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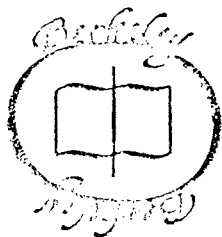
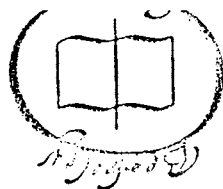
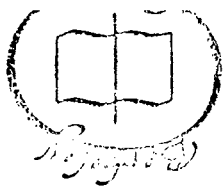


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Isaac Disraeli

**CURIOSITIES**

OF

**L I T E R A T U R E .**

*SEVENTH EDITION, CORRECTED.*

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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**LONDON:**  
**JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.**

**1823.**

**LOAN STACK**

**LONDON :**  
**PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFELARS.**

PN43

D5

1823

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# CURIOSITIES

OF

## Literature.

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### A LITERARY WIFE.

Marriage is such a rabble rout,  
That those that are out, would fain get in ;  
And those that are in, would fain get out.

CHAUCER.

HAVING examined some *literary blunders*, we will now proceed to the subject of a *literary wife*, which may happen to prove one. A learned lady is to the taste of few. It is however matter of surprise, that several literary men should have felt such a want of taste in respect to "their soul's far dearer part," as Hector calls his Andromache. The wives of many men of letters have been dissolute, ill-humoured, slatternly, and have run into all the frivolities of the age. The

wife of the learned Budæus was of a different character.

How delightful is it when the mind of the female is so happily disposed, and so richly cultivated, as to participate in the literary avocations of her husband! It is then truly that the intercourse of the sexes becomes the most refined pleasure. What delight, for instance, must the great Budæus have tasted, even in those works which must have been for others a most dreadful labour! His wife left him nothing to desire. The frequent companion of his studies, she brought him the books he required to his desk; she compared passages, and transcribed quotations; the same genius, the same inclinations, and the same ardour for literature, eminently appeared in those two fortunate persons. Far from withdrawing her husband from his studies, she was sedulous to animate him when he languished. Ever at his side and ever assiduous; ever with some useful book in her hand, she acknowledged herself to be a most happy woman. Yet she did not neglect the education of eleven children. She and Budæus shared in the mutual cares they owed their progeny. Budæus was not insensible of his singular felicity. In one of his letters, he represents himself as married to two *ladies*; one of whom gave him boys and girls,

the other was Philosophy, who produced books. He says, that in his twelve first years, Philosophy had been less fruitful than Marriage; he had produced less books than children; he had laboured more corporally than intellectually; but he hoped to make more books than children. "The soul (says he) will be productive in its turn; it will rise on the ruins of the body; a prolific virtue is not given at the same time to the bodily organs and the pen."

The lady of Evelyn designed herself the frontispiece to his translation of Lucretius. She felt the same passion in her own breast as animated her husband's, who has written with such various ingenuity. Of Baron Haller it is recorded that he inspired his wife and family with a taste for his different pursuits. They were usually employed in assisting his literary occupations; they transcribed manuscripts, consulted authors, gathered plants, and designed and coloured under his eye. What a delightful family picture has the younger Pliny given posterity in his letters!—See Melmoth's translation, Book IV. Letter XIX. Of Calphurnia, his wife, he says, "Her affection to me has given her a turn to books; and my compositions, which she takes a pleasure in reading, and even getting by heart, are continually in her hands. How full

of tender solicitude is she when I am entering upon any cause! How kindly does she rejoice with me when it is over! While I am pleading, she places persons to inform her from time to time how I am heard, what applauses I receive, and what success attends the cause. When at any time I recite my works, she conceals herself behind some curtain, and with secret rapture enjoys my praises. She sings my verses to her lyre, with no other master but love, the best instructor, for her guide. Her passion will increase with our days, for it is not my youth nor my person, which time gradually impairs, but my reputation and my glory, of which she is enamoured."

On the subject of a literary wife, I must introduce to the acquaintance of the reader, Margaret, duchess of Newcastle. She is known at least by her name, as a voluminous writer; for she extended her literary productions to the number of twelve folio volumes.

Her labours have been ridiculed by some wits; but had her studies been regulated, she would have displayed no ordinary genius. The *Connoisseur* has quoted her poems, and the verses have been imitated by Milton.

The duke, her husband, was also an author; his book on horsemanship still preserves his name.

He has likewise written comedies, of which Langbaine, in his account of our poets, speaks well; and his contemporaries have not been penurious in their eulogiums. It is true he was a duke. Shadwell says of him, "That he was the greatest master of wit, the most exact observer of mankind, and the most accurate judge of humour that ever he knew." The life of the duke is written (to employ the language of Langbaine) "by the hand of his incomparable duchess." It was published in his lifetime. This curious piece of biography is a folio of 197 pages, and is entitled "The Life of the Thrice Noble, High, and Puiſant Prince, William Cavendish." His titles then follow:—"Written by the Thrice Noble, Illuſtrious, and Excellent Princess, Margaret Duchess of Newcastle, his Wife. London 1667." This Life is dedicated to Charles the Second; and there is also prefixed a copious epistle to her husband the duke.

In this epistle the character of our Literary Wife is described with all its peculiarities; and no apology will be required for extracting what relates to our noble authoress. The reader will be amused while he forms a more correct idea of a literary lady with whose name he must be acquainted.

She writes:—"Certainly, my lord, you have had as many enemies and as many friends as ever any one particular person had; nor do I so much wonder at it, since I, a woman, cannot be exempt from the malice and aspersions of spiteful tongues, which they cast upon my poor writings, some denying me to be the true authoress of them; for your grace remembers well, that those books I put out first to the judgment of this censorious age were accounted not to be written by a woman, but that somebody else had writ and published them in my name; by which your lordship was moved to prefix an epistle before one of them in my vindication, wherein you assure the world, upon your honour, that what was written and printed in my name was my own; and I have also made known that your lordship was my only tutor, in declaring to me what you had found and observed by your own experience; for I being young when your lordship married me could not have much knowledge of the world; but it pleased God to command his servant Nature to endue me with a poetical and philosophical genius, even from my birth; for I did write some books in that kind before I was twelve years of age, which for want of good method and order I would never divulge. But though the world would not believe

that those conceptions and fancies which I writ were my own, but transcended my capacity, yet they found fault, that they were defective for want of learning, and on the other side, they said I had pluckt feathers out of the universities; which was a very preposterous judgment. Truly, my lord, I confess that for want of scholarship, I could not express myself so well as otherwise I might have done in those philosophical writings I published first; but after I was returned with your lordship into my native country, and led a retired country life, I applied myself to the reading of philosophical authors, on purpose to learn those names and words of art that are used in schools; which at first were so hard to me, that I could not understand them, but was fain to guess at the sense of them by the whole context, and so writ them down, as I found them in those authors; at which my readers did wonder, and thought it impossible that a woman could have so much learning and understanding in terms of art and scholastical expressions; so that I and my books are like the old apologue mentioned in *Æsop*, of a father and his son who rid on an ass." Here follows a long narrative of this fable, which she applies to herself in these words—"The old man seeing he could not please mankind in any



manner, and having received so many blemishes and aspersions for the sake of his ass, was at last resolved to drown him when he came to the next bridge. But I am not so passionate to burn my writings for the various humours of mankind, and for their finding fault; since there is nothing in this world, be it the noblest and most commendable action whatsoever, that shall escape blameless. As for my being the true and only authoress of them your lordship knows best; and my attending servants are witness that I have had none but my own thoughts, fancies, and speculations, to assist me; and as soon as I set them down I send them to those that are to transcribe them, and fit them for the press; whereof, since there have been several, and amongst them such as only could write a good hand, but neither understood orthography; nor had any learning (I being then in banishment, with your lordship, and not able to maintain learned secretaries) which hath been a great disadvantage to my poor works, and the cause that they have been printed so false and so full of errors; for besides that I want also skill in scholarship and true writing, I did many times not peruse the copies that were transcribed, lest they should disturb my following conceptions; by which neglect, as I said, many errors are

slipt into my works, which yet I hope learned and impartial readers will soon rectify, and look more upon the sense than carp at words. I have been a student even from my childhood; and since I have been your lordship's wife I have lived for the most part a strict and retired life, as is best known to your lordship; and therefore my censurers cannot know much of me, since they have little or no acquaintance with me. 'Tis true I have been a traveller both before and after I was married to your lordship, and sometimes show myself at your lordship's command in public places or assemblies, but yet I converse with few. Indeed, my lord, I matter not the censures of this age, but am rather proud of them; for it shows that my actions are more than ordinary, and, according to the old proverb, It is better to be envied than pitied; for I know well that it is merely out of spite and malice, whereof this present age is so full that none can escape them, and they 'll make no doubt to stain even your lordship's loyal, noble, and heroic actions, as well as they do mine; though yours have been of war and fighting, mine of contemplating and writing: yours were performed publicly in the field, mine privately in my closet; yours had many thousand eye-witnesses; mine none but my waiting-maids. But the great God, that hitherto

bless'd both your grace and me, will, I question  
not, preserve both our fames to after-ages.

Your grace's honest wife,  
and humble servant,

M. NEWCASTLE."

The last portion of this life, which consists of the observations and good things which she had gathered from the conversations of her husband, forms an excellent *Ana*; and shows that when Lord Orford, in his "Catalogue of Noble Authors," says, that "this stately poetic couple was a picture of foolish nobility," he writes, as he does too often, with extreme levity. But we must now attend to the reverse of our medal.

Many chagrins may corrode the nuptial state of literary men. Females who, prompted by vanity, but not by taste, unite themselves to scholars, must ever complain of neglect. The inexhaustible occupations of a library will only present to such a most dreary solitude. Such a lady declared of her learned husband, that she was more jealous of his books than his mistresses. It was probably while Glover was composing his "*Leonidas*," that his lady avenged herself for this *Homeric* inattention to her, and took her flight with a lover. It was peculiar to the learned Dacier to be united to a woman, his equal in eru-

dition and his superior in taste. When she wrote in the album of a German traveller a verse from Sophocles as an apology for her unwillingness to place herself among his learned friends, that "Silence is the female's ornament," it was a remarkable trait of her modesty. The learned Pasquier was coupled to a female of a different character, since he tells us in one of his Epigrams that to manage the vociferations of his lady, he was compelled himself to become a vociferator.— "Unfortunate wretch that I am, I who am a lover of universal peace! But to have peace I am obliged ever to be at war."

Sir Thomas More was united to a woman of the harshest temper and the most sordid manners. To soften the moroseness of her disposition, "he persuaded her to play on the lute, viol, and other instruments, every day." Whether it was that she had no ear for music, she herself never became harmonious as the instrument she touched. All these ladies may be considered as rather too alert in thought, and too spirited in action; but a tame cuckoo bird who is always repeating the same tone, must be very fatiguing. The lady of Samuel Clarke, the great compiler of books in 1680, whose name was anagrammatised to "*suck all cream*," alluding to his indefatigable labours in sucking all the cream of every other author,

without having any cream himself, is described by her husband as having the most sublime conceptions of his illustrious compilations. This appears by her behaviour. He says, "that she never rose from table without making him a curtesy, nor drank to him without bowing, and that his word was a law to her."

I was much surprised in looking over a correspondence of the times, that in 1590 the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry writing to the Earl of Shrewsbury on the subject of his living separate from his countess, uses as one of his arguments for their union the following curious one, which surely shows the gross and cynical feeling which the fair sex excited even among the higher classes of society. The language of this good bishop is neither that of truth, we hope, nor certainly that of religion.

"But some will saye in your Lordship's behalfe that the Countesse is a sharpe and bitter shrewe, and therefore lieke enough to shorten your lief, if shée should kepe yow company. Indeede, my good Lord, I have heard some say so; but if shrewdnesse or sharpnesse may be a juste cause of separation between a man and wief, I thinck fewe men in Englande would keepe their wives longe; for it is a common jeste, yet trewe in some sense, that there is but one shrewe in all

the worlde, and everee man hath her: and so everee man must be ridd of his wief that wolde be ridd of a shrewe." It is wonderful this good bishop did not use another argument as cogent, and which would in those times be allowed as something; the name of his lordship, *Shrewsbury*, would have afforded a consolatory *pun*!

The entertaining Marville says that the generality of ladies married to literary men are so vain of the abilities and merit of their husbands, that they are frequently unsufferable.

The wife of Barclay, author of "The Argenis," considered herself as the wife of a demigod. This appeared glaringly after his death: for Cardinal Barberini having erected a monument to the memory of his tutor, next to the tomb of Barclay, Mrs. Barclay was so irritated at this that she demolished his monument, brought home his bust, and declared that the ashes of so great a genius as her husband should never be placed beside so villanous a pedagogue.

Salmasius's wife was a termagant; and Christina said she admired his patience more than his erudition, married to such a shrew. Mrs. Salmasius indeed considered herself as the queen of science, because her husband was acknowledged as sovereign among the critics. She boasted she had for her husband the most learned of all the

nobles, and the most noble of all the learned. Our good lady always joined the learned conferences which he held in his study. She spoke loud, and decided with a tone of majesty. Salmasius was mild in conversation, but the reverse in his writings, for our proud Xantippe considered him as acting beneath himself if he did not magisterially call every one names!

The wife of Rohault, when her husband gave lectures on the philosophy of Descartes, used to seat herself on these days at the door, and refused admittance to every one shabbily dressed, or who did not discover a genteel air. So convinced was she that, to be worthy of hearing the lectures of her husband, it was proper to appear fashionable. In vain our good lecturer exhausted himself in telling her that fortune does not always give fine clothes to philosophers.

The ladies of Albert Durer and Berghem were both shrews. The wife of Durer compelled that great genius to the hourly drudgery of his profession, merely to gratify her own sordid passion: in despair, Albert ran away from his Tisiphone; she wheedled him back, and not long afterwards this great artist fell a victim to her furious disposition. Berghem's wife would never allow that excellent artist to quit his occupations; and she contrived an odd expedient to detect his indolence.

The artist worked in a room above her ; ever and anon she roused him by thumping a long stick against the ceiling, while the obedient Berghem answered by stamping his foot, to satisfy Mrs. Berghem that he was not napping!

Ælian had an aversion to the marriage state. Sigonius, a learned and well known scholar, would never marry, and alleged no inelegant reason; that " Minerva and Venus could not live together."

Matrimony has been considered by some writers as a condition not so well suited to the circumstances of philosophers and men of learning. There is a little tract which professes to investigate the subject. It has for title, *De Matrimonio Literati, an cœlibem esse, an verò nubere conveniat*, i. e. of the Marriage of a Man of Letters, with an inquiry whether it is most proper for him to continue a Bachelor, or to marry.

" The author alleges the great merit of some women ; particularly that of Gonzaga the consort of Montefeltro, duke of Urbino ; a lady of such distinguished accomplishments, that Peter Bembus said, none but a stupid man would not prefer one of her conversations to all the formal meetings and disputations of the philosophers.

" The ladies perhaps will be surprised to find that it is a question among the Learned, *Whether*



*they ought to marry?* and will think it an unaccountable property of learning that it should lay the professors of it under an obligation to disregard the sex. But whatever opinion these gentlemen may have of that amiable part of the species, it is very questionable whether, in return for this want of complaisance in them, the generality of ladies would not prefer the beau and the man of fashion to the man of sense and learning. However, if the latter be considered as valuable in the eyes of any of them, let there be Gonzagas, and I dare pronounce that this question will be soon determined in *their favour*, and they will find converts enough to their charms."

The sentiments of Sir Thomas Browne, on the consequences of marriage, are very curious, in the second part of his *Religio Medici*, Sect. 9. When he wrote that work, he said "I was never yet once, and commend their resolutions, who never marry twice."—He calls woman "the rib, and crooked piece of man." He adds, "I could be content that we might procreate like trees, without conjunction, or that there were any way to procreate the world without this trivial and vulgar way." He means the union of sexes, which he declares "is the foolishness a wise man commits in all his life, nor is there any thing that will more deject his cooled imagination, when he

shall consider what an odd and unworthy piece of folly he hath committed." He afterwards declares he is not averse to that sweet sex, but naturally amorous of all that is beautiful; "I could look a whole day with delight upon a handsome picture, though it be but of a horse." He afterwards disserts very profoundly on the music there is in beauty, "and the silent note which Cupid strikes is far sweeter than the sound of an instrument." Such were his sentiments when youthful, and residing at Leyden: Dutch philosophy had at first chilled his passion; it is probable that passion afterwards inflamed his philosophy—for he married and had four daughters!

Dr. Cocchi, a modern Italian writer, but apparently a cynic as old as Diogenes, has taken the pains of composing a treatise on the present subject—enough to terrify the boldest *Bachelor* of Arts! He has conjured up every chimera against the marriage of a literary man. He seems however to have drawn his disgusting portrait from his own country; and the chaste beauty of Britain only looks the more lovely beside this Florentine wife.

I shall not retain the cynicism which has coloured such revolting features. When at length the doctor finds a woman as all women ought to be, he opens

a new spring of misfortunes which must attend her husband. He dreads one of the probable consequences of matrimony,—progeny, in which we must maintain the children we beget! He thinks the father gains nothing in his old age from the tender offices administered by his own children: he asserts these are much better performed by menials and strangers! The more children he has, the less he can afford to have servants! The maintenance of his children will greatly diminish his property! Another alarming object in marriage is that, by affinity, you become connected with the relations of the wife. The envious and ill-bred insinuations of the mother, the family quarrels, their poverty or their pride, all disturb the unhappy sage who falls into the trap of connubial felicity! But if a sage has resolved to marry, he impresses on him the prudential principle of increasing his fortune by it, and to remember his “additional expenses!” Dr. Cocchi seems to have thought that a human being is only to live for himself; he had neither a heart to feel, a head to conceive, nor a pen that could have written one harmonious period, or one beautiful image! Bayle, in his article *Raphelengius*, note B, gives a singular specimen of logical subtlety, in “a reflection on the conse-

quence of marriage." This learned man was imagined to have died of grief for having lost his wife, and passed three years in protracted despair. What therefore must we think of an unhappy marriage, since a happy one is exposed to such evils? He then shows that an unhappy marriage is attended by beneficial consequences to the survivor. In this dilemma, in the one case, the husband lives afraid his wife will die, in the other that she will not! If you love her, you will always be afraid of losing her; if you do not love her, you will always be afraid of not losing her. Our satirical *Celibitaire* is gored by the horns of the dilemma he has conjured up.

James Petiver, a famous botanist, then a bachelor, the friend of Sir Hans Sloane, in an album which I have seen, signs his name, with this designation:

"From the Goat tavern in the Strand, London, Nov. 27. In the 34th year of my *freedom*. A. D. 1697."

## DEDICATIONS.

SOME authors excelled in this species of literary artifice. The Italian Doni dedicated each of his letters, in a book called *La Libreria*, to persons whose names began with the first letter of the epistle; and dedicated the whole collection in another epistle; so that the book, which only consisted of forty-five pages, was dedicated to above twenty-persons. This is carrying literary mendacity pretty high. Politi, the editor of the *Martyrologium Romanum*, published at Rome in 1751, has improved on the idea of Doni; for to the 365 days of the year of this Martyrology he has prefixed to each an epistle dedicatory. It is fortunate to have a large circle of acquaintance, though not worthy of being saints. Galland, the translator of the Arabian Nights, prefixed a dedication to each tale which he gave; had he finished the "one thousand and one," he would have surpassed even the Martyrologist.

Mademoiselle Scudery tells a remarkable expedient of an ingenious trader in this line—One Rangouze made a collection of letters, which he printed without numbering them. By this means the book-binder put that letter which the author ordered him first; so that all the persons to whom he presented this book, seeing their names at the

head, considered themselves under a particular obligation. There was likewise an Italian physician, who having wrote on Hippocrates's Aphorisms, dedicated each book of his Commentaries to one of his friends, and the index to another!

More than one of our own authors have dedications in the same spirit. It was an expedient to procure dedicatory fees; for publishing books by subscription was an art then undiscovered. One prefixed a different dedication to a certain number of printed copies, and addressed them to every great man he knew, who he thought relished a morsel of flattery, and would pay handsomely for a coarse luxury. Sir Balthazar Gerbier, in his "Counsel to Builders," has made up half the work with forty-two Dedications, which he excuses by the example of Antonio Perez; yet in these dedications he scatters a heap of curious things, for he was a very universal genius. Perez, once secretary of state to Philip II. of Spain, dedicates his "Obras," first to "Nuestro sanctissimo Padre," and "Al Sacro Collegio," then follows one to "Henry IV." and then one still more embracing, "A Todos."—Fuller, in his "Church History," has with admirable contrivance introduced twelve title-pages, besides the general one, and as many particular dedications, and no less than fifty or sixty of those by inscriptions which

are addressed to his benefactors; a circumstance which Heylin in his severity did not overlook; for "making his work bigger by forty sheets at the least; and he was so ambitious of the number of his patrons that having but four leaves at the end of his History, he discovers a particular benefactress to inscribe them to!" This unlucky lady, the patroness of four leaves, Heylin compares to Roscius Regulus, who accepted the consular dignity for that part of the day on which Cecina by a decree of the senate was degraded from it, which occasioned Regulus to be ridiculed by the people all his life after, as the consul of half a day.

The price for the dedication of a play was at length fixed, from five to ten guineas from the Revolution to the time of George I., when it rose to twenty, but sometimes a bargain was to be struck when the author and the play were alike indifferent. Sometimes the party haggled about the price, or the statue while stepping into his niche could turn round on the author to assist his invention. A patron of Peter Motteux dissatisfied with Peter's colder temperament, actually composed the superlative dedication to himself, and completed the misery of the apparent author by subscribing it with his name. This circumstance was so notorious at the time, that it occasioned a satirical dialogue between Motteux and his patron

Heveningham. The patron, in his zeal to omit no possible distinction that might attach to him, had given one circumstance which no one but himself could have known.

## PATRON.

I must confess I was to blame  
That one particular to name ;  
The rest could never have been known,  
*I made the style so like thy own.*

## POET.

I beg your pardon, Sir, for that !

## PATRON.

Why d——e what would you be at ?  
*I writ below myself, you sot !*  
Avoiding figures, tropes, what not ;  
For fear I should my fancy raise  
*Above the level of thy plays !*

Warton notices the common practice, about the reign of Elizabeth, of our authors dedicating a work at once to a number of the nobility. Chapman's Translation of Homer has sixteen sonnets addressed to lords and ladies. Henry Lock, in a collection of two hundred religious sonnets, mingles with such heavenly works the terrestrial composition of a number of sonnets to his noble



patrons; and not to multiply more instances, our great poet Spenser, in compliance with this disgraceful custom, or rather in obedience to the established tyranny of patronage, has prefixed to the Fairy Queen fifteen of these adulatory pieces, which, in every respect, are the meanest of his compositions. At this period all men, as well as writers, looked up to peers, as on beings on whose smiles or frowns all sublunary good and evil depended. At a much later period, Elkanah Settle sent copies round to the chief party, for he wrote for both parties, accompanied by addresses, to extort pecuniary presents in return. He had latterly one standard *Elegy*, and one *Epithalamium*, printed off with blanks, which by ingeniously filling up with the printed names of any great person who died or was married, no one who was going out of life or was entering into it could pass scotfree.

One of the most singular anecdotes respecting DEDICATIONS in English bibliography, is that of the Polyglot bible of Dr. Castell. Cromwell, much to his honour, patronised that great labour, and allowed the paper to be imported free of all duties, both of excise and custom. It was published under the protectorate, but many copies had not been disposed of ere Charles II. ascended the throne. Dr. Castell had dedicated the work

gratefully to Oliver, by mentioning him with peculiar respect in the preface, but he wavered with Richard Cromwell. At the Restoration, he cancelled the two last leaves, and supplied their places with three others, which softened down the republican strains, and blotted Oliver's name out of the book of life! The differences in what are now called the *republican* and the *loyal* copies have amused the curious collectors; and the former being very scarce are most sought after. I have seen the republican. In the *loyal* copies the patrons of the work are mentioned, but their *titles* are essentially changed; *Serenissimus*, *Illustrissimus*, and *Honoratissimus*, were epithets that dared not show themselves under the *levelling* influence of the great fanatic republican.

It is a curious literary folly, not of an individual, but of the Spanish nation, who, when the laws of Castile were reduced into a code under the reign of Alfonso X. surnamed the Wise, divided the work into *seven volumes*; that they might be dedicated to the *seven letters* which formed the name of his majesty!

Never was a gigantic baby of adulation so crammed with the soft pap of *Dedications* as Cardinal Richelieu. French flattery even exceeded itself.—Among the vast number of very extraordinary dedications to this man, in which the di-

vinity itself is disrobed of its attributes to bestow them on this miserable creature of vanity, I suspect that even the following one is not the most blasphemous he received. "Who has seen your face without being seized by those softened terrors which made the prophets shudder when God showed the beams of his glory? But as he whom they dared not to approach in the burning bush, and in the noise of thunders, appeared to them sometimes in the freshness of the zephyrs, so the softness of your august countenance dissipates at the same time, and changes into dew, the small vapours which cover its majesty." One of these herd of dedicators, after the death of Richelieu, suppressed in a second edition his hyperbolic panegyric, and as a punishment he inflicted on himself, dedicated the work to Jesus Christ!

The same taste characterises our own dedications in the reigns of Charles II. and James II. The great Dryden has carried it to an excessive height; and nothing is more usual than to compare the *patron* with the *Divinity*—and at times a fair inference may be drawn that the former was more in the author's mind than God himself! A Welsh bishop made an *apology* to James I. for *preferring* the Deity — to his Majesty! Burke has admirably observed on Dryden's extravagant dedications, that they were the vices of the time

more than of the man; they were loaded with flattery, and no disgrace was annexed to such an exercise of men's talents; the contest being who should go farthest in the most graceful way, and with the best turns of expression.

An ingenious dedication was contrived by Sir Simon Degge, who dedicated "the Parson's Counsellor" to Woods, Bishop of Lichfield, with this intention. Degge highly complimented the Bishop on having most nobly restored the church, which had been demolished in the civil wars, and was rebuilt but left unfinished by Bishop Hacket. At the time he wrote the dedication, Woods had not turned a single stone, and it is said, that much against his will he did something, from having been so publickly reminded of it by this ironical dedication.

## PHILOSOPHICAL DESCRIPTIVE POEMS.

THE BOTANIC GARDEN once appeared to open a new route through the trodden groves of Parnassus. The poet, with a prodigality of IMAGINATION, united all the minute accuracy of SCIENCE. It is a highly-repolished labour, and was in the

mind and in the hand of its author for twenty years before its first publication. The excessive polish of the verse has appeared too high to be endured throughout a long composition; it is certain that, in poems of length, a versification, which is not too florid for lyrical composition, will weary by its brilliancy. Darwin, inasmuch as a rich philosophical fancy constitutes a poet, possesses the entire art of poetry; no one has carried the curious mechanism of verse and the artificial magic of poetical diction to higher perfection. His volcanic head flamed with imagination, but his torpid heart slept unawakened by passion. His standard of poetry is by much too limited; he supposes that the essence of poetry is something of which a painter can make a picture. A picturesque verse was with him a verse completely poetical. But the language of the passions has no connexion with this principle; in truth, what he delineates as poetry itself, is but one of its provinces. Deceived by his illusive standard, he has composed a poem which is perpetually fancy, and never passion. Hence his processional splendour fatigues, and his descriptive ingenuity comes at length to be deficient in novelty, and all the miracles of art cannot supply us with one touch of nature.

Descriptive poetry should be relieved by a skilful intermixture of passages addressed to the heart

as well as to the imagination: uniform description satiates; and has been considered as one of the inferior branches of poetry. Of this both Thomson and Goldsmith were sensible. In their beautiful descriptive poems they knew the art of animating the pictures of FANCY with the glow of SENTIMENT.

Whatever may be thought of the originality of this poem, it has been preceded by others of a congenial disposition. Brookes's poem on "Universal Beauty," published about 1735, presents us with the very model of Darwin's versification; and the Latin poem of De la Croix, in 1727, intitled "*Connubia Florum*," with his subject. There also exists a race of poems which have hitherto been confined to *one object*, which the poet selected from the works of nature, to embellish with all the splendour of poetic imagination. I have collected some titles.

Perhaps it is Homer, in his *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, and Virgil in the poem on a *Gnat*, attributed to him, who have given birth to these luscious poems. The Jesuits, particularly when they composed in Latin verse, were partial to such subjects. There is a little poem on *Gold*, by P. Le Fevre, distinguished for its elegance; and Brumoy has given the *Art of making Glass*; in which he has described its various productions

with equal felicity and knowledge. P. Vaniere has written on *Pigeons*, Du Cerceau on *Butterflies*. The success which attended these productions produced numerous imitations, of which several were favourably received. Vaniere composed three on the *Grape*, the *Vintage*, and the *Kitchen Garden*. Another poet selected *Oranges* for his theme; others have chosen for their subjects, *Paper*, *Birds*, and fresh-water *Fish*. Tarillon has inflamed his imagination with *Gunpowder*; a milder genius, delighted with the oaten pipe, sang of *Sheep*; one who was more pleased with another kind of pipe, has written on *Tobacco*; and a droll genius wrote a poem on *Asses*. Two writers have formed didactic poems on the *Art of Enigmas*, and on *Ships*.

Others have written on moral subjects. Bru-moy has painted the *Passions*, with a variety of imagery and vivacity of description; P. Meyer has disserted on *Anger*; Tarillon, like our Stillingfleet, on the *Art of Conversation*; and a lively writer has discussed the subjects of *Humour and Wit*.

Giannetazzi, an Italian Jesuit, celebrated for his Latin poetry, has composed two volumes of poems on *Fishing* and *Navigation*. Fracastor has written delicately on an indelicate subject, his *Syphilis*. Le Brun wrote a delectable poem

on *Sweetmeats*; another writer on *Mineral Waters*, and a third on *Printing*. Vida pleases with his *Silk-worms* and his *Chess*; Buchanan is ingenious with his *Sphere*. Malapert has aspired to catch the *Winds*; the philosophic Huet amused himself with *Salt*, and again with *Tea*. The *Gardens* of Rapin is a finer poem than critics generally can write; Quillet's *Callipedia*, or Art of getting handsome Children, has been translated by Rowe; and Du Fresnoy at length gratifies the connoisseur with his poem on *Painting*, by the embellishments which his verses have received from the poetic diction of Mason, and the commentary of Reynolds.

This list might be augmented with a few of our own poets, and there still remain some virgin themes which only require to be touched by the hand of a true poet. In the "Memoirs of Tre-voux" they observe, in their review of the poem on *Gold*, "That poems of this kind have the advantage of instructing us very agreeably. All that has been most remarkably said on the subject is united, compressed in a luminous order, and dressed in all the agreeable graces of poetry. Such writers have no little difficulties to encounter: the style and expression cost dear; and still more to give to an arid topic an agreeable form, and to elevate the subject without falling into an-



other extreme.—In the other kinds of poetry the matter assists and prompts genius ; here we must possess an abundance to display it.”

## PAMPHLETS.

MYLES DAVIES'S “ *ICON LIBELLORUM, OR a Critical History of Pamphlets,*” affords some curious information ; and as this is a *pamphlet*-reading age, I shall give a sketch of its contents.

The author is at once serious and humorous in his preface. He there observes: “ From PAMPHLETS may be learned the genius of the age, the debates of the learned, the follies of the ignorant, the *bévue*s of government, and the mistakes of the courtiers. Pamphlets furnish beaux with their airs, coquets with their charms. Pamphlets are as modish ornaments to gentlewomen's toilets as to gentlemen's pockets ; they carry reputation of wit and learning to all that make them their companions ; the poor find their account in stall-keeping and in hawking them ; the rich find in them their shortest way to the secrets of church and state. There is scarce any class of people but may think themselves interested enough to be concerned with what is published in pamphlets,

either as to their private instruction, curiosity, and reputation, or to the public advantage and credit; with all which both ancient and modern pamphlets are too often over familiar and free.— In short, with pamphlets the booksellers and stationers adorn the gaiety of shop-gazing. Hence accrues to grocers, apothecaries, and chandlers, good furniture, and supplies to necessary retreats and natural occasions. In pamphlets lawyers will meet with their chicanery, physicians with their cant, divines with their Shibolet. Pamphlets become more and more daily amusements to the curious, idle, and inquisitive; pastime to gallants and coquets; chat to the talkative; catch-words to informers; fuel to the envious; poison to the unfortunate; balsam to the wounded; employment to the lazy; and fabulous materials to romancers and novelists.”

This author sketches the origin and rise of pamphlets. He deduces them from the short writings published by the Jewish Rabbins; various little pieces at the time of the first propagation of Christianity; and notices a certain pamphlet which was pretended to have been the composition of Jesus Christ, thrown from heaven, and picked up by the archangel Michael at the entrance of Jerusalem. It was copied by the priest Leora, and sent about from priest to priest, till

Pope Zachary ventured to pronounce it a *forgery!* He notices several such extraordinary publications, many of which produced as extraordinary effects.

He proceeds in noticing the first Arian and Popish pamphlets, or rather *libels*, i. e. little books, as he distinguishes them. He relates a curious anecdote respecting the forgeries of the monks. Archbishop Usher detected in a manuscript of St. Patrick's life, pretended to have been found at Louvain, as an original of a very remote date, several passages taken, with little alteration, from his own writings.

The following notice of our immortal Pope I cannot pass over: "Another class of pamphlets writ by Roman Catholics is that of *Poems*, written chiefly by a *Pope* himself, a gentleman of that name. He passed always amongst most of his acquaintance for what is commonly called a Whig; for it seems the Roman politics are divided as well as Popish missionaries. However one *Esdras*, an apothecary, as he qualifies himself, has published a piping-hot pamphlet against Mr. Pope's "*Rape of thé Lock*," which he entitles "*A Key to the Lock*," wherewith he pretends to unlock nothing less than a *plot* carried on by Mr. Pope in that poem against the last and this present ministry and government."

He observes on *Sermons*,—" 'Tis not much to be questioned, but of all modern pamphlets what or wheresoever, the *English stitched Sermons* be the most edifying, useful, and instructive, yet they could not escape the critical Mr. Bayle's sarcasm. He says, "*Republique des Lettres*," March 1710, in his article *London*, " We see here sermons swarm daily from the press. Our eyes only behold manna: are you desirous of knowing the reason? It is, that the ministers being allowed to *read* their sermons in the pulpit, *buy all they meet with*, and take no other trouble than to read them, and thus pass for very able scholars at a very cheap rate!"

He now begins more directly the history of pamphlets, which he branches out from four different etymologies. He says, " However foreign the word *Pamphlet* may appear, it is a genuine English word, rarely known or adopted in any other language: its pedigree cannot well be traced higher than the latter end of Queen Elizabeth's reign. In its first state wretched must have been its appearance, since the great linguist John Minshew, in his "*Guide into Tongues*," printed in 1617, gives it the most miserable character of which any libel can be capable. Mr. Minshew says (and his words were quoted by Lord Chief

Justice Holt), "A PAMPHLET, that is *Opusculum Stolidorum*, the diminutive performance of fools; from  $\pi\tilde{\alpha}\nu$ , all, and  $\pi\lambda\acute{\iota}\theta\omega$ , I fill, to wit, all places. According to the vulgar saying, all things are full of fools, or foolish things; for such multitudes of pamphlets, unworthy of the very name of libels, being more vile than common shores and the filth of beggars, and being flying papers daubed over and besmeared with the foams of drunkards, are tossed far and near into the mouths and hands of scoundrels; neither will the sham oracles of Apollo be esteemed so mercenary as a Pamphlet."

Those who will have the word to be derived from PAM, the famous knave of Loo, do not differ much from Minshew; for the derivation of the word *Pam* is in all probability from  $\pi\tilde{\alpha}\nu$ , all; or the *whole* or the *chief* of the game.

Under this *first* etymological notion of Pamphlets, may be comprehended the *vulgar stories* of the Nine Worthies of the World, of the Seven Champions of Christendom, Tom Thumb, Valentine and Orson, &c. as also most of apocryphal lucubrations. The greatest collection of this first sort of Pamphlets are the Rabbinic traditions in the Talmud, consisting of fourteen volumes in folio, and the Popish legends of the Lives of the

Saints, which, though not finished, form fifty folio volumes, all which tracts were originally in pamphlet forms.

The *second* idea of the *radix* of the word *Pamphlet* is, that it takes its derivations from *πάν*, *all*, and *φιλέω*, *I love*, signifying a thing beloved by all; for a pamphlet being of a small portable bulk, and of no great price, is adapted to every one's understanding and reading. In this class may be placed all stitched books on serious subjects, the best of which fugitive pieces have been generally preserved, and even reprinted in collections of some tracts, miscellanies, sermons, poems, &c.; and, on the contrary, bulky volumes have been reduced, for the convenience of the public, into the familiar shapes of stitched pamphlets. Both these methods have been thus censured by the majority of the lower house of convocation 1711. These abuses are thus represented: "They have re-published, and collected into volumes, pieces written long ago on the side of infidelity. They have reprinted together in the most contracted manner, many loose and licentious pieces, in order to their being purchased more cheaply, and dispersed more easily."

The *third* original interpretation of the word *Pamphlet* may be that of the learned Dr. Skinner, in his *Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanae*, that it is

derived from the Belgic word *Pampier*, signifying a little paper, or libel. To this third set of Pamphlets may be reduced all sorts of printed single sheets, or half sheets, or any other quantity of single paper prints, such as Declarations, Remonstrances, Proclamations, Edicts, Orders, Injunctions, Memorials, Addresses, News-papers, &c.

The *fourth* radical signification of the word Pamphlet is that homogeneal acceptation of it, viz. as it imports any little book, or small volume whatever, whether stitched or bound, whether good or bad, whether serious or ludicrous. The only proper Latin term for a Pamphlet is *Libellus*, or little book. This word indeed signifies in English an *abusive* paper or little book, and is generally taken in the worst sense.

After all this display of curious literature, the reader may smile at the guesses of Etymologists; particularly when he is reminded that the derivation of *Pamphlet* is drawn from quite another meaning to any of the present, by Johnson, which I shall give for his immediate gratification.

PAMPHLET [*par un filet*, Fr. Whence this word is written anciently, and by Caxton, *paunflet*] a small book; properly a book sold unbound, and only stitched.

The French have borrowed the word *Pamphlet* from us, and have the goodness of not disfiguring

its orthography. *Roast Beef* is also in the same predicament. I conclude that *Pamphlets* and *Roast Beef* have therefore their origin in our country.

I am favoured by Mr. Pinkerton with the following curious notice concerning pamphlets:

Of the etymon of *pamphlet* I know nothing; but that the word is far more ancient than is commonly believed, take the following proof from the celebrated *Philobiblion*, ascribed to Richard de Buri, bishop of Durham, but written by Robert Holkot, at his desire, as Fabricius says, about the year 1344, (Fabr. Bibl. Medii ævi, Vol. I.); it is in the eighth chapter.

“Sed revera libros non libras maluimus; codicesque plus dileximus quam florenos: ac PANFLETOS exiguos phaleratis prætulimus palescedis.”

“But, indeed, we prefer books to pounds; and we love manuscripts better than florins; and we prefer small *pamphlets* to war-horses.”

This word is as old as Lydgate's time: among his works, quoted by Thomas Warton, is a poem “translated from a *pamflete* in Frensche.”



## LITTLE BOOKS.

MYLES DAVIES has given an opinion of the advantages of Little Books with some wit and humour.

“ The smallness of the size of a book was always its own commendation; as, on the contrary, the largeness of a book is its own disadvantage, as well as terror of learning. In short, a big book is a scare-crow to the head and pocket of the author, student, buyer, and seller, as well as a harbour of ignorance; hence the inaccessible masteries of the inexpugnable ignorance and superstition of the ancient heathens, degenerate Jews, and of the popish scholasters and canonists entrenched under the frightful bulk of huge, vast, and innumerable volumes; such as the great folio that the Jewish rabbins fancied in a dream was given by the angel Raziel to his pupil Adam, containing all the celestial sciences. And the volumes writ by Zoroaster, entitled *The Similitude*, which is said to have taken up no more space than 1,260 hides of cattle: as also the 25,000, or, as some say, 36,000 volumes, besides 525 lesser mss. of his. The grossness and multitude of Aristotle and Varro's books were both a prejudice to the authors, and an hindrance to learning, and an occa-

sion of the greatest part of them being lost. The largeness of Plutarch's treatises is a great cause of his being neglected, while Longinus and Epictetus, in their pamphlet Remains, are every one's companions. Origen's 6,000 volumes (as Epiphanius will have it) were not only the occasion of his venting more numerous errors, but also for the most part of their perdition.—Were it not for Euclid's Elements, Hippocrates's Aphorisms, Justinian's Institutes, and Littleton's Tenures in small pamphlet volumes, young mathematicians, freshwater physicians, civilian novices, and *les apprentices en la ley d' Angleterre*, would be at a loss and stand, and total discouragement. One of the greatest advantages the *Dispensary* has over *King Arthur* is its pamphlet size. So Boileau's *Lutrin*, and his other pamphlet poems, in respect of Perrault's and Chapelain's *St. Paulin* and *la Pucelle*. *These* seem to pay a deference to the reader's quick and great understanding; *those* to mistrust his capacity, and to confine his time as well as his intellect."

Notwithstanding so much may be alleged in favour of books of a small size, yet the scholars of a former age regarded them with contempt. Scaliger, says Baillet, cavils with Drusius for the smallness of his books; and one of the great printers of the time (Moret, the successor of

Plantin) complaining to the learned Puteanus, who was considered as the rival of Lipsius, that his books were too small for sale, and that purchasers turned away, frightened at their diminutive size; Puteanus referred him to Plutarch, whose works consist of small treatises; but the printer took fire at the comparison, and turned him out of his shop, for his vanity at pretending that he wrote in any manner like Plutarch! a specimen this of the politeness and reverence of the early printers for their learned authors! Jurieu reproaches Colomies that he is a *great author of little books!*

At least, if a man is the author only of little books, he will escape the sarcastic observation of Cicero on a voluminous writer—that “his body might be burned with his writings,”—of which we have had several, eminent for the worthlessness and magnitude of their labours.

It was the literary humour of a certain Mæcenas, who cheered the lustre of his patronage with the steams of a good dinner, to place his guests according to the size and thickness of the books they had printed. At the head of the table sat those who had published in *folio*, *foliissimo*; next the authors in *quarto*; then those in *octavo*. At that table Blackmore would have had the precedence of Gray. Addison, who found this anecdote

dote in one of the Anas, has seized this idea, and applied it with his felicity of humour in No. 529 of the Spectator.

Montaigne's works have been called by a Cardinal, "The Breviary of Idlers." It is therefore the book for many men. Francis Osborne has a ludicrous image in favour of such opuscula. "Huge volumes, like the ox roasted whole at Bartholomew fair, may proclaim plenty of labour, but afford less of what is *delicate, savoury, and well-concocted, than SMALLER PIECES.*"

In the list of titles of minor works, which Aulus Gellius has preserved, the lightness and beauty of such compositions are charmingly expressed. Among these we find—a Basket of Flowers; an embroidered Mantle; and a Variegated Meadow.

## A CATHOLIC'S REFUTATION.

IN a religious book published by a fellow of the society of Jesus, entitled, "The Faith of a Catholic," the author examines what concerns the incredulous Jews and other infidels. He would show that Jesus Christ, author of the religion which bears his name, did not impose on or deceive the Apostles whom he taught; that the

Apostles who preached it did not deceive those who were converted; and that those who were converted did not deceive us. In proving these three not difficult propositions he says, he confounds "the *Atheist*, who does not believe in God; the *Pagan*, who adores several; the *Deist*, who believes in one God, but who rejects a particular Providence; the *Freethinker*, who presumes to serve God according to his fancy, without being attached to any religion; the *Philosopher*, who takes reason and not revelation for the rule of his belief; the *Gentile*, who never having regarded the Jewish people as a chosen nation, does not believe God promised them a Messiah; and finally, the *Jew*, who refuses to adore the Messiah in the person of Christ."

I have given this sketch, as it serves for a singular Catalogue of *Heretics*.

It is rather singular that so late as in the year 1765, a work should have appeared in Paris, which bears the title I translate, "The Christian Religion *proved* by a *single fact*; or a dissertation in which is shown that those *Catholics* of whom Huneric, King of the Vandals, cut the tongues, *spoke miraculously* all the remainder of their days; from whence is deduced the *consequences of this miracle* against the Arians, the Socinians, and the Deists, and particularly against

the author of *Emilius*, by solving their difficulties." It bears this Epigraph; "*Ecce Ego admirationem faciam populo huic, miraculo grandi et stupendo.*" There needs no further account of this book than the title.

The cause of religion is hurt by stupid advocates.

### THE GOOD ADVICE OF AN OLD LITERARY SINNER.

AUTHORS of moderate capacity have unceasingly harassed the public; and have at length been remembered only by the number of wretched volumes their unhappy industry has produced. Such as an author was the Abbé de Marolles, the subject of this article, otherwise a most estimable and ingenious man, and the father of print-collectors.

This Abbé was a most egregious scribbler; and so tormented with violent fits of printing, that he even printed lists and catalogues of his friends. I have even seen at the end of one of his works a list of names of those persons who had given him books. He printed his works at his own expense, as the booksellers had unani-

mously decreed this. Menage used to say of his works, "The reason why I esteem the productions of the Abbé is, for the singular neatness of their bindings; he embellishes them so beautifully, that the eye finds pleasure in them." On a book of his versions of the Epigrams of Martial, this Critic wrote, *Epigrams against Martial*. Latterly, for want of employment, our Abbé began a translation of the Bible; but having inserted the notes of the visionary Isaac de la Peyrere, the work was burnt by order of the ecclesiastical court. He was also an abundant writer in verse, and exultingly told a poet, that his verses cost him little: "They cost you what they are worth," replied the sarcastic critic. De Marolles in his *Memoirs* bitterly complains of the injustice done to him by his contemporaries; and says, that in spite of the little favours shown to him by the public, he has nevertheless published, by an accurate calculation, one hundred and thirty-three thousand one hundred and twenty-four verses! Yet this was not the heaviest of his literary sins. He is a proof that a translator may perfectly understand the language of his original, and yet produce an execrable translation.

In the early part of his life this unlucky author had not been without ambition; it was only when disappointed in his political projects that he re-

solved to devote himself to literature. As he was incapable of attempting original composition, he became known by his detestable versions. He wrote above eighty volumes, which have never found favour in the eyes of the critics ; yet his translations are not without their use, though they never retain by any chance a single passage of the spirit of their originals.

The most remarkable anecdote respecting these translations is, that whenever this honest translator came to a difficult passage, he wrote in the margin " I have not translated this passage, because it is very difficult, and in truth I could never understand it." He persisted to the last in his uninterrupted amusement of printing books, and his readers having long ceased, he was compelled to present them to his friends, who, probably, were not his readers. After a literary existence of forty years, he gave the public a work not destitute of entertainment in his own *Memoirs*, which he dedicated to his relations and all his illustrious friends. The singular postscript to his *Epistle Dedicatory* contains excellent advice for authors.

" I have omitted to tell you, that I do not advise any one of my relatives or friends to apply himself as I have done to study, and particularly to the composition of books, if he thinks that will



add to his fame or fortune. I am persuaded that of all persons in the kingdom, none are more neglected than those who devote themselves entirely to literature. The small number of successful persons in that class (at present I do not recollect more than two or three) should not impose on one's understanding, nor any consequence from them be drawn in favour of others. I know how it is by my own experience, and by that of several amongst you, as well as by many who are now no more, and with whom I was acquainted. Believe me, gentlemen! to pretend to the favours of fortune it is only necessary to render one's self useful, and to be supple and obsequious to those who are in possession of credit and authority; to be handsome in one's person; to adulate the powerful; to smile, while you suffer from them every kind of ridicule and contempt whenever they shall do you the honour to amuse themselves with you; never to be frightened at a thousand obstacles which may be opposed to one; have a face of brass and a heart of stone; insult worthy men who are persecuted; rarely venture to speak the truth; appear devout, with every nice scruple of religion, while at the same time every duty must be abandoned when it clashes with your interest. After these any other accomplishment is indeed superfluous."

MYSTERIES, MORALITIES, FARCES,  
AND SOTTIES.

THE origin of the theatrical representations of the ancients has been traced back to a Grecian stroller in a cart singing to the honour of Bacchus. Our European exhibitions, perhaps as rude in their commencement, were likewise for a long time devoted to pious purposes, under the titles of Mysteries and Moralities, &c. Of these primeval compositions of the drama of modern Europe, I have collected some anecdotes and some specimens.

It appears that pilgrims introduced these devout spectacles. Those who returned from the Holy Land or other consecrated places composed canticles of their travels, and amused their religious fancies by interweaving scenes of which Christ, the Apostles, and other objects of devotion, served as the themes. Menestrier informs us that these pilgrims travelled in troops, and stood in the public streets, where they recited their poems, with their staff in hand; while their chaplets and cloaks, covered with shells and images of various colours, formed a picturesque exhibition which at length excited the piety of the citizens to erect occasionally a stage on

an extensive spot of ground. These spectacles served as the amusement and instruction of the people. So attractive were these gross exhibitions in the dark ages, that they formed one of the principal ornaments of the reception which was given to princes when they entered towns.

When the Mysteries were performed at a more improved period, the actors were distinguished characters, and frequently consisted of the ecclesiastics of the neighbouring villages, who incorporated themselves under the title of *Confreres de la Passion*. Their productions were divided, not into acts, but into different days of performance, and they were performed in the open plain. This was at least conformable to the critical precept of that mad knight whose opinion is noticed by Pope. It appears by a ms. in the Harleian library quoted by Warton, that they were thought to contribute so much to the information and instruction of the people, that one of the Popes granted a pardon of one thousand days to every person who resorted peaceably to the plays performed in the Whitsun-week at Chester, beginning with the "Creation," and ending with the "General Judgment." These were performed at the expense of the different corporations of that city, and the reader may smile at these ludicrous combinations. "The

Creation" was performed by the Drapers; the "Deluge" by the Dyers; "Abraham, Melchisedech, and Lot," by the Barbers; "The Purification" by the Blacksmiths; "The Last Supper" by the Bakers; the "Resurrection" by the Skinners; and the "Ascension" by the Tailors. In these pieces the actors represented the person of the Almighty without being sensible of the gross impiety. So unskilful were they in this infancy of the theatrical art, that very serious consequences were produced by their ridiculous blunders and ill-managed machinery. In the "History of the French Theatre," vol. ii. p. 285, the following singular anecdotes are preserved, concerning a Mystery which took up several days in the performance.

"In the year 1437, when Conrad Bayer, bishop of Metz, caused the Mystery of "The Passion" to be represented on the plain of Veximel near that city, *God was an old gentleman*, named Mr. Nicholas Neufchatel of Touraine, curate of Saint Victory of Metz, and who was very near expiring on the cross had he not been timely assisted. He was so enfeebled that it was agreed another priest should be placed on the cross the next day, to finish the representation of the person crucified, and which was done; at the same time the said Mr. Nicholas undertook to perform "The Re-

surrection," which being a less difficult task, he did it admirably well."—Another priest, whose name was Mr. John de Nicey, curate of Metrange, personated Judas, and he had like to have been stifled while he hung on the tree, for his neck slipped; this being at length luckily perceived, he was quickly cut down and recovered.

John Bouchet, in his "Annales d'Aquitaine," a work which contains many curious circumstances of the times, written with that agreeable simplicity which characterises the old writers, informs us, that in 1486 he saw played and exhibited in Mysteries by persons of Poitiers, "The Nativity, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ," in great triumph and splendour; there were assembled on this occasion most of the ladies and gentlemen of the neighbouring counties.

We will now examine the Mysteries themselves. I prefer for this purpose to give a specimen from the French, which are livelier than our own. It is necessary to premise to the reader, that my versions being in prose will probably lose much of that quaint expression and vulgar *naïveté* which prevail through the originals, written in octosyllabic verses.

One of these Mysteries has for its subject the election of an Apostle to supply the place of the traitor Judas. A dignity so awful is conferred in

the meanest manner it is possible to conceive ; it is done by drawing two straws, of which he who gets the longest becomes the Apostle. Louis Chocquet was a favourite composer of these religious performances : when he attempts the pathetic he has constantly recourse to devils ; but, as these characters are sustained with little propriety, his pathos succeeds in raising a laugh. In the following dialogue Anne and Caiaphas are introduced conversing about Saint Peter and Saint John :—

“ ANNE.

“ I remember them once very honest people. They have often brought their fish to my house to sell.

“ CAIAPHAS.

“ Is this true ?

“ ANNE.

“ By God it is true ; my servants remember them very well. To live more at their ease they have left off business ; or perhaps they were in want of customers. Since that time they have followed Jesus, that wicked heretic, who has taught them magic ; the fellow understands necromancy, and is the greatest magician alive, as far as Rome itself.”

Saint John attacked by the satellites of Domitian, amongst whom the author has placed

Longinus and Patroclus, gives regular answers to their insulting interrogatories. Some of these I shall transcribe, but leave to the reader's conjectures the replies of the Saint, which are not difficult to anticipate.

“ PARTHENIA.

“ You tell us strange things, to say there is but one God in three persons.

“ LONGINUS.

“ Is it any where said that we must believe your old prophets (with whom your memory seems overburdened) to be more perfect than our Gods ?

“ PATROCLUS.

“ You must be very cunning to maintain impossibilities. Now listen to me: Is it possible that a virgin can bring forth a child without ceasing to be a virgin ?

“ DOMITIAN.

“ Will you not change these foolish sentiments? Would you pervert us? Will you not convert yourself? Lords! you perceive now very clearly what an obstinate fellow this is! Therefore let him be stript and put into a great caldron of boiling oil. Let him die at the Latin Gate.

“ PESART.

“ The great devil of hell fetch me if I don't Latinise

him well. Never shall they hear at the Latin gate any one sing so well as he shall sing.

“ TORNEAU.

“ I dare venture to say he won't complain of being frozen.

“ PATROCLUS.

“ Frita, run quick ; bring wood and coals, and make the caldron ready.

“ FRITA.

“ I promise him, if he has the gout or the itch, he will soon get rid of them.”

St. John dies a perfect martyr, resigned to the boiling oil and gross jests of Patroclus and Longinus. One is astonished in the present times at the excessive absurdity and indeed blasphemy which the writers of these moralities permitted themselves, and, what is more extraordinary, were permitted by an audience consisting of a whole town. An extract from the “Mystery of Saint Dennis” is in the Duke de la Valliere's “Bibliotheque du Theatre François depuis son origine. Dresde 1768.”

The emperor Domitian, irritated against the Christians, persecutes them, and thus addresses one of his courtiers:—



“ Seigneurs Romains, j’ai entendu	Roman lords, I understand
Que d’un crucifix, d’un pen- du,	That of a crucified hanged man
On fait un Dieu par notre empire	They make a God in our kingdom,
Sans ce qu’on le nous daigne dire.”	Without even deigning to ask our permission.

He then orders an officer to seize on Dennis in France. When this officer arrives at Paris the inhabitants acquaint him of the rapid and grotesque progress of this future saint.—

“ Sire, il preche un Dieu a Paris	Sir, he preaches a God at Paris
Qui fait tous les moulx et les vauls.	Who has made mountain and valley.
Il va à cheval sans che- vauls.	He goes a horseback with- out horses.
Il fait et defait tout en- semble.	He does and undoes at once.
Il vit, il meurt, il sue, il tremble.	He lives, he dies, he sweats, he trembles.
Il pleure, il vit, il veille, et dort.	He weeps, he laughs, he wakes and sleeps.
Il est jeune et vieux, foible et fort.	He is young and old, weak and strong.
Il fait d’un coq une pou- lette.	He turns a cock into a hen.

Il joue des arts de roulette,	He knows how to conjure with cup and ball,
Ou je ne scais que ce peut etre."	Or I do not know who this can be.

Another of these admirers says, evidently alluding to the right of baptism,—

" Sire, oyez que fait ce fol prestre :	Sir, hear what this mad priest does :
Il prend de l'yaue en une escuele,	He takes water out of a ladle,
Et gete aux gens sur la cervele,	And, throwing it at people's heads,
Et dit que partant, sont sauvés !"	He says that when they depart, they are saved !

This piece then proceeds to entertain the spectators with the tortures of Saint Dennis, and at length, when more than dead, they mercifully behead him:—the Saint, after his decapitation, rises very quietly, takes his head under his arm, and walks off the stage in all the dignity of martyrdom.

It is justly observed by Bayle on these wretched representations, that while they prohibited the people from meditating on the sacred history in the book which contains it in all its purity and truth, they permitted them to see it on the theatre sullied with a thousand gross inventions, which

were expressed in the most vulgar manner and in a farcical style. Warton, with his usual elegance, observes,—“To those who are accustomed to contemplate the great picture of human follies which the unpolished ages of Europe hold up to our view, it will not appear surprising that the people who were forbidden to read the events of the sacred history in the Bible, in which they are faithfully and beautifully related, should at the same time be permitted to see them represented on the stage disgraced with the grossest improprieties, corrupted with inventions and additions of the most ridiculous kind, sullied with impurities, and expressed in the language and gesticulations of the lowest farce.” Elsewhere he philosophically observes, that, however, they had their use, “not only in teaching the great truths of scripture to men who could not read the Bible, but in abolishing the barbarous attachment to military games and the bloody contentions of the tournament, which had so long prevailed as the sole species of popular amusement. Rude, and even ridiculous as they were, they softened the manners of the people by diverting the public attention to spectacles in which the mind was concerned, and by creating a regard for other arts than those of bodily strength and savage valour.”

*Mysteries* are to be distinguished from *Mo-*

*ralities*, and *Farces*, and *Sotties*. *Moralities* are dialogues where the interlocutors represented feigned or allegorical personages. *Farces* were more exactly what their title indicates: obscene, gross, and dissolute representations, where both the actions and words are alike reprehensible.

The *Sotties* were more farcical than farce, and frequently had the licentiousness of pasquinades. I shall give an ingenious specimen of one of the **MORALITIES**. This morality is entitled "The Condemnation of Feasts, to the Praise of Diet and Sobriety for the Benefit of the Human Body."

The perils of gorging form the present subject. Towards the close is a trial between *Feasting* and *Supper*. They are summoned before *Experience*, the Lord Chief Justice! *Feasting* and *Supper* are accused of having murdered four persons by force of gorging them. *Experience* condemns *Feasting* to the gallows; and his executioner is *Diet*. *Feasting* asks for a father confessor, and makes a public confession of so many crimes, such numerous convulsions, apoplexies, head-aches, stomach-qualms, &c. which he has occasioned, that his executioner *Diet* in a rage stops his mouth, puts the cord about his neck, and strangles him. *Supper* is only condemned to load his hands with a certain quantity of lead, to hinder him from putting too many dishes on table:—he is also bound over not

to approach *Dinner* too near, and to be placed at the distance of six hours' walking under pain of death. *Supper* felicitates himself on his escape, and swears to observe with scrupulous exactness the mitigated sentence.

The MORALITIES were allegorical dramas, whose tediousness seems to have delighted a barbarous people not yet accustomed to perceive that what was obvious might be omitted to great advantage: like children, every thing must be told in such an age: their own unexercised imagination cannot supply any thing.

Of the FARCES the licentiousness is extreme, but their pleasantry and their humour are not contemptible: The "Village Lawyer," which is never exhibited on our stage without producing the broadest mirth, originates among these ancient drolleries. The humorous incident of the shepherd, who, having stolen his master's sheep, is advised by his lawyer only to reply to his judge by mimicking the bleating of a sheep, and when the lawyer in return claims his fee pays him by no other coin, is discovered in these ancient farces. Brueys got up the ancient farce of the "*Patelin*" in 1702, and we borrowed it from him.

They had another species of drama still broader than Farce, and more strongly featured by the grossness, the severity, and personality of satire:

—these were called *Sotties*, of which the following one I find in the Duke de la Valliere's "Bibliothèque du Theatre François."

The actors come on the stage with their fools'-caps each wanting the right ear, and begin with stringing satirical proverbs, till after drinking freely, they discover that their fools'-caps want the right ear. They call on their old grandmother *Sottie* (or Folly), who advises them to take up some trade. She introduces this progeny of her fools to the *World*, who takes them into his service. The *World* tries their skill, and is much displeased with their work. The *Cobler-fool* pinches his feet by making the shoes too small; the *Taylor-fool* hangs his coats too loose or too tight about him; the *Priest-fool* says his masses either too short or too tedious. They all agree that the *World* does not know what he wants, and must be sick, and prevail on him to get some advice from a physician. The *World* obligingly sends what is required to an *Urine-doctor*, who instantly pronounces that "the *World* is as mad as a March hare!" He comes to visit his patient, and puts a great many questions on his unhappy state. The *World* replies, "that what most troubles his head is the idea of a new deluge by fire, which must one day consume him to a

powder; on which the Physician gives this answer:—

“ Et te troubles-tu pour cela ?	And you really trouble yourself about this ?
Monde, tu ne te troubles pas	Oh <i>World!</i> you do not trouble yourself about
De voir ce larrons attra- pars	Seeing those impudent ras- cals
Vendre et acheter bene- fices;	Selling and buying livings;
Les enfans en bras des Nourices	Children in the arms of their nurses
Estre Abbés, Eveques, Prieurs,	Made Abbots, Bishops, and Priors,
Chevaucher tres bien les deux soeurs,	Intriguing with girls,
Tuer les gens pour leurs plaisirs,	Killing people for their pleasures,
Jouer le leur, l'autrui sai- sir,	Minding their own interests, and seizing on what be- longs to another,
Donner aux flatteurs au- dience,	Lending their ears to flat- terers,
Faire la guerre à toute outrance	Making war, exterminating war,
Pour un rien entre les chrestiens !”	For a bubble among chris- tians !

The *World* takes leave of his physician, but

retains his advice ; and to cure his fits of melancholy gives himself up entirely to the direction of his fools. In a word, the *World* dresses himself in the coat and cap of *Folly*, and he becomes as gay and as ridiculous as the rest of the fools.

This *Sottie* was represented in the year 1524.

Such was the rage for mysteries, that René d'Anjou, King of Naples and Sicily, and Count of Provence, had them represented with all possible magnificence, and made them a very serious occupation. Being in Provence, and having received letters from his son the Prince of Calabria, who asked him for an immediate aid of men, he replied, that he had a very different matter in hand, for he was fully employed in settling the order of a mystery—in honour of God.

Mr. Strutt, in his "Manners and Customs of the English," has given a description of the stage in England when mysteries were the only theatrical performances. Vol. iii. p. 130.

"In the early dawn of literature, and when the sacred mysteries were the only theatrical performances, what is now called the stage did then consist of three several platforms, or stages raised one above another. On the uppermost sat the *Pater Cælestis*, surrounded with his Angels; on the second appeared the Holy Saints, and glorified men; and the last and lowest was occupied by



mere men who had not yet passed from this transitory life to the regions of eternity. On one side of this lowest platform was the resemblance of a dark pitchy cavern from whence issued appearance of fire and flames; and when it was necessary, the audience were treated with hideous yellings and noises as imitative of the howlings and cries of the wretched souls tormented by the relentless demons. From this yawning cave the devils themselves constantly ascended to delight and to instruct the spectators:—to delight, because they were usually the greatest jesters and buffoons that then appeared; and to instruct, for that they treated the wretched mortals who were delivered to them with the utmost cruelty, warning thereby all men carefully to avoid the falling into the clutches of such hardened and remorseless spirits." An anecdote relating to an English mystery presents a curious specimen of the manners of our country, which then could admit of such a representation; the simplicity, if not the libertinism, of the age was great. A play was acted in one of the principal cities of England, under the direction of the trading companies of that city, before a numerous assembly of both sexes, wherein *Adam* and *Eve* appeared on the stage entirely naked, performed their whole part in the representation of Eden, to the serpent's temptation, to the eating

of the forbidden fruit, the perceiving of, and conversing about their nakedness, and to the supplying of fig-leaves to cover it." Warton observes they had the authority of scripture for such a representation, and they gave matters just as they found them in the third chapter of Genesis. The following article will afford the reader a specimen of an *Elegant Morality*.

### LOVE AND FOLLY, AN ANCIENT MORALITY.

ONE of the most elegant Moralities was composed by Louise L'Abé; the Aspasia of Lyons in 1550, adored by her cotemporaries. With no extraordinary beauty, she however displayed the fascination of classical learning, and a vein of vernacular poetry refined and fanciful. To accomplishments so various she added the singular one of distinguishing herself by a military spirit, and was nicknamed Captain Louise. She was a fine rider and a fine lutanist. She presided in the assemblies of persons of literature and distinction: married to a rope-manufacturer, she was called *La belle Cordière*, and her name is still perpetuated by that of the street she lived in. Her anagram was *Belle à Soy*.—But she was *belle* also

for others. Her *Morals* in one point were not correct, but her taste was never gross: the ashes of her perishable graces may preserve themselves sacred from our severity; but the productions of her genius may still delight.

Her *Morality* entitled "Debat de Folie et d'Amour—The contest of *Love and Folly*," is divided into five parts, and contains six mythological or allegorical personages. This division resembles our five acts, which, soon after the publication of this *Morality*, became generally practised.

In the first part, *Love* and *Folly* arrive at the same moment at the gate of Jupiter's palace, to a festival to which he had invited the Gods. *Folly* observing *Love* just going to step in at the hall of the festival, pushes him away and enters in first. *Love* is enraged, but *Folly* insists on her precedence. *Love*, perceiving there was no reasoning with *Folly*, bends his bow and shoots an arrow; but she baffled his attempt by rendering herself invisible. She in her turn becomes furious, falls on the boy, tearing out his eyes, and then covers them with a bandage which could not be taken off.

In the second part, *Love*, in despair for having lost his sight, implores the assistance of his mother; she tries in vain to undo the magic fillet; the knots are never to be untied!

In the third part, *Venus* presents herself at the

foot of the throne of Jupiter to complain of the outrage committed by *Folly* on her son. Jupiter commands *Folly* to appear.—She replies, that though she has reasons to justify herself, she will not venture to plead her cause, as she is apt to speak too much, or omit what was material. *Folly* asks for a counsellor, and chooses Mercury; Apollo is selected by Venus. The fourth part consists of a long dissertation between Jupiter and *Love*, on the manner of loving. *Love* advises Jupiter, if he wishes to taste of truest happiness, to descend on earth, to lay down all his majesty and pomp; and, in the figure of a mere mortal, to seek to give pleasure to some beautiful maiden: “Then wilt thou feel quite another contentment than that thou hast hitherto enjoyed: instead of a single pleasure it will be doubled; for there is as much pleasure to be loved, as to love.” Jupiter agrees that this may be true, but he thinks that to attain to this it requires too much time, too much trouble, too many attentions,—and that after all it is not worth them!

In the fifth part, Apollo, the advocate for Venus, in a long pleading demands justice against *Folly*. The Gods, seduced by his eloquence, show by their indignation that they would condemn *Folly* without hearing her advocate Mercury. But Jupiter commands silence, and Mer-

cury replies. His pleading is as long as the adverse party's, and his arguments in favour of *Folly* are so plausible, that when he concludes his address, the gods are divided in opinion; some espouse the cause of *Love*, and some that of *Folly*. Jupiter, after trying in vain to make them agree together, pronounces this award:—

“ On account of the difficulty and importance of your disputes and the diversity of your opinions, we have suspended your contest from this day to three times seven times nine centuries. In the mean time we command you to live amicably together, without injuring one another. *Folly* shall lead *Love*, and take him whithersoever he pleases; and when restored to his sight, after consulting the Fates, sentence shall be pronounced.”

Many beautiful conceptions are scattered in this elegant morality. It has given birth to subsequent imitations; it was too original and playful an idea not to be appropriated by the poets. To this morality we perhaps owe the panegyric of *Folly* by Erasmus, and the *Love and Folly* of La Fontaine.

## RELIGIOUS NOUVELLETES.

I SHALL notice a class of very singular works, in which the spirit of romance has been called in to render religion more attractive to certain heated imaginations.

In the fifteenth century was published a little book of *prayers*, accompanied by *figures*, both of a very uncommon nature for a religious publication. It offers too curious objects to pass over in silence. It is entitled *Hortulus Animæ cum Oratiunculis aliquibus superadditis quæ in prioribus Libris non habentur*.

It is a small octavo *en lettres Gothiques* printed by John Grunninger, 1500. "A garden," says the author, "which abounds with flowers for the pleasure of the soul;" but Marchand tells us they are full of poison. In spite of his fine promises, the chief part of these meditations are as puerile as they are superstitious. This we might excuse, because the ignorance and superstition of the times allowed such things; but the *figures* which accompany the work are to be condemned in all ages; one represents Saint Ursula and some of her eleven thousand virgins, with all the licentious inventions of an Aretine. What strikes the ear

does not so much irritate the senses, observes the sage Horace, as what is presented in all its nudity to the eye. One of these designs is only ridiculous: David is represented as examining Bathsheba bathing, while Cupid hovering round him throws his dart, and with a malicious smile triumphs in his success: we have had many gross and strange designs like this. There is a laughable picture in a village in Holland, in which Abraham appears ready to sacrifice his son Isaac by a loaded blunderbuss; but his pious intention is entirely frustrated by an angel urining in the pan. Something similar is the design of another painting, in which the Virgin receives the annunciation of the angel Gabriel with a huge chaplet of beads tied round her waist, reading her own offices, and kneeling before a crucifix; or, like another happy invention to be seen on an altar-piece at Worms, in which the Virgin throws Jesus in the hopper of a mill, while from the other side he issues, changed into little morsels of bread with which the priests feast the people. Matthi-son, a modern traveller, describes a picture in a church at Constance, called the Conception of the holy Virgin. An old man lies on a cloud, whence he darts out a vast beam, which passes through a dove hovering just below; at the end of a beam appears a large transparent egg, in which egg is

seen a child in swaddling clothes with a glory round it. Mary sits leaning in an arm chair, and opens her mouth to receive the egg.

I must not pass unnoticed in this article a production as extravagant in its design, in which the author prided himself on discussing three thousand questions concerning his favourite lady Mary.

The publication now adverted to was not presented to the world in a barbarous age and in a barbarous country, but printed at Paris in 1668. It bears for title, *Devote Salutation des Membres sacres du Corps de la Glorieuse Vierge, Mere de Dieu*. That is, "A Devout Salutation of the Holy Members of the Body of the Glorious Virgin, Mother of God." It was printed and published with an approbation and privilege! which is more strange than the work itself. Valois reprobates it in these just terms: "What would Innocent XI. have done, after having abolished the shameful *Office of the Conception, Indulgences, &c.* if he had seen a volume in which the impertinent devotion of that visionary monk caused to be printed, with permission of his superiors, Meditations on all the Parts of the Body of the Holy Virgin? Religion, decency, and good sense, are they not alike wounded by such an extravagance?" In the *Journal des Sçavans*, for December 1703,



I find a specimen of these *salutations*. They have preserved the most decent ones, in which this fanatic salutes the *hair* and the *ears* of the holy Virgin.

*Salutation to the Hair.*

“ I salute you, charming hair of Maria! Rays of the mystical sun! Lines of the centre and circumference of all created perfection! Veins of gold of the mine of love! Chains of the prison of God! Roots of the tree of life! Rivulets of the fountain of Paradise! Strings of the bow of charity! Nets that caught Jesus, and shall be used in the hunting-day of souls!”

*Salutation to the Ears.*

“ I salute ye, intelligent ears of Maria! ye presidents of the princes of the poor! Tribunal for their petitions; salvation at the audience of the miserable! University of all divine wisdom! Receivers general of all wards! Ye are pierced with the rings of our chains; ye are impearled with our necessities!”

The images, prints, and miniatures, with which the catholic religion has occasion to decorate its

splendid ceremonies, have frequently been consecrated to the purposes of love: they have been so many votive offerings worthy to have been suspended in the temple of Idalia. Pope Alexander VI. had the images of the Virgin made to represent some of his mistresses; the famous Vanozza, his favourite, was placed on the altar of Santa Maria del Popolo; and Julia Farnese furnished a subject for another Virgin. The same genius of pious gallantry also visited our country. The statuaries made the queen of Henry III. a model for the face of the Virgin Mary. Hearne elsewhere affirms, that the Virgin Mary was generally made to bear a resemblance to the queens of the age, which, no doubt, produced some real devotion in the courtiers.

The prayer-books of certain pious libertines were decorated with the portraits of their favourite minions and ladies in the characters of saints, and even of the Virgin and Jesus. This scandalous practice was particularly prevalent in that reign of debauchery in France, when Henry III. held the reins of government with a loose hand. In a missal once appertaining to the queen of Lewis XII. may be seen a mitred ape, giving its benediction to a man prostrate before it; a keen reproach to the clergy of that day. Charles V., however pious that emperor affected

to be, had a missal painted for his mistress by the great Albert Durer, the borders of which are crowded with extravagant grotesques, consisting of apes, who were sometimes elegantly sportive, giving clysters to one another, and in many much more offensive attitudes, not adapted to heighten the piety of the Royal Mistress. This missal has two French verses written by the Emperor himself, who does not seem to have been ashamed of his present. The Italians carried this taste to excess. The manners of our country were more rarely tainted with this deplorable licentiousness, although I have observed an innocent tendency towards it, by examining the illuminated manuscripts of our ancient metrical romances: while we admire the vivid colouring of these splendid manuscripts, the curious observer will perceive that almost every heroine is represented in a state which appears incompatible with her reputation for chastity. Most of these works are, I believe, of French origin.

A good supplement might be formed to religious indecencies from the Golden Legend, which abounds in them. Henry Stephens's Apology for Herodotus might be likewise consulted with effect for the same purpose. There is a story of St. Mary the Egyptian, who was perhaps a looser liver than Mary Magdalen; for not being

able to pay for her passage to Jerusalem, whither she was going to adore the holy cross and sepulchre, in despair she thought of an expedient in lieu of payment to the ferryman, which required at least going twice, instead of once, to Jerusalem as a penitential pilgrimage. This anecdote presents the genuine character of certain *devotees*, who would have formed accomplished methodists.

Melchior Inchoffer, a jesuit, published a book to vindicate the miracle of a *Letter* which the Virgin Mary had addressed to the citizens of Messina: when Naudé brought him positive proofs of its evident forgery, Inchoffer ingenuously confessed that he knew it was an imposture, but that he had done it by the *orders* of his *superiors*.

This same *letter* of the Virgin Mary was like a *donation* made to her by Louis the eleventh of *the whole county* of Boulogne, retaining, however, for *his own use the revenues!* This solemn act bears the date of the year 1478, and is entitled, "Conveyance of Louis the eleventh to the Virgin of Boulogne, of the right and title of the fief and homage of the county of Boulogne, which is held by the Count of Saint Pol, to render a faithful account before the image of the said lady."

Maria Agreda, a religious visionary, wrote *the Life of the Virgin*. She informs us that she resisted the commands of God and the holy Mary

till the year 1637, when she began to compose this curious rhapsody. When she had finished this *original* production, her confessor advised her to *burn* it; she obeyed. Her friends, however, who did not think her less inspired than she informed them she was, advised her to re-write the work. When printed it spread rapidly from country to country: new editions appeared at Lisbon, Madrid, Perpignan, and Antwerp. It was the rose of Sharon for those climates. There are so many pious absurdities in this book which were found to give such pleasure to the devout, that it was solemnly honoured with the censure of the Sorbonne; and it spread the more!

The head of this lady was quite turned by her religion. In the first six chapters she relates the visions of the Virgin, which induced her to write her own life. She begins the history *ab ovo*, as it may be expressed; for she has formed a narrative of what passed during the nine months in which the Virgin was confined in the womb of her mother St. Anne. After the birth of Mary she received an augmentation of angelic guards; we have several conversations which God held with the Virgin during the first eighteen months after her birth. And it is in this manner she formed a *circulating novel*, which delighted the female devotees of the seventeenth century.

The worship paid to the Virgin Mary in Spain and Italy exceeds that which is given to the Son or the Father. When they pray to Mary, their imagination pictures a beautiful woman, they really feel a *passion*; while Jesus is only regarded as a *Bambino*, or infant at the breast, and the *Father* is hardly ever recollected; but the *Madona, la Senhora, la Maria Santa*, while she inspires their religious inclinations, is a mistress to those who have none.

Of similar works there exist an entire race, and the libraries of the curious may yet preserve a shelf of these religious *nouvellettes*. The Jesuits were the usual authors of these rhapsodies. I find an account of a book which pretends to describe what passes in Paradise. A Spanish Jesuit published at Salamanca a volume in folio, 1652, entitled *Empyreologia*. He dwells with great complacency on the joys of the celestial abode; there always will be music in heaven with material instruments as our ears are already accustomed to; otherwise he thinks the celestial music would not be music for us! But another Jesuit is more particular in his accounts. He positively assures us that we shall experience a supreme pleasure in kissing and embracing the bodies of the blessed; they will bathe in the presence of each other, and for this purpose there are most agreeable baths in which we shall

swim like fish; that we shall all warble as sweetly as larks and nightingales; that the angels will dress themselves in female habits, their hair curled; wearing petticoats and fardingales, and with the finest linen; that men and women will amuse themselves in masquerades, feasts, and balls.—Women will sing more agreeably than men to exalt these entertainments, and at the resurrection will have more luxuriant tresses, ornamented with ribbons and head-dresses as in this life!

Such were the books once so devoutly studied, and which doubtless were often literally understood. How very bold must the minds of the Jesuits have been, and how very humble those of their readers, that such extravagances should ever be published! And yet, even to the time in which I am now writing,—even at this day,—the same picturesque and impassioned pencil is employed by the modern Apostles of Mysticism—the Swedenburghians,—the Moravians,—the Methodists!

I find an account of another book of this class, ridiculous enough to be noticed. It has for title, “The Spiritual Kalendar, composed of as many Madrigals or Sonnets and Epigrams as there are days in the year; written for the consolation of the pious and the curious. By father G. Cortade, Austin Preacher at Bayonne, 1665.” To give a notion of this singular collection take an Epigram

addressed to a Jesuit, who, young as he was, used to *put spurs under his shirt* to mortify the outer-man! The Kalendar-poet thus gives a point to these spurs :

Il ne pourra donc plus ni ruer ni hennir  
 Sous le rude Eperon dont tu fais son supplice ;  
 Qui vit jamais tel artifice,  
 De piquer un cheval pour le mieux retenir !

HUMBLY IMITATED.

Your body no more will neigh and will kick,  
 The point of the spur must eternally prick ;  
 Whoever contrived a thing with such skill ;  
 To keep spurring a horse to make him stand still !

One of the most extravagant works projected on the subject of the Virgin Mary appears to be the following one. The prior of a convent in Paris had reiteratedly intreated Varillas the historian to examine a work composed by one of his monks ; and of which—not being himself addicted to letters—he wished to be governed by his opinion. Varillas at length yielded to the entreaties of the prior ; and to regale the critic, they laid on two tables for his inspection seven enormous volumes in folio !

This rather disheartened our reviewer : but greater was his astonishment, when, having opened



the first volume, he found its title to be *Summa Dei-paræ*; and as Saint Thomas had made a *Sum*, or System of Theology, so our monk had formed a *System* of the *Virgin*! He immediately comprehended the design of our good father, who had laboured on this work full thirty years, and who boasted he had treated *Three Thousand Questions* concerning the Virgin; of which he flattered himself not a single one had ever yet been imagined by any one but himself!

Perhaps a more extraordinary design was never known. Varillas, pressed to give his judgment on this work, advised the prior with great prudence and good-nature to amuse the honest old monk with the hope of printing these seven folios, but always to start some new difficulties; for it would be inhuman to give so deep a chagrin to a man who had reached his 74th year, as to inform him of the nature of his favourite occupations; and that after his death, he should throw the seven folios into the fire.

“CRITICAL SAGACITY,” AND “HAPPY  
CONJECTURE;” OR, BENTLEY’S  
MILTON.

—BENTLEY, long to wrangling schools confined,  
And but by books acquainted with mankind—  
To MILTON lending sense, to HORACE wit,  
He makes them write, what never poet writ.

DR. BENTLEY’S edition of our English Homer is sufficiently known by name. As it stands a terrifying beacon to conjectural criticism, I shall just notice some of those violations which the learned critic ventured to commit with all the arrogance of a Scaliger. This man so deeply versed in ancient learning it will appear was destitute of taste and genius in his native language.

It was an unfortunate ingenuity in our critic, when, to persuade the world of the necessity of his edition, he imagined a fictitious editor of Milton’s Poems: for it was this ingenuity which produced all his absurdities. As it is certain that the blind bard employed an amanuensis, it was not improbable that many words of similar sound, but very different signification, might have disfigured the poem; but our Doctor was bold enough to conjecture that this amanuensis *interpolated* whole

verses of his own composition in the "Paradise Lost!" Having laid down this fatal position, all the consequences of his folly naturally followed it. Yet if we must conjecture, the more probable one will be, that Milton, who was never careless of his future fame, had his poem *read* to him after it had been published. The first edition appeared in 1667, and the second in 1674 in which all the faults of the former edition are continued. By these *faults*, the Doctor means what *he* considers to be such: for we shall soon see that his "Canons of Criticism" are apocryphal.

Bentley says that he will *supply* the want of manuscripts to collate (to use his own words) by his own "SAGACITY," and "HAPPY CONJECTURE."

Milton, after the conclusion of Satan's speech to the fallen angels, proceeds thus :

1. He spake : and to confirm his words out flew
2. Millions of flaming SWORDS, drawn from the thighs
3. Of mighty cherubim : the sudden blaze
4. Far round illumin'd hell ; highly they rag'd
5. Against the Highest ; and fierce with grasped ARMS
6. Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war,
7. Hurling defiance tow'rd the VAULT of Heaven.

In this passage, which is as perfect as human wit can make, the Doctor alters three words. In the second line he puts *blades* instead of *swords* ; in

the fifth he puts *swords* instead of *arms*; and in the last line he prefers *walls* to *vault*. All these changes are so many defœdations of the poem. The word *swords* is far more poetical than *blades*, which may as well be understood of *knives* as *swords*. The word *arms*, the generic for the specific term, is still stronger and nobler than *swords*; and the beautiful conception of *vault*, which is always indefinite to the eye, while the solidity of *walls* would but meanly describe the highest Heaven, gives an idea of grandeur and majesty.

Milton writes, book i. v. 63.

No light, but rather DARKNESS VISIBLE  
Served only to discover sights of woe.

Perhaps borrowed from Spenser :

A little glooming light, much like a shade.  
Faery Queen. B. i. C. i. St. 14.

This fine expression of "DARKNESS VISIBLE" the Doctor's critical sagacity has thus rendered clearer :—

"No light, but rather A TRANSPICUOUS GLOOM."

Again our learned critic distinguishes the 74th line of the first book—

As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole,

G 2

as “a vicious verse,” and therefore with “happy conjecture,” and no taste, thrusts in an entire verse of his own composition—

“DISTANCE, WHICH TO EXPRESS ALL MEASURE FAILS.”

Milton *writes*,

Our torments also may in length of time  
Become our elements.

B. ii. ver. 274.

Bentley CORRECTS,

“Then, AS WAS WELL OBSERV'D, our torments may  
Become our elements.”

A curious instance how the insertion of a single prosaic expression turns a fine verse into something worse than the vilest prose.

To conclude with one more instance of critical emendation: Milton says, with an agreeable turn of expression—

So parted they; the angel up to heaven,  
From the thick shade; and Adam to his bower.

Bentley “conjectures” these two verses to be inaccurate, and in lieu of the last writes—

“ADAM, TO RUMINATE ON PAST DISCOURSE.”

And then our erudite critic reasons! as thus:

After the conversation between the Angel and

Adam in the bower, it may be well presumed that our first parent waited on his heavenly guest at his departure to some little distance from it, till he began to take his flight towards heaven; and therefore "sagaciously" thinks that the poet could not with propriety say that the Angel parted from the *thick shade*, that is, the *bower*, to go to heaven. But if Adam attended the Angel no farther than the door or entrance of the bower, then he shrewdly asks "How Adam could return to his bower if he was never out of it?"

Our editor has made above a thousand similar corrections in this edition of Milton! Some have suspected that the same kind intention which prompted Dryden to persuade Creech to undertake a translation of Horace influenced those who encouraged our Doctor, in thus exercising his "sagacity" and "happy conjecture" on the epic of Milton. He is one of those learned critics who have happily "elucidated their author into obscurity;" and comes nearest to that "true conjectural critic" whose practice a Portuguese satirist so greatly admired: by which means if he be only followed up by future editors, we might have that immaculate edition, in which little or nothing should be found of the original!

I have collected these few instances as not uninteresting to men of taste; they may convince

us that a scholar may be familiarised to Greek and Latin, though a stranger to his vernacular literature; and that a verbal critic may sometimes be successful in his attempts on a *single word*, though he may be incapable of tasting an *entire sentence*. Let it also remain as a gibbet on the high roads of literature; that "conjectural critics" as they pass may not forget the foolish fate of Bentley.

The following epigram appeared on this occasion:—

ON MILTON'S EXECUTIONER.

Did MILTON'S PROSE, O CHARLES! thy death defend?  
 A furious foe, unconscious, proves a friend;  
 ON MILTON'S VERSE does BENTLEY comment? know,  
 A weak officious friend becomes a foe.  
 While he would seem his author's fame to further,  
 The MURDEROUS CRITIC has aveng'd THY MURDER.

It is acknowledged, that the classical learning of Dr. Bentley was singular and acute. But the profound erudition of words is frequently found not to be allied to the sensibility of taste, and far removed from the ardour of genius.

## A JANSENIST DICTIONARY.

WHEN L'Advocat published his concise Biographical Dictionary, the Jansenists, the methodists of France, considered it as having been written with a view to depreciate the merit of *their* friends. It must be acknowledged there was little foundation for this complaint; but the spirit of party is soon alarmed. The Abbé Barral undertook a dictionary devoted to their cause. In this labour he indulged, assisted by his good friends the Jansenists, all the impetuosity and acerbity of a splenetic adversary. The abbé was, however, an able writer; his anecdotes are numerous and well chosen; and his style is rapid and glowing. The work bears for title "Dictionnaire Historique, Littéraire, et Critique des Hommes Célebres," 6 vols. 8vo. 1759. It is no unuseful speculation to observe in what manner a faction represents those who have not been its favourites: for this purpose I select the characters of Fenelon, Cranmer, and Luther.

In their article of FENELON they write,—“ He composed for the instruction of the Dukes of Burgundy, Anjou, and Berry, several works, amongst others the Telemachus. A singular book, which partakes at once of the character of a romance,



and of a poem, and which substitutes a prosaic cadence for versification. But several luscious pictures would not lead us to suspect that this book issued from the pen of a sacred minister for the education of a prince; and what we are told by a famous poet is not improbable, that Fenelon did not compose it at court, but that it is the fruits of his retreat in his diocese. And indeed the amours of Calypso and Eucharis should not be the first lessons that a minister should give his scholars; and besides, the fine moral maxims which the author attributes to the Pagan divinities are not well placed in their mouth. Is not this rendering homage to the demons of the great truths which we receive from the Gospel, and to despoil J. C. to render respectable the annihilated gods of paganism?—This prelate was a wretched divine, more familiar with the light of profane authors than with that of the fathers of the church. Phe-lipeaux has given us in his narrative of "Quietism," the portrait of the friend of Madame Guyon. This archbishop has a lively genius, artful, and supple, which can flatter and dissimulate if ever any could. Seduced by a woman, he was solicitous to spread his seduction. He joined to the politeness and elegance of conversation a modest air, which rendered him amiable. He spoke of spirituality with the expression and the enthu-

siasm of a prophet; with such talents he flattered himself that every thing would yield to him."

In this work the Protestants, particularly the first reformers, find no quarter; and thus virulently their rabid catholicism exults over the unhappy end of Thomas Cranmer, the first protestant archbishop.

"THOMAS CRANMER married the sister of Oslander. As Henry VIII. detested married priests, Cranmer kept this second marriage in profound secrecy. This action serves to show the character of this great reformer, who is the hero of Burnet, whose history is so much esteemed in England. What blindness to suppose him an Athanasius who was at once a Lutheran secretly married, a consecrated archbishop under the Roman pontiff, whose power he detested, saying the mass in which he did not believe, and granting a power to say it! The divine vengeance burst on this sycophantic courtier, who had always prostituted his conscience to his fortune."

Their character of Luther is quite Lutheran in one sense, for Luther was himself a stranger to moderate strictures.

"The furious LUTHER, perceiving himself assisted by the credit of several princes, broke loose against the church with the most inveterate rage,

and rung the most terrible alarm against the pope. According to him we should have set fire to every thing, and reduced to one heap of ashes the pope and the princes who supported him. Nothing equals the rage of this phrenetic man, who was not satisfied with exhaling his fury in horrid declamations, but who was for putting all in practice. He raised his excesses to the height by inveighing against the vow of chastity, and in marrying publicly Catherine De Bore, a nun, whom he enticed with eight others from their convents. He had prepared the minds of the people for this infamous proceeding by a treatise which he entitled "Examples of the Papistical Doctrine and Theology," in which he condemns the praises which all the saints had given to continence. He died at length quietly enough, in 1546, at Isleben, his country-place:—God reserving the terrible effects of his vengeance to another life."

Cranmer, who perished at the stake, these fanatic religionists proclaim as an example of "divine vengeance;" but Luther, the true parent of the Reformation, "died quietly enough at Isleben:" this must have puzzled their mode of reasoning; but they extricate themselves out of the dilemma by the usual way. Their curses are never what the lawyers call "lapsed legacies."

## MANUSCRIPTS AND BOOKS.

IT would be no uninteresting literary speculation to describe the difficulties which some of our most favourite works encountered in their manuscript state, and even after they had passed through the press. Sterne, when he had finished his first and second volumes of *Tristram Shandy*, offered them to a bookseller at York for fifty pounds; but was refused: he came to town with his MSS; and he and Robert Dodsley agreed in a manner of which neither repented.

The *Rosciad*, with all its merit, lay for a considerable time in a dormant state, till Churchill and his publisher became impatient, and almost hopeless of success.—Burn's *Justice* was disposed of by its author, who was weary of soliciting booksellers to purchase the ms. for a trifle, and which now yields an annual income. Collins burnt his odes before the door of his publisher.—The publication of Dr. Blair's *Sermons* was refused by Strahan, and the "Essay on the Immutability of Truth," by Dr. Beattie, could find no publisher, and was printed by two friends of the author, at their joint expense.

"The sermon in *Tristram Shandy*" (says Sterne, in his preface to his *Sermons*) "was printed by

itself some years ago, but could find neither purchasers nor readers." When it was inserted in his eccentric work, it met with a most favourable reception, and occasioned the others to be collected.

Joseph Warton writes, "When Gray published his exquisite Ode on Eton College, his first publication, little notice was taken of it." The *Polyeucte* of Corneille, which is now accounted to be his master-piece, when he read it to the literary assembly held at the Hotel de Rambouillet, was not approved. Voiture came the next day, and in gentle terms acquainted him with the unfavourable opinion of the critics. Such ill judges were then the most fashionable wits of France.

It was with great difficulty that Mrs. Centlivre could get her "Busy Body" performed. Wilks threw down his part with an oath of detestation. —Our comic authoress fell on her knees and wept. —Her tears, and not her wit, prevailed.

A pamphlet published in the year 1738, entitled "A Letter to the Society of Booksellers, on the Method of forming a true Judgment of the Manuscripts of Authors," contains some curious literary intelligence, and is as follows:—

"We have known books," says our writer, "that in the ms. have been damned, as well as others which seemed to be so, since, after their appear-

ance in the world, they have often lain by neglected. Witness the "Paradise Lost" of the famous Milton, and the Optics of Sir Isaac Newton, which last, 'tis said, had no character or credit here till noticed in France. "The Historical Connection of the Old and New Testament," by Shuckford, is also reported to have been seldom inquired after for about a twelvemonth's time; however it made a shift, though not without some difficulty, to creep up to a second edition, and afterwards even to a third. And, which is another remarkable instance, the manuscript of Dr. Prideaux's "Connection" is well known to have been bandied about from hand to hand, among several, at least five or six of the most eminent booksellers, during the space of at least two years, to no purpose, none of them undertaking to print that excellent work. It lay in obscurity, till Archdeacon Echard, the author's friend, strongly recommended it to Tonson. It was purchased, and the publication was very successful. Robinson Crusoe's manuscript also ran through the whole trade, nor would any one print it, though the writer, De Foe, was in good repute as an author. One bookseller at last not remarkable for his discernment, but for his speculative turn, engaged in this publication. *This* bookseller got above a thousand guineas by it; and the booksellers are accumulating money every

hour by editions of this work in all shapes. The undertaker of the translation of Rapin, after a very considerable part of the work had been published, was not a little dubious of its success, and was strongly inclined to drop the design. It proved at last to be a most profitable literary adventure." It is, perhaps, useful to record, that while the fine compositions of genius and the elaborate labours of erudition are doomed to encounter these obstacles to fame, and never are but slightly remunerated, works of another description are rewarded in the most princely manner: at the recent sale of a bookseller, the copy-right of "Vyse's Spelling-book" was sold at the enormous price of £2,200; with an annuity of 50 guineas to the author!

### THE TURKISH SPY.

WHATEVER may be the defects of the "Turkish Spy," the author has shown one uncommon merit, by having opened a new species of composition, which has been pursued by other writers with inferior success, if we except the charming "Persian Letters" of Montesquieu. The "Turkish Spy" is a book which has delighted us in our childhood, and to which we can still recur with

pleasure. But its ingenious author is unknown to three parts of his admirers.

In Boswell's, "Life of Johnson" is this dialogue concerning the writer of the "Turkish Spy." "B. Pray, Sir, is the "Turkish Spy" a genuine book? J. No, Sir. Mrs. Manley in her "Life" says, that *her father wrote the two first volumes*; and in another book—"Dunton's Life and Errours," we find that the rest was *written by one Sault*, at two guineas a sheet, under the direction of Dr. Midgeley."

I do not know on what authority Mrs. Manley advances that her father was the author; but this lady was never nice in detailing facts. Dunton, indeed, gives some information in a very loose manner. He tells us, p. 242, that it is probable, by reasons which he insinuates, that *one Bradshaw*, a hackney author, was the writer of the "Turkish Spy." This man probably was engaged by Dr. Midgeley to translate the volumes as they appeared at the rate of 40s. per sheet. On the whole, all this proves, at least, how little the author was known while the volumes were publishing, and that he is as little known at present by the extract from Boswell.

The ingenious writer of the Turkish Spy is John Paul Marana, an Italian; so that the Turkish Spy is just as real a personage as Cid Hamet,



from whom Cervantes says he had his "History of Don Quixote." Marana had been imprisoned for a political conspiracy; after his release he retired to Monaco, where he wrote the "History of the Plot," which is said to be valuable for many curious particulars. Marana was at once a man of letters and of the world. He had long wished to reside at Paris; in that assemblage of taste and luxury his talents procured him patrons. It was during his residence there that he produced his "Turkish Spy." By this ingenious contrivance he gave the history of the last age. He discovers a rich memory, and a lively imagination; but critics have said that he touches every thing, and penetrates nothing. His first three volumes greatly pleased: the rest are inferior. Plutarch, Seneca, and Pliny, were his favourite authors. He lived in a philosophical mediocrity; and in the last years of his life retired to his native country, where he died in 1693.

Charpentier gave the first particulars of this ingenious man. Even in his time the volumes were read as they came out, while its author remained unknown. Charpentier's proof of the author is indisputable; for he preserved the following curious certificate, written in Marana's own hand-writing.

"I, the under-written John Paul Marana, author

of a manuscript Italian volume, intituled, "*L'Esploratore Turco, tomo terzo,*" acknowledge that Mr. Charpentier, appointed by the Lord Chancellor to revise the said manuscript, has not granted me his certificate for printing the said manuscript, but on condition to rescind four passages. The first beginning, &c. By this I promise to suppress from the said manuscript the places above marked, so that there shall remain no vestige; since, without agreeing to this, the said certificate would not have been granted to me by the said Mr. Charpentier; and for surety of the above, which I acknowledge to be true, and which I promise punctually to execute, I have signed the present writing. Paris, 28th September, 1686.

JOHN PAUL MARANA."

This paper serves as a curious instance in what manner the censors of books clipped the wings of genius when it was found too daring or excursive.

These rescindings of the Censor appear to be marked by Marana in the printed work. We find more than once, chasms with these words: "the beginning of *this* letter is wanting in the Italian translation; the *original* paper *being* torn."

No one has yet taken the pains to observe the

dates of the first editions of the French and the English Turkish Spies, which would settle the disputed origin. It appears by the document before us, to have been originally *written* in Italian, but probably was first *published* in French. Does the English Turkish Spy differ from the French one?

### SPENSER, JONSON, AND SHAKSPEARE.

THE characters of these three great masters of English poetry are sketched by Fuller, in his "Worthies of England." It is a literary morsel that must not be passed by. The criticisms of those who lived in or near the times when authors flourished merit our observation. They sometimes elicit a ray of intelligence, which later opinions do not always give.

He observes on SPENSER—"The many *Chaucerisms* used (for I will not say affected by him) are thought by the ignorant to be *blemishes*, known by the learned to be *beauties*, to his book; which, notwithstanding, had been more SALEABLE, if more conformed to our modern language."

On JONSON.—"His parts were not so ready to *run of themselves*, as able to answer the spur; so that it may be truly said of him, that he had an

*elaborate wit*, wrought out by his own industry.— He would *sit silent* in learned company, and suck in (*besides wine*) their several humours into his observation. What was *ore* in *others*, he was able to *refine* himself.

“ He was paramount in the dramatic part of poetry, and taught the stage an exact conformity to the laws of comedians. His comedies were above the *Volge* (which are only tickled with downright obscenity), and took not so well at the *first stroke* as at the *rebound*, when beheld the second time; yea, they will endure reading so long as either ingenuity or learning are fashionable in our nation. If his latter be not so spritful and vigorous as his first pieces, all that are old will, and all who desire to be old should, excuse him therein.”

On SHAKSPEARE.—“ He was an eminent instance of the truth of that rule, *poeta non fit, sed nascitur*; one is not made, but born a poet. Indeed his *learning* was but very little; so that as *Cornish diamonds* are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed and smoothed, even as they are taken out of the earth, so *Nature* itself was all the *art* which was used upon him.

“ Many were the *wit-combats* betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a *Spanish great galleon*, and an *English man of war*. Master

*Jonson* (like the former) was built far higher in learning; *solid*, but *slow* in his performances. *Shakspeare*, with an English man of war, lesser in *bulk*, but lighter in *sailing*, could *turn with all tides*, and take advantage of *all winds*, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Had these "Wit-combats," between Shakspeare and Jonson, which Fuller notices, been chronicled by some faithful *Boswell* of the age, our literary history would have received an interesting accession. A letter has been published by Dr. Berkenhout relating to an evening's conversation between our great rival bards, and Alleyn the actor. Peele, a dramatic poet, writes to his friend Marlow, another poet. The Doctor unfortunately in giving this copy did not recollect his authority.

" FRIEND MARLOW,

" I never longed for thy companeye more than last night: we were all very merrye at the Globe, where Ned Alleyn did not scruple to affirme pleasantly to thy friend WILL, that he had stolen his speeche about the qualities of an actor's excellencye in Hamlet his Tragedye, from conversations manyfold which had passed between them, and opinyons given by Alleyn touchinge this subject. SHAKSPEARE did not take this talk in good sorte; but JONSON put an end to the strife, by

wittylie remarking,—this affaïre needeth no contention: you stole it from NED no doubt; do not marvel; have you not seen him act times out of number?"

This letter is not genuine, but one of those ingenious forgeries which the late George Steevens practised on the literary antiquary; they were not always of this innocent cast. It has been frequently quoted as an original document. I have preserved it as an example of *Literary Forgeries*, and the danger which literary historians incur by such dangerous practices.

## BEN JONSON, FELTHAM, AND RANDOLPH.

BEN JONSON, like most celebrated wits, was very unfortunate in conciliating the affections of his brother writers. He certainly possessed a great share of arrogance, and was desirous of ruling the realms of Parnassus with a despotic sceptre. That he was not always successful in his theatrical compositions, is evident from his abusing, in their title-page, the actors and the public. In this he has been imitated by Fielding. I have collected the following three satiric odes, written when the reception of his "*New-Inn*, or

*The Light Heart*," warmly exasperated the irritable disposition of our poet.

He printed the title in the following manner :

"*New-Inn, or The Light Heart, a Comedy never acted, but most negligently played by some, the King's servants ; and more squeamishly beheld and censured by others, the King's subjects, 1629. Now at last set at liberty to the readers, his Majesty's servants and subjects, to be judged, 1631.*"

At the end of this play he published the following Ode, in which he threatens to quit the stage for ever ; and turn at once a Horace, an Anacreon, and a Pindar.

"The just indignation the author took at the vulgar censure of his play, begat this following Ode to himself :

"Come, leave the loathed stage,  
And the more loathsome age ;  
Where pride and impudence (in fashion knit)  
Usurp the chair of wit !  
Inditing and arraigning every day  
Something they call a play.  
Let their fastidious, vaine  
Commission of braine  
Run on, and rage, sweat, censure, and condemn ;  
They were not made for thee,—less thou for them.

"Say that thou pour'st them wheat,  
And they will acorns eat :

'T were simple fury, still, thyself to waste  
     On such as have no taste !  
 To offer them a surfet of pure bread,  
     Whose appetites are dead !  
     No, give them graines their fill  
     Husks, draff, to drink and swill.  
 If they love lees, and leave the lusty wine,  
 Envy them not their palate with the swine.

    “ No doubt some mouldy tale  
     Like PERICLES\*, and stale  
 As the shrieve's crusts, and nasty as his fish-  
     Scraps, out of every dish  
 Thrown forth, and rak't into the common-tub,  
     May keep up the play-club :  
     There sweepings do as well  
     As the best order'd meale.  
 For who the relish of these guests will fit,  
 Needs set them but the almes-basket of wit.

    “ And much good do't you then,  
     Brave plush and velvet men  
 Can feed on orts, and safe in your stage clothes,  
     Dare quit, upon your oathes,  
 The staggers, and the stage-wrights too (your peers),  
     Of larding your large ears  
     With their foul comic socks,  
     Wrought upon twenty blocks :  
 Which, if they're torn, and turn'd, and patch'd enough,  
 The gamesters share your guilt, and you their stuff.

\* This play, Langbaine says, is written by Shakspeare.



" Leave things so prostitute,  
 And take the Alcæick lute,  
 Or thine own Horace, or Anacreon's lyre ;  
 Warm thee by Pindar's fire ;  
 And, tho' thy nerves be shrunk, and blood be cold,  
 Ere years have made thee old,  
 Strike that disdainful heat  
 Throughout, to their defeat ;  
 As curious fools, and envious of thy strain,  
 May, blushing, swear no palsy's in thy brain \* .

" But when they hear thee sing  
 The glories of thy King,  
 His zeal to God, and his just awe o'er men ;  
 They may blood-shaken then,  
 Feel such a flesh-quake to possess their powers,  
 As they shall cry like ours,  
 In sound of peace, or wars,  
 No harp ere hit the stars,  
 In tuning forth the acts of his sweet reign,  
 And raising Charles his chariot 'bove his wain."

This Magisterial Ode, as Langbaine calls it, was answered by *Owen Feltham*, author of the admirable "Resolves," who has written with great satiric acerbity the retort courteous. His character of this poet should be attended to:—

\* He had the palsy at that time.

*“ An Answer to the Ode, Come leave the loathed  
Stage, &c.”*

“ Come leave this sawcy way  
Of baiting those that pay  
Dear for the sight of your declining wit :  
'Tis known it is not fit  
That a sale poet, just contempt once thrown,  
Should cry up thus his own.  
I wonder by what dower,  
Or patent, you had power  
From all to rape a judgment. Let 't suffice,  
Had you been modest, y' ad been granted wise.

“ 'Tis known you can do well,  
And that you do excell  
As a translator ; but when things require  
A genius, and fire,  
Not kindled heretofore by other pains,  
As oft y' ave wanted brains  
And art to strike the white,  
As you have levell'd right :  
Yet if men vouch not things apocryphal,  
You bellow, rave, and spatter round your gall.

“ Jug, Pierce, Peek, Fly \*, and all  
Your jests so nominal,  
Are things so far beneath an able brain,  
As they do throw a stain

\* The names of several of Jonson's Dramatis Personæ.

Thro' all th' unlikely plot, and do displeas  
 As deep as PERICLES.  
 Where yet there is not laid  
 Before a chamber-maid  
 Discourse so weigh'd \*, as might have serv'd of old  
 For schools, when they of love and valour told.

“ Why rage, then ? when the show  
 Should judgment be, and know- †  
 ledge, there are plush who scorn to drudge  
 For stages, yet can judge  
 Not only poets looser lines, but wits,  
 And all their perquisites ;  
 A gift as rich as high  
 Is noble poesie :  
 Yet, tho' in sport it be for Kings a play,  
 'Tis next mechanicks' when it works for pay.

“ Alcæus lute had none,  
 Nor loose Anacreon  
 E'er taught so bold assuming of the bays  
 When they deserv'd no praise.  
 To rail men into approbation  
 Is new to your's alone :  
 And prospers not : for know,  
 Fame is as coy, as you  
 Can be disdainful ; and who dares to prove  
 A rape on her shall gather scorn,—not love.

\* “ New Inn,” Act iii. Scene 2.—Act iv. Scene 4.

† This break was purposely designed by the poet, to  
 expose that awkward one in Ben's third stanza.

" Leave then, this humour vain,  
 And this more humorous strain,  
 Where self-conceit, and choler of the blood,  
 Eclipse what else is good :  
 Then, if you please those raptures high to touch,  
 Whereof you boast so much :  
 And but forbear your crown  
 Till the world puts it on :  
 No doubt, from all you may amazement draw,  
 Since braver theme no Phœbus ever saw."

To console dejected Ben for this just reprimand,  
 Randolph, one of the adopted poetical sons of  
 Jonson, addressed him with all that warmth of  
 grateful affection which a man of genius should  
 have felt on the occasion.

*" An Answer to Mr. Ben Jonson's Ode, to persuade  
 him not to leave the stage.*

## I.

" Ben, do not leave the stage  
 'Cause 'tis a loathsome age ;  
 For pride and impudence will grow too bold,  
 When they shall hear it told  
 They frighted thee ; Stand high, as is thy cause ;  
 Their hiss is thy applause :  
 More just were thy disdain,  
 Had they approved thy vein :  
 So thou for them, and they for thee were born ;  
 They to incense, and thou as much to scorn.

## II.

" Willt thou engross thy store  
 Of wheat, and pour no more, \\  
 Because their bacon-brains had such a taste  
 As more delight in mast :  
 No ! set them forth a board of dainties, full  
 As thy best muse can cull ;  
 Whilst they the while do pine  
 And thirst, midst all their wine.  
 What greater plague can hell itself devise,  
 Than to be willing thus to tantalize ?

## III.

" Thou canst not find them stuff,  
 That will be bad enough  
 To please their pallates : let 'em them refuse,  
 For some pye-corner muse ;  
 She is too fair an hostess, 'twere a sin  
 For them to like thine Inn :  
 'Twas made to entertain  
 Guests of a nobler strain ;  
 Yet, if they will have any of the store,  
 Give them some scraps, and send them from thy dore.

## IV.

" And let those things in plush  
 Till they be taught to blush,  
 Like what they will, and more contented be  
 With what Broom \* swept from thee.

\* His man, Richard Broome, wrote with success  
 several comedies. He had been the amanuensis or

I know thy worth, and that thy lofty strains  
 Write not to cloaths, but brains :  
 But thy great spleen doth rise,  
 'Cause moles will have no eyes :  
 This only in my Ben I faulty find,  
 He's angry they'll not see him that are blind.

## V.

“ Why shon'd the scene be mute  
 'Cause thou canst touch the lute  
 And string thy Horace ? Let each Muse of nine  
 Claim thee, and say, th' art mine.  
 'Twere fond, to let all other flames expire,  
 To sit by Pindar's fire :  
 For by so strange neglect  
 I should myself suspect  
 Thy palsie \* were as well thy brain's disease,  
 If they could shake thy muse which way they please.

## VI.

“ And tho' thou well canst sing  
 The glories of thy King,  
 And on the wings of verse his chariot bear  
 To heaven, and fix it there ;  
 Yet let thy muse as well some raptures raise  
 To please him, as to praise.

attendant of Jonson. The epigram made against Pope for the assistance W. Broome gave him, appears to have been borrowed from this pun. Johnson has inserted it in “ Broome's Life.”

\* He had the palsy at that time.

I would not have thee chuse  
Only a treble muse ;  
But have this envious, ignorant age to know,  
Thou that canst sing so high, canst reach as low."

### ARIOSTO AND TASSO.

It surprises one to find among the literary Italians the merits of Ariosto most keenly disputed: slaves to classical authority they bend down to the majestic regularity of Tasso. Yet the father of Tasso, before his son had rivalled the romantic Ariosto, describes in a letter the effects of the "Orlando" on the people:—"There is no man of learning, no mechanic, no lad, no girl, no old man, who are satisfied to read the "Orlando Furioso" once. This poem serves as the solace of the traveller, who fatigued on his journey deceives his lassitude by chaunting some octaves of this poem. You may hear them sing these stanzas in the streets and in the fields every day." One would have expected that Ariosto would have been the favourite of the people, and Tasso of the critics. But in Venice the gondoliers, and others, sing passages which are generally taken from Tasso, and rarely from

Ariosto. A different fate, I imagined, would have attended the poet who has been distinguished by the epithet of "*The Divine*." I have been told by an Italian man of letters, that this circumstance arose from the relation which Tasso's poem bears to Turkish affairs; as many of the common people have passed into Turkey, either by chance or by war. Besides that the long antipathy existing between the Venetians and the Turks, gave additional force to the patriotic poetry of Tasso. We cannot boast of any similar poems. Thus it was that the people of Greece and Ionia sung the poems of Homer.

The Academia della Crusca gave a public preference to Ariosto. This irritated certain critics, and none more than Chapelain, who could *taste* the regularity of Tasso, but not *feel* the "brave disorder" of Ariosto. He could not approve of those writers,

"Who snatch a grace beyond the reach of art."

"I thank you," he writes, "for the sonnet which your indignation dictated, at the Academy's preference of Ariosto to Tasso. This judgment is overthrown by the confessions of many of the *Cruscanti*, my associates. It would be tedious to enter into its discussion; but it was passion and not equity that



prompted that decision. We confess, that as to what concerns invention and purity of language, Ariosto has eminently the advantage over Tasso ; but majesty, pomp, numbers, and a style truly sublime, united to regularity of design, raise the latter so much above the other that no comparison can fairly exist."

What Chapelain says is perhaps just ; though I did not know that Ariosto's language was purer than Tasso's.

Dr. Cocchi, the great Italian critic, compared " Ariosto's poem to the richer kind of harlequin's habit, made up of pieces of the very best silke and of the liveliest colours. The parts of it are many of them *more beautiful* than in Tasso's poem, but the whole in Tasso is without comparison more of a piece and better made." The critic was extricating himself as safely as he could out of this critical dilemma ; for the disputes were then so violent, that I think one of the disputants took to his bed, and was said to have died of Ariosto and Tasso.

It is the conceit of an Italian to give the name of *April* to *Ariosto*, because it is the season of *flowers* ; and that of *September* to *Tasso*, which is that of *fruits*. Tiraboschi judiciously observes, that no comparison ought to be made between these great rivals. It is comparing " Ovid's Me-

tamorphoses" with "Virgil's *Æneid*;" they are quite different things. In his characters of the two poets, he distinguishes between a romantic poem and a regular epic. Their designs required distinct perfections. But an English reader is not enabled by the wretched versions of Hoole, to echo the verse of La Fontaine, "JE CHERIS L'Arioste et J'ESTIME Le Tasse."

Boileau, some time before his death, was asked by a critic, if he had repented of his celebrated decision concerning the merits of Tasso, whom some Italians had compared with those of Virgil; this had awakened the vengeance of Boileau, who hurled his bolts at the violators of classical majesty. It is supposed that he was ignorant of the Italian language, but by some expressions in his following answer, we may be led to think that Boileau was not ignorant of Italian.

"I have so little changed my opinion, that on a *re-perusal* lately of Tasso, I was sorry that I had not more amply explained myself on this subject in some of my reflections on "Longinus." I should have begun by acknowledging that Tasso had a sublime genius, of great compass, with happy dispositions for the higher poetry. But when I came to the use he made of his talents, I should have shown that judicious discernment

rarely prevailed in his works. That in the greater part of his narrations he attached himself to the agreeable oftener than to the just. That his descriptions are almost always overcharged with superfluous ornaments. That in painting the strongest passions, and in the midst of the agitation they excite, frequently he degenerates into witticisms, which abruptly destroy the pathetic. That he abounds with images of too florid a kind; affected turns; conceits and frivolous thoughts; which, far from being adapted to his Jerusalem, could hardly be supportable in his "Aminta." So that all this, opposed to the gravity, the sobriety, the majesty of Virgil, what is it but tinsel compared with gold?"

It must be acknowledged that this passage, which is to be found in the "Histoire de l'Academie, t. ii. p. 276, may serve as an excellent commentary on our poet's well-known censure. The merits of Tasso are exactly discriminated; and this particular criticism must be valuable to the lovers of poetry. The errors of Tasso were, however, national.

An anonymous gentleman has greatly obliged me with an account of the recitation of these two poets by the gondoliers of Venice, extracted from his travelling pocket-book.

## VENICE.

IN Venice the gondoliers know by heart long passages from Ariosto and Tasso, and often chaunt them with a peculiar melody. But this talent seems at present on the decline:—at least, after taking some pains, I could find no more than two persons who delivered to me in this way a passage from Tasso. Goldoni in his life, however, notices the gondolier returning with him to the city: “he turned the prow of the gondola towards the city, singing all the way the twenty-sixth stanza of the sixteenth canto of the Jerusalem Delivered.” The late Mr. Barry once chaunted to me a passage of Tasso in the manner, as he assured me, of the Gondoliers. But Lord Byron has recently told us, that with the independence of Venice the song of the gondoliers has died away.

“In Venice Tasso’s echoes are no more.”

There are always two concerned, who alternately sing the strophes. We know the melody eventually by Rousseau, to whose songs it is printed; it has properly no melodious movement, and is a sort of medium between the *canto fermo* and the *canto figurato*; it approaches to the former by recitativical declamation, and to the latter

by passages and course, by which one syllable is detained and embellished.

I entered a gondola by moonlight: one singer placed himself forwards, and the other aft, and thus proceeded to St. Georgio. One began the song: when he had ended his strophe the other took up the lay, and so continued the song alternately. Throughout the whole of it, the same notes invariably returned, but, according to the subject matter of the strophe, they laid a greater or a smaller stress, sometimes on one, and sometimes on another note, and indeed changed the enunciation of the whole strophe, as the object of the poem altered.

On the whole, however, their sounds were hoarse and screaming: they seemed, in the manner of all rude uncivilised men, to make the excellency of their singing in the force of their voice: one seemed desirous of conquering the other by the strength of his lungs, and so far from receiving delight from this scene (shut up as I was in the box of the gondola), I found myself in a very unpleasant situation.

My companion, to whom I communicated this circumstance, being very desirous to keep up the credit of his countrymen, assured me that this singing was very delightful when heard at a distance. Accordingly we got out upon the shore,

leaving one of the singers in the gondola, while the other went to the distance of some hundred paces. They now began to sing against one another, and I kept walking up and down between them both, so as always to leave him who was to begin his part. I frequently stood still and hearkened to the one and to the other.

Here the scene was properly introduced. The strong declamatory, and, as it were, shrieking sound, met the ear from far, and called forth the attention; the quickly succeeding transitions, which necessarily required to be sung in a lower tone, seemed like plaintive strains succeeding the vociferations of emotion or of pain. The other, who listened attentively, immediately began where the former left off, answering him in milder or more vehement notes, according as the purport of the strophe required. The sleepy canals, the lofty buildings, the splendour of the moon, the deep shadows of the few gondolas that moved like spirits hither and thither, increased the striking peculiarity of the scene, and amidst all these circumstances it was easy to confess the character of this wonderful harmony.

It suits perfectly well with an idle solitary mariner, lying at length in his vessel at rest on one of these canals, waiting for his company, or for a

fare ; the tiresomeness of which situation is somewhat alleviated by the songs and poetical stories he has in memory. He often raises his voice as loud as he can, which extends itself to a vast distance over the tranquil mirror, and as all is still around, he is as it were in a solitude in the midst of a large and populous town. Here is no rattling of carriages, no noise of foot passengers : a silent gondola glides now and then by him, of which the splashing of the oars are scarcely to be heard.

At a distance he hears another, perhaps utterly unknown to him. Melody and verse immediately attach the two strangers ; he becomes the responsive echo to the former, and exerts himself to be heard as he had heard the other. By a tacit convention they alternate verse for verse ; though the song should last the whole night through, they entertain themselves without fatigue ; the hearers, who are passing between the two, take part in the amusement.

This vocal performance sounds best at a great distance, and is then inexpressibly charming, as it only fulfils its design in the sentiment of remoteness. It is plaintive, but not dismal in its sound, and at times it is scarcely possible to refrain from tears. My companion, who otherwise

was not a very delicately organised person, said quite unexpectedly: *e singolare come quel canto intenerisce, e molto più quando lo cantano meglio.*

I was told that the women of Libo, the long row of islands that divides the Adriatic from the Lagouns, particularly the women of the extreme districts of Malamocca and Palestrina, sing in like manner the works of Tasso to these and similar tunes.

They have the custom, when their husbands are fishing out at sea, to sit along the shore in the evenings and vociferate these songs, and continue to do so with great violence, till each of them can distinguish the responses of her own husband at a distance.

How much more delightful and more appropriate does this song show itself here, than the call of a solitary person uttered far and wide, till another equally disposed shall hear and answer him! It is the expression of a vehement and hearty longing, which yet is every moment nearer to the happiness of satisfaction.

## BAYLE.

FEW philosophers were more deserving of the title than BAYLE. His last hour exhibits the



Socratic intrepidity with which he encountered the formidable approach of death. I have seen the original letter of the bookseller Leers, where he describes the death of our philosopher. "On the evening preceding his decease, having studied all day, he gave my corrector some copy of his "Answer to Jacquetot," and told him that he was very bad. At nine in the morning his laundress entered his chamber: he asked her, with a dying voice, if his fire was kindled? and a few moments after he died." His disease was an hereditary consumption, and his decline must have been gradual; speaking had become with him a great pain; but he laboured with the same tranquillity of mind to his last hour; and, with Bayle, it was death alone which could interrupt the printer.

The irritability of genius is forcibly characterised by this circumstance in his literary life. When a close friendship had united him to Jurieu, he lavished on him the most flattering eulogiums. He is the hero of his "Republic of Letters." Enmity succeeded to friendship; Jurieu is then continually quoted in his "Critical Dictionary," whenever an occasion offers to give instances of gross blunders, palpable contradictions, and inconclusive arguments. These inconsistent opinions may be sanctioned by the similar conduct of a *Saint!*

St. Jerome praised Rufinus as the most learned man of his age, while his friend; but when the same Rufinus joined his adversary Origen, he called him one of the most ignorant!

As a logician Bayle had no superior: the best logician will, however, frequently deceive himself. Bayle made long and close arguments to show that La Motte le Vayer never could have been a preceptor to the king; but all his reasonings are overturned by the fact being given in the history of the Academy, by Pelisson.

Basnage said of Bayle, that *he read much by his fingers*. He meant that he ran over a book more than he read it; and that he had the art of always falling upon that which was most essential and curious in the book he examined.

There are heavy hours in which the mind of a man of letters is unhinged; when the intellectual faculties lose all their elasticity, and when nothing but the simplest actions are adapted to their enfeebled state. At such hours it is recorded of the Jewish Socrates, Moses Mendelsohn, that he would stand at his window, and count the tiles of his neighbour's house. An anonymous writer has told of Bayle, that he would frequently wrap himself in his cloak, and hasten to places where mountebanks resorted; and that this was one of his chief amusements. He is surprised that so great a

philosopher should delight in so trifling an object. This observation is not injurious to the character of Bayle; it only proves that the writer himself was no philosopher.

The Monthly Reviewer, in noticing this article, has continued the speculation, by giving two interesting anecdotes. "The observation concerning 'heavy hours,' and the want of elasticity in the intellectual faculties of men of letters, when the mind is fatigued, and the attention blunted by incessant labour, reminds us of what is related by persons who were acquainted with the late sagacious magistrate Sir John Fielding; who, when fatigued with attending to complicated cases, and perplexed with discordant depositions, used to retire to a little closet in a remote and tranquil part of the house, to rest his mental powers, and sharpen perception. He told a great physician, now living, who complained of the distance of places, as caused by the great extension of London, that 'he (the physician) would not have been able to visit so many patients to any purpose, if they had resided nearer to each other; as he could have had no time either to think, or to rest his mind.'"

Our excellent logician was little accustomed to a mixed society; his life was passed in study. He had such an infantine simplicity in his nature,

that he would speak on anatomical subjects before the ladies with as much freedom as before surgeons. When they inclined their eyes to the ground, and while some even blushed, he would then inquire if what he spoke was indecent? and, when told so, he smiled and stopped. His habits of life were, however, extremely pure; he probably left himself little leisure “*to fall into temptation.*”

Bayle knew nothing of geometry, and as Le Clerc informs us, acknowledged that he could never comprehend the demonstration of the first problem in Euclid. Le Clerc, however, was a rival to Bayle; with greater industry and more accurate learning, but with very inferior powers of reasoning and philosophy. Both of these great scholars, like our Locke, were destitute of fine taste, and poetical discernment.

When Fagon, an eminent physician, was consulted on the illness of our student, he only prescribed a particular regimen, without the use of medicine. He closed his consultation by a compliment remarkable for its felicity. “I ardently wish one could spare this great man all this constraint, and that it were possible to find a remedy as singular, as the merit of him for whom it is asked.”

Voltaire has said that Bayle confessed he would not have made his Dictionary exceed a folio volume, had he written only for himself and not for the booksellers. This Dictionary, with all its human faults, is a stupendous work, which must last with literature itself.

His other productions have claims on our attention: is it possible to read his "*Thoughts on Comets*," and complain of lassitude? His "*Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres*," are a model of periodical criticism, lively, neat, and full of that attic salt which gives a piquancy to the disquisitions of criticism. The mind of Bayle is always acute; but, what is still more engaging, it communicates entertainment. His sceptre of criticism is embellished by flowers.

## CERVANTES.

I FIND in the Segraisiana, this authentic anecdote concerning the inimitable Cervantes.

Mr. du Boulay accompanied the French ambassador to Spain, when Cervantes was yet alive. He has told me, that the ambassador one day complimented Cervantes on the great reputation he had acquired by his *Don Quixote*; and that

Cervantes whispered in his ear, "Had it not been for the Inquisition, I should have made my book much more entertaining."

Cervantes, at the battle of Lepanto, was wounded and enslaved. He has given his own history in *Don Quixote*. He was known at the court of Spain, but he did not receive those favours which might have been expected; he was neglected.—His first volume is the finest; and his design was to have finished there; but he could not resist the importunities of his friends, who engaged him to make a second, which has not the same force, although it has many splendid passages.

We have lost many good things of Cervantes, and other writers, because of the tribunal of religion and dulness. One Aonius Palearius was sensible of this; and said, "that the Inquisition was a poniard aimed at the throat of literature." The image is striking, and the observation just; but the ingenious observer was in consequence immediately led to the stake!

### MAGLIABECHI.

ANTHONY MAGLIABECHI, who died at the age of eighty, was celebrated for his great knowledge

of books. He has been called the *Helluo*, or the Glutton of Literature, as Peter *Comestor* received this nick-name from his amazing voracity for food he could never digest; which appeared when having fallen sick of so much false learning, he threw it all up in his "*Sea of Histories*," which proved to be the history of all things, and a bad history of every thing. Magliabechi's character is singular; for though his life was wholly passed in libraries, being librarian to the duke of Tuscany, he never *wrote* himself. There is a medal which represents him sitting, with a book in one hand, and with a great number of books scattered on the ground. The candid inscription signifies, that "it is not sufficient to become learned to have read much, if we read without reflection." This is the only remains we have of his own composition that can be of service to posterity. A simple truth, which may however be inscribed in the study of every man of letters.

His habits of life were uniform. Ever among his books, he troubled himself with no other concern whatever; and the only interest he appeared to take for any living thing was his spiders; for whom, while sitting among his literary piles, he affected great sympathy; and perhaps contemptuously, to those whose curiosity appeared impertinent, he frequently cried out, "to take care not to hurt his

spiders!" Although he lost no time in writing himself, he gave considerable assistance to authors who consulted him. He was himself an universal index to all authors. He had one book, among many others, dedicated to him, and this dedication consisted of a collection of titles of works which he had had at different times dedicated to him, with all the eulogiums addressed to him in prose and verse. When he died, he left his vast collection of books for the public use; they now compose the public library of Florence.

Heyman, a celebrated Dutch professor, visited this erudite librarian, who was considered as the ornament of Florence. He found him amongst his books, of which the number was prodigious. Two or three rooms in the first story were crowded with them, not only along their sides, but piled in heaps on the floor; so that it was difficult to sit, and more so to walk. A narrow space was contrived, indeed, so that by walking sideways, you might extricate yourself from one room to another. This was not all; the passage below stairs was full of books, and the staircase from the top to the bottom was lined with them. When you reached the second story, you saw with astonishment three rooms, similar to those below, equally full, so crowded, that two good beds in these chambers were also crammed with books.



This apparent confusion did not, however, hinder Magliabechi from immediately finding the books he wanted. He knew them all so well, that even to the least of them it was sufficient to see its outside, to say what it was; and indeed he read them day and night, and never lost sight of any. He eat on his books, he slept on his books, and quitted them as rarely as possible. During his whole life he only went twice from Florence; once to see Fiesoli, which is not above two leagues distant, and once ten miles further by order of the Grand Duke. Nothing could be more simple than his mode of life; a few eggs, a little bread, and some water, were his ordinary food. A drawer of his desk being open, Mr. Heyman saw there several eggs, and some money which Magliabechi had placed there for his daily use. But as this drawer was generally open, it frequently happened that the servants of his friends, or strangers who came to see him, pilfered some of these things; the money or the eggs.

His dress was as cynical as his repasts. A black doublet, which descended to his knees; large and long breeches; an old patched black cloak; an amorphous hat, very much worn, and the edges ragged; a large neckcloth of coarse cloth, begrimed with snuff; a dirty shirt, which he always wore as long as it lasted, and which the

broken elbows of his doublet did not conceal; and, to finish this inventory, a pair of ruffles which did not belong to the shirt. Such was the brilliant dress of our learned Florentine; and in such did he appear in the public streets, as well as in his own house. Let me not forget another circumstance; to warm his hands, he generally had a stove with fire fastened to his arms, so that his clothes were generally singed and burnt, and his hands scorched. He had nothing otherwise remarkable about him. To literary men he was extremely affable, and a cynic only to the eye; anecdotes almost incredible are related of his memory. It is somewhat uncommon that as he was so fond of literary *food*, he did not occasionally dress some dishes of his own invention, or at least some sandwiches to his own relish. He indeed should have written CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE. He was a living Cyclopaedia, though a dark lantern.

Of such reading men, Hobbes entertained a very contemptible, if not a rash opinion. His own reading was inconsiderable, and he used to say, that if he had spent as much time in *reading* as other men of learning, he should have been as *ignorant* as they. He put little value on a *large library*, for he considered all *books* to be merely *extracts* and *copies*, for that most authors were like sheep, never deviating from the beaten path.

History he treated lightly, and thought there were more lies than truths in it. But let us recollect after all this, that Hobbes was a mere metaphysician, idolising his own vain and empty hypotheses. It is true enough that weak heads carrying in them too much reading may be staggered. Le Clerc observes of two learned men, De Marcily and Barthius, that they would have composed more useful works had they *read* less numerous authors, and digested the better writers.

### ABRIDGERS.

THE present article presents the history of **ABRIDGERS**; a kind of literary men to whom the indolence of modern readers, and indeed the multiplicity of authors, gives ample employment.

It would be difficult, observe the learned Benedictines, the authors of the *Literary History of France*, to relate all the unhappy consequences which ignorance introduced, and the causes which produced that ignorance. But we must not forget to place in this number the mode of reducing, by way of abridgment, what the ancients had written in bulky volumes. Examples of this practice may be observed in preceding centuries, but in the

fifth century it began to be in general use. As the number of students and readers diminished, authors neglected literature, and were disgusted with composition; for to write is seldom done, but when the writer entertains the hope of finding readers. Instead of original authors, there suddenly arose numbers of Abridgers. These men, amidst the prevailing disgust for literature, imagined they should gratify the public by introducing a mode of reading works in a few hours, which otherwise could not be done in many months; and, observing that the bulky volumes of the ancients lay buried in dust, without any one condescending to examine them, necessity inspired them with an invention that might bring those works and themselves into public notice, by the care they took of renovating them. This they imagined to effect by forming abridgments of these ponderous volumes.

All these Abridgers, however, did not follow the same mode. Some contented themselves with making a mere abridgment of their authors, by employing their own expressions, or by inconsiderable alterations. Others formed abridgments in drawing them from various authors, but from whose works they only took what appeared to them most worthy of observation, and embellished them in their own style. Others again, having before them several authors who wrote on the same

subject, took passages from each, united them, and thus formed a new work; they executed their design by digesting in common-places, and under various titles, the most valuable parts they could collect, from the best authors they read. To these last ingenious scholars we owe the rescue of many valuable fragments of antiquity. They fortunately preserved the best maxims, characters, descriptions, and curious matters which they had found interesting in their studies.

Some learned men have censured these Abridgers as the cause of our having lost so many excellent entire works of the ancients; for posterity becoming less studious was satisfied with these extracts, and neglected to preserve the originals, whose voluminous size was less attractive. Others, on the contrary, say that these Abridgers have not been so prejudicial to literature; and that had it not been for their care, which snatched many a perishable fragment from that shipwreck of letters which the barbarians occasioned, we should perhaps have had no works of the ancients remaining. Many voluminous works have been greatly improved by their Abridgers. The vast history of Trogius Pompeius was soon forgotten and finally perished, after the excellent epitome of it by Justin, who winnowed the abundant chaff from the grain.

Bayle gives very excellent advice to an Abridger, when he shows that Xiphilin, in his "Abridgment of Dion," takes no notice of a circumstance very material for entering into the character of Domitian:—the recalling the empress Domitia after having turned her away for her intrigues with a player. By omitting this fact in the abridgment, and which is discovered through Suetonius, Xiphilin has evinced, he says, a deficient judgment; for Domitian's ill qualities are much better exposed, when it is known that he was mean-spirited enough to restore to the dignity of empress the prostitute of a player.

Abridgers, Compilers, and Translators, are now alike regarded with contempt; yet to form their works with skill requires an exertion of judgment, and frequently of taste, of which their contemners appear to have no due conception. Such literary labours it is thought the learned will not be found to want; and the unlearned cannot discern the value. But to such Abridgers as Monsieur Le Grand, in his "Tales of the Minstrels," and Mr. Ellis, in his "English Metrical Romances," we owe much; and such writers must bring to their task a congeniality of genius, and even more taste, than their originals possessed. I must compare such to fine etchers after

great masters:—very few give the feeling touches in the right place.

It is an uncommon circumstance to quote the Scriptures on subjects of *modern literature*; but on the present topic the elegant writer of the books of the Maccabees has delivered in a kind of preface to that history, very pleasing and useful instruction to an *Abridger*. I shall transcribe the passages, being concise, from Book ii. Chap. ii. v. 23, that the reader may have it at hand.—

“All these things, I say, being declared by Jason, of Cyrene, in *five books*, we will assay to *abridge* in one volume. We will be careful that they that will read may have *delight*, and that they that are desirous to commit to memory might have *ease*, and that all into whose hands it comes might have *profit*.” How concise and Horatian! He then describes his literary labours with no insensibility:—“To us that have taken upon us this painful labour of *abridging*, it was not easy, but a matter of *sweat* and *watching*.”—And the writer employs an elegant illustration: “Even as it is no ease unto him that prepareth a banquet, and seeketh the benefit of others; yet for the pleasuring of many, we will undertake gladly this great pain; leaving to the author the exact

handling of every particular, and labouring to follow *the rules of an Abridgement.*" He now embellishes his critical account with a sublime metaphor to distinguish the original from the copier:—"For as the master builder of a new house must care for the whole building; but he that undertaketh to set it out, and point it, must seek out fit things for the adorning thereof; even so I think it is with us. To stand upon *every point*, and *go over things at large*, and to be *curious in particulars*, belongeth to the *first author* of the story; but to use *brevity*, and avoid *much labouring* of the work, is to be granted to him that will make an Abridgment."

Quintilian has not a passage more elegantly composed, nor more judiciously conceived.

## PROFESSORS OF PLAGIARISM AND OBSCURITY.

AMONG the most singular characters in literature may be ranked those who do not blush to profess publicly its most dishonorable practices. The first vender of printed sermons imitating manuscript was, I think, Dr. Trusler. He to whom the following anecdotes relate had superior ingenuity. Like the famous orator Henley, he



formed a school of his own. The present lecturer openly taught not to *imitate* the best authors, but to *steal* from them!

Richesource, a miserable declaimer, called himself "Moderator of the Academy of Philosophical Orators." He taught in what manner a person destitute of literary talents might become eminent for literature. He published the principles of his art under the title of "The Mask of Orators; or the manner of disguising with ease all kinds of composition; briefs, sermons, panegyrics, funeral orations, dedications, speeches, letters, passages, &c." I will give a notion of the work.—

The author very truly observes, that all who apply themselves to polite literature do not always find from their own furds a sufficient supply to ensure success. For such he labours; and teaches to gather, in the gardens of others, those fruits of which their own sterile grounds are destitute; but so artfully to gather, that the public shall not perceive their depredations. He dignifies this fine art by the title of PLAGIANISM, and he thus explains it:—

"The Plagianism of orators is the art, or an ingenious and easy mode, which some adroitly employ, to change, or disguise, all sorts of speeches of their own composition, or of that of other authors, for their pleasure, or their utility;

in such a manner that it becomes impossible even for the author himself to recognise his own work, his own genius, and his own style, so skilfully shall the whole be disguised."

Our professor proceeds to inform us in what manner we are to manage the whole economy of the piece which is to be copied or disguised: and which consists in giving a new order to the parts, changing the phrases, words, &c. An orator, for instance, having said that a plenipotentiary should possess three qualities,—*probity*, *capacity*, and *courage*; the plagiarist, on the contrary, may employ *courage*, *capacity*, and *probity*. This is only for a general rule, for it is too simple to practise frequently. To render the part perfect we must make it more complex, by changing the whole of the expressions. The plagiarist in place of *courage* will put *force*, *constancy*, or *vigour*. For *probity* he may say *religion*, *virtue*, or *sincerity*. Instead of *capacity*, he may substitute *erudition*, *ability*, or *science*. Or he may disguise the whole by saying, that the *plenipotentiary should be firm*, *virtuous*, and *able*.

The rest of this uncommon work is composed of passages, extracted from celebrated writers, which are turned into a new manner by the plagiarist; their beauties, however, are never improved by their dress. Several celebrated

writers when young, particularly the famous Flechier, who addressed verses to him, frequented the lectures of this professor!

Richesource became so zealous in the cause of literature, that he published a volume, entitled "The Art of Writing and Speaking; or a method of composing all sorts of letters, and holding a polite conversation." He concludes his preface by advertising his readers, that authors who may be in want of essays, sermons, letters of all kinds, written pleadings and verses, may be accommodated on application to him.

Our professor was extremely fond of copious title-pages; which I suppose to be very attractive to certain readers; for it is a custom which the Richesources of the day fail not to employ. Are there persons who value *books* by the *length* of their *titles*; as formerly the ability of a *physician* was judged by the *size of his wig*?

To this article may be added an account of another singular school, where the professor taught *obscurity* in literary composition!

I do not believe, says Charpentier, that those who are unintelligible are very intelligent. Quintilian has justly observed, that the obscurity of a writer is generally in proportion to his incapacity. However, as there is hardly a defect which does not find partisans, the same author informs

us of a Rhetorician, who was so great an admirer of obscurity, that he always exhorted his scholars to preserve it; and made them correct, as blemishes, those passages of their works which appeared to him too intelligible. Quintilian adds, that the greatest panegyric they could give to a composition in that school was to declare, "I understand nothing of this piece." Lycophron possessed this taste, and he protested that he would hang himself if he found a person who should understand his poem, called the "Prophecy of Cassandra." He succeeded so well, that this piece has been the stumbling-block of all the grammarians, scholiasts, and commentators; and remains inexplicable to the present day. Such works Charpentier admirably compares to those subterraneous places, where the air is so thick and suffocating that it extinguishes all torches. A most sophisticated dilemma, on the subject of *obscurity*, was made by Thomas Anglus, or White, an English Catholic priest, the friend of Sir Kenelm Digby. This learned man frequently wandered in the mazes of metaphysical subtilities; and became perfectly unintelligible to his readers. When accused of this obscurity, he replied, "Either the learned understand me, or they do not. If they understand me, and find me in an error, it is easy for them to refute me; if they do

not understand me, it is very unreasonable for them to exclaim against my doctrines."

This is saying all that the wit of man can suggest in favour of *obscurity*! Many, however, will agree with an observation made by Gravina on the over-refinement of modern composition, that "we do not think we have attained genius, till others must possess as much themselves to understand us." Fontenelle, in France, followed by Marivaux, Thomas, and others, first introduced that subtilised manner of writing, which tastes more natural and simple reject; the source of such bitter complaints of obscurity.

## LITERARY DUTCH.

PERE BOUHOURS seriously asks if a German *can be a BEL ESPRIT*? This concise query was answered by Kramer, in a ponderous volume, which bears for title, *Vindiciæ nominis Germanici*. This mode of refutation does not prove that the question was *then* so ridiculous as it was considered. The Germans of the present day, although greatly superior to their ancestors, are still distant from that *acmé* of TASTE, which characterises the finished compositions of the French and the English authors. Nations display *genius*

before they form *taste*; and in some of the productions of the modern Germans, it will be allowed that their imaginations are fertile and fervid; but perhaps the simple question of Bouhours still exists in its full force.

It was once the mode with English and French writers to dishonour them with the epithets of heavy, dull, and phlegmatic compilers, without taste, spirit, or genius; genuine descendants of the ancient Boetians,

Crassoque sub aëre nati.

Many ingenious performances have lately shown that this censure has now become unjust; and much more forcibly answer the sarcastic question of Bouhours than the thick quarto of Kramer.

Churchill finely says of genius, that it is independent of situation,

‘ And may hereafter even in HOLLAND rise.’

Vondel, whom, as Marchand observes, the Dutch regard as their Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, has a strange defective taste; the poet himself knew none of these originals, but he wrote on some patriotic subject, the sure way to

obtain popularity. The greater part of his tragedies is drawn from the Scriptures; all badly chosen and unhappily executed. In his *Deliverance of the Children of Israel* one of his principal characters is the *Divinity!* In his *Jerusalem destroyed* we are disgusted with a tedious oration by the Angel Gabriel, who proves theologically, and his proofs extend through nine closely printed pages in quarto, that this destruction had been predicted by the prophets. And in the *Lucifer* of the same author, the subject is grossly scandalised by this haughty spirit becoming stupidly in love with Eve, and it is for her he causes the rebellion of the evil angels, and the fall of our first parents. Poor Vondel kept a hosier's shop, which he left to the care of his wife, while he indulged his poetical genius. His stocking shop failed, and his poems produced him more chagrin than glory; for in Holland even a patriotic poet, if a bankrupt, would, no doubt, be accounted by his fellow-citizens as a madman. Vondel had no other master but his genius, which, with his uncongenial situation, occasioned all his errors.

Another Dutch poet is even less tolerable. Having written a long rhapsody concerning Pyramus and Thisbe, he concludes it by a ridiculous parallel between the death of these unfortunate

victims of love, and the passion of Jesus Christ.  
He says,

Om t'concluserem van onsen begrypt,  
Dees Historie moraliserende,  
Is in den verstande wel accorderende,  
By der Passie van Christus gebenedyt.

And upon this, after having turned Pyramus into the son of God, and Thisbe into the Christian soul, he proceeds with a number of comparisons; the latter always more impertinent than the former.

I believe it is well known that the actors on the Dutch theatre are generally tradesmen, who quit their aprons at the hour of public representation. This was the fact when I was in Holland forty years ago. Their comedies are offensive by the grossness of their buffooneries. One of their comic incidents was a miller appearing in distress for want of wind to turn his mill; he had recourse to the novel scheme of placing his back against it, and, by certain imitative sounds behind the scenes, the mill is soon set a-going. It is hard to rival such a depravity of taste.

I saw two of their most celebrated tragedies. The one was Gysbert Van Amstel, by Vondel; that is Gysbrecht of Amsterdam, a warrior, who in the civil wars preserved this city by his heroism. It is a patriotic historical play, and never



fails to crowd the theatre towards Christmas, when it is usually performed successively. One of the acts concludes with a scene of a convent; the sound of warlike instruments is heard; the abbey is stormed; the nuns and fathers are slaughtered; with the aid of 'blunderbuss and thunder,' every Dutchman appears sensible of the pathos of the poet. But it does not here conclude. After this terrible slaughter, the conquerors and the vanquished remain for *ten minutes* on the stage, silent and motionless, in the attitudes in which they happened to fall! and this pantomimic pathos is received with loud bursts of applause from the audience.

The other was the Ahasuerus of Schubart, or the Fall of Haman. In the triumphal entry the Batavian Mordecai was mounted on a genuine Flanders mare, that, fortunately, quietly received *her* applause with a lumpish majesty resembling her rider. I have seen an English ass once introduced on our stage which did not act with this decorum. Our late actors have frequently been beasts;—a Dutch taste!

Some few specimens of the best Dutch poetry which we have had yield no evidence in favour of the national poetical taste. The Dutch poet Katz has a poem 'on the "Games of Children," where all the games are moralised; I suspect the taste

of the poet as well as his subject is puerile. When a nation has produced no works above mediocrity, with them a certain mediocrity is excellence, and their master-pieces, with a people who have made a greater progress in refinement, are but the works of a pupil.

THE PRODUCTIONS OF THE MIND NOT SEIZABLE  
BY CREDITORS.

WHEN Crebillon, the French tragic poet, published his *Catilina*, it was attended with an honour to literature, which, though it is probably forgotten (for it was only registered, I think, as the news of the day), it becomes a collector zealous in the cause of literature to preserve. I shall give the circumstance, the petition, and the decree.

At the time *Catilina* was given to the public, the creditors of the poet had the cruelty to attach the produce of this piece, as well at the bookseller's, who had printed the tragedy, as at the theatre where it was performed. The poet, much irritated at these proceedings, addressed a petition to the King, in which he showed that it was a thing yet unknown, that it should be allowed to class amongst seizable effects the productions of the human mind; that if such a practice was per-

mitted, those who had consecrated their vigils to the studies of literature, and who have made the greatest efforts to render themselves, by this means, useful to their country, would see themselves in the cruel predicament of not daring to publish works, often precious and interesting to the state; that the greater part of those who devote themselves to literature require for the necessaries of life those succours which they have a right to expect from their labours; and that it never has been suffered in France to seize the fees of lawyers, and other persons of liberal professions.

In answer to this petition, a decree immediately issued from the King's council, commanding a replevy of the arrests and seizures, of which the petitioner complained. This honourable decree was dated 21st May, 1749, and bore the following title: "Decree of the Council of his Majesty, in favour of Mr. Crebillon, author of the tragedy of Catalina, which declares that the productions of the mind are not amongst seizable effects."

Louis XV. exhibits the noble example of bestowing a mark of consideration to the remains of a man of letters. This King not only testified his esteem of Crebillon by having his works printed at the Louvre, but also by consecrating to his glory a tomb of marble.

## CRITICS.

WRITERS who have been unsuccessful in original composition have their other productions immediately decried, whatever merit they might once have been allowed to possess. Yet this is very unjust; an author who has given a wrong direction to his literary powers may perceive at length where he can more securely point them. Experience is as excellent a mistress in the school of literature, as in the school of human life. Blackmore's epics are insufferable; yet neither Addison nor Johnson erred when they considered his philosophical poem as a valuable composition. An indifferent poet may exert the art of criticism in a very high degree; and if he cannot himself produce an original work, he may yet be of great service in regulating the happier genius of another. This observation I shall illustrate by the characters of two French critics; the one is the Abbé d'Aubignac, and the other Chapelain.

Boileau opens his Art of Poetry by a precept which though it be common is always important; this critical poet declares, that "It is in vain a daring author thinks of attaining to the height of Parnassus if he does not feel the secret influence of heaven, and if his natal star has not formed

him to be a poet." This observation he founded on the character of our Abbé; who had excellently written on the economy of dramatic composition. His *Pratique du Theatre* gained him an extensive reputation. When he produced a tragedy, the world expected a finished piece; it was acted, and reprobated. The author, however, did not acutely feel its bad reception; he every where boasted that he, of all the dramatists, had most scrupulously observed the *rules* of Aristotle. The Prince de Guemené, famous for his repartees, sarcastically observed, "I do not quarrel with the Abbé D'Aubignac for having so closely followed the precepts of Aristotle; but I cannot pardon the precepts of Aristotle, that occasioned the Abbé D'Aubignac to write so wretched a tragedy."

The *Pratique du Theatre* is not, however, to be despised, because the *Tragedy* of its author is despicable.

Chapelain's unfortunate epic has rendered him notorious. He had gained, and not undeservedly, great reputation for his critical powers. After a retention of above thirty years, his *Pucelle* appeared. He immediately became the butt of every unfledged wit, and his former works were eternally condemned! Insomuch that when Camusat published, after the death of our author, a

little volume of extracts from his manuscript letters, it is curious to observe the awkward situation in which he finds himself. In his preface he seems afraid that the very name of Chapelain will be sufficient to repel the reader.

Camusat observes of Chapelain, that "He found flatterers who assured him his *Pucelle* ranked above the *Æneid*; and this Chapelain but feebly denied. However this may be, it would be difficult to make the bad taste which reigns throughout this poem agree with that sound and exact criticism with which he decided on the works of others. So true is it, that *genius* is very superior to a justness of mind which is *sufficient to judge* and to advise others." Chapelain was ordered to draw up a critical list of the chief living authors and men of letters in France, for the king. It is extremely impartial, and performed with an analytical skill of their literary characters which could not have been surpassed by an Aristotle or a Boileau.

The *talent of judging* may exist separately from the *power of execution*. An amateur may not be an artist, though an artist should be an amateur. And it is for this reason, that young authors are not to condemn the precepts of such critics as even the Abbé D'Aubignac, and Chapelain. It is to Walsh, a miserable versifier, that Pope stands in-

debted for the hint of our poetry then being deficient in correctness and polish; and it is from this fortunate hint that Pope derived his poetical excellence. Dionysius Halicarnassensis has composed a lifeless history; yet, as Gibbon observes, how admirably has *he* judged the masters, and defined the rules of historical composition! Gravina with great taste and spirit has written on poetry and poets, but he composed tragedies which give him no title to be ranked among them.

#### ANECDOTES OF AUTHORS CENSURED.

It is an ingenious observation made by a journalist of Trevoux, on perusing a criticism not ill-written, which pretended to detect several faults in the compositions of Bruyere, that in ancient Rome the great men who triumphed amidst the applauses of those who celebrated their virtues, were at the same time compelled to listen to those who reproached them with their vices. This custom is not less necessary to the republic of letters than it was formerly to the republic of Rome. Without this it is probable that authors would be intoxicated with success, and would then relax in their accustomed vigour; and the

multitude who took them for models would, for want of judgment, imitate their defects.

Sterne and Churchill were continually abusing the Reviewers, because they honestly told the one that obscenity was not wit, and obscurity was not sense; and the other that dissonance in poetry did not excel harmony, and that his rhymes were frequently prose lines of ten syllables cut into verse. They applauded their happier efforts. Notwithstanding all this, it is certain that so little discernment exists amongst common writers, and common readers, that the obscenity and flippancy of Sterne, and the bald verse and prosaic poetry of Churchill, were precisely the portions which they selected for imitation: the blemishes of great men are not the less blemishes, but they are, unfortunately, the easiest parts for imitation.

Yet criticism may be too rigorous, and genius too sensible to its fairest attacks. Racine acknowledged that one of the severe criticisms he received had occasioned him more vexation than the greatest applauses had afforded him pleasure. Sir John Marsham, having published the first part of his "Chronology," suffered so much chagrin at the endless controversies which it raised (and some of his critics went so far as to affirm it was designed to be detrimental to Revelation), that he burnt the second part, which was ready for the press. Pope was observed to writhe with



anguish in his chair, on hearing mentioned the letter of Cibber, with other temporary attacks; and it is said of Montesquieu, that he was so much affected by the criticisms, true and false, which he daily experienced, that they contributed to hasten his death. Ritson's extreme irritability closed in lunacy, while his ignorant Reviewers, in the shapes of assassins, were haunting his death-bed. In the preface to his "Metrical Romances" he says—"brought to an end in ill-health and low spirits—certain to be insulted by a base and prostitute gang of lurking assassins who stab in the dark, and whose poisoned daggers he has already experienced." Scott, of Amwell, never recovered from a ludicrous criticism, which I discovered had been written by a physician who never pretended to poetical taste.

Pelisson has recorded, in his History of the French Academy, a literary anecdote, which forcibly shows the danger of caustic criticism. A young man from a remote province came to Paris with a play, which he considered as a masterpiece. M. L'Etoile was more than just in his merciless criticism. He showed the youthful bard a thousand glaring defects in his chef d'œuvre. The humbled country author burnt his tragedy, returned home, took to his chamber, and died of vexation and grief. Of all unfortunate men, one of the unhappiest is a middling author endowed

with too lively a sensibility for criticism. Athenæus, in his tenth book, has given us a lively portrait of this melancholy being. Anaxandrides appeared one day on horseback in the public assembly at Athens, to recite a dithyrambic poem, of which he read a portion. He was a man of fine stature, and wore a purple robe edged with golden fringe. But his complexion was saturnine and melancholy, which was the cause that he never spared his own writings. Whenever he was vanquished by a rival, he immediately gave his compositions to the druggists to be cut into pieces, to wrap their articles in, without ever caring to revise his writings. It is owing to this that he destroyed a number of pleasing compositions; age increased his sourness, and every day he became more and more dissatisfied at the awards of his auditors. Hence his "Tereus," because it failed to obtain the prize, has not reached us, which, with other of his productions, deserved preservation, though not to have been publicly crowned.

Batteux having been chosen by the French government for the compilation of elementary books for the Military School, is said to have felt their unfavourable reception so acutely, that he became a prey to excessive grief. It is believed that the lamentable death of Dr. Hawkes-

worth was occasioned by a similar circumstance. Government had consigned to his care the compilation of the voyages that pass under his name:—how he succeeded is well known. He felt the public reception so sensibly, that he preferred the oblivion of death to the mortifying recollections of life.

On this interesting subject Fontenelle, in his "Eloge on Newton," has made the following observation:—"Newton was more desirous of remaining unknown, than of having the calm of life disturbed by those literary storms which genius and science attract about those who rise to eminence. In one of his letters we learn that his Treatise on Optics being ready for the press, several premature objections which appeared, made him abandon its publication.—"I should reproach myself (he said) for my imprudence, if I were to lose a thing so real as my ease to run after a shadow." But this shadow he did not miss: it did not cost him the ease he so much loved, and it had for him as much reality as ease itself. I refer to Bayle, in his curious article "Hipponax," note F. To these instances we may add the fate of the Abbé Cassagne, a man of learning, and not destitute of talents. He was intended for one of the preachers at court; but he had hardly made himself known in the pulpit,

when he was struck by the lightning of Boileau's muse. He felt so acutely the caustic verses, that they rendered him almost incapable of literary labour; in the prime of life he became melancholy, and shortly afterwards died insane. A modern painter, it is known, never recovered from the biting ridicule of a popular, but malignant wit. Cummyns, a celebrated quaker, confessed he died of an anonymous letter in a public paper, which, said he, "fastened on my heart, and threw me into this slow fever." Racine, who died of his extreme sensibility to a rebuke, confessed that the pain which one severe criticism inflicted outweighed all the applause he could receive. The feathered arrow of an epigram has sometimes been wet with the heart's blood of its victim. Fortune has been lost, reputation destroyed, and every charity of life extinguished, by the inhumanity of inconsiderate wit.

Literary history records the fate of several who may be said to have *died of Criticism*. But there is more sense and infinite humour in the mode which Phædrus adopted to answer the cavillers of his age. When he first published his fables, the taste for conciseness and simplicity was so much on the decline, that they were both objected to him as faults. He used his critics as they deserved. To those who objected against

the *conciseness* of his style, he tells a long *tedious story* (Lib. iii. Fab. 10, ver. 59), and treats those who condemned the *simplicity* of his style with a run of *bombast verses*, that have a great many noisy elevated words in them, without any sense at the bottom—this in Lib. iv. Fab. 6.

### VIRGINITY.

THE writings of the Fathers once formed the studies of the learned. These labours abound with that subtilty of argument which will repay the industry of the inquisitive, and the antiquary may turn them over for pictures of the manners of the age. A favourite subject with Saint Ambrose was that of *Virginity*, on which he has several works; and perhaps he wished to revive the order of the vestals of ancient Rome, which afterwards produced the institution of Nuns. His "Treatise on *VIRGINS*" is in three volumes. We learn from this work of the fourth century, the lively impressions his exhortations had made on the minds and hearts of girls, not less in the most distant provinces, than in the neighbourhood of Milan where he resided. The virgins of Bologna, amounting only, it appears, to the number of twenty, performed all kinds of needlework, not merely to

gain their livelihood, but also to be enabled to perform acts of liberality, and exerted their industry to allure other girls to join the holy profession of VIRGINITY. He exhorts daughters, in spite of their parents, and even their lovers, to consecrate themselves. "I do not blame marriage," he says; "I only show the advantages of VIRGINITY."

He composed this book in so florid a style, that he considered it required some apology. A Religious of the Benedictines published a translation in 1689.

So sensible was Saint Ambrose of the *rarity* of the profession he would establish, that he thus combats his adversaries: "They complain that human nature will be exhausted; but I ask who has ever sought to marry without finding women enough from amongst whom he might choose? What murder, or what war, has ever been occasioned for a virgin? It is one of the consequences of marriage to kill the adulterer, and to war with the ravisher."

He wrote another treatise *On the perpetual Virginité of the Mother of God*. He attacks Bonosius on this subject, and defends her virginity, which was indeed greatly suspected by Bonosius, who, however, got nothing by this bold suspicion, but the dreadful name of *Heretic*. A third treatise was entitled *Exhortation to Virginité*; a fourth,

*On the Fate of a Virgin*, is more curious. He relates the misfortunes of one *Susannah*, who was by no means a companion for her name-sake; for, having made a vow of virginity, and taken the veil, she afterwards endeavoured to conceal her shame, but the precaution only tended to render her more culpable. Her behaviour, indeed, had long afforded ample food for the sarcasms of the Jews and the Pagans. Saint Ambrose compelled her to perform public penance, and after having declaimed on her double crime, gave her hopes of pardon, if, like "Sœur Jeanne," this early nun would sincerely repent; to complete her chastisement, he ordered her every day to recite the fiftieth psalm.

## A GLANCE INTO THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

IN the republic of Letters the establishment of an academy has been a favourite project; yet perhaps it is little more than an Utopian scheme. The united efforts of men of letters in Academies have produced little. It would seem that no man likes to bestow his great labours on a small community, for whose members he himself does not feel, probably, the most flattering partiality. The

French Academy made a splendid appearance in Europe; yet when this society published their Dictionary, that of Furetiere's became a formidable rival; and Johnson did as much as the *forty* themselves. Voltaire confesses that the great characters of the literary republic were formed without the aid of academies.—“For what then,” he asks, “are they necessary?—To preserve and nourish the fire which great geniuses have kindled.” By observing the *Junto* at their meetings we may form some opinion of the indolent manner in which they trifled away their time. We are fortunately enabled to do this, by a letter in which Patru describes, in a very amusing manner, the visit which Christina of Sweden took a sudden fancy to pay to the academy.

The Queen of Sweden having resolved to visit the French Academy, gave so short a notice of her design, that it was impossible to inform the majority of the members of her intention. About four o'clock fifteen or sixteen academicians were assembled. Mr. Gombaut, one of the members who did not know of the intended royal visit, and who had never forgiven her majesty because she did not relish his verses, thought proper to show his resentment by quitting the assembly.

She was received in a spacious hall. In the middle was a table covered with rich blue velvet,



ornamented with a broad border of gold and silver. At its head was placed an arm-chair of black velvet embroidered with gold, and round the table were placed chairs with tapestry backs. The Chancellor had forgotten to hang in the hall the portrait of the queen, which she had presented to the Academy, and which was considered as a great omission. About five, a footman belonging to the Queen inquired if the company were assembled. Soon after, a servant of the king informed the chancellor that the queen was at the end of the street; and immediately her carriage drew up in the court-yard. The chancellor, followed by the rest of the members, went to receive her as she stepped out of her chariot; but the crowd was so great, that few of them could reach her majesty. Accompanied by the chancellor, she passed through the first hall, followed by one of her ladies, the captain of her guards, and one or two of her suite.

When she entered the Academy she approached the fire, and spoke in a low voice to the chancellor. She then asked why Mr. Menage was not there? and when she was told that he did not belong to the Academy, she asked why he did not? She was answered, that however he might merit the honour, he had rendered himself unworthy of it by several disputes he had had with its members.

She then inquired aside of the chancellor whether the academicians were to sit or stand before her? On this the chancellor consulted with a member, who observed that in the time of Ronsard, there was held an assembly of men of letters before Charles IX. several times, and that they were always seated. The queen conversed with M. Bourdelot; and suddenly turning to Madame de Bregis, told her that she believed she must not be present at the assembly; but it was agreed that this lady deserved the honour. As the queen was talking with a member she abruptly quitted him, as was her custom, and in her quick way sat down in the arm-chair; and at the same time the members seated themselves. The queen observing that they did not, out of respect to her, approach the table, desired them to come near; and they accordingly approached it.

During these ceremonious preparations several officers of state had entered the hall, and stood behind the academicians. The chancellor sat at the queen's left hand by the fire-side; and at the right was placed M. de la Chambre, the director; then Boisrobert, Patru, Pelisson, Cotin, the Abbé Tallemant, and others. M. de Mezeray sat at the bottom of the table facing the queen, with an inkstand, paper, and the portfolio of the company lying before him: he occupied the

place of secretary. When they were all seated the director rose, and the academicians followed him, all but the chancellor, who remained in his seat. The director made his complimentary address in a low voice, his body was quite bent, and no person but the queen and the chancellor could hear him. She received his address with great satisfaction.

All compliments concluded, they returned to their seats. The director then told the queen that he had composed a treatise on Pain, to add to his character of the Passions, and if it was agreeable to her majesty, he would read the first chapter.—Very willingly, she answered. Having read it, he said to her majesty, that he would read no more lest he should fatigue her. Not at all, she replied, for I suppose what follows resembles what I have heard.

Afterwards Mr. Mezeray mentioned that Mr. Cotin had some verses, which her majesty would doubtless find beautiful, and if it was agreeable they should be read. Mr. Cotin read them: they were versions of two passages from Lucretius: the one in which he attacks a providence, and the other, where he gives the origin of the world according to the Epicurean system: to these he added twenty lines of his own, in which he maintained the existence of a Providence. This done,

an abbé rose, and without being desired or ordered, read two sonnets, which by courtesy were allowed to be tolerable. It is remarkable that both the *poets* read their verses standing, while the rest read their compositions seated.

After these readings, the director informed the queen that the ordinary exercise of the company was to labour on the dictionary; and that if her majesty should not find it disagreeable, they would read a *cahier* or stitched ms. Very willingly, she answered. Mr. de Mezeray then read what related to the word *Jeu*; *Game*. Amongst other proverbial expressions was this: *Game of Princes, which only please the players*; to express a malicious violence committed by one in power. At this the queen laughed heartily; and they continued reading all that was fairly written. This lasted about an hour, when the queen observing that nothing more remained, arose, made a bow to the company, and returned in the manner she entered.

Furetiere, who was himself an academician, has described the miserable manner in which time was consumed at their assemblies. I confess he was a satirist, and had quarrelled with the academy; there must have been, notwithstanding, sufficient resemblance for the following picture, however it may be overcharged. He has been

blamed for thus exposing the Eleusinian mysteries of literature to the uninitiated.

“ He who is most clamorous, is he whom they suppose has most reason. They all have the art of making long orations upon a trifle. The second repeats like an echo what the first said; but generally three or four speak together. When there is a bench of five or six members, one reads, another decides, two converse, one sleeps, and another amuses himself with reading some dictionary which happens to lie before him. When a second member is to deliver his opinion, they are obliged to read again the article, which at the first perusal he had been too much engaged to hear. This is a happy manner of finishing their work. They can hardly get over two lines without long digressions; without some one telling a pleasant story, or the news of the day; or talking of affairs of state, and reforming the government.”

That the French Academy were generally frivolously employed appears also from an epistle to Balzac, by Boisrobert, the amusing companion of Cardinal Richelieu. “ Every one separately,” says he, “ promises great things; when they meet they do nothing. They have been *six years* employed on the letter F; and I should be happy if I were certain of living till they got through G.”

The following anecdote concerns the *forty arm-*

*chairs* of the academicians. Those cardinals who were academicians for a long time had not attended the meetings of the academy, because they thought that *arm-chairs* were indispensable to their dignity, and the academy had then only common chairs. These cardinals were desirous of being present at the election of Mr. Monnoie, that they might give him a distinguished mark of their esteem. "The king," says D'Alembert, "to satisfy at once the delicacy of their friendship, and that of their cardinalship, and to preserve at the same time that academical equality, of which this enlightened monarch, (Louis XIV.) well knew the advantage, sent to the academy forty arm-chairs for the forty academicians; the same chairs which we now occupy: and the motive to which we owe them is sufficient to render the memory of Louis XIV. precious to the republic of letters, to whom it owes so many more important obligations!"

## POETICAL AND GRAMMATICAL DEATHS.

It will appear by the following anecdotes, that some men may be said to have died *poetically* and even *grammatically*.

There must be some attraction existing in poetry which is not merely fictitious, for often have its genuine votaries felt all its power on the most trying occasions. They have displayed the energy of their mind by composing or repeating verses, even with death on their lips.

The Emperor Adrian, dying, made that celebrated address to his soul, which is so happily translated by Pope. Lucan, when he had his veins opened by order of Nero, expired reciting a passage from his *Pharsalia*, in which he had described the wound of a dying soldier. Petronius did the same thing on the same occasion.

Patris, a poet of Caen, perceiving himself expiring, composed some verses which are justly admired. In this little poem he relates a dream, in which he appeared to be placed next to a beggar, when, having addressed him in the haughty strain he would probably have employed on this side of the grave, he receives the following reprimand :

Ici tous sont egaux ; je ne te dois plus rien ;  
Je suis sur mon fumier comme toi sur le tien.

Here all are equal ! now thy lot is mine !  
· I on my dunghill, as thou art on thine.

Des Barreaux, it is said, wrote on his death-bed that well-known sonnet which is translated in the "Spectator."

Margaret of Austria, when she was nearly perishing in a storm at sea, composed her epitaph in verse. Had she perished, what would have become of the epitaph? And if she escaped, of what use was it? She should rather have said her prayers. The verses however have all the *naïveté* of the times. They are—

Cy gist Margot, la gente demoiselle,  
Qu'eut deux maris, et si mourut pucelle.

Beneath this tomb is high-born Margaret laid,  
Who had two husbands, and yet died a maid.

She was betrothed to Charles VIII. of France, who forsook her; and being next intended for the Spanish infant, in her voyage to Spain, she wrote these lines in a storm.

Mademoiselle de Serment was surnamed the philosopher. She was celebrated for her knowledge and taste in polite literature. She died of a cancer in her breast, and suffered her misfortune with exemplary patience. She expired in finishing these verses, which she addressed to Death.

Nectare clausa suo,  
Dignum tantorum pretium tulit illa laborum.

It was after Cervantes had received extreme unction that he wrote the dedication to his *Pericles*.

Roscommon, at the moment he expired, with



an energy of voice that expressed the most fervent devotion, uttered two lines of his own version of "Dies Iræ!" Waller, in his last moments, repeated some lines from Virgil: and Chaucer seems to have taken his farewell of all human vanities by a moral ode, entitled "A balade made by Geffrey Chaucyer upon his dethe-bedde lying in his grete anguysse."

Cornelius de Wit fell an innocent victim to popular prejudice. His death is thus noticed by Hume. "This man, who had bravely served his country in war, and who had been invested with the highest dignities, was delivered into the hands of the executioner, and torn in pieces by the most inhuman torments. Amidst the severe agonies which he endured he frequently repeated an ode of Horace, which contained sentiments suited to his deplorable condition." It was the third ode of the third book which this illustrious philosopher and statesman then repeated.

I add another instance in the death of that delightful poet Metastasio. After having received the sacrament, a very short time before his last moments, he broke out with all the enthusiasm of poetry and religion into the following stanzas:

T'offro il tuo proprio figlio,  
 Che già d'amore in pegno,  
 Racchiuso in picciol segno  
 Si volle a noi donar.

A lui rivolgi il ciglio.

Guardo chi t'offro, e poi

Lasci, Signor, se vuoi,

Lascia di perdonar.

“ I offer to thee, O Lord, thy own son, who already has given the pledge of love, inclosed in this thin emblem; turn on him thine eyes; ah! behold whom I offer to thee, and then desist, O Lord! if thou canst desist from mercy.”

“ The muse that has attended my course (says the dying Gleim in a letter to Klopstock) still hovers round my steps to the very verge of the grave.” A collection of lyrical poems, entitled “ Last Hours,” composed by Old Gleim on his death-bed, were intended to be published. The death of Klopstock was one of the most poetical; in this poet’s “ Messiah,” he had made the death of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, a picture of the death of the just; and on his own death-bed he was heard repeating, with an expiring voice, his own verses on Mary; he was exhorting himself to die by the accents of his own harp, the sublimities of his own muse! The same song of Mary, says Madame de Staël, was read at the public funeral of Klopstock.

Chatellard, a French gentleman, beheaded in Scotland for having loved the queen, and even for having attempted her honour, Brantome says,

would not have any other viaticum than a poem of Ronsard. When he ascended the scaffold he took the hymns of this poet, and for his consolation read that on death, which he says is well adapted to conquer its fear.

The Marquis of Montrose, when he was condemned by his judges to have his limbs nailed to the gates of four cities, the brave soldier said, that "he was sorry he had not limbs sufficient to be nailed to all the gates of the cities in Europe, as monuments of his loyalty." As he proceeded to his execution, he put this thought into beautiful verse.

Philip Strozzi, when imprisoned by Cosmo the First, great Duke of Tuscany, was apprehensive of the danger to which he might expose his friends who had joined in his conspiracy against the duke, from the confessions which the rack might extort from him. Having attempted every exertion for the liberty of his country, he considered it as no crime therefore to die. He resolved on suicide. With the point of the sword, with which he killed himself, he cut out on the mantel-piece of the chimney this verse of Virgil:

*Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.*

Rise, some avenger, from our blood!

I can never repeat without a strong emotion the

following stanzas, begun by André Chenier, in the dreadful period of the French revolution. He was waiting for his turn to be dragged to the guillotine, when he commenced this poem :

Comme un dernier rayon, comme un dernier zephyre  
 Anime la fin d'un beau jour ;  
 Au pied de l'échafaud j'essaie encor ma lyre,  
 Peut-être est ce bientôt mon tour ;

Peut-être avant que l'heure en cercle promenée  
 Ait posé sur l'email brillant  
 Dans les soixante pas ou sa route est bornée  
 Son pied sonore et vigilant.

Le sommeil du tombeau pressera ma paupière——

Here, at this pathetic line, was André Chenier summoned to the guillotine! Never was a more beautiful effusion of grief interrupted by a more affecting incident!

Several men of science have died in a scientific manner. Haller, the poet, philosopher, and physician, beheld his end approach with the utmost composure. He kept feeling his pulse to the last moment, and when he found that life was almost gone, he turned to his brother physician, observing, "My friend, the artery ceases to beat,"—and almost instantly expired. The same remarkable circumstance had occurred to the great Harvey ;

he kept making observations on the state of his pulse, when life was drawing to its close, "as if," says Dr. Wilson in the oration spoken a few days after the event, "that he who had taught us the beginning of life might himself, at his departing from it, become acquainted with those of death."

De Lagny, who was intended by his friends for the study of the law, having fallen on an Euclid, found it so congenial to his dispositions, that he devoted himself to mathematics. In his last moments, when he retained no further recollection of the friends who surrounded his bed, one of them, perhaps to make a philosophical experiment, thought proper to ask him the square of 12; our dying mathematician instantly, and perhaps without knowing that he answered, replied, "144."

The following anecdotes are of a different complexion, and may excite a smile.

Pere Bouhours was a French grammarian, who had been justly accused of paying too scrupulous an attention to the minutiae of letters. He was more solicitous of his *words* than his *thoughts*. It is said, that when he was dying, he called out to his friends (a correct grammarian to the last), "*Je vas, ou je vais mourir; l'un ou l'autre se dit !*"

When Malherbe was dying, he reprimanded

his nurse for making use of a solecism in her language! And when his confessor represented to him the felicities of a future state in low and trite expressions, the dying critic interrupted him:—“Hold your tongue,” he said, “your wretched style only makes me out of conceit with them!”

The favourite studies and amusements of the learned La Mothe le Vayer consisted in accounts of the most distant countries. He gave a striking proof of the influence of this master-passion, when death hung upon his lips. Bernier, the celebrated traveller, entering and drawing the curtains of his bed to take his eternal farewell, the dying man turning to him, with a faint voice inquired, “Well, my friend, what news from the Great Mogul?”

## SCARRON.

SCARRON, as a burlesque poet (but no other comparison exists), had his merit, but is now little read; for the uniformity of the burlesque style is as intolerable as the uniformity of the serious. From various sources we may collect some uncommon anecdotes, although he was a mere author.

Few are born with more flattering hopes than was Scarron. His father, a counsellor with an

income of 25,000 livres, married a second wife, and the lively Scarron soon became the object of her hatred. He studied, and travelled, and took the clerical tonsure; but discovered dispositions more suitable to the pleasures of his age than to the gravity of his profession. He formed an acquaintance with the wits of the times; and in the carnival of 1638 committed a youthful extravagance, for which his remaining days formed a continual punishment. He disguised himself as a savage; the singularity of a naked man attracted crowds. After having been hunted by the mob, he was forced to escape from his pursuers, and concealed himself in a marsh. A freezing cold seized him, and threw him, at the age of 27 years, into a kind of palsy; a cruel disorder which tormented him all his life. "It was thus," he says, "that pleasure deprived me suddenly of legs which had danced with elegance, and of hands which could manage the pencil and the lute."

Goujet, in his *Bibliothèque Française*, vol. xvi. p. 307, without stating this anecdote, describes his disorder as an acrid humour, distilling itself on his nerves, and baffling the skill of his physicians; the sciatica, rheumatism, in a word, a complication of maladies attacked him, sometimes successively, sometimes together, and made of our poor Abbé a sad spectacle. He thus describes

himself in one of his letters ; and who could be in better humour ?

“ I have lived to thirty : if I reach forty, I shall only add many miseries to those which I have endured these last eight or nine years. My person was well made, though short ; my disorder has shortened it still more by a foot. My head is a little broad for my shape ; my face is full enough for my body to appear very meagre ; I have hair enough to render a wig unnecessary ; I have got many white hairs, in spite of the proverb. My teeth, formerly square pearls, are now of the colour of wood, and will soon be of slate. My legs and thighs first formed an obtuse angle, afterwards an equilateral angle, and, at length, an acute one. My thighs and my body form another ; and my head, always dropping on my breast, makes me not ill represent a Z. I have got my arms shortened as well as legs, and my fingers as well as my arms. In a word, I am an abridgment of human miseries.”

It is said in the *Segraisiana*, p. 87, that he had the free use of nothing but his tongue and his hands ; and that he wrote on a portfolio, which was placed on his knees.

Balzac said of Scarron, that he had gone further in insensibility than the stoics, who were



satisfied in appearing insensible to pain; but Scarron was gay, and amused all the world with his sufferings.

He pourtrays himself thus humorously in his address to the queen :

Je ne regarde plus qu'en bas,  
 Je suis torticolis, j'ai la tête penchante ;  
 Ma mine devient si plaisante.  
 Que quand on en riroit, je ne m'en plaindrois pas.

“ I can only see under me ; I am wry-necked ; my head hangs down ; my appearance is so droll, that if people laugh, I shall not complain.”

He says elsewhere,

Parmi les torticolis  
 Je passe pour des plus jolis.

“ Among your wry-necked people I pass for one of the handsomest.”

After having suffered this distortion of shape, and these acute pains for four years, he quitted his usual residence, the quarter du Marais, for the baths of the fauxbourg Saint Germain. He took leave of his friends, by addressing some verses to them, entitled, *Adieux aux Marais* ; in this piece

he highly praises many celebrated persons. When he was brought into the street in a chair, the pleasure of seeing himself there once more overcame the pains which the motion occasioned, and he has celebrated the transport by an ode, which has for title, "The Way from le Marais to the Fauxbourg Saint Germain."

These and other baths which he tried had no effect on his miserable disorder. But a new affliction was added to the catalogue of his griefs.

His father, who had hitherto contributed to his necessities, having joined a party against Cardinal Richelieu, was exiled. This affair was rendered still more unfortunate by his mother-in-law with her children at Paris, in the absence of her husband, appropriating the money of the family to her own use.

Hitherto Scarron had had no connexion with Cardinal Richelieu. The behaviour of his father had even rendered his name disagreeable to the minister, who was by no means prone to forgiveness. Scarron, however, when he thought his passion softened, ventured to present a petition; and which is considered by the critics as one of his happiest productions. Richelieu permitted it to be read to him, and acknowledged that it afforded him much pleasure, and that it was *pleasantly*

*dated.* This *pleasant date* is thus given by Scarron:

Fait a Paris dernier jour d'Octobre,  
Par moi, Scarron, qui malgré mois suis sobre,  
L'an que l'on prit le fameux Perpignan,  
Et, sans canon, la ville de Sedan.

At Paris done, the last day of October,  
By me, Scarron, who wanting wine, am sober,  
The year they took fam'd Perpignan,  
And, without cannon-ball, Sedan.

This was flattering the minister adroitly in two points very agreeably to him. The poet augured well of the dispositions of the cardinal, and lost no time to return to the charge, by addressing an ode to him, to which he gave the title of **THANKS**, as if he had already received the favours which he hoped he should receive! But all was lost by the death of the cardinal. In this ode I think he has caught the leading idea from a hymn of Ronsard. Catherine of Medicis was prodigal of her *promises*, and for this reason Ronsard dedicated to her the hymn to **PROMISE**.

When Scarron's father died he brought his mother-in-law into court; and, to complete his misfortunes, lost his suit. The cases which he drew up for the occasion were so extremely bur-

lesque, that the world could not easily conceive how a man could amuse himself so pleasantly on a subject on which his existence depended.

The successor of Richelieu, the Cardinal Mazarin, was insensible to his applications. He did nothing for him, although the poet dedicated to him his *Typhon*, a burlesque poem, in which the author describes the wars of the giants with the gods. Our bard was so irritated at this neglect, that he suppressed a sonnet he had written in his favour, and aimed at him several satirical bullets. Scarron, however, consoled himself for this kind of disgrace with those select friends who were not inconstant in their visits to him. The Bishop of Mans, also, solicited by a friend, gave him a living in his diocese. When Scarron had taken possession of it, he began his *Roman Comique*, ill translated into English by *Comical Romance*. He made friends by his dedications. Such resources were indeed necessary, for he not only lived well, but had made his house an asylum for his two sisters, who there found refuge from an unfeeling step-mother.

It was about this time that the beautiful and accomplished Mademoiselle D'Aubigné, afterwards so well known by the name of Madame de Maintenon, she who was to be one day the mistress, if not the queen of France, formed with

Scarron the most romantic connexion. She united herself in marriage with one whom she well knew might be a lover, but could not be a husband. It was indeed amidst that literary society she formed her taste, and embellished with her presence his little residence, where the most polished courtiers and some of the finest geniuses of Paris, the party formed against Mazarin, called *La Fronde*, met. Such was the influence this marriage had over Scarron, that after this period his writings became more correct and more agreeable than those which he had previously composed. Scarron, on his side, gave a proof of his attachment to Madame de Maintenon; for by marrying her he lost his living of Mans. But though without wealth, we are told in the *Segraisiana*, that he was accustomed to say, that "his wife and he would not live uncomfortably by the produce of his estate and the *Marquisate of Quinct*." Thus he called the revenue which his compositions produced, and *Quinct* was his bookseller.

Scarron addressed one of his dedications to his dog, to ridicule those writers who dedicate their works indiscriminately, though no author has been more liberal of dedications than himself; but, as he confessed, he made dedication a kind of business. When he was low in cash he always dedicated to some lord, whom he praised as

warmly as his dog, but whom probably he did not esteem as much.

Segrais informs us, that when Scarron was visited, previous to general conversation his friends were taxed with a perusal of whatever he had written since he saw them before. One day Segrais and a friend calling on him, "Take a chair," said our author, "and let me *try on you* my Roman Comique." He took his manuscript, read several pages, and when he observed that they laughed, he said, "Good, this goes well; my book can't fail of success, since it obliges such able persons as yourselves to laugh;" and then remained silent to receive their compliments. He used to call this *trying on his romance*, as a taylor *tries his coat*. He was agreeable and diverting in all things, even in his complaints and passions. Whatever he conceived he immediately too freely expressed; but his amiable lady corrected him of this in three months after marriage!

He petitioned the Queen, in his droll manner, to be permitted the honour of being her *patient* \*

\* A friend would translate, "malade de la reine, the queen's *sick man*." I think there is more humour in supposing her majesty to be his *physician*; in which light Scarron might consider her for a pension of 500 crowns.

*by right of office.* These verses form a part of his address to her majesty :

Scarron, par la grace de Dieu,  
 Malade indigne de la reine,  
 Homme n'ayant ni feu, ni lieu,  
 Mais bien du mal et de la peine ;  
 Hopital allant et venant,  
 Des jambes d'autrui cheminant,  
 Des siennes n'ayant plus l'usage,  
 Souffrant beaucoup, dormant bien peu,  
 Et pourtant faisant par courage  
 Bonne mine et fort mauvais jeu.

“ Scarron, by the grace of God, an unworthy patient of the Queen ; a man without a house, though a moving hospital of disorders ; walking only with other people's legs, with great sufferings, but little sleep ; and yet, in spite of all, very courageously showing a hearty countenance, though indeed he plays a losing game.”

She smiled, granted the title, and, what was better, added a small pension, which losing, by lampooning the minister Mazarin, Fouquet generously granted him a more considerable one.

The termination of the miseries of this facetious genius was now approaching. To one of his friends, who was taking leave of him for some time, Scarron said, “ I shall soon die ; the only regret I have in dying is not to be enabled to

leave some property to my wife, who is possessed of infinite merit, and whom I have every reason imaginable to admire and to praise."

One day he was seized with so violent a fit of the hiccough, that his friends now considered his prediction would soon be verified. When it was over, "if ever I recover," cried Scarron, "I will write a bitter satire against the hiccough." The satire, however, was never written, for he died soon after. A little before his death, when he observed his relations and domestics weeping and groaning, he was not much affected, but humorously told them, "My children, you will never weep for me so much as I have made you laugh." A few moments before he died, he said, that "he never thought it was so easy a matter to laugh at the approach of death."

The burlesque compositions of Scarron are now neglected by the French. This species of writing was much in vogue till attacked by the critical Boileau, who annihilated such puny writers as D'Assoucy and Dulot, with their stupid admirers. It is said he spared Scarron because his merit, though it appeared but at intervals, was uncommon. Yet so much were burlesque verses the fashion after Scarron's works, that the booksellers would not publish poems, but with the word "Burlesque" in the title-page. In 1649 appeared a poem,



which shocked the pious, entitled "The Passion of our Lord, in *burlesque Verses*."

Swift, in his dotage, appears to have been gratified by such puerilities as Scarron frequently wrote. An ode which Swift calls "A Lilliputian Ode," consisting of verses of three syllables, probably originated in a long epistle in verses of three syllables, which Scarron addressed to Sarrazin. It is pleasant, and the following lines will serve as a specimen.

*Epitre a Mr. Sarrazin.*

Sarrazin  
 Mon voisin,  
 Cher ami,  
 Qu'a demi,  
 Je ne voi,  
 Dont ma foi  
 J'ai depit  
 Un petit.  
 N'es-tu pas  
 Barrabas,  
 Busiris,  
 Phalaris,  
 Ganelon,  
 Le Felon?

He describes himself

Uu pauvret,  
 Tres maigret,

Au col tors,  
 Dont le corps  
 Tout tortu,  
 Tout bossu.  
 Suranné,  
 Decharné,  
 Est réduit,  
 Jour et nuit,  
 A souffrir  
 Sans guerir  
 Des tourmens  
 Vehemens.

He complains of Sarrazin's not visiting him;  
 threatens to reduce him into powder if he comes  
 not quickly; and concludes,

Mais pourtant  
 Repentant  
 Si tu viens  
 Et te tiens  
 Seulement  
 Un moment  
 Avec nous  
 Mon courroux  
 Finira,  
 ET CÆTERA.

The Roman Comique of our author is well  
 known, and abounds with pleasantry, with wit  
 and character. His "Virgile Travestie" it is im-  
 possible to read long: this we likewise feel in

“Cotton's Virgil travestied,” which has notwithstanding considerable merit. Buffoonery after a certain time exhausts our patience. It is the chaste actor only who can keep the attention awake for a length of time. It is said that Scarron intended to write a tragedy; this perhaps would not have been the least facetious of his burlesques.

### PETER CORNEILLE.

Exact Racine and CORNEILLE'S noble fire  
Show'd us that France had something to admire.

POPE.

THE great Corneille having finished his studies, devoted himself to the bar; but this was not the stage on which his abilities were to be displayed. —He followed the occupation of a lawyer for some time, without taste, and without success. A trifling circumstance discovered to the world and to himself a different genius. A young man who was in love with a girl of the same town, having solicited him to be his companion in one of those secret visits which he paid to the lady, it happened that the stranger pleased infinitely more than his introducer. The pleasure arising from this adventure excited in Corneille a talent which

had hitherto been unknown to him, and he attempted, as if it were by inspiration, dramatic poetry. On this little subject, he wrote his comedy of *Melite*, in 1625. At that moment the French drama was at a low ebb; the most favourable ideas were formed of our juvenile poet, and comedy, it was expected, would now reach its perfection. After the tumult of approbation had ceased, the critics thought that *Melite* was too simple and barren of incident. Angered by this criticism, our poet wrote his *Clitandre*, and in that piece has scattered incidents and adventures with such a licentious profusion, that the critics say, he wrote it rather to expose the public taste than to accommodate himself to it. In this piece the persons combat on the theatre; there are murders and assassinations; heroines fight; officers appear in search of murderers, and women are disguised as men. There is matter sufficient for a romance of ten volumes; "And yet (says a French critic) nothing can be more cold and tiresome." He afterwards indulged his natural genius in various other performances; but began to display more forcibly his tragic powers in *Medea*. A comedy which he afterwards wrote was a very indifferent composition. He regained his full lustre in the famous *Cid*, a tragedy, of which he preserved in his closet translations in all

the European languages, except the Slavonian and the Turkish. He pursued his poetical career with uncommon splendour in the Horaces, Cinna, and at length in Polieuctes; which productions (the French critics say) can never be surpassed.

At length the tragedy of "Pertharite" appeared, and proved unsuccessful. This so much disgusted our veteran bard, that, like Ben Jonson, he could not conceal his chagrin in the preface. There the poet tells us that he renounces the theatre for ever! and indeed this *eternity* lasted for *several years!*

Disgusted by the fate of his unfortunate tragedy, he directed his poetical pursuits to a different species of composition. He now finished his translation, in verse, of the "Imitation of Jesus Christ, by Thomas à Kempis." This work, perhaps from the singularity of its dramatic author becoming a religious writer, was attended with astonishing success. Yet Fontenelle did not find in this translation the prevailing charm of the original, which consists in that simplicity and *naïveté*, which are lost in the pomp of versification so natural to Corneille. "This book," he continues, "the finest that ever proceeded from the hand of man (since the gospel does not come from man) would not go so direct to the heart, and would not seize on it with such force, if it

had not a natural and tender air, to which even that negligence which prevails in the style greatly contributes." Voltaire appears to confirm the opinion of our critic, in respect to the translation : "It is reported that Corneille's translation of the Imitation of Jesus Christ has been printed thirty-two times; it is as difficult to believe this as it is to read the book once!"

Corneille seems not to have been ignorant of the truth of this criticism. In his dedication of it to the pope, he says, "The translation which I have chosen, by the simplicity of its style, precludes all the rich ornaments of poetry, and, far from increasing my reputation, must be considered rather as a sacrifice made to the glory of the Sovereign Author of all which I may have acquired by my poetical productions." This is an excellent elucidation of the truth of that precept of Johnson which respects religious poetry; but of which the author of "Calvary" seems not to have been sensible. The merit of religious compositions appears, like this "Imitation of Jesus Christ," to consist in a simplicity inimical to the higher poetical embellishments; these are too human!

When Racine, the son, published a long poem on "Grace" taken in its holy sense, a most un-

happy subject at least for poetry, it was said that he had written on *Grace* without *grace*.

During the space of six years Corneille rigorously kept his promise of not writing for the theatre. At length, overpowered by the persuasions of his friends, and probably by his own inclinations, he once more directed his studies to the drama. He recommenced in 1659, and finished in 1675. During this time he wrote ten new pieces, and published a variety of little religious poems, which, although they do not attract the attention of posterity, were then read with delight, and probably preferred to the finest tragedies by the good catholics of the day.

In 1675 he terminated his career. In the last year of his life his mind became so enfeebled as to be incapable of thinking; and he died in extreme poverty. It is true that his uncommon genius had been amply rewarded; but amongst his talents we cannot count that of preserving those favours of fortune which he had acquired.

Fontenelle, his nephew, presents a minute and interesting description of this great man. I must first observe, what Marville says, that when he saw Corneille he had the appearance of a country tradesman, and that he could not conceive how a man of so rustic an appearance could put into

the mouths of his Romans such heroic sentiments. Corneille was sufficiently large and full in his person; his air simple and vulgar; always negligent; and very little solicitous of pleasing by his exterior.—His face had something agreeable, his nose large, his mouth not unhandsome, his eyes full of fire, his physiognomy lively, with strong features, well adapted to be transmitted to posterity on a medal or bust. His pronunciation was not very distinct: and he read his verses with force, but without grace.

He was acquainted with polite literature, with history, and politics; but he generally knew them best as they related to the stage. For other knowledge he had neither leisure, curiosity, nor much esteem. He spoke little, even on subjects which he perfectly understood. He did not embellish what he said, and to discover the great Corneille it became necessary to read him.

He was of a melancholy disposition, had something blunt in his manner, and sometimes he appeared rude; but in fact he was no disagreeable companion, and made a good father and husband. He was tender, and his soul was very susceptible of friendship. His constitution was very favourable to love, but never to debauchery, and rarely to violent attachments. His soul was fierce and independent: it could never be managed, for it



would never bend. This indeed rendered him very capable of portraying Roman virtue, but incapable of improving his fortune. Nothing equalled his incapacity for business but his aversion: the slightest troubles of this kind occasioned him alarm and terror. He was never satiated with praise, although he was continually receiving it; but if he was sensible to fame, he was far removed from vanity.

What Fontenelle observes of Corneille's love of fame is strongly proved by our great poet himself, in an epistle to a friend, in which we find the following remarkable description of himself; an instance that what the world calls vanity, at least interests in a great genius.

Nous nous aimons un peu, c'est notre foible à tous ;  
 Le prix que nous valons qui le sçait mieux que nous ?  
 Et puis la mode en est, et la cour l'autorise,  
 Nous parlons de nous même avec tout franchise,  
 La fausse humilité ne met plus en credit.  
 Je sçais ce que je vaux, et crois ce qu'on m'en dit,  
 Pour me faire admirer je ne fais point de ligue ;  
 J'ai peu de voix pour moi, mais je les ai sans brigue ;  
 Et mon ambition, pour faire plus de bruit  
 Ne les va point queter de reduit en reduit  
 Mon travail sans appui monte sur le theatre,  
 Chacun en liberté l'y blame ou l'idolatre ;  
 Là, sans que mes amis prechent leur sentimens,  
 J'arrache quelquefois leurs applaudissemens ;

Là, content du succes que le merite donne,  
 Par d'illustres avis je n'eblouis personne ;  
 Je satisfais ensemble et peuple et courtisans ;  
 Et mes vers en tous lieux sont mes seuls partisans ;  
 Par leur seule beauté ma plume est estimée,  
 Je ne dois qu'à moi seul toute ma renommée ;  
 Et pense toutefois n'avoir point de rival,  
 A qui je fasse tort, en le traitant d'egal.

I give his sentiments in English verse with more faithfulness than elegance. To write with his energetic expression, one must feel oneself in a similar situation, which only one or two living writers can experience.

Self-love prevails too much in every state ;  
 Who, like ourselves, our secret worth can rate ?  
 Since 'tis a fashion authorised at court,  
 Frankly our merits we ourselves report.  
 A proud humility will not deceive ;  
 I know my worth ; what others say, believe.  
 To be admired I form no petty league :  
 Few are my friends, but gain'd without intrigue.  
 My bold ambition, destitute of grace,  
 Scorns still to beg their votes from place to place.  
 On the fair stage my scenic toils I raise,  
 While each is free to censure or to praise :  
 And there, unaided by inferior arts,  
 I snatch the applause that rushes from their hearts.  
 Content by Merit still to win the crown,  
 With no illustrious names I cheat the town.

The galleries thunder, and the pit commends;  
 My verses, every where, my only friends!  
 'Tis from their charms alone my praise I claim;  
 'Tis to myself alone, I owe my fame;  
 And know no rival whom I fear to meet,  
 Or injure, when I grant an equal seat.

Voltaire censures Corneille for making his heroes say continually they are great men. But in drawing the character of an hero he draws his own. All his heroes are only so many Corneilles in different situations.

Thomas Corneille attempted the same career as his brother: perhaps his name was unfortunate, for it naturally excited a comparison which could not be favourable to him. Gaçon, the Dennis of his day, wrote the following smart impromptu under his portrait:

Voyant le portrait de Corneille,  
 Gardez vous de crier merveille!  
 Et dans vos transports n'allez pas,  
 Prendre ici *Pierre* pour *Thomas*.

## POETS.

IN all ages there has existed an anti-poetical party. This faction consists of those frigid intellects incapable of that glowing expansion so

necessary to feel the charms of an art, which only addresses itself to the imagination; or of writers who, having proved unsuccessful in their court to the muses, revenge themselves by reviling them; and also of those religious minds who consider the ardent effusions of poetry as dangerous to the morals and peace of society.

Plato, amongst the ancients, is the model of those moderns who profess themselves to be ANTI-POETICAL. This writer, in his ideal republic, characterises a man who occupies himself with composing verses as a very dangerous member of society, from the inflammatory tendency of his writings. It is by arguing from its abuse, that he decries this enchanting talent. At the same time it is to be recollected, that no head was more finely organised for the visions of the muse than Plato's: he was a true poet, and had addicted himself in his prime of life to the cultivation of the art, but perceiving that he could not surpass his inimitable original, Homer, he employed this insidious manner of depreciating his works. In the Phædrus he describes the feelings of a genuine Poet. To become such, he says, it will never be sufficient to be guided by the rules of art, unless we also feel the ecstasies of that *furor*, almost divine, which in this kind of composition is the most palpable and least ambiguous character of a

true inspiration. Cold minds, ever tranquil and ever in possession of themselves, are incapable of producing exalted poetry; their verses must always be feeble, diffusive, and leave no impression; the verses of those who are endowed with a strong and lively imagination, and who, like Homer's personification of Discord, have their heads incessantly in the skies, and their feet on the earth, will agitate you, burn in your heart, and drag you along with them; breaking like an impetuous torrent, and swelling your breast with that enthusiasm with which they are themselves possessed.

Such is the character of a *poet* in a *poetical age*! —The tuneful race have many corporate bodies of mechanics; Pontipool manufacturers, inlayers, burnishers, gilders, and filers!

Men of taste are sometimes disgusted in turning over the works of the anti-poetical, by meeting with gross railleries and false judgments concerning poetry and poets. Locke has expressed a marked contempt of poets; but we see what ideas he formed of poetry by his warm panegyric of one of Blackmore's epics! and besides he was himself a most unhappy poet! Selden, a scholar of profound erudition, has given us *his* opinion concerning poets. "It is ridiculous for a *lord* to print verses; he may make them to please him-

self. If a man in a private chamber twirls his band-strings, or plays with a rush to please himself, it is well enough; but if he should go into Fleet-street, and sit upon a stall and twirl a band-string, or play with a rush, then all the boys in the street would laugh at him."—As if "the sublime and the beautiful" are to be compared to the twirling of a band-string or playing with a rush!—A poet, related to an illustrious family, and who did not write unpoetically, entertained a far different notion concerning poets. So persuaded was he that to be a true poet required an elevated mind, that it was a maxim with him, that no writer could be an excellent poet who was not descended from a noble family. This opinion is as absurd as that of Selden's:—but when one party will not grant enough, the other always assumes too much. The great Pascal, whose extraordinary genius was discovered in the sciences, knew little of the nature of poetical beauty. He said "Poetry has no settled object." This was the decision of a geometrician, not of a poet. "Why should he speak of what he did not understand?" asked the lively Voltaire. Poetry is not an object which comes under the cognizance of philosophy or wit.

Longuerue had profound erudition; but he de-

cided on poetry in the same manner as those learned men. Nothing so strongly characterises such literary men as the following observations in the Longuerana, p. 170.

“There are two *books on Homer*, which I prefer to *Homer himself*. The first is *Antiquitates Homericæ* of Feithius, where he has extracted every thing relative to the usages and customs of the Greeks; the other is *Homeri Gnomologia per Duportum*, printed at Cambridge. In these two books is found every thing valuable in Homer, without being obliged to get through his *Contes à dormir debout!*” Thus men of *science* decide on men of *taste*! There are who study Homer and Virgil as the blind travel through a fine country, merely to get to the end of their journey. It was observed at the death of Longuerue that in his immense library not a volume of poetry was to be found. He had formerly read poetry, for indeed he had read every thing. Racine tells us, that when young he paid him a visit; the conversation turned on *poets*; our *erudit* reviewed them all with the most ineffable contempt of the poetical talent, from which he said we learn nothing. He seemed a little charitable towards Ariosto.—“As for that *Madman*, (said he) he has amused me sometimes.” Dacier, a poetical

pedant after all, was asked who was the greater poet, Homer or Virgil? he honestly answered, "Homer by a thousand years!"

But it is mortifying to find among the *anti-poetical* even *poets* themselves! Malherbe, the first poet in France in his day, appears little to have esteemed the art. He used to say, that "a good poet was not more useful to the state than a skilful player of nine-pins!" Malherbe wrote with costive labour. When a poem was shown to him which had been highly commended, he sarcastically asked if it would "lower the price of bread?" In these instances he maliciously confounded the *useful* with the *agreeable* arts. Be it remembered that Malherbe had a cynical heart, cold and unfeeling; his character may be traced in his poetry; labour and correctness, without one ray of enthusiasm.

Le Clerc was a scholar not entirely unworthy to be ranked amongst the Lockes, the Seldens, and the Longuerues; and his opinions are as just concerning poets. In the *Parrhasiana* he has written a treatise on poets in a very unpoetical manner. I shall notice his coarse raileries relating to what he calls "the personal defects of poets." In vol. i. p. 33, he says, "In the *Scaligerana* we have Joseph Scaliger's opinion concerning poets. 'There never was a man who



was a poet, or addicted to the study of poetry, but his heart was puffed up with his greatness.'— This is very true. The poetical enthusiasm persuades those gentlemen, that they have something in them superior to others, because they employ a language peculiar to themselves. When the poetic furor seizes them its traces frequently remain on their faces, which make connoisseurs say with Horace,

Aut insanit homo, aut versus facit.

There goes a madman, or a bard !

Their thoughtful air and melancholy gait make them appear insane ; for, accustomed to versify while they walk, and to bite their nails in apparent agonies, their steps are measured and slow, and they look as if they were reflecting on something of consequence, although they are only thinking, as the phrase runs, of nothing !” He proceeds in the same elegant strain to enumerate other defects. I have only transcribed the above description of our jocular scholar, with an intention of describing those exterior marks of that fine enthusiasm, of which the poet is peculiarly susceptible, and which have exposed many an elevated genius to the ridicule of the vulgar.

I find this admirably defended by Charpentier :  
 “ Men may ridicule as much as they please those

gesticulations and contortions which poets are apt to make in the act of composing; it is certain however that they greatly assist in putting the imagination into motion. These kinds of agitation do not always show a mind which labours with its sterility; they frequently proceed from a mind which excites and animates itself. Quintilian has nobly compared them to those lashings of his tail which a lion gives himself when he is preparing to combat. Persius, when he would give us an idea of a cold and languishing oration, says that its author did not strike his desk nor bite his nails.

*Nec pluteum cædit, nec demorsos sapit ungues."*

These exterior marks of enthusiasm may be illustrated by the following curious anecdote:—Domenichino, the painter, was accustomed to act the characters of all the figures he would represent on his canvas, and to speak aloud whatever the passion he meant to describe could prompt. Painting the martyrdom of St. Andrew, Carracci one day caught him in a violent passion, speaking in a terrible and menacing tone. He was at that moment employed on a soldier, who was threatening the saint. When this fit of enthusiastic abstraction had passed, Carracci ran and embraced him, acknowledging that Domenichino had been that day his master; and that he had learnt from

him the true manner to succeed in catching the expression; that great pride of the painter's art.

Thus different are the sentiments of the intelligent and the unintelligent on the same subject. A Carracci embraced a kindred genius for what a Le Clerc or a Selden would have ridiculed.

Poets, I confess, frequently indulge *reveries*, which, though they offer no charms to their friends, are too delicious to forego. In the ideal world, peopled with all its fairy inhabitants, and ever open to their contemplation, they travel with an unwearied foot. Crebillon, the celebrated tragic poet, was enamoured of solitude, that he might there indulge, without interruption, in those fine romances with which his imagination teemed. One day when he was in a deep reverie, a friend entered hastily: "Don't disturb me," cried the poet, "I am enjoying a moment of happiness; I am going to hang a villain of a minister, and banish another who is an idiot."

Amongst the anti-poetical may be placed the father of the great monarch of Prussia. George the Second was not more the avowed enemy of the muses. Frederic would not suffer the prince to read verses; and when he was desirous of study, or of the conversation of literary men, he was obliged to do it secretly. Every poet was odious to his majesty. One day, having observed

some lines written on one of the doors of the palace, he asked a courtier their signification. They were explained to him; they were Latin verses composed by Wachter, a man of letters, then resident at Berlin. The king immediately sent for the bard, who came warm with the hope of receiving a reward for his ingenuity. He was astonished however to hear the king, in a violent passion, accost him, "I order you immediately to quit this city and my kingdom." Wachter took refuge in Hanover. As little indeed was this anti-poetical monarch a friend to philosophers. Two or three such kings might perhaps renovate the ancient barbarism of Europe. Barratier, the celebrated child, was presented to his majesty of Prussia as a prodigy of erudition: the king, to mortify our ingenious youth, coldly asked him, "If he knew the law?" The learned boy was constrained to acknowledge that he knew nothing of law. "Go," was the reply of this Augustus, "Go, and study it before you give yourself out as a scholar." Poor Barratier renounced for this pursuit his other studies, and persevered with such ardour, that he became an excellent lawyer at the end of fifteen months; but his exertions cost him at the same time his life!

Every monarch, however, has not proved so destitute of poetic sensibility as this Prussian.

Francis I. gave repeated marks of his attachment to the favourites of the muses, by composing several occasional sonnets, which are dedicated to their eulogy. Andrelin, a French poet, enjoyed the happy fate of Oppian, to whom the emperor Caracalla counted as many pieces of gold as there were verses in one of his poems; and with great propriety they have been called "golden verses." Andrelin when he recited his poem on the conquest of Naples before Charles VIII. received a sack of silver coin, which with difficulty he carried home. Charles IX., says Brantome, loved verses, and recompensed poets, not indeed immediately, but gradually, that they might always be stimulated to excel. He used to say that poets resembled race horses, that must be fed but not fattened, for then they were good for nothing. Marot was so much esteemed by kings, that he was called the poet of princes, and the prince of poets.

In the early state of poetry what honours were paid to its votaries! Ronsard, the French Chaucer, was the first who carried away the prize at the Floral games. This meed of poetic honour was an eglantine composed of silver. The reward did not appear equal to the merit of the work and the reputation of the poet; and on this occasion the city of Toulouse had a Minerva of solid

silver struck, of considerable value. This image was sent to Ronsard, accompanied by a decree, in which he was declared, by way of eminence, "The French poet."

It is a curious anecdote to add, that when, at a later period, a similar Minerva was adjudged to Maynard for his verses, the Capitouls of Toulouse, who were the executors of the Floral gifts, to their shame, out of covetousness, never obeyed the decision of the poetical judges. This circumstance is noticed by Maynard in an epigram, which bears this title; *On a Minerva of silver, promised but not given.*

The anecdote of Margaret of Scotland (wife of the Dauphin of France), and Alain the poet, is, perhaps, generally known. Who is not charmed with that fine expression of her poetical sensibility? The person of Alain was repulsive, but his poetry had attracted her affections. Passing through one of the halls of the palace, she saw him sleeping on a bench; she approached and kissed him. Some of her attendants could not conceal their astonishment that she should press with her lips those of a man so frightfully ugly. The amiable princess answered, smiling, "I did not kiss the man, but the mouth which has uttered so many fine things."

The great Colbert paid a pretty compliment

to Boileau and Racine. This minister, at his villa, was enjoying the conversation of our two poets, when the arrival of a prelate was announced: turning quickly to the servant, he said, "Let him be shown every thing except myself!"

To such attentions from this great minister, Boileau alludes in these verses:

— Plus d'un grand, m'aima jusques à la tendresse ;  
Et ma vue à Colbert inspiroit l'allegresse.

Several pious persons have considered it as highly meritable to abstain from the reading of poetry! A good father, in his account of the last hours of Madame Racine, the lady of the celebrated tragic poet, pays high compliments to her religious disposition, which, he says, was so austere, that she would not allow herself to read poetry, as she considered it to be a dangerous pleasure; and he highly commends her for never having read the tragedies of her husband! Arnauld, though so intimately connected with Racine for many years, had not read his compositions. When, at length, he was persuaded to read Phædra, he declared himself to be delighted, but complained that the poet had set a dangerous example, in making the manly Hypolitus dwindle to an effeminate lover. As a critic, Arnauld was right; but Racine had his nation to please. Such

persons entertain notions of poetry similar to that of an ancient father, who calls poetry the wine of Satan; or to that of the religious and austere Nicole, who was so ably answered by Racine: he said, that dramatic poets were public poisoners, not of bodies, but of souls.

Poets, it is acknowledged, have foibles peculiar to themselves. They sometimes act in the daily commerce of life, as if every one was concerned in the success of their productions. Poets are too frequently merely poets. Segrain has recorded that the following maxim of Rochefoucault was occasioned by reflecting on the characters of Boileau and Racine. "It displays," he writes, "a great poverty of mind to have only one kind of genius." On this Segrain observes, and Segrain knew them intimately, that their conversation only turned on poetry; take them from that, and they knew nothing. It was thus with one Du Perrier, a good poet, but very poor. When he was introduced to Pelisson, who wished to be serviceable to him, the minister said, "In what can he be employed? He is only occupied by his verses."

All these complaints are not unfounded; yet, perhaps, it is unjust to expect from an excelling artist all the petty accomplishments of frivolous persons, who have studied no art but that of prac-



tising on the weaknesses of their friends. The enthusiastic votary, who devotes his days and nights to meditations on his favourite art, will rarely be found that despicable thing, a mere man of the world. Du Bos has justly observed, that men of genius, born for a particular profession, appear inferior to others when they apply themselves to other occupations. That distraction which arises from their continued attention to their ideas renders them awkward in their manners. Such defects are even a proof of the activity of genius.

It is a common foible with poets to read their verses to friends. Ségrais has ingeniously observed, to use his own words, "When young I used to please myself in reciting my verses indifferently to all persons; but I perceived when Scarron, who was my intimate friend, used to take his portfolio and read his verses to me, although they were good, I frequently became weary. I then reflected, that those to whom I read mine, and who, for the greater part, had no taste for poetry, must experience the same disagreeable sensation. I resolved for the future to read my verses only to those who entreated me, and to read but few at a time. We flatter ourselves too much; we conclude that what pleases us must please others. We will have persons indulgent to

us, and frequently we will have no indulgence for those who are in want of it." An excellent hint for young poets, and for those old ones who carry odes and elegies in their pockets, to inflict the pains of the torture on their friends.

The affection which a poet feels for his verses has been frequently extravagant. Bayle, ridiculing that parental tenderness which writers evince for their poetical compositions, tells us, that many having written epitaphs on friends whom they believed on report to have died, could not determine to keep them in their closet, but suffered them to appear in the lifetime of those very friends whose death they celebrated. In another place he says, that such is their infatuation for their productions, that they prefer giving to the public their panegyrics of persons whom afterwards they satirized, rather than suppress the verses which contain those panegyrics. We have many examples of this in the poems, and even in the epistolary correspondence of modern writers. It is customary with most authors, when they quarrel with a person after the first edition of their work, to cancel his eulogies in the next. But poets and letter-writers frequently do not do this; because they are so charmed with the happy turn of their expressions, and other elegancies of composition, that they prefer the praise which they may ac-

quire for their style to the censure which may follow from their inconsistency.

After having given a hint to *young* poets, I shall offer one to *veterans*. It is a common defect with them that they do not know when to quit the muses in their advanced age. Bayle says, "Poets and orators should be mindful to retire from their occupations, which so peculiarly require the fire of imagination; yet it is but too common to see them in their career, even in the decline of life. It seems as if they would condemn the public to drink even the lees of their nectar." Afer and Daurat were both poets who had acquired considerable reputation, but which they overturned when they persisted to write in their old age without vigour and without fancy.

What crowds of these impenitently bold,  
 In sounds and jingling syllables grown old,  
 They run on poets, in a raging vein,  
 E'en to the dregs and squeezings of the brain :  
 Strain out the last dull droppings of their sense,  
 And rhyme with all the rage of impotence.

POPE.

It is probable he had Wycherley in his eye when he wrote this. The veteran bard latterly scribbled much indifferent verse; and Pope had freely given his opinion, by which he lost his friendship!

It is still worse when aged poets devote their exhausted talents to *divine poems*, as did Waller; and Milton in his second epic. Such poems, observes Voltaire, are frequently entitled "*sacred poems*;" and *sacred* they are, for no one touches them. From a soil so arid what can be expected but insipid fruits? Corneille told Chevreau several years before his death, that he had taken leave of the theatre, for he had lost his poetical powers with his teeth.

Poets have sometimes displayed an obliquity of taste in their female favourites. As if conscious of the power of ennobling others, some have selected them from the lowest classes, whom having elevated into divinities, they have addressed in the language of poetical devotion. The Chloe of Prior, after all his raptures, was a plump barmaid. Ronsard addressed many of his verses to Miss Cassandra, who followed the same occupation: in one of his sonnets to her, he fills it with a crowd of personages taken from the Iliad, which to the honest girl must have all been extremely mysterious. Colletet, a French bard, married three of his servants. His last lady was called *la belle Claudine*. Ashamed of such menial alliances, he attempted to persuade the world that he had married the tenth muse; and for this purpose published verses in her name. When he

died, the vein of Claudine became suddenly dry. She indeed published her "Adieux to the Muses;" but it was soon discovered that all the verses of this lady, including her "Adieux," were the compositions of her husband.

Sometimes, indeed, the ostensible mistresses of poets have no existence; and a slight occasion is sufficient to give birth to one. Racan and Malherbe were one day conversing on their amours; that is, of selecting a lady who should be the object of their verses. Racan named one, and Malherbe another. It happening that both had the same name, Catharine, they passed the whole afternoon in forming it into an anagram. They found three: Arthenice, Eracinte, and Charinté. The first was preferred; and many a fine ode was written in praise of the beautiful Arthenice!

Poets change their opinions of their own productions wonderfully at different periods of life. Baron Haller was in his youth warmly attached to poetic composition. His house was on fire, and to rescue his poems he rushed through the flames. He was so fortunate as to escape with his beloved manuscripts in his hand. Ten years afterwards he condemned to the flames those very poems which he had ventured his life to preserve.

Satirists, if they escape the scourges of the law, have reason to dread the cane of the satirised.

Of this kind we have many anecdotes on record ; but none more poignant than the following. Benserade was caned for lampooning the Duke d'Epéron. Some days afterwards he appeared at court, but being still lame from the rough treatment he had received, he was forced to support himself by a cane. A wit, who knew what had passed, whispered the affair to the queen. She, dissembling, asked him if he had the gout? " Yes, madam," replied our lame satirist, " and therefore I make use of a cane." " Not so," interrupted the malignant Bautru, " Benserade in this imitates those holy martyrs who are always represented with the instrument which occasioned their sufferings."

## ROMANCES.

ROMANCE has been elegantly defined as the offspring of FICTION and LOVE. Men of learning have amused themselves with tracing the epocha of romances; but that erudition is desperate which would fix on the inventor of the first romance: for what originates in nature, who shall hope to detect the shadowy outlines of its beginnings? The Theagenes and Chariclea of Heliodorus appeared in the fourth century; and this

elegant prelate was the Grecian Fenelon. It has been prettily said, that posterior romances seem to be the children of the marriage of Theagenes and Chariclea. The Romance of "The Golden Ass," by Apuleiūs, which contains the beautiful tale of "Cupid and Psyche," remains unrivalled; while the "Daphne and Chloe" of Longus, in the old version of Amiot, is inexpressibly delicate, simple, and inartificial, but sometimes offends us, for nature there "plays her virgin fancies."

Beautiful as these compositions are, when the imagination of the writer is sufficiently stored with accurate observations on human nature, in their birth, like many of the fine arts, the zealots of an ascetic religion opposed their progress. However Heliodorus may have delighted those who were not insensible to the felicities of a fine imagination, and to the enchanting elegancies of style, he raised himself, among his brother ecclesiastics, enemies, who at length so far prevailed that, in a synod, it was declared that his performance was dangerous to young persons, and that if the author did not suppress it, he must resign his bishoprick. We are told he preferred his romance to his bishoprick. Even so late as in Racine's time it was held a crime to peruse these unhalloved pages. He informs us that the first effusions of his muse were in consequence of study-

ing that ancient romance, which his tutor observing him to devour with the keenness of a famished man, snatched from his hands and flung it in the fire. A second copy experienced the same fate. What could Racine do? He bought a third, and took the precaution of devouring it secretly till he got it by heart; after which he offered it to the pedagogue with a smile, to burn like the others.

The decision of these ascetic bigots was founded in their opinion of the immorality of such works. They alleged that the writers paint too warmly to the imagination, address themselves too forcibly to the passions, and in general, by the freedom of their representations, hover on the borders of indecency. Let it be sufficient, however, to observe, that those who condemned the liberties which these writers take with the imagination, could indulge themselves with the Anacreontic voluptuousness of the wise *Solomon*, when sanctioned by the authority of the church.

The marvellous powers of romance over the human mind is exemplified in this curious anecdote of oriental literature.

Mahomet found they had such an influence over the imaginations of his followers, that he has expressly forbidden them in his Koran; and the reason is given in the following anecdote. An Arabian merchant having long resided in Persia,



returned to his own country while the prophet was publishing his Koran. The merchant, among his other riches, had a treasure of romances concerning the Persian heroes. These he related to his delighted countrymen, who considered them to be so excellent, that the legends of the Koran were neglected, and they plainly told the prophet that the "Persian Tales" were superior to his. Alarmed, he immediately had a visitation from the angel Gabriel, declaring them impious and pernicious, hateful to God and Mahomet. This checked their currency; and all true believers yielded up the exquisite delight of poetic fictions for the insipidity of religious ones. Yet these romances may be said to have outlived the Koran itself; for they have spread into regions which the Koran could never penetrate. Even to this day Colonel Capper, in his travels across the Desert, saw "Arabians sitting round a fire, listening to their tales with such attention and pleasure, as totally to forget the fatigue and hardship with which an instant before they were entirely overcome." And Wood, in his journey to Palmyra:—"At night the Arabs sat in a circle drinking coffee, while one of the company diverted the rest by relating a piece of history on the subject of Love or War, or with an extempore tale."

Mr. Ellis has given us "Specimens of the

Early English Metrical Romances," and Ritson and Weber have printed two collections of them entire, valued by the poetical antiquary. Learned inquirers have traced the origin of romantic fiction to various sources.—From Scandinavia issued forth the giants, dragons, witches, and enchanters. The curious reader will be gratified by "Illustrations of Northern Antiquities," a volume in quarto; where he will find extracts from "the Book of Heroes" and "the Nibelungen Lay," with many other metrical tales from the old German, Danish, Swedish, and Icelandic Languages. In the East, Arabian fancy bent her Iris of many-softened hues, over a delightful land of fiction; while the Welsh, in their emigration to Britany, are believed to have brought with them their national fables. That subsequent race of minstrels known by the name of *Troubadours* in the South of France, composed their erotic or sentimental poems; and those romancers called *Trouveurs*, or finders, in the North of France, culled and compiled their domestic tales or *Fabliaux*, *Dits*, *Conte*, or *Lai*. Millot, Sainte Palaye, and Le Grand have preserved, in their "Histories of the Troubadours," their literary compositions. They were a romantic race of ambulatory poets; military and religious subjects their favourite themes; yet bold and satirical on princes, and even on priests: severe

moralisers, though libertines in their verse; so refined and chaste in their manners, that few husbands were alarmed at the enthusiastic language they addressed to their wives. The most romantic incidents are told of their loves. But love and its grosser passion were clearly distinguished from each other in their singular intercourse with their "Dames." The object of their mind was separated from the object of their senses; the virtuous lady to whom they vowed their hearts was in their language styled "*la dame de ses pensées*," a very distinct being from their other mistress! Such was the Platonic chimera that charmed in the age of chivalry; the Laura of Petrarch might have been no other than "the lady of his thoughts."

From such productions in their improved state poets of all nations have drawn their richest inventions. The agreeable wildness of that fancy which characterised the Eastern nations was often caught by the crusaders. When they returned home, they mingled in their own the customs of each country. The Saracens, being of another religion, brave, desperate, and fighting for their father-land, were enlarged to their fears, under the tremendous form of *Paynim Giants*, while the reader of that day followed with trembling sympathy the *Red-cross Knight*. Thus fiction

embellished religion, and religion invigorated fiction; and such incidents have enlivened the cantos of Ariosto, and adorned the epic of Tasso. Spenser is the child of their creation; and it is certain that we are indebted to them for some of the bold and strong touches of Milton. Our great poet marks his affection for "these lofty Fables and Romances, among which his young feet wandered." Collins was bewildered among their magical seductions; and Dr. Johnson was enthusiastically delighted by the old Spanish folio romance of "Felixmarte of Hircania," and similar works. The most ancient romances were originally composed in verse before they were converted into prose: no wonder that the lacerated members of the poet have been cherished by the sympathy of poetical souls. Don Quixote's was a very agreeable insanity.

The most voluminous of these ancient Romances is *Le Roman de Perceforest*. I have seen an edition in six small folio volumes, and its author has been called the French Homer by the writers of his age. In the class of romances of chivalry we have several translations in the black-letter. These books are very rare, and their price is as voluminous. It is extraordinary that these writers were so unconscious of their future fame, that not one of their names has tra-

velled down to us. There were eager readers in their days, but not a solitary bibliographer! All these romances now require some indulgence for their prolixity, and their Platonic amours,—but they have not been surpassed in the wildness of their inventions, the ingenuity of their incidents, the simplicity of their style, and their curious manners. Many a Homer lies hid among them; but a celebrated Italian critic suggested to me that many of the fables of Homer are only disguised and degraded in the romances of chivalry. Those who vilify them as only barbarous imitations of classical fancy, condemn them as some do Gothic architecture, as mere corruptions of a purer style: such critics form their decision by preconceived notions; they are but indifferent philosophers, and to us seem to be deficient in magnitude.

As a specimen I select two romantic adventures:—

The title of the extensive romance of Perceforest is, “The most elegant, delicious, mellifluous, and delightful history of Perceforest, King of Great Britain, &c.” The most ancient edition is that of 1528. The writers of these Gothic fables, lest they should be considered as mere triflers, pretended to an allegorical meaning concealed under the texture of their fable. From the following adventure we learn the power of beauty

in making *ten days* appear as *yesterday*! Alexander the Great, in search of Perceforest, parts with his knights in an enchanted wood, and each vows they will not remain longer than one night in one place. Alexander, accompanied by a page, arrives at Sebilla's castle, who is a sorceress. He is taken by her witcheries and beauty, and the page, by the lady's maid, falls into the same mistake as his master, who thinks he is there only one night. They enter the castle with deep wounds, and issue perfectly recovered. I transcribe the latter part as a specimen of the manner. When they were once out of the castle, the king said, "Truly, Floridas, I know not how it has been with me; but certainly Sebilla is a very honourable lady, and very beautiful, and very charming in conversation. Sire, (said Floridas,) it is true; but one thing surprises me:—how is it that our wounds have healed in one night? I thought at least ten or fifteen days were necessary. Truly, said the king, that is astonishing! Now king Alexander met Gadiffer, king of Scotland, and the valiant knight Le Tors. Well, said the king, have ye news of the king of England? Ten days we have hunted him, and cannot find him out. How, said Alexander, did we not separate *yesterday* from each other? In God's name, said Gadiffer, what means your majesty? It is

*ten days!* Have a care what you say, cried the king. Sire, replied Gadiffer, it is so; ask Le Tors. On my honour, said Le Tors, the king of Scotland speaks truth. Then, said the king, some of us are enchanted. Floridas, didst thou not think we separated *yesterday*? Truly, truly, your majesty, I thought so! But when I saw our wounds healed in one night, I had some suspicion that we were *enchanted*."

In the old romance of Melusina, this lovely fairy, though to the world unknown as such, enamoured of Count Raymond, marries him, but first extorts a solemn promise that he will never disturb her on Saturdays. On those days the inferior parts of her body are metamorphosed to that of a mermaid, as a punishment for a former error. Agitated by the malicious insinuations of a friend, his curiosity and his jealousy one day conduct him to the spot she retired to at those times. It was a darkened passage in the dungeon of the fortress. His hand gropes its way till it feels an iron gate oppose it; nor can he discover a single chink, but at length perceives by his touch a loose nail; he places his sword in its head and screws it out. Through this hole he sees Melusina in the horrid form she is compelled to assume. That tender mistress, transformed into a monster bathing in a fount, flashing the

spray of the water from a scaly tail! He repents of his fatal curiosity: she reproaches him, and their mutual happiness is for ever lost! The moral design of the tale evidently warns the lover to revere a *Woman's Secret!*

Such are the works which were the favourite amusements of our English court, and which doubtless had a due effect in refining the manners of the age, in diffusing that splendid military genius, and that tender devotion to the fair sex which dazzle us in the reign of Edward III. and through that enchanting labyrinth of History constructed by the gallant Froissart. In one of the revenue rolls of Henry III. there is an entry of "Silver clasps and studs for his majesty's *great book of Romances.*" Dr. Moore observes that the enthusiastic admiration of chivalry which Edward III. manifested during the whole course of his reign was probably in some measure owing to his having studied the *clasped book* in his great grandfather's library.

The Italian romances of the fourteenth century were spread abroad in great numbers. They formed the polite literature of the day. But if it is not permitted to authors freely to express their ideas, and give full play to the imagination, these works must never be placed in the study of the rigid moralist. They, indeed, pushed their



indelicacy to the verge of grossness, and seemed rather to seek than to avoid scenes, which a modern would blush to describe. They, to employ the expression of one of their authors, were not ashamed to name what God had created. Cinthio, Bandello, and others, but chiefly Boccaccio, rendered libertinism agreeable by the fascinating charms of a polished style and a luxuriant imagination.

This, however, must not be admitted as an apology for immoral works; for poison is not the less poison, even when delicious. Such works were, and still continue to be, the favourites of a nation stigmatised for being prone to impure amours. They are still curious in their editions, and are not parsimonious in their price for what they call an uncastrated copy\*. There are many Italians, not literary men, who are in possession of an ample library of these old novelists.

If we pass over the moral irregularities of these romances, we may discover a rich vein of invention, which only requires to be released from that

\* Cinthio's Novels, in two very thick volumes 12mo, are commonly sold at the price of five or six guineas. Bandello is equally high; and even in Pope's time it appears by the correspondence of Lady Pomfret, that a copy sold at fifteen guineas.

rubbish which disfigures it, to become of an invaluable price. The *Decamerones*, the *Hecatommiti*, and the *Novellas* of these writers, translated into English, made no inconsiderable figure in the little library of our Shakespeare. Chaucer had been a notorious imitator and lover of them. His "Knight's Tale" is little more than a paraphrase of "Boccaccio's Teseoide." Fontaine has caught all their charms with all their licentiousness. From such works, these great poets, and many of their contemporaries, frequently borrowed their plots; not uncommonly kindled at their flame the ardour of their genius; but bending too submissively to the taste of their age, in extracting the ore they have not purified it of the alloy. The origin of these tales must be traced to the inventions of the *Trouveurs*, who doubtless often adopted them from various nations. Of these tales, Le Grand has printed a curious collection; and of the writers Mr. Ellis observes, in his preface to "Way's Fabliaux," that the authors of the "Cento Novelle Antiche," Boccaccio, Bandello, Chaucer, Gower,—in short, the writers of all Europe, have probably made use of the inventions of the elder fablers. They have borrowed their general outlines, which they have filled up with colours of their own, and have exercised their ingenuity in varying the drapery, in com-

bining the groups, and in forming them into more regular and animated pictures.

We now turn to the French romances of the last century, called heroic, from the circumstance of their authors adopting the name of some hero. The manners are the modern-antique; and the characters are a sort of beings made out of the old epical, the Arcadian pastoral, and the Parisian sentimentality and affectation of the days of *Voiture*. The *Astrea* of *D'Urfé* greatly contributed to their perfection. As this work is founded on several curious circumstances, it shall be the subject of the following article; for it may be considered as a literary curiosity. The *Astrea* was followed by the *Illustrious Bassa*, *Artamene*, or the *Great Cyrus*, *Clelia*, &c. which, though not adapted to the present age, once gave celebrity to their authors; and the *Great Cyrus*, in ten volumes, passed through five or six editions. Their style, as well as that of the *Astrea*, is diffuse and languid; yet *Zaide*, and the *Princess of Cleves*, are master-pieces of the kind. Such works formed the first studies of *Rousseau*, who, with his father, would sit up all night, till warned by the chirping of the swallows how foolishly they had spent it! Some incidents in his *Nouvelle Heloise* have been retraced to these sources; and they certainly entered greatly into the formation of his characters.

Such romances at length were regarded as pernicious to good sense, taste, and literature. It was in this light they were considered by Boileau, after he had indulged in them in his youth.

A celebrated Jesuit pronounced an oration against these works. The rhetorician exaggerates, and hurls his thunders on flowers. He entreats the magistrates not to suffer foreign romances to be scattered amongst the people, but to lay on them heavy penalties as on prohibited goods; and represents this prevailing taste as being more pestilential than the plague itself. He has drawn a striking picture of a family devoted to romance reading; he there describes women occupied day and night with their perusal; children just escaped from the lap of their nurse grasping in their little hands the fairy tales; and a country squire seated in an old arm-chair, reading to his family the most wonderful passages of the ancient works of chivalry.

These romances went out of fashion with our square-cocked hats; they had exhausted the patience of the public, and from them sprung NOVELS. They attempted to allure attention by this inviting title, and reducing their works from ten to two volumes. The name of romance, including imaginary heroes and extravagant passions, disgusted;

and they substituted scenes of domestic life, and touched our common feelings by pictures of real nature. Heroes were not now taken from the throne: they were sometimes even sought after amongst the lowest ranks of the people. Scarron seems to allude sarcastically to this degradation of the heroes of Fiction: for in hinting at a new comic history he had projected, he tells us that he gave it up suddenly because he had "heard that his hero had just been hanged at Mans."

NOVELS, as they were long *manufactured*, form a library of illiterate authors for illiterate readers; but as they are *created* by genius, are precious to the philosopher. They paint the character of an individual or the manners of the age more perfectly than any other species of composition: it is in novels we observe as it were passing under our own eyes the refined frivolity of the French; the gloomy and disordered sensibility of the German; and the petty intrigues of the modern Italian in some Venetian Novels. We have shown the world that we possess writers of the first order in this delightful province of Fiction and of Truth; for every Fiction invented naturally must be true. After the abundant invective poured on this class of books, it is time to settle for ever the controversy, by asserting that these works of fiction

are among the most instructive of every polished nation, and must contain all the useful truths of human life, if composed with genius. They are pictures of the passions, useful to our youth to contemplate. That acute philosopher, Adam Smith, has given an opinion most favourable to NOVELS. "The poets and romance writers who best paint the refinements and delicacies of love and friendship, and of all other private and domestic affections, Racine and Voltaire, Richardson, Marivaux, and Riccoboni, are in this case much better instructors than Zeno, Chrysippus, or Epic-tetus."

The history of romances has been recently given by Mr. Dunlop, with many pleasing details; but this work should be accompanied by the learned Lenglet du Fresnoy's "Bibliothèque des Romans," published under the name of M. le C. Gordon de Percel; which will be found useful for immediate reference for titles, dates, and a copious catalogue of romances and novels to the year 1734.

## THE ASTREA.

I BRING the *Astrea* forwards to point out the ingenious manner by which a fine imagination can

veil the common incidents of life, and turn whatever it touches into gold.

Honoré D'Urfé was the descendant of an illustrious family. His brother Anne married Diana of Chateaumorand, the wealthy heiress of another great house. After a marriage of no less duration than twenty-two years, this union was broken by the desire of Anne himself, for a cause which the delicacy of Diana had never revealed. Anne then became an ecclesiastic. Some time afterwards, Honoré, desirous of retaining the great wealth of Diana in the family, addressed this lady, and married her. This union, however, did not prove fortunate. Diana, like the goddess of that name, was a huntress, continually surrounded by her dogs.—They dined with her at table, and slept with her in bed.—This insupportable nuisance could not be patiently endured by the elegant Honoré. He was also disgusted with the barrenness of the huntress Diana, who was only delivered every year of abortions. He separated from her, and retired to Piedmont, where he passed his remaining days in peace, without feeling the thorns of marriage and ambition rankling in his heart. In this retreat he composed his *Astrea*; a pastoral romance, which was the admiration of Europe during half a century. It forms a striking picture of human life, for the

incidents are facts beautifully concealed. They relate the amours and gallantries of the court of Henry IV. The personages in the *Astrea* display a rich invention; and the work might be still read, were it not for those wire-drawn and languishing conversations, or rather disputations, which they then introduced into romances. In a modern edition of this work, by the Abbé Sou-chai, he has *curtailed* these tiresome dialogues; the work still consists of ten duodecimo volumes.

Patru, when a youth, visited Honoré in his retirement, and collected from him with some difficulty a few explanations of those circumstances which he had concealed under a veil of fiction.

In this romance, Celidée, to cure the unfortunate Celidon, and to deprive Thamire at the same time of every reason for jealousy, tears her face with a pointed diamond, and disfigures it in so cruel a manner, that she excites horror in the breast of Thamire; who so ardently admires this exertion of virtue, that he loves her, hideous as she is represented, still more than when she was most beautiful. Heaven, to be just to these two lovers, restores the beauty of Celidée; which is effected by a sympathetic powder. This romantic incident is thus explained. One of the French princes (Celidon), when he returned from Italy, treated with coldness his amiable princess (Ce-



idée); this was the effect of his violent passion, which had now become jealousy. The coolness subsisted till the prince was imprisoned, for state affairs, in the wood of Vincennes. The princess, with the permission of the court, followed him into his confinement. This proof of her love soon brought back the wandering heart and affections of the prince. The small-pox seized her; which is the pointed diamond, and the dreadful disfigurement of her face. She was so fortunate as to escape being marked by this disease; which is meant by the sympathetic powder. This trivial incident is happily turned into the marvellous: that a wife should choose to be imprisoned with her husband is not singular; to escape being marked by the small-pox happens every day; but to romance, as he has done, on such common circumstances, is beautiful and ingenious.

D'Urfé, when a boy, is said to have been enamoured of Diana; this indeed has been questioned. D'Urfé, however, was sent to the island of Malta to enter into that order of knighthood; and in his absence Diana was married to Anne. What an affliction for Honoré on his return, to see her married, and to his brother! His affection did not diminish, but he concealed it in respectful silence. He had some knowledge of his brother's unhappiness, and on this probably founded his

hopes. After several years, during which the modest Diana had uttered no complaint, Anne declared himself; and shortly afterwards Honoré, as we have noticed, married Diana.

Our author has described the parties under this false appearance of marriage. He assumes the names of Celadon and Sylvander, and gives Diana those of Astrea and Diana. He is Sylvander and she Astrea while she is married to Anne; and he Celadon and she Diana when the marriage is dissolved. Sylvander is represented always as a lover who sighs secretly; nor does Diana declare her passion till overcome by the long sufferings of her faithful shepherd. For this reason Astrea and Diana, as well as Sylvander and Celadon, go together, prompted by the same despair, to the FOUNTAIN OF THE TRUTH OF LOVE.

Sylvander is called an unknown shepherd, who has no other wealth than his flock; because our author was the youngest of his family, or rather a knight of Malta who possessed nothing but honour.

Celadon in despair throws himself into a river; this refers to his voyage to Malta. Under the name of Alexis he displays the friendship of Astrea for him, and all those innocent freedoms which passed between them as relatives; from this circumstance he has contrived a difficulty inimitably delicate.

Something of passion is to be discovered in these expressions of friendship. When Alexis assumes the name of Celadon, he calls that love which Astrea had mistaken for fraternal affection. This was the trying moment. For though she loved him, she is rigorous in her duty and honour. She says, "what will they think of me if I unite myself to him, after permitting, for so many years, those familiarities which a brother may have taken with a sister, with me, who knew that in fact I remained unmarried?"

How she got over this nice scruple does not appear; it was, however, for a long time a great obstacle to the felicity of our author. There is an incident which shows the purity of this married virgin, who was fearful the liberties she allowed Celadon might be ill construed. Phillis tells the druid Adamas, that Astrea was seen sleeping by the fountain of the Truth of Love, and that the unicorns which guarded those waters were observed to approach her, and lay their heads on her lap. According to fable, it is one of the properties of these animals never to approach any female but a maiden: at this strange difficulty our druid remains surprised; while Astrea has thus given an incontrovertible proof of her purity.

The history of Philander is that of the elder D'Urfé. None but boys disguised as girls, and girls as boys, appear in the history. It was in

this manner he concealed, without offending modesty, the defect of his brother. To mark the truth of this history, when Philander is disguised as a woman, while he converses with Astrea of his love, he frequently alludes to his misfortune, although in another sense.

Philander, ready to expire, will die with the glorious name of the husband of Astrea. He intreats her to grant him this favour; she accords it to him, and swears before the gods that she receives him in her heart for her husband. The truth is, he enjoyed nothing but the name. Philander dies too, in combating with a hideous Moor, which is the personification of his conscience, and which at length compelled him to quit so beautiful an object, and one so worthy of being eternally beloved.

The gratitude of Sylvander, on the point of being sacrificed, represents the consent of Honoré's parents to dissolve his vow of celibacy, and unite him to Diana; and the druid Adamas represents the ecclesiastical power. The FOUNTAIN OF THE TRUTH OF LOVE is that of marriage; the unicorns are the symbols of that purity which should ever guard it; and the flaming eyes of the lions, which are also there, represent those inconveniences attending marriage, but over which a faithful passion easily triumphs.

In this manner has our author disguised his own private history; and blended in his works a number of little amours which passed at the court of Henry the Great. I might proceed in explaining these allegories; but what I have noticed will be sufficient to give an idea of the ingenuity of the author.

Fontenelle, in his introduction to his *Éclogues*, has made a pretty comparison of this species of pastoral romance with that of chivalry, which turned the brain of Don Quixote. When he reads the inimitable acts of Amadis, so many castles forced, giants hacked, magicians confounded, he does not regret that these are only fables; but he adds, when I read the *ASTREA*, where in a softened repose love occupies the minds of amiable heroes, where love decides on their fate, where wisdom itself preserves so little of its rigid air, that it becomes a zealous partisan of love, even to Adamas, the sovereign druid, I then grieve that it is only a romance!

## POETS LAUREAT.

THE present article is a sketch of the history of POETS LAUREAT, from a memoir of the French Academy, by the Abbé Resnel.

The custom of crowning poets is as ancient as poetry itself; it has indeed frequently varied; it existed, however, as late as the reign of Theodosius, when it was abolished as a remain of paganism.

When the barbarians overspread Europe, few appeared to merit this honour, and fewer who could have read their works. It was about the time of PETRARCH that POETRY resumed its ancient lustre; he was publicly honoured with the LAUREL CROWN. It was in this century (the thirteenth) that the establishment of Bachelor and Doctor was fixed in the universities. Those who were found worthy of the honour obtained the *laurel of Bachelor*, or the *laurel of Doctor*; *Laurea Baccalaureatus*; *Laurea Doctoratus*. At their reception they not only assumed this *title*, but they also had a *crown of laurel* placed on their heads.

To this ceremony the ingenious writer attributes the revival of the custom. The *poets* were not slow in putting in their claims to what they had most a right; and their patrons sought to encourage them by these honourable distinctions.

The following *formula* is the exact style of those which are yet employed in the universities to confer the degree of Bachelor and Doctor, and serves to confirm the conjecture of Resnel.

“ We, count and senator,” (Count d’Anguillara,

who bestowed the laurel on Petrarch) “ for us and our College, declare FRANCIS PETRARCH, great poet and historian, and for a special mark of his quality of poet, we have placed with our hands on his head a *crown of laurel*, granting to him, by the tenor of these presents, and by the authority of King Robert, of the senate and the people of Rome, in the poetic, as well as in the historic art, and generally in whatever relates to the said arts, as well in this holy city as elsewhere, the free and entire power of reading, disputing, and interpreting all ancient books, to make new ones, and compose poems, which, God assisting, shall endure from age to age.”

In Italy these honours did not long flourish ; although Tasso dignified the laurel crown by his acceptance of it. Many got crowned who were unworthy of the distinction. The laurel was even bestowed on QUERNO, whose character is given in the Dunciad :

“ Not with more glee, by hands pontific crown'd,  
 With scarlet hats wide-waving circled round,  
 Rome in her capitol saw *Querno* sit,  
 Thron'd on seven hills, the Antichrist of wit.”

Canto II.

This man was made laureat, for the joke's sake ; his poetry was inspired by his cups, a kind of poet

who came in with the dessert; and he recited twenty thousand verses. He was rather the *arch-buffoon* than the *arch-poet* to Leo X. though honoured with the latter title. They invented for him a new kind of laureated honour, and in the intermixture of the foliage raised to Apollo, slyly inserted the vine and the cabbage leaves, which he evidently deserved, from his extreme dexterity in clearing the pontiff's dishes and emptying his goblets.

Urban VIII. had a juster and more elevated idea of the children of Fancy. It appears that he possessed much poetic sensibility. Of him it is recorded, that he wrote a letter to Chiabrera to felicitate him on the success of his poetry: letters written by a pope were then an honour only paid to crowned heads. One is pleased also with another testimony of his elegant dispositions: Charmed with a poem which Bracciolini presented to him, he gave him the surname of *DELLE-APE*, of the bees; which were the arms of this amiable pope. He, however, never crowned these favourite bards with the laurel, which, probably, he deemed unworthy of them.

In Germany the laureat honours flourished under the reign of Maximilian the First. He founded in 1504 a Poetical College at Vienna; reserving to himself and the regent the power of bestowing



the laurel. But the institution, notwithstanding this well-concerted scheme, fell into disrepute, owing to a crowd of claimants who were fired with the rage of versifying, and who, though destitute of poetic talents, had the laurel bestowed on them. Thus it became a prostituted honour; and satires were incessantly levelled against the usurpers of the crown of Apollo: it seems, notwithstanding, always to have had charms in the eyes of the Germans, who did not reflect, as the Abbé elegantly expresses himself, that it faded when it passed over so many heads.

The Emperor of Germany retains the laureatship in all its splendour. The selected bard is called *Il Poeta Cesareo*. APOSTOLO ZENO, as celebrated for his erudition as for his poetic powers, was succeeded by that most enchanting poet, METASTASIO.

The French never had a *Poet Laureat*, though they had *Regal Poets*; for none were ever solemnly crowned. The Spanish nation, always desirous of titles of honour, seem to have known the *Laureat*; but little information concerning it can be gathered from their authors.

Respecting our own country little can be said but what is mentioned by Selden. John Kay, who dedicated a History of Rhodes to Edward IV., takes the title of his *humble Poet Laureat*.

Gower and Chaucer were laureats; so was likewise the rhyming Skelton to Henry VIII. In the Acts of Rymer, there is a charter of Henry VII. with the title of *pro Poeta Laureato*.

It does not appear that our poets were ever solemnly crowned as in other countries. Selden, after all his recondite researches, is satisfied with saying, that some trace of this distinction is to be found in our nation. It is, however, certain that our kings from time immemorial have placed a miserable dependant in their household appointment, who was sometimes called the *King's poet*, and the *King's versificator*. It is probable that at length the selected bard assumed the title of *Poet Laureat*, without receiving the honours of the ceremony; or at the most, the *crown of laurel* was a mere obscure custom practised at our universities, and not attended with great public distinction. It was oftener placed on the skull of a pedant than wreathed on the head of a man of genius.

### ANGELO POLITIAN.

ANGELO POLITIAN, an Italian, was one of the most polished writers of the fifteenth century.

Baillet has placed him amongst his celebrated children; for he was a writer at twelve years of age. The Muses indeed cherished him in his cradle, and the Graces hung round it their most beautiful wreaths. When he became professor of the Greek language, such were the charms of his lectures, that one Chalcondylas, a native of Greece, saw himself abandoned by his pupils, who resorted to the delightful disquisitions of the elegant Politian. Critics of various nations have acknowledged that his poetical versions have frequently excelled the originals. This happy genius was lodged in a most unhappy form; nor were his morals untainted: it is only in his literary compositions that he appears perfect.

Monnoye, in his edition of the *Menagiana*, as a specimen of his Epistles, gives a translation of the letter, which serves as prefatory and dedicatory; and has accompanied it by a commentary. The letter is replete with literature, though void of pedantry; a barren subject is embellished by its happy turns. It is addressed to his patron Monsignor Pietro de Medicis; and was written about a month before the writer's death. Perhaps no author has so admirably defended himself from the incertitude of criticism and the fastidiousness of critics. His wit and his humour are delicate;

and few compositions are sprinkled with such Attic salt.

MY LORD!

You have frequently urged me to collect my letters, to revise and to publish them in a volume. I have now gathered them, that I might not omit any mark of that obedience which I owe to him, on whom I rest all my hopes, and all my prosperity. I have not, however, collected them all, because that would have been a more laborious task, than to have gathered the scattered leaves of the Sibyl. It was never, indeed, with an intention of forming my letters into one body that I wrote them, but merely as occasion prompted, and as the subjects presented themselves without seeking for them. I never retained copies except of a few, which less fortunate, I think, than the others, were thus favoured for the sake of the verses they contained. To form, however, a tolerable volume, I have also inserted some written by others, but only those with which several ingenious scholars favoured me, and which, perhaps, may put the reader in good humour with my own.

There is one thing for which some will be inclined to censure me; the style of my letters is very unequal; and, to confess the truth, I did not find myself always in the same humour; and the

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same modes of expression were not adapted to every person and every topic. They will not fail then to observe, when they read such a diversity of letters (I mean if they do read them) that I have composed not epistles, but (once more) miscellanies.

I hope, my Lord, notwithstanding this, that amongst such a variety of opinions, of those who write letters, and of those who give precepts how letters should be written, I shall find some apology. Some, probably, will deny that they are Ciceronian. I can answer such, and not without good authority, that in epistolary composition we must not regard Cicero as a model. Another perhaps will say, that I imitate Cicero. And him I will answer by observing, that I wish nothing better than to be capable of grasping something of this great man, were it but his shadow!

Another will wish that I had borrowed a little from the manner of Pliny the orator, because his profound sense and accuracy were greatly esteemed. I shall oppose him by expressing my contempt of all the writers of the age of Pliny. If it should be observed, that I have imitated the manner of Pliny, I shall then screen myself by what Sidonius Apollinaris, an author who is by no means disreputable, says in commendation of his epistolary style. Do I resemble Symmachus? I shall not

be sorry, for they distinguish his openness and conciseness. Am I considered in no wise resembling him? I shall confess that I am not pleased with his dry manner.

Will my letters be condemned for their length? Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, and Cicero, have all written long ones. Will some of them be criticised for their brevity? I allege in my favour the examples of Dion, Brutus, Apollonius Philostratus, Marcus Antoninus, Alciphron, Julian, Symmachus, and also Lucian, who vulgarly, but falsely, is believed to have been Phalaris.

I shall be censured for having treated of topics which are not generally considered as proper for epistolary composition. I admit this censure, provided while I am condemned, Seneca also shares in the condemnation. Another will not allow of a sententious manner in my letters; I will still justify myself by Seneca. Another, on the contrary, desires abrupt sententious periods; Dionysius shall answer him for me, who maintains, that pointed sentences should not be admitted into letters.

Is my style too perspicuous? It is precisely that which Philostratus admires. Is it obscure? Such is that of Cicero to Atticus. Negligent? An agreeable negligence in letters is more graceful than elaborate ornaments. Laboured? Nothing

can be more proper, since we send epistles to our friends as a kind of presents. If they display too nice an arrangement, the Halicarnassian shall vindicate me. If there is none; Artemon says there should be none.

Now as a good and pure Latinity has its peculiar taste, its manners, and (to express myself thus) its Atticisms; if in this sense a letter shall be found not sufficiently Attic, so much the better; for what was Herod the sophist censured? but that having been born an Athenian, he affected too much to appear one in his language. Should a letter seem too Attical; still better, since it was by discovering Theophrastus, who was no Athenian, that a good old woman of Athens laid hold of a word, and shamed him.

Shall one letter be found not sufficiently serious? I love to jest. Or is it too grave? I am pleased with gravity. Is another full of figures? Letters being the images of discourse, figures have the effect of graceful action in conversation. Are they deficient in figures? This is just what characterises a letter, this want of figures! Does it discover the genius of the writer? This frankness is recommended. Does it conceal it? The writer did not think proper to paint himself; and it is one requisite in a letter, that it should be void of ostentation. You express yourself, some one will

observe, in common terms on common topics, and in new terms on new topics. The style is thus adapted to the subject. No, no, he will answer; it is in common terms you express new ideas, and in new terms common ideas. Very well! It is because I have not forgotten an ancient Greek precept which expressly recommends this.

It is thus by attempting to be ambidextrous I try to ward off attacks. My critics will however criticise me as they please. It will be sufficient for me, my Lord, to be assured of having satisfied you, by my letters, if they are good; or by my obedience, if they are not so.

Florence, 1494.

## ORIGINAL LETTER OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

IN the Cottonian Library, Vespasian, F. III. is preserved a letter written by Queen Elizabeth (then Princess) to her sister Queen Mary. It appears by this epistle that Mary had desired to have her picture; and in gratifying the wishes of her majesty, Elizabeth accompanies the present with the following elaborate letter. It bears no date of the *year* in which it was written; but her



place of residence is marked to be at Hatfield. There she had retired to enjoy the silent pleasures of a studious life, and to be distant from the dangerous politics of the time. When Mary died Elizabeth was at Hatfield; the letter must have been written shortly before this circumstance took place. She was at the time of its composition in habitual intercourse with the most excellent writers of antiquity; her letter displays this in every part of it; it is polished and re-polished. It has also the merit of now being first published.

## LETTER.

“ LIKE as the riche man that dayly gathereth riches to riches, and to one bag of money layeth a greate sort til it come to infinit, so me thinkes, your Majestie not beinge suffised with many benefits and gentilnes shewed to me afore this time, dothe now increase them in askinge and desiring wher you may bid and coñmaunde, requiring a thinge not worthy the desiringe for it selfe, but made worthy for your highness request. My pictur I mene, in wiche if the inward good mynde towarde your grace might as wel be declared as the outwarde face and countenance shal be seen, I wold nor haue taried the coñmandement but pre-

vent it, nor haue bine the last to graunt but the first to offer it. For the face, I graunt, I might wel blusche to offer, but the mynde I shall neur be ashamed to present. For thogth from the grace of the pictur, the coulers may fade by time, may giue by wether, may be spotted by chance, yet the other nor time with her swift winges shall ouertake, nor the mistie cloudes with their loweringes may darken, nor chance with her slipery fote may overthrow. Of this althogth yet the profe could not be greate because the occasions hathe bine but smal, notwithstandinge as a dog hathe a day, so may I perchaunce haue time to declare it in dides wher now I do write them but in wordes. And further I shal most humbly besече your Maiestie that whan you shal loke on my pictur you wil witsafe to thinke that as you haue but the outwarde shadow of the body afore you, so my inward minde wischeth, that the body it selfe wer oftener in your presence; howbeit bicause bothe my so beinge I thinke coude do your Maiestie litel pleasure thogth my selfe great good, and againe bicause I se as yet not the time agreing therūto, I shal lerne to folow this sainge of Orace, *Feras non culpes quod vitari non potest.* And thus I wil (troblinge your Maiestie I fere) ende with my most humble thanks, besechinge God longe to

preserue you to his honour, to your cōfort, to the realmes profit, and to my joy. From Hatfilde this 1 day of May.

Your Maiesties most humbly Sistar  
and Seruante.

ELIZABETH.

### ANNE BULLEN.

THAT minute detail of circumstances frequently found in writers of the history of their own times is more interesting than the elegant and general narratives of later, and probably of more philosophical historians. It is in the artless recitals of memoir-writers, that the imagination is struck with a lively impression, and fastens on petty circumstances which must be passed over by the classical historian. The writings of Brantome, Comines, Froissart, and others, are dictated by their natural feelings: while the passions of modern writers are temperate with dispassionate philosophy, or inflamed by the virulence of faction. History instructs, but Memoirs delight. These prefatory observations may serve as an apology for Anecdotes, which are gathered from

obscure corners, on which the dignity of the historian must not dwell.

In Houssaie's *Memoires*, Vol. I. p. 435, a little circumstance is recorded concerning the decapitation of the unfortunate Anne Bullen, which illustrates an observation of Hume. Our historian notices that her executioner was a Frenchman of Calais, who was supposed to have uncommon skill; it is probable that the following incident might have been preserved by tradition in France, from the account of the executioner himself.—Anne Bullen being on the scaffold, would not consent to have her eyes covered with a bandage, saying, that she had no fear of death. All that the divine who assisted at her execution could obtain from her was, that she would shut her eyes. But as she was opening them at every moment, the executioner could not bear their tender and mild glances; fearful of missing his aim, he was obliged to invent an expedient to behead the queen. He drew off his shoes, and approached her silently; while he was at her left hand, another person advanced at her right, who made a great noise in walking, so that this circumstance drawing the attention of Anne, she turned her face from the executioner, who was enabled by this artifice to strike the fatal blow, without being disarmed by

that spirit of affecting resignation which shone in the eyes of the lovely Anne Bullen.

“ The Common Executioner,  
Whose heart th’ accustom’d sight of death makes hard,  
Falls not the axe upon the humbled neck  
But first begs pardon.” SHAKESPEARE.

### JAMES I.

IT was usual, in the reign of James the First, when they compared it with the preceding glorious one, to distinguish him by the title of *Queen James*, and his illustrious predecessor by that of *King Elizabeth!* Sir Anthony Weldon informs us, “ that when James the First sent Sir Roger Aston as his messenger to Elizabeth, Sir Roger was always placed in the lobby: the hangings being turned so that he might see the queen dancing to a little fiddle, which was to no other end than that he should tell his master, by her youthful disposition, how likely he was to come to the crown he so much thirsted after;”—and indeed, when at her death this same knight, whose origin was low, and whose language was suitable to that origin, appeared before the English council, he could not conceal his Scottish rapture, for, asked

how the king did? he replied, "even, my lords, like a poore man wandering about forty years in a wilderness and barren soyle, and now arrived at the *Land of Promise*." A curious anecdote, respecting the economy of the court in these reigns, is noticed in some manuscript memoirs written in James's reign, preserved in a family of distinction. The lady, who wrote these memoirs, tells us that a great change had taken place in *cleanliness*, since the last reign; for having rose from her chair, she found, on her departure, that she had the honour of carrying *upon* her some companions who must have been inhabitants of the palace. The court of Elizabeth was celebrated occasionally for its magnificence, and always for its nicety. James was singularly effeminate; he could not behold a drawn sword without shuddering; was much too partial to handsome men; and appears to merit the bitter satire of Churchill. If wanting other proofs, we should only read the second volume of "Royal Letters," 6987, in the Harleian collections, which contains Stenie's correspondence with James. The gross familiarity of Buckingham's address is couched in such terms as these:—he calls his majesty "Dere dad and Gossope!" and concludes his letters with "your humble slaue and dogge, Stenie." He was a most weak, but not quite a vicious man;

yet his expertness in the art of dissimulation was very great indeed. He called this *King-Craft*. Sir Anthony Weldon gives a lively anecdote of this dissimulation in the king's behaviour to the Earl of Somerset at the very moment he had prepared to disgrace him. The earl accompanied the king to Royston, and, to his apprehension, never parted from him with more seeming affection, though the king well knew he should never see him more. "The earl when he kissed his hand, the king hung about his neck, slabbering his cheeks, saying—for God's sake, when shall I see thee again? On my soul I shall neither eat nor sleep until you come again. The earl told him on Monday (this being on the Friday). For God's sake let me, said the king:—Shall I, shall I?—then lolled about his neck;—then for God's sake give thy lady this kisse for me, in the same manner at the stayre's head, at the middle of the stayres, and at the stayre's foot. The earl was not in his coach when the king used these very words (in the hearing of four servants, one of whom reported it instantly to the author of this history); 'I shall never see his face more.'"

He displayed great imbecility in his amusements, which are characterised by the following one, related by Arthur Wilson.—When James became melancholy in consequence of various dis-

appointments in state matters, Buckingham and his mother used several means of diverting him. Amongst the most ludicrous was the present.— They had a young lady, who brought a pig in the dress of a new-born infant: the countess carried it to the king, wrapped in a rich mantle. One Turpin, on this occasion, was dressed like a bishop in all his pontifical ornaments. He began the rites of baptism with the common prayer-book in his hand; a silver ewer with water was held by another. The marquis stood as godfather. When James turned to look at the infant, the pig squeaked: an animal which he greatly abhorred. At this, highly displeased, he exclaimed,—“ Out! Away for shame! What blasphemy is this!”

This ridiculous joke did not accord with the feelings of James at that moment; he was not “ i’ the vein.” Yet we may observe, that had not such artful politicians as Buckingham and his mother been strongly persuaded of the success of this puerile fancy, they would not have ventured on such “ blasphemies.” They certainly had witnessed amusements heretofore not less trivial, which had gratified his majesty. The account which Sir Anthony Weldon gives, in his Court of King James, exhibits a curious scene of James’s amusements. “ After the king supped, he would come forth to see pastimes and fooleries; in



which Sir Ed. Zouch, Sir George Goring, and Sir John Finit, were the chiefe and master fools, and surely this fooling got them more than any others' wisdome; Zouch's part was to sing bawdy songs, and tell bawdy tales; Finit's to compose these songs; there was a set of fiddlers brought to court on purpose for this fooling, and Goring was master of the game for fooleries, sometimes presenting David Droman and Archee Armstrong, the kinge's foole, on the back of the other fools, to tilt one at another, till they fell together by the eares; sometimes they performed antick dances. But Sir John Millicent (who was never known before) was commended for notable fooling; and was indeed the best *extemporary foole* of them all." Weldon's "Court of James" is a scandalous chronicle of the times.

His dispositions were, however, generally grave and studious. He seems to have possessed a real love of letters, but attended with that mediocrity of talent which in a private person had never raised him into notice. "While there was a chance," writes the author of the Catalogue of Noble Authors, "that the .dyer's son, Vorstius, might be divinity-professor at Leyden, instead of being burnt, as his majesty hinted *to the Christian prudence* of the Dutch that he deserved to be, our ambassadors could not receive instructions,

and consequently could not treat, on any other business. The king, who did not resent the massacre at Amboyna, was on the point of breaking with the States for supporting a man who professed the heresies of Enjedius, Ostodorus, &c. points of extreme consequence to Great Britain! Sir Dudley Carleton was forced to threaten the Dutch, not only with the hatred of king James, but also with his pen.

This royal pedant is forcibly characterised by the following observations of the same writer :

“ Among his majesty’s works is a small collection of poetry. Like several of his subjects, our royal author has condescended to apologize for its imperfections, as having been written in his youth, and his maturer age being otherwise occupied. So that (to employ his own language) when his ingyne and age could, his affaires and fascherie would not permit him to correct them, scarslie but at stolen moments, he having the leisure to blenk upon any paper.” When James sent a present of his harangues, turned into Latin, to the protestant princes in Europe, it is not unentertaining to observe in their answers of compliments and thanks, how each endeavoured to insinuate that he had read them, without positively asserting it! Buchanan, when asked how he came to make a pedant of his royal pupil, answered, that it was the best he could make of him. Sir George

Mackenzie relates a story of his tutelage, which shows Buchanan's humour, and the veneration of others for royalty. The young king being one day at play with his fellow pupil, the master of Erskine, Buchanan was reading, and desired them to make less noise. As they disregarded his admonition, he told his majesty, if he did not hold his tongue, he would certainly whip his breech. The king replied, he would be glad to see who would *bell the cat*, alluding to the fable. Buchanan lost his temper, and throwing his book from him, gave his majesty a sound flogging. The old Countess of Mar rushed into the room, and taking the king in her arms, asked how he dared to lay his hands on the lord's anointed? Madam, replied the elegant and immortal historian, I have whipped his a——, you may kiss it if you please!"

Many years after this was published, I discovered a curious anecdote:—Even so late as when James I. was seated on the throne of England, once the appearance of his *frowning tutor in a dream* greatly agitated the king, who in vain attempted to pacify his illustrious pedagogue in this portentous vision. Such was the terror which the remembrance of this inexorable republican tutor had left on the imagination of his royal pupil\*.

\* See the manuscript letter whence I drew this curious information in "An Inquiry into the Literary and Political Character of James the First," p. 61.

James I. was certainly a zealous votary of literature; his wish was sincere, when at viewing the Bodleian Library at Oxford, he exclaimed, "were I not a king I would be an university man; and if it were so that I must be a prisoner, if I might have my wish, I would have no other prison than this library, and be chained together with these good authors."

Hume has informed us, that "his death was decent." The following are the minute particulars; I have drawn them from an imperfect manuscript collection, made by the celebrated Sir Thomas Browne:

"The lord keeper, on March 22, received a letter from the court, that it was feared his majesty's sickness was dangerous to death; which fear was more confirmed, for he, meeting Dr. Harvey in the road, was told by him that the king used to have a beneficial evacuation of nature, a sweating in his left arm, as helpful to him as any fontanel could be, which of late failed.

"When the lord keeper presented himself before him, he moved to cheerful discourse, but it would not do. He staid by his bed-side until midnight. Upon the consultations of the physicians in the morning he was out of comfort, and by the prince's leave told him, kneeling by his pallet, that his days to come would be but few in

this world—‘*I am satisfied,*’ said the king; ‘but pray you assist me to make me ready for the next world, to go away hence for Christ, whose mercies I call for, and hope to find.’

“From that time the keeper never left him, or put off his cloaths to go to bed. The king took the communion, and professed he died in the bosom of the Church of England, whose doctrine he had defended with his pen, being persuaded it was according to the mind of Christ, as he should shortly answer it before him.

“He staid in the chamber to take notice of every thing the king said, and to repulse those who crept much about the chamber door, and into the chamber; they were for the most addicted to the Church of Rome. Being rid of them, he continued in prayer, while the king lingered on, and at last *shut his eyes with his own hands.*”

Thus in the full power of his faculties, a timorous prince encountered the horrors of dissolution. *Religion* rendered cheerful the abrupt night of futurity; and what can *philosophy* do more, or rather can philosophy do as much?

I proposed to have examined with some care the works of James I.—but that uninviting task has been now postponed till it is too late. As a writer his works may not be valuable, and are infected with the pedantry and the superstition of the

age; yet I *suspect* that James was not that degraded and feeble character in which he ranks by the contagious voice of criticism. He has had more critics than readers. After a great number of acute observations and witty allusions, made extempore, which we find continually recorded of him by contemporary writers, and some not friendly to him, I conclude that he possessed a great promptness of wit, and much solid judgment and acute ingenuity. It requires only a little labour to prove this.

That labour I have since zealously performed. This article, composed *thirty years* ago, displays the effects of first impressions, and popular clamours. About *ten years* I *suspected* that his character was grossly injured, and *lately* I found how it has suffered from a variety of causes. That monarch preserved for us a peace of more than twenty years; and his talents were of a higher order than the calumnies of the party who degraded him have allowed a common inquirer to discover. For the rest I must refer the reader to "An Inquiry into the Literary and Political Character of James I.;" where, though I have there introduced a variety of irrelevant topics, the reader may find many correctives for this article.

## GENERAL MONK AND HIS WIFE.

FROM the same ms. collection of Sir Thomas Browne, I shall rescue another anecdote, which has a tendency to show that it is not advisable to permit ladies to remain at home, when political plots are to be secretly discussed. And while it displays the treachery of Monk's wife, it will also appear that, like other great revolutionists, it was ambition that first induced him to become the reformer he pretended to be.

“ Monk gave fair promises to the Rump, but last agreed with the French Ambassador to take the government on himself; by whom he had a promise from Mazarin of assistance from France. This bargain was struck late at night: but not so secretly but that Monk's wife, who had posted herself conveniently behind the hangings, finding what was resolved upon, sent her brother Clarges away immediately with notice of it to Sir A. A. She had promised to watch her husband, and inform Sir A. how matters went. Sir A. caused the Council of state, whereof he was a member, to be summoned, and charged Monk that he was playing false. The general insisted that he was true to his principles, and firm to what he had promised, and that he was ready to give them all sa-

tisfaction. Sir A. told him if he were sincere he might remove all scruples, and should instantly take away their commissions from such and such men in his army, and appoint others, and that before he left the room. Monk consented; a great part of the commissions of his officers were changed, and Sir Edward Harley, a member of the council, and then present, was made governor of Dunkirk, in the room of Sir William Lockhart; the army ceased to be at Monk's devotion; the ambassador was recalled, and broke his heart."

Such were the effects of the infidelity of the wife of General Monk!

### PHILIP AND MARY.

HOUSSAIE in his *Memoires*, vol. i. p. 261, has given the following curious particulars of this singular union:

"The second wife of Philip was Mary Queen of England; a virtuous princess (Houssaie was a good catholic), but who had neither youth nor beauty. This marriage was as little happy for the one as for the other. The husband did not like his wife, although she doted on him; and the English hated Philip still more than he hated



them. Silhon says, that the rigour which he exercised in England against heretics, partly hindered Prince Carlos from succeeding to that crown, and for *which purpose* Mary had invited him in case she died childless!—But no historian speaks of this pretended inclination, and is it probable that Mary ever thought proper to call to the succession of the English throne the son of the Spanish Monarch? This marriage had made her nation detest her, and in the last years of her life she could be little satisfied with him from his marked indifference for her. She well knew that the Parliament would never consent to exclude her sister Elizabeth, whom the nobility loved for being more friendly to the new religion, and more hostile to the house of Austria.”

In the Cottonian library, Vespasian F. III. is preserved a note of instructions in the handwriting of Queen Mary, of which the following is a copy. It was, probably, written when Philip was just seated on the English throne.

“ Instructions for my lorde Previsel.

“ Firste, to tell the Kinge the whole state of this realme, w<sup>t</sup> all thyngs appartaynyng to the same, as myche as ye knowe to be trewe.

“ Seconde, to obey his commandment in all thyngs.”

“Thyrdly, in all things he shall aske your aduyse to declare your opinion as becometh a faythfull conceyllour to do.

“Marye the Quene.”

Houssaie proceeds: “After the death of Mary, Philip sought Elizabeth in marriage; and she, who was yet unfixed at the beginning of her reign, amused him at first with hopes. But as soon as she unmasked herself to the pope, she laughed at Philip, telling the Duke of Feria, his ambassador, that her conscience would not permit her to marry the husband of her sister.”

This monarch, however, had no such scruples. Incest appears to have had in his eyes peculiar charms; for he offered himself three times to three different sisters-in-law. He seems also to have known the secret of getting quit of his wives when they became inconvenient. In state matters he spared no one whom he feared; to them he sacrificed his only son, his brother, and a great number of princes and ministers.

It is said of Philip, that before he died he advised his son to make peace with England, and war with the other powers. *Pacem cum Anglo, bellum cum reliquis.* Queen Elizabeth, and the ruin of his invincible fleet, physicked his phrensy into health, and taught him to fear and respect

that country which he thought he could have made a province of Spain!

On his death-bed he did every thing he could for *salvation*. The following protestation, a curious morsel of bigotry, he sent to his confessor a few days before he died:

“Father confessor! as you occupy the place of God, I protest to you that I will do every thing you shall say to be necessary for my being saved; so that what I omit doing will be placed to your account, as I am ready to acquit myself of all that shall be ordered to me.”

Is there in the records of history a more glaring instance of the idea which a good Catholic attaches to the power of a confessor than the present authentic example? The most licentious philosophy seems not more dangerous than a religion whose votary believes that the accumulation of crimes can be dissipated by the breath of a few orisons, and which, considering a venal priest to “occupy the place of God,” can traffic with the divine power at a very moderate price.

After his death a Spanish grandee wrote with a coal on the chimney-piece of his chamber the following epitaph, which ingeniously paints his character in four verses:

Siendo moço luxurioso ;  
Siendo hombre, fue cruel ;

Siendo viejo, codicioso ;  
Que se puede esperar del ?  
In youth he was luxurious ;  
In manhood he was cruel ;  
In old age he was avaricious ;  
What could be hoped from him ?

### CHARLES THE FIRST.

OF his romantic excursion into Spain for the Infanta, many curious particulars are scattered amongst foreign writers, which display the superstitious prejudices which prevailed on this occasion, and, perhaps, develop the mysterious politics of the courts of Spain and Rome.

Cardinal Gaetano, who had long been nuncio in Spain, observes, that the people, accustomed to revere the inquisition as the oracle of divinity, abhorred that proposal of marriage of the Infanta with an heretical prince ; but that the king's council, and all wise politicians, were desirous of its accomplishment. Gregory XV. held a consultation of cardinals, where it was agreed that the just apprehension which the English catholics entertained of being more cruelly persecuted, if this marriage failed, was a sufficient reason to justify the pope. The dispensation

was therefore immediately granted, and sent to the nuncio of Spain, with orders to inform the Prince of Wales, in case of rupture, that no impediment of the marriage proceeded from the court of Rome, who, on the contrary, had expedited the dispensation.

The prince's excursion to Madrid was, however, universally blamed, as being inimical to state-interests. Nani, author of a history of Venice, which, according to his digressive manner, is the universal history of his times, has noticed this affair. "The people talked, and the English murmured more than any other nation to see the only son of the king and heir of his realms venture on so long a voyage, and present himself rather as a hostage than a husband to a foreign court, which so widely differed in government and religion, to obtain by force of prayer and supplications a woman whom Philip and his ministers made a point of honour and conscience to refuse."

Houssaie observes, "The English council were against it, but King James obstinately resolved on it; being over persuaded by Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador, whose facetious humour and lively repartees greatly delighted him. Gondomar persuaded him that the presence of the prince would not fail of accomplishing this union, and also the restitution of the electorate to his

son-in-law the palatine. Add to this the Earl of Bristol, the English ambassador extraordinary at the court of Madrid, finding it his interest, wrote repeatedly to his majesty that the success was certain if the prince came there, for that the Infanta would be charmed with his personal appearance and polished manners. It was thus that James, seduced by these two ambassadors, and by his parental affection for both his children, permitted the Prince of Wales to travel into Spain." This account differs from Clarendon.

Wicquefort says, "that James in all this was the dupe of Gondomar, who well knew the impossibility of this marriage, which was alike inimical to the interests of politics and the inquisition. For a long time he amused his majesty with hopes, and even got money for the household expenses of the future queen. He acted his part so well, that the King of Spain recompensed the knave, on his return, with a seat in the council of state." There is preserved in the British Museum a considerable series of letters which passed between James I. and the Duke of Buckingham and Charles, during their residence in Spain.

I shall glean some further particulars concerning this mysterious affair from two English contemporaries, Howel and Wilson, who wrote from their own observations. Howel had been em-

ployed in this projected match, and resided during its negotiation at Madrid.

Howel describes the first interview of Prince Charles and the Infanta. He says, "The Infanta wore a blue riband about her arm, that the prince might distinguish her, and as soon as she saw the prince her colour rose very high."—Wilson informs us that "two days after their interview the prince was invited to run at the ring, where his fair mistress was a spectator, and to the glory of his fortune, and the great contentment both of himself and the lookers on, he took the ring the very first course." Howel, writing from Madrid, says "The people here do mightily magnify the gallantry of the journey, and cry out that he deserved to have the Infanta thrown into his arms the first night he came." The people appear, however, some time after to doubt if the English had any religion at all. Again, "I have seen the prince have his eyes immovably fixed upon the Infanta half an hour together in a thoughtful speculative posture." Olivares, who was no friend to this match, coarsely observed that the prince watched her as a cat does a mouse. Charles indeed acted every thing that a lover in one of the old romances could have done. He once leapt over the walls of her garden, and only retired by the entreaties of the old marquis who then guarded

her, and who, falling on his knees, solemnly protested that if the prince spoke to her his head would answer for it. He watched hours in the street to meet with her; and Wilson says he gave such liberal presents to the court, as well as Buckingham to the Spanish beauties, that the Lord Treasurer Middlesex complained repeatedly of their wasteful prodigality.

Let us now observe by what mode this match was consented to by the courts of Spain and Rome. Wilson informs us that Charles agreed "That any one should freely propose to *him* the arguments in favour of the catholic religion, without giving any impediment; but that he would never, directly or indirectly, permit any one to speak to the *Infanta* against the same." They probably had tampered with Charles concerning his religion. A letter of Gregory XV. to him is preserved in Wilson's life. Olivares said to Buckingham, you gave me some assurance and hope of the prince's *turning catholic*. The duke roundly answered that it was false. The Spanish minister, confounded at the bluntness of our English duke, broke from him in a violent rage, and lamented that state matters would not suffer him to do himself justice. This insult was never forgiven; and some time afterwards he attempted to revenge himself on Buckingham, by endeavouring to per-



suade James that he was at the head of a conspiracy against him.

We hasten to conclude these anecdotes not to be found in the pages of Hume and Smollett. —Wilson says that both kingdoms rejoiced.—“Preparations were made in England to entertain the Infanta; a new church was built at St. James’s, the foundation-stone of which was laid by the Spanish ambassador, for the public exercise of her religion; her portrait was multiplied in every corner of the town; such as hoped to flourish under her eye suddenly began to be powerful. In Spain (as Wilson quaintly expresses himself) the substance was as much courted as the shadow here. Indeed the Infanta, Howel tells us, was applying hard to the English language, and was already called the Princess of England. To conclude,—Charles complained of the repeated delays; and he, and the Spanish court, parted with a thousand civilities. The Infanta however observed, that had the Prince loved her, he would not have quitted her.”

How shall we dispel those clouds of mystery with which politics have covered this strange transaction? It appears that James had in view the restoration of the Palatinate to his daughter, whom he could not effectually assist; that the court of Rome had speculations of the most

dangerous tendency to the Protestant religion: that the marriage was broken off by that personal hatred which existed between Oliyares and Buckingham; and that, if there was any sincerity existing between the parties concerned, it rested with the Prince and the Infanta, who were both youthful and romantic, and were but two beautiful ivory balls in the hands of great players.

### DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

THE Duke of Buckingham, in his bold and familiar manner, appears to have been equally a favourite with James I. and Charles I. He behaved with singular indiscretion both at the courts of France and Spain.

Various anecdotes might be collected from the memoir writers of those countries, to convince us that our court was always little respected by its ill choice of this ambassador. His character is hit off by one master-stroke from the pencil of Hume; "He had," says this penetrating observer of men, "English familiarity and French levity;" so that he was in full possession of two of the most offensive qualities an ambassador can possess.

Sir Henry Wotton has written an interesting life of our duke. At school his character fully

discovered itself, even at that early period of life. He would not apply to any serious studies, but excelled in those lighter qualifications adapted to please in the world. He was a graceful horseman, musician, and dancer. His mother withdrew him from school at the early age of thirteen, and he soon became a domestic favourite. Her fondness permitted him to indulge in every caprice, and to cultivate those agreeable talents which were natural to him. His person was beautiful, and his manners insinuating. In a word, he was adapted to become a courtier. The fortunate opportunity soon presented itself; for James saw him, and invited him to court, and showered on him, with a prodigal hand, the cornucopia of royal patronage.

Houssaie, in his political memoirs, has detailed an anecdote of this duke, only known to the English reader in the general observation of the historian. When he was sent to France, to conduct the Princess Henrietta to the arms of Charles I., he had the insolence to converse with the Queen of France, not as an ambassador, but as a lover! The Marchioness of Senecey, her lady of honour, enraged at seeing this conversation continue, seated herself in the arm-chair of the Queen, who that day was confined to her bed; she did this to hinder the insolent duke from

approaching the queen, and probably taking other liberties. As she observed that he still persisted in the lover, "Sir, (she said, in a severe tone of voice,) you must learn to be silent; it is not thus we address the queen of France."

This audacity of the duke is further confirmed by Nani, in his sixth book of the History of Venice; an historian who is not apt to take things lightly. For when Buckingham was desirous of once more being ambassador at that court, in 1626, it was signified by the French ambassador, that for reasons *well known to himself*, his person would not be agreeable to his most Christian majesty. In a romantic threat, the duke exclaimed, he would go and see the queen in spite of the French court: and to this petty affair is to be ascribed the war between the two nations!

The Marshal de Bassompierre, in the journal of his embassy, affords another instance of his "English familiarity." He says, "The king of England gave me a long audience, and a very disputatious one. He put himself in a passion, while I, without losing my respect, expressed myself freely. The Duke of Buckingham, when he observed the king and myself very warm, leapt suddenly betwixt his majesty and me, exclaiming, I am come to set all to rights betwixt you, which I think is high time."

Cardinal Richelieu hated Buckingham as sincerely as did the Spaniard Olivares. This enmity was apparently owing to the cardinal writing to the duke without leaving any space open after the title of Monsieur; the duke, to show his equality, returned his answer in the same "paper-sparing" manner. From such petty circumstances many wars have taken their source.

This ridiculous circumstance between Richelieu and Buckingham reminds me of a similar one, which happened to two Spanish Lords:—One signed at the end of his letter, *EL Marques* (*THE Marquis*) as if the title had been peculiar to himself for its excellence. His national vanity received a dreadful reproof from his correspondent, who, jealous of his equality, signed *OTRO Marques* (*ANOTHER Marquis*).

An anecdote given by Sir Henry Wotton offers a characteristic trait of Charles and his favourite:

"They were now entered into the deep time of Lent, and could get no flesh into their inns; whereupon fell out a pleasant passage (if I may insert it by the way among more serious):—There was near Bayon a herd of goats with their young ones; on which sight Sir Richard Graham (master of the horse to the marquis) tells the marquis he could snap one of the kids, and make some shift to carry him close to their lodg-

ings; which the prince overhearing, 'Why, Richard,' says he, 'do you think you may practise here your old tricks again upon the borders?' Upon which word they first gave the goat-herd good contentment, and then while the marquis and his servants, being both on foot, were chasing the kid about the flock, the prince from horse-back killed him in the head with a Scottish pistol. Let this serve for a journal parenthesis, which yet may show how his highness, even in such light and sportful damage, had a noble sense of just dealing."

### THE DEATH OF CHARLES IX.

DR. CAYET is an old French controversial writer, but is better known in French literature as an historian. His *Chronologie Novenaire* is full of anecdotes unknown to other writers. He collected them from his own observations, for he was under preceptor to Henry IV. The dreadful massacre of St. Bartholomew took place in the reign of Charles IX.; on which occasion the English court went into mourning. The singular death of Charles has been regarded by the Huguenots as an interposition of divine justice: he died bathed in his blood, which burst from his

veins. The horrors of this miserable prince on his dying bed are forcibly depicted by the anecdotes I am now collecting. I shall premise, however, that Charles was a mere instrument in the hand of his mother, the political and cruel Catherine of Medicis.

Dr. Cayet, with honest *naiveté*, thus relates what he knew to have passed a few hours before his death.

“ King Charles, feeling himself near his end, after having passed some time without pronouncing a word, said, as he turned himself on one side, and as if he seemed to awake, ‘ Call my brother !’ The queen mother was present, who immediately sent for the Duke of Alençon (who was afterwards Henry III.) The king perceiving him, turned his back and again said, ‘ Let my brother come !’ The queen his mother replied, ‘ Sir, I do not know whom you mean ; here is your brother.’ The king was displeased, and said, ‘ Let them bring my brother the King of Navarre ; it is he who is my brother.’ The queen mother observing the dying monarch’s resolute order, sent for him ; but, for reasons known only to herself, she commanded the captain of the guards to conduct him under the vaults. They went to the King of Navarre, and desired him to come and speak to the king ; at that moment, this prince has since

repeatedly said, he felt a shuddering and apprehension of death so much that he would not go. But King Charles persisting on his coming, the queen mother assured him that he should receive no injury. In this promise, however, he put little trust. He went, accompanied by the Viscount D'Auchy, on whose word he chiefly relied. Having, however, observed under these vaults a great number of halberdiers and arquebusiers in ranks, he would have returned, when the viscount and the captain re-assured him that no harm should happen to him. The soldiers bowed, and their behaviour was respectful. By a private staircase he entered the chamber of the king, who, immediately on perceiving him, turned towards him, and stretched out his arms. The King of Navarre was affected; he sighed and wept, and fell on his knees at the side of the bed. Charles embraced, and having kissed him, said, 'My brother, you lose a good master and a good friend. I know it is not you who occasions me so much trouble; had I believed what they said, you would not have been alive; but I have always loved you. It is to you alone I trust my wife and daughter; earnestly do I recommend them to your care. *Do not trust the queen*; but God protect you!'

"The queen mother here interrupted him, 'Ah, sir! do not say that!'—'Yes, madam, I must



say it ; it is the truth. Believe me, my brother ; love me ; assist my wife and daughter, and implore God for mercy on me. Adieu, my brother, adieu.' The King of Navarre remained till his majesty expired."

The following minute particulars are drawn from the journal of Pierre de L'Etoile. In the simplicity of his narration, so pleasing in the old writers, the *nurse* and the *monarch* ; the religious remorse of the one, and the artless consolations of the other, become interesting objects.

"King Charles, two days before his death, having called for Mazzille, his chief physician, and complaining of the pains he suffered, asked him if it was not possible that he, and so many other celebrated physicians that were in his realms, could give some alleviation to his disorder ; ' for I am,' said he, ' cruelly and horridly tormented.' To which Mazzille replied, that whatever had depended on them had been tried, but that in truth God only could be the sovereign physician in such complaints. ' I believe,' said the king, ' that what you say is true, and that you know nothing else. Draw from me my *custode* (or large cap), that I may try to rest.' Mazzille withdrew, and left orders that all should leave the king except three, viz. La Tour, St. Pris, and his nurse, whom his majesty greatly

loved, *although she was a Huguenot*. As she had just seated herself on a coffer, and began to doze, she heard the king groan bitterly, weeping and sighing; she then approached the bed softly, and drawing away his *custode*, the king said to her, giving vent to a heavy sigh, and shedding tears plentifully, insomuch that they interrupted his discourse—‘ Ah! my dear nurse! my beloved woman, what blood! what murders! Ah! I have followed wicked advice! O my God! pardon me, and be merciful. I know not where I am, they have made me so perplexed and agitated. How will all this end?—What shall I do? I am lost for ever! I know it.’—Then the nurse thus addressed him:—‘ Sire, be the murders on those who forced you to order them; your majesty could not help it, and since you never consented, and now regret them, believe God will never impute them to you, and will cover them with the mantle of justice of his Son, to whom alone you should look for aid. Ah! for the honour of God, let your majesty cease from this weeping.’ Having said this, she rose for a handkerchief, for his was drenched with tears; Charles having taken it from her, made a sign that she should retire and leave him to repose.”

The dreadful narrative of the massacre of St. Bartholomew is detailed in the history of De

Thou; and the same scene is painted in glowing, though in faithful colours, by Voltaire in the *Henriade*.—Charles, whose last miserable moments we come from contemplating, when he observed several fugitive Huguenots about his palace, in the morning after the massacre of 30,000 of their friends, took a fowling piece and repeatedly fired at them.

Such was the effect of religion operating, perhaps not on a malignant, but on a feeble mind!

### ROYAL PROMOTIONS.

IF the golden gate of preferment is not usually opened to men of real merit, persons of no worth have entered it in a most extraordinary manner.

Chevreau informs us that the Sultan Osman having observed a gardener planting a cabbage with some peculiar dexterity, the manner so attracted his imperial eye that he raised him to an office near his person, and shortly afterwards he rewarded the planter of cabbages by creating him *beglerbeg* or viceroy of the Isle of Cyprus!

Marc Antony gave the house of a Roman citizen to a cook, who had prepared for him a good supper! Many have been raised to extraordinary prefer-

ment by capricious monarchs for the sake of a jest. Lewis XI. promoted a poor priest whom he found sleeping in the porch of a church, that the proverb might be verified, that to lucky men good fortune will come even when they are asleep! Our Henry VII. made a viceroy of Ireland if not for the sake of, at least with a clench. When the king was told that all Ireland could not rule the Earl of Kildare, he said, then shall this earl rule all Ireland.

It is recorded of Henry VIII. that he raised a servant to a considerable dignity, because he had taken care to have a roasted boar prepared for him, when his majesty happened to be in the humour of feasting on one! and the title of *Sugar-loaf-court*, in Leadenhall-street, was probably derived from another piece of magnificence of this monarch: the widow of a Mr. Cornwallis was rewarded by the gift of a dissolved priory there situated, for some *fine puddings* with which she had presented his majesty!

When Cardinal de Monte was elected pope, before he left the conclave he bestowed a cardinal's hat upon a servant, whose chief merit consisted in the daily attentions he paid to his holiness's monkey!

Louis Barbier owed all his good fortune to the familiar knowledge he had of Rabelais. He knew

his Rabelais by heart. This served to introduce him to the Duke of Orleans, who took great pleasure in reading that author. It was for this he gave him an abbey, and he was gradually promoted till he became a cardinal.

George Villiers was suddenly raised from a private station, and loaded with wealth and honours by James the First, merely for his personal beauty. Almost all the favourites of James became so from their handsomeness.

M. De Chamillart, minister of France, owed his promotion merely to his being the only man who could beat Louis XIV. at billiards. He retired with a pension after ruining the finances of his country.

The Duke of Luines was originally a country lad, who insinuated himself into the favour of Louis XIII. then young, by making bird-traps (*pié grieches*) to catch sparrows. It was little expected, (says Voltaire,) that these puerile amusements were to be terminated by a most sanguinary revolution. De Luines, after causing his patron the Marshal of Ancre to be assassinated, and the queen mother to be imprisoned, raised himself to a title and the most tyrannical power.

Sir Walter Raleigh owed his promotion to an act of gallantry to Queen Elizabeth, and Sir Christopher Hatton owed his preferment to his

dancing: Queen Elizabeth, observes Granger, with all her sagacity could not see the future lord chancellor in the fine dancer. The same writer says, "Nothing could form a more curious collection of memoirs than *anecdotes of preferment*." Could the secret history of great men be traced, it would appear that merit is rarely the first step to advancement. It would much oftener be found to be owing to superficial qualifications, and even vices.

## NOBILITY.

FRANCIS THE FIRST was accustomed to say, that when the nobles of his kingdom came to court, they were received by the world as so many little *kings*; that the day after they were only beheld as so many *princes*; but on the third day they were merely considered as so many *gentlemen*, and were confounded among the crowd of courtiers.—It was supposed that this was done with a political view of humbling the proud *nobility*; and for this reason Henry IV. frequently said aloud, in the presence of the princes of the blood, *We are all gentlemen*.

It is recorded of Philip the Third of Spain, that while he exacted the most punctilious re-

spect from the *grandeess*, he saluted the *peasants*. He would never be addressed but on the knees; for which he gave this artful excuse, that as he was of low stature, every one would have appeared too high for him. He showed himself rarely even to his *grandeess*, that he might the better support his haughtiness and repress their pride. He also affected to speak to them by half words; and reprimanded them if they did not guess at the rest. In a word, he omitted nothing that could mortify *his nobility*.

### MODES OF SALUTATION, AND AMICABLE CEREMONIES, OBSERVED IN VARIOUS NATIONS.

WHEN men, writes the philosophical compiler of "*L'Esprit des Usages et des Coutumes*," salute each other in an amicable manner, it signifies little whether they move a particular part of the body, or practise a particular ceremony. In these actions there must exist different customs. Every nation imagines it employs the most reasonable ones; but all are equally simple, and none are to be treated as ridiculous.

This infinite number of ceremonies may be reduced to two kinds; to reverences or salutations;

and to the touch of some part of the human body. To bend and prostrate oneself to express sentiments of respect, appears to be a natural motion; for terrified persons throw themselves on the earth when they adore invisible beings; and the affectionate touch of the person they salute is an expression of tenderness.

As nations decline from their ancient simplicity, much farce and grimace are introduced. Superstition, the manners of a people, and their situation, influence the modes of salutation; as may be observed from the instances we collect.

Modes of salutation have sometimes very different characters, and it is no uninteresting speculation to examine their shades. Many display a refinement of delicacy, while others are remarkable for their simplicity, or for their sensibility. In general, however, they are frequently the same in the infancy of nations, and in more polished societies. Respect, humility, fear, and esteem, are expressed much in a similar manner, for these are the natural consequences of the organization of the body.

These demonstrations become in time only empty civilities which signify nothing; we shall notice what they were originally, without reflecting on what they are.

The first nations have no peculiar modes of



salutation; they know no reverences or other compliments, or they despise and disdain them. The Greenlanders laugh when they see an European uncover his head, and bend his body before him whom he calls his superior.

The Islanders, near the Philippines, take the hand or foot of him they salute, and with it they gently rub their face. The Laplanders apply their nose strongly against that of the person they salute. Dampier says, that at New Guinea they are satisfied to put on their heads the leaves of trees, which have ever passed for symbols of friendship and peace. This is at least a picturesque salute.

Other salutations are very incommodious and painful; it requires great practice to enable a man to be polite in an island situated in the straits of the Sound. Houtman tells us they saluted him in this grotesque manner: "They raised his left foot, which they passed gently over the right leg, and from thence over his face." The inhabitants of the Philippines use a most complex attitude; they bend their body very low, place their hands on their cheeks, and raise at the same time one foot in the air with their knee bent.

An Ethiopian takes the robe of another, and ties it about his own waist, so that he leaves his friend half naked. This custom of undressing

on these occasions takes other forms; sometimes men place themselves naked before the person whom they salute; it is to show their humility, and that they are unworthy of appearing in his presence. This was practised before Sir Joseph Banks, when he received the visit of two female Otaheitans. Their innocent simplicity, no doubt, did not appear immodest in the eyes of the *virtuoso*.

Sometimes they only undress partially. The Japanese only take off a slipper; the people of Arracan their sandals in the street, and their stockings in the house.

In the progress of time it appears servile to uncover oneself. The grandees of Spain claim the right of appearing covered before the king, to show that they are not so much subjected to him as the rest of the nation; and (this writer truly observes) we may remark that the *English* do not uncover their heads so much as the other nations of Europe. Mr. Hobhouse observes, that uncovering the head, with the Turks, is a mark of indecent familiarity; in their mosques the Franks must keep their hats on. The Jewish custom of wearing their hats in their synagogues is, doubtless, the same oriental custom.

In a word, there is not a nation, observes the humorous Montaigne, even to the people who

when they salute turn their backs on their friends, but that can be justified in their customs.

The negroes are lovers of ludicrous actions, and hence all their ceremonies seem farcical. The greater part pull the fingers till they crack. Snelgrave gives an odd representation of the embassy which the king of Dahomy sent to him. The ceremonies of salutation consisted in the most ridiculous contortions. When two negro monarchs visit, they embrace in snapping three times the middle finger.

Barbarous nations frequently imprint on their salutations the dispositions of their character. When the inhabitants of Carmaena (says Athenæus) would show a peculiar mark of esteem, they breathed a vein, and presented for the beverage of their friend the blood as it issued. The Franks tore the hair from their head, and presented it to the person they saluted. The slave cut his hair, and offered it to his master.

The Chinese are singularly affected in their personal civilities. They even calculate the number of their reverences. These are the most remarkable postures. The men move their hands in an affectionate manner, while they are joined together on the breast, and bow their head a little. If they respect a person, they raise their hands joined, and then lower them to the earth in bending the

body. If two persons meet after a long separation, they both fall on their knees and bend the face to the earth, and this ceremony they repeat two or three times. Surely we may differ here with the sentiment of Montaigne, and confess this ceremony to be ridiculous. It arises from their national affectation. They substitute artificial ceremonies for natural actions.

Their expressions mean as little as their ceremonies. If a Chinese is asked how he finds himself in health? He answers, *Very well; thanks to your abundant felicity*. If they would tell a man that he looks well, they say, *Prosperity is painted on your face*; or, *Your air announces your happiness*.

If you render them any service, they say, *My thanks shall be immortal*. If you praise them, they answer, *How shall I dare to persuade myself of what you say of me?* If you dine with them, they tell you at parting, *We have not treated you with sufficient distinction*. The various titles they invent for each other it would be impossible to translate.

It is to be observed that all these answers are prescribed by the Chinese ritual, or Academy of Compliments. There, are determined the number of bows; the expressions to be em-

ployed; the genuflexions, and the inclinations which are to be made to the right or left hand; the salutations of the master before the chair where the stranger is to be seated, for he salutes it most profoundly, and wipes the dust away with the skirts of his robe; all these and other things are noticed, even to the silent gestures by which you are entreated to enter the house. The lower class of people are equally nice in these punctilios; and ambassadors pass forty days in practising them before they are enabled to appear at court. A tribunal of ceremonies has been erected; and every day very odd decrees are issued, to which the Chinese most religiously submit.

The marks of honour are frequently arbitrary; to be seated, with us is a mark of repose and familiarity: to stand up, that of respect. There are countries, however, in which princes will only be addressed by persons who are seated, and it is considered as a favour to be permitted to stand in their presence. This custom prevails in despotic countries; a despot cannot suffer without disgust the elevated figure of his subjects; he is pleased to bend their bodies with their genius; his presence must lay those who behold him prostrate on the earth: he desires no eagerness, no attention, he would only inspire terror.

## SINGULARITIES OF WAR.

WAR kindles enthusiasm, and therefore occasions strange laws and customs. We may observe in it whatever is most noble and heroic mixed with what is most strange and wild. We collect facts, and the reader must draw his own conclusions.

They frequently condemned at Carthage their generals to die after an unfortunate campaign, although they were accused of no other fault. We read in Du Halde that Captain Mancheou, a Chinese, was convicted of giving battle without obtaining a complete victory, and he was punished.—With such a perspective at the conclusion of a battle generals will become intrepid, and exert themselves as much as possible, and this is all that is wanted.

When the savages of New France take flight, they pile the wounded in baskets, where they are bound and corded down as we do children in swaddling clothes.—If they should happen to fall into the hands of the conquerors, they would expire in the midst of torments. It is better therefore that the vanquished should carry them away in any manner, though frequently even at the risk of their lives.

The Spartans were not allowed to combat often with the same enemy. They wished not to inure these to battle; and if their enemies revolted frequently, they were accustomed to exterminate them.

The governors of the Scythian provinces gave annually a feast to those who had valiantly, with their own hands, despatched their enemies. The skulls of the vanquished served for their cups; and the quantity of wine they were allowed to drink was proportioned to the number of skulls they possessed. The youth, who could not yet boast of such martial exploits, contemplated distantly the solemn feast, without being admitted to approach it. This institution formed courageous warriors.

War has corrupted the morals of the people, and has occasioned them to form horrible ideas of virtue. When the Portuguese attacked Madrid, in the reign of Philip V., the courtezans of that city were desirous of displaying their patriotic zeal: those who were most convinced of the envenomed state of their body perfumed themselves, and went by night to the camp of the enemy; the consequence was that in less than three weeks there were more than six thousand Portuguese disabled with venereal maladies, and the greater part died.

Men have frequently fallen into unpardonable contradictions, in attempting to make principles and laws meet which could never agree with each other. The Jews suffered themselves to be attacked without defending themselves on the sabbath-day, and the Romans profited by these pious scruples. The council of Trent ordered the body of the constable of Bourbon, who had fought against the Pope, to be dug up, as if the head of the church was not as much subjected to war as others, since he is a temporal prince.

Pope Nicholas, in his answer to the Bulgarians, forbids them to make war in Lent, unless, he prudently adds, there be an urgent necessity.

## FIRE, AND THE ORIGIN OF FIRE-WORKS.

IN the Memoirs of the French Academy, a little essay on this subject is sufficiently curious; the following contains the facts:—

FIRE-WORKS were not known to antiquity.— It is certainly a modern invention. If ever the ancients employed fires at their festivals, it was only for religious purposes.

Fire, in primæval ages, was a symbol of respect, or an instrument of terror. In both these ways



God manifested himself to man. In the holy writings he compares himself sometimes to an ardent fire, to display his holiness and his purity ; sometimes he renders himself visible under the form of a burning bush, to express himself to be as formidable as a devouring fire : again, he rains sulphur ; and often, before he speaks, he attracts the attention of the multitude by flashes of lightning.

Fire was worshipped as a divinity by several idolaters : the Platonists confounded it with the heavens, and considered it as the divine intelligence. Sometimes it is a symbol of majesty.— God walked (if we may so express ourselves) with his people, preceded by a pillar of fire ; and the monarchs of Asia, according to Herodotus, commanded that such ensigns of their majesty should be carried before them. These fires, according to Quintus Curtius, were considered as holy and eternal, and were carried at the head of their armies on little altars of silver, in the midst of the magi who accompanied them and sang their hymns.

Fire was also a symbol of majesty amongst the Romans ; and if it was used by them in their festivals, it was rather employed for the ceremonies of religion than for a peculiar mark of their rejoicings. Fire was always held to be

most proper and holy for sacrifices; in this the Pagans imitated the Hebrews. The fire so carefully preserved by the Vestals was probably an imitation of that which fell from heaven on the victim offered by Aaron, and long afterwards religiously kept up by the priests. Servius, one of the seven kings of Rome, commanded a great fire of straw to be kindled in the public place of every town in Italy to consecrate for repose a certain day in seed-time, or sowing.

The Greeks lighted lamps at a certain feast held in honour of Minerva, who gave them oil; of Vulcan, who was the inventor of lamps; and of Prometheus, who had rendered them service by the fire which he had stolen from heaven. Another feast to Bacchus was celebrated by a grand nocturnal illumination, in which wine was poured forth profusely to all passengers. A feast in memory of Ceres, who sought so long in the darkness of hell for her daughter, was kept by burning a number of torches.

Great illuminations were made in various other meetings; particularly in the Secular Games, which lasted three whole nights; and so carefully were they kept up, that these nights had no darkness.

In all their rejoicings the ancients indeed used fires, but they were intended merely to burn their sacrifices, and which, as the generality of them

were performed at night, the illuminations served to give light to the ceremonies.

Artificial fires were indeed frequently used by them, but not in public rejoicings; like us, they employed them for military purposes; but we use them likewise successfully for our decorations and amusement.

From the latest times of paganism to the early ages of Christianity, we can but rarely quote instances of fire lighted up for other purposes, in a public form, than for the ceremonies of religion; illuminations were made at the baptism of princes, as a symbol of that life of light in which they were going to enter by faith; or at the tombs of martyrs, to light them during the watchings of the night. All these were abolished from the various abuses they introduced.

We only trace the rise of *feux de joie*, or fire-works, given merely for amusing spectacles to delight the eye, to the epocha of the invention of powder and cannon, at the close of the thirteenth century. It was these two inventions, doubtless, whose effects furnished the idea of all those machines and artifices which form the charms of these fires.

To the Florentines and the Siennese are we indebted not only for the preparation of powder with other ingredients to amuse the eyes, but

also for the invention of elevated machines and decorations adapted to augment the pleasure of the spectacle. They began their attempts at the feasts of Saint John the Baptist and the Assumption, on wooden edifices, which they adorned with painted statues, from whose mouth and eyes issued a beautiful fire. Callot has engraved numerous specimens of the pageants, triumphs, and processions, under a great variety of grotesque forms:—dragons, swans, eagles, &c. which were built up large enough to carry many persons, while they vomited forth the most amusing fire-work.

This use passed from Florence to Rome, where, at the creation of the popes, they displayed illuminations of hand-grenadoes, thrown from the height of a castle. *Pyrotechnics* from that time have become an art, which, in the degree the inventors have displayed ability in combining the powers of architecture, sculpture, and painting, have produced a number of beautiful effects, which even give pleasure to those who read the descriptions without having beheld them.

A pleasing account of decorated fire-works is given in the Secret Memoirs of France. In August, 1764, Torr , an Italian artist, obtained permission to exhibit a pyrotechnic operation.—The Parisians admired the variety of the colours,

and the ingenious forms of his fire. But this first exhibition was disturbed by the populace, as well as by the apparent danger of the fire, although it was displayed on the Boulevards. In October it was repeated; and proper precautions having been taken, they admired the beauty of the fire, without fearing it. These artificial fires are described as having been rapidly and splendidly executed. The exhibition closed with a transparent triumphal arch, and a curtain illuminated by the same fire, admirably exhibiting the palace of Pluto.—Around the columns, stanzas were inscribed, supported by Cupids, with other fanciful embellishments. Among these little pieces of poetry appeared the following one, which ingeniously announced a more perfect exhibition :

Les vents, les frimats, les orages,  
 Eteindront ces FEUX, pour un tems ;  
 Mais, ainsi que les FLEURS, avec plus d'avantage,  
 Ils renaîtront dans le printems.

## IMITATED.

The icy gale, the falling snow,  
 Extinction to these FIRES shall bring ;  
 But, like the FLOWERS, with brighter glow,  
 They shall renew their charms in spring.

The exhibition was greatly improved, according to this promise of the artist. His subject was

chosen with much felicity: it was a representation of the forges of Vulcan under Mount Ætna. The interior of the mount discovered Vulcan and his Cyclops. Venus was seen to descend, and demand of her consort armour for Æneas.—Opposite to this was seen the palace of Vulcan, which presented a deep and brilliant perspective. The labours of the Cyclops produced numberless very happy combinations of artificial fires. The public with pleasing astonishment beheld the effects of the volcano, so admirably adapted to the nature of these fires. At another entertainment he gratified the public with a representation of Orpheus and Eurydice in hell; many striking circumstances occasioned a marvellous illusion. What subjects indeed could be more analogous to this kind of fire? And let me ask, what is the reason we do not see these artificial fires display more brilliant effects in London? What man of taste can be gratified with stars, wheels, and rockets?

### THE BIBLE PROHIBITED AND IMPROVED.

THE following are the *express words* contained in the regulation of the popes to prohibit the use of the *Bible*.

“ As it is manifest by *experience*, that if the use of the holy writers is permitted in the vulgar tongue more evil than profit will arise, *because* of the temerity of man ; it is for this reason all bibles are prohibited (*prohibentur Biblia*) with all their *parts*, whether they be printed or written, in whatever vulgar language soever ; as also are prohibited all summaries or abridgments of bibles, or any books of the holy writings, although they should only be historical, and that in whatever vulgar tongue they be written.”

It is there also said, “ That the reading the bibles of *catholic editors* may be permitted to those by whose perusal or power the *faith* may be spread, and who will not *criticise* it. But this *permission* is not to be granted without an express *order* of the *bishop*, or the *inquisitor*, with the *advice* of the *curate* and *confessor* ; and their *permission* must first be had in *writing*. And he who, without permission, presumes to *read* the holy writings, or to have them in his *possession*, shall not be *absolved* of his sins before he first shall have returned the bible to his bishop.”

A Spanish author says, that if a person should come to his bishop to ask for leave to *read the bible*, with the best intention, the bishop should answer him from Matthew, ch. xx. ver. 20. “ *You know not what you ask.*” And indeed, he ob-

serves, the nature of this demand indicates an *heretical disposition*.

The reading of the bible was prohibited by Henry VIII. except by those who occupied high offices in the state; a noble lady or gentle woman might read it in "their garden or orchard," or other retired places; but men and women in the lower ranks were positively forbidden to read it, or to have it read to them.

Dr. Franklin, in his own Life, has preserved a singular anecdote of the bible being prohibited in England in the time of our true Catholic Mary. His family had then early embraced the reformation; "They had an English bible, and to conceal it the more securely, they conceived the project of fastening it open with pack-threads across the leaves, on the inside of the lid of a close-stool! When my great grandfather wished to read to his family, he reversed the lid of the close-stool upon his knees, and passed the leaves from one side to the other, which were held down on each by the packthread. One of the children was stationed at the door to give notice if he saw an officer of the Spiritual Court make his appearance; in that case the lid was restored to its place, with the bible concealed under it as before."

I shall leave the reader to make his own reflections on this extraordinary account. He may me-



ditate on what the *popes did*, and what they probably would *have done*, had not Luther happily been in a humour to abuse the pope, and begin a REFORMATION. It would be curious to sketch an account of the *probable* situation of *Europe* at the present moment, had the pontiffs preserved the singular power of which they had possessed themselves.

It appears by an act dated in 1516, that in those days the bible was called *Bibliotheca*, that is *per emphasim*, *the Library*. The word library was limited in its signification then to the biblical writings; no other books, compared with the holy writings, appear to have been worthy to rank with them, or constitute what we call a library.

We have had several remarkable attempts to recompose the bible; Dr. Geddes's version is aridly literal, and often ludicrous by its vulgarity; but the following attempts are of a very different kind. Sebastian *Castillon*, who afterwards changed his name to *Castalion*, with his accustomed affectation referring to *Castalia*, the fountain of the Muses—took a very extraordinary liberty with the sacred writings. He fancied he could give the world a more classical version of the bible, and for this purpose introduced phrases and entire sentences from profane writers into the text of holy writ. His whole style is finically quaint, over-

loaded with prettinesses, and all the ornaments of false taste. Of the noble simplicity of the scriptures he seems not to have had the remotest conception.

But an attempt by Pere Berruyer is more extraordinary; in his *Histoire du Peuple de Dieu*, he has recomposed the Bible as he would have written a fashionable novel. With absurd refinement he conceives that the great legislator of the Hebrews is too barren in his descriptions, too concise in the events he records, nor is careful to enrich his history by pleasing reflections and interesting conversation-pieces, and hurries on the catastrophes, by which means he omits much entertaining matter: as for instance, in the loves of Joseph and the wife of Potiphar, Moses is very dry and concise, which, however, our Pere Berruyer is not. His histories of Joseph, and of King David, are relishing morsels, and were devoured eagerly in all the boudoirs of Paris. Take a specimen of the style. "Joseph combined with a regularity of features, and a brilliant complexion, an air of the noblest dignity; all which contributed to render him one of the most amiable men in Egypt." At length "she declares her passion, and pressed him to answer her. It never entered her mind that the advances of a woman

of her rank could ever be rejected. Joseph at first only replied to all her wishes by his cold embarrassments. She would not yet give him up. In vain he flies from her; she was too passionate to waste even the moments of his astonishment." This good father, however, does ample justice to the gallantry of the Patriarch Jacob. He offers to serve Laban seven years for Rachel. "Nothing is too much," cries the venerable novelist, "when one really loves;" and this admirable observation he confirms by the facility with which the obliging Rachel allows Leah for one night to her husband! In this manner the patriarchs are made to speak in the tone of the tenderest lovers; Judith is a Parisian coquette, Holofernes is rude as a German baron; and their dialogues are tedious with all the reciprocal politesse of metaphysical French lovers! Moses in the desert, it was observed, is precisely as pedantic as Pere Berruyer addressing his class at the university. One cannot but smile at the following expressions: "By the easy manner in which God performed miracles, one might easily perceive they cost no effort." When he has narrated an "Adventure of the Patriarchs," he proceeds, "After such an extraordinary, or curious, or interesting adventure, &c." This good father had caught the language

of the beau monde, but with such perfect simplicity that, in employing it on sacred history, he was not aware of the ludicrous he was writing.

A Gothic bishop translated the scriptures into the Goth language, but omitted the *Books of Kings!* lest the *wars*, of which so much is there recorded, should increase their inclination to fighting, already too prevalent. Jortin notices this castrated copy of the bible in his Remarks on Ecclesiastical History.

As the Bible, in many parts, consists merely of historical transactions, and as too many exhibit a detail of offensive ones, it has often occurred to the fathers of families, as well as to the popes, to prohibit its general reading. Archbishop Tillotson formed a design of purifying the historical parts. Since some have given us a *family Shakespeare*, it were desirable that the same spirit would present us with a *Family Bible*.

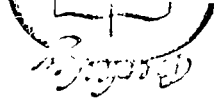
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**LONDON :**  
**PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.**



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