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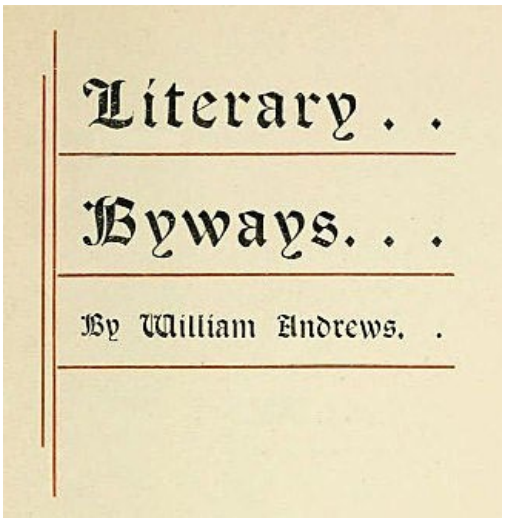
LITERARY BYWAYS.



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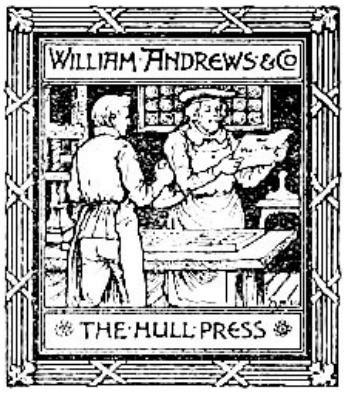

Preface.

IN the following pages no attempt has been made to add to the many critical works authors bring under the notice of the public. My aim in this collection of leisure-hour studies is to afford entertaining reading on some topics which do not generally attract the reader's attention.

It is necessary for me to state that three of the chapters were originally contributed to the columns of the *Chambers's Journal*, and by courtesy of the Editor are reproduced in this volume.

WILLIAM ANDREWS.

THE HULL PRESS,
July 5th, 1898.

Contents.

LITERARY BYWAYS.

[Pg 1]

Authors at Work.


interest of the public in those who write for its entertainment naturally extends itself to their habits of life. All such habits, let it be said at once, depend on individual peculiarities. One will write only in the morning, another only at night, a third will be able to force himself into effort only at intervals, and a fourth will, after the manner of Anthony Trollope, be almost altogether independent of times and places. The nearest approach to a rule was that which was formulated by a great writer of the last generation, who said that morning should be employed in the production of what De Quincey called "the literature of knowledge," and the evening in impassioned work, "the literature of power."

But habits, however unreasonable they may be, are ordinarily very powerful with authors. [Pg 2]
One of the most renowned writers always attired himself in evening dress before sitting down to his desk. The influence of his attire, he said, gave dignity and restraint to his style. Another author, of at least equal celebrity, could only write in dressing gown and slippers. In order that he might make any progress, it was absolutely essential that he should be unconscious of his clothes. Most authors demand quiet and silence as the conditions of useful work. Carlyle padded his room, in order that he might not be annoyed by the clatter of his neighbours. On the other hand, Jean Paul Richter, whose influence is visible throughout nearly the whole of Carlyle's writings, would work serenely in the kitchen with his mother attending to her domestic duties, and the children playing around him. In an article contributed by Carlyle to the *Edinburgh Review* on Richter, we get some interesting facts about this truly great man. The following is reproduced from Döring. "Richter's studying or sitting apartment, offered about this time (1793),[1] a true and beautiful emblem of his simple and noble way of thought, which comprehended at once the high and the low. [Pg 3]
Whilst his mother, who then lived with him, busily pursued her household work, occupying herself about stove and dresser, Jean Paul was sitting in a corner of the same room, at a simple writing-desk, with few or no books about him, but merely with one or two drawers containing excerpts and manuscripts. The jingle of the household operations seemed not at all to disturb him, any more than did the cooing of the pigeons, which fluttered to and fro in the chamber—a place, indeed, of considerable size." Carlyle, commenting on the preceding passage, says—"Our venerable Hooker, we remember, also enjoyed 'the jingle of household operations,' and the more questionable jingle of shrewd tongues to boot, while he wrote; but the good thrifty mother, and the cooing pigeons, were wanting. Richter came afterwards to live in fine mansions, and had the great and learned for associates, but the gentle feelings of those days abode with him: through life he was the same substantial, determinate, yet meek and tolerating man. It is seldom that so much rugged energy can be so blandly attempered, that so much vehemence and so much softness will go together."

Dr. Johnson's "Dictionary" is one of the most familiar books in the English language, and the [Pg 4]
particulars of the way in which it was compiled are of considerable interest. He agreed with a number of leading London booksellers to prepare the work for £1,775, and spent seven years over the task. When he undertook it, he expected to finish it in three years. His friend, Dr. Adams, called upon him one day, and found him busy with his book, and, says Boswell, a dialogue as follows ensued. "Adams: 'This is a great work, sir. How are you to get all the etymologies?' Johnson: 'Why, here is a shelf with Junius and Skinner, and others; and there is a Welsh gentleman who has published a collection of Welsh proverbs, who will help me with the Welsh.' Adams: 'But, sir, how can you do this in three years?' Johnson: 'Sir, I have no doubt that I can do it in three years.' Adams: 'But the French Academy, which consists of forty members, took forty years to complete their dictionary.' Johnson: 'Sir, thus it is—this is the proportion. Let me see: forty times forty is sixteen hundred. As three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman.'" This pleasantry is not reproduced to [Pg 5]
show Johnson's vanity, but to give a glimpse of some of the books he used, and his own ideas as to the period he expected to spend over the undertaking.

Johnson fitted up an upper room like a counting house, in which were employed six copyists; and in spite of his asserted aversion from Scotchmen, he engaged no less than five of them on his book, so that his objection to the sons of Caledonia cannot have been very deeply rooted.

Many of his words were drawn from previously published dictionaries, and others he supplied himself. He spent much time in reading the best informed authors, and marked their books with a pencil when he found suitable material for his work. He would not under any consideration quote the productions of an author whose writings were calculated to hurt sound religion and morality. The marked sentences were copied on slips of paper, which were afterwards posted into an interleaved copy of an old dictionary opposite the words to which they related.

At the commencement of the work he made a rather serious mistake by writing on both sides of his paper. He had to pay twenty pounds to have it transcribed to one side of the paper only.

It has been truthfully observed that Dr. Johnson's "Illustrations of the meanings and uses of [Pg 6]
words" is the most valuable part of the work, and shows an extraordinary knowledge of literature. Some of the definitions were characteristic of the man. Take for example the following, to be found in the first edition:—"Excise. A hateful tax levied upon commodities, adjudged, not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom the excise is paid.—Network. Anything reticulated or decussated at equal distances, with

interstices between the intersections.—Oats. A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but which in Scotland supports the people." Sir Walter Scott related the happy retort by Lord Elibank, who said, when he heard the definition—"Yes; and where else will you see *such* horses, and *such* men."—Patron. Commonly, a wretch, who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery.—Pension. In England, it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.

Mr. Andrew Miller, bookseller, of the Strand, took the chief management of the publication, and appears to have been much disappointed at the slow progress the compiler made. He [Pg 7] frequently pressed Johnson for more "copy," and towards the latter part of the work became most anxious, for Johnson had drawn all his money in drafts long before he had completed the "Dictionary."

According to Boswell, "When the messenger who carried the last sheet to Miller returned, Johnson asked him, 'Well, what did he say?' 'Sir,' answered the messenger, 'he said, "Thank God I have done with him."' 'I am glad,' replied Johnson, 'that he thanks God for anything.'"

The Dictionary was published in 1755 in two volumes at £4 4s. 0d., and soon went through several editions. The expenses of producing the work left Johnson a small margin of profit. It firmly established his fame.

Having referred at some length to Johnson's "Dictionary," let us pay some little attention to another important work of reference, the "Encyclopædia Britannica." The first edition was issued in weekly numbers commenced in 1771, and was completed in 1773. It consisted of three small quarto volumes. The first editor was William Smellie, a studious man who made his start in life as a compositor, and left the printing office for an hour or two daily to attend the classes of the Edinburgh University. At nineteen he was employed as proof-reader, [Pg 8] conductor and compiler of the *Scots' Magazine* at a salary of sixteen shillings a week. He devised and wrote the chief articles in the "Encyclopædia Britannica." The agreement of the work is a curiosity of literature, and reads as follows:

"Mr. Andrew Bell to Mr. William Smellie.

"Sir,—As we are engaged in publishing a 'Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences,' and as you have informed us that there are fifteen capital sciences, which you will undertake for, and write up the sub-divisions and detached parts of them, conforming to your plan, and likewise to prepare the whole work for the press, etc., etc. We hereby agree to allow you £200 for your trouble."

A second edition was called for in 1776, and the proprietors offered Smellie a share in the undertaking if he would edit it; but having other pressing work on hand, he declined the proposal, and Joseph Tytler, a man of varied attainments, was engaged. He was born in 1747, and was the son of a minister of a rural parish in Scotland. After receiving a liberal education, he was placed with a surgeon at Forfar. He subsequently made a couple of voyages as a doctor in a whaling-ship to Greenland. Next he proceeded to Edinburgh with [Pg 9] the money he had earned, with a view of completing his medical education at the University. He had no sooner got nicely settled in the Northern capital, than he married a girl in humble circumstances, a step which did not help to advance his worldly interests. He made many attempts to succeed, but always failed. Keen poverty kept his nose to the grindstone. His faculty in projecting works was much larger than his energy in carrying them out. Before he had reached the age of thirty, he commenced his labours as the editor of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." The remuneration he received was very small; and while the work was in progress, he lodged, with his wife and family, with a poor washerwoman at the village of Duddingston, and for his writing-desk turned her wash-tub upside down.

The poor fellow never attempted to hide his poverty. It is said by a gentleman who once waited upon him, that he found him making a repast on a cold potato, which he continued eating with as much composure as if he were dining in the most sumptuous style.

The Encyclopædia was a great success, and sold to the extent of ten thousand copies; the [Pg 10] owners of the copyright cleared £42,000. Moreover two of the owners, one a printer and the other an engraver, were paid for their respective work; yet in spite of this handsome profit, the result of Tytler's ability, they permitted him to live with his wife and children in penury.

He could write almost on any topic, and at any time. As a proof of this, his biographer tells a good anecdote. "A gentleman in Edinburgh," he states, "once told him he wanted as much matter as would form a junction between a certain history and its continuance to a later period. He found Tytler lodged in one of those elevated apartments called garrets, and was informed by the old woman with whom he resided that he had gone to bed rather the worse for liquor. Determined, however, not to depart without fulfilling his errand, he was shown into Mr. Tytler's apartment by the light of a lamp, where he found him in the situation described by the landlady. The gentleman having acquainted him with the nature of the business which brought him at so late an hour, Mr. Tytler called for pen and ink, and in a short time produced about a page and a half of letterpress, which answered the end as completely as if it had been the result of the most mature deliberation, previous notice, and [Pg 11] a mind undisturbed by any liquid capable of deranging its ideas."

Tytler was a poet of some skill, and wrote a number of popular songs, three of which find a place in "The Celebrated Songs of Scotland." He enjoyed the friendship of Robert Burns. In

1792 he published a prospectus of a paper to be named the *Political Gazetteer*; when it came under the notice of Burns he wrote to him as follows:—"Go on, sir; lay bare with undaunted heart and steady hand that horrid mass of corruption called politics and state-craft." At the time he penned this he was an officer in the Excise, and for this and similar expressions he was rebuked by the Board of Excise. Burns described Tytler as an "obscene, tippling, but extraordinary body; a mortal who, though he drudges about Edinburgh with leaky shoes, a skylighted hat, yet that same drunken mortal is author and compiler of three-fourths of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' which he composed at half-a-guinea a week."

We must, before dismissing Tytler, give another anecdote, although it does not relate to literature. We read that "he constructed a huge bag, and filled it full of gas, and invited the [Pg 12] inhabitants of Edinburgh to witness his flight through the regions of space." Mr. Tytler, it appears, slowly rose in his bag as high as a garden wall, when something went wrong with the machinery, and he was deposited head foremost "softly on an adjoining dunghill." The "gaping crowd nearly killed themselves with laughter." He was afterwards known as "Balloon Tytler." He wrote a seditious placard, and had to flee to save his neck. He found a home in America, and for some time edited a paper at Salem. After a life of toil and trouble, he died in the year 1803.

Much has been said about the habits and earnings of Sir Walter Scott, and it is only necessary for us to observe that he wrote in his neatly-arranged library, where at any moment he could refer to his books. He was a most methodical man, and never had to waste time hunting up lost papers and books. He usually commenced writing between five and six, and worked until ten in the morning, and during this period it was his practice to fast. When pressed with work, he would often take breakfast at nine, and lounge about until eleven, and then write with a will until two o'clock. During the closing years of Sir Walter Scott's life he [Pg 13] employed William Laidlaw as his amanuensis. Laidlaw was a poet and prose writer of some merit, possessed of superior shrewdness, and highly esteemed by Sir Walter and his family. He was for many years steward at Abbotsford.

Another famous son of the North was Professor Wilson, perhaps more widely known as "Christopher North," of *Blackwood's Magazine*. He entered in a large ledger skeletons of intended articles; when he felt in the humour for working, he turned to his skeletons, selected one, and quickly clothed it with flesh and nerve. Wilson in a short time could produce a considerable quantity of original matter. Mr. J. S. Roberts, the editor of the volume of "Scottish Ballads" in the Chandos Classics series, was a boy at Blackwood's when Wilson was the chief contributor to "*Maga*." It was one of Roberts' duties to go to Christopher North for his "copy." He was wont to sit and amuse himself whilst the great, lion-headed man wrote or furnished an article on all manner of scraps of waste paper. One day there was a high wind, and Roberts was indiscreet enough to put Professor Wilson's article in his hat. The result was hugely disastrous. The head-gear was blown off, and [Pg 14] Wilson's article was distributed in small portions over all the streets of Edinburgh. It was a frightful thing to have to go to the author and explain the catastrophe. John Wilson would swear, as the boy knew; and for a while he swore most stormily, but eventually calmed his choler, and wrote the article over again.

Professor Wilson was the author of a severe critique on the earlier poems of Alfred Tennyson, and in reply to it the poet wrote the following lines:—

"To Christopher North.

"You did late review my lays,
Crusty Christopher;
You did mingle blame and praise,
Rusty Christopher.

"When I learnt from whom it came,
I forgave you all the blame,
Musty Christopher;
I could *not* forgive the praise,
Fusty Christopher.

After penning the foregoing, the Laureate does not appear to have troubled himself further respecting Professor Wilson.

Let us now look at the method of a famous French author. Like many able writers, Balzac thought out every detail of a story before he commenced writing it. The places he proposed [Pg 15] describing were visited, and the special features carefully noted. His note-books were filled with particulars of all classes of characters, for reproduction in his novels. No sooner had he made up his mind to write on a certain subject, and collected materials for his work, than he retired from the haunts of men, and declined to see even his closest friends. Letters might come, but they were not opened; he was dead to the outer world. His blinds were drawn, the sunlight shut out, and candles lighted. His ordinary costume was changed for a loose white monkish gown. The round of his daily toil was as follows:—At two in the morning he commenced writing, and continued it until six; a bath was then indulged in; at eight he took coffee, and rested until the clock marked the hour of nine. He resumed writing until noon, when an hour was occupied over breakfast. He again laboured with his pen from one to six, when his work closed for the day. He dined and conferred with his publisher, and at eight

o’clock he retired to rest. This daily round often occupied two months, in which period he furnished the first rough draft of his work. The matter was usually re-written, and even when in type he would frequently alter three or four proofs. We are not surprised to learn [Pg 16] “that he was the terror of the printers; few could decipher his ‘copy,’ and it is said that those few made a stipulation with their employer to work on it for one hour at a time.”

He was a most painstaking writer, but was never satisfied with his productions. “I took,” he said, “sixteen hours out of twenty-four over the elaboration of my unfortunate style, and I am never satisfied with it when done.”

Carlyle’s productions gave the printers much trouble, on account of the many alterations he made, and his cramped penmanship. His changes were not confined to his manuscripts; he revised his proofs to such an extent that it was frequently found easier to reset the matter than to alter it. Miss Martineau told a good story anent this subject. “One day,” she said, “while in my study, I heard a prodigious sound of laughter on the stairs, and in came Carlyle, laughing aloud. He had been laughing in that manner all the way from the printing office in Charing Cross. As soon as he could, he told me what it was about. He had been to the office to urge the printer, and the man said: ‘Why, sir, you really are so very hard upon us with [Pg 17] your corrections; they take so much time, you see.’ After some remonstrance, Carlyle observed that he had been accustomed to do this sort of thing; that he had got works printed in Scotland, and—‘Yes, indeed, sir,’ interrupted the printer, ‘we are aware of that. We have a man here from Edinburgh, and when he took up a bit of your copy he dropped it as if it had burnt his fingers, and cried out, ‘Lord have mercy! Have you got that man to print for? Lord knows when we shall get done all his corrections.’”

Mrs. Gore was the author of many fashionable novels and other works, which won much favourable notice in her day. She did not confine all her attention to story-writing; she contributed very largely to the leading magazines, and wrote successfully for the stage. The list of her works is a long one, yet, in spite of all her tireless toil with the pen, she entered very freely into the pleasures of society. Mr. Planché visited her in Paris in 1837, and in course of a conversation she explained how she managed to find time to write so much. Said Mrs. Gore: “I receive, as you know, a few friends at dinner at five o’clock nearly every evening. They leave me at ten or eleven, when I retire to my own room, and write till seven [Pg 18] or eight in the morning. I then go to bed till noon, when I breakfast, after which I drive out, shop, pay visits, and return at four, dress for dinner, and as soon as my friends have departed, go to work again all night as before.” Mrs. Gore died in 1861, at the age of sixty-two years. Her first book was issued in 1823, and it was followed by no less than seventy separate works. She lived for many years on the Continent, and supported her family with her pen.

Mrs. Trollope did not commence her career as an author until she had “reached the sober season of married and middle life,” yet she managed to produce no less than one hundred and fifteen volumes of fiction. In an autobiographical work, entitled “What I Remember,” by her son, Thomas Adolphus Trollope, we get some touching pictures of this wonderful woman writing her books. He speaks of her passing an extended period by the bedside of her invalid son. From about nine in the morning until eight in the evening, with “a cheerful countenance and a bleeding heart,” she entertained and nursed her patient. He generally slept about eight, when she went to her desk and wrote her fiction to amuse light-hearted readers. She worked from two to three in the morning. This was all done with the aid of green tea and [Pg 19] sometimes laudanum. Mrs. Trollope died at the age of eighty-three years, so that it cannot be said that hard work killed her, although she did an immense quantity.

We believe that hard work seldom kills anyone. Some say that it does, and point to the fate of Southey, one of the most industrious of English men of letters, to support their assertion. The mention of his name brings to the mind scenes of sunshine and shadow. He was a lover of books, and his charming house in Lake-land contained a fine library. Here he read and worked, and life passed happily. Nothing could tempt him to leave it, not even the editorship of *The Times*. When bereft of reason, Southey would linger lovingly amongst the companions of happier days, his beloved books. He would play with them as a child plays with a toy. It is generally believed that hard literary labour killed him. When Dr. Charles Mackay visited Wordsworth he named the matter to him, and was told that there was no truth in it. Said Wordsworth of Southey: “He was a calm and methodical worker, and calm, steady work never kills. It is only worry and hurry that kill. Southey wrote a great deal; but he wrote [Pg 20] easily and pleasantly to himself. Besides, only those who have tried know what an immense deal of literary work can be got through comfortably by a man who will work regularly for only four or even three hours a day. Take the case of Sir Walter Scott, for instance. What an immensity of work he got through; and yet he was always idle at one o’clock in the afternoon, and ready for any amusement, or for such change of labour as the garden or the field afforded. Southey was like him in that respect, and, though he worked hard, he always contrived to enjoy abundance of leisure. Scott died of pecuniary trouble, not of work. Southey died of grief for the loss of his wife.”

Lord Byron puzzled his friends by continual production whilst appearing to occupy himself with everything else but writing.

Hans Christian Andersen had to be alone when he composed his fairy tales. He was never able to dictate a contribution for the press. All his matter for the printer was in his own

handwriting. This circumstance he named to Thiers, by whom he was informed that he dictated to an amanuensis the whole of his “History of the Consulate and the Empire.”

Miss Edgeworth wrote her stories in the common sitting-room, surrounded by her family. [Pg 21]
Some authors are able to concentrate their attention on a task and remain unconscious of anything going on around them. Says a recent writer on this topic: “Dr. Somerville told Harriet Martineau that he once laid a wager with a friend that he would abuse Mrs. Somerville in a loud voice to her face, and she would take no notice; and he did so. Sitting close to her, he confided to his friend the most injurious things—that she rouged, that she wore a wig, and such nonsense uttered in a very loud voice; her daughters were in a roar of laughter, while the slandered lady sat placidly writing. At last her husband made a dead pause after her name, on which she looked up in an innocent manner saying, “Did you speak to me?”

Southey too could write in the presence of his family. A more remarkable method of composition was that of Barry Cornwall. He composed his best poems in the busy streets of London, only leaving the crowd to enter a shop to commit to paper the verses he had made.

The poet Gray usually worked himself into the “mood” by reading some other poet, generally [Pg 22]
Spenser.

Shelley always composed out of doors sometimes on the roof tops. Trelawney describes how he found him in a grove near Florence by a pool of water; he was gazing unconsciously into the depths. Trelawney did not disturb him, but when Shelley came out of his trance he had written one of his finest lyrics, in a hand-writing that no other man could decipher.

Wordsworth mainly composed his poems during his rural rambles. It was not an unusual circumstance for him to write with a slate pencil on a smooth piece of stone his newly made lines. Surely the hillsides and lovely dales of Lake-land were fitting places for the great high priest of nature to give birth to his poetry. He repeated his poems aloud as he composed them, a practice which greatly puzzled the common people. We cannot perhaps better illustrate the strange impression it made on the country folk than by repeating an anecdote told to Dr. Charles Mackay by an American gentleman. He said—“One of his countrymen had lost his way in a vain attempt to discover Rydal Mount; had taken a wrong turn and gone three or four miles beyond or to the side of the point he should have aimed at. Meeting an [Pg 23]
old woman in a scarlet cloak, who was gathering sticks, he asked her the way to Rydal Mount. She could not tell him; she did not know. ‘Not know,’ said the American, ‘the house of the great Wordsworth?’ ‘No.’ ‘What, not the house of the man whose fame brings people here from all parts of the world?’ ‘No,’ she insisted, ‘but what was he great in?—was he a preacher or a doctor?’ ‘Greater than preacher or doctor—he was a poet.’ ‘Oh, poet!’ she replied; ‘and why did you not tell me that before? I know who you mean now. I often meet him in the woods, jabbering his pottery (poetry) to himself. But I’m not afraid of him. He’s quite harmless, and almost as sensible as you or me.’” This is the old story—a man, however great, is not much thought of in his own district.

It is generally understood that Lord Tennyson composed much of his poetry during his rural rambles.

Edwin Arnold, the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, wrote his “Light of Asia” whilst travelling in the railway carriage to and from his newspaper office.

Some authors appear to be able to write at any time and in any place. Anthony Trollope did [Pg 24]
much writing in a railway train. “It was,” he says, “while I was engaged on ‘Barchester Towers’ that I adopted a system of writing, which for some years afterwards I found to be very serviceable to me. My time was greatly occupied in travelling, and the nature of my travelling was now changed. I could not any longer do it by horseback. Railroads afforded me my means of conveyance, and I found that I passed in railway carriages very many hours of my existence.... If I intended to make a profitable business of writing, and, at the same time, to do my best for the Post Office, I must turn my hours to more account than I could by reading. I made for myself, therefore, a little tablet, and I found after a few days’ exercise that I could write as quickly in a railway carriage as I could at my own desk. I worked with a pencil, and what I wrote my wife copied afterwards. My only objection to the practice came from the appearance of literary ostentation, to which I felt myself to be subject when going to work before four or five fellow passengers. But I got used to it.”

Trollope never attached any importance to a writing mood; to use his own phrase, he sat [Pg 25]
down to work just “as a cobbler sits down to make shoes.” When at home he rose at from half-past four to five o’clock daily, and, attired in his dressing-gown, he went to his writing-room. During the cold weather his old and favourite Irish servant made a fire in it before he arrived. He placed his watch before him, and he trained himself to write two hundred and fifty words every fifteen minutes, and he says that he was able to perform the feat as regularly as his watch went.

He believed that a serial was spoilt if written month by month as published. Only once during his long career did he commence publishing a story before the manuscript was completed, and that was “Framley Parsonage,” in the pages of *Cornhill Magazine*. It is admitted to be one of his best books. He wielded the pen of a ready writer for nearly forty years, and in this period produced an enormous quantity of work. He stands in this respect

almost on a level with Sir Walter Scott. No writer of the highest genius writes like Trollope, though it was Keats' habit to write a certain number of lines a day when he was engaged on "Endymion." Emerson remarks "a poet must wait many days in order to glorify one."

The late Bishop Wilberforce managed to write in his chaise even when driven over rough roads, as well as in railway carriages. His lordship appeared to be able to use his pen in most unlikely quarters. [Pg 26]

Amongst authors noted as early risers must be included Charles Dickens. He has told us how the solemn and still solitude of the morning had a charm for him. It was seldom that he wrote before breakfast; as a rule he confined his writing between the hours of breakfast and luncheon. Dickens was by no means a rapid writer. When engaged on a novel he regarded three of his not very large pages of manuscript as a good day's work, and four as excellent. He did not recopy his writings, although they contained numerous corrections which, however, were clearly made. Prior to commencing a new story he suffered much from despondency. He spoke of himself as "going round and round the idea, as you see a bird in his cage go about his sugar before he touches it."

Dickens' love of order was very marked; his writing materials were always neatly arranged, and his household was a model of order.

The highways and byways of London were familiar to him, and many happy hours were spent rambling in them. He had a theory that the number of hours engaged in literary labour should have a corresponding time spent in pedestrian exercise, and he frequently enjoyed a twenty miles' walk. [Pg 27]

Thackeray was not very particular as to the place or time when he wrote. He liked to perform his literary labours in a pleasant room. It is certain, from the large number of books that he produced in a limited time, that he must have written at a considerable speed. He had also the happy facility of being able to dictate his works when composing them.

Previous to commencing a book George Eliot would read all she could find bearing on the subject. Sometimes she would study over a thousand works to write one book. She spared no pains in perfecting her productions.

Charles Reade wrote much and well. He rose at eight o'clock, took breakfast at nine, and at ten commenced his literary work, which usually lasted until two in the afternoon. He wrote in his drawing-room, and when the French windows were closed no sounds from the street could be heard. When once fairly on the way with a novel he worked with rapidity. He wrote with a large pen, with very black ink, on large sheets of drab-coloured paper. Each sheet was numbered as written, and thrown on the floor, which, after a few hours' writing, was completely covered. A maid servant gathered up the manuscript, which, after being put in order, was sent to a copyist, who made, in a round hand, a clear copy. Mr. Reade then went carefully over it, making improvements by omissions and additions. The revised sheets were once more copied for the printer. He seldom dictated a story, but had not any objection to the company of a friend in his room when busy with his pen. He would sometimes relieve the monotony of his work by watching a game of tennis on his lawn, or the gambols of his tame hares, or the traffic passing in the street at the bottom of his garden. Mr. Reade did not take any lunch; he dined late, and generally finished the day by a visit to the theatre. [Pg 28]

Alphonse Daudet, the greatest of living French novelists, is a painstaking man, and usually spends a year in writing a story. He takes a deep interest in his work; indeed, it seems to get the mastery over him; and when engaged on "Le Nabob" he worked about twenty hours a day. He related to an interviewer his method of work, and it transpired that he carries about with him a small book, and enters in it notes bearing on his subject. Next he reproduces his jottings and expands them, and as he completes the items he severs them out of his list. His wife then takes the manuscript in hand and makes a clear copy, and, at the same time, corrects any slight errors of redundancy. Daudet goes carefully over it, making additions and polishing according to his fancy. It is afterwards rewritten for the press. [Pg 29]

Shortly after the death of Mrs. Henry Wood, her son, Mr. Charles W. Wood, published in the *Argosy* some very interesting particulars of her literary life. She was a born author, and at the age when children play with dolls she was composing stories. She was a ready writer. Her powerful prize temperance tale "Danesbury House" was commenced and completed in twenty-eight days.

Respecting her manner of writing her novels, says her son: "She first composed her plot. Having decided upon the main idea, she would next divide it into the requisite number of chapters. Each chapter was then elaborated. Every incident in every chapter was thought out and recorded, from the first chapter to the last. She never changed her plots or incidents. Once thought out, her purpose became fixed, and was never turned aside for any fresh departure or emergency that might arise in the development of the story. The drama had then become to her as if it actually existed. Every minute detail of the plot was written out before a line of the story was begun. All was so elaborately sketched that anyone with sufficient power would have no difficulty in writing the story with the plot in possession. The only difference would have been the evidence of another hand. [Pg 30]

"The plot of each novel occupied a good many pages of close, though not small writing. It would take her, generally speaking, about three weeks to think it out from beginning to end.

During those times she could not bear the slightest interruption. But I have occasionally gone into her study, though never without being startled, almost awed, by the look upon her face. She would be at all times in a reclining chair, her paper upon her knees, and the expression of her eyes, large, wide-opened, was so intense and absorbed, so far away, it seemed as if the spirit had wandered into some distant realm and had to be brought back to [Pg 31] its tenement before the matter, suddenly placed before her, could be attended to. It, indeed, took many moments to recall her attention, elsewhere concentrated." Mr. Wood observes, "Only on rare or important occasions was such intrusion ever permitted for the thread of her ideas once broken could very seldom be resumed the same day, and, as she never wrote a line of anything when composing a plot, she would consider that the day had been partly lost or wasted."

When Mrs. Wood was writing a story, on entering her study she consulted the outline she had prepared, and then worked on the allotted portion of her task. She did not recopy her manuscripts, yet they contained few corrections, and were very legible and as clear as print.

Miss Braddon is the author of many widely-read novels, and it is said that the profits on her works place her high amongst the first six of the best paid writers of fiction. She left the Hull stage, where she performed without any particular success under the name of Miss Seton, and took up her residence at Beverley, where she wrote her first story, "Three times [Pg 32] dead; or the Secret of the Heath." It was printed and published by Mr. C. R. Empson, and was brought out at a loss. At that time she was about twenty years of age. In 1861 she issued "Garibaldi, and other Poems," the contents of this book having previously appeared in a Beverley newspaper. A year prior to that date she competed for a £5 prize, offered by Mr. Joseph Temple, for the best ode on celebrating the first tree planted in the Hull Public Park, and failed to win it. She contributed to several local newspapers. Her powerful novel, "Lady Audley's Secret," published in 1862, established her reputation, and by industry and skill it has been sustained. At the commencement of 1887 the sale of "Lady Audley's Secret" had reached about 450,000 copies, Mrs. Henry Wood's "East Lynne" 120,000 copies, and Mrs. Craik's "John Halifax Gentleman," 90,000 copies. Miss Braddon says "The Woman in White" inspired her to write "Lady Audley's Secret," "a novel of construction and character." Wilkie Collins she regards as her literary godfather. Miss Braddon had not a single note when she wrote her most popular story. She now makes a skeleton of her tales in a small [Pg 33] memorandum book, often not extending over a couple of pages, before she commences writing her novels. She usually writes four days a week, commencing her work at ten and concluding it at seven, and takes during that time strong tea at intervals, and occasionally a light luncheon. The other two days are devoted to riding on horseback and when possible to hunting. Respecting Miss Braddon's method of writing, some interesting details appear in the "Treasury of Modern Biography," and perhaps we cannot do better than draw upon it for a few facts. "By the fireside," it is stated, "is a particularly low uncomfortable chair. In this the novelist huddles herself up with a piece of thick cardboard resting on her lap, and a little ink-bottle held firmly against it with her left hand. This apparently cramped position appears to be favourable to the composition, for the pen moves over the great square slips of paper, and the corrections are few and far between." Her copy is very clear and carefully punctuated, and is somewhat masculine in style. At one time she wrote a bold hand, but reduced its size, because she had to cover more paper with her pen than when she wrote a small hand. She wears a tailor's thimble to protect the middle finger from the brand of the [Pg 34] ink.

Mr. James Payn was for many years a busy and successful literary man. He conducted the *Cornhill Magazine*, having previously edited for many years *Chambers's Journal*. It was in the latter periodical that his first story, "A Family Scapegrace," appeared. A few years later it was followed by "Lost Sir Massingberd," which raised the circulation of the serial by nearly 20,000 copies. Mr. Payn related some time since to Mr. Joseph Hatton, the journalist, an outline of his daily life which is as follows: "I rise at eight," said Mr. Payn, "breakfast, read the papers, get to the office at ten, work at my own work until one—subject to any special call on Smith and Elder's business—lunch at the Reform Club at one—generally with Robinson, of the *Daily News*, and occasionally with William Black—return to the office at two; from two until four I read manuscripts and edit *Cornhill*; from 4.0 to 6.30 I play whist at the Reform Club—it is a great rest, whist—home to dinner by seven—I rarely dine out now, and never go to what are called dinner parties—to bed at ten."

It remains for us to add that his writing is very difficult to decipher, indeed he is sometimes [Pg 35] puzzled to read it himself; fortunately for the printers, his daughter makes a copy of his productions by the type-writer.

In answer to a correspondent, Mr. Philip G. Hamerton detailed particulars of his method of work. Said Mr. Hamerton in his interesting letter, "I think that there are two main qualities to be kept in view in literary composition—freshness and finish. The best way, in my opinion, of attaining both is to aim at freshness in the rough draft, with little regard to perfection of expression; the finish can be given by copious subsequent correction, even to the extent of writing all over again when there is time. Whenever possible, I would assimilate literary to pictorial execution by treating the rough draft as a rapid and vigorous sketch, without any regard to delicacy of workmanship; then I would write from this a second work, retaining as much as possible the freshness of the first, but correcting those oversights and errors which are due to rapidity."

One of his books, he says, was penned as a private diary, then he made a rough and rapid manuscript with a lead pencil, and subsequently rewrote it for the printer, especially with a [Pg 36] view to concentration. Mr. Hamerton states that he used shorthand for one volume, which enabled him to write it quickly, but he found much trouble in reading it, and he does not recommend it for literary purposes.

Referring to work, "The Intellectual Life" was begun in quite a different form (not in letters), and many pages were written before he concluded that it was heavy, and that letters would give a lighter and less didactic appearance. We are told that his story "Marmone" was partly written and put aside, and it was not until solicited by Messrs. Roberts Brothers for a book for their "No Name Series," that he completed it. The earlier part of the novel was written three times over.

In concluding his letter, he says that "I have sometimes, instead of rewriting, sent a corrected rough draft to a type-writer. There is an economy of time in this, and the work can be corrected in the type-writer's copy; but, on the whole, for very careful finished work, I think the old plan of rewriting the whole manuscript is superior."

Mr. G. A. Sala used commonly to be regarded as a journalist, but he ranks high as an author. [Pg 37] He has written nearly a library of books of travel, essays, and novels, which have been much praised by the critics, and largely circulated. His father was an Italian gentleman, who married a charming and accomplished English lady, famous in her day as a vocalist. Between the ages of six and nine he was totally blind. After regaining his sight he was placed in the Collège Bourbon, Paris, for a couple of years, and subsequently removed to Turnham Green, near London, with a view of thoroughly acquiring his mother tongue which he spoke imperfectly, in fact he was almost ignorant of it. His parents intended him for an artist, but circumstances compelled him to relinquish art in its highest form. Possessing the happy faculty of effective sketching, he produced hundreds of political caricatures and pictorial skits on passing events; these found a ready sale. His eyesight failing, he had to give up lithographing and engraving, and to try other means of making a living. After a variety of engagements, an accident led to his finding his right vocation. One night he was by an oversight locked out of his house, and had to pass the night perambulating the streets. It occurred to him that he might make it a subject of an article, which he accordingly wrote [Pg 38] under the title of "The Key of the Street," and submitted it to Charles Dickens. The famous novelist at once recognised his genius, and encouraged him to become a constant contributor to *Household Words*. At the suggestion of Dickens he entered the lists of journalism, and won the highest place amongst pressmen. He was known as "The Prince of Journalists." Sala joined the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*, and did much to make the reputation of that brilliant journal. He represented it in all parts of the world, and his remuneration equalled the pay of an ambassador. Its columns have been enriched with several thousand leading articles from his facile pen on almost every topic.

Sala was the owner of a large and valuable library, but his chief source of information was found in his common-place book. In it he had brought together facts and illustrations on all kinds of subjects calculated to aid him in his journalistic labours. This wonderful book has often been described, the best account of it appears in "Living London." "Scarcely a week passes," says Mr. Sala, "without bringing me letters from correspondents who ask me to explain my own system of keeping a common-place book. I have but one such system, and it [Pg 39] possesses one merit, that of rugged simplicity. Take a book, large or small, according to the size of your handwriting, and take care that at the end of the book there shall be plenty of space for an index. Begin at the beginning, and make your entries precisely as they occur to you in unordered sequence. But after each entry place a little circle, or oval, or parenthesis ( ), and in a portion of these spaces place consecutive numbers. Here is a model page taken at random from a book which may have been in keeping for years:—

> 'The Prince of Wales wore the robes of the Garter at his marriage in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. All the other K.Gs present wore their robes and collars. Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A., who was to paint a picture of the wedding for the Queen, stood close to the reredos, to the right, looking from the organ-loft (1023). Just before the liberation in 1859 of Lombardy from the domination of Austria, the audiences in the Italian theatres used to give vent to their pent-up patriotism by shouting at the close of each performance "Viva Verdi!" The initiated knew that this was meant to signify Viva V (for Victor) E (for Emmanuele) R (for Re) D I (for d'Italia) (1024). Old Hungerford Market was never very successful as a fish market; but according to Seyer it was always very well supplied with shrimps. In Hungerford Street, leading to the market, there was a pastrycook's famous shop, at which the penny buns were as good as those sold at Farrance's in Cockspur Street (1025).'

"Now, all you have to do is, immediately you have made your entry, to index it; and if you [Pg 40] will only spare the time and patience and perseverance, to *cross index* it. Thus under letter W you will write, 'Wales, Prince of, married in Robes of the Garter' (1023); under G, 'Garter, Robes of, worn by P. of W. at his Marriage' (1023); under F, 'W. P. Frith, R.A., present at the Marriage of P. of W.' (1023). Thus also, 'Verdi, Victor Emmanuel,' and 'Italy' will be indexed under their respective letters 'V' and 'I,' and be referable to at the number (1024). I have one common-place book that has been 'cooking' ever since 1858, and is not half finished yet. The last entry is numbered (5068), and refers to Sir Thomas Roe, Ambassador from James

the First of England to the Emperor Jehan Guize, commonly called the Great Mogul. The number (5068) is referred to under the letters R (for Roe), J (for James I.), J (for Jehan Guize), M (for Mogul), and A (for Ambassadors). By means of a rigidly pursued system of indexing and *cross indexing* (so earnestly recommended by Henry Brougham) you can put your hand at once on the information bearing on the particular subject which claims your attention."

Mr. Sala also said:—"I believe this system strengthens and disciplines the memory, and keeps it green. It is a very good mental exercise to read a page or two of the index alone, from time to time. You will be astonished at the number of bright nuggets of fact which will crop up from the rock of half forgetfulness. Finally, never allow your index to fall into arrear, and write the figures in your circumscribed spaces in red ink. The corresponding ones in the index may be in black." [Pg 41]

It was from this mine of literary nuggets that he used to obtain the materials for his charming papers which amused and instructed the reader.

Another celebrated modern journalist and author is Mr. Andrew Lang. He is just the contrary of Mr. Sala in his methods of work. Mr. Lang seems to pride himself on the fact that he has no other aid to writing except an excellent memory. He does not trouble himself about books of reference, and says he has not one of any sort, not even a classical dictionary, in his house. Mr. Lang is certainly a clever writer, and manages to produce much pleasant reading, but his contributions to the magazines and newspapers lack the interesting facts which Mr. Sala placed so pleasantly before the public in his racy and able articles. Mr. Lang devotes his mornings to writing books and magazine articles, and the afternoons to penning leaders for the newspapers. [Pg 42]

The Earnings of Authors. [Pg 43]

LITTLE is known of the remuneration of authors until the days of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Before his time, literary men, as a rule, depended on the generosity of patrons for their means of support, and as an acknowledgment of their obligations, dedicated their works to them. The dedications were frequently made in most fulsome terms. The position of the writer was certainly a mean one; indeed, it might fitly be pronounced degrading; when he had exhausted his possibilities of patronage, he starved. It was Johnson—a giant in the world of letters—who broke through the objectionable custom, and taught the author to look to the reading public for support, and not to a wealthy patron. It is not until the days of Samuel Johnson that the subject of literary earnings is of much importance; yet we may with advantage glance at a few payments made prior to his age.

We do not know the amount Shakespeare received for his plays, but it is certain that his connection with the theatre in London in a few years realised for him a fortune, and, at a comparatively early age, enabled him to return to his own town, a man of independent means. Oldys, in one of his manuscripts, says that "Hamlet" was sold for £5; but he does not mention his authority for the statement. It appears, from a publication of Robert Greene's, in 1592, the price of a drama was twenty nobles, or about £6 13s. 4d. of current coin. [Pg 44]

Small must have been the literary pay of Spenser, Butler, and Otway, since they feared to die for want of the simple necessaries of life. Milton sold "Paradise Lost" for £5 down, to be followed by £15 if a second and third large editions were required. The first edition consisted of 1,500 copies, and in two years 1,300 were sold. The balance was not disposed of until five years later. This powerful poem, when given to the world, met with some adverse criticism. The poet Waller wrote of it thus: "The old, blind schoolmaster, John Milton, hath published a tedious poem on the fall of man; if its length be not considered a merit, it hath no other." A greater poet than Waller—Dryden—recognised its merits, and said: "Undoubtedly, 'Paradise Lost' is one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime poems which either this age or nation has produced." Dryden wrote the following epigram referring to Homer, Virgil, and Milton:— [Pg 45]

> "Three poets—in three distant ages born—
> Greece, Italy, and England did adorn;
> The first in loftiness of thought surpassed,
> The next in majesty, in both the last.
> The force of Nature could no further go;
> To make a third, she joined the former two."

Milton's poem has been praised by the greatest critics, and it is still very much read. It appears in many forms, and the annual sale is extremely large. Routledge's popular edition sells at the rate of about a couple of thousand a year; and we suppose the sale of other editions is equally great.

Dryden arranged with Jacob Tonson, the famous bookseller and publisher, to write for him 10,000 verses, at sixpence per line. To make up the required number of lines, he threw in the “Epistle to his Cousin,” and his celebrated “Ode to Music.”

Gray only received £40 for the whole of his poems. He presented the copyright of his famous “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” to Dodsley, feeling that it was beneath the dignity of a gentleman to make money with his pen. The lucky publisher quite agreed with him, and [Pg 46] cleared about a thousand pounds by the publication.

Pope’s translation of “Homer” yielded him about £8,000. He was assisted in the work by William Broome, a scholar who was the author of a volume of verse. John Henley thus refers to the circumstance:—

> “Pope came off clean with Homer; but they say,
> Broome went before, and kindly swept the way.”

Gay made £1,000 by his “Poems.” He was paid £400 for the “Beggar’s Opera,” and for the second part, “Polly,” £1,000. Rich, the theatrical manager, profited to a far greater extent from the “Beggar’s Opera” than its author. The contemporary jest was that it made Gay rich, and Rich gay.

Dr. Johnson sold the copyright of Goldsmith’s “Vicar of Wakefield” for £60, and he thought that amount fairly represented the value of the work. “The great lexicographer,” as Miss Pinkerton called him, placed no high value on the performance of his friend, but the publisher found in the “Vicar of Wakefield” a gold mine. Goldsmith was paid £21 for “The Traveller.” It was the work that established his reputation. Before it appeared he was [Pg 47] regarded as little better than a superior Grub Street hack. Johnson pronounced this the finest poem that had been written since the death of Pope. After having read it to the sister of Sir Joshua Reynolds, she said: “Well, I never more shall think Dr. Goldsmith ugly.” The following are the prices Goldsmith obtained for others of his works:—“English Grammar,” £5; the “History of Rome,” in two volumes, 250 guineas; the “History of England,” in four volumes, £500; the “History of Greece,” £250; and the “History of the Earth and Animated Nature,” in eight volumes, £850. “She stoops to Conquer” yielded between £400 and £500. Five shillings a couplet was paid for “The Deserted Village.”

To cover the cost of his mother’s funeral, Johnson wrote “Rasselas,” and disposed of it for £100. He sold his “Lives of the Poets” for 200 guineas. The sum was considered liberal, but Johnson became so engrossed in his subject that he supplied much more than what was expected from him. It is believed that out of his work, in twenty-five years, the booksellers cleared £5,000. It is still a saleable book, and is to be found in every public and private [Pg 48] library of any pretentions.

The sum of £700 was paid to Fielding for “Tom Jones,” and for “Amelia,” £1,000.

Very large amounts have been given for biographical works. Hayley received for his “Life of Cowper,” £11,000; and Southey, £1,000 for his life of the same poet. The life of “William Wilberforce” was sold for £4,000; “Bishop Heber’s Journals,” for £5,000; “General Gordon’s Diary,” for £5,250; and the “Life of Hannah More,” for £2,000.

The income of Scott was, perhaps, the largest ever made by authorship, yet he said that the pursuit of literature was a good walking-stick, but a bad crutch! His reputation was first made as a poet, and the following are particulars of his profits from poetry: “The Lay of the Last Minstrel,” published in 1805, £769 6s.; “Ballads and Lyrical Pieces,” published in 1806, £100; for “Marmion,” published 1808, Messrs. Constable offered 1,000 guineas soon after the poem was begun. It proved a very profitable speculation to its publishers. During the first month after its appearance, 2,000 copies were sold, the price being 31s. 6d. the quarto volume. Next came the “Lady of the Lake” (1810), £2,100. This found even greater favour [Pg 49] with the public than its predecessors, and with it Scott’s poetical fame reached its zenith. A new poet who appeared on the scene, Byron, completely eclipsed Scott. Scott tried, with two more poems, to win back his lost place, as the popular poet of the period, and produced “Rokeby,” and the “Bridal of Triermain;” the latter was issued anonymously, but both were failures. When Scott saw that his poetry did not attract many readers, he turned his thoughts and energy into another channel, and commenced his immortal novels. He had by him an unfinished story, the work of former years, which he completed, giving it to the world under the title of “Waverley.” Constable offered £700 for the copyright—an amount deemed very large in those days for a novel to be published without the name of the author. Seven hundred sovereigns did not, however, satisfy Scott; he simply said, “It is too much if the work should prove a failure, and too little if it should be a success.” It was a brilliant book, and entranced the reading world. Scott had now found his real vocation. He received for eleven novels, of three volumes each, and nine volumes of “Tales of My Landlord,” the sum [Pg 50] of £110,000. For one novel he was paid £10,000. Between November, 1825, and June, 1827, he earned £26,000—an amount representing £52 6s. 3d. per working day. From first to last, Sir Walter Scott made by his literary labours about £300,000.

Lord Byron’s dealings with Mr. Murray were in every respect satisfactory, but this did not prevent the pleasure-loving lord from having a little joke at the expense of his publisher. He delighted Mr. Murray with a gift of a Bible, but the recipient’s pleasure was fleeting, for on examining the book it was discovered that it contained a marginal correction. “Now

Barabbas was a robber," was altered to "Now Barabbas was a publisher." This was a cruel stab, seeing that Byron had received for his poetry £19,340, and might have increased this sum if he had been more anxious about remuneration.

In Mrs. Oliphant's book on "William Blackwood and His Sons," a letter is quoted from Mr. Murray relating to the poet. "Lord Byron is a curious man," says Murray, "he gave me, as I told you, the copyright of his two poems, to be printed only in his works. I did not receive [Pg 51] the last until Tuesday night. I was so delighted with it that even as I read it I sent him a draught for a thousand guineas. The two poems are altogether no more than twelve hundred and fifteen hundred lines, and will altogether sell for five and sixpence. But he returned the draught, saying that it was very liberal—much more than they were worth; that I was perfectly welcome to both poems to print in his (collected) works without cost or expectation, but that he did not think them equal to what they ought to be, and that he would not admit of their separate publication. I went yesterday, and he was rallying me upon my folly in offering so much that he dared to say I thought now I had a most lucky escape. 'To prove how much I think so, my lord,' said I 'do me the favour to accept this pocket book'—In which I had brought with me my draught, changed into two bank notes of £1,000 and £50; but he would not take it. But I am not in despair that he will yet allow their separate publication, which I must continue to urge for mine own honour."

Mr. Murray treated Crabbe in a most liberal manner. He paid for the "Tales of the Hall," and the copyright of his other poems, £3,000. It was given to the poet in bills, and we read that [Pg 52] "Moore and Rogers earnestly advised him to deposit them, without delay, in some safe hands—but no; he must take them with him to Trowbridge, and show them to his son John. They would hardly believe his good luck at home, if they did not see the bills." On his way to Trowbridge, a friend at Salisbury, at whose house he rested (Mr. Everett, the banker), seeing that he carried his bills loosely in his waistcoat pocket, requested to be allowed to take charge of them; but Crabbe thankfully declined, saying that "There was no fear of his losing them, and he must show them to his son John."

Without seeing a line of Thomas Moore's "Lalla Rookh," Messrs. Longman undertook to pay £3,000 for it. The terms drawn up were simple, and read as follows: "That upon your giving into our hands a poem of yours, the length of 'Rokeby,' you shall receive from us the sum of £3,000. We also agree to the stipulation, that the few songs which you may introduce into the work shall be considered as reserved for your own selling."

His poem, of some 6,000 lines, was written in a lonely cottage in Derbyshire. Moore never tired of telling his friends that the stormy winter weather in the country helped him to [Pg 53] imagine, by contrast, the bright and everlasting summers and glowing scenery of the East.

The work was a great success. The first edition was sold in almost fourteen days; within six months six editions had been called for. It is said that some parts of the poem were translated into Persian, a circumstance which caused Mr. Luttrell to write to the author in the following strain:—

"I'm told dear Moore, your lays are sung
(Can it be true, you lucky man?)
By moonlight, in the Persian tongue,
Along the streets of Ispahan."

Moore received considerable amounts for his "Irish Melodies." The mention of these call to mind a letter he penned to Mr. Power, his publisher, on November 12, 1812:—

"My dear Sir,—I have just got your letter, and have only time to say, that if you can let me have three or four pounds by return of post, you will oblige me. I would not have made this importunate demand on you, but I have foolishly let myself run dry without trying my other resources, and I have been the week past literally without one sixpence. Ever, with most [Pg 54] sincere good will.—T.M."

Mr. Power promptly posted ten pounds to the poet. Said Moore, in the course of his reply, "The truth is, we have been kept on a visit at a house where we have been much longer than I wished or intended, and simply from not having a shilling in my pocket to give to the servants on going away. So I know you will forgive my teasing you.... You may laugh at my ridiculous distress in being kept to turtle eating and claret-drinking longer than I wish, and merely because I have not a shilling in my pocket,—but, however paradoxical it sounds, it is true."

We read in Moore's journals, ten years later: "17th August, 1822.—Received to-day a letter from Brougham, enclosing one from Barnes (the editor of *The Times*), proposing that, as he is ill, I shall take his place for some time in writing the leading articles of that paper, the pay to be £100 a month. This is flattering. To be thought capable of wielding so powerful a political machine as *The Times* newspaper is a tribute the more flattering (as is usually the case) from my feeling conscious that I do not deserve it." The next day he wrote and declined the offer.

Thomas Campbell received, at the age of 21 years, £60 for his "Pleasures of Hope," certainly [Pg 55] a small amount for a fine poem, yet it gave him a name, and enabled him to obtain large sums for some very slight literary services. The publisher of his "Pleasures of Hope" did not treat him in a generous manner, and his conduct appears to have embittered his mind as will

be gathered from the following anecdote. He was present at a party at a period when the actions of Bonaparte were most severely condemned. On being called upon for a toast, Campbell gave "The Health of Napoleon." This caused a great surprise to all the company, and an explanation was called for. "The only reason I have for proposing to honour Bonaparte," said he, "is that he had the virtue to shoot a bookseller." Palm, a bookseller, had recently been executed in Germany by order of the French chief.

It may here be mentioned that the copyright of the "Life of Bonaparte," by Sir Walter Scott, with some copies of the work, was sold for £18,000.

Successful school-books are often gold mines for the authors and publishers. The copyright of "Vyse's Spelling-Book" was sold for £2,000 and an annuity of £50 to the compiler.

The copyright of Rundell's "Domestic Cookery" realised a couple of thousand pounds, and many other works of this class have been extremely popular. [Pg 56]

Very large sums have been paid for historical works. Hume received £700 a volume; and Smollett, for a catch-penny rival work, cleared £2,000. The money made by Henry is set down at £3,300. The booksellers, says Mr. Leslie Stephen, made £6,000 out of Robertson's "History of Scotland." He was paid for his "Charles V." the handsome sum of £4,500. Lingard's "History of England" is, without doubt, an able work, and for it the author was paid £4,683. The author's profits for the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," by Gibbon, are put down at £10,000.

The foregoing are respectable figures, but they appear small when compared with the amounts paid to Lord Macaulay. On one occasion he had handed to him a cheque for £20,000, representing three-fourths of the net profits of his "History of England." A short time since, the following statement went the rounds of the newspaper press, respecting Mr. Justin McCarthy's popular work, the "History of Our Own Times." The book was offered to a well-known publishing firm, who agreed to purchase it for £600. On finding that the author was a Home Ruler, however, this firm asked to be allowed to withdraw from the contract. Mr. McCarthy, who was greatly annoyed at the suggestion that he might mutilate history to suit his own private or political views, then went to Messrs. Chatto and Windus, who at once agreed to publish the work for him on a basis of mutual profits. In the interval, the other firm reconsidered the situation, and asked to be allowed to revive the lapsed contract, but were too late, as the book had been placed in the hands of the second firm. The work won a flattering reception, and the author has, up to the present time, received several thousand pounds as his share of the profits. [Pg 57]

In 1897 passed away Dr. Brewer, the compiler of a "Guide to Science," and other popular books. Shortly before his death, he told an interviewer that he offered the copyright of his "Guide to Science" to Mr. Thomas Jarrold for £50, but he declined the venture, saving he would pay a royalty of one penny in the shilling for every copy sold. It went through two editions in ten months, and then it was agreed to call 8,000 an edition, the royalty to be given half-yearly, but any number less than 1,000 to stand over to the next return. The largest half-yearly royalty was 19,000 copies (Midsummer, 1836). In 1842, Dr. Brewer offered Mr. Jarrold £2,000 for his half-share, which he declined. Soon after this, Messrs. Longman and Co. offered Dr. Brewer £300 per year for life for the copyright. He offered Mr. Jarrold £4,000 for his share, but he replied that he would not accept double that sum, in fact that he would not part with it at all. [Pg 58]

According to a careful estimate, Charles Dickens received £10,000 a year from his works for five years, and died worth nearly £100,000. He made every penny from his writings and readings. We need scarcely repeat the well-known facts that "he not only lived in a very liberal style for over thirty years, keeping up a considerable establishment, and often travelling without regard to cost, but he brought up a large and expensive family."

Thackeray did not make large sums by his books, when we consider his undoubted genius and the high place he holds amongst the greatest authors. It is said that he never made more than £5,000 out of any of his novels. He received large sums for his lectures; indeed, the platform yielded him better returns than the publishers.

Eighty thousand pounds is the amount of Bulwer Lytton's earnings as a novelist. The remuneration he received, when his books first appeared, did not reach large figures, the sums usually ranging from £600 to £1,000, although his books were in great favour with lovers of fiction. When a collected edition of his novels was issued, the publishers paid liberally for the copyrights. The sale of Lytton's novels is very large; about 80,000 copies of the sixpenny edition, and some thousands of the three-shillings-and-sixpenny edition, are sold every year. [Pg 59]

The Earl of Beaconsfield, it is said, received the largest amount ever paid in this country for a single novel. His last work, "Endymion," was sold for £12,000. He only produced one other successful story, and that was "Lothair." It is stated, on good authority, that these two novels have together brought more than double the sums realised for his other books, although inferior to some of his former writings. In his later years the public paid for the novelty of reading stories by a statesman, and not for the merits of his works. Some of his novels have recently been brought out in a shilling edition, but they have already lost the allurements of fiction, and are only read by students of politics, or persons curious as to the [Pg 60]

character of the author.

Wilkie Collins was paid for “Armadale” £5,000. Mr. James Payn recently received £1,000 for the rights of running one of his novels in the pages of a sixpenny magazine. This author tells rather a good story about the mode of payment for his novels. “It was,” says Mr. Payn, “the custom with a very respectable firm of publishers, with whom I did business, to pay my cheques to the names of my immortal works, instead of to myself: and since it suited their convenience to do so, I never complained of it, though it sometimes put me in rather a false position when I presented my demands in person, as, for example, in the case of the ‘Family Scapegrace.’ When I came for the proceeds of ‘Found Dead,’ it was too much for the sense of professional propriety of the banker’s clerk, who gravely observed: ‘It is very fortunate, Sir, that this cheque is not payable to order, or it would have to be signed by your executors.’” Said Dickens, to whom Payn related the incident, “I should not like to have much money at a bank which keeps so clever a clerk as that.”

Anthony Trollope worked hard to gain a footing in the literary world. His earlier manuscripts [Pg 61]
were frequently rejected. He tried to induce managers of theatres to accept his plays, but not one was ever produced. The first year’s labour with the pen, and a very hard year’s work too, only yielded £12. The next year the sum was still small, only amounting to £20, yet he did not despair. At last, the happy time came, and it was taken at the flood. It was in 1855 that he scored with “The Warden.” From that time he was a man of mark; his works were in demand, and with ease he earned £1,000 a year, which soon increased to £2,000 and £3,000, and at the time of his death to about £4,000. The amounts paid for a few of his books are as follows: In 1850 was issued “La Vendée,” and for it he got £20; twelve years later he was paid, for “Orley Farm,” £3,135; in 1864 was published “Can You Forgive Her?” for which he received £3,525; and in the same year was issued “The Small House at Allington,” for which he was paid £3,000. Amongst his other novels for which he received large sums may be mentioned “The Last Chronicles of Barset,” £3,000; “Phineas Finn,” £3,200; “He knew He was Right,” £3,200. The last two were published in 1869. He was paid £3,000 for [Pg 62]
“The Way We Live Now.” “More than nine-tenths of my literary work,” writes Trollope, “has been done in the last twenty years, and during twelve of those years I followed another profession. I have never been a slave to this work, giving due time, if not more than due time, to the amusement I have loved. But I have been constant—and constancy of labour will conquer all difficulties.” In twenty years he made by writing nearly £70,000. We cannot place Trollope in a high position amongst the greatest novelists, yet the monetary results of his literary labours must be regarded as extremely satisfactory.

Large sums of money were made by George Eliot, but we must not forget that she had some weary years to wait for the days of prosperity, and that the story of her life contains many records of disappointment after brave struggles. We read of her living in humble apartments in London; to earn a little money, which she much needed when she went to Switzerland in 1849, she tried to sell her books and globes. It was not until she was forty years of age that she established a reputation by the publication of “Adam Bede.” She received in cash down, for the first sale of her book, some £40,000, or about £2,000 a year. George Eliot had a great [Pg 63]
objection to her novels appearing in serial form, and she sacrificed much money by not first publishing them in the magazines. Ouida had for a long time the same objection to her stories being published piecemeal in newspapers and periodicals. She now appears to have got over her prejudice in this matter, and consents to write for newspaper readers. It is generally believed amongst literary and journalistic men, that she is not a brilliant success as a newspaper novelist, yet Ouida’s income as an author must be very great. The reader of the weekly paper in which fiction forms a feature is not educated up to her standard; authors like those engaged on the *Family Herald* and similar journals are much more popular.

It is pleasing to state that Mr. John Ruskin has made large sums with his books, but not so much, we think, as his merits entitle him to receive.

We have seen it stated that by “Oceana,” by no means a large volume, Mr. Froude cleared £10,000.

In the “Life of Longfellow,” written by his brother, are a few particulars of his earnings. [Pg 64]
During 1825—the last year of his college course—he contributed poems to the United States *Literary Gazette*, and was paid one or two dollars a poem, the price depending on the length of the piece. He wrote, in 1840-1, “The Village Blacksmith,” “Endymion,” and “God’s Acre,” and was paid fifteen dollars each. When his fame was fully established, Mr. Bonner the publisher of the *New York Ledger*, paid him, for the right of publishing in that paper, 3,000 dollars for “The Hanging of the Crane.”

Lord Tennyson received considerable sums for his poetry. He was paid £100 for the right of printing a short original poem in a monthly magazine. For his ballad, “The Revenge,” in the *Nineteenth Century*, he received 300 guineas. It became known some time ago that his lordship did not deem £5,000 a year a sufficient sum for the exclusive right of publishing his works. He changed his publishers several times. He was regarded as a keen man of business, and it is said that he generally got the best of the bargain.

Money never tempted Robert Browning to contribute to the magazines. His poems always saw the light in book form.

Mr. J. Cuthbert Hadden, who has made a study of this subject, says the supply of verse to-day is greatly in excess of the demand, and so it happens that in many quarters poetry is not paid for at all. Most of the minor poets whose volumes come before the public have to bear the whole expense of production themselves, and only a very small number escape without considerable loss. In this connection an amusing story regarding James Russell Lowell—not quite a minor poet—may be quoted. The cost of publishing his first book was borne entirely by Mr. Lowell himself, the edition being a plain but substantial one of 500 copies. The author felt the usual pride in his achievement, and hoped for almost immediate fame. Unhappily, only a few copies of the work were sold. Soon after, a fire occurred in the publishing house where the volumes were stored, and they were destroyed. As the publisher carried a full insurance on the stock, Mr. Lowell was able to realise the full cash value on his venture, and he had the satisfaction of saying that the entire edition was exhausted. [Pg 65]

The leading American novelists usually get £1,000 for a serial story in a magazine, and a similar sum when it is produced in book form. Bret Harte can command a thousand dollars for a single magazine article. Mrs. Grant received a cheque for £40,000 for her share of the first volume of General Grant's "Memoirs," and the whole of her share of the proceeds is put down at £100,000. [Pg 66]

In closing, we must remind our readers that there are two sides to every picture, and that countless instances of bitter disappointment and death are recorded in the annals of literature. Only a few in the mighty army of writers come to the front and win fame and fortune.

"Declined with Thanks." [Pg 67]

"DECLINED with thanks," is a phrase which often disappoints the aspirant in the wide field of literature. Works of the highest merit are frequently rejected by publishers; indeed, some of the most popular books in our language have gone the rounds of the trade without their merits being recognised. Frequently the authors, after repeated failures, have brought their works out at their own risk, and have thereby won fame and fortune. In works of fiction, perhaps the most notable example of a story which was offered to publisher after publisher only to be returned to its author, is that of "Robinson Crusoe." It was at last "Printed for W. Taylor, at the Ship in Paternoster Row, MDCCXIX." It proved a good speculation for the lucky publisher. He made a profit of one hundred thousand pounds out of the venture. Jane Austen's name stands high in the annals of English literature; yet she had a struggle to get her books published. She sold her "Northanger Abbey" to a Bath bookseller for the insignificant sum of ten pounds. The manuscript remained for some time in his possession without being printed, he fearing that if published it would prove a failure. He was, however, at length induced to issue it, and its merits caused it to be extensively read. Samuel Warren could not prevail upon a publisher to bring out his well-known book, "The Diary of a late Physician," and, much against his inclination, it was first given to the reading public as a serial in "Blackwood's Magazine." Thackeray wrote his great novel, "Vanity Fair," for "Colburn's Magazine"; it was refused by the publishers, who deemed it a work without interest. He tried to place it with several of the leading London firms who all declined it. He finally issued it in monthly parts, and by it his fame as a novelist was established. [Pg 68]

It will surprise many to learn that the first volume of Hans Christian Andersen's "Fairy Tales" was declined by every publisher in Copenhagen. The book was brought out at the author's own cost, and the charming collection of stories gained for him world-wide renown. The Rev. James Beresford could not induce any publisher to pay twenty pounds for his amusing volume, entitled "The Miseries of Human Life." It was after some delay issued, and in twelve months passed through nine editions. A humorous notice by Sir Walter Scott in the "Edinburgh Review" doubtless did much to increase the circulation of the book. The handsome sum of five thousand pounds profit was cleared out of this happy venture. In an able work by a leading American critic, entitled "American Publishers and English Authors," it is stated that "'Jane Eyre' went the round of the publishing houses of London, but could not find a market until the daughter of a publisher accidentally discovered the manuscript in an iron safe, where it had been lying until it was mouldy. She saw the extraordinary merit of the novel, and induced her father to publish it." The foregoing statement is incorrect. As a matter of fact, the manuscript was sent by rail to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., on the 24th August, 1847, and by the 16th of October in the same year the firm issued the novel. According to Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë," the future publishers of "Jane Eyre" were at once most favourably impressed with the book, and this is fully confirmed by the prompt publication of it. Respecting its reception by the firm, says Mrs. Gaskell, "the first reader of the manuscript was so powerfully struck by the character of the tale, that he reported his impression in very strong terms to Mr. Smith, who appears to have been much amused by the admiration excited. 'You seem to have been so much enchanted, that I do not [Pg 69] [Pg 70]

know how to believe you,' he laughingly said. But when a second reader, in the person of a clear-headed Scotchman, not given to enthusiasm, had taken the manuscript home in the evening, and become so deeply interested in it as to sit up half the night to finish it, Mr. Smith's curiosity was sufficiently excited to prompt him to read it for himself; and great as were the praises which had been bestowed upon it, he found that they did not exceed the truth." The first novel Miss Brontë wrote was entitled "The Professor," which was submitted to numerous publishers without finding one to accept it. It was not issued until after the death of the gifted author, and is much inferior to her other books. Says Mrs. Gaskell, "Mr. Smith has told me a little circumstance connected with the reception of this manuscript, which seems indicative of no ordinary character. It came in a brown paper parcel to 65, Cornhill. Besides the address to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., there were on it those of other publishers to whom the tale had been sent, not obliterated, but simply scored through, so that Mr. Smith at once perceived the names of some of the houses in the trade to which the unlucky parcel had gone, without success." [Pg 71]

Sterne could not find a bookseller who would pay fifty pounds for "Tristram Shandy," he therefore issued it on his own account, and it proved a saleable work, gaining for its author a front place amongst English humorists. Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was written as a serial for the "National Era," an anti-slavery journal published at Washington. It was next offered to Messrs. Jewett & Co., but their reader and critic pronounced it not a story of sufficient interest to be worth reproducing in book form. The wife of the latter strenuously insisted that it would meet with a favourable reception, and advised its publication. In a notice of Mrs. Stowe, it is stated that in four years 313,000 copies had been printed in the United States alone, probably as many more in Great Britain. Miss Warner's popular novel, "The Wide, Wide World," was declined by a leading New York publisher. It is said that several well-known houses refused to have anything to do with one of the most popular books of recent times, "Vice Versâ"; even when in type, two American firms did not discover its worth, and rejected it. [Pg 72]

Some notable books in history, travels, poetry, and science have been "Declined with thanks." Both Murray and Longman were afraid to risk the publication of Prescott's "Ferdinand and Isabella," but Bentley brought out the book, and according to his statement it is the most successful work that he has published. A score of houses refused to publish "Eöthen." The author in despair handed his manuscript to one of the lesser known booksellers, and printed it at his own cost; it was extremely successful. After twenty-five editions of Buchan's "Domestic Medicine" had been sold, one thousand six hundred pounds was paid for the copyright, yet, strange to state, before it was published not a single firm in Edinburgh would pay a hundred pounds for it. Strahan, the King's printer, had offered to him the first volume of Blair's "Sermons," and, after a careful perusal, concluded that the work would not be one to find a ready sale. Dr. Johnson, however, came to the rescue, and with his eloquence induced Mr. Strahan to pay a hundred pounds for the copyright. It had a large circulation; for a second volume, three hundred pounds was the amount gladly paid, and for subsequent volumes six hundred pounds each. [Pg 73]

Sir Richard Phillips rejected several famous books. It was to this bookseller and publisher that Robert Bloomfield offered the copyright of his "Farmer's Boy" in return for a dozen copies of the work when printed. He feared it would be a failure, and declined it. The poet issued it by subscription, and within three years 25,000 copies were sold. This publisher is said to have had offered to him Byron's early poems. He might have purchased the copyright of "Waverley" for thirty pounds, but declined it! He rejected other works which won favourable reception from the press and the public. It is only right to state that he gave to the world many valuable volumes, and that he was a man of decided literary ability. A paragraph went the rounds of the literary press after the death of Mr. J. H. Parker, the well-known Oxford publisher, stating that the copyright of Keble's "Christian Year" was offered to Joseph Parker for the sum of twenty pounds and refused. It was further stated that "during the forty years which followed the publication of this work nearly 400,000 copies were sold, and Mr. Keble's share of the profits amounted to fourteen thousand pounds, being one-fourth the retail price." The brothers Smith desired to sell for twenty pounds to Mr. Murray their celebrated "Rejected Addresses," but the great publisher declined the proposal with thanks. They resolved to bring out the book at their own risk. It hit the popular taste, and after sixteen editions had been sold, Mr. Murray paid for the copyright one hundred and thirty-one pounds. The poems yielded the authors over a thousand pounds. [Pg 74]

Editors of newspapers and magazines have often made ludicrous blunders in rejecting poems of sterling merit. It is generally known that the editor of the *Greenock Advertiser* expressed his regret that he could not insert in his newspaper one of Thomas Campbell's best poems on account of it not being quite up to his standard.

The Rev. Charles Wolfe submitted to the editor of a leading magazine his famous ode on "The Burial of Sir John Moore," but it was rejected in such a scornful manner as to cause the writer to hand it to the editor of *The Newry Telegraph*, an Ulster newspaper of no standing as a literary journal. It was published in 1817, in that obscure paper, with the initials of "C. W." It was reproduced in various publications, and attracted great attention. It is one of the best in our limited number of pieces of martial poetry. [Pg 75]

Epigrams on Authors.

[Pg 76]

THE epigram is of considerable antiquity. The Greeks placed on their monuments, statues, and tombs, short poetical inscriptions, written in a simple style, and it was from this practice that we derive the epigram. In the earlier examples we fail to find any traces of satire which is now its chief characteristic. The Romans were the first to give a satirical turn to this class of literature. Amongst the writers of Latin epigrams, Catullus and Martial occupy leading places. The French are, perhaps, the most gifted writers of epigrams. German epigrammatists have put into verse moral proverbs. Schiller and Goethe did not, however, follow the usual practice of their countrymen, but wrote many satirical epigrams, having great force. Many of our English poets have displayed a fine faculty of writing epigrams.

The birthplace of Homer is a disputed point, and has given rise to not a few essays and epigrams. Thomas Heywood, in one of his poetical publications, published in 1640, wrote:—

[Pg 77]

"Seven cities warr'd for Homer, being dead,
Who, living, had no roof to shroud his head."

Much in the same strain wrote Thomas Seward, a century and a half later:—

"Seven wealthy towns contend for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begg'd his bread."

The two writers have not stated fully the number of cities which claim to have given birth to Homer. The number is nearer twenty than seven. Pope, in his translation of Homer, was assisted by a poet named William Broome, a circumstance which prompted John Henley to pen the following:—

"Pope came off clean with Homer; but, they say,
Broome went before, and kindly swept the way."

Butler, the author of "Hudibras," was much neglected during his life. It is true that Charles II. and his courtiers read and were delighted with his poem, but they did not extend to him any patronage. The greater part of his days were passed in obscurity and poverty. He had been buried about forty years when a monument was placed in Westminster Abbey to his memory, by John Barber, a printer, and afterwards an Alderman and Lord Mayor of London. Samuel Wesley wrote on the memorial the following lines:—

[Pg 78]

"Whilst Butler, needy wretch! was yet alive,
No gen'rous patron would a dinner give;
See him, when starved to death, and turn'd to dust,
Presented with a monumental bust!
The poet's fate is here in emblem shown,—
He asked for bread, and he receiv'd a stone."

An epitaph similar in sentiment to the foregoing was placed by Horace Walpole over the remains of Theodore, King of Corsica, who, after many trials and disappointments, ended his life as a prisoner for debt in King's Bench, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Anne's, Westminster:—

"The grave, great teacher, to a level brings
Heroes and beggars, galley slaves and kings.
But Theodore this moral learn'd ere dead;
Fate pour'd its lesson on his living head;
Bestow'd a kingdom, and denied him bread."

The fourth Earl of Chesterfield, on seeing a whole-length portrait of Nash between the busts of Sir Isaac Newton and Pope in the rooms at Bath, wrote as follows:—

"Immortal Newton never spoke
  More truth than here you'll find;
Nor Pope himself e'er penn'd a joke
  More cruel on mankind.

The picture, plac'd the busts between,
  Gives satire all its strength:
Wisdom and Wit are little seen,
  But Folly at full length."

[Pg 79]

Stephen Duck's poetry and progress in life gave rise to some lively lines by the lampooners of the eighteenth century. He was an agricultural labourer, having a thirst for knowledge and some skill as a writer of verse. This humble and self-taught student was brought under the notice of Queen Caroline, who was much interested in his welfare, and pleased with his

poetry; she granted him a pension of £30 a year. He was next made a yeoman of the guard, an appointment he did not long retain, for he was advanced to the position of a clergyman in the Church of England, and presented to the living of Byfleet, Surrey. It is to be feared that his education was not sufficiently liberal for a clerk in holy orders. Dean Swift assailed the poor poet as follows:—

"The thresher Duck could o'er the Queen prevail;
The proverb says 'No fence against a flail.'
From threshing corn he turns to thresh his brains,
For which Her Majesty allows him grains.
Though 'tis confess'd that those who ever saw
His poems, think them all not worth a straw.
Thrice happy Duck, employed in threshing stubble!
Thy toil is lessen'd and thy profits doubled."

The want of dignity displayed in the foregoing is unworthy of Swift, and the reply as follows made by Duck is certainly much to his credit:—

"You think it, censor, mighty strange [Pg 80]
  That, born a country clown,
I should my first profession change
  And wear a chaplain's gown!
If virtue honours the low race
  From which I was descended,
If vices your high birth disgrace
  Who should be most commended?"

Duck wrote the epitaph for the tombstone over the remains of Joe Miller of mirthful memory. The following is a copy of the lines:—

"If humour, wit, and honesty could save
The hum'rous, witty, honest from the grave;
The grave had not so soon this tenant found
Whom honesty, and wit, and humour crowned.
Or could esteem and love preserve our breath,
And guard us longer from the stroke of death,
The stroke of death on him had later fell,
Whom all mankind esteem'd and lov'd so well."

The poet-preacher was advanced to the chaplaincy of a regiment of Dragoon Guards. Sad to relate, in the year 1756, in a fit of insanity, he took his own life.

During the Gordon riots on the 7th of January, 1780, Lord Mansfield's house in Bloomsbury Square was burnt, and in the flames perished his valuable library, which he commenced collecting when a lad at school. It included many valuable volumes and materials for [Pg 81] memoirs of his times. Cowper thus wrote on the subject:—

"So then—the Vandals of our isle,
  Sworn foes of sense and law,
Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
  Than ever Roman saw!

And Murray sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
  And many a treasure more,
The well-judged purchase, and the gift
  That graced his letter'd store.

Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,
  The loss was his alone;
But ages yet to come shall mourn
  The burning of his own."

A pleasing and playful epigram on Robert Bloomfield, the author of "The Farmer's Boy," was written by Henry Kirke White:—

"Bloomfield, thy happy omen'd name
Ensures continuance of thy fame;
Both sense and truth this verdict give,
While *fields* shall *bloom* thy name shall live."

The residences of Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge near the English Lakes suggested the title of lake poets, and of their works the Rev. Henry Townshend wrote:—

"They come from the lakes—an appropriate quarter
For poems diluted with plenty of water."

Surely Lord Holland was a little wide of the mark when he penned the following epigram, [Pg 82] complaining that Southey did not write sufficient laureate poems; the fact is, he wrote too many to sustain his reputation as a poet:—

"Our Laureate Bob defrauds the King—
He takes his cash and will not sing;
Yet on he goes, I know not why,
Singing for us who do not buy."

In the *Diary* of Thomas Moore, under date of September 4, 1825, it is stated: "Lord H. full of an epigram he had just written on Southey, which we all twisted and turned into various shapes; he is as happy as a boy during the operation. He suggests the following as the last couplet:—

"And for us, who will not buy,
Goes singing on eternally."

It has been truthfully observed that William Wordsworth "found poetry in the most commonplace events of life, and described them in familiar language; he naturally contended that there was little real difference between poetry and prose." Byron thus rallies him on the theory:—

"The simple Wordsworth, framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favourite May,
Who warns his friend, 'to shake off toil and trouble,
And quit his books, for fear of growing double;' [Pg 83]
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose;
Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose inane."

Theodore Hook produced some pungent verses; here is a slight example on Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound":—

"Shelley styles his new poem *Prometheus Unbound*,
And 'tis like to remain so while time circles round;
For surely an age would be spent in the finding
A reader so weak as to pay for the binding!"

Scott wrote a poem which was published in 1815, under the title of *The Field of Waterloo*, and prefaced it thus: "It may be some apology for the imperfections of this poem, that it was composed hastily, and during a short tour upon the Continent, where the author's labours were liable to frequent interruption; but its best apology is, that it was written for the purpose of assisting the Waterloo subscription."

This plea did not disarm hostile criticism. Thomas, Lord Erskine, expressed himself as follows:—

"On Waterloo's ensanguined plain
Lie tens of thousands of the slain;
But none by sabre or by shot
Fell half so flat as Walter Scott."

Wrote Thomas Moore in his *Diary*: "I have read *Walter*-loo. The battle murdered many, and [Pg 84]
he has murdered the battle; 'tis sad stuff."

The Earl of Carlisle wrote a sixpenny pamphlet advocating small theatres; and on the day it was issued the newspapers contained the announcement that he had given a large subscription to a public fund, a circumstance which formed the theme of the following epigram by his cousin, Lord Byron:

"Carlisle subscribes a thousand pounds
  Out of his rich domains;
And for sixpence circles round
  The product of his brains:
'Tis thus the difference you may hit
Between his fortune and his wit."

Byron made his unhappy marriage the subject of at least three epigrams. Here are two of them as follows:—

ON HIS WEDDING-DAY.

"Here's a happy new year! But with reason
  I beg you'll permit me to say—
Wish me many returns of the season,
  But as few as you please of the day."

At a later period he wrote—

"This day, of all our days, has done
  The worst for *me* and *you*:
'Tis just six years since we were *one*,
  And five since we were *two*."

Lord Byron's friend, Thomas Moore, wrote many excellent epigrams, and not a few were penned about him. He published his first volume of poems under the name of Thomas Little. It is stated that a lady found a copy of the book under the pillow of her maid's bed, and wrote on it in pencil:— [Pg 85]

"You read *Little*, I guess;
I wish you'd read *less*."

The servant was equal to her mistress, and wrote:—

"I read Little before,
Now I mean to read *Moore*."

Lord Byron wrote the following in 1811 on Moore's farcical opera:—

"Good plays are scarce;
So Moore writes farce;
The poet's fame grows brittle—
We knew before
That Little's Moore,
But now 'tis Moore that's Little."

Respecting Moore's duel with Lord Jeffrey, Theodore Hook composed the following lines:—

"When Anacreon would fight, as the poets have said,
A reverse he displayed in his vapour,
For while all his poems were loaded with lead,
His pistols were loaded with paper.

[Pg 86]

For excuses, Anacreon old custom may thank,
Such salvo he should not abuse;
For the cartridge, by rule, is always made blank
That is fired away at *Reviews*."

"Moore is here called Anacreon," says W. Davenport Adams, "in allusion to his translations from that poet." The duel was owing to an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, which Moore thought proper to resent by challenging the editor. The combatants were, however, arrested on the ground, and conveyed to Bow Street, where the pistols were found to contain merely a charge of powder, the balls having in some way disappeared. Byron alludes to the circumstance in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*:—

"When Little's leadless pistol met his eye,
And Bow Street myrmidons stood laughing by."

After this strange encounter, the poet and critic were firm friends.

Slips of the pen have given rise to some smart epigrammatic corrections. Albert Smith wrote in an album as follows:—

"Mont Blanc is the Monarch of Mountains,
They crown'd him long ago;
But who they got to put it on
Nobody seems to know."

ALBERT SMITH.

Thackeray was successfully solicited to contribute to the same book, and wrote under the fore-going:— [Pg 87]

A HUMBLE SUGGESTION.

"I know that Albert wrote in a hurry,
To criticize I scarce presume;
But methinks that Lindley Murray,
Instead of *who* had written *whom*."

W. M. THACKERAY.

Samuel Warren on one occasion made a slip in writing in an album, misquoting Moore, writing "glory's throb" instead of "glory's thrill." The mistake formed the subject of the following impromptu lines by Mr. Digby Seymour:—

"Warren, thy memory was poor
The Irish bard to rob,
Had you remembered Tommy Moore,
Glory would 'thrill,' not 'throb.'"

The vanity of Mr. Warren was unusually largely developed, and gave rise to a number of amusing anecdotes. Sir George Rose thus refers to his weakness:—

"Samuel Warren, though able, yet vainest of men,
Could he guide with discretion his tongue and his pen,
His course would be clear for—'Ten Thousand a Year;'
But limited else be a brief—'Now and Then.'"

For a long period Mr. Warren was the Recorder for Hull. Mr. Thompson, the Town Clerk, was a gentleman of cultivated literary tastes, and able to compose a neat epigram. He wrote the following:— [Pg 88]

"Our Recorder, Sam Warren, from all that I hear,
  Is one of the kindest of men,
For a friend he presents with 'Ten Thousand a Year,'
  And adds to the gift 'Now and Then.'"

Mr. William Harrison Ainsworth, the romance writer, was very unpopular with the contributors of *Punch*, and many were the satires on him in its pages. Colburn published a magazine, in which many of Ainsworth's novels appeared, and this gave rise to the following epigram:—

"Says Ainsworth to Colburn:
  'A plan in my pate is
To give my romance as
  A supplement gratis.'

"Says Colburn to Ainsworth:
  ''Twill do very nicely,
For that will be charging
  Its value precisely.'"

In early manhood, Edwin Paxton Hood called upon Bulwer Lytton without any introduction. The servant told him that his master could not be seen. On receiving the intimation, Hood took out of his pocket pencil and paper, and wrote as follows:—

"A son of song, to fame unknown, [Pg 89]
  Stands waiting in your hall below;
Your footman tells him to begone;
  Say, mighty Bulwer, shall he go?"

It is not surprising to learn that the impromptu lines proved an effective introduction. The interview was the first of many pleasant meetings between the author of *The Caxtons* and Mr. Paxton Hood.

Poetical Graces. [Pg 90]

LITERARY by-paths furnish some singular specimens of poetical graces. We produce a few for the entertainment of our readers.

Robert Fergusson, the Edinburgh poet, was born in 1751, and was a student at St. Andrews' University from his thirteenth to his seventeenth year. It was the duty of each student, in turn, to ask a blessing at the dinner table. One day, to the consternation of all, the youthful bard repeated the following lines:

"For rabbits young, and for rabbits old,
For rabbits hot, and for rabbits cold,
For rabbits tender, and for rabbits tough,
Our thanks we render, for we've had enough."

The masters of the college deliberated how they should punish the graceless poet. It was finally resolved not to censure him, but to have in the future a more spare supply of rabbits. Poor Fergusson's sad career closed in a lunatic asylum at an early age, not, however, before he had enriched Scottish poetical literature with some important contributions.

Burns appears to have had a great admiration for this wayward son of song. He placed over his remains in the Canongate Churchyard, Edinburgh, a tombstone bearing the following inscription:— [Pg 91]

"Here lies Robert Fergusson,
  Poet, born September 5th, 1751,
  Died October 16th, 1774.
No sculptured marble here, nor pompous lay
  No storied urn, nor animated bust;
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
  To pour her sorrows o'er her Poet's dust."

On the back of the stone it is stated:—

"By special grant of the Managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial place is ever to remain sacred to the memory of Robert Fergusson."

More than one poetical grace is attributed to the facile pen of Burns. His grace before dinner is well known, and is as follows:—

"Oh Thou who kindly dost provide
  For every creature's want!
We bless Thee, God of nature wide,
  For all Thy goodness lent:
And if it please Thee, Heavenly guide,
  May never worse be sent,
But whether granted or denied,
  Lord, bless us with content."

It is said that at one of Burns's convivial dinners he was desired to say grace, and he gave the following, impromptu: [Pg 92]

"O Lord we do Thee humbly thank
  For what we little merit;—
Now Jean may tak' the flesh away,
  And Will bring on the spirit."

On one occasion a rhymster, who had placed before him a supper small in quantity and poor in quality, invoked a blessing with the following lines:—

"O Thou who bless'd the loaves and fishes
Look down upon these two poor dishes;
And though the 'tatoes be but small,
Lord make them large enough for all;
For if they do our bellies fill,
'Twill be a wondrous miracle."

This reminds us of an epigram entitled "Dress v. Dinner:"—

What is the reason, can you guess,
Why men are poor, and women thinner?
So much do they for dinner dress,
    There's nothing left to dress for dinner.

On a graceless peer an epigrammatist wrote:—

"'By proxy I pray, and by proxy I vote,'
  A graceless peer said to a churchman of note;
Who answered,'My lord, then I venture to say,
  You'll to heaven ascend in a similar way.'"

Here is a grateful grace:—

"Some hae meat that canna eat, [Pg 93]
  An' some cou'd eat that want it;
But we hae meat, an' we can eat,
  Sae let the Lord be thankit."

The Rev. Samuel Wesley, formerly vicar of Epworth, and another friend were entertained to dinner at Temple Belwood, by a host noted as a strange compound of avarice and oddity. Mr. Wesley returned thanks with the following impromptu lines:—

"Thanks for the feast, for 'tis no less
Than eating manna in the wilderness,
Here meagre famine bears controlless sway,
And ever drives each fainting wretch away.
Yet here, O how beyond a saint's belief,
We've seen the glories of a chine of beef;
Here chimneys smoke, which never smoked before,
And we have dined, where we shall dine no more."

In conclusion we give a vegetarian grace. The first four lines are to be said before the meal:—

"These fruits do Thou, O Father, bless,
Which Mother Earth to us doth give;
No blood doth stain our feast to day,
In Thee we trust, and peaceful live."

The next is a form of thanksgiving after a vegetarian meal:—

"We thank Thee, Lord, for these Thy fruits,
Which Mother Earth to us doth give;
No blood hath stained our feast to-day,
In Thee we trust, and peaceful live!"

Poetry on Panes.

[Pg 94]

IN a variety of places, but more especially in old village inns, reflections in verse, good, bad, and indifferent, have been found scratched upon window-panes. We have carefully copied the best examples which have come under our notice, and present a batch herewith, believing that they may entertain our readers.

A genial old Yorkshire parson appears at the commencement of the present century to have been greatly pleased with an inn situated between Northallerton and Boroughbridge, for he visited it daily to enjoy his pipe and glass. On one of its window-panes he inscribed some lines, of which the following is a literal copy:—

"Here in my wicker chair I sitt,
From folly far, and far from witt,
Content to live, devoid of care,
With country folks and country fare;
To listen to my landlord's tale,
And drink his health in Yorkshire ale;
Then smoak and read the *York Courant*;
I'm happy and 'tis all I want.
Though few my tythes, and light my purse,
I thank my God it is no worse."

[Pg 95]

Here is another Yorkshire example, written towards the close of the last century; it is from an old wayside inn near Harewood-bridge, on the Leeds and Harrogate road:—

"Gaily I lived, as Ease and Nature taught,
And passed my little Life without a thought;
I wonder, then, why Death, that tyrant grim,
Should think of me, who never thought of him."

Under the foregoing, the following was written:

"Ah! why forget that Death should think of thee;
If thou art Mortal, such must surely be;
Then rouse up reason, view thy hast'ning end,
And lose no time to make God thy Friend."

In the old coaching days, the Dog and Doublet, at Sandon, Staffordshire, was a popular house. A guest wrote on one of its window panes the following recommendation:—

"Most travellers to whom these roads are known,
Would rather stay at Sandon than at Stone!
Good chaises, horses, treatment, and good wines,
They always meet with at James Ballantine's."

A penniless poet wrote on a tavern window-pane the lines:—

"O Chalk! to me, and to the poor, a friend,
On Thee my life and happiness depend;
On Thee with joy, with gratitude I think,
For, by thy bounty, I both eat and drink."

[Pg 96]

"Chalk" is a slang word for credit. Innkeepers kept their accounts on the back of a door, written with chalk.

The following epigram was written under a pane disfigured with autographs:—

"Should you ever chance to see,
  A man's name writ on a glass,
Be sure he owns a diamond,
  And his parent owns an ass."

On the accession of Her Majesty, this *jeu d'esprit* was inscribed on an inn window:—

"The Queen's with us, the Whigs exulting say;
For when she found us in, she let us stay.
It may be so; but give me leave to doubt
How long she'll keep you when she finds you out."

The following lines dated 1793, were written on a window-pane at the Hotel des Pays Bas, Spa Belgium:—

"I love but one, and only one,
  Ah, Damon, thou art he!
Love thou but one, and only one,
  And let that one be me!"

Early in the present century, it was customary for the actors to write their names on the

panes in one of the windows of the York Theatre. On the glass of the same window were found inscribed these lines.

"The rich man's name embellished stands on brass;
The player simply scribbles his on glass, [Pg 97]
Appropriate tablet to the wayward fate—
A brittle shining, evanescent state:
The fragile glass destroyed—farewell the name;
The actor's glass consumed—farewell his fame."

Our next example, dated 1834, from Purwell Hall, Batley, Yorkshire, was composed by a Miss Taylor. It is generally believed that her heart was won by a lover who did not meet with the approbation of her friends, and that they made her prisoner in one of the rooms of the old Hall, and there, on a pane of glass, were written the lines which follow:—

"Come, gentle Muse, wont to divert
Corroding cares from anxious heart;
Adjust me now to bear the smart
Of a relenting angry heart.
What though no being I have on earth,
Though near the place that gave me birth,
And kindred less regard do pay
Than thy acquaintance of to-day:
Know what the best of men declare,
That they on earth but strangers are,
Nor matter it a few years hence
How fortune did to thee dispense,
If—in a palace thou hast dwelt,
Or—in a cell of penury felt—
Ruled as a prince—served as a slave,
Six feet of earth is all thou'lt have.
  Hence give my thoughts a nobler theme,
Since all the world is but a dream
Of short endurance."

Robert Burns wrote several lines on tavern windows. On a pane of glass at the Queensberry Arms, Sanquhar, he inscribed the following. [Pg 98]

"Ye gods! ye gave to me a wife
  Out of your grace and favour,
To be a comfort to my life;
  And I was glad to have her.
But if your providence divine
  For other ends design her,
To obey your will at any time,
  I'm ready to resign her."

Next may be quoted:—

"Envy, if thy jaundiced eye
Through this window chance to pry,
To thy sorrow, thou wilt find
All that's generous, all that's kind:
Virtue, friendship, every grace
Dwelling in this happy place."

Burns's lines written on the window-panes of the Globe Tavern, Dumfries, have frequently been quoted. The following inscription refers to the charms of the daughter of the factor of Closeburn estate, when the poet resided at Ellisland:—

"O lovely Polly Stewart,
  O charming Polly Stewart,
There's not a flower that blooms in May,
  That's half so fair as thou art."

In some editions of the poet's works, the following verse, stated to have been copied from a window of the same tavern, is given:— [Pg 99]

"The graybeard, Old Wisdom, may boast of his treasures;
  Grant me with gay Folly to live;
I grant him his calm-blooded, time settled pleasures;
  But Folly has raptures to give."

Such are a few of the many rhymes scratched upon glass. Some of the panes on which they were inscribed may now be broken, and this may be the only means of preserving them.

English Folk-Rhymes.

[Pg 100]

ENGLISH folk-rhymes are very numerous and curious. Characteristics of persons and places have given rise to not a few which are frequently far from complimentary. Weather-lore is often expressed in rhyme; the rustic muse has besides rendered historic events popular, and enabled persons to remember them who are not readers of books. The lines often lack polish, but are seldom without point.

Amongst the more ancient rhymes are those respecting grants of land. The following is a good example, and is from Derbyshire:—

> “Me and mine
> Give thee and thine
> Millners Hay
> And Shining Cliff,
> While grass is green
> And hollies rough.”

The old story of the grant is thus related. Years ago, a member of the ancient family of Lowe had the honour of hunting with the king and his nobles. Lowe rode a splendid horse, the only one in at the death. The king admired the animal very much, and the owner presented it to [Pg 101] His Majesty. The horse “mightily pleased the king.” Some little time afterwards, Lowe waited upon the king to beg a brier bed and a watering-place, which were Shining Cliff and Millners Hay. The request was at once complied with. The tale does not end here. It is related that “an envious courtier told the king that he did not know what he was doing, for what he was giving away was a great wood with a large tract of land.” Upon this, Lowe said to His Majesty: “King or no king?”—“Why, king, Lowe.” Adding with prompitude: “The brier-bed and watering-place are thine:” the rhyme above quoted being given as the title for the grant.

It is asserted that Athelstan granted the first charter to the ancient borough of Hedon, Yorkshire, in these words:—

> “As free make I thee
> As eye see or ear hear.”

It is said a similar charter was granted by the same king to the neighbouring town of Beverley.

An old, old Norfolk rhyme says:—

> “Rising was a seaport town,
> And Lynn it was a wash; [Pg 102]
> But now Lynn is a seaport town,
> And Rising fares the worst.”

It is said at Norwich:—

> “Caistor was a city ere Norwich was none,
> And Norwich was built of Caistor stone.”

“About half-way between Curbar and Brompton, to the right of the turnpike leading from Barlow to Sheffield,” writes William Wood, “there is, far on the moor, a very level flat piece of ground, near a mile square, most remarkable for its boggy nature, so much so that it is dangerous to cross, or at times to approach. Here, before the Roman invasion, says the legend, stood a town or village, the inhabitants of which lived, according to Diodorus Siculus, in small cots or huts built of wood, the walls of stakes or wattles, like hurdles, and covered with rushes or reeds. These dwellings, with their inhabitants, were swallowed up by one of those convulsions of nature so destructive at times to the habitations of mankind.” Respecting Leechfield and Chesterfield are the following lines current in Derbyshire:—

> “When Leechfield was a market town,
> Chesterfield was gorse and broom;
> Now Chesterfield’s a market town,
> Leechfield a marsh is grown.”

Respecting Nertoun, a Somersetshire village, near Taunton, is this couplet:— [Pg 103]

> “Nertoun was a market-town
> When Taunton was a furzy down.”

A Scottish rhyme says:—

> “York was, London is,
> And Edinburgh will be
> The biggest of the three.”

Says a popular English rhyme:—

“Lincoln was, London is,
And York shall be
The fairest city of the three.”

In the days of old it was the practice to allow the wives of the Lord Mayors of York to retain by courtesy the title Lady for life, and this custom gave rise to the following couplet:—

“The Lord Mayor’s a lord but a year and a day;
But his Lady’s a lady for ever and aye.”

Few English towns have made greater progress than the thriving port of Hull. Its prosperity was predicted long ago:—

“When Myton is pulled down,
Hull shall become a great town.”

As a matter of history, it may be stated that when the town was threatened by Charles I., a number of houses in Myton Lane, as well as the Charter-house, were laid in ruins by Sir John Hotham, governor of Hull, so that they might not give shelter to the Royalists. Ray refers to this couplet, and, in error, calls Myton, Dighton. [Pg 104]

Selling church-bells has given rise to satirical rhymes. Here are three Lincolnshire rhymes on this topic:—

“The poor Hatton people
Sold the bells to build up the steeple.”

The next says:—

“Owersby’s parish,
  Wicked people,
Sold their bells to Kelsey
  To build a steeple.”

It is stated in the third:—

“Poor Scartho people,
Sold their bells to repair the steeple.”

About 1710, the spire of Arlesey Church, Bedfordshire, fell down, and it is believed the bells were broken. The metal was sold to a distant parish to raise money to rebuild the spire, and until the year 1877 only one small bell was suspended in the steeple to call the inhabitants to the house of prayer. The transaction gave rise to the saying:—

“Arlesey, Arlesey, wicked people,
Sold their bells to build their steeple.”

About half a century later, a similar accident occurred at Welstead, and the bishop granted a license to sell three of the bells, to enable the parishioners with the proceeds to restore the tower. It gave rise to a taunting distich similar to the one at Arlesey. [Pg 105]

On the walls of Newington Church, London, in 1793, was written a rhyme anent the rebuilding of the church without a steeple and selling the bells:—

“Pious parson, pious people
Sold the bells to build the steeple;
A very fine trick of the Newington people,
To sell the bells to build a steeple.”

Rhymes on steeples are very common; perhaps the best known is the one on Preston, Lancashire:—

“Proud Preston, poor people,
High church and low steeple.”

In a somewhat similar strain is the one on Bowness-on-Windermere:—

“New church and old steeple,
Poor town and proud people.”

Lincolnshire rhymes are very numerous, and a complete collection would almost fill a book. Here are three:—

“Gainsbro’ proud people
Built a new church to an old steeple.”

According to the next:— [Pg 106]

“Luddington poor people
Built a brick church to a stone steeple.”

A question is put and answered thus:—

“Boston! Boston!

What hast thou to boast on?
High steeple, proud people,
And shoals that souls are lost on.”

The village of Ugley, Essex, supplies a satirical couplet:—

“Ugley church, Ugley steeple,
Ugley parson, Ugley people.”

An old triplet describes the characteristics of three church spires thus:—

“Bloxham for length,
Adderbury for strength,
King-Sutton for beauty.”

Almost every district furnishes examples of bell rhymes. We give one example, and it is from Derbyshire:—

“Crich two roller-boulders,
Winfield ting-tangs,
Alfreton kettles,
And Pentrich pans,
Kirk-Hallam candlesticks,
Cossall cow-bells,
Denby cracked puncheons,
And Horsley merry bells.”

It is very generally believed in Derbyshire that the town of Alfreton was once the stake at a game of cards—“put,” and that the loser exclaimed on the cards being dealt out:— [Pg 107]

“If I have not an ace, a deuce, and tray,
Farewell, Alfreton, for ever and aye.”

There is a similar couplet respecting Carnfield Hall, near to Alfreton. It is related by Mr. E. Kirk, a Lancashire folk-lorist, that the owner of a large farm in Goosnargh, called Landscales, staked his land at a game of “put.” He received his three cards, which were a tray, a deuce, and an ace, and he put—that is, struck the table with his fist, in proof of his resolution to abide by the issue of his cards. His opponent had two trays and a deuce. The farm was consequently lost, and its owner exclaimed:—

“Ace, deuce, and tray,
Landscales, go thy way.”

A Derbyshire rhyme refers to the inhabitants of four places as follows:—

“Ripley ruffians,
Butterly blocks,
Swanwick bulldogs,
Alfreton shacks.”

Equally severe is the following on the people of the villages between Norwich and Yarmouth:—

“Halvergate hares, Reedham rats, [Pg 108]
Southwood swine, and Cantley cats,
Acle asses, Moulton mules,
Beighton bears, and Freethorpe fools.”

Of Derbyshire folk it is said:—

“Derbyshire born and Derbyshire bred,
Strong in the arm, but weak in the head.”

The next are two Kentish rhymes:—

“Sutton for mutton
  Kerby for beef,
South Darve for gingerbread,
  Dartford for a thief.”

This is complimentary:—

“English lord, German count, and French marquies,
A yeoman of Kent is worth all three.”

It is said of Herefordshire:—

“They who buy a house in Herefordshire
Pay three years’ purchase for the air.”

Says a Gloucestershire rhyme:—

“Blest is the eye

Betwixt Severn and Wye.”

In the same shire is the next couplet:—

“Beggarly Birley, strutting Stroud,
Hampton poor, and Painswick proud.”

Many more rhymes similar to the foregoing might be given, if space permitted; but we have only room for a few more examples, and they relate to the weather. An old distich says:—

“When clouds are on the hills, [Pg 109]
They’ll come down by the mills.”

Another rhyme states:—

“When the mist comes from the hill,
Then good weather it doth spill.
When the mist comes from the sea,
Then good weather it will be.”

In Worcestershire there is a saying:—

“When Bredon Hill puts on his hat,
Ye men of the vale, beware of that.”

Says a Yorkshire rhyme:—

“When Oliver’s Mount puts on his hat,
Scarbro’ town must pay for that.”

In the same broad shire is a similar couplet:—

“When Ingleboro’ wears a hat,
Ribblesdale’ll hear o’ that.”

The Poetry of Toast Lists and Menu Cards. [Pg 110]

THE public dinner-season in provincial England commences early in October and ends in the middle of March. During that period, at the slightest provocation, our countrymen are prepared to dine together, not with a desire of over-indulgence in eating, but to enjoy the pleasant company usually gathered round the festive board. It is an admitted fact that the men who are in the habit of attending banquets are generally most abstemious. Speech, story, and song form a pleasing part of the proceedings of literary-society dinners, masonic banquets, and the more homely but not less enjoyable suppers held in connection with the Burns’ Clubs. The toast lists and menu cards are often very interesting; they are frequently artistic in design, and enriched with quotations from the poets, which renders them of more than passing interest. A few quotations from some of the best of those which have come under our notice seem worth reproducing. The authors represented cover a wide field, [Pg 111] ranging from Shakespeare to Tennyson. The former is the most quotable poet, and he is most frequently drawn upon. Burns, however, runs him very closely.

In turning over a pile of toast lists, the first to attract our attention is the one prepared for the Hull Shakespearean Festival. On the front page is a portrait of the bard and the familiar line of “rare” Ben Jonson:—

“He was not of an age, but for all time.”

Under the first toast—that of the Queen—are two lines from *Henry V.*:—

“God and his angels guard your sacred throne,
And make you long become it.”

The toast of the evening follows: “The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare”—Dr. Johnson’s well-known verse beneath it:—

“Each change of many-coloured life he drew;
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new;
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toiled after him in vain.”

The third speaker had for his topic “Shakespeare’s Universality,” with a motto from *Romeo and Juliet*:—

“Monarch of the universal earth.”

Actors and actresses were next toasted under the heading of “Shakespearean Exponents,” [Pg 112]

with a quotation from *Othello*:—

> “Speak of me as I am: nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice.”

The next theme was “Shakespeare and Tragedy,” with a line from *Richard III.*:—

> “I live to look upon their tragedy.”

Then followed “Shakespeare and Comedy,” with two lines from the *Taming of the Shrew*:—

> “Frame your mind for mirth and merriment,
> Which bars a thousand harms.”

Under the sentiment of “Shakespeare and History,” is a line from *Henry IV.* (Part II.):—

> “There is a history in all men’s lives.”

Lastly, “Shakespearean Women” were remembered, and under the toast are three lines as follow from the third part of *Henry VI.*:—

> “’Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud;
> ’Tis virtue that doth make them most admired;
> ’Tis modesty that makes them seem divine.”

The programme of music is headed with a couple of lines from *Twelfth Night*:—

> “If music be the food of love, play on;
> Give me excess of it.”

At the foot of the card is printed “Good Night,” and a quotation from *Macbeth*, as follows:—

> “At once good night: [Pg 113]
> Stand not upon the order of your going,
> But go at once.”

The toast list of a local literary society contains some happy quotations from Shakespeare. The speakers are reminded at the commencement of the programme, in the words from *Hamlet*, that “Brevity is the soul of wit.” The two lines under the toast of “The Prince and Princess of Wales” are from *Pericles*:—

> “As jewels lose their glory if neglected,
> So princes their renown if not respected.”

A line from *Richard III.*:—

> “Arm, fight, and conquer for England’s sake.”

was the motto to the toast of “The Army, Navy, and Auxiliary Forces.” Under the toast of “The Officers of the Club” are words from *Othello*:—

> “We cannot all be masters.”

Two good lines from the *Taming of the Shrew* are given with the toast of “Literature and Science”:—

> “My books and instruments shall be my company,
> On them to look and practise by myself.”

A line under the toast of “The Press” says, in the words of the *Merchant of Venice*:—

> “There are some shrewd contents in your paper.”

We have seen on several menu cards:—

> “A good digestion to you all, and once more [Pg 114]
> I shower a welcome on you—welcome all.”
> —*Henry VIII.*

A more general quotation (from *Macbeth*) is:—

> “Now good digestion wait on appetite,
> And health on both.”

The bill of fare for the Tercentenary Banquet held in 1864, at Stratford-on-Avon, in honour of Shakespeare, is perhaps the best specimen of cuisine literature ever produced. The following are a few of the edibles and the quotations:—

Roast turkey:—

> “Why, here comes swelling like a turkey-cock.”
> —*Henry V.*

Roast fowls:—

> “There is a fowl without a feather.”

—*Comedy of Errors.*

Ducks:—

"O dainty duck!"—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Boar's head:—

"Like a full-acorned boar."—*Cymbeline.*

York hams:—

"Sweet stem from York's great stock."
—*Henry VI.* (Part I.).

Tongues:—

"Silence is only commendable in a neat's tongue dried."
—*Merchant of Venice.*

Mayonnaise of lamb:—

"Was never gentle lamb more mild."—*Richard II.*

Braised lamb and beef:— [Pg 115]

"What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?
A dish that I love to feed upon."
—*Taming of the Shrew.*

Roast lamb:—

"Come you to seek the lamb here?"
—*Measure for Measure.*

Lobster and mayonnaise salads:—

"Sallet was born to do me good."—*Henry IV.* (Part II.).

Dressed lobsters and crabs:—

"There's no meat like them: I could wish my best friend at such a feast."—*Timon of Athens.*

Desserts, cakes, jellies, and creams:—

"The queen of curds and cream."—*Winter's Tale.*

Dressed potatoes:—

"Let the sky rain potatoes."—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Bitter ale:—

"And here's the pot of good double beer, neighbour:
Drink, and fear not your man."—*Henry VI.* (Part II.).

In addition to the foregoing, many interesting and well-chosen quotations appear on the famous bill of fare.

The bill of fare of the Annual Dinner of the Norwich Saint Andrew Society, held in 1896, was headed, "Caird o' Guid Things":—

"Kail Bree.
Maukin.
Cockie Leekie.

[Pg 116]

Guid Caller Fish.
Sole-fleuks, baned an' stovit.
Caller Cod wi' Sauce o' Caller Ou.

THE HAGGIS.
"Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great Chieftain, o' the puddin' race!"
"A nip o' Fairntosh, an' it's no ower perjinkitie measure!"

Roast an' Biled.
Sheeps' Hurdies.
Sirloins o' Nowte.
Biled Chuckies an' Tongue.
Rostit Bubblyjock wi' Sausages.
Tatties Biled an' Champit.
Curly Kail.
"I'm thinkin', Sandy, we wadna be the waur o' a drappie."
Roastit Feesants wi' Raupit Tatties.

CONFECTOURI.
Figmaleerie o’ Fruits.
Jeelies.
Plum Puddin’.
Mince Pies.
Apple Tairts and Cream.
Kebbuck wi’ Celery an’ guid Oat Farls.

DESSERT AN’ COFFEE.
“Let them that wants Coffee, hae Coffee; I’m thinkin’ I’ll hae a dram!”

The birthday of Burns is celebrated in all parts of the world: wherever Scotchmen are located the bard is honoured. We have before us a number of Burns dinner toast lists, and several are headed “Should auld acquaintance be forgot?”

The following are from the toast lists of the Hull Burns’ Club. Under the toast of “The Queen,” two lines appear:—

“In the field of proud honour, our swords in our hand, [Pg 117]
Our Queen and our country to save.”

To the toast of “The Mayor, Sheriff, and Corporation” is this couplet:—

“How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and unite;
How virtue and vice blend their black and their white.”

The toast of the evening, “The Memory of Burns,” has under it the following verse from *The Cotter’s Saturday Night*:—

“O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blessed with health, and peace, and sweet content.”

We have seen inscribed with this toast a verse from one of Bennoch’s beautiful poems:—

“With reverent silence we will fill
A cup whene’er this day returns,
And pledge the memory of the Bard,
The Bard of Nature—Robert Burns,
Immortal Burns.”

Appended to the toast of “The Hull Burns’ Club” are the noble lines:—

“It’s coming yet, for a’ that,
That man to man, the warld o’er,
Shall brithers be for a’ that.”

“The Visitors,” “Kindred Societies,” are included with suitable quotations. The verse under the toast of “The Press” is a happy selection:—

“Here’s freedom to him that wad read, [Pg 118]
Here’s freedom to him that wad write,
There’s nane ever feared that the truth should be heard,
But they whom the truth would indite.”

We have seen the following quoted several times with this toast:—

“A chiel’s amang you takin’ notes,
And faith he’ll prent it.”

The concluding toast, that of “The Lassies,” has the familiar lines:—

“The wisest man the warl’ e’er saw,
He dearly loved the lassies, O!”

At a dinner of the Hull Literary Club the toast list was enriched with quotations from the works of the Poet Laureate. An excerpt from *The Princess* on the first page says:—

“Hark the bell
For dinner, let us go!”

Two lines from a poem, *To the Rev. F. D. Maurice*, head the list:—

“You’ll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine.”

To the toast of “The Queen” are four lines, as follow:—

“Her Court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed

In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen.”

Five lines from *The Battle of Brunanburgh* are given to the toast of “Our Brave Defenders”:— [Pg 119]

> “Theirs was a greatness
> Got from their grandsires—
> Theirs that so often in
> Strife with their enemies,
> Struck for their hoards and their hearths and their homes.”

Two quotations appear under the toast of “Success to the Hull Literary Club”:—

> “We rub each other’s angles down.”—*In Memoriam.*
>
> “Work in noble brotherhood.”—*Exhibition Ode.*

With the toast of “Literature and the Arts” is the line:—

> “Let knowledge grow from more to more.”

Under “The Press”:—

> “News from the humming city comes to it.”

The line under the toast of “The Ladies” is brief and graceful:—

> “Made to be loved.”

Toasts and Toasting. [Pg 120]

TOASTING and drinking were more general half a century ago than they are at the present time. In the earlier years of the Queen’s reign temperance, if not teetotalism, was, it is true, making headway, but in a great measure convivial customs were maintained, and toasting was popular. Books were published to supply suitable toasts, for public and private parties. Such compilations must have been extremely useful to those who attended social gatherings, and were not able to express graceful and pithy sentiments.

We have before us a little work issued in London in 1847, under the title of “The Social and Convivial Toast-Master; and Compendium of Sentiment.” It consists of prose and poetry arranged under various headings, such as Loyal and Patriotic, Naval and Military, Masonic, Bacchanalian, Amatory, Sporting, Political, Sentimental, and lastly, Miscellaneous. It cannot be without interest to reproduce from this rare volume a few examples of the toasts of the earlier Victorian era.

The opening section of the book is devoted to loyal and patriotic toasts. The first toast is this:— [Pg 121]

> “Albert and Victoria; may their union be cemented by love and affection, and their Royal offspring adorn the station they are destined to fill.”

A brief and popular toast was:—

> “Church and Queen.”

Another sentiment was:—

> “Happiness to the Royal pair—Victoria and Albert.”

A longer toast is as follows:—

> “Here’s a health to Her Majesty,
> Conversion to her enemies,
> And he that will not pledge her health
> I wish him neither wit nor wealth,
> Nor yet a rope to hang himself.”

Another toast is to this effect:—

> “Health to the Queen, prosperity to the people, and may the Ministry direct their endeavours to the public good rather than engage in party distinction.”

A favourite sentiment was:—

> “Great Britain’s rising star, the Prince of Wales.”

Many of the patriotic toasts ask for reforms:—

“A revision of the code of criminal laws.”

At this period they were extremely severe.

“A speedy restoration of the rights of the people.”

was another toast, and not a few related to Ireland. [Pg 122]

“Truth for England and justice for Ireland”

is one, and another says:—

“The birthplace of wit, the home of hospitality—Ireland.”

Patriotic toasts relating to Scotland are numerous, such as:—

“Scotland, the birthplace of valour—the country of worth.”

“Scottish heroes; and may their fame live for ever.”

A popular toast of the past was:—

“The independence of Greece and the memory of Byron.”

The dislike to France by our fathers is plainly indicated in several sentiments:—

“May French principles never corrupt English manners.”

It would appear from many of the toasts that the nation was weary of war and wanted peace and liberty. The plea for liberty occurs in many of the sentiments; it is the closing wish of the following:—

> “May peace o’er Britain spread her wing,
> And commerce fill her ports with gold;
> May arts and science comfort bring,
> And liberty her sons enfold.”

The naval and military toasts, as befits a nation that has gained glory in battles on sea and land, are on the whole good. A few examples only must suffice. How out of date our first appears in this age of ironclads:— [Pg 123]

“Old England’s wooden walls.”

Here is a punning toast:—

“Sir Home Popham—and pop-home to all our enemies.”

A nautical toast is:—

> “To Nelson’s memory here’s a health,
> And to his gallant tars,
> And may our British seamen bold,
> Despite both wounds and scars,
> Make France and Spain,
> And all the main
> And all the foes to know,
> Britons reign o’er the main,
> While the stormy winds do blow.”

Says another toast:—

“May the deeds never be forgot that were done at Trafalgar and Waterloo.”

Wellington is not neglected in the toasts, but he is not so popular as Nelson. The feats of the Life Guards at Waterloo are remembered:—

“The Life Guards: that washed out in blood the blots of Piccadilly.”

Another famous regiment is thus toasted:—

“The Scotch Greys: that made the Eagles look black.”

Half a century ago was a toast which will find to-day a response in many hearts:—

“The Greeks: may they never fall under Turkish bondage.”

Many of the masonic sentiments are fine; they are amongst the best in the book. Here is good teaching:— [Pg 124]

“May we never condemn that in a brother which we pardon in ourselves.”

“May the evening’s diversions bear the morning’s reflections.”

“May every society instituted for the promotion of virtue—flourish.”

Other toasts are equally good, but the masonic allusions make them more suitable for the perusal of members of the craft than for the public.

Next in order come Bacchanalian toasts. Some of the sentiments would not meet with favour in well regulated society at the present period, but we doubt not were hailed with delight in the hard drinking days of old. The first toast under this head is:—

"A friend and a bottle of wine to give him."

Wine and women find a place in not a few of the sentiments:—

"A full purse, a fresh bottle, and a pretty face."

"Beauty, wit, and wine."

"Wine, women, and wit."

The foregoing are brief, and are perhaps the best toasts which link women with wine. The next is not a bad toast:—

"May our love of the glass never make us forget decency."

Punning examples are included, such as the two following:— [Pg 125]

"May good fellows be found in every port, and all bad ones obliged to sherry out."

"May we never be out of spirits."

On the whole, the toasts under this heading are not equal in merit to many of the others in the volume.

We find amatory toasts next in order, and of this class quote three examples:—

"The fairest work of nature—women."

"The village maid, may she remain so till she gets a good husband."

"Love without deceit, and matrimony without regret."

Sporting sentiments are by no means numerous; only four pages are devoted to them. The following are specimens:—

"May the thirst of blood never disgrace a British sportsman."

"May the love of the chase never interrupt our attention to the welfare of the country."

"The huntsman's pleasures—the field in the morning, the bottle at night."

Some are in rhyme, and the following is a favourable example:—

"May jovial hunters in the morn
Prepare them for the chase;
Rise at the sounding of the horn,
And health with sport enhance."

Under the heading of political toasts are a number free from party sentiment, advocating more the glory of our country than the praise of a particular party. We can quite understand how favourably a toast like the following would be received:— [Pg 126]

"The British Lion, may he never rise in anger and sit down in fear."

The next is brief:—

"Death or Liberty."

A popular toast is as follows:—

"Here's to England, the ruler and queen of the waves,
May she ever be found to give freedom to slaves.
May she always extend to the weak and oppressed,
Those blessings with which her own have been blessed.

Lastly, let us quote one that in our day might be taken to heart by those in office:—

"May Ministers while they are servants of the Crown never forget that they are representatives of the people."

Next in order come sentimental toasts. Examples of these may almost be culled at random to represent the whole, for there is a great sameness about them:—

"May our great men be good and our good men great."

"May goodness prevail where beauty fails."

"May we never be lost to hope."

"Our friends, our country, our laws, home, love, and liberty."

Two pages are devoted to flash toasts, but as far as we are able to judge are without interest. [Pg 127]

The work closes with a varied and interesting collection of toasts under the heading of "Miscellaneous," and contains excellent examples of the wit and wisdom of bygone times. The celebrated Roxburghe Club of book-lovers was founded in 1812, and has given to the world many valuable volumes. The social side of the society was well sustained, and the following are the ten bibliomania toasts which were honoured at the festive gatherings:—

1. "The immortal memory of Christopher Valdarfer, printer of the Boccaccio of 1471."
2. "The memory of William Caxton, founder of the British Press."
3. "To the memory of Wynkyn de Worde, Pynson, and Notary, successors of Caxton."
4. "The memory of John, Duke of Roxburghe."
5. "The memory of Lady Juliana Barnes and the St. Albans' Press."
6. "The memory of Gutenberg, Fust, and Schœffer, fathers of the art of printing."
7. "The Aldine family of Venice."
8. "The Giunti family of Florence."
9. "The prosperity of the Roxburghe Club, and in all cases the cause of Bibliomania all over the world."
10. "The Society of the Bibliophiles Français."

By-the-way, in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, is a memorial to the first English printer, bearing the following inscription:— [Pg 128]

"To the memory of
William Caxton,
Who first introduced into Great Britain
The Art of Printing;
And, who, A.D. 1477 or earlier, exercised that art in the
Abbey of Westminster,
This Tablet,
In remembrance of one to whom the literature of this
country is so largely indebted, was raised
Anno Domini MDCCCXX
By the Roxburghe Club.
Earl Spencer, K.G., President."

Professional sentiments are rather plentiful. The surgeon's toast is:—

"The man that bleeds for his country."

The schoolmaster's toasts are rather numerous, but not without point:—

"Addition to patriots,
Subtraction to placemen,
Multiplication to the friends of peace,
Division to its enemies,
Reduction to abuses,
Rule of three to king, lords, and commons,
Practice to reformation,
Fellowship to Britons,
Discount to the National Debt,
Decimal fractions to the clergy."

Toasts of musicians are included:—

"May a crotchet in the head never bar the utterance of good notes." [Pg 129]

A second sentiment is:—

"May the lovers of harmony never be in want of a note, and its enemies die in a common chord."

Tradesmen's toasts are very plentiful, and several include puns. Here is the hatter's sentiment:—

"When the rogue naps it, may the lesson be felt."

Respecting the baker is the following:—

"May we never be done so much as to make us crusty."

The glazier’s toast is:—

> “The praiseworthy glazier who takes pains to see his way through life.”

A rather longer toast is that of the greengrocer:—

> “May we spring up like vegetables, have turnip noses, reddish cheeks, and carroty hair—and may our hearts never be hard like those of cabbages, nor may we be rotten at the core.”

The sentiment of the pawnbroker is:—

> “When we lend our cash to a friend, may it be to his interest to pay the principal, and his principle to pay the interest.”

The shoemaker’s toast is:—

> “May the cobbler’s lapstones never fail him.”

In another toast we have an allusion to shoes:—

> “May the enemies of Great Britain always have long corns and short shoes.” [Pg 130]

Here we close this curious collection of toasts, feeling thankful that such a book is no longer required for the every-day use of the people. A great change for the better has come over the manners and customs of our countrymen. Turning over the pages of this publication has given us pleasure, and we trust the quotations culled from it may not fail to interest our readers.

Curious American Old-Time Gleanings. [Pg 131]

“THE only true history of a country,” said Lord Macaulay, “is to be found in its newspapers.” Sir George Cornewall Lewis expressed his conviction that the historian of the future will find all his materials in the *Times*. The American historian Mr. Bancroft seldom saw a newspaper without drawing from it materials for his works. The story-teller often obtains from the daily and weekly press suggestive notes. Charles Reade made excellent use of the romantic episodes recorded in the newspapers. His scrapbooks containing clippings from the papers were numerous and valuable, and amongst his most cherished treasures. Many modern men of letters might be mentioned who are alive to the importance of preserving facts drawn from the journals of the day.

Professor James Davie Butler, LL.D., a few years ago wrote an amusing and at the same time a valuable paper on Scrap-books. He related how he had corrected, through seeing in an old Connecticut newspaper an advertisement, statements made by the leading historians of [Pg 132] America. It was respecting the horse of General Stark, a hero in the American War, who broke Burgoyne’s left wing. Headley says, “Stark’s horse sank under him.” Everett states, “The General’s horse was killed in the action.” Irving writes, “The veteran had his horse shot under him.” They were led to make the statement from a postscript of a letter the General wrote saying, “I lost my horse in the action.” Here is the advertisement referred to:—

> “TWENTY DOLLARS REWARD.—Stolen from me, the subscriber, in the time of action, the 16th of August last, a Brown Mare, five years old; had a star in her forehead. Also a doeskin seated saddle, blue housing trimmed with white, and a curbed bridle.—It is earnestly requested of all Committees of Safety, and others in authority, to exert themselves to recover the said Mare, so that the thief may be brought to justice and the Mare brought to me; and the person, whoever he be, shall receive the above reward for both; and for the Mare alone, one-half that sum. How scandalous, how disgraceful and ignominious, must it appear to all friendly and generous souls to have such sly, artful, designing villains enter into the field of action in order to pillage, pilfer, and plunder from their brethren when engaged in battle!
>
> JOHN STARK, B.D.G.
>
> Bennington, 11th Sept., 1777.”

The foregoing may be regarded as a good proof of the value of historical facts gleaned from [Pg 133] newspapers.

In recent years several interesting works have been compiled from old newspapers. Perhaps the most important is a set of volumes entitled “The Olden Times Series,” prepared by Mr. Henry M. Brooks, a painstaking antiquary, and published in Boston, Massachusetts. Not the least interesting of the volumes is one devoted to the *New England Sunday*. The opening page proves that neither the rich nor the poor were permitted to break the strict Sabbath

regulations. In Connecticut, in 1789, General Washington was stopped by the officer representing the State authorities for riding on Sunday. The circumstances were reported in the columns of the *Columbian Centinel* for December of that year. “The President,” it is stated, “on his return to New York from his late tour through Connecticut, having missed his way on Saturday, was obliged to ride a few miles on Sunday, in order to gain the town, at which he had previously proposed to attend divine service. Before he arrived, however, he was met by a Tythingman, who, commanding him to stop, demanded the occasion of his riding; and it was not until the President had informed him of every circumstance, and promised to go no farther than the town intended, that the Tythingman would permit him to proceed on his journey.” [Pg 134]

In the old days, little attempt was made to render the places of worship attractive, or even to warm the rooms in which the preachers delivered their long sermons, although the people were obliged by law to attend the services unless they were sick. It was a serious matter not to be a “meeting-goer,” it was, as Mr. Brooks says, to be ranged with thieves and other outlaws. Mr. Felt, the compiler of the *Annals of Salem*, has brought together some items of interest bearing on the introduction of stoves into the churches of the district. “For a long period,” writes Mr. Felt, “the people of our country did not consider that a comfortable degree of warmth while at public worship contributed much to a profitable hearing of the gospel.” He states that the first stove heard of in Massachusetts for a meeting-house was put up by the first Congregation of Boston in 1773. Two stoves were placed in the Friends’ Society meeting-house at Salem in 1793, and one in the North Church, Salem in 1809. “Not a few remember,” writes Mr. Brooks, “the general knocking of feet on cold days and near the close of long sermons. On such occasions, the Rev. Dr. Hopkins used to say now and then: ‘My hearers, have a little patience, and I will soon close.’” [Pg 135]

One of Mr. Brook’s volumes deals with *Strange and Curious Punishments*, and it gives particulars of many harsh and cruel laws. It appears, from an address delivered before the Essex Bar Association in 1885, that the old-time punishments in America were much milder than the criminal laws of England at the time, and the number of capital offences was greatly reduced. Persons were frequently whipped. The following is an example drawn from the Essex County Court Records: “In 1643, Roger Scott, for repeated sleeping in meeting on the Lord’s Day, and for striking the person who waked him, was, at Salem, sentenced to be severely whipped.”

Whipping appears to have been a common means of punishing offenders who transgressed the laws. In the month of January, 1761, we see it stated that four men for petty larceny were publicly whipped at the cart’s tail through the streets of New York. We gather from another newspaper report that a man named Andrew Cayto received forty-nine stripes at the public whipping-post for house-robbery—namely, for robbing one house, thirty-nine stripes; and for robbing the other, ten stripes. It appears in some instances prisoners had, as part of their sentence, to sit on the gallows with ropes about their necks. We read: “At Ipswich, Massachusetts, June 1763, one Francis Brown for stealing a large quantity of goods, was found guilty; and it being the second conviction, he was sentenced by the Court to sit on the gallows an hour with a rope round his neck, to be whipt thirty stripes, and pay treble damages.” The man was a native of Lisbon, and described as a great thief. “We hear from Worcester,” says the *Boston Chronicle*, November 20th, 1769, “that on the 8th instant one Lindsay stood in the pillory there one hour, after which he received thirty stripes at the public whipping-post, and was then branded on the hand; his crime was forgery.” It appears that it was the custom to brand by means of hot iron the letter F on the palm of the right hand. [Pg 136]

We find that at this period persons found guilty of passing counterfeit dollars were sentenced to have their ears cropped.

To illustrate his subject Mr. Brooks draws from Felt’s *Annals of Salem* not a few quaint items. It is stated that “in 1637, Dorothy Talby, for beating her husband, is ordered to be bound to and chained to a post.” It is recorded that “in 1649 women were prosecuted in Salem for scolding,” and probably in many cases whipped or ducked. The ducking-stool appears to have been frequently employed. Under date of May 15th 1672, we find it stated: “The General Court of Massachusetts orders that scolds and railers shall be gagged or set in a ducking stool, and dipped over head and ears three times.” [Pg 137]

We find particulars of one Philip Ratclif for making “hard speeches against Salem Church, as well as the Government,” sentenced to pay “forty pounds, to be whipped, to have his ears cropped, and to be banished.” The date of this case is 1631. In the *Annals of Salem*, under date for May 3rd, 1669, it is recorded that “Thomas Maule is ordered to be whipped for saying that Mr. Higgenson preached lies, and that his instruction was ‘the doctrine of devils.’”

The Quakers were very severely dealt with. At Salem, for making disturbances in the meeting-house, etc., Josiah Southwick, Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Buffum, and other Quakers, were whipped at the cart’s tail through the town. After being banished, Southwick returned to Salem, and for this offence was whipped through the towns of Boxton, Roxbury, and Dedham. [Pg 138]

In bygone times, hanging the remains of persons executed was general in England; in America it was an uncommon practice. Mr. Brooks, however, gives particulars of a few

instances. At Newport, Rhode Island, on March 12th, 1715, a man named Mecum, was executed for murder; and his body hung in chains on Miantonomy Hill, where the bodies of some Indians executed three years previously were then hanging. A negro hanged at Newport in 1769 was gibbetted on the same hill.

A few lighter passages than those we have studied brighten up the records of American punishments, which were very severe. A prisoner in February, 1789, escaped through the jail chimney at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and wrote on the wall as follows: "The reason of my going is because I have no fire to comfort myself with, and very little provision. So I am sure if I was to stay any longer I should perish to death. Look at that bed there! Do you think it fit for any person to lie on?

"If you are well, I am well; [Pg 139]
Mend the chimney, and all's well!"

To the gentlemen and officers of Portsmouth, from your humble servant,

William Fall.

"N.B.—I am very sorry that I did not think of this before, for if I had, your people should not have had the pleasure of seeing me take the lashes."

Curiosities of the Lottery is the title of another volume of Mr. Brooks's "Olden Time Series." Selling lottery tickets was regarded as a respectable calling. "The better the man," says Mr. Brooks, "the better the agent. Indeed, it was generally thought to be just as respectable to sell lottery tickets as to sell Bibles; and we have them classed together in the same advertisement." In England, we must not forget the fact that the business was conducted on the same lines in bygone times. The first lottery in this country was drawn day and night at the west door of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, from the 11th of January to May 6th, 1569. The profit, which was considerable, was devoted to the repair of harbours. The prizes consisted of pieces of plate.

In the United States, lotteries were instituted for a variety of objects, including building [Pg 140]
bridges, cleaning rivers, rebuilding Faneuil Hall, raising money to successfully carry on the work of Dartmouth College, Harvard College, and other seats of learning. The advertisements were extremely quaint, illustrated with crudely drawn but effective pictures, and supplied "a speedy cure for a broken fortune." Rhymes as well as pictures were largely employed in advertisements for lotteries. Much has been spoken and written against lotteries; but, nevertheless, in some of the States of the Union they are still lawful.

With a dip into a volume called *Days of the Spinning Wheel*, we bring our old-time gleanings to a close. The items we cull relate to a trade once very general in the United States, but happily now a thing of the past. Advertisements similar to the following appeared in all the American newspapers; not a few of the publishers took an active part in the trade of buying and selling human beings. "To be sold," advertises the *Boston Evening Gazette*, 1741, "by the printer of this paper, the very best negro woman in this town, who has had the small pox and measles; is as hearty as a horse, as brisk as a bird, and will work like a beaver." The [Pg 141]
same publisher stated that he also had on sale "a negro man about thirty years old, who can do both town and country business very well, but will suit the country best, where they have not so many dram-shops as we have in Boston. He has worked at the printing business fifteen or sixteen years; can handle axe, saw, spade, hoe, or other instrument of husbandry as well as most men, and values himself and is valued by others for his skill in cookery."

In the *Gazette* of May 12, 1760, is offered for sale "a negro woman about twenty-eight years of age; she is remarkably healthy and strong, and has several other good qualities; and is offered for sale for no other reason than her being of a furious temper, somewhat lazy. Smart discipline would make her a very good servant. Any person minded to purchase may be further informed by inquiring of the printer." It will be gathered from the foregoing that the faults of the slaves were clearly stated.

Children were often given away; and many announcements like the following, drawn from the *Postboy*, February 28, 1763, appeared:—"To be given away, a male negro child of good breed, and in good health. Inquire of Green and Russell." [Pg 142]

Runaway slaves gave considerable trouble to their owners, and the papers include numerous advertisements, details respecting appearance, speech, dress, etc., of the missing persons. After describing his runaway slave, the owner concluded his announcement thus: "All masters of vessels and others are cautioned against harbouring, concealing, or carrying off the said negro, if they would avoid the rigour of the law."

The Earliest American Poetess: Anne Bradstreet. [Pg 143]

TO Northamptonshire belongs the honour of giving birth to the first woman poet who produced a volume of poetry in America. Her name was Anne Bradstreet. She was born in the year 1612. The place of her birth is not absolutely certain. “There is little doubt,” says Helen Campbell, the author of “Anne Bradstreet, and Her Time,” “that Northampton, England, was the home of her father’s family.” At an early age she sailed with her father, Thomas Dudley, to Massachusetts Bay, he being one of the earliest settlers in New England. For some years he had been steward to the Earl of Lincoln. He was a man of means, and belonged to a good family, claiming kinship with the Dudleys and Sidneys of Penshurst. Literature had for him many charms; he wrote poetry, and, says his daughter, he was a “magazine of history.” He left his native country and braved the perils of sea and land to settle in a distant clime where he might worship God according to his conscience. This stern, [Pg 144] truth-speaking Puritan soon had his sterling merits recognised, and held the governorship of Massachusetts from 1634 to 1650. He closed at the age of seventy-seven years a well-spent life. After death, in his pocket were found some of his recently written verses. His daughter Anne was a woman of active and refined mind, having acquired considerable culture at a time when educational accomplishments were possessed by few. She suffered much from ill-health; in her girlhood she was stricken with small pox, and was also lame. Her many trials cast a tinge of sadness over her life and writings.

She grew up to be a winsome woman, gaining esteem from the leading people of her adopted country, and her fame as a writer of poetry reached the land of her nativity.

She married, in 1629, Simon Bradstreet, Secretary, and afterwards Governor, of the Colony.

Her first volume, published at Boston in 1640, was dedicated to her father. The title is very long, and is as follows: “Several Poems, compiled with great variety of wit and learning, full of delight, wherein especially is contained a Complete Discourse and Description of the Four [Pg 145] Elements, Constitutions, Ages of Man, and Seasons of the Year; together with an exact Epitome of the Three First Monarchies, viz.: the Assyrian, Persian, and Grecian, and the Beginning of the Roman Commonwealth to the end of their last King; with divers other pleasant and serious Poems. By a Gentlewoman of New England.” The book met with much favour, and soon passed into a second edition. In the third edition, issued in 1658, her character is thus sketched: “It is the work of a woman honoured and esteemed where she lives, for her gracious demeanour, her eminent parts, her pious conversation, her courteous disposition, her exact diligence in her place, and discreet management of her family occasions; and more so, these poems are the fruits of a few hours curtailed from her sleep, and other refreshments.” The work was reprinted and published in London in 1650, with the high-sounding title of “The Tenth Muse, lately sprung up in America.” Compared with much that was written in the age in which she lived, her poetry is entitled to a foremost rank, but it is not sufficiently good to gain for it a lasting place in literature. It mainly attracts [Pg 146] attention in our time as being the first collection of poetry published in America.

Professor Charles F. Richardson, one of the soundest American critics, speaks of some of the poems as by “no means devoid of merit, though disfigured by a paucity of words and stiffness of style.” The estimable writer of this volume won words of praise from her leading countrymen. President Rogers, of Harvard College, himself a poet, thus addressed her:—

> “Madam, twice through the Muses’s grove I walked
> Under your blissful bowers—
> Twice have I drunk the nectar of your lines.”

All her critics were not so complimentary as President Rogers. Some did not think that a woman had a right to produce poetry and to such she adverts in the following lines:—

> “I am obnoxious to each carping tongue
> Who says my hand a needle better fits,
> A poet’s pen all scorn I should thus wrong,
> For such despite they cast on female wits:
> If what I do prove well, it won’t advance;
> They’ll say it’s stol’n, or else it was by chance.”

Here are four lines on “The Vanity of all Worldly Things,” which, give a favourable example of her poetic power:—

> “As he said vanity, so vain say I, [Pg 147]
> Oh vanity, O vain all under sky;
> Where is man can say, lo! I have found
> On brittle earth a consolation sound?”

The next specimen of her poetry is an “Elegy on a Grandchild”:—

> “Farewell, sweet babe, the pleasure of mine eye;
> Farewell, fair flower, that for a space was lent,
> Then ta’en away into eternity.
> Blest Babe, why should I once bewail thy fate,
> Or sigh the days so soon were terminate,
> Sith thou art settled in an everlasting state?”

“By nature trees do rot when they are grown,
And plums and apples thoroughly ripe do fall,
And corn and grass are in their season mown,
And time brings down what is both strong and tall;
But plants new set to be eradicate,
And buds new-bloom to have so short a date,
’Tis by His hand alone that nature guides, and fate.”

The lines which follow were written in the prospect of death, and addressed to her husband:—

“How soon, my dear, death may my steps attend,
How soon ’t may be thy lot to lose thy friend,
We both are ignorant. Yet love bids me
These farewell lines to recommend to thee,
That, when that knot’s untied that made us one
I may seem thine, who in effect am none.

“And, if I see not half my days that’s due,
What Nature would God grant to yours and you.
The many faults that well you know I have,
Let be interred in my oblivious grave;
If any virtue is in me, [Pg 148]
Let that live freshly in my memory;
And when thou feel’st no griefs, as I no harms,
Yet live thy dead, who long lay in thine arms;
And, when thy loss shall be repaid with gains,
Look to my little babes, my dear remains,
And, if thou lov’st thyself or lovest me,
These, oh protect from step-dame’s injury!
And, if chance to thine eyes doth bring this verse,
With some sighs honour my absent hearse,
And kiss this paper, for thy love’s dear sake,
Who with salt tears this last farewell doth take.”

In the year 1666, her house at Andover was consumed by fire, and her letters and papers destroyed, which put an end to one of her literary projects. Six years later she died, at the age of sixty years. It is said of her by an American author: “Her numbers are seldom correct, and her ear had little of Milton’s tenderness or Shakespeare’s grace; yet she was the contemporary of England’s greatest poets, the offspring of that age of melody which had begun with Spenser and Sidney, an echo, from the distant wilderness of the period of universal song.” Several of her descendants are amongst the most gifted of American poets; they include Channing, Dana, Holmes, and others. Her husband nearly reached the age of a hundred years, and was termed “the Nestor of New England.”

A Playful Poet: Miss Catherine Fanshawe.

[Pg 149]

SEVERAL lasting contributions were made to poetical literature by Miss Catherine Maria Fanshawe. In the literary and artistic circles of London in the closing years of the last century, and for more than three decades of the present century she was popular.

Miss Fanshawe was born in 1775, and came of a good old English family. At an early age she displayed literary gifts full of promise. The following sonnet, written at the age of fourteen and addressed to her mother, has perhaps not been excelled by any youthful writer:—

“Oh thou! who still by piercing woe pursued,
  Alone and pensive, pour’st thy sorrows here,
Forgive, if on thy griefs I dare intrude
  To wipe from thy lov’d cheek the falling tear.
Dear mourner, think!—thy son will weep no more;
  His life was spotless, and his death was mild,
And, when this vain delusive life is o’er,
  He’ll shine a seraph, whom thou lost a child.
Then, as we bend before th’ eternal throne,
  Oh may’st thou, with exulting accents boast, [Pg 150]
‘Now shall my children ever be my own,
  For none of those thou gavest me are lost.’
With rapture then thou’lt meet th’ angelic boy,
  And she who sow’d in tears shall meet in joy.”

August, 1789.

A long playful poem composed at the age of sixteen, was addressed to the Earl of Harcourt, on his wishing to spell her name, Catherine, with a K. It displays much erudition, but it is too long to quote in full. We give a few of the lines pleading for the letter C:—

"And can his antiquarian eyes,
My Anglo-Saxon C despise?
And does Lord Harcourt day by day,
Regret the extinct initial K?
And still with ardour unabated,
Labour to get it reinstated?
I know, my lord, your generous passion,
For every long exploded fashion;
And own the Catherine you delight in,
Looks irresistibly inviting,
Appears to bear the stamp and mark,
Of English used in Noah's Ark;
'But all that glitters is not gold,'
Not all things obsolete are old.
Would you but take the pains to look,
In Dr. Johnson's quarto book
(As I did, wishing much to see,
Th' aforesaid letter's pedigree),
Believe me, 'twould a tale unfold,
Would make your Norman blood run cold; [Pg 151]
My lord, you'll find the K's no better,
Than an interpolated letter;
A wand'ring Greek, a franchis'd alien,
Derived from Cadmus or Deucalion;
And why, or wherefore, none can tell,
Inserted 'twixt the J and L.
The learnèd say, our English tongue
On Gothic beams is built and hung.
Then why the solid fabric piece,
With motley ornaments from Greece?
Her lettered despots had no bowels,
For northern consonants and vowels;
The Roman and the Greek grammarian
Deem'd us, and all our words barbarian;
'Till those hard words, and harder blows,
Had silenced all our haughty foes;
And proud they were to kiss the sandals
(Shoes we had none) of Goths and Vandals."

She wrote a satire on William Cobbett, M.P., for Oldham, which was extremely popular amongst politicians at the period it was penned. This is not surprising, for it contains some most amusing lines. It is entitled "The Speech of the Member for Odium."

In the lighter vein she produced some verses in imitation of the poetry of Wordsworth.

"There is a river clear and fair,
'Tis neither broad nor narrow;
It winds a little here and there,
It winds about like any hare; [Pg 152]
And then it takes as straight a course
As on the turnpike road a horse,
  Or through the air an arrow.

The trees that grow upon the shore,
Have grown a hundred years or more,
  So long, there is no knowing.
Old Daniel Dobson does not know,
When first these trees began to grow;
But still they grew, and grew, and grew,
As if they'd nothing else to do,
  But ever to be growing.

The impulses of air and sky
Have reared their stately stems so high,
  And clothed their boughs with green;
Their leaves the dews of evening quaff,—
  And when the wind blows loud and keen,
I've seen the jolly timbers laugh,
  And shake their sides with merry glee—
  Wagging their heads in mockery.

Fix’d are their feet in solid earth,
  Where winds can never blow;
But visitings of deeper birth
  Have reached their roots below.
For they have gained the river’s brink,
And of the living waters drink.

There’s little Will, a five year’s child—
  He is my youngest boy;
To look on eyes so fair and wild,
  It is a very joy:—
He hath conversed with sun and shower,
And dwelt with every idle flower,
  As fresh and gay as them. [Pg 153]
He loiters with the briar rose,
The blue-bells are his play-fellows,
  That dance upon their slender stem.

And I have said, my little Will
Why should not he continue still
  A thing of Nature’s rearing?
A thing beyond the world’s control—
A living vegetable soul,—
  No human sorrow fearing.

It were a blessed sight to see
That child become a willow tree,
  His brother trees among.
He’d be four time as tall as me,
  And live three times as long.”

It was related by the Rev. William Harness, who did much to make known the merits of Miss Fanshawe’s works, that when the foregoing lines were read to a distinguished admirer of Wordsworth’s poetry, she thought them beautiful, and wondered why the poet had never shown them to her!

Miss Fanshawe’s fame rests on the authorship of the celebrated riddle on the letter H, which has frequently been attributed to Byron, and appeared in more than one edition of his poems. At a party held one evening at the house of her friend, Mr. Hope, of Deep Dene, the conversation turned upon the abuse of the aspirate. After the guests had withdrawn, Miss [Pg 154] Fanshawe retired to her room and composed her noted poem. Next morning she read it at the breakfast table, much to the surprise and delight of the company. It is as follows:—

“’Twas in heaven pronounced, and ’twas muttered in hell,
And echo caught faintly the sound as it fell;
On the confines of earth ’twas permitted to rest,
And the depths of the ocean its presence confest.
’Twill be found in the sphere, when ’tis riven asunder,
Be seen in the lightning, and heard in the thunder.
’Twas allotted to man with his earliest breath,
Attends at his birth, and awaits him in death,
Presides o’er his happiness, honour, and health,
Is the prop of his house, and the end of his wealth.
In the heaps of the miser ’tis hoarded with care,
But is sure to be lost on his prodigal heir,
It begins every hope, every wish it must bound,
With the husbandman toils, and with monarchs is crown’d,
Without it the soldier, the seaman may roam,
But woe to the wretch who expels it from home!
In the whispers of conscience its voice will be found,
Nor e’en in the whirlpool of passion be drown’d,
’Twill not soften the heart; but though deaf to the ear,
It will make it acutely and instantly hear.
Yet in shade let it rest like a delicate flower,
Ah, breathe on it softly—it dies in an hour.

Some other riddles and charades appear in her collected poems, but none are of equal merit to the riddle on the letter H.

Our next example bears the title of an “Ode”:— [Pg 155]

“Lo! where the gaily vestur’d throng,
  Fair learning’s train, are seen,
Wedg’d in close ranks her walls along,
  And up her benches green.[2]
Unfolded to their mental eye

Thy awful form, Sublimity!
The moral teacher shows—
Sublimity of Silence born,
And Solitude ’mid caves forlorn
And dimly vision’d woes;
Or Stedfast Worth, that inly great
Mocks the malignity of faith.
While whisper’d pleasure’s dulcet sound
Murmurs the crowded room around,
And Wisdom, borne on Fashion’s pinions,
Exulting hails her new dominions.
Oh! both on me your influence shed,
Dwell in my heart and deck my head!

Where’er a broader, browner shade
The shaggy beaver throws,
And with the ample feather’s aid
  O’er canopies the nose;
Where’er with smooth and silken pile,
Ling’ring in solemn pause awhile,
  The crimson velvet glows;
From some high benches giddy brink,
Clinton with me begins to think
  (As bolt upright we sit) [Pg 156]
That dress, like dogs, should have its day,
That beavers are too hot for May,
  And velvets quite unfit.

Then taste, in maxims sweet, I draw
  From her unerring lip;
How light, how simple are the straw,
  How delicate the chip!
Hush’d is the speaker’s powerful voice,
  The audience melt away,
I fly to fix my final choice
  And bless th’ instructive day.

The milliner officious pours
Of hats and caps her ready stores,
  The unbought elegance of spring;
Some wide, disclose the full round face,
Some shadowy, lend a modest grace
  And stretch their sheltering wing.

Here clustering grapes appear to shed
Their luscious juices on the head,
  And cheat the longing eye;
So round the Phrygian monarch hung
Fair fruits that from his parchèd tongue
  For ever seem’d to fly.

Here early blooms the summer rose;
Her ribbons wreathe fantastic bows;
Here plays gay plumage of a thousand dyes—
Visions of beauty, spare my aching eyes!
Ye cumbrous fashions, crowd not on my head!
  Mine be the chip of purest white,
  Swan-like, and as her feathers light
When on the still wave spread;
And let it wear the graceful dress,
Of unadornèd simpleness. [Pg 157]

Ah! frugal wish; ah! pleasing thought;
  Ah! hope indulged in vain;
Of modest fancy chiefly bought
  A stranger yet to Payne.[3]
With undissembled grief I tell,—
  For sorrow never comes too late,—
The simplest bonnet in Pall Mall
  Is sold for £1 8*s.*

To Calculation’s sober view,
  That searches ev’ry plan,
Who keep the old, or buy the new,
  Shall end where they began.

Alike the shabby and the gay
Must meet the sun’s meridian ray;
  The air, the dust, the damp.
This, shall the sudden shower despoil;
That slow decay by gradual soil;
  Those, envious boxes cramp.
Who will, their squander’d gold may pay;
  Who will, our taste deride;
We’ll scorn the fashion of the day
  With philosophic pride.

Methinks we thus, in accents low,
  Might Sydney Smith address,
‘Poor moralist! and what art thou,
  Who never spoke of dress!’

‘Thy mental hero never hung
Suspended on a tailor’s tongue,
  In agonising doubt;
Thy tale no flutt’ring female show’d,
Who languish’d for the newest mode,
  Yet dar’d to live without.’”

In Miss Mary Russell Mitford’s “Recollections of a Literary Life” are some genial allusions to Miss Fanshawe. “Besides,” wrote Miss Mitford, “her remarkable talent for graceful and polished pleasantry, whether in prose or verse, Miss Catherine Fanshawe was admirable as a letter-writer, and as a designer in almost every style.” Her drawings and etchings met with praise from those capable of judging their merits. [Pg 158]

After Miss Fanshawe’s death, in 1834, her friend, the Rev. William Harness, printed for private circulation a small collection of her poems, expressing his wish “that some enduring memorial may exist of one who, in her varied accomplishments, her acute perception of the beautiful, her playful fancy, her charming conversation, her gentle and retiring manners, her lively sympathy with the sorrows and joys of others, and above all, her simple piety, was so cherished a member of a society, not very extended but intimately united by a common love of literature, and art, and science, which existed in London at the close of the last and the opening of the present century, and which, perhaps, taken for all in all, has never been surpassed.” In 1876, Mr. Basil Montagu Pickering issued “The Literary Remains of Catherine Maria Fanshawe,” with notes by the Rev. William Harness. Doubtless his admiration of the productions of the author prompted him to publish the volume. Only two hundred and fifty copies were printed. Mr. Pickering is entitled to the gratitude of lovers of choice poetry for publishing the charming volume. [Pg 159]

[Pg 160]

A Popular Song Writer: Mrs. John Hunter.

THE name of Mrs. John Hunter stands high on the roll of English song writers. She is one of the most gifted women in her particular literary field Hull has produced, and it is most remarkable that she is not noticed in any local work devoted to history or biography. Her maiden name was Anne Home, and she was the eldest daughter of Robert Home, of Greenlaw, Berwickshire, surgeon of Burgoyne’s Regiment of Light Horse, and subsequently a physician in Savoy. He greatly displeased his parents by marrying at an early age, and on this account they declined to assist him in the outset of his professional career. He proceeded to Hull, and practised as a surgeon. In the year 1742, Anne, his eldest daughter, was born. She received a liberal education, and at an early age displayed considerable poetical gifts. Her early work found its way into the periodicals, and in one entitled the *Lark*, published at Edinburgh, at the age of twenty-three years, she contributed her well-known song, “The Flowers of the Forest,” and a song we quote as a specimen of her style:— [Pg 161]

“Adieu, ye streams that smoothly glide
  Through mazy windings o’er the plain;
I’ll in some lonely cave reside,
  And ever mourn my faithful swain.

Flower of the forest was my love,
  Soft as the sighing summer’s gale;
Gentle and constant as the dove,
  Blooming as roses in the vale.

Alas! by Tweed my love did stray,
  For me he searched the banks around;
But, ah! the sad and fatal day,
  My love, the pride of swains, was drown'd.

Now droops the willow o'er the stream;
  Pale stalks his ghost in yonder grove;
Dire fancy paints him in my dream;
  Awake I mourn my hopeless love."

Such is one of her many songs, several of which were set to music by Haydn. Her best known song is, perhaps, "My Mother bids me bind my Hair":—

"My mother bids me bind my hair
  With bands of rosy hue,
Tie up my sleeves with ribbons rare,
  And lace my bodice blue.

"For why," she cries, "sit still and weep,
  While others dance and play?" [Pg 162]
Alas! I scarce can go or creep
  While Lubin is away.

'Tis sad to think the days are gone
  When those we love were near;
I sit upon this mossy stone,
  And sigh when none can hear.

And while I spin my flaxen thread,
  And sing my simple lay,
The village seems asleep or dead
  Now Lubin is away."

In July, 1771, Miss Home was married to John Hunter, the famous anatomist, who step by step rose from the bench of a cabinet-maker to one of the highest positions in the medical profession. He was a native of Long Calderwood, Kilbride parish, Lanarkshire. After working some time as a cabinet-maker, he proceeded to London, and obtained an appointment as an anatomical assistant. He was student at Chelsea Hospital in 1748, a year later undertook the charge of the dissecting room, and in the same year entered St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, as a gentleman commoner. He did not remain there very long. In 1750 he was a surgeon-pupil at St. George's Hospital. His brother made his mark in London as a surgeon, and John joined him as lecturer in 1754. Ten years' toil in the dissecting room broke down his health. With a [Pg 163] view of obtaining a change of work and climate, he joined the army, and in 1761 was made staff-surgeon. He was at the siege of Belle Isle in his first year, and was afterwards with the army in Portugal. He returned home in 1763, and commenced practising as a surgeon. He read many able papers before the members of the Royal Society; in 1767, he was elected a fellow of that distinguished body. In 1787 he was awarded the Copleyan gold medal. He wrote some important medical works. His death was sudden, and occurred in the Board-room of St. George's Hospital, on the 16th October, 1793, at the age of 64 years. His father died when he was ten years of age, and his early education was neglected. At the age of twenty he could simply read and write, knowing no other language than his own. He was most diligent. His museum contained 10,563 specimens and preparations illustrative of human and comparative anatomy, physiology, pathology, and natural history. It was two years after his death purchased by the Government for £15,000, and presented to the Royal College of Surgeons. Dr. Hunter won fame but not wealth, and died a comparatively poor man. In marriage he was most fortunate; his wife had a beautiful face, and handsome [Pg 164] person. She entertained the doctor's guests with delightful conversation, and her amiability and simple manners endeared her to all with whom she came in contact, many of whom were men of world-wide reputation. Some of Mrs. Hunter's friends did not always meet with the approval of her husband. The following story is well known, but will bear repeating: —"On returning home late one evening, after a hard day's fag, Hunter unexpectedly found his drawing-room filled with musical professors, connoisseurs, and other idlers, whom Mrs. Hunter had assembled. He was greatly irritated, and walking straight into the room, addressed the astonished guests pretty much in the following strain: 'I know nothing of this kick-up, and I ought to have been informed of it beforehand; but as I am now returned home to study, I hope the present company will retire.' This intimation was, of course, speedily followed by an *exeunt omnes*." Mrs. Hunter was both a skilful musician and a graceful singer. The greater part of her poetry displays much sweetness of expression and force. A volume of her poems was issued in 1802, and attracted much favourable notice.

Mrs. Hunter wrote the following epitaph for a monument to her husband to be placed in St. [Pg 165] Martin's Church, London, where he was buried. The then rector of the parish, however, stated it was contrary to the rules to have any memorial placed in the church:—

"Here rests in awful silence, cold and still,

One whom no common spark of genius fir’d;
Whose reach of thought Nature alone could fill,
Whose deep research the love of truth inspired.

Hunter, if years of toil and watchful care,
If the vast labours of a pow’rful mind
To soothe the ills humanity must share,
Deserve the grateful plaudits of mankind.

Then to each human weakness buried here
Envy would raise, to dim a name so bright,
Those specks which on the orb of day appear,
Take nothing from his warm and welcome light.”

In the year 1860, the remains of John Hunter were removed from the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and placed in Westminster Abbey, to rest with the dust of England’s most famous sons. The Council of the Royal College of Surgeons erected a tablet bearing a suitable inscription.

Mrs. Hunter retired from society after the death of her husband, and found much enjoyment in literature. She had two children, a son and a daughter. On the 7th January, 1821, she died [Pg 166] in London after a lingering illness, being nearly eighty years of age. Her name will long remain, and recall the life of one who added several popular songs to our literature. In popular anthologies her productions usually find a place.

[Pg 167]

A Poet of the Poor: Mary Pyper.

SCOTLAND is a land of song. It has been the birthplace of many poets who have added glory to our literary annals. Its list of authors includes the names of a large number of men and women in the humbler walks of life, who took up literature under difficulties, and won honourable places in the world of letters. Burns at the plough, Hogg tending his sheep on the hillside, Hugh Miller in the quarry, Allan Cunningham with chisel in hand, William Thom and Robert Tannahill at the shuttle, and Janet Hamilton in her humble home are familiar figures to every reader of Scottish biography.

Amongst the lesser known names is that of Mary Pyper, who, under severe trials, read a great deal and produced poems of considerable merit for a self-taught writer. She was born at Greenock, on the 27th of May, 1795. Her father was a clockmaker, named Alexander Pyper, who had married a worthy woman, Isabella Andrews, both of whom were natives of Edinburgh. Failing to obtain regular employment in their native city, the parents of our [Pg 168] heroine moved westwards in search of work. Mary Pyper, in an autobiographical letter, addressed to the Rev. Charles Rogers, LL.D., states that “her father enlisted in the 42nd Highlanders on account of failing to find employment.” Says Mr. D. H. Edwards, in his *Modern Scottish Poets*, “it was a time of war when recruits were often made in an unscrupulous manner, and one day Alexander Pyper found a shilling in his pocket, and was told to his astonishment that he had enlisted in His Majesty’s service.” His regiment, shortly after he joined it, received orders to march from Perth across the Sheriffmuir, a distance of sixteen miles. Poor Mrs. Pyper walked, carrying her infant in her arms, the rain coming down in torrents. After a weary tramp the poor mother sat down nearly broken-hearted, fearing that her baby had perished. On the arrival of the baggage carts, warm clothing and other necessaries were procured, and happily the child began to revive.

The regiment subsequently proceeded to Ireland. Pyper, on leaving Dublin for England, stumbled and fractured his leg. The accident rendered him unfit for active service, and he was discharged. He did not long survive, and at the age of six months, Mary Pyper was left [Pg 169] fatherless.

Her mother then returned to her native city. Here she had to struggle for bread, gaining a scanty living as a boot-binder. She devoted much time to the education of her child, who proved an apt scholar. Mother and daughter delighted in the study of history, but Mary’s chief pleasure was derived from the works of the poets. She was familiar with the poetry of Shakespeare, Milton, Scott, Cowper, and other celebrated authors. As a child she was puny; she was always little, and might be called a dwarf. In her early years she suffered much from ill-health. She was troubled with jaundice, and on three occasions had severe attacks of fever, each lasting from six to eight weeks. Her mother, too, was often sick, and when other children of her age were enjoying childish games Mary Pyper was busy with her needle helping to add to the slender income of her mother.

After being confined to her bed for six years, Mrs. Pyper died on the 27th of March, 1827. It

was during the attendance on her mother that Mary first thought of composing verses. The poor woman had been obliged to run into debt to the extent of £9. This amount was paid by [Pg 170] her daughter out of her wages of six shillings per week, obtained from a shop-keeper who employed her to make buttons and fringes. Hoping to earn more, she left her situation, and obtained a small basket containing fancy goods, which she hawked for sale, but this did not prove a satisfactory means of making a living. It was uncertain, and the walking fatiguing. In later years she had a continual struggle, and met with numerous misfortunes. Writing to Dr. Rogers, in 1860, she said: "As I was working in our church-school, I fell and broke my arm, some ten years since. Eight months after this, I was painting my house and, over-reaching myself, ricked my back, and the year before I fell on the frost and severely hurt my head." Kind friends helped to lighten her troubles, which she bore with Christian fortitude.

A small volume of her poems was published in 1860, mainly through the assistance of Mr. T. Constable. The work met with a favourable reception, and a couple of the hymns were reproduced in the pages of *Lyra Britannica*. Mr. Henry Wright, the compiler of the work entitled *Lays of Pious Minstrels*, includes in it examples of Mary Pyper's poetry. In the [Pg 171] preface to his volume he wrote: "The attention of my readers is especially directed to the pieces 'Let me go,' 'Servant of God,' and 'We shall see Him as He is,' the composition of Miss Mary Pyper, a resident in one of the closes or alleys in the Old Town of Edinburgh, who is in extreme old age, quite alone in the world, totally blind, and in deep poverty. Since the notice of Miss Pyper appeared in the last edition of this work, many benevolent persons have sent me donations for her in postage stamps, and otherwise. I shall be glad to be the medium of alleviating in any degree the very painful circumstances in which she is placed." It will be seen from the foregoing that in addition to other afflictions she lost her eyesight in her old age.

We give a few specimens of her verses, which are chiefly of a religious and devotional character. The first poem is entitled "The Christian's View of Death":

"Let me go! the Day is breaking
  Morning bursts upon mine eye,
Death this mortal frame is shaking,
  But the soul can never die!

Let me go! the Day-Star, beaming,
  Gilds the radiant realms above; [Pg 172]
Its full glory on me streaming,
  Lights me to the Land of Love."

The last stanzas of her "Servant of God" are as follow:—

"There Flowers immortal bloom
  To charm the ravished sight;
And palms and harps await for those
  Who walk with Him in white.

For they shall sing the song
  Of Moses, long foretold,
When they have passed those pearly gates
  And streets of burnished gold.

The glories of the Lamb
  Their rapturous strains shall raise—
Eternal ages shall record
  His love, His power, His praise."

The following are the concluding lines of "We shall see Him as He is":—

"When we pass o'er death's dark river
  We shall see Him as He is—
Resting in His love and favour
  Owning all the glory His;
There to cast our crowns before Him—
  Oh! what bliss the thought affords!
There for ever to adore Him—
  King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

One of her best hymns is entitled "What has Jesus done?" The little gem we next reproduce is perhaps her best known production. It has been widely quoted and much admired:—

EPITAPH: A LIFE. [Pg 173]

"I came at morn—'twas Spring, I smiled,
  The fields with green were clad;
I walked abroad at noon, and lo!
  'Twas summer—I was glad.
I sate me down—'twas autumn eve,
  And I with sadness wept;

I laid me down at night—and then
'Twas winter—and I slept."

The following poem is a fair specimen of her poetic power:—

ON SEEING TWO LITTLE GIRLS PRESENT
A FLOWER TO A DYING PERSON.

"Come, sit beside my couch of death,
With that fair summer flower,
That I may taste its balmy breath
Before my final hour.
The lily's virgin purity,
The rose's rich perfume,
Speak with a thrilling voice to me,
Preparing for the tomb.

"Each calls to mind sweet Sharon's rose,
The lily of the vale—
The white and stainless robes of those
Who conquer and prevail.
For as it droops its modest head,
Methinks it seems to say:
'All flesh, like me, must quickly fade,
Must wither and decay!'

"And yet it tells of fairer skies,
And happier lands than this, [Pg 174]
Where beauteous flowers immortal vie,
And plants of Paradise:
A land where blooms eternal spring—
Where every storm is past;
Fain would my weary spirit wing
Its way—and be at rest.—

"But hark, I hear a choral strain—
It comes from worlds above,
It speaks of my release from pain,
Of rest—in Jesus' love!
Jesus, my hope, my help, my stay,
My all in earth or heaven,
Let thy blest mandate only say,
'Thy sins are all forgiven!'

"Then will I plume my joyful wing
To those blest realms of peace,
Where saints and angels ever sing,
And sorrows ever cease.
Dear mother, dry thy tearful eye,
And weep no more for me,
The orphan's God that reigns on high
The widow's God shall be.

"Pull me a sprig of that white flower,
And place it on my breast,
The last effect of friendship's power
Shall charm my heart to rest.
Then, Lord, let me depart from pain
To realms where glories dwell,
Where I may meet those friends again,
And say no more 'farewell!'"

Her first book did not yield much pecuniary profit. In 1865 a larger volume of her poetry was published by Mr. Andrew Elliot, of Edinburgh. Her valued friend, Miss Moncrieff, [Pg 175] prefaced it with a biographical sketch, and Dean Ramsay wrote an introduction. He described her poems as being of "no common excellence, both in diction and sentiment." The book also contains a portrait of the author. Through the kindly interest of the publisher the work proved extremely successful, and the proceeds of the sale became her chief support in her old age, when unable to work through feeble health and blindness. She enjoyed many comforts, thanks to the help of Miss M. A. Scott Moncrieff, Mr. Andrew Elliot, and other warm-hearted friends.

She died in 1870, having reached more than the allotted three score years and ten, and was interred in the historic burial ground of Greyfriars' Church, Edinburgh. Her last resting-place was for some years without any monumental stone, but mainly through the exertions of Dr. Rogers, in May, 1885, a handsome cross was erected over her remains, simply

bearing her name, “Mary Pyper.”

The Poet of the Fisher-Folk: Mrs. Susan K. Phillips.

[Pg 176]

“The poet’s little span is done,
The poet’s work on earth goes on;
The hand that strikes the ringing chords,
The thought that clothes itself in words,
That chimes with every varying mood,
That gives a friend to solitude,
In flash or fire, in smiles or tears,
Wakes echoes for all coming years.”

SUSAN K. PHILLIPS.

FROM the days of Cædmon, the first and greatest of the Anglo-Saxon poets, to the present time, Yorkshire has produced many singers of power, whose poetry has been read and appreciated far beyond the limits of England’s largest county. The lovely scenery, romantic legends, old-world tales, and noble lives of its sons and daughters have had a marked influence on the writings of its poets. We recognise this in the best work of Mr. Alfred Austin, our present Poet Laureate, the sisters Brontë, Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn Law Rhymer, and in a marked degree in Mrs. Susan K. Phillips, whose well-spent life has just closed, and whose contributions to literature have gained for her an honourable place [Pg 177] amongst the authors of the Victorian era. In the realm of poetry devoted to the joys and sorrows of the fisher-folk, she has not been equalled.

How true are the words of Sir Henry Taylor, “The world knows nothing of its greatest men,” and we may add, less, if possible, of its greatest women. Men have a better opportunity of becoming known, and their works appreciated, than women, for men take a more active part in public affairs which bring them in closer touch with the people. As a rule women are of a more retiring disposition, and the result is that their merits are not so readily recognised as those of men, yet their works are often more ennobling and lasting.

Mrs. Phillips’ best poems deal with various incidents in the lives of the fisher-folk of the Yorkshire coast. She was a frequent visitor to Whitby, and was beloved by the rough, but kind-hearted, fishermen. She was a true friend to them in their time of sorrow, and in the hard lot of those who are engaged on the perilous waters of the North Sea.

Before giving examples of the poetry of Mrs. Phillips, it may be well to present a few details [Pg 178] of her life. She was born in 1831 at Aldborough, the *Isurium* of the Romans, a village of great antiquity, not far distant from Boroughbridge. Her father, the Rev. George Kelly Holdsworth, M.A., was vicar of the parish.

In 1856 she was married to Mr. H. Wyndham Phillips, a celebrated artist, who has been dead some years. Mrs. Phillips resided for many years at Green Royd, Ripon, but usually spent the summer months at Whitby.

In 1865 her first volume of poetry appeared under the title of “Verses and Ballads,” and the welcome given to it induced her to issue, five years later, “Yorkshire Songs and Ballads.” A still more important volume was given to the world in 1878, from the well-known house of Messrs. Macmillan & Co., entitled, “On the Seaboard.” The critical press were not slow to recognise the sterling merits of this book, which soon passed into a second edition. On this work the reputation of Mrs. Phillips mainly rests. Some of the poems had previously appeared in the pages of *Macmillan’s Magazine*, *All the Year Round*, *Cassell’s Magazine*, and other leading periodicals. They had been widely quoted in the press on both sides of the Atlantic. “These poems,” said the reviewer, in a leading London daily, “suggest a [Pg 179] recollection of Charles Kingsley, but the writer has a voice and song of her own, which is full of yearning pathetic sweetness, and a loving human sympathy with the anxious homes of the poor toiler of the sea. The poems evince a true simplicity of style which is only another word for sincerity.” It was stated by another critic that “This volume of verses stands out in bright relief from the average poetry of the day. All is pure, womanly, in a setting of most graceful and melodious verse.” Other notices were equally good. In 1884, Messrs. J. S. Fletcher & Co., Leeds, published “Told in a Coble, and other Poems.” Many of those relating to Whitby were warmly welcomed, and added not a little to her fame. This is her last volume of collected poems, but not a few have since been written and printed in the periodicals, and might, with advantage to the world of letters, be collected, and reappear in book form.

Mrs. Phillips was for a long period one of the honorary secretaries of the Ripon Home for Girls, and did much useful work for this excellent institution. Says one who knew her well, “She was extremely generous in disposition, and her warm-hearted liberality and her kindly [Pg 180]

interest in those in distress endeared her to all classes." On May 25th, 1897, she died at Sea Lawn, Torquay, having reached the age of sixty-six years.

Instead of giving brief quotations from several pieces, it will be perhaps the better plan to reproduce at length two or three of the author's poems, and enable our readers to form their own conclusions. We may not quote the best of the writer's work, but indicate her style. No one, we think, can read lines like the following without being moved, and his sympathy extended to the sorrowing fisher-folk:—

LOST WITH ALL HANDS.

"'Lost, with all hands, at sea.'
The Christmas sun shines down
On the headlands that frown o'er the harbour wide,
On the cottages, thick on the long quay side,
On the roofs of the busy town.

'Lost, with all hands, at sea.'
The dread words sound like a wail,
The song of the waits, and the clash of the bells,
Ring like death-bed dirges or funeral knells,
In the pauses of the gale.

Never a home so poor
But it brightens for good Yule Tide,
Never a heart too sad or too lone, [Pg 181]
But the holy Christmas mirth 'twill own,
And his welcome will provide.

Where the sea-coal fire leaps
On the fisherman's quiet hearth,
The Yule Log lies for his hand to heave,
While he hastes to his bride on Christmas Eve,
In the flush of his strength and mirth.

High on the little shelf
The tall Yule candle stands,
For the ship is due ere the Christmas night,
And it waits to be duly set alight,
By the coming father's hands.

Long has the widow spared
Her pittance for warmth and bread,
That her sailor boy, when he home returns,
May joy, that her fire brightly burns,
Her board is so amply spread.

The sharp reef moans and moans,
The foam on the sand lies hoar;
The 'sea-dog' flickers across the sky,
The north wind whistles shrill and high
'Mid the breakers' ominous roar.

But on the great pier head,
The grey-haired sailors stand,
While the black clouds pile away in the west,
And the spray flies free from the billow's crest
Ere they dash on the hollow sand.

Never a sail to be seen
On the long grim tossing swell;
Only drifting wreckage of canvas and spar,
That sweep with the waves o'er the harbour bar,
Their terrible tale to tell.

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Did a vision of Christmas pass
Before their drowning eyes?
When 'mid rent of rigging and crash of mast,
The brave ship, smote by the mighty blast,
Went down 'neath the pitiless skies.

No Christmas joy I ween
On the rock-bound coast may be.
Put token and custom of Yule away,
While widows and orphans weep and pray
For the 'hands lost out at sea.'"

Still in the pathetic strain we will give another poem. In quoting this we feel we are not doing full justice to Mrs. Phillips, but it at all events shows her deep devotion to the race she greatly helped in their many trials.

THE FISHERMAN'S FUNERAL.

"Up on the breezy headland the fisherman's grave they made,
Where, over the daisies and clover-bells, the birchen branches swayed;
Above us the lark was singing in the cloudless skies of June,
And under the cliffs the billows were chanting their ceaseless tune;
For the creamy line was curving along the hollow shore,
Where the dear old tides were flowing that he would ride no more.

The dirge of the wave, the note of the bird, and the priest's low tone were blent
In the breeze that blew from the moorland, all laden with country scent;
But never a thought of the new-mown hay tossing on sunny plains, [Pg 183]
Or of lilies deep in the wild wood, or roses gemming the lanes,
Woke in the hearts of the stern bronzed men who gathered about the grave,
Where lay the mate who had fought with them the battle of wind and wave.

How boldly he steered the coble across the foaming bar,
When the sky was black to the eastward and the breakers white on the scar!
How his keen eye caught the squall ahead, how his strong hand furled the sail,
As we drove through the angry waters before the raging gale!
How cheery he kept the long dark night; and never a parson spoke
Good words like those he said to us when at last the morning broke!

So thought the dead man's comrades, as silent and sad they stood,
While the prayer was prayed, the blessing said, and the dull earth struck the wood;
And the widow's sob, and the orphan's wail, jarred through the joyous air;
How could the light wind o'er the sea blow on so fresh and fair?
How could the gay waves laugh and leap, landward o'er sand and stone,
While he, who knew and loved them all, lay lapped in clay alone?

But for long, when to the beetling heights the snow-tipped billows roll,
When the cod, and the skate, and dogfish dart around the herring shoal; [Pg 184]
When gear is sorted and sail is set, and the merry breezes blow,
And away to the deep-sea harvest the stalwart reapers go,
A kindly sigh and a hearty word, they will give to him who lies
Where the clover springs, and the heather blooms beneath the northern skies."

We regard the following lines on a well-known division of East Yorkshire, as a successful effort on the part of Mrs. Phillips. An August day spent in rambling amongst the leafy lanes of Holderness cannot easily be forgotten. There is a lack of romantic and rugged scenery, but the old farmsteads nestling amongst the trees and the fields of golden grain have a beauty not surpassed in many parts of old England:—

IN HOLDERNESS.

"The wind blew over the barley, the wind blew over the wheat,
Where the scarlet poppy toss'd her head, with the bindweed at her feet;
The wind blew over the great blue sea, in the golden August weather,
Till the tossing corn and the tossing waves showed shadow and gleam together.

The wind blew over the barley, the wind blew over the oats,
The lark sprung up in the sunny sky, and shook his ringing notes;
Over the wealth of the smiling land, the sweep of the glittering sea,
'Which is the fairest?' he sang, as he soared o'er the beautiful rivalry.
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And with a fuller voice than the wind, a deeper tone than the bird,
Came the answer from the solemn sea, that Nature, pausing, heard,—
'The corn will be garnered, the lark will be hushed at the frown of the wintry weather,
The sun will fly from the snow-piled sky, but I go on for ever!'"

It would be a pleasure to reproduce some of her poems dealing with the romantic legends of her native shire, but the space at our disposal does not permit this; they may, however, be found in her published works. We close with some pretty lines on the bells she loved so well:—

THE WHITBY BELLS.

"The Whitby bells, so full and free,
They ring across the sunny sea,

That the great ocean god, who dwells
’Mid coral groves and silvery shells,
Wakes to the summons joyously.

O’er the purpling moors and ferny dells
Sound the sweet chimes, and bird and bee
Pause, hearing over land and lea
The Whitby bells.

And as the mellow music swells
One listener to the Whitby bells
Feels all the days that used to be,
Speak in the blended harmony;
They shrine life—death—and their farewells,
The Whitby bells.”

A Poet and Novelist of the People: Thomas Miller.

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ON the roll of self-taught authors, Thomas Miller is entitled to a high place, and amongst Victorian men of letters he holds an honourable position. He enriched English literature with many charming works on country life and scenes. Although his career was not eventful, it is not without interest, furnishing a notable instance of a man surmounting difficulties and gaining distinction.

He was born on August 31st, 1808, at Gainsborough, a quaint old Lincolnshire town, situated on the banks of the river Trent. His father held a good position, being a wharfinger and shipowner; he died, however, when his son was a child, without making provision for his wife, who had to pass some years in pinching poverty. Young Thomas received a very limited education at school, and according to his own account he only learned “to write a very indifferent hand, and to read the Testament tolerably.” His playmate was Thomas Cooper, the Chartist and Poet, and this notable man, in his autobiography, has much to say about the boyhood of our hero. Mrs. Miller, to provide for her family, had to sew sacks.

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Says Thomas Cooper, “She worked early and late for bread for herself and her two boys; but would run in, now and then, at the back door, and join my mother for a few whiffs at the pipe. And then away they would go again to work, after cheering each other, to go stoutly through the battle of life.”

“They bent their wits, on one occasion,” continues Mr. Cooper, “to disappoint the tax-gatherer. He was to ‘distrain’ on a certain day; but beds, chairs, and tables were moved secretly in the night to blind Thomas Chatterton’s; and when the tax-gatherer came next day to execute his threat, there was nothing left worth his taking. The poor were often driven to such desperate schemes to save all they had from ruin, in those days; and the curse upon taxes and the tax-gatherer was in the mouths of hundreds—for those years of war were terrific years of suffering for the poor, notwithstanding their shouts and rejoicings when Matthew Guy rode in, with ribbons flying, bringing news of another ‘glorious victory.’”

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“Sometimes,” adds Mr. Cooper, “Miller’s mother and mine were excused paying some of the taxes by appealing to the magistrates, a few of whom respected them for their industry, and commiserated their hardships. But the petition did not always avail.”

In spite of poverty, Miller’s childhood was not without its sunshine, and many days spent in the lanes and fields were not the least enjoyable of his pleasures. He was first engaged as a farmer’s boy at Thornock, a village near his native town. The trade of basket-making was subsequently learned, and when quite a young man he married. He migrated to Nottingham, and obtained employment as a journeyman at a basket-manufactory in the town.

“At this period,” says Dr. Spencer T. Hall, “the Sherwood Forester,” “he had a somewhat round but intelligent face, a fair complexion, full, blue, speaking eyes, and a voice reminding one of the deeper and softer tones of a well-played flute. Of all who saw him at his work, it is probable that scarcely one knew how befitting him was the couplet of Virgil, where he says:

‘Thus while I sung, my sorrows I deceived,
And bending osiers into baskets weaved.’”

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He had the good fortune to become known to Mr. Thomas Bailey, a man of literary taste, the writer of several works, and father of the more famous Philip James Bailey, author of “Festus.” Mr. Bailey recognised at once the merits of a collection of poems submitted to him by Miller, was the means of the pieces being printed, and did all in his power to obtain a favourable welcome for the volume. The book was entitled “Songs of Sea Nymphs;” it

contained only forty-eight pages, and was sold at two shillings. In his preface the author stated: “I am induced to offer these extracts from unpublished poems in their present state solely because I cannot find any publisher who will undertake, without an extensive list of subscribers, the risk of publishing a volume of poetry written by an individual whose humble station in life buries him in obscurity.” He next explains that the object of the work is to elicit the opinion of his country-men as to the merits or demerits of his verses—which he terms “trifles.” Mr. Miller says, “Concerning the poems, I have only to add that the three first songs are extracts from an unpublished poem entitled, ‘Hero and Leander, a Tale of the Sea.’ The scene is chiefly confined to Neptune’s palace beneath the waves. The other [Pg 190] extracts are from ‘Adelaide and Reginald, a Fairy Tale of Bosworth Field.’ I am aware that the date is too modern for fairies; however, who can prove it? for so long as a barren circle is found in the velvet valleys of England, tradition will ever call it a fairy-ring. Having launched my little bark on the casual ocean of public opinion, not without anxiety, I leave it to its fate.—Thomas Miller, Basket-maker, Nottingham, August, 1832.” The volume was the means of making him many friends, and enabling him to start business on his own account. He had a work-room in the Long Row, and a stall on a Saturday in the market-place. Here is a picture of the stall from Spencer Hall’s graphic pen:—“There was poetry in his very baskets. A few coarser ones were there, but others of more beautiful pattern, texture, and colour, flung a sort of bloom over the rest; and the basket-maker and his wares well-matched each other, as he would take his cigar from his mouth, and ask some pretty market maiden, in his cheeriest tones, as she lingered and looked, if she would not like to purchase. As a youth, I was wont to stand there chatting with him occasionally, and to hear him, between customers, pour out the poetry of Coleridge and other great minds, with an [Pg 191] appreciance and a melody that such authors might themselves have listened to with pride and delight.”

He next moved to London, hoping to follow a literary career by contributing at the commencement to the monthly magazines. Writing gave Miller great pleasure, but put little money in his purse, and to obtain bread for his household he had to work at his trade in the metropolis. Friends at first were few, and he had none able to help him to literary employment. He had journeyed to London alone, and arrived there with seven-and-sixpence in his pocket, intending to send for his wife and family when brighter days dawned. Some time passed before there was a break in the dark clouds which hung over him. Here are particulars of the dawn of better times. “One day,” says Mr. Joseph Johnson, in *Manchester Notes and Queries*, “when bending over his baskets, he was surprised by a visit from Mr. W. H. Harrison, editor of *Friendship’s Offering*, who had fortunately read one of Miller’s poems, and had become impressed with the ability and original talent of the author. The result of the interview was a request that the basket-maker would write a poem for the *Offering*. [Pg 192] Miller, at the time, was so poor that he had neither paper, pens, nor ink, nor the means to buy these needful materials for his poem. He tided over the difficulty by using the whity-brown paper in which his sugar had been wrapped, and mixed some soot with water for his ink; the back of a bellows serving him for a desk, upon which he wrote his charming poem, entitled, ‘The Old Fountain.’ His letter to the editor of the *Offering* was sealed with moistened bread. The poem was accepted, and two guineas immediately returned. It is simply impossible to imagine the rapture which would fill the breast of the poor poet on receipt of so large a sum.” Says Miller, “I never had been so rich in my life before, and I fancied some one would hear of my fortune and try and rob me of it; so, at night, I barred the door, and went to bed, but did not sleep all night, from delight and fear.”

We reproduce the lines as a fair example of Miller’s poetry:—

THE OLD FOUNTAIN.

“Deep in the bosom of a silent wood,
Where an eternal twilight dimly reigns,
A sculptured fountain hath for ages stood,
O’erhung with trees; and still such awe remains
Around the spot, that few dare venture there— [Pg 193]
The babbling water spreads such superstitious fear.

It looks so old and grey, with moss besprent,
And carven imag’ry, grotesque or quaint;
Eagles and lions are with dragons blent
And cross-winged cherub; while o’er all a Saint
Bends grimly down with frozen blown-back hair,
And on the dancing spray its dead eyes ever stare.

From out a dolphin’s mouth the water leaps
And frets, and tumbles to its bed of gloom;
So dark the umbrage under which it sweeps,
Stretching in distance like a dreary tomb;
With murmurs fraught, and many a gibbering sound,
Gurgle, and moan, and hiss, and plash, and fitful bound.

Oh! ’tis a spot where man might sit and weep
His childish griefs and petty cares away;

Wearied Ambition might lie there and sleep,
And hoary Crime in silence kneel to pray.
The fountain's voice, the day-beams faintly given,
Tell of that starlight land we pass in dreams to heaven.

There, lovely forms in elder times were seen,
And snowy kirtles waved between the trees;
And light feet swept along the velvet green,
While the rude anthem rose upon the breeze,
When round the margin England's early daughters
Worshipped the rough-hewn Saint that yet bends o'er the waters.

And some bent priest, whose locks were white as snow,
Would raise his trembling hands and voice to pray;
All would be hushed save that old fountain's flow
That rolling bore the echoes far away;
Perchance a dove, amid the foliage dim,
Might raise a coo, then pause to list their parting hymn.

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That old grey abbey lies in ruins now,
The wild-flowers wave where swung its pond'rous door;
Where once the altar rose, rank nettles grow,
The anthem's solemn sound is heard no more;
'Tis as if Time had laid down to repose,
Drowsed by the fountain's voice, which through the forest flows."

He wrote and worked at his trade; his poetry won for him many admirers, amongst them Lady Blessington, Thomas Moore, Samuel Rogers, the banker-poet, and others, and he was welcomed to their houses. He remarked, "Often have I been sitting in Lady Blessington's splendid drawing-room in the morning, and talking and laughing as familiarly as in the old house at home; and on the same evening I might have been seen on Westminster Bridge, between an apple vendor and a baked-potato merchant, vending my baskets."

In 1836, he wrote "A Day in the Woods," consisting of a series of sketches, stories, and poems. The reading public welcomed the work, and the critical press recognised it as the production of a man of undoubted genius. He continued to make friends, including "L. E. L.," the poetess, Campbell, Leigh Hunt, Jerrold, Disraeli and Thackeray. The merits and success [Pg 195] of his book caused Colburn to make him a tempting offer to write a three-volume novel, and in 1838 appeared "Royston Gower." The work was so popular that the same publisher commissioned him to write two more novels, namely, in 1839, "Fair Rosamond," and in 1840, "Lady Jane Grey." He produced other novels, perhaps the best known is "Gideon Giles." These works are now to be obtained in cheap form, and have been most extensively circulated.

He was assisted and encouraged by Rogers, Lady Blessington and others, to commence as a publisher and bookseller, and was enabled by their kindness to purchase back from Colburn the copyrights of his novels. His place of business was 9, Newgate Street, opposite Christ's Hospital, and from here he issued several of his own books besides works by well-known authors. Miller did not succeed in business, and gave it up to devote all his time to writing books and contributing to the periodicals and newspapers. He wrote for the *Athenæum*, *Literary Gazette*, *Chambers' Journal*, *Household Words*, *Boys' Own Magazine*, the *Illustrated London News*, and other monthlies and weeklies. Many leading articles from his facile pen appeared in the *Morning Post*. His papers on the months in Chambers' "Book of Days," [Pg 196] which describe the varied aspects of the country during the year, have been reproduced in an elegant volume bearing the title of "All Round the Year."

Mr. J. Potter Briscoe, F.R.H.S., kindly supplies me with the following list of books by Thomas Miller:—"All Round the Year," 1860; "Birds, Bees, and Blossoms," 1867, 1869 (see also "Original Poems," etc.); "British Wolf Hunter," 1859; "Boys' Own Library," 6 vols., 1856; "Boys' Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter Books," 1847, 1881; "Boys' Own Country Book, Seasons, and Rural Rides," 1867, 1868; "Brampton among the Roses," 1863; "Child's Country Book," 1867; "Child's Country Story Book," 1867, 1870, 1881; "Common Wayside Flowers," 1841, 1873; "Country Year book," 2 vols., 1847, 1 vol., 1836; "Day in the Woods," 1836; "Desolate Hall," (in "Friendship's Offering") 1838; "Dorothy Dovedale's Trials," 2 vols., 1864; "English Country Life," 1858, 1859, 1864; "Fair Rosamond," 3 vols., 1839, 1 vol., 1862; "Fortune and Fortitude," 1848; "Fred and the Gorillas," 1869, 1873; "Fred Holdsworth" (In *Illustrated London News*), 1852, 1873; "Gaboon," 1868; "Gideon Giles, the [Pg 197] Roper," 1840, 1841, 1859, 1867; "Godfrey Malvern," 1842, 1843, 1844, 1847, 1858, 1877; "Goody Platts and her two Cats," 1864; "History of the Anglo-Saxons," 1848, 1850, 1852, 1856; "Jack-of-All-Trades," 1867; "Lady Jane Grey, a romance," 3 vols., 1840, 1 vol., 1861, 1864; "Langley-on-the-Lea; or, Love and Duty," 1858; "Life and [remarkable] Adventures of a Dog," 1856, 1870; "Lights and Shades of London Life" (forming vol. 5 of Reynolds' *Mysteries of London*); "Little Blue Hood," 1863; "My Father's Garden," 1866, 1867; "No Man's Land, etc.," 1860, 1861, 1863; "Old Fountain" (in *Friendship's Offering*, etc.); "Original Poems for my Children," 1850 (see also "Birds," etc.); "Our Old Town" (Gainsborough) 1857, 1858; "Old Park Road," 1870, 1876; "Picturesque Sketches of

London," 1852 (in the *Illustrated London News*); "Pictures of Country Life," 1846, 1847, 1853; "Poacher and other Pictures of Country Life," 1858; "Poems," 1841, 1848, 1856; "Poetical Language of Flowers," 1838, 1847, 1853, 1856, 1865, 1869, 1872; "Royston Gower," 3 vols., 1830, 1 vol. 1858, 1860, 1874; "Rural Sketches," 1839, 1861; "Sketches of English Country Life"; "Songs for British Riflemen," 1860; "Songs of the Sea Nymphs," [Pg 198] 1857; "Songs of the Seasons," 1865; "Sports and Pastimes of Merry England," 1859 (?-56); "Summer Morning," 1844; "Tales of Old England," 1849, 1881; "Village Queen," 1851, 1852; "Watch the End" (second edition of "My Father's Garden") 1869, 1871, 1873; "Year Book of Country Life," 1855; "Year Book of the Country," 1837; "Young Angler," 1862.

The foregoing volumes are in the Nottingham Public Library, and the librarian, Mr. Briscoe is to be congratulated on bringing together Miller's works in the city closely associated with his career. In Paxton Hood's "Peerage of Poverty," a fine estimate of Miller's ability as an author is given, though very little about his life is recorded. On the 25th of October, 1874, he died at his residence, a small house in West Street, Kensington, leaving a son and two daughters. Shortly before his death an effort was made to get him placed on the Civil List. Mr. Disraeli was not able to include him at the time, but, with his well-known generosity, made him an allowance from some other fund. Miller only received one quarterly instalment before passing away.

The Cottage Countess. [Pg 199]

THE late Poet Laureate has given a world-wide interest to the romantic story of "The Peasant Countess" of "Burleigh House by Stamford town," in his popular poem, "The Lord of Burleigh." He relates how Henry Cecil, in the guise of a landscape painter in humble circumstances, wooes and weds a rustic maiden, and how a shadow overcasts her bright dream when the real rank of her husband is made known to her:—

"But a trouble weighed upon her,
  And perplexed her night and morn,
With the burthen of an honour
  Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
  And she murmured, 'Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter,
  Which did win my heart from me.'
So she drooped and drooped before him,
  Fading slowly from his side:
Three fair children first she bore him,
  Then before her time she died."

The poet tells how keenly the Lord of Burleigh mourned her loss, and that he buried her in [Pg 200] the dress in which she was married.

The real facts, however, are not so poetical; yet Hazlitt says that the story outdoes the "Arabian Nights." The following particulars may be regarded as a correct version of this romantic tale. Henry Cecil was born in the year 1754, and was the only child of the Hon. Thomas Chambers Cecil by his marriage with Miss Charlotte Gardner. At the age of nineteen he had lost his parents, and was the presumptive heir to his uncle's estates and the earldom of Exeter. He was by no means popular with his uncle, and seldom troubled the inmates of Burleigh House with his presence. While still a minor, he married into a good old west of England family, his wife being a lady of great personal charms, named Emma Vernon, the only daughter of the Squire of Hornbury Hall, in the county of Worcester. The union was not a happy one, young Cecil being far from an exemplary husband. He wasted much of his time and money in gambling. After fifteen years of married life he sought and obtained a divorce. His own folly and other circumstances rendered him a poor man, and induced him shortly before the time he obtained a divorce to quit the society of those in his [Pg 201] rank of life, and settle down in one of the secluded villages in Shropshire. He selected Bolas Magna, a charming little place, nestling among apple orchards and green lanes. Here he was known as John Jones, and was lost to the fashionable world, out of sight and out of mind. For a short time he lodged at the village hostelry, freely conversing with the customers who came at night to smoke their pipes and drink their beer. The days he spent in sketching the pretty bits of scenery in the district.

The noisy life of an inn soon palled upon him, and he sought lodgings at some of the farmhouses, but his search was almost futile, as he was viewed with much suspicion; indeed, some went so far as to hint that he was a highwayman. The honest country folk failed to discover any visible means of his making money, although they saw that he spent it pretty freely. He at last procured lodgings at the dwelling of a labourer called Hoggins, and soon made himself a favourite in the humble household. Cecil appears to have been anticipating

the day when he would be a free man, and, even before he had obtained a divorce, he paid some attention to an attractive young woman named Taylor. She, however, being engaged, did not favour his suit. He then made love to Sarah Hoggins, the daughter of his landlady—a young, comely, honest girl, who reciprocated his affection. Her mother was doubtful about the matter, feeling that the marriage of her girl with a stranger was a step that might lead to serious results, and she had a lingering suspicion that there might be some truth in the rumour of her lodger being a highwayman. The father was more favourably inclined; he saw that the man had plenty of money, and it was a golden opportunity not to be missed, and he encouraged the match. Eventually the mother had to give way. In June, 1791, he obtained a divorce, and, on the 3rd of October, in the same year, in the little church of Bolas, Henry Cecil and Sarah Hoggins were married. He bought a piece of land near Hodnet, and on it built a house, the largest in the neighbourhood. The local tradesmen looked upon him with mistrust, and he had to make liberal advances of money before they would undertake the work. Here he lived with his young wife, teaching her such accomplishments as she would require in her future high station. He did not, however, give any hint as to his real character. His superior manners and education, in spite of the mystery of his life, made him friends, and inspired some confidence, so that the ratepayers elected him to one of their parish offices. The duties of his parochial appointment took him to the sessions at Shrewsbury, where he encountered a brother magistrate, who had been an old schoolfellow, although not recognised by him. As a proof of his disposition to oblige his friends and make himself generally useful, it is recorded that on one occasion he gratified his father-in-law by carrying a large pig as a present to a neighbouring squire.

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A little daughter was born at Bolas, who died after living a few days, and was buried in the churchyard, without a stone to mark her grave, which is now forgotten.

After he had been married about two years he read in a country newspaper an account of the death of his uncle, which occurred towards the close of the year 1793. Early in the following January, he repaired, with his wife, then nineteen years of age, to Burleigh House. He merely told her that he had to go to a distant part of the country, and wished to have her company. They travelled on horseback, the wife being seated on a pillion behind her husband, according to the fashion of the period. They stopped at the several noblemen’s and gentlemen’s seats on their route. At last they reached Burleigh House, where she was told that she was a countess, and the mystery of Henry Cecil solved.

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When surrounded by the titled and the great, she sighed for a humbler position, but nevertheless she made an excellent wife and mother, and the happiness of her husband was complete. It was of short duration, for in the flower of her life she died, deeply lamented, on January 17th, 1797.

In addition to the first-born previously mentioned, they had a daughter and two sons. One of the sons was the peer who succeeded his father. Lord Burleigh settled seven hundred a year on his wife’s parents, and gave them the house he had just vacated. The Countess was cordially received by the Earl’s relatives, and mixed in the fashionable society of London, and won respect and regard from all with whom she came in contact.

Lawrence painted her portrait. She is represented as far from rustic in appearance, her face being oval and very pleasing.

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It remains to be stated, to complete the outline of the life of Henry Cecil, that he was created a marquis, that he married for his third wife the Dowager-Duchess of Hamilton, and died in the year 1804.

The Compiler of “Old Moore’s Almanac,” Henry Andrews.

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THE name of Henry Andrews is familiar to the literary and scientific world as the compiler for many years of “Old Moore’s Almanac,” but the particulars of his life are not generally known. His career, although not an eventful one, was most honourable, and furnishes a notable example of a man who, from a humble beginning, by perserverance attained an important position in life.

He was born at Frieston, near Grantham, on February 4th, 1744, of parents in poor circumstances, who were only able to afford him a limited education. In his earliest years he appears to have had a love for astronomy, a science in which he afterwards became one of the most proficient of his day. It is recorded that when only six years old he would frequently stand in his shirt looking at the moon out of his chamber window at midnight; when about ten years of age, he used to fix a table on Frieston Green on clear frosty nights, and set a telescope thereon through which to view the stars. The young student would afterwards sit by the fireside with a table covered with books, making astronomical calculations.

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At an early age he left home to earn his own living, the first situation he filled being that of servant to a shopkeeper at Sleaford. We next trace him to the city of Lincoln, where he was engaged to wait upon a lady. During his leisure time, he took every opportunity to make weather-glasses and weather-houses. The last situation he held as a gentleman's servant, was under J. Feriman, Esq., who found Andrews so intent on study that he kindly allowed him two or three hours daily to devote to that purpose.

We are told that on the 1st of April, 1764, he went to Aswarby Hall, the seat of Sir Christopher Whichcote, to view the eclipse of the sun which was visible on that day. A number of ladies and gentlemen had assembled for the same purpose. Having previously calculated a type of this eclipse, he presented the same to the company, showing them the manner of its appearance in a dark room upon a board, and, after it was over they unanimously declared that his calculations came nearer than any given in the almanacs. Shortly after the above meeting, he opened a school at Basingthorpe, near Grantham. We [Pg 208] presume the venture did not prove satisfactory, for we find that he was afterwards engaged as an usher in a clergyman's boarding-school at Stilton. His next move was to Cambridge, hoping there to obtain assistance in prosecuting his studies from the men of science in the University. Accustomed to a quiet life, he could not endure the bustle of that ancient seat of learning, so left and settled at Royston, Hertfordshire, where he opened a school, and continued to reside until the day of his death. He had only reached the age of twenty-three when he took up his residence at the latter town.

A few years after Andrews settled there, we find his name on the title-page of an almanac, and an advertisement of his school. The title-page of the publication is curious, and reads as follows:—

> "A Royal almanac and meteorological diary for the year of our Lord, 1778, and of the Julian period 6491. The second after Bissextile or leap year, and the eighteenth year of the Reign of his Majesty King George III. Containing the feasts and fasts of the Church of England; the times of the lunations; the rising and setting of the sun; the equation of time for the regulating of clocks and watches; the moon's rising and setting; the times of high water at London Bridge, morning and afternoon; the aspects of the planets and weather. Also, for every sixth day, the increase and decrease of days; the beginning and end [Pg 209] of daylight; the nightly rising, southing and setting of the planets and seven stars; adapted to the meridian and latitude of London. Likewise an exact meteorological journal for the preceding year, or the state of the barometer and thermometer, with the wind, weather, &c., as they were registered every day. Also the depth of rain which fell, and the observations made every month. To which are added the eclipses of the sun and moon and other remarkable phenomena that will happen this year; the Middlesex commencement of the sessions of the peace; a table of the terms and their returns, and for finding the times of high water at most of the seaports of this kingdom. By Henry Andrews, Teacher of the Mathematics, at Royston, Herts. London: Printed for T. Carnan, in St. Paul's Church-Yard, who dispossessed the stationers of the privilege of printing almanacs, which they had unjustly monopolised 170 years, 1778. Price 1s."

Following is a copy of his advertisement:—

> "At Royston, Herts., Young Gentlemen and others may be commendably boarded with the Author of this Almanac at reasonable rates, and be taught by him as follows, viz., Writing, Arithmetic, Mensuration, Geometry, Trigonometry, Navigation, Astronomy, the use of the Globes, &c."

For forty-three years Henry Andrews compiled *Moore's Almanac* for the Company of Stationers. The following extract from a letter written by Andrews' only son, proves that he did not receive liberal remuneration for his arduous task. Mr. W. H. Andrews stated:—"My father's calculations, etc., for *Moore's Almanac* continued during a period of forty-three years; and although through his great talent and management he increased the sale of that [Pg 210] work from 100,000 to 500,000 copies, yet, strange to say, all he received for his services was £25 per annum. Yet I never heard him murmur even once about it; such was his delight in pursuing his favourite studies, that his anxiety about remuneration was out of the question. Sir Richard Phillips, who at times visited him at Royston, once met him in London, and endeavoured to persuade him to go with him to Stationers' Hall, and he would get him £100; but he declined going, saying that he was satisfied."

He was compiler of the *Nautical Ephemeris*, and on retiring from the appointment he received the thanks of the Board of Longitude, accompanied by a handsome present, as a just tribute of long and able services, for which he would not receive more than a nominal payment.

In 1805, Andrews built a house in High Street, Royston, and in it he spent the remainder of his life. It is worthy of note that he paid the builders of the work as it progressed, on account of the men being in poor circumstances, a good proof of his kind consideration.

At the age of seventy-six, Andrews closed his well-spent life. We find in the *Gentleman's* [Pg 211] *Magazine*, of February, 1820, a short notice of his career, concluding thus:—

“His profound knowledge of Astronomy and the Mathematics was acknowledged by all scientific men who were acquainted with his abilities, but the greatness of his mind was never more conspicuous than during the period of his last illness; and on his deathbed not a murmur escaped his lips, but serenity of mind, patience, and resignation were constantly depicted in his countenance, in which amiable situation he continued until the vital spark fled.”

He was interred in the new burial ground, Royston, and over his remains was placed a tombstone, bearing the following inscription:—

> “In memory of Mr. Henry Andrews, who, from a limited education, made great progress in the liberal sciences, and was justly esteemed one of the best Astronomers of the Age. He departed this life, in full assurance of a better, January 26th, 1820, aged 76 years.”

A portrait of Henry Andrews was published, and is now very rare. Dr. Charles Mackay, in his entertaining volume entitled “Extraordinary Popular Delusions” (issued by Routledge), gives a small portrait, and under it states, “Henry Andrews, the original ‘Francis Moore.’” This is a [Pg 212] mistake, as the Almanac was named after Francis Moore, physician, one of the many quack doctors who duped the credulous in the latter part of the 17th century. In Chambers’s “Book of Days” (Vol. I., pages 9-14) will be found some very interesting information respecting Almanacs and Almanac Writers. We find it stated that “Francis Moore, in his Almanac for 1711, dates from the sign of the Old Lilly, near the old barge-house, in Christ Church Parish, Southwark, July 19th, 1710.” Then follows an advertisement, in which he undertakes to cure diseases. Lysons mentions him as one of the remarkable men who, at different periods, resided at Lambeth, and says that his house was in Calcott’s Alley, High Street, then called Back Lane, where he practised as astrologer, physician, and schoolmaster. *Moore’s Almanac* had appeared some years prior to 1711. We refer the reader wishing to obtain information respecting written and printed almanacs, to “The Book of Days.”

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James Nayler,
The Mad Quaker, who claimed to be the Messiah.

HISTORY furnishes particulars of many men who have claimed to be the Messiah, and perhaps the most celebrated of the number is James Nayler, “the mad Quaker.” He was born at East Ardsley, near Wakefield, in the year 1616. It is certain that his parents were in humble circumstances, and it is generally believed that his father occupied a house near the old church, and that he was a small farmer. James Nayler, for a person in his station in life, received a fairly good education. In his early manhood he was a husbandman, and resided in his native village. When about twenty-two years of age he married, as he puts it, “according to the world,” and removed to Wakefield.

Shortly after his marriage, the Civil War broke out in England, and Nayler took his share in the struggle between King and Parliament. He joined, in 1641, as a private, the Parliamentarian army, and his conduct and ability gaining him advancement, he rose to the position of quarter-master under General Lambert. While in Scotland ill-health obliged him [Pg 214] to retire from active service, and he returned home.

Nayler carefully studied the Scriptures, and was a zealous member of the Independents, worshipping at Horbury, but he left this body in disgrace. It transpired that he had been paying attentions to a married woman named Mrs. Roper, of Horbury, whose husband had been absent from her for a long period, and that she became a mother, and that Nayler was the father of the child. The Rev. Mr. Marshall, the minister of the Independents, exposed him, and took him severely to task, so that he was finally expelled from that body.

George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, visited Wakefield in the year 1651, and made a convert of James Nayler. Here commences the real interest of Nayler’s career—a career in which there is much to deplore, but much also certainly to cause wonder. He possessed extraordinary gifts as a preacher, and impressed the people with the truth of his teaching, more especially in the North and West of England. Troubles beset him almost on every hand,—troubles often caused through his own mistaken zeal and frail conduct; but he [Pg 215] bore his trials with a noble Christian spirit. Nayler had no sooner joined the Quakers then he commenced what he termed his travels. At the quarter-sessions held at Appleby, in 1652, he was tried and found guilty of blasphemy, and sentenced to twenty weeks’ imprisonment. On being released he continued spreading his doctrines in the North. We gather from the remarks of an officer who had served under Cromwell a testimony to the power of Nayler’s preaching. “After the battle of Dunbar,” says the officer, “as I was riding in Scotland at the head of my troop, I observed at some distance from the road a crowd of people, and one higher than the rest; upon which I sent one of my men to see, and bring me word what was the meaning of the gathering; and seeing him ride up and stay there, without returning

according to my order, I sent a second, who stayed in like manner; and then I determined to go myself. When I came thither, I found it was James Nayler preaching to the people, but with such power and reaching energy as I had not till then been witness of. I could not help staying a little, although I was afraid to stay, for fear I was made a *Quaker*, being forced to tremble at the sight of myself. I was struck with more terror by the preaching of James Nayler than I was at the battle of Dunbar, when we had nothing else to expect but to fall a prey to the swords of our enemies, without being able to help ourselves. I clearly saw the Cross of Christ to be submitted to, so I durst stay no longer, but got off, and carried condemnation for it in my own breast. The people there cried out against themselves, imploring mercy, a thorough change, and the whole work of salvation to be effected by them." [Pg 216]

Nayler, in 1654 after visiting in the West, wended his way to London, and preached to two congregations which had been formed by Edward Burrough and Francis Howgil, members of the Society of Friends, who suffered imprisonment with him at Appleby. He broke up both congregations, and drew after him "some inconsiderate women."

His mind gave way, and he believed that he was the Messiah. "Notwithstanding the irregularities of Nayler's life," says Scatcherd, the learned historian of Morley, "there were many things in the man, which, with low and ignorant people, exceedingly favoured his pretensions to the Messiahship. He appeared, both as to form and feature, the perfect likeness to Jesus Christ, according to the best descriptions. His face was of the oval shape, his forehead broad, his hair auburn and long, and parted on the brow, his beard flowing, his eyes beaming with a benignant lustre, his nose of the Grecian or Caucasian order, his figure erect and majestic, his aspect sedate, his speech sententious, deliberative, and grave, and his manner authoritative." Carlyle has drawn a pen picture of Nayler, but not with the skill of the foregoing. [Pg 217]

It is not our intention to attempt to trace Nayler from place to place in his wanderings, but to touch on the more important episodes of his closing years. He visited the West in 1652 on a religious mission, and revisited it again four years later. During his visit to Cornwall, he prophesied, and subsequently one of the charges made against him was that he proclaimed himself to be a prophet. At Exeter he was charged with vagrancy, and imprisoned. During his confinement he was visited by a number of women, who had been moved by his teaching. Amongst the number was a widow named Dorcas Erbury. She fell into a swoon, and it was supposed that she was dead. Nayler went through certain ceremonies, and he pretended to have restored her to life. Referring to this when examined by the Bristol Magistrate at a later period, the woman said: "Nayler laid his hand on my head after I had been dead two days, and said, 'Dorcas, arise!' and I arose, and live, as thou seest." On being asked if she had any witness to corroborate her statement, she said that her mother was present. The local authorities at Exeter released Nayler after detaining him for a short time. At this period some strange scenes occurred. "The usual posture of Nayler," says Scatcherd, "was sitting in a chair, while his company of men and women knelt before him." These, it appears, were very numerous and constant for whole days together. At the commencement of the service, a female stepped forth and sang:— [Pg 218]

> "This is the joyful day,
> Behold! the King of righteousness is come!"

Another, taking him by the hand, exclaimed:—

> "Rise up, my love—my dove—and come away,
> Why sittest thou among the pots."

Then, putting his hand upon her mouth, she sunk upon the ground before him, the auditory vociferating:—

> "Holy, holy, holy, to the Almighty."

His procession through Chepstow caused much amazement in that quiet place. "Nayler" is described as being mounted on the back of a horse or mule;—one Woodcock preceded him bareheaded, and on foot:—a female on each side of Nayler held his bridle; many spread garments in his way,—while the women sang: "Hosannah to the Son of David—blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord—Hosannah in the highest!" [Pg 219]

Nayler and his followers entered Bristol in a procession similar to the one just described. We are told that on this particular day in the year of grace 1656, when he visited the city of Bristol, rain was falling, and the roads were deep with mud, but neither mud nor rain could check the ardour of himself and disciples, and they sang hymns of praise. They first wended their steps to the High Cross, and then to the White Hart, Broad Street, where a couple of Quakers were staying. The local magistrates were soon on the alert, and had the party apprehended and cast into prison. After being examined by Bristol magistrates, Nayler and his followers were sent to London to be examined before Parliament. His examination and the debate on it occupied many days, and the members finally resolved "that James Nayler was guilty of horrid blasphemy, and that he was a grand impostor and seducer of the people"; and his sentence was, "that he should be set on the pillory, in the Palace Yard, Westminster, during the space of two hours, on Thursday next, and be whipped by the hangman through the streets from Westminster to the Old Exchange, London; and there, [Pg 220]

likewise, he should be set on the pillory, with his head in the pillory, for the space of two hours, between the hours of eleven and one, on Saturday next, in each place wearing a paper containing an inscription of his crimes; and that at the Old Exchange his tongue should be bored through with a hot iron, and that he should be there also stigmatised in the forehead with the letter B; and that he should be afterwards sent to Bristol, to be conveyed in and through the city on horseback, with his face backwards, and there also should be whipped the next market-day after he came thither; and that thence he should be committed to prison in Bridewell, London, and there be restrained from the society of all people, and there to labour hard till he should be released by Parliament; and during that time he should [Pg 221] be debarred the use of pen, ink, and paper, and he should have no relief but what he earned by his daily labour." This terrible sentence was duly carried out, although Parliament and Cromwell were petitioned to mitigate the punishment. During his imprisonment he wrote his recantations in letters addressed to the Quakers. After being confined for two years he was set at liberty, and repaired to Bristol, and at a public meeting made a confession of his offence and fall. His address moved nearly all present to tears. The Quakers once more received him back to their Society.

His end came in the year 1660. In that year he left London for Wakefield, but failed to reach it. At Holm, near King's Rippon, Huntingdonshire, one night he was bound and robbed, and left in a field, where he was found by a countryman. He was removed to a house at Holm and every attention paid to him, but he soon died from the results of the rough treatment he had received at the hands of the highwaymen.

A Biographical Romance. Swan's Strange Story.

[Pg 222]

IN the olden days the misfortunes of William Swan frequently formed the topic of conversation amongst friends, who gathered round the fireside in the homes on the wild wolds of Yorkshire, where he spent some years of his disappointed life. The full details of his career have been lost in the lapse of time; never, to our knowledge, have they been committed to paper, but sufficient particulars may be brought together to prove in his case the truth of the old saying that "fact is stranger than fiction."

Nearly two centuries ago there was joy in Benwell Hall, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, the stately mansion of Richard Swan, Esq., the occasion of the rejoicing being the birth of an heir. The parents dreamed of a bright future for their boy, and proudly predicted that he would, in a worthy manner, perpetuate the name and fame of Swan. The happy expectations of boyhood were not to be realised, for the young heir had barely reached the age of nine years, when he was kidnapped from his home, in order that another might inherit the wealth that by [Pg 223] kinship belonged to him. He was quietly shipped on board the "New Britannia" brig, which formed part of the squadron under command of the famous Sir Cloudesley Shovel. His position was that of a "powder monkey," and his chief employment was to bring powder from the magazine to the gunners during the naval engagements. On the 22nd of October, 1707, the fleet was wrecked on the Scilly Isles, owing to the Admiral mistaking the rocks for the sea-coast. No less than eight hundred brave men found a watery grave, and several vessels were lost. Happily the ship in which Swan sailed escaped destruction. Ill-fate, however, followed in its wake, for, shortly afterwards, it was captured by an Algerine corsair, and Swan was sold to the Moors as a slave. Four weary years were passed in Barbary. He gained his liberty through the assistance of the Redeeming Friars, a noble body of men who were the means of freeing thousands of Christians from captivity. Many benevolent persons left large sums of money for redeeming their fellow countrymen from bondage, and this money was expended judiciously through the agency of the Friars.

Swan had not the good fortune to reach his home in safety. He was again taken prisoner, [Pg 224] and sold once more into slavery, this time to an English planter in South Carolina. Here his sufferings were terrible. He toiled with negroes from sunrise to sunset, the slave-drivers keeping them busy at work in the cotton and sugar plantations by means of the lash. Managing to escape, he landed, after an exile of twenty years, on his native shore in 1726, and speedily made his way to Newcastle-on-Tyne. His father's footman, Thomas Chance, and his old nurse, Mrs. Gofton, identified him, and he at once instituted a claim for the estate of his uncle, Alderman Swan, Mayor of Hull, who had died and left property yielding an income of £20,000 a year. His efforts proved unsuccessful, and the deep disappointment broke his heart, his death occurring in 1736, at the age of thirty-eight years.

Swan had married a Yorkshire woman called Jane Cole, of North Dalton, near Driffield, by whom he had a son named William. The widowed mother told her boy, as soon as he was able to understand, that he was the rightful heir to vast estates, and encouraged him to persevere to obtain them. The melancholy fate of her husband was not sufficient to crush [Pg 225] her ardent spirit. A lawyer at Driffield was consulted, and he advised that action be taken.

He undertook to conduct the case without payment until the estates were obtained, beyond the sums for correspondence, court fees, etc. The man, however, drained the poor fellow of every penny that he could procure, and both mother and son denied themselves the necessaries of life to keep up the constant demands of the solicitor. Months and years passed without getting any satisfaction. Poor Mrs. Swan at last felt the case to be hopeless, and the anxious waiting, with its disappointing results, preyed so on her mind that she fell into ill-health and died. Speaking to her son before her death, she said: “Oh, William, let this horrid plea drop. Don’t pay that man any more money. I feel that he would skin us both alive. They are a bad set all these law men.” William was young, and like the majority of young people, hope was firmly fixed in his nature. He not only devoted all his money to law, but bought a second-hand copy of “Blackstone’s Commentaries,” and spent all his leisure time in studying it, until he was complete master of the work. After the death of his mother, he gave up house-keeping, and took lodgings with a widow, having a daughter about twenty- [Pg 226] four years of age. They became interested in his case, and lent him money to carry on his suit. A rich uncle had left the girl a few hundred pounds. The young couple were brought into sympathy with each other, which ripened into mutual affection, and in a short time, with the consent freely given of the mother, they were married. Shortly after the wedding it transpired that the attorney at Driffield had been cheating his client, and instead of using the hard-earned money of William Swan to gain his estates, he had spent it in dissipation, and was a ruined man.

Swan proceeded to London, and consulted another lawyer. This man advised an action which swallowed up the wife’s small fortune, without getting them one step nearer obtaining the estate. Trouble after trouble came upon William. His heart was almost crushed, but he continued the action to the best of his ability. His wife begged of him to leave law alone, to return to their Yorkshire home, live by their industry, and give up all thoughts of the property. He refused to act upon her good advice. He got into debt, and was committed to the Fleet prison on his inability to pay. Here ill luck still followed him, for he caught the jail [Pg 227] fever. In his sickness his devoted wife got permission to visit him, and bring him some delicacies. She, alas, caught the fever, and in a few days died. He recovered, but the death of his loving helpmate was almost too much for him. She had endured much for his sake, but never by word or deed showed regret at becoming his wife. Shortly afterwards a jail delivery enabled him to leave prison. His illness rendered him so weak that he could hardly walk. He obtained lodgings in an obscure lane or alley near Chiswell Street, and afterwards was found dead in bed. It is believed that his remains were buried in a pauper’s grave.

Short Letters. [Pg 228]

THE shortest letters on record are two exchanged between a couple of members of the Society of Friends. One of them, wishing to learn if a correspondent in a distant town had any news to communicate, posted to him a quarto sheet of paper, on which nothing but a note of interrogation was written, thus: ? (meaning, “what news?”) He received in reply, by next post, a blank sheet of paper, indicating that there was nothing to relate.

Some of the best of brief letters have been penned by members of the dramatic profession. The following are good specimens. A tradesman made application to Mordaunt, the player, for payment of an account, as follows:—

> “Sir,—Your bill having been standing a very long time, I beg to have it settled forthwith.
>
> Yours, etc.,
> J. Thwaites.”

Said the comedian in reply:—

> “Sir,—When your bill is tired of *standing*, it is welcome to sit down.
>
> Yours, etc.,
> T. H. M.”

The next letters passed between Samuel Foote, the famous actor, and his unfortunate [Pg 229] mother:—

> “Dear Sam,—I am in prison for debt; come and assist your loving mother,
>
> E. Foote.”

His answer was almost as brief, certainly as pathetic:—

> “Dear Mother,—So am I, which prevents his duty being paid to his loving mother by her affectionate son.

Sam Foote.”

“P.S.—I have sent my attorney to assist you; in the meantime let us hope for better days.”

Quin had a misunderstanding with Rich, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, which resulted in the former leaving in an unceremonious manner. He soon regretted the step that he had taken, and wrote to his old friend and manager:—

“I am at Bath.

Quin.”

Rich did not deem such a letter a sufficient apology for his unwarrantable conduct, and thus replied to it:—

“Stay there and be hanged.

Rich.”

The Rev. Sydney Smith, in answer to a friend who had forwarded a letter asking him to sit for his portrait, to be executed by Landseer, the gifted painter, whose pictures of dogs made him famous, sent the following reply:— [Pg 230]

“Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?”

Genial Charles Lamb wrote an amusing letter to Haydon, the artist, in answer to an invitation to pay him a visit. The odd address of Haydon was the cause of the note, which ran as follows:—

“My dear Haydon,—I will come, with pleasure, to 22, Lisson Grove, North, at Rossi’s, half-way up, right hand side, if I can find it.

Yours,
C. Lamb.”

“20, Russell Court,
Covent Garden, East,
Half-way up, next the corner,
Left-hand side.”

A lady named Morris, of Plymouth, is recorded to have been the first of her sex to venture under water in a diving bell.

She had wit as well as courage, and wrote to her father a rhyming epistle, saying:—

“From a belle, my dear father, you’ve oft had a line,
But not from a bell under water;
Just now I can only assure you I’m thine,
Your diving and dutiful daughter.”

Frank Smedley, the author of “Frank Fairleigh,” addressed to a lady friend the following letter in verse:—

“To Mrs. G. H. Virtue.” [Pg 231]

“Thou better half of Virtue, gentle friend,
Fairly to thee, I, Fairleigh, greeting send;
Frankly I give what frankly you desire;
You thus Frank Fairleigh’s autograph acquire.
To make assurance doubly sure, this medley
Of Franks and Fairleighs this I sign—
Frank Smedley.”

A famous sporting character, named Captain O’Byrne, laid a wager about Admiral Payne, and wrote to him as follows:—

“Dear Payne,—Pray, were you bread to the sea?”

The witty Admiral made reply:—

“Dear O’Byrne,—No; but the sea was bread to me.”

It is said that King Charles the Second received the following letter:—

“King Charles,—One of your subjects the other night robbed me of £40, for which I robbed another of the same sum, who has inhumanly sent me to Newgate, and he vows I shall be hanged; therefore, for your own sake, save my life, or you will lose one of the best seamen in your navy.

Jack Skifton.”

His Majesty promptly answered the letter:—

“Jack Skifton,—For this time I’ll save thee from the gallows, but if hereafter

thou art guilty of the like, I'll have thee hanged, though the best seaman in my navy.

Charles Rex."

Here is a copy of a quaint letter sent to another king. It was written by Dr. Schmidt, sacristan of the Cathedral at Berlin, to Frederick of Prussia:

"Sire,—I acquaint your Majesty, 1st, that they are wanting books of psalms for the Royal Family. I acquaint your Majesty, 2ndly, that there wants wood to warm the Royal seats. And I acquaint your Majesty, 3rdly, that the balustrade next the river, behind the church, is become ruinous. [Pg 232]

Schmidt,
Sacristan of the Cathedral."

In reply to the foregoing diverting communication the king wrote:—

"I acquaint Mr. Sacrist Schmidt, 1st, that they who want to sing songs may buy books. I acquaint Mr. Sacrist Schmidt, 2ndly, that those who want to be kept warm may buy wood. I acquaint Mr. Sacrist Schmidt, 3rdly, that I shall not trust any longer to the balustrade next to the river; and I acquaint Mr. Sacrist Schmidt, 4thly, that I will not have any more correspondence with him.

Frederick."

The following phonographic curiosity is extracted from the *Times*. It was written by an unsophisticated person to his physician, in Lancashire:—

"Cer yole oblige me uf yole kum and ce me i hev a bad kowld an am hill in mi bow hills an hev lorst mi happetite.

Roger Trooman."

One Highlander wrote to another the following smart letter:—

"My dear Glengarry,—As soon as you can prove yourself to be my chief, I shall be ready to acknowledge you. In the meantime

I am yours,
MacDonald."

The Duke of Wellington engaged an intelligent Scotch farmer, named Heriot, to act as his private secretary. [Pg 233]

"Walking in the city one day," says the Rev. Dr. Charles Rogers, "Mr. Heriot met an old acquaintance from Scotland."

"Hallo! Heriot," said his friend, "what are you doing in London?"

"I am secretary to the Duke of Wellington," answered Heriot.

"You are nothing of the sort," said the Scotsman; "and I fear you're doing little good, since you would impose upon me in this fashion."

Returning to Scotland, it occurred to Heriot's acquaintance that he would write to the Duke, warning him that one Heriot "had been passing himself off as his secretary."

He received the following reply:

"Sir,—I am directed by the Duke of Wellington to acknowledge the receipt of your letter; and I am,

Your obedient servant,
J. Heriot,
Private Secretary."

A captain being ordered with his regiment to the Cape, made application to the Duke of Wellington for permission to try and arrange for a transfer to another corps. The "Iron Duke" merely turned up his letter and wrote "Sail or sell," and returned it to the applicant. [Pg 234]

Mr. George Seton, who has devoted much attention to this theme, tells an American story in which a brief letter holds a prominent place. He states that "in 1693, the Rev. Stephen Mix made a journey to Northampton in search of a wife. He arrived at the Rev. Solomon Stoddard's, and informed him of the object of his visit. Mr. Stoddard introduced him to his six daughters, and then retired. Addressing Mary, the eldest, Mr. Mix said that he had lately settled at Wethersfield, was desirous of obtaining a wife, and concluded by offering his heart and hand. The blushing damsel replied that so important a proposal required time for consideration; and accordingly Mr. Mix left the room in order to smoke a pipe with her father, while she took the case to 'avizandum.' On her answer being sent for, she requested further time for consideration; and it was agreed that she should send her answer by letter to Wethersfield. In the course of a few weeks, Mr. Mix received a reply, which was soon followed by the wedding:—

"Northampton,
3rd November, 1693.

Rev. Stephen Mix,—Yes.—Mary Stoddard."

We will bring to a close our examples of laconic letters with another specimen from the other side of the Atlantic. A notable dark day at Boston, on the 19th March, 1790, induced a lady to write to Dr. Byles, an eccentric but clever notability, the following note:— [Pg 235]

"Dear Doctor,—How do you account for this darkness?"

He simply said:—

"Dear Madam,—I am as much in the dark as you are."

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Footnotes:

[1] He was thirty years of age.

[2] The Royal Institution where the Rev. Sydney Smith was reading lectures on moral philosophy. The particular lecture alluded to in the above ode was "The Sublime."

[3] A fashionable milliner.

Transcriber's Notes:

Punctuation has been corrected without note.

Other than the corrections noted by hover information, inconsistencies in spelling and hyphenation have been retained from the original.

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