themselves from the barbarism of the scholastic logic with cautious boldness. It

was the conjoint labour of Arnauld and Nicolle. Europe has benefited by the labours of these learned men: but not many have attended to the origin and dissolution of this literary society.

In the year 1637, Le Maitre, a celebrated advocate, resigned the bar, and the honour of being *Conseiller d'Etat*, which his uncommon merit had obtained him, though then only twenty-eight years of age. His brother, De Sericourt, who had followed the military profession, quitted it at the same time. Consecrating themselves to the service of God, they retired into a small house near *the Port Royal* of Paris, where they were joined by their brothers De Sacy, De St. Elme, and De Valmont. Arnauld, one of their most illustrious associates, was induced to enter into the Jansenist controversy, and then it was they encountered the powerful persecution of the Jesuits. Constrained to remove from that spot, they fixed their residence at a few leagues from Paris, and called it *Port Royal des Champs*.

With these illustrious recluses many distinguished persons now retired, who had given up their parks and houses to be appropriated to their schools; and this community was called *the Society of Port-Royal*.

Here were no rules, no vows, no constitution, and no cells formed. Prayer and study, and

manual labour were their only occupations. They applied themselves to the education of youth, and raised up little academies in the neighbourhood, where the members of the Port-Royal, the most illustrious names of literary France, presided. None considered his birth entitled him to any exemption from their public offices, relieving the poor and attending on the sick, and employing themselves in their farms and gardens; they were carpenters, ploughmen, gardeners, and vine-dressers, &c. as if they had practised nothing else; they studied physic, and surgery, and law; in truth, it seems that from religious motives, these learned men attempted to form a community of primitive Christianity.

The Duchess of Longueville, once a political chief, sacrificed her ambition on the altar at Port-Royal, enlarged the monastic inclosure with spacious gardens and orchards, built a noble house, and often retreated to its seclusion. The learned D'Andilly, the translator of Josephus, after his studious hours, resorted to the cultivation of fruit-trees; and the fruit of Port-Royal became celebrated for its size and flavour. Presents were sent to the Queen-Mother of France, Anne of Austria, and Cardinal Mazarine, who used to call it "Fruit beni." It appears that "families of rank, affluence, and piety, who did not wish entirely to give up their avocations in the world,

built themselves country-houses in the valley of Port-Royal, in order to enjoy the society of its religious and literary inhabitants."

In the solitudes of Port-Royal *Racine* received his education; and, on his death-bed, desired to be buried in its cemetery, at the feet of his master, Hamon. Arnauld, persecuted, and dying in a foreign country, still cast his lingering looks on this beloved retreat, and left the society his heart, which was there inurned.

Anne de Bourbon, a princess of the blood-royal, erected a house near the Port-Royal, and was, during her life, the powerful patroness of these solitary and religious men: but her death in 1679, was the fatal stroke which dispersed them for ever.

The envy and the fears of the Jesuits, and their rancour against Arnauld, who with such ability had exposed their designs, occasioned the destruction of the Port-Royal Society. *Exinanite, exinanite usque ad fundamentum in ea!*—Annihilate it, annihilate it, to its very foundations! Such are the terms in the Jesuitic decree. The Jesuits had long called the little schools of Port-Royal the hot-beds of heresy. Gregoire, in his interesting memoir of "Ruins of Port-Royal," has drawn an affecting picture of that virtuous society when the Jesuits obtained by their intrigues an order from government to break it up. They razed the build-

ings, and ploughed up the very foundation; they exhausted their hatred even on the stones, and profaned even the sanctuary of the dead; the corpses were torn out of their graves, and dogs were suffered to contend for the rags of their shrouds. When the Port-Royal had no longer an existence, the memory of that asylum of innocence and learning was still kept alive by those who collected the engravings representing that place by Mademoiselle Hortemels. The police, under Jesuitic influence, at length seized on the plates in the cabinet of the fair artist.—How caustic was the retort courteous which Arnauld gave the Jesuits—“ I do not fear your *pen*, but its *knife*.”

These were men whom the love of retirement had united to cultivate literature, in the midst of solitude, of peace, and of piety. They formed a society of learned men, of fine taste and sound philosophy. Alike occupied on sacred, as well as on profane writers, they edified, while they enlightened the world. Their writings fixed the French language. The example of these solitaries shows how retirement is favourable to penetrate into the sanctuary of the Muses: and that by meditating in silence on the oracles of taste, in imitating we may equal them.

An interesting anecdote is related of Arnauld

on the occasion of the dissolution of this society. The dispersion of these great men, and their young scholars, was lamented by every one but their enemies. Many persons of the highest rank participated in their sorrows. The excellent Arnauld, in that moment, was as closely pursued as if he had been a felon.

It was then the Duchess of Longueville concealed Arnauld in an obscure lodging, who assumed the dress of a layman, wearing a sword and full-bottomed wig. Arnauld was attacked by a fever, and in the course of conversation with a physician, Arnauld inquired after news. "They talk of a new book of the Port-Royal," replied the doctor, "attributed to Arnauld or to Sacy; but I do not believe it to come from Sacy; he does not write so well."—"How, Sir!" exclaimed the philosopher, forgetting his sword and wig; "believe me my nephew writes better than I do."—The physician eyed his patient with amazement—he hastened to the duchess, and told her, "The malady of the gentleman you sent me to is not very serious, provided you do not suffer him to see any one, and insist on his holding his tongue." The duchess, alarmed, immediately had Arnauld conveyed to her palace. She gave him an apartment, concealed him in her chamber, and persisted to attend him herself.—"Ask," she said, "what

you want of the servant, but it shall be myself who shall bring it to you."

How honourable is it to the female character, that in all similar events their sensibility is not greater than their fortitude! But the Duchess of Longueville saw in Arnauld a model of human fortitude which martyrs never excelled. His remarkable reply to Nicole, when they were hunted from place to place, can never be forgotten: Arnauld wished Nicole to assist him in a new work, when the latter observed, "We are now old, is it not time to rest?" "Rest!" returned Arnauld, "have we not all eternity to rest in?" The whole of the Arnauld family were the most extraordinary instance of that hereditary character which is continued through certain families: here it was a sublime, and, perhaps, singular union of learning with religion. The Arnaulds, Sacy, Pascal, Tillemont, with other illustrious names, to whom literary Europe will owe perpetual obligations, combined the life of the monastery with that of the library.

THE PROGRESS OF OLD AGE IN NEW STUDIES.

OF the pleasures derivable from the cultivation of the arts, sciences, and literature, time will not

abate the growing passion ; for old men still cherish an affection and feel a youthful enthusiasm in those pursuits, when all others have ceased to interest. Dr. Reid, to his last day, retained a most active curiosity in his various studies, and particularly in the revolutions of modern chemistry. In advanced life we may resume our former studies with a new pleasure, and in old age we may enjoy them with the same relish with which more youthful students commence. Professor Dugald Stewart tells us that Adam Smith observed to him, that “ of all the amusements of old age, the most grateful and soothing is a renewal of acquaintance with the favourite studies and favourite authors of youth—a remark, which, in his own case, seemed to be more particularly exemplified while he was re-perusing, with the enthusiasm of a student, the tragic poets of ancient Greece. I heard him repeat the observation more than once while Sophocles and Euripides lay open on his table.”

Socrates learnt to play on musical instruments in his old age ; Cato, at eighty, thought proper to learn Greek ; and Plutarch, almost as late in life, Latin.

Theophrastus began his admirable work on the Characters of Men at the extreme age of ninety. He only terminated his literary labours by his death.

Peter Ronsard, one of the fathers of French poetry, applied himself late to study. His acute genius, and ardent application, rivalled those poetic models which he admired; and Boccaccio was thirty-five years of age when he commenced his studies in polite literature.

The great Arnauld retained the vigour of his genius, and the command of his pen, to his last day; and at the age of eighty-two was still the great Arnauld.

Sir Henry Spelman neglected the sciences in his youth, but cultivated them at fifty years of age, and produced good fruit. His early years were chiefly passed in farming, which greatly diverted him from his studies; but a remarkable disappointment respecting a contested estate, disgusted him with these rustic occupations; resolved to attach himself to regular studies, and literary society, he sold his farms, and became the most learned antiquary and lawyer.

Colbert, the famous French minister, almost at sixty, returned to his Latin and law studies.

Tellier, the chancellor of France, learned logic, merely for an amusement, to dispute with his grandchildren.

Dr. Johnson applied himself to the Dutch language but a few years before his death. The Marquis de Saint Aulaire, at the age of seventy,

began to court the muses, and they crowned him with their freshest flowers. The verses of this French Anacreon are full of fire, delicacy, and sweetness.

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were the composition of his latest years: they were begun in his fifty-fourth year, and finished in his sixty-first.

Ludovico Monaldesco, at the extraordinary age of 115, wrote the memoirs of his times. A singular exertion, noticed by Voltaire, who himself is one of the most remarkable instances of the progress of age in new studies.

The most delightful of auto-biographies for artists, is that of Benvenuto Cellini; a work of great originality, which was not begun till "the clock of his age had struck fifty-eight."

Koornhert began at forty to learn the Latin and Greek languages, of which he became a master; several students, who afterwards distinguished themselves, have commenced as late in life their literary pursuits. Ogilby, the translator of Homer and Virgil, knew little of Latin or Greek till he was past fifty; and Franklin's philosophical pursuits began when he had nearly reached his fiftieth year.

Accorso, a great lawyer, being asked why he began the study of the law so late, answered, that

indeed he began it late, but should therefore make it the sooner.

Dryden's complete works form the largest mass of poetry from the pen of one writer in the English language; yet he gave no public testimony of poetical abilities till his twenty-seventh year. In his sixty-eighth year he proposed to translate the whole *Iliad*; and his most pleasing productions were written in his old age.

Michael Angelo preserved his creative genius even in extreme old age: there is a device said to be invented by him, of an old man represented in a go-cart, with an hour-glass upon it; the inscription *Ancora imparo!*—**YET I AM LEARNING!**

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Malherbe declares the honours of genius were his, yet young—

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Maynard moralises on this subject,

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Comme un enfant tous les jours à l'école;
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He did not venture to call it a *Spanish grandee*, for, in fact, it is but a shallow and dirty stream; and as Quevedo wittily informs us, “ *Mançanares* is reduced, during the summer season, to the melancholy condition of the wicked rich man, who asks for water in the depths of hell.”

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The following elegant translation of a Spanish

madrigal of the kind here criticised I found in a newspaper, but it is evidently by a master-hand.

On the green margin of the land,
 Where Guadalhorce winds his way,
 My lady lay :
 With golden key Sleep's gentle hand
 Had closed her eyes so bright—
 Her eyes, two suns of light—
 And bade his balmy dews
 Her rosy cheek suffuse.
 The River God in slumber saw her laid,
 He raised his dripping head,
 With weeds o'erspread,
 Clad in his wat'ry robes approach'd the maid,
 And with cold kiss, like death,
 Drank the rich perfume of the maiden's breath.
 The maiden felt that icy kiss,
Her suns unclosed, their flame
 Full and unclouded on th' intruder came.
 Amazed th' intruder felt
His frothy body melt,
And heard the radiance on his bosom hiss ;
 And, forced in blind confusion to retire,
Leapt in the water to escape the fire.

SAINT EVREMOND.

THE portrait of St. Evremond, delineated by his own hand, will not be unacceptable to many readers.

to babble, he hushed them by desiring them not to tittle-tattle of their sister, the nightingale. Attacked by a wolf, with only the sign manual of the cross, he held a long dialogue with his rabid assailant, till the wolf, meek as a lap-dog, stretched his paws in the hands of the saint, followed him through towns, and became half a Christian.

This same St. Francis had such a detestation of the good things of this world, that he would never suffer his followers to touch money. A friar having placed in a window some money collected at the altar, he desired him to take it in his mouth, and throw it on the dung of an ass! St. Philip Neri was such a *lover of poverty*, that he frequently prayed that God would bring him to that state as to stand in need of a penny, and find nobody that would give him one!

But Saint Macaire was so shocked at having *killed a louse*, that he endured seven years of penitence among the thorns and briars of a forest. A circumstance which seems to have reached Moliere, who gives this stroke to the character of his Tartuffe :

Il s'impute a peché la moindre bagatelle ;
 Jusques-la qu'il se vint, l'autre jour s'accuser
 D'avoir pris une puce en faisant sa priere,
 Et de l'avoir tué, avec trop de colere !

I give a miraculous incident respecting two

pious maidens. The night of the Nativity of Christ, after the first mass, they both retired into a solitary spot of their nunnery till the second mass was rung. One asked the other, "Why do you want two cushions, when I have only one?" The other replied, "I would place it between us, for the child Jesus; as the Evangelist says, where there are two or three persons assembled I am in the midst of them."—This being done, they sat down, feeling a most lively pleasure at their fancy; and there they remained from the Nativity of Christ to that of John the Baptist; but this great interval of time passed with these saintly maidens as two hours would appear to others. The abbess and her nuns were alarmed at their absence, for no one could give any account of them. In the eve of St. John, a cowherd passing by them, beheld a beautiful child seated on a cushion between this pair of run-away nuns. He hastened to the abbess with news of these stray sheep, who saw this lovely child playfully seated between these nymphs, who, with blushing countenances, inquired if the second bell had already rung? Both parties were equally astonished to find our young devotees had been there from the Nativity of Jesus to that of St. John. The abbess asked after the child who sat between them; they solemnly declared they saw no child between them, and persisted in their story.

Such is one of these miracles of "the Golden Legend," which a wicked wit might comment on, and see nothing extraordinary in the whole story. The two nuns might be missing between the Nativities, and be found at the last with a child seated between them.—They might not choose to account either for their absence or their child—the only touch of miracle is, that they asseverated, they *saw no child*—that I confess is a *little (child) too much*.

The lives of the saints by Alban Butler is a learned work, and the most sensible history of these legends; Ribadenaira's lives of the saints exhibit more of the legendary spirit, for wanting judgment and not faith, he is more voluminous in his details, and more ridiculous in his narratives.

THE PORT-ROYAL SOCIETY.

EVERY lover of letters has heard of this learned society, which, says Gibbon, contributed so much to establish in France a taste for just reasoning, simplicity of style, and philosophical method. Their "Logic, or the Art of Thinking," for its lucid, accurate, and diversified matter, is still an admirable work; notwithstanding the writers at that time had to emancipate themselves from the barbarism of the scholastic logic with cautious boldness. It

was the conjoint labour of Arnauld and Nicolle. Europe has benefited by the labours of these learned men: but not many have attended to the origin and dissolution of this literary society.

In the year 1637, Le Maitre, a celebrated advocate, resigned the bar, and the honour of being *Conseiller d'Etat*, which his uncommon merit had obtained him, though then only twenty-eight years of age. His brother, De Sericourt, who had followed the military profession, quitted it at the same time. Consecrating themselves to the service of God, they retired into a small house near *the Port Royal* of Paris, where they were joined by their brothers De Sacy, De St. Elme, and De Valmont. Arnauld, one of their most illustrious associates, was induced to enter into the Jansenist controversy, and then it was they encountered the powerful persecution of the Jesuits. Constrained to remove from that spot, they fixed their residence at a few leagues from Paris, and called it *Port Royal des Champs*.

With these illustrious recluses many distinguished persons now retired, who had given up their parks and houses to be appropriated to their schools; and this community was called *the Society of Port-Royal*.

Here were no rules, no vows, no constitution, and no cells formed. Prayer and study, and

manual labour were their only occupations. They applied themselves to the education of youth, and raised up little academies in the neighbourhood, where the members of the Port-Royal, the most illustrious names of literary France, presided. None considered his birth entitled him to any exemption from their public offices, relieving the poor and attending on the sick, and employing themselves in their farms and gardens; they were carpenters, ploughmen, gardeners, and vine-dressers, &c. as if they had practised nothing else; they studied physic, and surgery, and law; in truth, it seems that from religious motives, these learned men attempted to form a community of primitive Christianity.

The Duchess of Longueville, once a political chief, sacrificed her ambition on the altar at Port-Royal, enlarged the monastic inclosure with spacious gardens and orchards, built a noble house, and often retreated to its seclusion. The learned D'Andilly, the translator of Josephus, after his studious hours, resorted to the cultivation of fruit-trees; and the fruit of Port-Royal became celebrated for its size and flavour. Presents were sent to the Queen-Mother of France, Anne of Austria, and Cardinal Mazarine, who used to call it "Fruit beni." It appears that "families of rank, affluence, and piety, who did not wish entirely to give up their avocations in the world,

built themselves country-houses in the valley of Port-Royal, in order to enjoy the society of its religious and literary inhabitants."

In the solitudes of Port-Royal *Racine* received his education; and, on his death-bed, desired to be buried in its cemetery, at the feet of his master, Hamon. Arnauld, persecuted, and dying in a foreign country, still cast his lingering looks on this beloved retreat, and left the society his heart, which was there inurned.

Anne de Bourbon, a princess of the blood-royal, erected a house near the Port-Royal, and was, during her life, the powerful patroness of these solitary and religious men: but her death in 1679, was the fatal stroke which dispersed them for ever.

The envy and the fears of the Jesuits, and their rancour against Arnauld, who with such ability had exposed their designs, occasioned the destruction of the Port-Royal Society. *Exinanite, exinanite usque ad fundamentum in ea!*—Annihilate it, annihilate it, to its very foundations! Such are the terms in the Jesuitic decree. The Jesuits had long called the little schools of Port-Royal the hot-beds of heresy. Gregoire, in his interesting memoir of "Ruins of Port-Royal," has drawn an affecting picture of that virtuous society when the Jesuits obtained by their intrigues an order from government to break it up. They razed the build-

you want of the servant, but it shall be myself who shall bring it to you."

How honourable is it to the female character, that in all similar events their sensibility is not greater than their fortitude! But the Duchess of Longueville saw in Arnauld a model of human fortitude which martyrs never excelled. His remarkable reply to Nicole, when they were hunted from place to place, can never be forgotten: Arnauld wished Nicole to assist him in a new work, when the latter observed, "We are now old, is it not time to rest?" "Rest!" returned Arnauld, "have we not all eternity to rest in?" The whole of the Arnauld family were the most extraordinary instance of that hereditary character which is continued through certain families: here it was a sublime, and, perhaps, singular union of learning with religion. The Arnaulds, Sacy, Pascal, Tillemont, with other illustrious names, to whom literary Europe will owe perpetual obligations, combined the life of the monastery with that of the library.

THE PROGRESS OF OLD AGE IN NEW STUDIES.

OF the pleasures derivable from the cultivation of the arts, sciences, and literature, time will not

abate the growing passion; for old men still cherish an affection and feel a youthful enthusiasm in those pursuits, when all others have ceased to interest. Dr. Reid, to his last day, retained a most active curiosity in his various studies, and particularly in the revolutions of modern chemistry. In advanced life we may resume our former studies with a new pleasure, and in old age we may enjoy them with the same relish with which more youthful students commence. Professor Dugald Stewart tells us that Adam Smith observed to him, that "of all the amusements of old age, the most grateful and soothing is a renewal of acquaintance with the favourite studies and favourite authors of youth—a remark, which, in his own case, seemed to be more particularly exemplified while he was re-perusing, with the enthusiasm of a student, the tragic poets of ancient Greece. I heard him repeat the observation more than once while Sophocles and Euripides lay open on his table."

Socrates learnt to play on musical instruments in his old age; Cato, at eighty, thought proper to learn Greek; and Plutarch, almost as late in life, Latin.

Theophrastus began his admirable work on the Characters of Men at the extreme age of ninety. He only terminated his literary labours by his death.

Peter Ronsard, one of the fathers of French poetry, applied himself late to study. His acute genius, and ardent application, rivalled those poetic models which he admired; and Boccaccio was thirty-five years of age when he commenced his studies in polite literature.

The great Arnauld retained the vigour of his genius, and the command of his pen, to his last day; and at the age of eighty-two was still the great Arnauld.

Sir Henry Spelman neglected the sciences in his youth, but cultivated them at fifty years of age, and produced good fruit. His early years were chiefly passed in farming, which greatly diverted him from his studies; but a remarkable disappointment respecting a contested estate, disgusted him with these rustic occupations; resolved to attach himself to regular studies, and literary society, he sold his farms, and became the most learned antiquary and lawyer.

Colbert, the famous French minister, almost at sixty, returned to his Latin and law studies.

Tellier, the chancellor of France, learned logic, merely for an amusement, to dispute with his grandchildren.

Dr. Johnson applied himself to the Dutch language but a few years before his death. The Marquis de Saint Aulaire, at the age of seventy,

began to court the muses, and they crowned him with their freshest flowers. The verses of this French Anacreon are full of fire, delicacy, and sweetness.

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were the composition of his latest years: they were begun in his fifty-fourth year, and finished in his sixty-first.

Ludovico Monaldesco, at the extraordinary age of 115, wrote the memoirs of his times. A singular exertion, noticed by Voltaire, who himself is one of the most remarkable instances of the progress of age in new studies.

The most delightful of auto-biographies for artists, is that of Benvenuto Cellini; a work of great originality, which was not begun till "the clock of his age had struck fifty-eight."

Koornhert began at forty to learn the Latin and Greek languages, of which he became a master; several students, who afterwards distinguished themselves, have commenced as late in life their literary pursuits. Ogilby, the translator of Homer and Virgil, knew little of Latin or Greek till he was past fifty; and Franklin's philosophical pursuits began when he had nearly reached his fiftieth year.

Accorso, a great lawyer, being asked why he began the study of the law so late, answered, that

indeed he began it late, but should therefore master it the sooner.

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SAINT EVREMOND.

THE portrait of St. Evremond, delineated by his own hand, will not be unacceptable to many readers.

This writer possessed delicacy and wit, and has written well, but with great inequality: His poetry is insipid, and his prose abounds with points; the antithesis was his favourite figure, and its prodigality fatigues. The comparisons he forms between some of the illustrious ancients will interest from their ingenuity.

In his day it was a literary fashion for writers to give their own portraits; a fashion that seems to have passed over into our country, for Farquhar has drawn his own character in a letter to a lady. Others of our writers have given these self-miniatures. Such painters are, no doubt, great flatterers, and it is rather their ingenuity, than their truth, which we admire in these cabinet-pictures.

“ I am a philosopher, as far removed from superstition as from impiety; a voluptuary, who has not less abhorrence of debauchery than inclination for pleasure; a man, who has never known want, or abundance. I occupy that station of life which is contemned by those who possess every thing; envied by those who have nothing, and only relished by those who make their felicity consist in the exercise of their reason. Young, I hated dissipation; convinced that a man must possess wealth to provide for the comforts of a long life. Old, I disliked economy; as I believe that

we need not greatly dread want, when we have but a short time to be miserable. I am satisfied with what nature has done for me, nor do I repine at fortune. I do not seek in men what they have of evil, that I may censure; I only discover what they have ridiculous, that I may be amused. I feel a pleasure in detecting their follies; I should feel a greater in communicating my discoveries did not my prudence restrain me. Life is too short, according to my ideas, to read all kinds of books, and to load our memories with an endless number of things at the cost of our judgment. I do not attach myself to the observations of scientific men to acquire science; but to the most rational, that I may strengthen my reason. Sometimes, I seek for more delicate minds, that my taste may imbibe their delicacy; sometimes, for the gayer, that I may enrich my genius with their gaiety; and, although I constantly read, I make it less my occupation than my pleasure. In religion, and in friendship, I have only to paint myself such as I am—in friendship more tender than a philosopher; and in religion, as constant and as sincere as a youth who has more simplicity than experience. My piety is composed more of justice and charity than of penitence. I rest my confidence on God, and hope every thing from his benevolence. In the bosom of providence I find my repose, and my felicity."

MEN OF GENIUS DEFICIENT IN CONVERSATION.

THE student who may, perhaps, shine a luminary of learning and of genius, in the pages of his volume, is found, not rarely, to lie obscured beneath a heavy cloud in colloquial discourse.

If you love the man of letters, seek him in the privacies of his study. It is in the hour of confidence and tranquillity his genius shall elicit a ray of intelligence, more fervid than the labours of polished composition.

The great Peter Corneille, whose genius resembled that of our Shakspeare, and who has so forcibly expressed the sublime sentiments of the hero, had nothing in his exterior that indicated his genius; on the contrary, his conversation was so insipid that it never failed of wearying. Nature, who had lavished on him the gifts of genius, had forgotten to blend with them her more ordinary ones. He did not even *speak* correctly that language of which he was such a master.

When his friends represented to him how much more he might please by not disdaining to correct these trivial errors, he would smile, and say—“*I am not the less Peter Corneille!*” Descartes, whose habits were formed in solitude and meditation, was silent in mixed company; and Thomas describes

his mind by saying that he had received his intellectual wealth from nature in solid bars, but not in current coin; or as Addison expressed the same idea, by comparing himself to a banker who possessed the wealth of his friends at home, though he carried none of it in his pocket; or as that judicious moralist Nicolle, one of the Port-Royal Society, who said of a scintillant wit—"He conquers me in the drawing-room, but he surrenders to me at discretion on the staircase." Such may say with Themistocles, when asked to play on a lute,—“I cannot fiddle, but I can make a little village a great city.”

The deficiencies of Addison in conversation are well known. He preserved a rigid silence amongst strangers; but if he was silent, it was the silence of meditation. How often, at that moment, he laboured at some future Spectator!

Mediocrity can *talk*; but it is for genius to *observe*.

The cynical Mandeville compared Addison, after having passed an evening in his company, to “a silent parson in a tie-wig.” It is no shame for an Addison to receive the censures of a Mandeville: he has only to blush when he calls down those of a Pope.

Virgil was heavy in conversation, and resembled more an ordinary man than an enchanting poet.

La Fontaine, says La Bruyere, appeared coarse, heavy, and stupid; he could not speak or describe what he had just seen: but when he wrote he was the model of poetry.

It is very easy, said a humorous observer on La Fontaine, to be a man of wit, or a fool; but to be both, and that too in the extreme degree, is indeed admirable, and only to be found in him. This observation applies to that fine natural genius Goldsmith. Chaucer was more facetious in his tales than in his conversation, and the Countess of Pembroke used to rally him by saying that his silence was more agreeable to her than his conversation.

Isocrates, celebrated for his beautiful oratorical compositions, was of so timid a disposition that he never ventured to speak in public. He compared himself to the whetstone which will not cut, but enables other things to do this; for his productions served as models to other orators. Vaucanson was said to be as much a machine as any he had made.

Dryden says of himself,—“ My conversation is slow and dull, my humour saturnine and reserved. In short, I am none of those who endeavour to break jests in company, or make repartees.”

VIDA.

WHAT a consolation for an aged parent to see his child, by the efforts of his own merits, attain from the humblest obscurity to distinguished eminence! What a transport for the man of sensibility to return to the obscure dwelling of his parent, and to embrace him, adorned with public honours! Poor *Vida* was deprived of this satisfaction; but he is placed higher in our esteem by the present anecdote than even by that classic composition, which rivals the Art of Poetry of his great master.

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She had her panegyrists in her day: Menage observes, "What a pleasing description has Mademoiselle Scudery made, in her *Cyrus*, of the little court at Rambouillet! A thousand things in the romances of this learned lady render them inestimable. She has drawn from the ancients their happiest passages, and has even improved upon them; like the prince in the fable, whatever she touches becomes gold. We may read her works with great profit, if we possess a correct taste, and love instruction. Those who censure their *length*, only show the littleness of their judgment; as if Homer and Virgil were to be despised, because many of their books are filled with episodes and incidents that necessarily retard the conclusion. It does not require much penetration to observe, that *Cyrus* and *Clelia* are a species of the *epic* poem. The epic must embrace a number of events to suspend the course of the narrative; which only taking in a part of the life of the hero, would terminate too soon to display the skill of the poet. Without this artifice, the charm of uniting the greater part of the episodes to the principal subject of the romance would be lost. Mademoiselle de Scudery has so well treated them, and so aptly introduced a variety of beautiful passages, that

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 C'est notre dame de la garde!
 Gouvernement commode et beau,
 A qui suffit pour tout garde,
 Un Suisse avec sa halebarde
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A fort very commodiously guarded; only requiring one sentinel, and that sentinel a soldier painted on the door!

In a poem on his disgust with the world, he

tells us how intimate he has been with princes :
 Europe has known him through all her provinces ;
 he ventured every thing in a thousand combats :

L'on me vit obeir, l'on me vit commander,
 Et mon poil tout poudreux a blanchi sous les armes ;
 Il est peu de beaux arts ou je ne sois instruit ;
 En prose et en vers, mon nom fit quelque bruit ;
 Et par plus d'un chemin je parvins à la gloire !

IMITATED.

Princes were proud my friendship to proclaim,
 And Europe gazed, where'er her Hero came !
 I grasp'd the laurels of heroic strife,
 The thousand perils of a soldier's life !
 Obedient in the ranks each toilful day !
 Though heroes soon command, they first obey.
 'Twas not for me, too long a time to yield !
 Born for a chieftain in the tented field !
 Around my plumed helm, my silvery hair
 Hung like an honour'd wreath of age and care !
 The finer arts have charm'd my studious hours,
 Versed in their mysteries, skilful in their powers ;
 In verse and prose my equal genius glow'd,
 Pursuing glory, by no single road !

Such was the vain George Scudery ! whose heart
 however was warm ; poverty could never degrade
 him ; adversity never broke down his magnanimous
 spirit !

DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT.

THE maxims of this noble author are in the hands of every one. To those who choose to derive every motive and every action from the solitary principle of *self-love*, they are inestimable. They form one continued satire on human nature; but they are not reconcilable to the feelings of the man of more generous dispositions, or who passes through life with the firm integrity of virtue. Even at court we find a Sully, a Malesherbes and a Clarendon, as well as a Rochefoucault and a Chesterfield.

The Duke de la Rochefoucault, says Segrais, had not studied; but he was endowed with a wonderful degree of discernment, and knew the world perfectly well. This afforded him opportunities of making reflections, and reducing into maxims those discoveries which he had made in the heart of man, of which he displayed an admirable knowledge.

It is perhaps worthy of observation that this celebrated French duke, according to Olivet in his History of the French Academy, could never summon resolution, at his election, to address the academy. Although chosen a member, he never entered; for such was his timidity, that he could

not face an audience and pronounce the usual compliment on his introduction; he whose courage, whose birth, and whose genius, were alike distinguished. The fact is, that it appears by Mad. De Sevigné, that Rochefoucault lived a close domestic life; and that there must be at least as much *theoretical* as *practical* knowledge in the opinions of such a retired philosopher.

Chesterfield, our English Rochefoucault, we are also informed, possessed an admirable knowledge of the heart of man; and he too has drawn a similar picture of human nature! These are two *noble authors* whose chief studies seem to have been made in *courts*. May it not be possible, allowing these authors not to have written a sentence of apocrypha, that the fault lies not so much in *human nature* as in the satellites of Power?

PRIOR'S HANS CARVEL.

WERE we to investigate the genealogy of our best modern stories, we should often discover the illegitimacy of our favourites; we should indeed trace them frequently to the East. My well-read friend Mr. Douce, has collected materials for such a work; but his modesty has too long prevented him from receiving the gratitude of the curious in literature.

This writer possessed delicacy and wit, and has written well, but with great inequality: His poetry is insipid, and his prose abounds with points; the antithesis was his favourite figure, and its prodigality fatigues. The comparisons he forms between some of the illustrious ancients will interest from their ingenuity.

In his day it was a literary fashion for writers to give their own portraits; a fashion that seems to have passed over into our country, for Farquhar has drawn his own character in a letter to a lady. Others of our writers have given these self-miniatures. Such painters are, no doubt, great flatterers, and it is rather their ingenuity, than their truth, which we admire in these cabinet-pictures.

“ I am a philosopher, as far removed from superstition as from impiety; a voluptuary, who has not less abhorrence of debauchery than inclination for pleasure; a man, who has never known want, or abundance. I occupy that station of life which is contemned by those who possess every thing; envied by those who have nothing, and only relished by those who make their felicity consist in the exercise of their reason. Young, I hated dissipation; convinced that a man must possess wealth to provide for the comforts of a long life. Old, I disliked economy; as I believe that

we need not greatly dread want, when we have but a short time to be miserable. I am satisfied with what nature has done for me, nor do I repine at fortune. I do not seek in men what they have of evil, that I may censure; I only discover what they have ridiculous, that I may be amused. I feel a pleasure in detecting their follies; I should feel a greater in communicating my discoveries did not my prudence restrain me. Life is too short, according to my ideas, to read all kinds of books, and to load our memories with an endless number of things at the cost of our judgment. I do not attach myself to the observations of scientific men to acquire science; but to the most rational, that I may strengthen my reason. Sometimes, I seek for more delicate minds, that my taste may imbibe their delicacy; sometimes, for the gayer, that I may enrich my genius with their gaiety; and, although I constantly read, I make it less my occupation than my pleasure. In religion, and in friendship, I have only to paint myself such as I am—in friendship more tender than a philosopher; and in religion, as constant and as sincere as a youth who has more simplicity than experience. My piety is composed more of justice and charity than of penitence. I rest my confidence on God, and hope every thing from his benevolence. In the bosom of providence I find my repose, and my felicity.”

MEN OF GENIUS DEFICIENT IN CON- VERSATION.

THE student who may, perhaps, shine a luminary of learning and of genius, in the pages of his volume, is found, not rarely, to lie obscured beneath a heavy cloud in colloquial discourse.

If you love the man of letters, seek him in the privacies of his study. It is in the hour of confidence and tranquillity his genius shall elicit a ray of intelligence, more fervid than the labours of polished composition.

The great Peter Corneille, whose genius resembled that of our Shakspeare, and who has so forcibly expressed the sublime sentiments of the hero, had nothing in his exterior that indicated his genius; on the contrary, his conversation was so insipid that it never failed of wearying. Nature, who had lavished on him the gifts of genius, had forgotten to blend with them her more ordinary ones. He did not even *speak* correctly that language of which he was such a master.

When his friends represented to him how much more he might please by not disdaining to correct these trivial errors, he would smile, and say—“*I am not the less Peter Corneille!*” Descartes, whose habits were formed in solitude and meditation, was silent in mixed company; and Thomas describes

his mind by saying that he had received his intellectual wealth from nature in solid bars, but not in current coin; or as Addison expressed the same idea, by comparing himself to a banker who possessed the wealth of his friends at home, though he carried none of it in his pocket; or as that judicious moralist Nicolle, one of the Port-Royal Society, who said of a scintillant wit—"He conquers me in the drawing-room, but he surrenders to me at discretion on the staircase." Such may say with Themistocles, when asked to play on a lute,—“I cannot fiddle, but I can make a little village a great city.”

The deficiencies of Addison in conversation are well known. He preserved a rigid silence amongst strangers; but if he was silent, it was the silence of meditation. How often, at that moment, he laboured at some future Spectator!

Mediocrity can *talk*; but it is for genius to *observe*.

The cynical Mandeville compared Addison, after having passed an evening in his company, to “a silent parson in a tie-wig.” It is no shame for an Addison to receive the censures of a Mandeville: he has only to blush when he calls down those of a Pope.

Virgil was heavy in conversation, and resembled more an ordinary man than an enchanting poet.

La Fontaine, says La Bruyere, appeared coarse, heavy, and stupid; he could not speak or describe what he had just seen: but when he wrote he was the model of poetry.

It is very easy, said a humorous observer on La Fontaine, to be a man of wit, or a fool; but to be both, and that too in the extreme degree, is indeed admirable, and only to be found in him. This observation applies to that fine natural genius Goldsmith. Chaucer was more facetious in his tales than in his conversation, and the Countess of Pembroke used to rally him by saying that his silence was more agreeable to her than his conversation.

Isocrates, celebrated for his beautiful oratorical compositions, was of so timid a disposition that he never ventured to speak in public. He compared himself to the whetstone which will not cut, but enables other things to do this; for his productions served as models to other orators. Vaucanson was said to be as much a machine as any he had made.

Dryden says of himself,—“ My conversation is slow and dull, my humour saturnine and reserved. In short, I am none of those who endeavour to break jests in company, or make repartees.”

VIDA.

WHAT a consolation for an aged parent to see his child, by the efforts of his own merits, attain from the humblest obscurity to distinguished eminence! What a transport for the man of sensibility to return to the obscure dwelling of his parent, and to embrace him, adorned with public honours! Poor *Vida* was deprived of this satisfaction; but he is placed higher in our esteem by the present anecdote than even by that classic composition, which rivals the Art of Poetry of his great master.

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THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY

The Academy of Sciences, which was established in 1666, was the first of the kind in France. It was founded by Louis XIV. and Colbert, and its purpose was to promote the progress of science and the arts. The Academy was composed of members who were chosen by the king, and they were to meet regularly to discuss and report on the progress of their researches. The Academy was the first of its kind in France, and it was the first to be established in any country. It was the first to be organized on a permanent basis, and it was the first to be given a charter by the king. The Academy was the first to be given a permanent seat, and it was the first to be given a permanent name. The Academy was the first to be given a permanent office, and it was the first to be given a permanent jurisdiction. The Academy was the first to be given a permanent power, and it was the first to be given a permanent authority. The Academy was the first to be given a permanent influence, and it was the first to be given a permanent reputation. The Academy was the first to be given a permanent fame, and it was the first to be given a permanent glory.

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PRIOR'S HANS CARVEL.

WERE we to investigate the genealogy of our best modern stories, we should often discover the illegitimacy of our favourites; we should indeed trace them frequently to the East. My well-read friend Mr. Douce, has collected materials for such a work; but his modesty has too long prevented him from receiving the gratitude of the curious in literature.

The first of the two is the *Leaves* & of the
second is the *Leaves* & of the

third is the *Leaves* & of the
fourth is the *Leaves* & of the

fifth is the *Leaves* & of the
sixth is the *Leaves* & of the

seventh is the *Leaves* & of the
eighth is the *Leaves* & of the

ninth is the *Leaves* & of the
tenth is the *Leaves* & of the

eleventh is the *Leaves* & of the
twelfth is the *Leaves* & of the

thirteenth is the *Leaves* & of the
fourteenth is the *Leaves* & of the

France has pretty set it off and in numerous
times has imposed it in Latin Aristotelian verses:
and at length our Prior has given it in his best
manner, with equal variety and freedom. After
Ariosto, La Fontaine, and Prior, let us hear of it
no more; yet this has been done.

Voltaire has a curious essay to show that most
of our best modern stories and plots originally be-

longed to the eastern nations, a fact which has been made more evident by recent researches. The *Amphitruon* of Moliere was an imitation of Plautus, who borrowed it from the Greeks, and they took it from the Indians! It is given by Dow in his *History of Hindostan*. In Captain Scott's *Tales and Anecdotes* from Arabian writers, we are surprised at finding so many of our favourites very ancient orientalist.—The *Ephesian Matron*, versified by La Fontaine, was borrowed from the Italians; it is to be found in Petronius, and Petronius had it from the Greeks. But where did the Greeks find it? In the *Arabian Tales*! And from whence did the Arabian fabulists borrow it? From the Chinese! It is found in Du Halde, who collected it from the Versions of the Jesuits.

THE STUDENT IN THE METROPOLIS.

A MAN of letters, who is more intent on the acquisitions of literature than on the plots of politics, or the speculations of commerce, will find a deeper solitude in a populous metropolis than if he had retreated to the seclusion of the country.

The student, who is no flatterer of the little passions of men, will not be much incommoded by their presence. Gibbon paints his own situation in the

heart of the fashionable world.—“ I had not been endowed by art or nature with those happy gifts of confidence and address which unlock every door and every bosom. While coaches were rattling through Bond-street, I have passed many a solitary evening in my lodging with my books. I withdrew without reluctance from the noisy and extensive scene of crowds without company, and dissipation without pleasure.” And even after he had published the first volume of his History, he observes that in London his confinement was solitary and sad; “ the many forgot my existence when they saw me no longer at Brookes’s, and the few who sometimes had a thought on their friend, were detained by business or pleasure, and I was proud and happy if I could prevail on my bookseller Elmsly to enliven the dulness of the evening.”

A situation, very elegantly described in the beautifully-polished verses of Mr. Rogers, in his “ Epistle to a Friend :”

When from his classic dreams the student steals
 Amid the buzz of crowds, the whirl of wheels,
 To muse unnoticed, while around him press
 The meteor-forms of equipage and dress;
 Alone in wonder lost, he seems to stand
 A very stranger in his native land.

He compares the student to one of the seven sleepers in the ancient legend.

Descartes residing in the commercial city of Amsterdam, writing to Balzac, illustrates these descriptions with great force and vivacity.

You wish to retire; and your intention is to seek the solitude of the Chartreux, or, possibly, some of the most beautiful provinces of France and Italy. I would rather advise you, if you wish to observe mankind, and at the same time to lose yourself in the deepest solitude, to join me in Amsterdam. I prefer this situation to that even of your delicious villa, where I spent so great a part of the last year; for however agreeable a country-house may be, a thousand little conveniences are wanted, which can only be found in a city. One is not alone so frequently in the country as one could wish: a number of impertinent visitors are continually besieging you. Here, as all the world, except myself, is occupied in commerce, it depends merely on myself to live unknown to the world. I walk every day amongst immense ranks of people, with as much tranquillity as you do in your green alleys. The men I meet with make the same impression on my mind as would the trees of your forests, or the flocks of sheep grazing on your common. The busy hum too of these merchants does not disturb one more than the purling of your brooks. If sometimes I amuse myself in contemplating their anxious motions, I

receive the same pleasure which you do in observing those men who cultivate your land; for I reflect that the end of all their labours is to embellish the city which I inhabit, and to anticipate all my wants. If you contemplate with delight the fruits of your orchards, with all the rich promises of abundance, do you think I feel less in observing so many fleets that convey to me the productions of either India? What spot on earth could you find, which, like this, can so interest your vanity and gratify your taste?

THE TALMUD.

THE JEWS have their TALMUD; the CATHOLICS their LEGENDS of Saints; and the TURKS their SONNAH. The PROTESTANT has nothing but his BIBLE. The former are three kindred works. Men have imagined that the more there is to be believed, the more are the merits of the believer. Hence all *traditionists* formed the orthodox and the strongest party. The word of God is lost amidst those heaps of human inventions, sanctioned by an order of men connected with religious duties; they ought now, however, to be regarded rather as CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE. I give a sufficiently ample account of the TALMUD and the LEGENDS;

but of the SONNAH I only know that it is a collection of the traditional opinions of the Turkish prophets, directing the observance of petty superstitions not mentioned in the Koran.

The TALMUD is a collection of Jewish traditions, which have been *orally* preserved. It comprises the MISHNA, which is the text, and the GEMARA, its commentary. The whole forms a complete system of the learning, ceremonies, civil and canon laws of the Jews; treating indeed on all subjects; even gardening, manual arts, &c. The rigid Jews persuaded themselves that these traditional explications are of divine origin. The Pentateuch, say they, was written out by their legislator before his death in thirteen copies, distributed among the twelve tribes, and the remaining one deposited in the ark. The oral law Moses continually taught in the Sanhedrim, to the elders and the rest of the people. The law was repeated four times; but the interpretation was delivered only by *word of mouth* from generation to generation. In the fortieth year of the flight from Egypt the memory of the people became treacherous, and Moses was constrained to repeat this oral law, which had been conveyed by successive traditionists. Such is the account of honest David Levi: it is the creed of every rabbin.—David believed in every thing, but in Jesus.

This writer possessed delicacy and wit, and has written well, but with great inequality: His poetry is insipid, and his prose abounds with points; the antithesis was his favourite figure, and its prodigality fatigues. The comparisons he forms between some of the illustrious ancients will interest from their ingenuity.

In his day it was a literary fashion for writers to give their own portraits; a fashion that seems to have passed over into our country, for Farquhar has drawn his own character in a letter to a lady. Others of our writers have given these self-miniatures. Such painters are, no doubt, great flatterers, and it is rather their ingenuity, than their truth, which we admire in these cabinet-pictures.

“ I am a philosopher, as far removed from superstition as from impiety; a voluptuary, who has not less abhorrence of debauchery than inclination for pleasure; a man, who has never known want, or abundance. I occupy that station of life which is contemned by those who possess every thing; envied by those who have nothing, and only relished by those who make their felicity consist in the exercise of their reason. Young, I hated dissipation; convinced that a man must possess wealth to provide for the comforts of a long life. Old, I disliked economy; as I believe that

we need not greatly dread want, when we have but a short time to be miserable. I am satisfied with what nature has done for me, nor do I repine at fortune. I do not seek in men what they have of evil, that I may censure; I only discover what they have ridiculous, that I may be amused. I feel a pleasure in detecting their follies; I should feel a greater in communicating my discoveries did not my prudence restrain me. Life is too short, according to my ideas, to read all kinds of books, and to load our memories with an endless number of things at the cost of our judgment. I do not attach myself to the observations of scientific men to acquire science; but to the most rational, that I may strengthen my reason. Sometimes, I seek for more delicate minds, that my taste may imbibe their delicacy; sometimes, for the gayer, that I may enrich my genius with their gaiety; and, although I constantly read, I make it less my occupation than my pleasure. In religion, and in friendship, I have only to paint myself such as I am—in friendship more tender than a philosopher; and in religion, as constant and as sincere as a youth who has more simplicity than experience. My piety is composed more of justice and charity than of penitence. I rest my confidence on God, and hope every thing from his benevolence. In the bosom of providence I find my repose, and my felicity.”

Peter Ronsard, one of the fathers of French poetry, applied himself late to study. His acute genius, and ardent application, rivalled those poetic models which he admired; and Boccaccio was thirty-five years of age when he commenced his studies in polite literature.

The great Arnauld retained the vigour of his genius, and the command of his pen, to his last day; and at the age of eighty-two was still the great Arnauld.

Sir Henry Spelman neglected the sciences in his youth, but cultivated them at fifty years of age, and produced good fruit. His early years were chiefly passed in farming, which greatly diverted him from his studies; but a remarkable disappointment respecting a contested estate, disgusted him with these rustic occupations; resolved to attach himself to regular studies, and literary society, he sold his farms, and became the most learned antiquary and lawyer.

Colbert, the famous French minister, almost at sixty, returned to his Latin and law studies.

Tellier, the chancellor of France, learned logic, merely for an amusement, to dispute with his grandchildren.

Dr. Johnson applied himself to the Dutch language but a few years before his death. The Marquis de Saint Aulaire, at the age of seventy,

began to court the muses, and they crowned him with their freshest flowers. The verses of this French Anacreon are full of fire, delicacy, and sweetness.

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were the composition of his latest years: they were begun in his fifty-fourth year, and finished in his sixty-first.

Ludovico Monaldesco, at the extraordinary age of 115, wrote the memoirs of his times. A singular exertion, noticed by Voltaire, who himself is one of the most remarkable instances of the progress of age in new studies.

The most delightful of auto-biographies for artists, is that of Benvenuto Cellini; a work of great originality, which was not begun till "the clock of his age had struck fifty-eight."

Koornhert began at forty to learn the Latin and Greek languages, of which he became a master; several students, who afterwards distinguished themselves, have commenced as late in life their literary pursuits. Ogilby, the translator of Homer and Virgil, knew little of Latin or Greek till he was past fifty; and Franklin's philosophical pursuits began when he had nearly reached his fiftieth year.

Accorso, a great lawyer, being asked why he began the study of the law so late, answered, that

indeed he began it late, but should therefore master it the sooner.

Dryden's complete works form the largest body of poetry from the pen of one writer in the English language; yet he gave no public testimony of poetical abilities till his twenty-seventh year. In his sixty-eighth year he proposed to translate the whole Iliad; and his most pleasing productions were written in his old age.

Michael Angelo preserved his creative genius even in extreme old age: there is a device said to be invented by him, of an old man represented in a *go-cart*, with an hour-glass upon it; the inscription *Ancora imparo!*—YET I AM LEARNING!

We have a literary curiosity in a favourite treatise with Erasmus and men of letters of that period, *De Ratione Studii*, by Joachim Sterck, otherwise Fortius de Rhingelberg. The enthusiasm of the writer often carries him to the verge of ridicule; but something must be granted to his peculiar situation and feelings; for Baillet tells us that this method of studying had been formed entirely from his own practical knowledge and hard experience; at a late period of life he commenced his studies, and at length he imagined that he had discovered a more perpendicular mode of ascending the hill of science than by its usual circuitous

windings. His work Mr. Knox compares to the sound of a trumpet.

Menage, in his *Anti-Baillet*, has a very curious apology for writing verses in his old age, by showing how many poets amused themselves notwithstanding their gray hairs, and wrote sonnets or epigrams at ninety.

La Casa, in one of his letters, humorously said, *Io credo ch'io farò Sonnetto venti cinque anni, o trenta, poi che io sarò morto.* I think I may make sonnets twenty-five, or perhaps thirty years, after I shall be dead! Petau tells us that he wrote verses to solace the evils of old age—

——— Petavius æger

Cantabat veteris quærens solatia morbi.

Malherbe declares the honours of genius were his, yet young—

Je les posseday jeune, et les possede encore

A la fin de mes jours!

Maynard moralises on this subject,

En cheveux blancs il me faut donc aller
Comme un enfant tous les jours à l'école;
Que je suis fou d'apprendre à bien parler
Lorsque la mort vient m'oter la parole,

SPANISH POETRY.

PERE BOUHOURS observes, that the Spanish poets display an extravagant imagination, which is by no means destitute of *esprit*—shall we say *wit*? but which evinces little taste or judgment.

Their verses are much in the style of our Cowley—trivial points, monstrous metaphors, and quaint conceits. It is evident that the Spanish poets imported this taste from the time of Marino in Italy; but the warmth of the Spanish climate appears to have redoubled it, and to have blown the kindled sparks of chimerical fancy to the heat of a Vulcanian forge.

Lopes de Vega, in describing an afflicted shepherdess, in one of his pastorals, who is represented weeping near the sea-side, says, “That the sea joyfully advances to gather her tears; and that, having enclosed them in shells, it converts them into pearls.”

“ Y el mar como imbidioso
 A tierra por las lagrimas salia,
 Y alegre de cogerlas
 Las guarda en conchas, y convierte en perlas.”

Villegas addresses a stream—“Thou who runnest over sands of gold, with feet of silver,”

more elegant than our Shakespeare's "Thy silver skin laced with thy golden blood." Villegas monstrously exclaims, "Touch my breast, if you doubt the power of Lydia's eyes—you will find it turned to ashes." Again—"Thou art so great that thou canst only imitate thyself with thy own greatness;" much like our "None but himself can be his parallel."

Gongora, whom the Spaniards once greatly admired, and distinguished by the epithet of *The wonderful*, is full of these points and conceits.

He imagines that a nightingale, who enchantingly varied her notes, and sang in different manners, had a hundred thousand other nightingales in her breast, which alternately sang through her throat—

“ Con diferencia tal, con gracia tanta,
 A quel ruysenor llora, que sospecho
 Que tiene otros cien mil dentro del pecho,
 Que alterna su dolor por su garganta.”

Of a young and beautiful lady he says, that she has but a few *years* of life, but many *ages* of beauty.

Muchos siglos de hermosura
 En pocos anos de edad.

Many ages of beauty is a false thought, for beauty becomes not more beautiful from its age;

it would be only a superannuated beauty. A face of two or three ages old could have but few charms.

In one of his odes he addresses the River of Madrid by the title of the *Duke of Streams* and the *Viscount of Rivers*—

“ Mançanares, Mançanares,
Os que en todo el aguatismo,
Estois *Duque* de Arroyos,
Y *Visconde* de los Rios.”

He did not venture to call it a *Spanish grandee*, for, in fact, it is but a shallow and dirty stream; and as Quevedo wittily informs us, “ *Mançanares* is reduced, during the summer season, to the melancholy condition of the wicked rich man, who asks for water in the depths of hell.”

Concerning this river a pleasant witticism is recorded. Though so small, this stream in the time of a flood can spread itself over the neighbouring fields; for this reason Philip the Second built a bridge eleven hundred feet long!—A Spaniard passing it one day, when it was perfectly dry, observing this superb bridge, archly remarked, “ That it would be proper that the bridge should be sold to purchase water.”—*Es menester, vender la puente por comprar agua.*

The following elegant translation of a Spanish

madrigal of the kind here criticised I found in a newspaper, but it is evidently by a master-hand.

On the green margin of the land,
 Where Guadalhorce winds his way,
 My lady lay:
 With golden key Sleep's gentle hand
 Had closed her eyes so bright—
 Her eyes, two suns of light—
 And bade his balmy dews
 Her rosy cheek suffuse.
 The River God in slumber saw her laid,
 He raised his dripping head,
 With weeds o'erspread,
 Clad in his wat'ry robes approach'd the maid,
 And with cold kiss, like death,
 Drank the rich perfume of the maiden's breath.
 The maiden felt that icy kiss,
Her suns unclosed, their flame
 Full and unclouded on th' intruder came.
 Amazed th' intruder felt
His frothy body melt,
And heard the radiance on his bosom hiss ;
 And, forced in blind confusion to retire,
Leapt in the water to escape the fire.

SAINT EVREMOND.

THE portrait of St. Evremond, delineated by his own hand, will not be unacceptable to many readers.

This writer possessed delicacy and wit, and has written well, but with great inequality: His poetry is insipid, and his prose abounds with points; the antithesis was his favourite figure, and its prodigality fatigues. The comparisons he forms between some of the illustrious ancients will interest from their ingenuity.

In his day it was a literary fashion for writers to give their own portraits; a fashion that seems to have passed over into our country, for Farquhar has drawn his own character in a letter to a lady. Others of our writers have given these self-miniatures. Such painters are, no doubt, great flatterers, and it is rather their ingenuity, than their truth, which we admire in these cabinet-pictures.

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we need not greatly dread want, when we have but a short time to be miserable. I am satisfied with what nature has done for me, nor do I repine at fortune. I do not seek in men what they have of evil, that I may censure; I only discover what they have ridiculous, that I may be amused. I feel a pleasure in detecting their follies; I should feel a greater in communicating my discoveries did not my prudence restrain me. Life is too short, according to my ideas, to read all kinds of books, and to load our memories with an endless number of things at the cost of our judgment. I do not attach myself to the observations of scientific men to acquire science; but to the most rational, that I may strengthen my reason. Sometimes, I seek for more delicate minds, that my taste may imbibe their delicacy; sometimes, for the gayer, that I may enrich my genius with their gaiety; and, although I constantly read, I make it less my occupation than my pleasure. In religion, and in friendship, I have only to paint myself such as I am—in friendship more tender than a philosopher; and in religion, as constant and as sincere as a youth who has more simplicity than experience. My piety is composed more of justice and charity than of penitence. I rest my confidence on God, and hope every thing from his benevolence. In the bosom of providence I find my repose, and my felicity."

MEN OF GENIUS DEFICIENT IN CONVERSATION.

THE student who may, perhaps, shine a luminary of learning and of genius, in the pages of his volume, is found, not rarely, to lie obscured beneath a heavy cloud in colloquial discourse.

If you love the man of letters, seek him in the privacies of his study. It is in the hour of confidence and tranquillity his genius shall elicit a ray of intelligence, more fervid than the labours of polished composition.

The great Peter Corneille, whose genius resembled that of our Shakspeare, and who has so forcibly expressed the sublime sentiments of the hero, had nothing in his exterior that indicated his genius; on the contrary, his conversation was so insipid that it never failed of wearying. Nature, who had lavished on him the gifts of genius, had forgotten to blend with them her more ordinary ones. He did not even *speak* correctly that language of which he was such a master.

When his friends represented to him how much more he might please by not disdaining to correct these trivial errors, he would smile, and say—“*I am not the less Peter Corneille!*” Descartes, whose habits were formed in solitude and meditation, was silent in mixed company; and Thomas describes

his mind by saying that he had received his intellectual wealth from nature in solid bars, but not in current coin; or as Addison expressed the same idea, by comparing himself to a banker who possessed the wealth of his friends at home, though he carried none of it in his pocket; or as that judicious moralist Nicolle, one of the Port-Royal Society, who said of a scintillant wit—"He conquers me in the drawing-room, but he surrenders to me at discretion on the staircase." Such may say with Themistocles, when asked to play on a lute,—“I cannot fiddle, but I can make a little village a great city.”

The deficiencies of Addison in conversation are well known. He preserved a rigid silence amongst strangers; but if he was silent, it was the silence of meditation. How often, at that moment, he laboured at some future Spectator!

Mediocrity can *talk*; but it is for genius to *observe*.

The cynical Mandeville compared Addison, after having passed an evening in his company, to “a silent parson in a tie-wig.” It is no shame for an Addison to receive the censures of a Mandeville: he has only to blush when he calls down those of a Pope.

Virgil was heavy in conversation, and resembled more an ordinary man than an enchanting poet.

La Fontaine, says La Bruyere, appeared coarse, heavy, and stupid; he could not speak or describe what he had just seen: but when he wrote he was the model of poetry.

It is very easy, said a humorous observer on La Fontaine, to be a man of wit, or a fool; but to be both, and that too in the extreme degree, is indeed admirable, and only to be found in him. This observation applies to that fine natural genius Goldsmith. Chaucer was more facetious in his tales than in his conversation, and the Countess of Pembroke used to rally him by saying that his silence was more agreeable to her than his conversation.

Isocrates, celebrated for his beautiful oratorical compositions, was of so timid a disposition that he never ventured to speak in public. He compared himself to the whetstone which will not cut, but enables other things to do this; for his productions served as models to other orators. Vaucanson was said to be as much a machine as any he had made.

Dryden says of himself,—“ My conversation is slow and dull, my humour saturnine and reserved. In short, I am none of those who endeavour to break jests in company, or make repartees.”

VIDA.

WHAT a consolation for an aged parent to see his child, by the efforts of his own merits, attain from the humblest obscurity to distinguished eminence! What a transport for the man of sensibility to return to the obscure dwelling of his parent, and to embrace him, adorned with public honours! Poor *Vida* was deprived of this satisfaction; but he is placed higher in our esteem by the present anecdote than even by that classic composition, which rivals the Art of Poetry of his great master.

Jerome Vida, after having long served two Popes, at length attained to the episcopacy. Arrayed in the robes of his new dignity, he prepared to visit his aged parents, and felicitated himself with the raptures which the old couple would feel in embracing their son as their bishop. When he arrived at their village, he learnt that it was but a few days since they were no more! His sensibilities were exquisitely pained. The muse, elegantly querulous, dictated some elegiac verse; and in the sweetest pathos deplored the death and the disappointment of his parents.

THE SCUDERIES.

Bien heureux SCUDERY, dont la fertile plume
Peut tous les mois sans peine enfanter un volume.

BOILEAU has written this couplet on the Scuderies, the brother and sister, both famous in their day for composing romances, which they sometimes extended to ten or twelve volumes. It was the favourite literature of that period, as novels are now. Our nobility not infrequently condescended to translate these voluminous compositions.

The diminutive size of our modern novels is undoubtedly an improvement: but, in resembling the size of primers, it were to be wished that their contents had also resembled their inoffensive pages. Our great grandmothers were incommoded with overgrown folios; and, instead of finishing the eventful history of two lovers at one or two sittings, it was sometimes six months, *including Sundays*, before they could get quit of their Clelias, their Cyrus's, and Parthenissas.

Mademoiselle Scudery, *Menage* informs us, had composed *ninety volumes!* She had even finished another romance, which she would not give the public, whose taste, she perceived, no more relished this kind of works. She was that unfortunate author who lives to more than ninety

years of age; and consequently outlive their immortality.

She had her panegyrists in her day: Menage observes, "What a pleasing description has Mademoiselle Scudery made, in her *Cyrus*, of the little court at Rambouillet! A thousand things in the romances of this learned lady render them inestimable. She has drawn from the ancients their happiest passages, and has even improved upon them; like the prince in the fable, whatever she touches becomes gold. We may read her works with great profit, if we possess a correct taste, and love instruction. Those who censure their *length*, only show the littleness of their judgment; as if Homer and Virgil were to be despised, because many of their books are filled with episodes and incidents that necessarily retard the conclusion. It does not require much penetration to observe, that *Cyrus* and *Clelia* are a species of the *epic* poem. The epic must embrace a number of events to suspend the course of the narrative; which only taking in a part of the life of the hero, would terminate too soon to display the skill of the poet. Without this artifice, the charm of uniting the greater part of the episodes to the principal subject of the romance would be lost. Mademoiselle de Scudery has so well treated them, and so aptly introduced a variety of beautiful passages, that

nothing in this kind is comparable to her productions. Some expressions, and certain turns, have become somewhat obsolete, all the rest will last for ever, and outlive the criticisms they have undergone."

Menage has here certainly uttered a false prophecy. The curious only look over her romances. They contain doubtless many beautiful inventions; the misfortune is, that *time* and *patience* are rare requisites for the enjoyment of these Iliads in prose.

"The misfortune of her having written too abundantly has occasioned an unjust contempt," says a French critic. "We confess there are many heavy and tedious passages in her voluminous romances; but if we consider that in the Clelia and the Artamene are to be found inimitable delicate touches, and many splendid parts which would do honour to some of our living writers, we must acknowledge that the great defects of all her works arise from her not writing in an age when taste had reached the acmé of cultivation. Such is her erudition that the French place her next to the celebrated Madame Dacier. Her works, containing many secret intrigues of the court and city, her readers must have keenly relished on their early publication."

Her Artamenes, or the Great Cyrus, and prin-

cipally her Clelia, are representations of what then passed at the court of France. The *Map of the Kingdom of Tenderness*, in Clelia, appeared, at the time, as the happiest invention. This once celebrated *map* is an allegory which distinguishes the different kinds of tenderness, which are reduced to esteem, gratitude, and inclination. The map represents three rivers, which have these three names, and on which are situated three towns called Tenderness: Tenderness on *Inclination*; Tenderness on *Esteem*; and Tenderness on *Gratitude*. *Pleasing Attentions*, or *Petit Soins*, is a *village* very beautifully situated. Mademoiselle de Scudery was extremely proud of this little allegorical map; and had a terrible controversy with another writer about its originality.

GEORGE SCUDERY, her brother, and inferior in genius, had a striking singularity of character:— he was one of the most complete votaries to the universal divinity of Vanity. With a heated imagination, entirely destitute of judgment, his military character was continually exhibiting itself by that peaceful instrument the pen, so that he exhibits a most amusing contrast of ardent feelings in a cool situation; not liberally endowed with genius, but abounding with its semblance in the fire of eccentric gasconade; no man has portrayed his own character with a bolder colouring than himself in

his numerous prefaces and addresses; surrounded by a thousand self-illusions of the most sublime class, every thing that related to himself had an Homeric grandeur of conception.

In an epistle to the Duke of Montmorency, he says, "I will learn to write with my left hand, that my right hand may more nobly be devoted to your service;" and alluding to his pen, (*plume,*) declares "he comes from a family who never used one, but to stick in their hats." When he solicits small favours from the great, he assures them "that princes must not think him importunate, and that his writings are merely inspired by his own individual interest; no! (he exclaims) I am studious only of your glory, while I am careless of my own fortune." And indeed, to do him but justice, he acted up to these romantic feelings. After he had published his epic of Alaric, Christina of Sweden proposed to honour him with a chain of gold of the value of five hundred pounds, provided he would expunge from his epic the eulogiums he bestowed on the Count of Gardie, whom she had disgraced. The epical soul of Scudery magnanimously scorned the bribe, and replied, that "If the chain of gold should be as weighty as that chain mentioned in the history of the Incas, I will never destroy any altar on which I have sacrificed!"

Proud of his boasted nobility and erratic life, he

thus addresses the reader: "You will lightly pass over any faults in my work, if you reflect that I have employed the greater part of my life in seeing the finest parts of Europe, and that I have passed more days in the camp than in the library. I have used more matches to light my musket than to light my candles; I know better to arrange columns in the field than those on paper; and to square battalions better than to round periods." In his first publication, he began his literary career perfectly in character, by a challenge to his critics!

He is the author of sixteen plays, chiefly heroic tragedies; children who all bear the features of their father. He first introduced in his "L'Amour Tyrannique" a strict observance of the Aristotelian unities of time and place; and the necessity and advantages of this regulation are urged, which only shows that Aristotle goes but little to the composition of a pathetic tragedy. In his last drama, "Arminius," he extravagantly scatters his panegyrics on its fifteen predecessors; but of the present one he has the most exalted notion: it is the quintessence of Scudery! An ingenious critic calls it "The downfall of mediocrity!" It is amusing to listen to this blazing preface—"At length, reader, nothing remains for me but to mention the great Arminius which I now present

to you, and by which I have resolved to close my long and laborious course. It is indeed my masterpiece! and the most finished work that ever came from my pen; for whether we examine the fable, the manners, the sentiments, or the versification, it is certain that I never performed any thing so just, so great, nor more beautiful; and if my labours could ever deserve a crown, I would claim it for this work!"

The actions of this singular personage were in unison with his writings: he gives a pompous description of a most unimportant government which he obtained near Marseilles, but all the grandeur existed only in our author's heated imagination. Bachaumont and De la Chapelle, two wits of those times, in their playful "Voyage" describe it with humour:

Mais il faut vous parler du Fort
 Qui sans doute est une merveille ;
 C'est notre dame de la garde !
 Gouvernement commode et beau,
 A qui suffit pour tout garde,
 Un Suisse avec sa halebarde
 Peint sur la porte du chateau !

A fort very commodiously guarded; only requiring one sentinel, and that sentinel a soldier painted on the door!

In a poem on his disgust with the world, he

tells us how intimate he has been with princes :
 Europe has known him through all her provinces ;
 he ventured every thing in a thousand combats :

L'on me vit obeir, l'on me vit commander,
 Et mon poil tout poudreux a blanchi sous les armes ;
 Il est peu de beaux arts ou je ne sois instruit ;
 En prose et en vers, mon nom fit quelque bruit ;
 Et par plus d'un chemin je parvins à la gloire !

IMITATED.

Princes were proud my friendship to proclaim,
 And Europe gazed, where'er her Hero came !
 I grasp'd the laurels of heroic strife,
 The thousand perils of a soldier's life !
 Obedient in the ranks each toilful day !
 Though heroes soon command, they first obey.
 'Twas not for me, too long a time to yield !
 Born for a chieftain in the tented field !
 Around my plumed helm, my silvery hair
 Hung like an honour'd wreath of age and care !
 The finer arts have charm'd my studious hours,
 Versed in their mysteries, skilful in their powers ;
 In verse and prose my equal genius glow'd,
 Pursuing glory, by no single road !

Such was the vain George Scudery ! whose heart
 however was warm ; poverty could never degrade
 him ; adversity never broke down his magnanimous
 spirit !

DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT.

THE maxims of this noble author are in the hands of every one. To those who choose to derive every motive and every action from the solitary principle of *self-love*, they are inestimable. They form one continued satire on human nature; but they are not reconcilable to the feelings of the man of more generous dispositions, or who passes through life with the firm integrity of virtue. Even at court we find a Sully, a Malesherbes and a Clarendon, as well as a Rochefoucault and a Chesterfield.

The Duke de la Rochefoucault, says Segrais, had not studied; but he was endowed with a wonderful degree of discernment, and knew the world perfectly well. This afforded him opportunities of making reflections, and reducing into maxims those discoveries which he had made in the heart of man, of which he displayed an admirable knowledge.

It is perhaps worthy of observation that this celebrated French duke, according to Olivet in his History of the French Academy, could never summon resolution, at his election, to address the academy. Although chosen a member, he never entered; for such was his timidity, that he could

not face an audience and pronounce the usual compliment on his introduction; he whose courage, whose birth, and whose genius, were alike distinguished. The fact is, that it appears by Mad. De Sevigné, that Rochefoucault lived a close domestic life; and that there must be at least as much *theoretical* as *practical* knowledge in the opinions of such a retired philosopher.

Chesterfield, our English Rochefoucault, we are also informed, possessed an admirable knowledge of the heart of man; and he too has drawn a similar picture of human nature! These are two *noble authors* whose chief studies seem to have been made in *courts*. May it not be possible, allowing these authors not to have written a sentence of apocrypha, that the fault lies not so much in *human nature* as in the satellites of Power?

PRIOR'S HANS CARVEL.

WERE we to investigate the genealogy of our best modern stories, we should often discover the illegitimacy of our favourites; we should indeed trace them frequently to the East. My well-read friend Mr. Douce, has collected materials for such a work; but his modesty has too long prevented him from receiving the gratitude of the curious in literature.

The story of the ring of Hans Carvel is of very ancient standing, as are most of the tales of this kind.

Menage says that Poggius, who died in 1459, has the merit of its invention; but I suspect he only related a very popular story.

Rabelais, who has given it in his peculiar manner, changed its original name of Philelphus to that of Hans Carvel.

This tale is likewise in the eleventh of *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* collected in 1461, for the amusement of Louis XI. when Dauphin, and living in solitude.

Ariosto has borrowed it, at the end of his fifth Satire; but, by his pleasant manner of relating it, it is fairly appropriated.

In a collection of novels at Lyons, in 1555, it is also employed, in the eleventh novel.

Celio Malespini has it again in page 288 of the second part of his *Two Hundred Novels*, printed at Venice in 1609.

Fontaine has prettily set it off, and an anonymous writer has composed it in Latin Anacreontic verses; and at length our Prior has given it in his best manner, with equal gaiety and freedom. After Ariosto, La Fontaine, and Prior, let us hear of it no more; yet this has been done.

Voltaire has a curious essay to show that most of our best modern stories and plots originally be-

longed to the eastern nations, a fact which has been made more evident by recent researches. The *Amphitruon* of Moliere was an imitation of Plautus, who borrowed it from the Greeks, and they took it from the Indians! It is given by Dow in his *History of Hindostan*. In Captain Scott's *Tales and Anecdotes* from Arabian writers, we are surprised at finding so many of our favourites very ancient orientalists.—The *Ephesian Matron*, versified by La Fontaine, was borrowed from the Italians; it is to be found in Petronius, and Petronius had it from the Greeks. But where did the Greeks find it? In the *Arabian Tales*! And from whence did the Arabian fabulists borrow it? From the Chinese! It is found in Du Halde, who collected it from the Versions of the Jesuits.

THE STUDENT IN THE METROPOLIS.

A MAN of letters, who is more intent on the acquisitions of literature than on the plots of politics, or the speculations of commerce, will find a deeper solitude in a populous metropolis than if he had retreated to the seclusion of the country.

The student, who is no flatterer of the little passions of men, will not be much incommoded by their presence. Gibbon paints his own situation in the

heart of the fashionable world.—“ I had not been endowed by art or nature with those happy gifts of confidence and address which unlock every door and every bosom. While coaches were rattling through Bond-street, I have passed many a solitary evening in my lodging with my books. I withdrew without reluctance from the noisy and extensive scene of crowds without company, and dissipation without pleasure.” And even after he had published the first volume of his History, he observes that in London his confinement was solitary and sad ; “ the many forgot my existence when they saw me no longer at Brookes’s, and the few who sometimes had a thought on their friend, were detained by business or pleasure, and I was proud and happy if I could prevail on my bookseller Elmsly to enliven the dulness of the evening.”

A situation, very elegantly described in the beautifully-polished verses of Mr. Rogers, in his “ Epistle to a Friend :”

When from his classic dreams the student steals
Amid the buzz of crowds, the whirl of wheels,
To muse unnoticed, while around him press
The meteor-forms of equipage and dress ;
Alone in wonder lost, he seems to stand
A very stranger in his native land.

He compares the student to one of the seven sleepers in the ancient legend.

Descartes residing in the commercial city of Amsterdam, writing to Balzac, illustrates these descriptions with great force and vivacity.

You wish to retire; and your intention is to seek the solitude of the Chartreux, or, possibly, some of the most beautiful provinces of France and Italy. I would rather advise you, if you wish to observe mankind, and at the same time to lose yourself in the deepest solitude, to join me in Amsterdam. I prefer this situation to that even of your delicious villa, where I spent so great a part of the last year; for however agreeable a country-house may be, a thousand little conveniences are wanted, which can only be found in a city. One is not alone so frequently in the country as one could wish: a number of impertinent visitors are continually besieging you. Here, as all the world, except myself, is occupied in commerce, it depends merely on myself to live unknown to the world. I walk every day amongst immense ranks of people, with as much tranquillity as you do in your green alleys. The men I meet with make the same impression on my mind as would the trees of your forests, or the flocks of sheep grazing on your common. The busy hum too of these merchants does not disturb one more than the purling of your brooks. If sometimes I amuse myself in contemplating their anxious motions, I

receive the same pleasure which you do in observing those men who cultivate your land; for I reflect that the end of all their labours is to embellish the city which I inhabit, and to anticipate all my wants. If you contemplate with delight the fruits of your orchards, with all the rich promises of abundance, do you think I feel less in observing so many fleets that convey to me the productions of either India? What spot on earth could you find, which, like this, can so interest your vanity and gratify your taste?

THE TALMUD.

THE JEWS have their TALMUD; the CATHOLICS their LEGENDS of Saints; and the TURKS their SONNAH. The PROTESTANT has nothing but his BIBLE. The former are three kindred works. Men have imagined that the more there is to be believed, the more are the merits of the believer. Hence all *traditionists* formed the orthodox and the strongest party. The word of God is lost amidst those heaps of human inventions, sanctioned by an order of men connected with religious duties; they ought now, however, to be regarded rather as CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE. I give a sufficiently ample account of the TALMUD and the LEGENDS;

but of the SONNAH I only know that it is a collection of the traditional opinions of the Turkish prophets, directing the observance of petty superstitions not mentioned in the Koran.

The TALMUD is a collection of Jewish traditions, which have been *orally* preserved. It comprises the MISHNA, which is the text, and the GEMARA, its commentary. The whole forms a complete system of the learning, ceremonies, civil and canon laws of the Jews; treating indeed on all subjects; even gardening, manual arts, &c. The rigid Jews persuaded themselves that these traditional explications are of divine origin. The Pentateuch, say they, was written out by their legislator before his death in thirteen copies, distributed among the twelve tribes, and the remaining one deposited in the ark. The oral law Moses continually taught in the Sanhedrim, to the elders and the rest of the people. The law was repeated four times; but the interpretation was delivered only by *word of mouth* from generation to generation. In the fortieth year of the flight from Egypt the memory of the people became treacherous, and Moses was constrained to repeat this oral law, which had been conveyed by successive traditionists. Such is the account of honest David Levi: it is the creed of every rabbin.—David believed in every thing, but in Jesus.

This history of the Talmud some inclined to suppose apocryphal, even among a few of the Jews themselves. When these traditions first appeared, the keenest controversy has never been able to determine. It cannot be denied that there existed traditions among the Jews in the time of Jesus Christ. About the second century they were industriously collected by Rabbi Juda the holy, the prince of the rabbins, who enjoyed the favour of Antoninus Pius. He has the merit of giving some order to this very multifarious collection.

It appears that the Talmud was compiled by certain Jewish doctors, who were solicited for this purpose by their nation, that they might have something to oppose to their Christian adversaries.

The learned W. Wotton, in his curious "Discourses" on the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, supplies an analysis of this vast collection; he has translated entire two divisions of this code of traditional laws with the original text and the notes.

There are two Talmuds: the Jerusalem and the Babylonian. The last is the most esteemed, because it is the most bulky.

R. Juda, the prince of the rabbins, committed to writing all these traditions, and arranged them under six general heads, called orders or classes. The subjects are indeed curious for philosophical

inquirers, and multifarious as the events of civil life. Every *order* is formed of *treatises*: every *treatise* is divided into *chapters*, every *chapter* into *mishnas*, which word means mixtures or miscellanies, in the form of *aphorisms*. In the first part is discussed what relates to *seeds, fruits, and trees*; in the second, *feasts*; in the third, *women*, their duties, their *disorders, marriages, divorces, contracts, and nuptials*; in the fourth, are treated the damages or losses sustained by beasts or men; of *things found; deposits; usuries; rents; farms; partnerships* in commerce; *inheritance; sales and purchases; oaths; witnesses; arrests; idolatry*; and here are named those by whom the oral law was received and preserved. In the fifth part are noticed *sacrifices and holy things*: and the sixth treats of *purifications; vessels; furniture; clothes; houses; leprosy; baths*; and numerous other articles. All this forms the MISHNA.

The GEMARA, that is, the *complement, or perfection*, contains the DISPUTES and the OPINIONS of the RABBINS on the oral traditions. Their last decisions. It must be confessed that absurdities are sometimes elucidated by other absurdities; but there are many admirable things in this vast repository. The Jews have such veneration for this compilation, that they compare the holy writings to *water*, and the Talmud to *wine*; the text

of Moses to *pepper*, but the Talmud to *aromatics*. Of the twelve hours of which the day is composed, they tell us that *God* employs nine to study the Talmud, and only three to read the written law!

St. Jerome appears evidently to allude to this work, and notices its "Old Wives' Tales," and the filthiness of some of its matters. The truth is, that the rabbins resembled the Jesuits and Casuists; and Sanchez's work on "*Matrimonio*" is well known to agitate matters with such *scrupulous niceties*, as to become the most offensive thing possible. But as among the schoolmen and the casuists there have been great men, the same happened to these gemaraists. Maimonides was a pillar of light among their darkness. The antiquity of this work is of itself sufficient to make it very curious.

A specimen of the topics may be shown from the table and contents of "Mishnic Titles. In the order of seeds, we find the following heads, which presents no uninteresting picture of the pastoral and pious ceremonies of the ancient Jews.

The Mishna, entitled the *Corner*, i. e. of the field. The laws of gleaning are commanded according to Leviticus; xix. 9, 10. Of the corner to be left in a corn-field. When the corner is due, and when not. Of the forgotten sheaf. Of ears of corn left in gathering. Of grapes left upon the vine. Of

olives left upon the trees. When and where the poor may lawfully glean. What sheaf, or olives, or grapes, may be looked upon to be forgotten, and what, not. Who are the proper witnesses concerning the poor's due, to exempt it from tithing, &c. They distinguish uncircumcised fruit:—it is unlawful to eat of the fruit of any tree till the fifth year of its growth: the first three years of its bearing, it is called uncircumcised; the fourth is offered to God; and the fifth may be eaten.

The Mishna, entitled *Heterogeneous Mixtures*, contains several curious horticultural particulars. Of divisions between garden-beds and fields, that the produce of the several sorts of grains or seeds may appear distinct. Of the distance between every species. Distances between vines planted in corn-fields from one another and from the corn; between vines planted against hedges, walls, or espaliers, and any thing sowed near them. Various cases relating to vineyards planted near any forbidden seeds.

In their seventh, or sabbatical year, in which the produce of all estates was given up to the poor, one of their regulations is on the different work which must not be omitted in the sixth year, lest (because the seventh being devoted to the poor) the produce should be unfairly diminished, and the public benefit arising from this law be

frustrated. Of whatever is not perennial, and produced that year by the earth, no money may be made; but what is perennial may be sold.

On priest's tithes, we have a regulation concerning eating the fruits they are carrying to the place where they are to be separated.

The order of *women* is very copious. A husband is obliged to forbid his wife to keep a particular man's company before two witnesses. Of the waters of jealousy by which a suspected woman is to be tried by drinking, we find many ample particulars. The ceremonies of clothing the accused woman at her trial. Pregnant women, or who suckle, are not obliged to drink; for the rabbins seem to be well convinced of the effects of the imagination. Of their divorces many are the laws; and care is taken to particularise bills of divorces written by men in delirium or dangerously ill. One party of the rabbins will not allow of any divorce, unless something light was found in the woman's character, while another (the Pharisees) allow divorces even when a woman has only been so unfortunate as to suffer her husband's soup be burnt!

In the order of *damages*, containing rules how to tax the damages done by man or beast, or other casualties, their distinctions are as nice as their cases are numerous. What beasts are innocent and what convict. By the one they mean crea-

tures not naturally used to do mischief in, any particular way; and by the other, those that naturally, or by a vicious habit, are mischievous that way. The tooth of a beast is convict. when it is proved to eat its usual food, the property of another man; and full restitution must be made; but if a beast that is used to eat fruits and herbs gnaws clothes or damages tools, which are not its usual food, the owner of the beast shall pay but half the damage when committed on the property of the injured person; but if the injury is committed on the property of the person who does the damage, he is free, because the beast gnawed what was not its usual food. As thus; if the beast of A gnaws or tears the clothes of B, in B's house or grounds, A shall pay half the damages; but if B's clothes are injured in A's grounds by A's beast, A is free, for what had B to do to put his clothes in A's grounds? They made such subtile distinctions, as when an ox gores a man or beast, the law inquired into the habits of the beast; whether it was an ox that used to gore, or an ox that was not used to gore. However these were niceties sometimes acute, they were often ridiculous. No beast could be *convicted* of being vicious till evidence was given that he had done mischief three successive days; but if he leaves off those vicious tricks for three days more, he is innocent again. An ox may be

convict of goring an ox and not a man, or of goring a man and not an ox: nay, of goring on the sabbath, and not on a working day. Their aim was to make the punishment depend on the proofs of the *design* of the beast that did the injury; but this attempt evidently led them to distinctions much too subtle and obscure. Thus some rabbins say that the morning prayer of the *Shemáh* must be read at the time they can distinguish *blue* from *white*; but another, more indulgent, insists it may be when we can distinguish *blue* from *green*! which latter colours are so near akin as to require a stronger light. With the same remarkable acuteness in distinguishing things, is their law respecting not touching fire on the sabbath. Among those which are specified in this constitution, the rabbins allow the minister to look over young children by lamp-light, but he shall not read himself. The minister is forbidden to *read* by lamp-light, lest he should trim his lamp; but he may direct the children where they should read, because that is quickly done, and there would be no danger of his trimming his lamp in their presence, or suffering any of them to do it in his. All these regulations, which some may conceive as minute and frivolous, show a great intimacy with the human heart, and a spirit of profound observation which had been capable of achieving great purposes.

The owner of an innocent beast only pays half the costs for the mischief incurred. Man is always convict, and for all mischief he does he must pay full costs. However there are casual damages, —as when a man pours water accidentally on another man; or makes a thorn-hedge which annoys his neighbour; or falling down, and another by stumbling on him incurs harm; how such compensations are to be made. He that has a vessel of another's in keeping, and removes it, but in the removal breaks it, must swear to his own integrity: i. e. that he had no design to break it. All offensive or noisy trades were to be carried on at a certain distance from a town. Where there is an estate, the sons inherit and the daughters are maintained; but if there is not enough for all, the daughters are maintained, and the sons must get their living as they can, or even beg. The contrary to this excellent ordination has been observed in Europe.

These few titles may enable the reader to form a general notion of the several subjects on which the Mishna treats. The Gemara or Commentary is often overloaded with ineptitudes and ridiculous subtilties. For instance, in the article of "Negative Oaths." If a man swears he will eat no bread, and does eat all sorts of bread, in that case the perjury is but one; but if he swears that he

will eat neither barley, nor wheaten, nor rye-bread, the perjury is multiplied as he multiplies his eating of the several sorts.—Again, the Pharisees and the Sadducees had strong differences about touching the holy writings with their hands. The doctors ordained that whoever touched the book of the law must not eat of the truma (first fruits of the wrought produce of the ground), till they had washed their hands. The reason they gave was this. In times of persecution they used to hide those sacred books in secret places, and good men would lay them out of the way when they had done reading them. It was possible then that these rolls of the law might be gnawed by *mice*. The hands then that touched these books when they took them out of the places where they had laid them up, were supposed to be unclean, so far as to disable them from eating the truma till they were washed. On that account they made this a general rule, that if any part of the *Bible* (except *Ecclesiastes*, because that excellent book their sagacity accounted less holy than the rest) or their phylacteries, or the strings of their phylacteries, were touched by one who had a right to eat the truma, he might not eat it till he had washed his hands. An evidence of that superstitious trifling for which the Pharisees and the later Rabbins have been so justly reprobated.

They were absurdly minute in the literal ob-

servance of their vows, and as shamefully subtle in their artful evasion of them. The Pharisees could be easy enough to themselves when convenient, and always as hard and unrelenting as possible to all others. They quibbled, and dissolved their vows with experienced casuistry. Jesus reproaches the Pharisees in Matthew xv. and Mark vii. for flagrantly violating the fifth commandment, by allowing the vow of a son, perhaps made in hasty anger, its full force, when he had sworn that his father should never be the better for him, or any thing he had, and by which an indigent father might be suffered to starve. There is an express case to this purpose in the Mishna, in the title of *Vows*. The reader may be amused by the story.—A man made a vow that his *father should not profit by him*. This man afterwards made a wedding-feast for his own son, and wishes his father should be present; but he cannot invite him because he is tied up by his vow. He invented this expedient:—he makes a gift of the court in which the feast was to be kept, and of the feast itself, to a third person in trust, that his father should be invited by that third person with the other company whom he at first designed. This third person then says,—If these things you thus give me are mine, I will dedicate them to God, and then none of you can be the better for them. The

son replied,—I did not give them to you that you should consecrate them. Then the third man said,—Yours was no donation, only you were willing to eat and drink with your father. Thus, says R. Juda, they dissolved each other's intentions; and when the case came before the rabbins, they decreed, that a gift which may not be consecrated by the person to whom it is given is not a gift.

The following extract from the Talmud exhibits a subtile mode of reasoning, which the Jews adopted when the learned of Rome sought to persuade them to conform to their idolatry. It forms an entire Mishna, entitled *Seder Nezikin*, *Avoda Zara*, iv. 7. on idolatrous worship, translated by Wotton:

“Some Roman senators examined the Jews in this manner:—If God had no delight in the worship of idols, why did he not destroy them? The Jews made answer,—If men had worshipped only things of which the world had had no need, he would have destroyed the objects of their worship; but they also worship the sun and moon, stars and planets; and then he must have destroyed his world for the sake of these deluded men. But still, said the Romans, why does not God destroy the things which the world does not want, and leave those things which the world cannot be without? Because, replied the Jews, this would strengthen the hands of such as worship these

necessary things, who would then say,—Ye allow now that these are gods, since they are not destroyed.”

RABBINICAL STORIES.

THE preceding article furnishes some of the more serious investigations to be found in the Talmud. Its levities may amuse. I leave untouched the gross obscenities and immoral decisions. The Talmud contains a vast collection of stories, apologies, and jests; many display a vein of pleasantry, and at times have a wildness of invention which sufficiently mark the features of an eastern parent. Many extravagantly puerile were designed merely to recreate their young students. When a rabbin was asked the reason of so much nonsense, he replied that the ancients had a custom of introducing music in their lectures, which accompaniment made them more agreeable; but that not having musical instruments in the schools, the rabbins invented these strange stories to arouse attention. This was ingeniously said; but they make miserable work when they pretend to give mystical interpretations to pure nonsense.

These rabbinical stories, and the LEGENDS of the Catholics, though they will be despised, and

are too often despicable, yet, as the great Lord Bacon said of some of these inventions, they would "serve for winter talk by the fire-side;" and a happy collection from these stores is much wanted.

In 1711, a German professor of the Oriental languages, Dr. Eisenmenger, published in two large volumes quarto, his "Judaism discovered," a ponderous labour, of which the scope was to ridicule the Jewish traditions.

I shall give a dangerous adventure into which King David was drawn by the devil. The king one day hunting, Satan appeared before him in the likeness of a roe. David discharged an arrow at him, but missed his aim. He pursued the feigned roe into the land of the Philistines. Ishbi, the brother of Goliath, instantly recognised the king as him who had slain that giant. He bound him, and bended him neck and heels, and laid him under a wine-press in order to press him to death. A miracle saves David. The earth beneath him became soft, and Ishbi could not press wine out of him. That evening in the Jewish congregation a dove, whose wings were covered with silver, appeared in great perplexity; and evidently signified the King of Israel was in trouble. Abishai, one of the king's counsellors, inquiring for the king, and finding him absent, is at a loss to proceed, for according to the Mishna, no one may ride on the

king's horse, nor sit upon his throne, nor use his sceptre. The school of the rabbins however allowed these things in time of danger. On this Abishai vaults on David's horse, and (with an Oriental metaphor) the land of the Philistines leaped to him instantly! Arrived at Ishbi's house, he beholds his mother Orpa spinning. Perceiving the Israelite, she snatched up her spinning-wheel and threw it at him, to kill him; but not hitting him, she desired him to bring the spinning-wheel to her. He did not do this exactly, but returned it to her in such a way that she never asked any more for her spinning-wheel. When Ishbi saw this, and recollecting that David, though tied up neck and heels, was still under the wine-press, he cried out, "There are now two, who will destroy me!" So he threw David high up into the air, and stuck his spear into the ground, imagining that David would fall upon it and perish. But Abishai pronounced the magical name, which the Talmudists frequently make use of, and it caused David to hover between earth and heaven, so that he fell not down! Both at length unite against Ishbi, and observing that two young lions should kill one lion, find no difficulty in getting rid of the brother of Goliath.

Of Solomon, another favourite hero of the Talmudists, a fine Arabian story is told. This king

was an adept in necromancy, and a male and a female devil were always in waiting for any emergency. It is observable, that the Arabians who have many stories concerning Solomon, always describe him as a magician. His adventures with Aschmedai, the prince of devils, are numerous; and they both (the king and the devil) served one another many a slippery trick. One of the most remarkable is when Aschmedai, who was prisoner to Solomon, the king having contrived to possess himself of the devil's seal-ring, and chained him, one day offered to answer an unholy question put to him by Solomon, provided he returned him his seal-ring and loosened his chain. The impertinent curiosity of Solomon induced him to commit this folly. Instantly Aschmedai swallowed the monarch, and stretching out his wings up to the firmament of heaven, one of his feet remaining on the earth, he spit out Solomon four hundred leagues from him. This was done so privately that no one knew any thing of the matter. Aschmedai then assumed the likeness of Solomon, and sat on his throne. From that hour did Solomon say, "*This* then is the reward of all my labour," according to Ecclesiasticus, i. 3.; which *this*, means, one rabbin says, his walking staff; and another insists was his ragged coat. For Solomon went a begging from door to door; and wherever he came he uttered

these words: "I, the preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem." At length coming before the council, and still repeating these remarkable words, without addition or variation, the rabbins said, "This means something; for a fool is not constant in his tale!" They asked the chamberlain if the king frequently saw him? and he replied to them, No! Then they sent to the queens, to ask if the king came into their apartments? and they answered, Yes! The rabbins then sent them a message to take notice of his feet; for the feet of devils are like the feet of cocks. The queens acquainted them that his majesty always came in slippers, but forced them to embraces at times forbidden by the law. He had attempted to lie with his mother Bathsheba, whom he had almost torn to pieces. At this the rabbins assembled in great haste, and taking the beggar with them, they gave him the ring and the chain in which the great magical name was engraven, and led him to the palace. Aschmedai was sitting on the throne as the real Solomon entered; but instantly he shrieked and flew away. Yet to his last day was Solomon afraid of the prince of devils, and had his bed guarded by the valiant men of Israel, as is written in Cant. iii. 7, 8.

They frequently display much humour in their inventions, as in the following account of the man-

ners and morals of an infamous town which derided all justice. There were in Sodom four judges, who were liars, and deriders of justice. When any one had struck his neighbour's wife and caused her to miscarry, these judges thus counselled the husband: "Give her to the offender that he may get her with child for thee." When any one had cut off an ear of his neighbour's ass, they said to the owner,—“Let him have the ass till the ear is grown again, that it may be returned to thee as thou wishest.” When any one had wounded his neighbour, they told the wounded man to “give him a fee, for letting him blood.” A toll was exacted in passing a certain bridge; but if any one chose to wade through the water, or walk round about to save it, he was condemned to a double toll. Eleasar, Abraham's servant, came thither, and they wounded him.—When before the judge he was ordered to pay his fee for having his blood let, Eleasar flung a stone at the judge and wounded him; on which the judge said to him,—What meaneth this? Eleasar replied,—Give him who wounded me the fee that is due to myself for wounding thee. The people of this town had a bedstead on which they laid travellers who asked to rest. If any one was too long for it, they cut off his legs; and if he was shorter than the bedstead, they strained him to its head and

foot. When a beggar came to this town, every one gave him a penny, on which was inscribed the donor's name; but they would sell him no bread, nor let him escape. When the beggar died from hunger, then they came about him, and each man took back his penny. These stories are curious inventions of keen mockery and malice, seasoned with humour. It is said some of the famous decisions of Sancho Panca are to be found in the Talmud.

Abraham is said to have been jealous of his wives, and built an enchanted city for them. He built an iron city and put them in.—The walls were so high and dark the sun could not be seen in it. He gave them a bowl full of pearls and jewels, which sent forth a light in this dark city equal to the sun. Noah, it seems, when in the ark had no other light than jewels and pearls. Abraham in travelling to Egypt brought with him a chest. At the custom-house the officers exacted the duties. Abraham would have readily paid, but desired they would not open the chest. They first insisted on the duty for clothes, which Abraham consented to pay; but then they thought by his ready acquiescence that it might be gold.—Abraham consents to pay for gold. They now suspected it might be silk. Abraham was willing to pay for silk, or more costly pearls; and Abra-

ham generously consented to pay as if the chest contained the most valuable of things. It was then they resolved to open and examine the chest. And behold as soon as that chest was opened, that great lustre of human beauty broke out which made such a noise in the land of Egypt; it was Sarah herself! The jealous Abraham, to conceal her beauty, had locked her up in this chest.

The whole creation in these rabbinical fancies is strangely gigantic and vast. The works of eastern nations are full of these descriptions; and Hesiod's *Theogony*, and Milton's battles of angels, are puny in comparison with these rabbinical heroes, or rabbinical things. Mountains are hurled with all their woods with great ease, and creatures start into existence too terrible for our conceptions. The winged monster in the "*Arabian Nights*," called the Roc, is evidently one of the creatures of rabbinical fancy; it would sometimes, when very hungry, seize and fly away with an elephant. Captain Cook found a bird's nest in an island near New-Holland, built with sticks on the ground, six-and-twenty feet in circumference, and near three feet in height. But of the rabbinical birds, fish, and animals, it is not probable any circumnavigator will ever trace even the slightest vestige or resemblance.

One of their birds, when it spreads its wings,

blots out the sun. An egg from another fell out of its nest, and the white thereof broke and glued about three hundred cedar-trees, and overflowed a village. One of them stands up to the lower joint of the leg in a river, and some mariners imagining the water was not deep, were hastening to bathe, when a voice from heaven said,—“Step not in there, for seven years ago there a carpenter dropped his axe, and it hath not yet reached the bottom.”

The following passage concerning fat geese is perfectly in the style of these rabbins. “A rabbin once saw in a desert a flock of geese so fat that their feathers fell off, and the rivers flowed in fat. Then said I to them, shall we have part of you in the other world when the Messiah shall come? And one of them lifted up a wing, and another a leg, to signify these parts we should have. We should otherwise have had all parts of these geese; but we Israelites shall be called to an account touching these fat geese, because their sufferings are owing to us. It is our iniquities that have delayed the coming of the Messiah, and these geese suffer greatly by reason of their excessive fat, which daily and daily increases, and will increase till the Messiah comes!”

What the manna was which fell in the wilderness has often been disputed, and still is disputable :

it was sufficient for the rabbins to have found in the Bible that the taste of it was "as a wafer made with honey," to have raised their fancy to its pitch. They declare it was "like oil to children, honey to old men, and cakes to middle age." It had every kind of taste except that of cucumbers, melons, garlick, and onions, and leeks, for these were those Egyptian roots which the Israelites so much regretted to have lost. This manna had, however, the quality to accommodate itself to the palate of those who did not murmur in the wilderness; and to these it became fish, flesh, or fowl.

The rabbins never advance an absurdity without quoting a text in scripture; and to substantiate this fact they quote Deut. ii. 7. where it is said, "through this great wilderness, these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee, and *thou hast lacked nothing!*" St. Austin repeats this explanation of the rabbins, that the faithful found in this manna the taste of their favourite food! However, the Israelites could not have found all these benefits as the rabbins tell us, for in Numbers xi. 6. they exclaim, "There is *nothing at all besides this manna* before our eyes!" They had just said that they remembered the melons, cucumbers, &c. which they had eaten of so freely in Egypt. One of the hyperboles of the rabbins is, that the manna fell in such mountains that the kings of the east

and the west beheld them; which they found in a passage in the 23d Psalm: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies!" These may serve as specimens of the forced interpretations on which their grotesque fables are founded.

Their detestation of Titus, their great conqueror, appears by the following wild invention.—After having narrated certain things too shameful to read, of a prince whom Josephus describes in far different colours, they tell us that on sea Titus tauntingly observed in a great storm that the God of the Jews was only powerful on the water, and that therefore he had succeeded in drowning Pharaoh and Sisra. "Had he been strong he would have waged war with me in Jerusalem." On uttering this blasphemy, a voice from heaven said, "Wicked man! I have a little creature in the world which shall wage war with thee!" When Titus landed, a gnat entered his nostrils, and for seven years together made holes in his brains. When his skull was opened the gnat was found as large as a pigeon: the mouth of the gnat was of copper, and the claws of iron.

That however there are some beautiful inventions in the Talmud I refer to the story of "Solomon and Sheba," in the present collections.

ON THE CUSTOM OF SALUTING
AFTER SNEEZING.

It is probable that this custom, so universally prevalent, originated in some ancient superstition; it seems to have excited inquiry among all nations.

Some Catholics, says Father Feyjoo, have attributed the origin of this custom to the ordinance of a pope, Saint Gregory—who is said to have instituted a short benediction to be used on such occasions, at a time when, during a pestilence, the crisis was attended by *sneezing*, and in most cases followed by *death*.

But the rabbins, who have a story for every thing, say, that before Jacob, men never sneezed but *once*, and then immediately *died*: they assure us that that patriarch was the first who died by natural disease, before him all men died by sneezing; the memory of which was ordered to be preserved in *all nations* by a command of every prince to his subjects to employ some salutary exclamation after the act of sneezing. But these are Talmudical dreams, and only serve to prove that so familiar a custom has always created inquiry.

Even Aristotle has delivered some considerable nonsense on this custom; he says it is an honourable acknowledgment of the seat of good sense and

genius—the head—to distinguish it from two other offensive eruptions of air, which are never accompanied by any benediction from the by-standers. The custom at all events existed long prior to Pope Gregory. The lover in Apuleius, Gyton in Petronius, and allusions to it in Pliny, prove its antiquity; and a memoir of the French academy notices the practice in the New World on the first discovery of America. Every where man is saluted for sneezing.

An amusing account of the ceremonies which attend the *sneezing* of a king of Monomotapa, shows what a national concern may be the sneeze of despotism.—Those who are near his person, when this happens, salute him in so loud a tone that persons in the antichamber hear it, and join in the acclamation; in the adjoining apartments they do the same, till the noise reaches the street, and becomes propagated throughout the city; so that at each sneeze of his majesty, results a most horrid cry from the salutations of many thousands of his vassals.

When the king of Sennaar sneezes, his courtiers immediately turn their backs on him, and give a loud slap on their right thigh.

With the ancients sneezing was ominous; from the *right* it was considered auspicious; and Plutarch, in his life of Themistocles, says, that before a naval

battle it was a sign of conquest! Catullus, in his pleasing poem of Acme and Septimius, makes this action from the deity of Love from the *left* the source of his fiction. The passage has been elegantly versified by a poetical friend, who finds authority that the gods sneezing on the *right* in *heaven*, is supposed to come to us on *earth* on the *left*.

Cupid *sneezing* in his flight
 Once was heard upon the *right*
 Boding woe to lovers true;
 But now upon the *left* he flew,
 And with sportive *sneeze* divine,
 Gave of joy the sacred sign.
 Acme bent her lovely face,
 Flush'd with rapture's rosy grace,
 And those eyes that swam in bliss,
 Prest with many a breathing kiss;
 Breathing, murmuring, soft, and low,
 Thus might life for ever flow!
 " Love of my life, and life of love!
 Cupid rules our fates above,
 Ever let us vow to join
 In homage at his happy shrine."
 Cupid heard the lovers true,
 Again upon the *left* he flew,
 And with sportive *sneeze* divine,
 Renew'd of joy the *sacred sign*!

BONAVENTURE DE PERIERS.

A HAPPY art in the relation of a story is, doubtless, a very agreeable talent—it has obtained La Fontaine all the applause his charming *naïveté* deserves.

“*Bonaventure de Periers, Valet de Chambre de la Royne de Navarre,*” of whom the French have three little volumes of tales in prose, shows that pleasantry and sportive vein in which the tales of that time frequently abound. The following short anecdote is not given as the best specimen of our author, but as it introduces a novel etymology of a word in great use.

“A student at law, who studied at Poitiers, had tolerably improved himself in cases of equity; not that he was overburthened with learning, but his chief deficiency was a want of assurance and confidence to display his knowledge. His father passing by Poitiers, recommended him to read aloud, and to render his memory more prompt by continued exercise. To obey the injunctions of his father he determined to read at the *Ministry*. In order to obtain a certain assurance, he went every day into a garden, which was a very secret spot, being at a distance from any house, and where there grew a great number of fine large cabbages.

Thus for a long time he pursued his studies, and repeated his lectures to these cabbages, addressing them by the title of *gentlemen*; and balancing his periods to them as if they had composed an audience of scholars. After a fortnight or three weeks preparation, he thought it was high time to take the *chair*; imagining that he should be able to lecture his scholars as well as he had before done his cabbages. He comes forward, he begins his oration—but before a dozen words his tongue freezes between his teeth! Confused and hardly knowing where he was, all he could bring out was—*Domini, Ego bene video quod non estis caules*; that is to say—for there are some who will have every thing in plain English—*Gentlemen, I now clearly see you are not cabbages!* In the *garden* he could conceive the *cabbages* to be *scholars*; but in the *chair*, he could not conceive the *scholars* to be *cabbages*."

On this story La Monnoye has a note, which gives a new origin to a familiar term.

"The hall of the School of Equity at Poitiers, where the institutes were read, was called *La Ministerie*. On which head, Florimond de Remond (book vii. ch. 11.), speaking of Albert Babinot, one of the first disciples of Calvin, after having said he was called "The *good man*," adds, that because he had been a student of the institutes at this *Ministerie* of Poitiers, Calvin, and others, styled

him *Mr. Minister*; from whence, afterwards, *Calvin* took occasion to give the name of **MINISTERS** to the pastors of his church."

GROTIUS.

THE Life of Grotius has been written by De Burigny; it shows the singular felicity of a man of letters and a statesman; and in what manner a student can pass his hours in the closest imprisonment. The gate of the prison has sometimes been the porch of fame.

Grotius was born with the happiest dispositions; studious from his infancy, he had also received from Nature the qualities of genius; and was so fortunate as to find in his father a tutor who had formed his early taste and his moral feelings. The younger Grotius, in imitation of Horace, has celebrated his gratitude in verse.

One of the most interesting circumstances in the life of this great man, which strongly marks his genius and fortitude, is displayed in the manner in which he employed his time during his imprisonment. Other men, condemned to exile and captivity, if they survive, they despair: the man of letters counts those days as the sweetest of his life.

When a prisoner at the Hague, he laboured on

a Latin essay on the means of terminating religious disputes, which occasion so many infelicities in the state, in the church, and in families; when he was carried to Louvestein, he resumed his law studies, which other employments had interrupted. He gave a portion of his time to moral philosophy, which engaged him to translate the maxims of the ancient poets, collected by Stobæus, and the fragments of Menander and Philemon. Every Sunday was devoted to read the scriptures, and to write his Commentaries on the New Testament. In the course of this work he fell ill, but as soon as he recovered his health he composed his treatise, in Dutch verse, on the Truth of the Christian Religion. Sacred and profane authors occupied him alternately. His only mode of refreshing his mind was to pass from one work to another. He sent to Vossius his Observations on the Tragedies of Seneca. He wrote several other works: particularly a little Catechism, in verse, for his daughter Cornelia: and collected materials to form his Apology. Add to these various labours an extensive correspondence he held with the learned and his friends; and his letters were often so many treatises. There is a printed collection amounting to two thousand. Grotius had notes ready for every classical author of antiquity whenever they prepared a new edition; an account of his plans

and his performances might furnish a volume of themselves; yet he never published in haste, and was fond of revising them; we must recollect, notwithstanding such uninterrupted literary avocations, his hours were frequently devoted to the public functions of an ambassador. "I only reserve for my studies the time which other ministers give to their pleasures, to conversations often useless, and to visits sometimes unnecessary;" such is the language of this great man! Although he thus produced abundantly, his confinement was not more than two years. We may well exclaim here, that the mind of Grotius had never been imprisoned.

Perhaps the most sincere eulogium, and the most grateful to this illustrious scholar, was that which he received at the hour of his death.

When this great man was travelling, he was suddenly struck by the hand of death, at the village of Rostock. The parish minister, who was called in his last moments, ignorant who the dying man was, began to go over the usual points; but Grotius, who saw there was no time to lose in exhortations, turned to him, and told him, that he needed them not; and concluded by saying, *Sum Grotius*—I am Grotius. *Tu magnus ille Grotius?*—"What! are you the great Grotius?" interrogated the minister.—What an eulogium! This anecdote seems, however, apocryphal; for we have

are too often despicable, yet, as the great Lord Bacon said of some of these inventions, they would "serve for winter talk by the fire-side;" and a happy collection from these stores is much wanted.

In 1711, a German professor of the Oriental languages, Dr. Eisenmenger, published in two large volumes quarto, his "Judaism discovered," a ponderous labour, of which the scope was to ridicule the Jewish traditions.

I shall give a dangerous adventure into which King David was drawn by the devil. The king one day hunting, Satan appeared before him in the likeness of a roe. David discharged an arrow at him, but missed his aim. He pursued the feigned roe into the land of the Philistines. Ishbi, the brother of Goliath, instantly recognised the king as him who had slain that giant. He bound him, and bended him neck and heels, and laid him under a wine-press in order to press him to death. A miracle saves David. The earth beneath him became soft, and Ishbi could not press wine out of him. That evening in the Jewish congregation a dove, whose wings were covered with silver, appeared in great perplexity; and evidently signified the King of Israel was in trouble. Abishai, one of the king's counsellors, inquiring for the king, and finding him absent, is at a loss to proceed, for according to the Mishna, no one may ride on the

king's horse, nor sit upon his throne, nor use his sceptre. The school of the rabbins however allowed these things in time of danger: On this Abishai vaults on David's horse, and (with an Oriental metaphor) the land of the Philistines leaped to him instantly! Arrived at Ishbi's house, he beholds his mother Orpa spinning. Perceiving the Israelite, she snatched up her spinning-wheel and threw it at him, to kill him; but not hitting him, she desired him to bring the spinning-wheel to her. He did not do this exactly, but returned it to her in such a way that she never asked any more for her spinning-wheel. When Ishbi saw this, and recollecting that David, though tied up neck and heels, was still under the wine-press, he cried out, "There are now two, who will destroy me!" So he threw David high up into the air, and stuck his spear into the ground, imagining that David would fall upon it and perish. But Abishai pronounced the magical name, which the Talmudists frequently make use of, and it caused David to hover between earth and heaven, so that he fell not down! Both at length unite against Ishbi, and observing that two young lions should kill one lion, find no difficulty in getting rid of the brother of Goliath.

Of Solomon, another favourite hero of the Talmudists, a fine Arabian story is told. This king

frustrated. Of whatever is not perennial, and produced that year by the earth, no money may be made; but what is perennial may be sold.

On priest's tithes, we have a regulation concerning eating the fruits they are carrying to the place where they are to be separated.

The order of *women* is very copious. A husband is obliged to forbid his wife to keep a particular man's company before two witnesses. Of the waters of jealousy by which a suspected woman is to be tried by drinking, we find many ample particulars. The ceremonies of clothing the accused woman at her trial. Pregnant women, or who suckle, are not obliged to drink; for the rabbins seem to be well convinced of the effects of the imagination. Of their divorces many are the laws; and care is taken to particularise bills of divorces written by men in delirium or dangerously ill. One party of the rabbins will not allow of any divorce, unless something light was found in the woman's character, while another (the Pharisees) allow divorces even when a woman has only been so unfortunate as to suffer her husband's soup be burnt!

In the order of *damages*, containing rules how to tax the damages done by man or beast, or other casualties, their distinctions are as nice as their cases are numerous. What beasts are innocent and what convict. By the one they mean crea-

tures not naturally used to do mischief in, any particular way; and by the other, those that naturally, or by a vicious habit, are mischievous that way. The tooth of a beast is convict. when it is proved to eat its usual food, the property of another man; and full restitution must be made; but if a beast that is used to eat fruits and herbs gnaws clothes or damages tools, which are not its usual food, the owner of the beast shall pay but half the damage when committed on the property of the injured person; but if the injury is committed on the property of the person who does the damage, he is free, because the beast gnawed what was not its usual food. As thus; if the beast of A gnaws or tears the clothes of B, in B's house or grounds, A shall pay half the damages; but if B's clothes are injured in A's grounds by A's beast, A is free, for what had B to do to put his clothes in A's grounds? They made such subtile distinctions, as when an ox gores a man or beast, the law inquired into the habits of the beast; whether it was an ox that used to gore, or an ox that was not used to gore. However these were niceties sometimes acute, they were often ridiculous. No beast could be *convicted* of being vicious till evidence was given that he had done mischief three successive days; but if he leaves off those vicious tricks for three days more, he is innocent again. An ox may be

convict of goring an ox and not a man, or of goring a man and not an ox: nay, of goring on the sabbath, and not on a working day. Their aim was to make the punishment depend on the proofs of the *design* of the beast that did the injury; but this attempt evidently led them to distinctions much too subtle and obscure. Thus some rabbins say that the morning prayer of the *Shemáh* must be read at the time they can distinguish *blue* from *white*; but another, more indulgent, insists it may be when we can distinguish *blue* from *green!* which latter colours are so near akin as to require a stronger light. With the same remarkable acuteness in distinguishing things, is their law respecting not touching fire on the sabbath. Among those which are specified in this constitution, the rabbins allow the minister to look over young children by lamp-light, but he shall not read himself. The minister is forbidden to *read* by lamp-light, lest he should trim his lamp; but he may direct the children where they should read, because that is quickly done, and there would be no danger of his trimming his lamp in their presence, or suffering any of them to do it in his. All these regulations, which some may conceive as minute and frivolous, show a great intimacy with the human heart, and a spirit of profound observation which had been capable of achieving great purposes.

The owner of an innocent beast only pays half the costs for the mischief incurred. Man is always convict, and for all mischief he does he must pay full costs. However there are casual damages,—as when a man pours water accidentally on another man; or makes a thorn-hedge which annoys his neighbour; or falling down, and another by stumbling on him incurs harm; how such compensations are to be made. He that has a vessel of another's in keeping, and removes it, but in the removal breaks it, must swear to his own integrity: i. e. that he had no design to break it. All offensive or noisy trades were to be carried on at a certain distance from a town. Where there is an estate, the sons inherit and the daughters are maintained; but if there is not enough for all, the daughters are maintained, and the sons must get their living as they can, or even beg. The contrary to this excellent ordination has been observed in Europe.

These few titles may enable the reader to form a general notion of the several subjects on which the Mishna treats. The Gemara or Commentary is often overloaded with ineptitudes and ridiculous subtleties. For instance, in the article of "Negative Oaths." If a man swears he will eat no bread, and does eat all sorts of bread, in that case the perjury is but one; but if he swears that he

will eat neither barley, nor wheaten, nor rye-bread, the perjury is multiplied as he multiplies his eating of the several sorts.—Again, the Pharisees and the Sadducees had strong differences about touching the holy writings with their hands. The doctors ordained that whoever touched the book of the law must not eat of the truma (first fruits of the wrought produce of the ground), till they had washed their hands. The reason they gave was this. In times of persecution they used to hide those sacred books in secret places, and good men would lay them out of the way when they had done reading them. It was possible then that these rolls of the law might be gnawed by *mice*. The hands then that touched these books when they took them out of the places where they had laid them up, were supposed to be unclean, so far as to disable them from eating the truma till they were washed. On that account they made this a general rule, that if any part of the *Bible* (except *Ecclesiastes*, because that excellent book their sagacity accounted less holy than the rest) or their phylacteries, or the strings of their phylacteries, were touched by one who had a right to eat the truma, he might not eat it till he had washed his hands. An evidence of that superstitious trifling for which the Pharisees and the later Rabbins have been so justly reprobated.

They were absurdly minute in the literal ob-

servance of their vows, and as shamefully subtle in their artful evasion of them. The Pharisees could be easy enough to themselves when convenient, and always as hard and unrelenting as possible to all others. They quibbled, and dissolved their vows with experienced casuistry. Jesus reproaches the Pharisees in Matthew xv. and Mark vii. for flagrantly violating the fifth commandment, by allowing the vow of a son, perhaps made in hasty anger, its full force, when he had sworn that his father should never be the better for him, or any thing he had, and by which an indigent father might be suffered to starve. There is an express case to this purpose in the Mishna, in the title of *Vows*. The reader may be amused by the story.—A man made a vow that his *father should not profit by him*. This man afterwards made a wedding-feast for his own son, and wishes his father should be present; but he cannot invite him because he is tied up by his vow. He invented this expedient:—he makes a gift of the court in which the feast was to be kept, and of the feast itself, to a third person in trust, that his father should be invited by that third person with the other company whom he at first designed. This third person then says,—If these things you thus give me are mine, I will dedicate them to God, and then none of you can be the better for them. The

son replied,—I did not give them to you that you should consecrate them. Then the third man said,—Yours was no donation, only you were willing to eat and drink with your father. Thus, says R. Juda, they dissolved each other's intentions; and when the case came before the rabbins, they decreed, that a gift which may not be consecrated by the person to whom it is given is not a gift.

The following extract from the Talmud exhibits a subtile mode of reasoning, which the Jews adopted when the learned of Rome sought to persuade them to conform to their idolatry. It forms an entire Mishna, entitled *Seder Nezikin*, *Avoda Zara*, iv. 7. on idolatrous worship, translated by Wotton:

“Some Roman senators examined the Jews in this manner:—If God had no delight in the worship of idols, why did he not destroy them? The Jews made answer,—If men had worshipped only things of which the world had had no need, he would have destroyed the objects of their worship; but they also worship the sun and moon, stars and planets; and then he must have destroyed his world for the sake of these deluded men. But still, said the Romans, why does not God destroy the things which the world does not want, and leave those things which the world cannot be without? Because, replied the Jews, this would strengthen the hands of such as worship these

necessary things, who would then say,—Ye allow now that these are gods, since they are not destroyed.”

RABBINICAL STORIES.

THE preceding article furnishes some of the more serious investigations to be found in the Talmud. Its levities may amuse. I leave untouched the gross obscenities and immoral decisions. The Talmud contains a vast collection of stories, apologies, and jests; many display a vein of pleasantry, and at times have a wildness of invention which sufficiently mark the features of an eastern parent. Many extravagantly puerile were designed merely to recreate their young students. When a rabbin was asked the reason of so much nonsense, he replied that the ancients had a custom of introducing music in their lectures, which accompaniment made them more agreeable; but that not having musical instruments in the schools, the rabbins invented these strange stories to arouse attention. This was ingeniously said; but they make miserable work when they pretend to give mystical interpretations to pure nonsense.

These rabbinical stories, and the LEGENDS of the Catholics, though they will be despised, and

are too often despicable, yet, as the great Lord Bacon said of some of these inventions, they would "serve for winter talk by the fire-side;" and a happy collection from these stores is much wanted.

In 1711, a German professor of the Oriental languages, Dr. Eisenmenger, published in two large volumes quarto, his "Judaism discovered," a ponderous labour, of which the scope was to ridicule the Jewish traditions.

I shall give a dangerous adventure into which King David was drawn by the devil. The king one day hunting, Satan appeared before him in the likeness of a roe. David discharged an arrow at him, but missed his aim. He pursued the feigned roe into the land of the Philistines. Ishbi, the brother of Goliath, instantly recognised the king as him who had slain that giant. He bound him, and bended him neck and heels, and laid him under a wine-press in order to press him to death. A miracle saves David. The earth beneath him became soft, and Ishbi could not press wine out of him. That evening in the Jewish congregation a dove, whose wings were covered with silver, appeared in great perplexity; and evidently signified the King of Israel was in trouble. Abishai, one of the king's counsellors, inquiring for the king, and finding him absent, is at a loss to proceed, for according to the Mishna, no one may ride on the

king's horse, nor sit upon his throne, nor use his sceptre. The school of the rabbins however allowed these things in time of danger. On this Abishai vaults on David's horse, and (with an Oriental metaphor) the land of the Philistines leaped to him instantly! Arrived at Ishbi's house, he beholds his mother Orpa spinning. Perceiving the Israelite, she snatched up her spinning-wheel and threw it at him, to kill him; but not hitting him, she desired him to bring the spinning-wheel to her. He did not do this exactly, but returned it to her in such a way that she never asked any more for her spinning-wheel. When Ishbi saw this, and recollecting that David, though tied up neck and heels, was still under the wine-press, he cried out, "There are now two, who will destroy me!" So he threw David high up into the air, and stuck his spear into the ground, imagining that David would fall upon it and perish. But Abishai pronounced the magical name, which the Talmudists frequently make use of, and it caused David to hover between earth and heaven, so that he fell not down! Both at length unite against Ishbi, and observing that two young lions should kill one lion, find no difficulty in getting rid of the brother of Goliath.

Of Solomon, another favourite hero of the Talmudists, a fine Arabian story is told. This king

was an adept in necromancy, and a male and a female devil were always in waiting for any emergency. It is observable, that the Arabians who have many stories concerning Solomon, always describe him as a magician. His adventures with Aschmedai, the prince of devils, are numerous; and they both (the king and the devil) served one another many a slippery trick. One of the most remarkable is when Aschmedai, who was prisoner to Solomon, the king having contrived to possess himself of the devil's seal-ring, and chained him, one day offered to answer an unholy question put to him by Solomon, provided he returned him his seal-ring and loosened his chain. The impertinent curiosity of Solomon induced him to commit this folly. Instantly Aschmedai swallowed the monarch, and stretching out his wings up to the firmament of heaven, one of his feet remaining on the earth, he spit out Solomon four hundred leagues from him. This was done so privately that no one knew any thing of the matter. Aschmedai then assumed the likeness of Solomon, and sat on his throne. From that hour did Solomon say, "*This* then is the reward of all my labour," according to Ecclesiasticus, i. 3.; which *this*, means, one rabbin says, his walking staff; and another insists was his ragged coat. For Solomon went a begging from door to door; and wherever he came he uttered

these words: "I, the preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem." At length coming before the council, and still repeating these remarkable words, without addition or variation, the rabbins said, "This means something; for a fool is not constant in his tale!" They asked the chamberlain if the king frequently saw him? and he replied to them, No! Then they sent to the queens, to ask if the king came into their apartments? and they answered, Yes! The rabbins then sent them a message to take notice of his feet; for the feet of devils are like the feet of cocks. The queens acquainted them that his majesty always came in slippers, but forced them to embraces at times forbidden by the law. He had attempted to lie with his mother Bathsheba, whom he had almost torn to pieces. At this the rabbins assembled in great haste, and taking the beggar with them, they gave him the ring and the chain in which the great magical name was engraven, and led him to the palace. Aschmedai was sitting on the throne as the real Solomon entered; but instantly he shrieked and flew away. Yet to his last day was Solomon afraid of the prince of devils, and had his bed guarded by the valiant men of Israel, as is written in Cant. iii. 7, 8.

They frequently display much humour in their inventions, as in the following account of the man-

ners and morals of an infamous town which derided all justice. There were in Sodom four judges, who were liars, and deriders of justice. When any one had struck his neighbour's wife and caused her to miscarry, these judges thus counselled the husband: "Give her to the offender that he may get her with child for thee." When any one had cut off an ear of his neighbour's ass, they said to the owner,—“ Let him have the ass till the ear is grown again, that it may be returned to thee as thou wishest.” When any one had wounded his neighbour, they told the wounded man to “ give him a fee, for letting him blood.” A toll was exacted in passing a certain bridge; but if any one chose to wade through the water, or walk round about to save it, he was condemned to a double toll. Eleasar, Abraham's servant, came thither, and they wounded him.—When before the judge he was ordered to pay his fee for having his blood let, Eleasar flung a stone at the judge and wounded him; on which the judge said to him,—What meaneth this? Eleasar replied,—Give him who wounded me the fee that is due to myself for wounding thee. The people of this town had a bedstead on which they laid travellers who asked to rest. If any one was too long for it, they cut off his legs; and if he was shorter than the bedstead, they strained him to its head and

foot. When a beggar came to this town, every one gave him a penny, on which was inscribed the donor's name; but they would sell him no bread, nor let him escape. When the beggar died from hunger, then they came about him, and each man took back his penny. These stories are curious inventions of keen mockery and malice, seasoned with humour. It is said some of the famous decisions of Sancho Panca are to be found in the Talmud.

Abraham is said to have been jealous of his wives, and built an enchanted city for them. He built an iron city and put them in.—The walls were so high and dark the sun could not be seen in it. He gave them a bowl full of pearls and jewels, which sent forth a light in this dark city equal to the sun. Noah, it seems, when in the ark had no other light than jewels and pearls. Abraham in travelling to Egypt brought with him a chest. At the custom-house the officers exacted the duties. Abraham would have readily paid, but desired they would not open the chest. They first insisted on the duty for clothes, which Abraham consented to pay; but then they thought by his ready acquiescence that it might be gold.—Abraham consents to pay for gold. They now suspected it might be silk. Abraham was willing to pay for silk, or more costly pearls; and Abra-

ham generously consented to pay as if the chest contained the most valuable of things. It was then they resolved to open and examine the chest. And behold as soon as that chest was opened, that great lustre of human beauty broke out which made such a noise in the land of Egypt; it was Sarah herself! The jealous Abraham, to conceal her beauty, had locked her up in this chest.

The whole creation in these rabbinical fancies is strangely gigantic and vast. The works of eastern nations are full of these descriptions; and Hesiod's *Theogony*, and Milton's battles of angels, are puny in comparison with these rabbinical heroes, or rabbinical things. Mountains are hurled with all their woods with great ease, and creatures start into existence too terrible for our conceptions. The winged monster in the "Arabian Nights," called the Roc, is evidently one of the creatures of rabbinical fancy; it would sometimes, when very hungry, seize and fly away with an elephant. Captain Cook found a bird's nest in an island near New-Holland, built with sticks on the ground, six-and-twenty feet in circumference, and near three feet in height. But of the rabbinical birds, fish, and animals, it is not probable any circumnavigator will ever trace even the slightest vestige or resemblance.

One of their birds, when it spreads its wings,

blots out the sun. An egg from another fell out of its nest, and the white thereof broke and glued about three hundred cedar-trees, and overflowed a village. One of them stands up to the lower joint of the leg in a river, and some mariners imagining the water was not deep, were hastening to bathe, when a voice from heaven said,—“Step not in there, for seven years ago there a carpenter dropped his axe, and it hath not yet reached the bottom.”

The following passage concerning fat geese is perfectly in the style of these rabbins. “A rabbin once saw in a desert a flock of geese so fat that their feathers fell off, and the rivers flowed in fat. Then said I to them, shall we have part of you in the other world when the Messiah shall come? And one of them lifted up a wing, and another a leg, to signify these parts we should have. We should otherwise have had all parts of these geese; but we Israelites shall be called to an account touching these fat geese, because their sufferings are owing to us. It is our iniquities that have delayed the coming of the Messiah, and these geese suffer greatly by reason of their excessive fat, which daily and daily increases, and will increase till the Messiah comes!”

What the manna was which fell in the wilderness has often been disputed, and still is disputable :

it was sufficient for the rabbins to have found in the Bible that the taste of it was "as a wafer made with honey," to have raised their fancy to its pitch. They declare it was "like oil to children, honey to old men, and cakes to middle age." It had every kind of taste except that of cucumbers, melons, garlick, and onions, and leeks, for these were those Egyptian roots which the Israelites so much regretted to have lost. This manna had, however, the quality to accommodate itself to the palate of those who did not murmur in the wilderness; and to these it became fish, flesh, or fowl.

The rabbins never advance an absurdity without quoting a text in scripture; and to substantiate this fact they quote Deut. ii. 7. where it is said, "through this great wilderness, these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee, and *thou hast lacked nothing!*" St. Austin repeats this explanation of the rabbins, that the faithful found in this manna the taste of their favourite food! However, the Israelites could not have found all these benefits as the rabbins tell us, for in Numbers xi. 6. they exclaim, "There is *nothing at all besides this manna* before our eyes!" They had just said that they remembered the melons, cucumbers, &c. which they had eaten of so freely in Egypt. One of the hyperboles of the rabbins is, that the manna fell in such mountains that the kings of the east

and the west beheld them; which they found in a passage in the 23d Psalm: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies!" These may serve as specimens of the forced interpretations on which their grotesque fables are founded.

Their detestation of Titus, their great conqueror, appears by the following wild invention.—After having narrated certain things too shameful to read, of a prince whom Josephus describes in far different colours, they tell us that on sea Titus tauntingly observed in a great storm that the God of the Jews was only powerful on the water, and that therefore he had succeeded in drowning Pharaoh and Sisra. "Had he been strong he would have waged war with me in Jerusalem." On uttering this blasphemy, a voice from heaven said, "Wicked man! I have a little creature in the world which shall wage war with thee!" When Titus landed, a gnat entered his nostrils, and for seven years together made holes in his brains. When his skull was opened the gnat was found as large as a pigeon; the mouth of the gnat was of copper, and the claws of iron.

That however there are some beautiful inventions in the Talmud I refer to the story of "Solomon and Sheba," in the present collections.

ON THE CUSTOM OF SALUTING
AFTER SNEEZING.

It is probable that this custom, so universally prevalent, originated in some ancient superstition; it seems to have excited inquiry among all nations.

Some Catholics, says Father Feyjoo, have attributed the origin of this custom to the ordinance of a pope, Saint Gregory—who is said to have instituted a short benediction to be used on such occasions, at a time when, during a pestilence, the crisis was attended by *sneezing*, and in most cases followed by *death*.

But the rabbins, who have a story for every thing, say, that before Jacob, men never sneezed but *once*, and then immediately *died*: they assure us that that patriarch was the first who died by natural disease, before him all men died by sneezing; the memory of which was ordered to be preserved in *all nations* by a command of every prince to his subjects to employ some salutary exclamation after the act of sneezing. But these are Talmudical dreams, and only serve to prove that so familiar a custom has always created inquiry.

Even Aristotle has delivered some considerable nonsense on this custom; he says it is an honourable acknowledgment of the seat of good sense and

genius—the head—to distinguish it from two other offensive eruptions of air, which are never accompanied by any benediction from the by-standers. The custom at all events existed long prior to Pope Gregory. The lover in Apuleius, Gyton in Petronius, and allusions to it in Pliny, prove its antiquity; and a memoir of the French academy notices the practice in the New World on the first discovery of America. Every where man is saluted for sneezing.

An amusing account of the ceremonies which attend the *sneezing* of a king of Monomotapa, shows what a national concern may be the sneeze of despotism.—Those who are near his person, when this happens, salute him in so loud a tone that persons in the antichamber hear it, and join in the acclamation; in the adjoining apartments they do the same, till the noise reaches the street, and becomes propagated throughout the city; so that at each sneeze of his majesty, results a most horrid cry from the salutations of many thousands of his vassals.

When the king of Sennaar sneezes, his courtiers immediately turn their backs on him, and give a loud slap on their right thigh.

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BONAVENTURE DE PERIERS.

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“A student at law, who studied at Poitiers, had tolerably improved himself in cases of equity; not that he was overburthened with learning, but his chief deficiency was a want of assurance and confidence to display his knowledge. His father passing by Poitiers, recommended him to read aloud, and to render his memory more prompt by continued exercise. To obey the injunctions of his father he determined to read at the *Ministry*. In order to obtain a certain assurance, he went every day into a garden, which was a very secret spot, being at a distance from any house, and where there grew a great number of fine large cabbages.

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With the ancients sneezing was ominous; from the *right* it was considered auspicious; and Plutarch, in his life of Themistocles, says, that before a naval

battle it was a sign of conquest! Catullus, in his pleasing poem of Acme and Septimius, makes this action from the deity of Love from the *left* the source of his fiction. The passage has been elegantly versified by a poetical friend, who finds authority that the gods sneezing on the *right* in *heaven*, is supposed to come to us on *earth* on the *left*.

Cupid *sneezing* in his flight
 Once was heard upon the *right*
 Boding woe to lovers true;
 But now upon the *left* he flew,
 And with sportive *sneeze* divine,
 Gave of joy the sacred sign.
 Acme bent her lovely face,
 Flush'd with rapture's rosy grace,
 And those eyes that swam in bliss,
 Prest with many a breathing kiss;
 Breathing, murmuring, soft, and low,
 Thus might life for ever flow!
 " Love of my life, and life of love!
 Cupid rules our fates above,
 Ever let us vow to join
 In homage at his happy shrine."
 Cupid heard the lovers true,
 Again upon the *left* he flew,
 And with sportive *sneeze* divine,
 Renew'd of joy the *sacred sign*!

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Thus for a long time he pursued his studies, and repeated his lectures to these cabbages, addressing them by the title of *gentlemen*; and balancing his periods to them as if they had composed an audience of scholars. After a fortnight or three weeks preparation, he thought it was high time to take the *chair*; imagining that he should be able to lecture his scholars as well as he had before done his cabbages. He comes forward, he begins his oration—but before a dozen words his tongue freezes between his teeth! Confused and hardly knowing where he was, all he could bring out was—*Domini, Ego bene video quod non estis caules*; that is to say—for there are some who will have every thing in plain English—*Gentlemen, I now clearly see you are not cabbages!* In the garden he could conceive the *cabbages* to be *scholars*; but in the *chair*, he could not conceive the *scholars* to be *cabbages*."

On this story La Monnoye has a note, which gives a new origin to a familiar term.

"The hall of the School of Equity at Poitiers, where the institutes were read, was called *La Ministerie*. On which head, Florimond de Remond (book vii. ch. 11.), speaking of Albert Babinot, one of the first disciples of Calvin, after having said he was called "The *good man*," adds, that because he had been a student of the institutes at this *Ministerie* of Poitiers, Calvin, and others, styled

him *Mr. Minister*; from whence, afterwards, *Calvin* took occasion to give the name of **MINISTERS** to the pastors of his church."

GROTIUS.

THE Life of Grotius has been written by De Burigny; it shows the singular felicity of a man of letters and a statesman; and in what manner a student can pass his hours in the closest imprisonment. The gate of the prison has sometimes been the porch of fame.

Grotius was born with the happiest dispositions; studious from his infancy, he had also received from Nature the qualities of genius; and was so fortunate as to find in his father a tutor who had formed his early taste and his moral feelings. The younger Grotius, in imitation of Horace, has celebrated his gratitude in verse.

One of the most interesting circumstances in the life of this great man, which strongly marks his genius and fortitude, is displayed in the manner in which he employed his time during his imprisonment. Other men, condemned to exile and captivity, if they survive, they despair: the man of letters counts those days as the sweetest of his life.

When a prisoner at the Hague, he laboured on

a Latin éssay on the means of terminating religious disputes, which occasion so many infelicities in the state, in the church, and in families; when he was carried to Louvestein, he resumed his law studies, which other employments had interrupted. He gave a portion of his time to moral philosophy, which engaged him to translate the maxims of the ancient poets, collected by Stobæus, and the fragments of Menander and Philemon. Every Sunday was devoted to read the scriptures, and to write his Commentaries on the New Testament. In the course of this work he fell ill, but as soon as he recovered his health he composed his treatise, in Dutch verse, on the Truth of the Christian Religion. Sacred and profane authors occupied him alternately. His only mode of refreshing his mind was to pass from one work to another. He sent to Vossius his Observations on the Tragedies of Seneca. He wrote several other works: particularly a little Catechism, in verse, for his daughter Cornelia: and collected materials to form his Apology. Add to these various labours an extensive correspondence he held with the learned and his friends; and his letters were often so many treatises. There is a printed collection amounting to two thousand. Grotius had notes ready for every classical author of antiquity whenever they prepared a new edition; an account of his plans

and his performances might furnish a volume of themselves; yet he never published in haste, and was fond of revising them; we must recollect, notwithstanding such uninterrupted literary avocations, his hours were frequently devoted to the public functions of an ambassador. "I only reserve for my studies the time which other ministers give to their pleasures, to conversations often useless, and to visits sometimes unnecessary;" such is the language of this great man! Although he thus produced abundantly, his confinement was not more than two years. We may well exclaim here, that the mind of Grotius had never been imprisoned.

Perhaps the most sincere eulogium, and the most grateful to this illustrious scholar, was that which he received at the hour of his death.

When this great man was travelling, he was suddenly struck by the hand of death, at the village of Rostock. The parish minister, who was called in his last moments, ignorant who the dying man was, began to go over the usual points; but Grotius, who saw there was no time to lose in exhortations, turned to him, and told him, that he needed them not; and concluded by saying, *Sum Grotius*—I am Grotius. *Tu magnus ille Grotius?*—"What! are you the great Grotius?" interrogated the minister.—What an eulogium! This anecdote seems, however, apocryphal; for we have

a narrative of his death by the clergyman himself. On the death of Grotius a variety of tales were spread concerning his manner of dying raised by different parties.

In the approbation of the *censeur* to print this "Vie de Grotius," it is observed that while "his history gives us a clear idea of the extent of the human mind, it will further inform us, that Grotius died without reaping any advantage from his great talents."

NOBLEMEN TURNED CRITICS.

I OFFER to the contemplation of those unfortunate mortals who are necessitated to undergo the criticisms of *lords*, this pair of anecdotes—

Soderini, the Gonfaloniere of Florence, having had a statue made by the great *Michael Angelo*, when it was finished came to inspect it; and having for some time sagaciously considered it, poring now on the face, then on the arms, the knees, the form of the leg, and at length on the foot itself; the statue being of such perfect beauty, he found himself at a loss to display his powers of criticism, but by lavishing his praise. But only to praise, might appear as if there had been an obtuseness in the keenness of his criticism. He trembled to

find a fault, but a fault must be found. At length he ventured to mutter something concerning the nose; it might, he thought, be something more Grecian. *Angelo* differed from his grace, but he said he would attempt to gratify his taste. He took up his chisel, and concealed some marble-dust in his hand; feigning to retouch the part, he adroitly let fall some of the dust he held concealed. The cardinal observing it as it fell, transported at the idea of his critical acumen, exclaimed—"Ah, *Angelo!* you have now given an inimitable grace!"

When Pope was first introduced to read his *Iliad* to Lord Halifax, the noble critic did not venture to be dissatisfied with so perfect a composition: but, like the cardinal, this passage, and that word, this turn, and that expression, formed the broken cant of his criticisms. The honest poet was stung with vexation; for, in general, the parts at which his lordship hesitated were those of which he was most satisfied. As he returned home with Sir Samuel Garth he revealed to him the anxiety of his mind. "Oh," replied Garth, laughing, "you are not so well acquainted with his lordship as myself; he must criticise. At your next visit read to him those very passages as they now stand; tell him that you have recollected his criticisms; and I'll warrant you of his approbation of them. This is what I have done a hundred times myself." *Pope*

made use of this stratagem: it took like the herbicide of Angelo: and my lord the cardinal exclaimed—"Dear Pope, they are now irretrievable!"

LITERARY IMPOSTURES.

SOME authors have practised singular impositions on the public. Varillas, the French historian, enjoyed for some time a great reputation in his own country for his historic compositions, but when they became more known, the scholars of other countries destroyed the reputation he had unjustly acquired. "His continual professions of sincerity prejudiced many in his favour, and made him pass for a writer who had penetrated into the inmost recesses of the cabinet: but the public were at length undeceived, and were convinced that the historical anecdotes which Varillas put off for authentic facts had no foundation, being wholly his own inventing:—though he endeavoured to make them pass for realities by affected citations of titles, instructions, letters, memoirs, and relations, all of them imaginary!" He had read almost every thing historical, printed and manuscript; but he had a fertile political imagination, and gave his conjectures as facts, while he quoted at random his

pretended authorities. Burnet's book against Varrillas is a curious little volume.

Gemelli Carreri, a Neapolitan gentleman, for many years never quitted his chamber: confined by a tedious indisposition, he amused himself with writing a *Voyage round the World*; giving characters of men, and descriptions of countries, as if he had really visited them: and his volumes are still very interesting. Du Halde, who has written so voluminous an account of China, compiled it from the Memoirs of the Missionaries, and never travelled ten leagues from Paris in his life; though he appears, by his writings, to be very familiar with Chinese scenery.

Damberger's travels more recently made a great sensation—and the public were duped; they proved to be the ideal voyages of a member of the German Grub-street, about his own garret! Too many of our "Travels" have been manufactured to fill a certain size; and some which bear names of great authority, were not written by the professed authors.

This is an excellent observation of an anonymous author:—"writers who never visited foreign countries, and travellers who have run through immense regions with fleeting pace, have given us long accounts of various countries and people; evidently collected from the idle reports and absurd

translations of the original vulgar, from which only they could have received those passages which we are astonished with such unobscuring credulity."

Some authors have practised the singular imposture of announcing a variety of titles of works as if preparing for the press, but of which nothing but the titles have been written.

Pascal, Historiographer of France, had a reason for these ingenious inventions; he continually announced such titles, that his pension for writing on the history of France might not be stopped. When he died, his historical labours did not exceed six pages!

Gregorio Leti is an historian of much the same stamp as Varillas. He wrote with great facility, and hunger generally quickened his pen. He took every thing too lightly; yet his works are sometimes looked into for many anecdotes of English history not to be found elsewhere; and perhaps ought not to have been there if truth had been consulted. His great aim was always to make a book: he swells his volumes with digressions, intersperses many ridiculous stories, and applies all the repartees he collected from old novel-writers, to modern characters.

Such forgeries abound; the numerous "Testaments Politiques" of Colbert, Mazarine, and other great ministers, were forgeries usually from the

Dutch press, as are many pretended political "Memoirs."

Of our old translations from the Greek and Latin authors, many were taken from French versions.

The travels written in Hebrew, of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, of which we have a curious translation, are, I believe, apocryphal. He describes a journey, which if ever he took, it must have been with his night-cap on; being a perfect dream! It is said that to inspirit and give importance to his nation, he pretended he had travelled to all the synagogues in the east; places he mentions he does not appear ever to have seen, and the different people he describes no one has known. He calculates that he has found near eight hundred thousand Jews, of which about half are independent, and not subjects of any Christian or Gentile sovereign. These fictitious travels have been a source of much trouble to the learned; particularly to those whose zeal to authenticate them induced them to follow the aërial footsteps of the Hippogriffe of Rabbi Benjamin. He affirms that the tomb of Ezekiel, with the library of the first and second temples, were to be seen in his time at a place on the banks of the river Euphrates; Wesselius of Groningen, and many other literati, travelled on purpose to Mesopotamia, to reach the

tomb and examine the library, but the fairy treasures were never to be seen, nor even heard of!

The first on the list of impudent impostors is Annius of Viterbo, a Dominican, and master of the sacred palace under Alexander VI. He pretended he had discovered the genuine works of Sanchoniatho, Manetho, Berosus, and other works, of which only fragments are remaining. He published seventeen books of antiquities! But not having any MSS. to produce, though he declared he had found them buried in the earth, these literary fabrications occasioned great controversies; for the author died before he had made up his mind to a confession. At their first publication universal joy was diffused among the learned.—Suspicion soon rose, and detection followed. However, as the forger never would acknowledge himself as such, it has been ingeniously conjectured that he himself was imposed on, rather than that he was the impostor; or, as in the case of Chatterton, possibly all may not be fictitious. It has been said that a great volume in MS. anterior by two hundred years to the seventeen folios of Annius, exists in the Bibliotheque Colbertine, in which these pretended histories were to be read; but as Annius would never point out the sources of his seventeen folios, the whole is considered as a very wonderful imposture. I refer the reader to Tyr-

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Europe. When this ms. was examined by an Orientalist, it was discovered to be nothing but a history of *Mahomet and his family*. Vella was condemned to imprisonment.

The Spanish antiquary, Medina Conde, in order to favour the pretensions of the church in a great law-suit, forged deeds and inscriptions, which he buried in the ground, where he knew they would shortly be dug up. Upon their being found, he published engravings of them, and gave explanations of their unknown characters, making them out to be so many authentic proofs and evidences of the contested assumptions of the clergy.

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George Psalmanazar, to whose labours we owe much of the great *Universal History*, exceeded in powers of deception any of the great impostors of learning. His *Island of Formosa* was an illusion eminently bold, and maintained with as much felicity as erudition; and great must have been

ON THE CUSTOM OF SALUTING
AFTER SNEEZING.

It is probable that this custom, so universally prevalent, originated in some ancient superstition; it seems to have excited inquiry among all nations.

Some Catholics, says Father Feyjoo, have attributed the origin of this custom to the ordinance of a pope, Saint Gregory—who is said to have instituted a short benediction to be used on such occasions, at a time when, during a pestilence, the crisis was attended by *sneezing*, and in most cases followed by *death*.

But the rabbins, who have a story for every thing, say, that before Jacob, men never sneezed but *once*, and then immediately *died*: they assure us that that patriarch was the first who died by natural disease, before him all men died by sneezing; the memory of which was ordered to be preserved in *all nations* by a command of every prince to his subjects to employ some salutary exclamation after the act of sneezing. But these are Talmudical dreams, and only serve to prove that so familiar a custom has always created inquiry.

Even Aristotle has delivered some considerable nonsense on this custom; he says it is an honourable acknowledgment of the seat of good sense and

genius—the head—to distinguish it from two other offensive eruptions of air, which are never accompanied by any benediction from the by-standers. The custom at all events existed long prior to Pope Gregory. The lover in Apuleius, Gytton in Petronius, and allusions to it in Pliny, prove its antiquity; and a memoir of the French academy notices the practice in the New World on the first discovery of America. Every where man is saluted for sneezing.

An amusing account of the ceremonies which attend the *sneezing* of a king of Monomotapa, shows what a national concern may be the sneeze of despotism.—Those who are near his person, when this happens, salute him in so loud a tone that persons in the antichamber hear it, and join in the acclamation; in the adjoining apartments they do the same, till the noise reaches the street, and becomes propagated throughout the city; so that at each sneeze of his majesty, results a most horrid cry from the salutations of many thousands of his vassals.

When the king of Sennaar sneezes, his courtiers immediately turn their backs on him, and give a loud slap on their right thigh.

With the ancients sneezing was ominous; from the *right* it was considered auspicious; and Plutarch, in his life of Themistocles, says, that before a naval

battle it was a sign of conquest! Catullus, in his pleasing poem of Acme and Septimius, makes this action from the deity of Love from the *left* the source of his fiction. The passage has been elegantly versified by a poetical friend, who finds authority that the gods sneezing on the *right* in *heaven*, is supposed to come to us on *earth* on the *left*.

Cupid *sneezing* in his flight
 Once was heard upon the *right*
 Boding woe to lovers true;
 But now upon the *left* he flew,
 And with sportive *sneeze* divine,
 Gave of joy the sacred sign.
 Acme bent her lovely face,
 Flush'd with rapture's rosy grace,
 And those eyes that swam in bliss,
 Prest with many a breathing kiss;
 Breathing, murmuring, soft, and low,
 Thus might life for ever flow!
 " Love of my life, and life of love!
 Cupid rules our fates above,
 Ever let us vow to join
 In homage at his happy shrine."
 Cupid heard the lovers true,
 Again upon the *left* he flew,
 And with sportive *sneeze* divine,
 Renew'd of joy the *sacred sign*!

BONAVENTURE DE PERIERS.

A HAPPY art in the relation of a story is, doubtless, a very agreeable talent—it has obtained La Fontaine all the applause his charming *naïveté* deserves.

“*Bonaventure de Periers, Valet de Chambre de la Royne de Navarre,*” of whom the French have three little volumes of tales in prose, shows that pleasantry and sportive vein in which the tales of that time frequently abound. The following short anecdote is not given as the best specimen of our author, but as it introduces a novel etymology of a word in great use.

“A student at law, who studied at Poitiers, had tolerably improved himself in cases of equity; not that he was overburthened with learning, but his chief deficiency was a want of assurance and confidence to display his knowledge. His father passing by Poitiers, recommended him to read aloud, and to render his memory more prompt by continued exercise. To obey the injunctions of his father he determined to read at the *Ministry*. In order to obtain a certain assurance, he went every day into a garden, which was a very secret spot, being at a distance from any house, and where there grew a great number of fine large cabbages.

Thus for a long time he pursued his studies, and repeated his lectures to these cabbages, addressing them by the title of *gentlemen*; and balancing his periods to them as if they had composed an audience of scholars. After a fortnight or three weeks preparation, he thought it was high time to take the *chair*; imagining that he should be able to lecture his scholars as well as he had before done his cabbages. He comes forward, he begins his oration—but before a dozen words his tongue freezes between his teeth! Confused and hardly knowing where he was, all he could bring out was—*Domini, Ego bene video quod non estis caules*; that is to say—for there are some who will have every thing in plain English—*Gentlemen, I now clearly see you are not cabbages!* In the *garden* he could conceive the *cabbages* to be *scholars*; but in the *chair*, he could not conceive the *scholars* to be *cabbages*."

On this story La Monnoye has a note, which gives a new origin to a familiar term.

"The hall of the School of Equity at Poitiers, where the institutes were read, was called *La Ministerie*. On which head, Florimond de Remond (book vii. ch. 11.), speaking of Albert Babinot, one of the first disciples of Calvin, after having said he was called "The good man," adds, that because he had been a student of the institutes at this *Ministerie* of Poitiers, Calvin, and others, styled

him *Mr. Minister*; from whence, afterwards, *Calvin* took occasion to give the name of **MINISTERS** to the pastors of his church.”

GROTIUS.

THE Life of Grotius has been written by De Burigny; it shows the singular felicity of a man of letters and a statesman; and in what manner a student can pass his hours in the closest imprisonment. The gate of the prison has sometimes been the porch of fame.

Grotius was born with the happiest dispositions; studious from his infancy, he had also received from Nature the qualities of genius; and was so fortunate as to find in his father a tutor who had formed his early taste and his moral feelings. The younger Grotius, in imitation of Horace, has celebrated his gratitude in verse.

One of the most interesting circumstances in the life of this great man, which strongly marks his genius and fortitude, is displayed in the manner in which he employed his time during his imprisonment. Other men, condemned to exile and captivity, if they survive, they despair: the man of letters counts those days as the sweetest of his life.

When a prisoner at the Hague, he laboured on

a Latin essay on the means of terminating religious disputes, which occasion so many infelicities in the state, in the church, and in families; when he was carried to Louvestein, he resumed his law studies, which other employments had interrupted. He gave a portion of his time to moral philosophy, which engaged him to translate the maxims of the ancient poets, collected by Stobæus, and the fragments of Menander and Philemon. Every Sunday was devoted to read the scriptures, and to write his Commentaries on the New Testament. In the course of this work he fell ill, but as soon as he recovered his health he composed his treatise, in Dutch verse, on the Truth of the Christian Religion. Sacred and profane authors occupied him alternately. His only mode of refreshing his mind was to pass from one work to another. He sent to Vossius his Observations on the Tragedies of Seneca. He wrote several other works: particularly a little Catechism, in verse, for his daughter Cornelia: and collected materials to form his Apology. Add to these various labours an extensive correspondence he held with the learned and his friends; and his letters were often so many treatises. There is a printed collection amounting to two thousand. Grotius had notes ready for every classical author of antiquity whenever they prepared a new edition; an account of his plans

and his performances might furnish a volume of themselves; yet he never published in haste, and was fond of revising them; we must recollect, notwithstanding such uninterrupted literary avocations, his hours were frequently devoted to the public functions of an ambassador. "I only reserve for my studies the time which other ministers give to their pleasures, to conversations often useless, and to visits sometimes unnecessary;" such is the language of this great man! Although he thus produced abundantly, his confinement was not more than two years. We may well exclaim here, that the mind of Grotius had never been imprisoned.

Perhaps the most sincere eulogium, and the most grateful to this illustrious scholar, was that which he received at the hour of his death.

When this great man was travelling, he was suddenly struck by the hand of death, at the village of Rostock. The parish minister, who was called in his last moments, ignorant who the dying man was, began to go over the usual points; but Grotius, who saw there was no time to lose in exhortations, turned to him, and told him, that he needed them not; and concluded by saying, *Sum Grotius*—I am Grotius. *Tu magnus ille Grotius?*—"What! are you the great Grotius?" interrogated the minister.—What an eulogium! This anecdote seems, however, apocryphal; for we have

a narrative of his death by the clergyman himself. On the death of Grotius a variety of tales were spread concerning his manner of dying raised by different parties.

In the approbation of the *censeur* to print this "Vie de Grotius," it is observed that while "his history gives us a clear idea of the extent of the human mind, it will further inform us, that Grotius died without reaping any advantage from his great talents."

NOBLEMEN TURNED CRITICS.

I OFFER to the contemplation of those unfortunate mortals who are necessitated to undergo the criticisms of *lords*, this pair of anecdotes—

Soderini, the Gonfaloniere of Florence, having had a statue made by the great *Michael Angelo*, when it was finished came to inspect it; and having for some time sagaciously considered it, poring now on the face, then on the arms, the knees, the form of the leg, and at length on the foot itself; the statue being of such perfect beauty, he found himself at a loss to display his powers of criticism, but by lavishing his praise. But only to praise, might appear as if there had been an obtuseness in the keenness of his criticism. He trembled to

find a fault, but a fault must be found. At length he ventured to mutter something concerning the nose; it might, he thought, be something more Grecian. *Angelo* differed from his grace, but he said he would attempt to gratify his taste. He took up his chisel, and concealed some marble-dust in his hand; feigning to retouch the part, he adroitly let fall some of the dust he held concealed. The cardinal observing it as it fell, transported at the idea of his critical acumen, exclaimed—"Ah, *Angelo!* you have now given an inimitable grace!"

When Pope was first introduced to read his *Iliad* to Lord Halifax, the noble critic did not venture to be dissatisfied with so perfect a composition: but, like the cardinal, this passage, and that word, this turn, and that expression, formed the broken cant of his criticisms. The honest poet was stung with vexation; for, in general, the parts at which his lordship hesitated were those of which he was most satisfied. As he returned home with Sir Samuel Garth he revealed to him the anxiety of his mind. "Oh," replied Garth, laughing, "you are not so well acquainted with his lordship as myself; he must criticise. At your next visit read to him those very passages as they now stand; tell him that you have recollected his criticisms; and I'll warrant you of his approbation of them. This is what I have done a hundred times myself." *Pope*

made use of this stratagem; it took, like the marble-dust of *Angelo*; and my lord, like the cardinal, exclaimed—"Dear *Pope*, they are now inimitable!"

LITERARY IMPOSTURES.

SOME authors have practised singular impositions on the public. Varillas, the French historian, enjoyed for some time a great reputation in his own country for his historic compositions, but when they became more known, the scholars of other countries destroyed the reputation he had unjustly acquired. "His continual professions of sincerity prejudiced many in his favour, and made him pass for a writer who had penetrated into the inmost recesses of the cabinet: but the public were at length undeceived, and were convinced that the historical anecdotes which Varillas put off for authentic facts had no foundation, being wholly his own inventing:—though he endeavoured to make them pass for realities by affected citations of titles, instructions, letters, memoirs, and relations, all of them imaginary!" He had read almost every thing historical, printed and manuscript; but he had a fertile political imagination, and gave his conjectures as facts, while he quoted at random his

pretended authorities. Burnet's book against Varrillas is a curious little volume.

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that erudition which could form a pretended language and its grammar, and fertile the genius which could invent the history of an unknown people; it is said that the deception was only satisfactorily ascertained by his own penitential confession; he had defied and baffled the most learned. The literary impostor Lauder had much more audacity than ingenuity, and he died contemned by all the world. Ireland's Shakespeare served to show that commentators are not blessed, necessarily, with an interior and unerring tact. Genius and learning are ill directed in forming literary impositions, but at least they must be distinguished from the fabrications of ordinary impostors.

A singular forgery was practised on Captain Wilford by a learned Hindu, who, to ingratiate himself and his studies with the too zealous and pious European, contrived among other attempts to give the history of Noah and his three sons, in his "Purana," under the designation of Sâtyavrata. Captain Wilford having *read* the passage, transcribed it for Sir William Jones, who translated it as a curious extract; the whole was an interpolation by the dextrous introduction of a forged sheet, discoloured and prepared for the purpose of deception, and which, having served his purpose for the moment, was afterwards withdrawn. As books

in India are not bound, it is not difficult to introduce loose leaves. To confirm his various impositions this learned forgerer had the patience to write two voluminous sections, in which he connected all the legends together in the style of the *Puranas*, consisting of 12,000 lines. When Capt. Wilford resolved to collate the manuscript with others, the learned Hindu began to disfigure his own manuscript, the captain's, and those of the college, by erasing the name of the country and substituting that of Egypt. With as much pains, and with a more honourable direction, our Hindu Lauder might have immortalised his inverted invention.

We have authors who sold their names to be prefixed to works they never read; or on the contrary, have prefixed the names of others to their own writings. Sir John Hill owned to a friend once when he fell sick, that he had overfatigued himself with writing seven works at once! One of which was on architecture, and another on cookery! This hero once contracted to translate Swammerdam's work on insects for fifty guineas. After the agreement with the bookseller, he perfectly recollected that he did not understand a single word of the Dutch language! Nor did there exist a French translation. The work however was not the less done for this small obstacle. Sir John

bargained with another translator for twenty-five guineas. The second translator was precisely in the same situation as the first; as ignorant, though not so well paid as the knight. He rebargained with a third, who perfectly understood his original, for twelve guineas! So that the translators who could not translate feasted on venison and turtle, while the modest drudge, whose name never appeared to the world, broke in patience his daily bread! The craft of authorship has many mysteries. The great patriarch and primeval dealer in English literature, is said to have been Robert Green, one of the most facetious, profligate, and indefatigable of the scribleri family. He laid the foundation of a new dynasty of literary emperors. The first act by which he proved his claim to the throne of Grubstreet has served as a model to his numerous successors—it was an ambidextrous trick! Green sold his “Orlando Furioso” to two different theatres, and is supposed to have been the first author in English literary history who wrote as a *trader*; or as crabbed Anthony Wood phrases it in the language of celibacy and cynicism, “he wrote to maintain his *wife*, and that high and loose course of living which *poets generally follow*.” With a drop still sweeter, old Anthony describes Gayton, another worthy; “he came up to London to live in a *shirking condition*, and wrote *trite things*

merely to get bread to sustain him and his *wife*." The hermit Anthony seems to have had a mortal antipathy against the Eves of literary men.

CARDINAL RICHELIEU.

THE present anecdote concerning Cardinal Richelieu may serve to teach the man of letters how he deals out criticisms to the *great*, when they ask his opinion of manuscripts, be they in verse or prose.

The cardinal placed in a gallery of his palace the portraits of several illustrious men, and he was desirous of composing the inscriptions to be placed round the portraits. That he intended for Mont-luc, the marechal of France, was conceived in these terms: *Multa fecit, plura scripsit, vir tamen magnus fuit*. He showed it without mentioning the author to Bourbon, the royal professor in Greek, and asked his opinion concerning it. He reprobated it, and considered that the Latin was much in the style of the breviary; and, if it had concluded with an *allelujah*, it would serve for an *anthem* to the *magnificat*. The cardinal agreed with the severity of his strictures; and even acknowledged the discernment of the professor; "for," he said, "it is really written by a priest." But

however he might approve of Bourbon's critical powers, he punished without mercy his ingenuity. The pension his majesty had bestowed on him was withheld the next year.

The cardinal was one of those ambitious men who foolishly attempt to rival every kind of genius; and seeing himself constantly disappointed, he envied, with all the venom of rancour, those talents which are so frequently the *all* that men of genius possess.

He was jealous of Balzac's splendid reputation; and offered the elder Heinsius ten thousand crowns to write a criticism which should ridicule his elaborate compositions. This Heinsius refused, because Salmasius threatened to revenge Balzac on his *Herodes Infanticida*.

He attempted to rival the reputation of Corneille's "Cid," by opposing to it one of the most ridiculous dramatic productions; it was the allegorical tragedy called "Europe," in which the *minister* had congregated the four quarters of the world! Much political matter was thrown together, divided into scenes and acts. There are appended to it keys of the *dramatis personæ* and of the allegories. In this tragedy Francion represents France; Ibere, Spain; Parthenope, Naples, &c. and these have their attendants:—Lilian (alluding to the French lilies) is the servant of

Francion, while Hispale is the confident of Ibere. But the key to the allegories is much more copious:—Albione signifies England; *three knots of the hair of Austrasie*, mean the towns of Clermont, Stenay, and Jamet, these places once belonging to Lorraine. *A box of diamonds of Austrasie*, is the town of Nancy, belonging once to the dukes of Lorraine. The *key* of Iberia's great porch is Perpignan, which France took from Spain; and in this manner is this sublime tragedy composed! When he first sent it anonymously to the French Academy it was reprobated. He then tore it in a rage, and scattered it about his study. Towards evening, like another Medea lamenting over the members of her own children, he and his secretary passed the night in uniting the scattered limbs. He then ventured to avow himself; and having pretended to correct this incorrigible tragedy, the submissive Academy retracted their censures, but the public pronounced its melancholy fate on its first representation. This lamentable tragedy was intended to thwart Corneille's "Cid." Enraged at its success, Richelieu even commended the academy to publish a severe *critique* of it well known in French literature. Boileau on this occasion has these two well-turned verses:—

“ En vain contre le Cid, un ministre se ligue ;
 Tout Paris, pour *Chimene*, a les yeux de *Rodrigue*.”

To oppose the *Cid*, in vain the statesman tries ;
All Paris, for *Chimene*, has *Roderick's* eyes.

It is said that in consequence of the fall of this tragedy that French custom is derived of securing a number of friends to applaud their pieces at their first representations. I find the following droll anecdote concerning this droll tragedy in Beau-champ's *Recherches sur la Théâtre*.

The minister after the ill success of his tragedy retired unaccompanied the same evening to his country house at Ruel. He then sent for his favourite Desmarets, who was at supper with his friend Petit. Desmarets, conjecturing that the interview would be stormy, begged his friend to accompany him.

"Well!" said the cardinal as soon as he saw them, "the French will never possess a taste for what is lofty: they seem not to have relished my tragedy."—"My lord," answered Petit, "it is not the fault of the piece, which is so admirable, but that of the *players*. Did not your eminence perceive that not only they knew not their parts, but that they were all *drunk*?"—"Really," replied the cardinal, something pleased, "I observed they acted it dreadfully ill."

Desmarets and Petit returned to Paris, flew directly to the players to plan a *new mode* of performance, which was to *secure* a number of specta-

tors; so that at the second representation bursts of applause were frequently heard!

Richelieu had another singular vanity of closely imitating Cardinal Ximenes. Pliny was not a more servile imitator of Cicero. Marville tells us that, like Ximenes, he placed himself at the head of an army: like him he degraded princes and nobles; and like him rendered himself formidable to all Europe. And because Ximenes had established schools of theology, Richelieu undertook likewise to raise into notice the schools of the Sorbonne. And, to conclude, as Ximenes had written several theological treatises, our cardinal was also desirous of leaving posterity various polemical works. But his gallantries rendered him more ridiculous. Always in ill health, this miserable lover and grave cardinal would, in a freak of love, dress himself with a red feather in his cap and sword by his side. He was more hurt by a filthy nickname given him by the queen of Louis XIII. than even by the hiss of theatres and the critical condemnation of academies.

Cardinal Richelieu was assuredly a great political genius. Sir William Temple observes, that he instituted the French Academy to give employment to the *wits*, and to hinder them from inspecting too narrowly into his politics and his administration. It is believed that the Marshal de Gram-

mont lost an important battle by the orders of the cardinal; that in this critical conjuncture of affairs his majesty, who was inclined to dismiss him, could not then absolutely do without him.

Vanity in this cardinal levelled a great genius. He who would attempt to display universal excellence will be impelled to practise meannesses, and to act follies which, if he has the least sensibility, must occasion him many a pang and many a blush.

ARISTOTLE AND PLATO.

No philosopher has been so much praised and censured as Aristotle: but he had this advantage, of which some of the most eminent scholars have been deprived, that he enjoyed during his life a splendid reputation. Philip of Macedon must have felt a strong conviction of his merit when he wrote to him on the birth of Alexander:—"I receive from the gods this day a son; but I thank them not so much for the favour of his birth, as his having come into the world at a time when you can have the care of his education; and that through you he will be rendered worthy of being my son."

Diogenes Laertius describes the person of the Stagyrite.—His eyes were small, his voice hoarse,

and his legs lank. He stammered, was fond of a magnificent dress, and wore costly rings. He had a mistress whom he loved passionately, and for whom he frequently acted inconsistently with the philosophic character; a thing as common with philosophers as with other men. Aristotle had nothing of the austerity of the philosopher, though his works are so austere: he was open, pleasant, and even charming in his conversation; fiery and volatile in his pleasures; magnificent in his dress. He is described as fierce, disdainful, and sarcastic. He joined to a taste for profound erudition that of an elegant dissipation. His passion for luxury occasioned him such expenses when he was young that he consumed all his property. Laertius has preserved the will of Aristotle, which is curious. The chief part turns on the future welfare and marriage of his daughter. "If, after my death, she chooses to marry, the executors will be careful she marries no person of an inferior rank. If she resides at Chalcis, she shall occupy the apartment contiguous to the garden; if she chooses Stagira, she shall reside in the house of my father, and my executors shall furnish either of those places she fixes on."

Aristotle had studied under the divine Plato; but the disciple and the master could not possibly agree in their doctrines: they were of opposite

tastes and talents. Plato was the chief of the academic sect, and Aristotle of the peripatetic. Plato was simple, modest, frugal, and of austere manners; a good friend and a zealous citizen, but a theoretical politician: a lover indeed of benevolence, and desirous of diffusing it amongst men, but knowing little of them as we find them; his "republic" is as chimerical as Rousseau's ideas, or Sir Thomas More's Utopia.

Rapin, the critic, has sketched an ingenious parallel of these two celebrated philosophers.

The genius of Plato is more polished, and that of Aristotle more vast and profound. Plato has a lively and teeming imagination; fertile in invention, in ideas, in expressions, and in figures; displaying a thousand different turns, a thousand new colours, all agreeable to their subject; but after all it is nothing more than imagination. Aristotle is hard and dry in all he says, but what he says is all reason, though it is expressed drily: his diction, pure as it is, has something uncommonly austere; and his obscurities, natural or affected, disgust and fatigue his readers. Plato is equally delicate in his thoughts and in his expressions. Aristotle, though he may be more natural, has not any delicacy: his style is simple and equal, but close and nervous; that of Plato is grand and elevated, but loose and diffuse. Plato

always says more than he should say: Aristotle never says enough, and leaves the reader always to think more than he says. The one surprises the mind, and charms it by a flowery and sparkling character: the other illuminates and instructs it by a just and solid method. Plato communicates something of genius by the fecundity of his own; and Aristotle something of judgment and reason by that impression of good sense which appears in all he says. In a word, Plato frequently only thinks to express himself well; and Aristotle only thinks to think justly.

An interesting anecdote is related of these philosophers.—Aristotle became the rival of Plato. Literary disputes long subsisted betwixt them. The disciple ridiculed his master, and the master treated contemptuously his disciple. To make this superiority manifest, Aristotle wished for a regular disputation before an audience where erudition and reason might prevail; but this satisfaction was denied.

Plato was always surrounded by his scholars, who took a lively interest in his glory. Three of these he taught to rival Aristotle, and it became their mutual interest to depreciate his merits. Unfortunately one day Plato found himself in his school without these three favourite scholars. Aristotle flies to him—a crowd gathers and enters with him.

The idol whose oracles they wished to overturn was presented to them. He was then a respectable old man, the weight of whose years had enfeebled his memory. The combat was not long. Some rapid sophisms embarrassed Plato. He saw himself surrounded by the inevitable traps of the subtlest logician. Vanquished, he reproached his ancient scholar by a beautiful figure:—"He has kicked against us as a colt against its mother."

Soon after this humiliating adventure he ceased to give public lectures. Aristotle remained master in the field of battle. He raised a school, and devoted himself to render it the most famous in Greece. But the three favourite scholars of Plato, zealous to avenge the cause of their master, and to make amends for their imprudence in having quitted him, armed themselves against the usurper.—Xenocrates, the most ardent of the three, attacked Aristotle, confounded the logician, and re-established Plato in all his rights. Since that time the academic and peripatetic sects, animated by the spirits of their several chiefs, avowed an eternal hostility. In what manner his works have descended to us has been told at page 97 of this volume. Aristotle having declaimed irreverently of the Gods, and dreading the fate of Socrates, wished to retire from Athens. In a beautiful manner he pointed out his successor. There

were two rivals in his schools: Menedemus the Rhodian, and Theophrastus the Lesbian. Alluding delicately to his own critical situation, he told his assembled scholars that the wine he was accustomed to drink was injurious to him, and he desired them to bring the wines of Rhodes and Lesbos. He tasted both, and declared they both did honour to their soil, each being excellent, though differing in their quality.—The Rhodian wine is the strongest, but the Lesbian is the sweetest, and that he himself preferred it. Thus his ingenuity pointed out his favourite Theophrastus, the author of the “Characters,” for his successor.

ABELARD AND ELOISA.

ABELARD, so famous for his writings and his amours with Eloisa, ranks among the heretics for opinions concerning the Trinity! His superior genius probably made him appear so culpable in the eyes of his enemies. The cabal formed against him disturbed the earlier part of his life with a thousand persecutions, till at length they persuaded Bernard, his old *friend*, but who had now turned *saint*, that poor Abelard was what their malice described him to be. Bernard, inflamed

against him, condemned unheard the unfortunate scholar. But it is remarkable that the book which was burnt as unorthodox, and as the composition of Abelard, was in fact written by Peter Lombard, bishop of Paris: a work which has since been *canonized* in the Sorbonne, and on which the scholastic theology is founded. The objectionable passage is an illustration of the *Trinity* by the nature of a *syllogism*!—"As (says he) the three propositions of a syllogism form but one truth, so the *Father and Son* constitute but *one essence*.—The *major* represents the *Father*, the *minor* the *Son*, and the *conclusion* the *Holy Ghost*!" It is curious to add that Bernard himself has explained this mystical union precisely in the same manner, and equally clear. "The understanding," says this saint, "is the image of God. We find it consists of three parts:—memory, intelligence, and will. To *memory*, we attribute all which we know, without cogitation; to *intelligence*, all truths we discover which have not been deposited by *memory*. By *memory*, we resemble the *Father*; by *intelligence* the *Son*; and by *will* the *Holy Ghost*." Bernard's *Lib. de Anima*, Cap. I. Num. 6. quoted in the "Mem. Secretes de la Republique des Lettres." We may add also, that because Abelard, in the warmth of honest indignation, had reprov'd the monks of St. Denis, in France, and St.

Gildas de Ruys, in Bretagne, for the horrid incontinence of their lives, they joined his enemies, and assisted to embitter the life of this ingenious scholar; who perhaps was guilty of no other crime than that of feeling too sensibly an attachment to one who not only possessed the enchanting attractions of the softer sex, but, what indeed is very unusual, a congeniality of disposition, and an enthusiasm of imagination.

“ Is it, in heaven, a crime to love too well ? ”

It appears by a letter of Peter de Cluny to Eloisa, that she had solicited for Abelard's absolution. The abbot gave it to her. It runs thus: “ Ego Petrus Cluniacensis Abbas, qui Petrum Abælardum in monachum Cluniacensum recepi, et corpus ejus furtim delatum Heloissæ abbatissæ et moniali Paracleti concessi, auctoritate omnipotentis Dei et omnium sanctorum absolvo eum pro officio ob omnibus peccatis suis.”

An ancient chronicle of Tours records that when they deposited the body of the Abbess Eloisa in the tomb of her lover Peter Abelard, who had been there interred twenty years, this faithful husband raised his arms, stretched them, and closely embraced his beloved Eloisa. This poetic fiction was invented to sanctify, by a miracle, the frailties of their youthful days. This is not

wonderful:—but it is strange that Du Chesne, the father of French history, not only relates this legendary tale of the ancient chroniclers, but gives it as an incident well authenticated, and maintains its possibility by various other examples. Such fanciful incidents once not only embellished poetry, but enlivened history.

Bayle tells us that *billets doux* and *amorous verses* are two powerful machines to employ in the assaults of love; particularly when the passionate songs the poetical lover composes are sung by himself. This secret was well known to the elegant Abelard. Abelard so touched the sensible heart of Eloisa, and infused such fire into her frame, by employing his *fine pen* and his *fine voice*, that the poor woman never recovered from the attack. She herself informs us that he displayed two qualities which are rarely found in philosophers, and by which he could instantly win the affections of the female;—he *wrote* and *sung* finely. He composed *love-verses* so beautiful, and *songs* so agreeable, as well for the *words* as the *airs*, that all the world got them by heart, and the name of his mistress was spread from province to province.

What a gratification to the enthusiastic, the amorous, the vain Eloisa! of whom Lord Lyttelton in his curious life of Henry II. observes, that had she not been compelled to read the fathers and

the legends in a nunnery, but had been suffered to improve her genius by a continued application to polite literature, from what appears in her letters, she would have excelled any man of that age.

Eloisa, I suspect, however, would have proved but a very indifferent polemic. She seems to have had a certain delicacy in her manners which rather belongs to the *fine lady*. We cannot but smile at an observation of hers on the *apostles* which we find in her letters. "We read that the *apostles*, even in the company of their master, were so *rustic* and *ill-bred* that, regardless of common decorum, as they passed through the corn-fields they plucked the ears and ate them like children. Nor did they wash their hands before they sat down to table. To eat with unwashed hands, said our Saviour to those who were offended, doth not defile a man."

It is on the misconception of the mild apologetical reply of Jesus, indeed, that religious fanatics have really considered that to be careless of their dress, and not to free themselves from filth and slovenliness, is an act of piety, just as the late political fanatics, who thought that republicanism consisted in the most offensive filthiness. On this principle, that it is saint-like to go dirty, ragged, and slovenly, says Bishop Lavington, "Enthusiasm of the Methodists and Papists," how *piously* did

Whitefield take care of the outward man, who in his journals writes, " My apparel was mean—thought it unbecoming a penitent to have *powdered hair*—I wore *woollen gloves*, a *patched gown*, and *dirty shoes* !"

After an injury, not less cruel than humiliating, Abelard raises the school of the Paraclete; with what enthusiasm is he followed to that desert! His scholars in crowds hasten to their adored master. They cover their mud-sheds with the branches of trees. They do not want to sleep under better roofs, provided they remain by the side of their unfortunate master. How lively must have been their taste for study! It formed their solitary passion, and the love of glory was gratified even in that desert.

The two reprehensible lines in Pope's *Eloisa*, too celebrated among certain of its readers,

" Not Cæsar's empress would I deign to prove ;

" No,—make me mistress to the man I love !"

are, however, found in her original letters. The author of that ancient work, " *The Romaunt of the Rose*," has given it thus *naïvely*; a specimen of the *natural* style in those days.

Se le'empereur, qui est a Rome

Soubz qui doyvent etre tout homme,

Me daignoit prendre pour sa femme,
 Et me faire du monde dame ;
 Si voudroye-je mieux, dist-elle
 Et Dieu en tesmoing en appelle
 Etre sa Putaine appellée
 Qu'etre emperiere couronnée.

PHYSIOGNOMY.

A VERY extraordinary physiognomical anecdote has been given by De la Place in his "*Pieces interessantes et peu connues*," v. iv. p. 8.

A friend assured him that he had seen a voluminous and secret correspondence which had been carried on between Louis XIV. and his favourite physician De la Chambre on this science: the faith of the monarch seems to have been great, and the purpose to which this correspondence tended was extraordinary indeed, and perhaps scarcely credible. Who will believe that Louis XIV. was so convinced of that talent which De la Chambre attributed to himself, of deciding merely by the physiognomy of persons not only on the real bent of their character, but to what employment they were adapted, that the king entered into a *secret correspondence* to obtain the critical notices of his *physiognomist*? That Louis XIV. should have pursued this system, undetected by his own

courtiers, is also singular; but it appears by this correspondence that this art positively swayed him in his choice of officers and favourites. On one of the backs of these letters De la Chambre had written, "If I die before his majesty, he will incur great risk of making many an unfortunate choice!"

This collection of physiognomical correspondence, if it does really exist, would form a curious publication; we have heard nothing of it. De la Chambre was an enthusiastic physiognomist, as appears by his works; "The Characters of the Passions," four volumes in quarto; "The Art of knowing Mankind;" and "The Knowledge of Animals." Lavater quotes his "Vote and Interest" in favour of his favourite science. It is, however, curious to add, that Philip Earl of Pembroke, under James I., had formed a particular collection of portraits, with a view to physiognomical studies. According to Evelyn on Medals, p. 302, such was his sagacity in discovering the characters and dispositions of men by their countenances, that James I. made no little use of his extraordinary talent on the *first arrival of ambassadors at court*.

The following physiological definition of PHYSIOGNOMY is extracted from a publication by Dr. Gwither, of the year 1604, which, dropping his history of "the Animal Spirits," is curious.

"Soft wax cannot receive more various and

numerous impressions than are imprinted on a man's face by *objects* moving his affections: and not only the *objects* themselves have this power, but also the very *images* or *ideas*; that is to say, any thing that puts the animal spirits into the same motion that the *object* present did, will have the same effect with the object. To prove the first, let one observe a man's face looking on a pitiful object, then a ridiculous, then a strange, then on a terrible or dangerous object, and so forth. For the second, that *ideas* have the same effect with the *object*, dreams confirm too often.

“ The manner I conceive to be thus. The animal spirits moved in the sensory by an object, continue their motion to the brain; whence the motion is propagated to this or that particular part of the body, as is most suitable to the design of its creation; having first made an alteration in the *face* by its nerves, especially by the *pathetic* and *oculorum motorii* actuating its many muscles, as the dial-plate to that stupendous piece of clock-work which shows what is to be expected next from the striking part. Not that I think the motion of the spirits in the sensory continued by the impression of the object all the way, as from a finger to the foot: I know it too weak, though the tenseness of the nerves favours it. But I conceive it done in the medulla of the brain, where is the

common stock of spirits; as in an organ, whose pipes being uncovered, the air rushes into them; but the keys let go, are stopped again. Now, if by repeated acts or frequent entertaining of a favourite idea of a passion or vice, which natural temperament has hurried one to, or custom dragged, the *face* is so often put into that posture which attends such acts, that the animal spirits find such latent passages into its nerves, that it is sometimes unalterably set: as the *Indian* religious are by long continuing in strange postures in their *pagods*. But most commonly such a habit is contracted, that it falls insensibly into that posture when some present object does not obliterate that more natural impression by a new, or dissimulation hide it.

“ Hence it is that we see *great drinkers* with *eyes* generally set towards the nose, the adducent muscles being often employed to let them see their loved liquor in the glass at the time of drinking; which were therefore called *bibitory*. *Lascivious persons* are remarkable for the *oculorum mobilis petulantia*, as *Petronius* calls it. From this also we may solve the *Quaker's* expecting face, waiting for the pretended spirit; and the melancholy face of the *sectaries*; the *studious* face of men of great application of mind; revengeful and *bloody* men, like executioners in the act: and though silence in a

sort may awhile pass for wisdom, yet, sooner or later, Saint Martin peeps through the disguise to undo all. A *changeable face* I have observed to show a *changeable mind*. But I would by no means have what has been said understood as without exception: for I doubt not but sometimes there are found men with great and virtuous souls under very unpromising outsides."

The great Prince of Condé was very expert in a sort of physiognomy which showed the peculiar habits, motions, and postures of familiar life and mechanical employments. He would sometimes lay wagers with his friends, that he would guess, upon the Pont Neuf, what trade persons were of that passed by, from their walk and air.

CHARACTERS DESCRIBED BY MUSICAL NOTES.

THE idea of describing characters under the names of Musical Instruments has been already displayed in two most pleasing papers which embellish the *Tatler*, written by Addison. He dwells on this idea with uncommon success. It has been applauded for its *originality*; and in the general preface to that work, those papers are distinguished for their felicity of imagination. The following

paper was published in the year 1700, in a volume of "Philosophical Transactions and Collections," and the two numbers of Addison in the year 1710. It is probable that this inimitable writer borrowed the seminal hint from this work.

"A conjecture at dispositions from the modulations of the voice.

"Sitting in some company, and having been but a little before musical, I chanced to take notice, that in ordinary discourse *words* were spoken in perfect *notes*; and that some of the company used *eighths*, some *fifths*, some *thirds*; and that his discourse which was most pleasing, his *words*, as to their tone, consisted most of *concord*s, and were of *discord*s of such as made up harmony. The same person was the most affable, pleasant, and best-natured in the company. This suggests a reason why many discourses which one *hears* with much pleasure, when they come to be *read* scarcely seem the same things.

"From this difference of MUSIC in SPEECH, we may conjecture that of TEMPERs. We know, the Doric mood sounds gravity and sobriety; the Lydian, buxomness and freedom; the Æolic, sweet stillness and quiet composure; the Phrygian, jollity and youthful levity; the Ionic is a stiller of storms and disturbances arising from passion. And why may not we reasonably sup-

pose, that those whose speech naturally runs into the notes peculiar to any of these moods, are likewise in nature hereunto congenerous? *C Fa ut* may show me to be of an ordinary capacity, though good disposition. *G Sol re ut*, to be peevish and effeminate. *Flats*, a manly or melancholic sadness. He who hath a voice which will in some measure agree with all *cliffs*, to be of good parts, and fit for variety of employments, yet somewhat of an inconstant nature. Likewise from the **TIMES**: so *semi-briefs* may speak a temper dull and phlegmatic; *minums*, grave and serious; *crotchets*, a prompt wit; *quavers*, vehemency of passion, and scolds use them. *Semi-brief-rest*, may denote one either stupid or fuller of thoughts than he can utter; *minum-rest*, one that deliberates; *crotchet-rest*, one in a passion. So that from the natural use of MOOD, NOTE, and TIME, we may collect DISPOSITIONS."

MILTON.

It is painful to observe the acrimony which the most eminent scholars have infused frequently in their controversial writings. The politeness of the present times has in some degree softened the malignity of the man, in the dignity of the author, but this is by no means an irrevocable law.

It is said not be honourable to literature to revive such controversies; and a work entitled "Querelles Litteraires," when it first appeared, excited loud murmurs. But it has its moral; like showing the drunkard to a youth that he may turn aside disgusted with ebriety. Must we suppose that men of letters are exempt from the human passions? Their sensibility, on the contrary, is more irritable than that of others. To observe the ridiculous attitudes in which great men appear, when they employ the style of the fish-market, may be one great means of restraining that ferocious pride often breaking out in the republic of letters. Johnson at least appears to have entertained the same opinion; for he thought proper to republish the low invective of *Dryden* against *Settle*: and since I have published my "Quarrels of Authors," it becomes me to say no more.

The celebrated controversy of *Salmasius* continued by *Morus* with *Milton*—the first the pleader of King Charles, the latter the advocate of the people—was of that magnitude, that all Europe took a part in the paper-war of these two great men. The answer of *Milton*, who perfectly massacred *Salmasius*, is now read but by the few. Whatever is addressed to the times, however great may be its merit, is doomed to perish with the times; yet on these pages the philosopher will not contemplate in vain.

It will form no uninteresting article to gather a few of the rhetorical *wceds*, for *flowers* we cannot well call them, with which they mutually presented each other. Their rancour was at least equal to their erudition, the two most learned antagonists of a learned age!

Salmasius was a man of vast erudition, but no taste. His writings are learned; but sometimes ridiculous. He called his work *Defensio Regia*, Defence of Kings. The opening of this work provokes a laugh. "Englishmen! who toss the heads of kings as so many tennis-balls; who play with crowns as if they were bowls; who look upon sceptres as so many crooks."

That the deformity of the body is an idea we attach to the deformity of the mind, the vulgar must acknowledge; but surely it is unpardonable in the enlightened philosopher thus to compare the crookedness of corporeal matter with the rectitude of the intellect: yet Milbourne and Dennis, the last a formidable critic, have frequently considered, that comparing Dryden and Pope to whatever the eye turned from with displeasure was very good argument to lower their literary abilities. Salmasius seems also to have entertained this idea, though his spies in England gave him wrong information; or, possibly, he only drew the figure of his own distempered imagination.

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according as their authors were disposed. *Peter Hcylin* in the preface to his *Cosmography* mentions, that "the affairs of each town or war were better presented to the reader in the *Weekly News-books*." Hence we find some papers entitled News from Hull, Truths from York, Warranted Tidings from Ireland, &c. We find also "The Scots' Dove" opposed to "The Parliament Kite," or "The Secret Owl."—Keener animosities produced keener titles: "Heraclitus ridens" found an antagonist in "Democritus ridens," and "The Weekly Discoverer" was shortly met by "The Discoverer stript naked." "Mercurius Britannicus" was grappled by "Mercurius Mastix, faithfully lashing all Scouts, Mercuries, Posts, Spies, and others." Under all these names papers had appeared, but a Mercury was the prevailing title of these "News-Books," and the principles of the writer were generally shown by the additional epithet. We find an alarming number of these Mercuries, which, were the story not too long to tell, might excite some laughter; they present us with a very curious picture of those singular times.

Devoted to political purposes, they soon became a public nuisance by serving as receptacles of party malice, and echoing to the farthest ends of the kingdom the insolent voice of all factions. They set the minds of men more at variance, inflamed

their tempers to a greater fieroeness, and gave a keener edge to the sharpness of civil discord.

Such works will always find adventurers adapted to their scurrilous purposes, who neither want at times, either talents, or boldness, or wit, or argument. A vast crowd issued from the press, and are now to be found in a few private collections. They form a race of authors unknown to most readers of these times: the names of some of their chiefs however have just reached us, and in the minor chronicle of domestic literature I rank three notable heroes; Marchamont Needham, Sir John Birkenhead, and Sir Roger L'Estrange.

Marchamont Needham, the great patriarch of newspaper writers, was a man of versatile talents and more versatile politics; a bold adventurer, and most successful, because the most profligate of his tribe. We find an ample account of him in Anthony Wood. From college he came to London; was an usher in Merchant Taylors' school; then an under clerk in Gray's Inn; at length studied physic, and practised chemistry; and finally he was a captain, and in the words of honest Anthony, "siding with the rout and scum of the people, he made them weekly sport by railing at all that was noble, in his *Intelligence*, called *Mercurius Britannicus*, wherein his endeavours were

courtiers, is also singular; but it appears by this correspondence that this art positively swayed him in his choice of officers and favourites. On one of the backs of these letters De la Chambre had written, "If I die before his majesty, he will incur great risk of making many an unfortunate choice!"

This collection of physiognomical correspondence, if it does really exist, would form a curious publication; we have heard nothing of it. De la Chambre was an enthusiastic physiognomist, as appears by his works; "The Characters of the Passions," four volumes in quarto; "The Art of knowing Mankind;" and "The Knowledge of Animals." Lavater quotes his "Vote and Interest" in favour of his favourite science. It is, however, curious to add, that Philip Earl of Pembroke, under James I., had formed a particular collection of portraits, with a view to physiognomical studies. According to Evelyn on Medals, p. 302, such was his sagacity in discovering the characters and dispositions of men by their countenances, that James I. made no little use of his extraordinary talent on the *first arrival of ambassadors at court*.

The following physiological definition of PHYSIOGNOMY is extracted from a publication by Dr. Gwither, of the year 1604, which, dropping his history of "the Animal Spirits," is curious.

"Soft wax cannot receive more various and

numerous impressions than are imprinted on a man's face by *objects* moving his affections: and not only the *objects* themselves have this power, but also the very *images* or *ideas*; that is to say, any thing that puts the animal spirits into the same motion that the *object* present did, will have the same effect with the object. To prove the first, let one observe a man's face looking on a pitiful object, then a ridiculous, then a strange, then on a terrible or dangerous object, and so forth. For the second, that *ideas* have the same effect with the *object*, dreams confirm too often.

“The manner I conceive to be thus. The animal spirits moved in the sensory by an object, continue their motion to the brain; whence the motion is propagated to this or that particular part of the body, as is most suitable to the design of its creation; having first made an alteration in the *face* by its nerves, especially by the *pathetic* and *oculorum motorii* actuating its many muscles, as the dial-plate to that stupendous piece of clock-work which shows what is to be expected next from the striking part. Not that I think the motion of the spirits in the sensory continued by the impression of the object all the way, as from a finger to the foot: I know it too weak, though the tenseness of the nerves favours it. But I conceive it done in the medulla of the brain, where is the

common stock of spirits; as in an organ, whose pipes being uncovered, the air rushes into them; but the keys let go, are stopped again. Now, if by repeated acts or frequent entertaining of a favourite idea of a passion or vice, which natural temperament has hurried one to, or custom dragged, the *face* is so often put into that posture which attends such acts, that the animal spirits find such latent passages into its nerves, that it is sometimes unalterably set: as the *Indian* religious are by long continuing in strange postures in their *pagods*. But most commonly such a habit is contracted, that it falls insensibly into that posture when some present object does not obliterate that more natural impression by a new, or dissimulation hide it.

“ Hence it is that we see *great drinkers* with *eyes* generally set towards the nose, the adducent muscles being often employed to let them see their loved liquor in the glass at the time of drinking; which were therefore called *bibitory*. *Lascivious persons* are remarkable for the *oculorum mobilis petulantia*, as Petronius calls it. From this also we may solve the *Quaker's* expecting face, waiting for the pretended spirit; and the melancholy face of the *sectaries*; the *studious* face of men of great application of mind; revengeful and *bloody* men, like executioners in the act: and though silence in a

sort may awhile pass for wisdom, yet, sooner or later, Saint Martin peeps through the disguise to undo all. A *changeable face* I have observed to show a *changeable mind*. But I would by no means have what has been said understood as without exception: for I doubt not but sometimes there are found men with great and virtuous souls under very unpromising outsides."

The great Prince of Condé was very expert in a sort of physiognomy which showed the peculiar habits, motions, and postures of familiar life and mechanical employments. He would sometimes lay wagers with his friends, that he would guess, upon the Pont Neuf, what trade persons were of that passed by, from their walk and air.

CHARACTERS DESCRIBED BY MUSICAL NOTES.

THE idea of describing characters under the names of Musical Instruments has been already displayed in two most pleasing papers which embellish the *Tatler*, written by Addison. He dwells on this idea with uncommon success. It has been applauded for its *originality*; and in the general preface to that work, those papers are distinguished for their felicity of imagination. The following

paper was published in the year 1700, in a volume of "Philosophical Transactions and Collections," and the two numbers of Addison in the year 1710. It is probable that this inimitable writer borrowed the seminal hint from this work.

"A conjecture at dispositions from the modulations of the voice.

"Sitting in some company, and having been but a little before musical, I chanced to take notice, that in ordinary discourse *words* were spoken in perfect *notes*; and that some of the company used *eighths*, some *fifths*, some *thirds*; and that his discourse which was most pleasing, his *words*, as to their tone, consisted most of *concord*s, and were of *discord*s of such as made up harmony. The same person was the most affable, pleasant, and best-natured in the company. This suggests a reason why many discourses which one *hears* with much pleasure, when they come to be *read* scarcely seem the same things.

"From this difference of MUSIC in SPEECH, we may conjecture that of TEMPERs. We know, the Doric mood sounds gravity and sobriety; the Lydian, buxomness and freedom; the Æolic, sweet stillness and quiet composure; the Phrygian, jollity and youthful levity; the Ionic is a stiller of storms and disturbances arising from passion. And why may not we reasonably sup-

pose, that those whose speech naturally runs into the notes peculiar to any of these moods, are likewise in nature hereunto congenerous? *C Fa ut* may show me to be of an ordinary capacity, though good disposition. *G Sol re ut*, to be peevish and effeminate. *Flats*, a manly or melancholic sadness. He who hath a voice which will in some measure agree with all *cliffs*, to be of good parts, and fit for variety of employments, yet somewhat of an inconstant nature. Likewise from the **TIMES**: so *semi-briefs* may speak a temper dull and phlegmatic; *minums*, grave and serious; *crotchets*, a prompt wit; *quavers*, vehemency of passion, and scolds use them. *Semi-brief-rest*, may denote one either stupid or fuller of thoughts than he can utter; *minum-rest*, one that deliberates; *crotchet-rest*, one in a passion. So that from the natural use of **MOOD**, **NOTE**, and **TIME**, we may collect **DISPOSITIONS**."

MILTON.

It is painful to observe the acrimony which the most eminent scholars have infused frequently in their controversial writings. The politeness of the present times has in some degree softened the malignity of the man, in the dignity of the author, but this is by no means an irrevocable law.

It is said not be honourable to literature to revive such controversies; and a work entitled "Querelles Litteraires," when it first appeared, excited loud murmurs. But it has its moral; like showing the drunkard to a youth that he may turn aside disgusted with ebriety. Must we suppose that men of letters are exempt from the human passions? Their sensibility, on the contrary, is more irritable than that of others. To observe the ridiculous attitudes in which great men appear, when they employ the style of the fish-market, may be one great means of restraining that ferocious pride often breaking out in the republic of letters. Johnson at least appears to have entertained the same opinion; for he thought proper to republish the low invective of *Dryden* against *Settle*: and since I have published my "Quarrels of Authors," it becomes me to say no more.

The celebrated controversy of *Salmasius* continued by *Morus* with *Milton*—the first the pleader of King Charles, the latter the advocate of the people—was of that magnitude, that all Europe took a part in the paper-war of these two great men. The answer of *Milton*, who perfectly massacred *Salmasius*, is now read but by the few. Whatever is addressed to the times, however great may be its merit, is doomed to perish with the times; yet on these pages the philosopher will not contemplate in vain.

It will form no uninteresting article to gather a few of the rhetorical *weeds*, for *flowers* we cannot well call them, with which they mutually presented each other. Their rancour was at least equal to their erudition, the two most learned antagonists of a learned age!

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* I have written the history of the *Mar-prelate* faction, in "Quarrels of Authors," which our historians appear not to have known. The materials were suppressed by government, and not preserved even in our national depositories.

† A curious secret history of the Earl of Leicester, by the Jesuit Parson.

according as their authors were disposed. *Peter Heylin* in the preface to his *Cosmography* mentions, that "the affairs of each town or war were better presented to the reader in the *Weekly News-books*." Hence we find some papers entitled News from Hull, Truths from York, Warranted Tidings from Ireland, &c. We find also "The Scots' Dove" opposed to "The Parliament Kite," or "The Secret Owl."—Keener animosities produced keener titles: "Heraclitus ridens" found an antagonist in "Democritus ridens," and "The Weekly Discoverer" was shortly met by "The Discoverer stript naked." "Mercurius Britannicus" was grappled by "Mercurius Mastix, faithfully lashing all Scouts, Mercuries, Posts, Spies, and others." Under all these names papers had appeared, but a Mercury was the prevailing title of these "News-Books," and the principles of the writer were generally shown by the additional epithet. We find an alarming number of these Mercuries, which, were the story not too long to tell, might excite some laughter; they present us with a very curious picture of those singular times.

Devoted to political purposes, they soon became a public nuisance by serving as receptacles of party malice, and echoing to the farthest ends of the kingdom the insolent voice of all factions. They set the minds of men more at variance, inflamed

their tempers to a greater fieroeness, and gave a keener edge to the sharpness of civil discord.

Such works will always find adventurers adapted to their scurrilous purposes, who neither want at times, either talents, or boldness, or wit, or argument. A vast crowd issued from the press, and are now to be found in a few private collections. They form a race of authors unknown to most readers of these times: the names of some of their chiefs however have just reached us, and in the minor chronicle of domestic literature I rank three notable heroes; Marchamont Needham, Sir John Birkenhead, and Sir Roger L'Estrange.

Marchamont Needham, the great patriarch of newspaper writers, was a man of versatile talents and more versatile politics; a bold adventurer, and most successful, because the most profligate of his tribe. We find an ample account of him in Anthony Wood. From college he came to London; was an usher in Merchant Taylors' school; then an under clerk in Gray's Inn; at length studied physic, and practised chemistry; and finally he was a captain, and in the words of honest Anthony, "siding with the rout and scum of the people, he made them weekly sport by railing at all that was noble, in his Intelligence, called Mercurius Britannicus, wherein his endeavours were

to sacrifice the fame of some lord, or any person of quality, and of the king himself, to the beast with many heads." He soon became popular, and was known under the name of Captain Needham of Gray's Inn; and whatever he now wrote was deemed oracular. But whether from a slight imprisonment for aspersing Charles I. or some pique with his own party; he requested an audience on his knees with the king, reconciled himself to his majesty, and showed himself a violent royalist in his "Mercurius Pragmaticus," and galled the presbyterians with his wit and quips. Some time after, when the popular party prevailed, he was still further enlightened, and was got over by President Bradshaw, as easily as by Charles I. Our Mercurial writer became once more a virulent presbyterian, and lashed the royalists outrageously in his "Mercurius Politicus;" at length on the return of Charles II. being now conscious, says our friend Anthony, that he might be in danger of the halter, once more he is said to have fled into Holland, waiting for an act of oblivion. For money given to an hungry courtier, Needham obtained his pardon under the great seal. He latterly practised as a physician among his party, but lived universally hated by the royalists, and now only committed harmless treasons with the College of

Physicians, on whom he poured all that gall and vinegar which the government had suppressed from flowing through its natural channel.

The royalists were not without their Needham in the prompt activity of Sir John Birkenhead. In buffoonery, keenness, and boldness, having been frequently imprisoned, he was not inferior, nor was he at times less an adventurer. His *Mercurius Aulicus* was devoted to the court, then at Oxford. But he was the fertile parent of numerous political pamphlets, which appear to abound in banter, wit, and satire. He had a promptness to seize on every temporary circumstance, and a facility in execution. His "Paul's Church Yard" is a bantering pamphlet, containing fictitious titles of books and acts of parliament, reflecting on the mad reformers of these times. One of his poems is entitled "*The Jolt*," being written on the Protector having fallen off his own coach-box: Cromwell had received a present from the German Count Oldenburgh, of six German horses, and attempted to drive them himself in Hyde Park, when this great political Phaeton met the accident, of which Sir John Birkenhead was not slow to comprehend the benefit, and hints how unfortunately for the country it turned out! Sir John was during the dominion of Cromwell an author by profession. After various imprisonments for his majesty's cause, says

the venerable historian of English literature, already quoted, "he lived by his wits, in helping young gentlemen out at dead lifts in making poems, songs, and epistles on and to their mistresses; as also in translating, and other petite employments." He lived however after the Restoration to become one of the masters of requests, with a salary of 3000*l.* a year. But he showed the baseness of his spirit, (says Anthony), by slighting those who had been his benefactors in his necessities.

Sir *Roger L'Estrange* among his rivals was esteemed as the most perfect model of political writing. The temper of the man was factious, and the compositions of the author seem to us coarse, yet I suspect they contain much idiomatic expression. His *Æsop's Fables* are a curious specimen of familiar style. Queen Mary showed a due contempt of him after the Revolution, by this anagram :

Roger L'Estrange,
Lye strange Roger!

Such were the three patriarchs of newspapers. De Saint Foix, in his curious *Essais historiques sur Paris*, gives the origin of newspapers to France. Renaudot, a physician at Paris, to amuse his patients was a great collector of news; and he found

by these means that he was more sought after than his more learned brethren. But as the seasons were not always sickly, and he had many hours not occupied by his patients, he reflected, after several years of assiduity given up to this singular employment, that he might turn it to a better account, by giving every week to his patients, who in this case were the public at large, some fugitive sheets which should contain the news of various countries. He obtained a privilege for this purpose in 1632.

At the Restoration the proceedings of parliament were interdicted to be published, unless by authority; and the first daily paper after the Revolution took the popular title of "The Orange Intelligencer."

In the reign of Queen *Anne*, there was but one daily paper: the others were weekly. Some attempted to introduce literary subjects, and others topics of a more general speculation. Sir *Richard Steele* formed the plan of his *Tatler*. He designed it to embrace the three provinces, of manners and morals, of literature, and of politics. The public were to be conducted insensibly into so different a track from that to which they had been hitherto accustomed. Hence politics were admitted into his paper. But it remained for the chaster genius of *Addison* to banish this painful topic from his

elegant pages. The writer in polite letters felt himself degraded by sinking into the diurnal narrator of political events, which so frequently originate in rumours and party fiction. From this time, newspapers and periodical literature became distinct works—at present, there seems to be an attempt to revive this union; it is a retrograde step for the independent dignity of literature.

TRIALS AND PROOFS OF GUILT IN SUPERSTITIOUS AGES.

THE strange trials to which those suspected of guilt were put in the middle ages, conducted with many devout ceremonies, by the ministers of religion, were pronounced to be the *judgments of God!* The ordeal consisted of various kinds: walking blindfold amidst burning ploughshares; passing through fires; holding in the hand a red hot bar; and plunging the arm into boiling water: the popular affirmation,—“I will put my hand in the fire to confirm this,” appears to be derived from this solemn custom of our rude ancestors. Challenging the accuser to single combat, when frequently the stoutest champion was allowed to supply their place; swallowing a morsel of con-

secrated bread; sinking or swimming in a river for witchcraft; or weighing a witch; stretching out the arms before the cross, till the champion soonest wearied dropped his arms, and lost his estate, which was decided by this very short chancery suit, called the *judicium crucis*. The bishop of Paris and the abbot of St. Denis disputed about the patronage of a monastery: Pepin the Short, not being able to decide on their confused claims, decreed one of these judgments of God, that of the cross. The bishop and abbot each chose a man, and both the men appeared in the chapel, where they stretched out their arms in the form of a cross. The spectators, more devout than the mob of the present day, but still the mob, were piously attentive, but *betted* however now for one man, now for the other, and critically watched the slightest motion of the arms. The bishop's man was first tired:—he let his arms fall, and ruined his patron's cause for ever! Though sometimes these trials might be eluded by the artifice of the priest, numerous were the innocent victims who unquestionably suffered in these superstitious practices.

From the tenth to the twelfth century they were very common. Hildebert, bishop of Mans, being accused of high treason by our William Rufus, was preparing to undergo one of these trials; when Ives, bishop of Chartres, convinced him that they were against the canons of the constitutions of the

church, and adds, that in this manner *Innocentiam defendere, est innocentiam perdere.*

An abbot of St. Aubin of Angers in 1066, having refused to present a horse to the Viscount of Tours, which the viscount claimed in right of his lordship, whenever an abbot first took possession of that abbey; the ecclesiastic offered to justify himself by the trial of the ordeal, or by duel, for which he proposed to furnish a man. The viscount at first agreed to the duel; but, reflecting that these combats, though sanctioned by the church, depended wholly on the skill or vigour of the adversary, and could therefore afford no substantial proof of the equity of his claim, he proposed to compromise the matter in a manner which strongly characterizes the times: he waived his claim, on condition that the Abbot should not forget to mention in his prayers, himself, his wife, and his brothers! As the *orisons* appeared to the abbot, in comparison with the *horse*, of little or no value, he accepted the proposal.

In the tenth century the right of representation was not fixed: it was a question, whether the sons of a son ought to be reckoned among the children of the family; and succeed equally with their uncles, if their fathers happened to die while their grandfathers survived. This point was decided by one of these combats. The champion in behalf of the right of children to represent

their deceased father proved victorious. It was then established by a perpetual decree that they should henceforward share in the inheritance, together with their uncles. In the eleventh century the same mode was practised to decide respecting two rival *Liturgies*! A pair of knights, clad in complete armour, were the critics to decide which was the authentic and true Liturgy.

If two neighbours, say the capitularies of Dago- bert, dispute respecting the boundaries of their possessions, let a piece of turf of the contested land be dug up by the judge, and brought by him into the court, and the two parties shall touch it with the points of their swords, calling on God as a witness of their claims;—after this let them *combat*, and let victory decide on their rights!

In Germany, a solemn circumstance was practised in these judicial combats. In the midst of the lists, they placed a *bier*.—By its side stood the accuser and the accused; one at the head and the other at the foot of the bier, and leaned there for some time in profound silence, before they began the combat.

Mr. Ellis, in his elegant preface to Way's *Fabliaux*, shows how faithfully the manners of the age are painted in these ancient tales, by observing the judicial combat introduced by a writer of the fourteenth century, who in his poem represents Pilate as challenging Jesus Christ to

single combat, and another who describes the person who pierced the side of Christ as *a knight who jousted with Jesus*.

Judicial combat appears to have been practised by the Jews. Whenever the rabbins had to decide on a dispute about property between two parties, neither of which could produce evidence to substantiate his claim, they terminated it by single combat. The rabbins were impressed by a notion that consciousness of right would give additional confidence and strength to the rightful possessor. This appears in the recent sermon of a rabbin. It may, however, be more philosophical to observe that such judicial combats were more frequently favourable to the criminal than to the innocent, because the bold wicked man is usually more ferocious and hardy than he whom he singles out as his victim, and who only wishes to preserve his own quiet enjoyments:—in this case the assailant is the more terrible combatant.

In these times those who were accused of robbery were put to trial by a piece of barley-bread, on which the mass had been said; and if they could not swallow it they were declared guilty. This mode of trial was improved by adding to the *bread* a slice of *cheese*; and such were their credulity and firm dependence on Heaven in these ridiculous trials, that they were very particular in this holy *bread* and *cheese* called the *corsned*. The

bread was to be of unleavened barley, and the cheese made of ewe's milk in the month of May.

Du Cange observed, that the expression—" *May this piece of bread choke me !*" comes from this custom. The anecdote of Earl Godwin's death by swallowing a piece of bread, in making this asseveration, is recorded in our history. If it be true, it was a singular misfortune.

Amongst the proofs of guilt in superstitious ages was that of the *bleeding of a corpse*. If a person was murdered, it was believed that at the touch or approach of the murderer the blood gushed out of the body in various parts. By the side of the bier, if the slightest change was observable in the eyes, the mouth, feet, or hands of the corpse, the murderer was conjectured to be present, and many innocent spectators must have suffered death; "for when a body is full of blood, warmed by a sudden external heat and a putrefaction coming on, some of the blood-vessels will burst, as they will all in time." This practice was once allowed in England, and is still looked on in some of the uncivilized parts of these kingdoms as a detection of the criminal. It forms a rich picture in the imagination of our old writers; and their histories and ballads are laboured into pathos by dwelling on this phenomenon.

Robertson observes that all these absurd institutions were cherished from the superstitions of the

age believing the legendary histories of those saints, who crowd and disgrace the Roman calendar. These fabulous miracles had been declared authentic by the bulls of the popes and the decrees of councils; they were greedily swallowed by the populace; and whoever believed that the Supreme Being had interposed miraculously on those trivial occasions mentioned in legends, could not but expect his intervention in matters of greater importance when solemnly referred to his decision. Besides this ingenious remark, the fact is, that these customs were a substitute for written laws which that barbarous period had not; and as no society can exist without *laws*, the ignorance of the people had recourse to these *customs*, which, bad and absurd as they were, served to close controversies which otherwise might have given birth to more destructive practices. Ordeals are in truth the rude laws of a barbarous people who have not yet obtained a written code, and not advanced enough in civilization to enter into the refined inquiries, the subtile distinctions and elaborate investigations, which a court of law demands.

May we suppose that these ordeals owe their origin to that one of Moses, called the "Waters of Jealousy?" The Greeks likewise had ordeals, for in the *Antigonus* of Sophocles, the soldiers offer to prove their innocence by handling red-hot iron, and walking between fires. One cannot but

smile at the whimsical ordeals of the Siamese. Among other practices to discover the justice of a cause, civil or criminal, they are particularly attached to using certain consecrated purgative pills, which they make the contending parties swallow. He who *retains* them longest gains his cause! The practice of giving Indians a consecrated grain of rice to swallow is known to discover the thief, in any company, by the contortions and dismay evident on the countenance of the real thief.

But to return to the middle-ages.—They were acquainted in those times with *secrets* to pass unhurt these singular trials. Voltaire mentions one for undergoing the ordeal of boiling-water. Our late travellers in the east have confirmed this statement. The Mevleheh dervises can hold red-hot iron between their teeth. Such artifices have been often publicly exhibited at Paris and London. Mr. Sharon Turner observes on the ordeals of the Anglo-Saxons, that the hand was not to be immediately inspected, and was left to the chance of a good constitution to be so far healed during three days (the time they required it to be bound up and sealed, before it was examined) as to discover those appearances when inspected, which were allowed to be satisfactory. There was likewise much preparatory training suggested by the more experienced; besides, the accused had an opportunity of *going alone into the church*, and making

terms with the priest. The few *spectators* were always *distant*; and cold iron, &c. might be substituted, and the fire diminished at the moment, &c.

Doubtless they possessed these secrets and medicaments, which they had at hand, to pass through these trials in perfect security. Camerarius, in his "*Horæ Subsecivæ*," gives an anecdote of these times which may serve to show their readiness. A rivalry existed between the Austin-friars and the Jesuits. The father-general of the Austin-friars was dining with the Jesuits; and when the table was removed, he entered into a formal discourse of the superiority of the monastic order, and charged the Jesuits in unqualified terms, with assuming the title of "*fratres*," while they held not the three vows, which other monks were obliged to consider as sacred and binding. The general of the Austin-friars was very eloquent and very authoritative:—and the superior of the Jesuits was very unlearned, but not half a fool.

He did not care to enter the list of controversy with the Austin-friar, but arrested his triumph by asking him if he would see one of his friars, who pretended to be nothing more than a Jesuit, and one of the Austin-friars who religiously performed the aforesaid three vows, show instantly which of them would be the readier to obey his superiors? The Austin-friar consented. The Jesuit then turning to one of his brothers, the holy friar Mark,

who was waiting on them, said, " Brother Mark, our companions are cold. I command you, in virtue of the holy obedience you have sworn to me, to bring here instantly out of the kitchen-fire, and in your hands, some burning coals, that they may warm themselves over your hands." Father Mark instantly obeys, and to the astonishment of the Austin-friars, brought in his hand a supply of red burning coals, and held them to whoever chose to warm himself; and at the command of his superior returned them to the kitchen hearth. The general of the Austin-friars, with the rest of his brotherhood, stood amazed; he looked wistfully on one of his monks, as if he wished to command him to do the like. But the Austin monk, who perfectly understood him, and saw this was not a time to hesitate, observed,—“ Reverend father, forbear, and do not command me to tempt God! I am ready to fetch you fire in a chafing-dish, but not in my bare hands.” The triumph of the Jesuits was complete; and it is not necessary to add, that the *miracle* was noised about, and that the Austin-friars could never account for it, notwithstanding their strict performance of the three vows!

END OF VOL. I.

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