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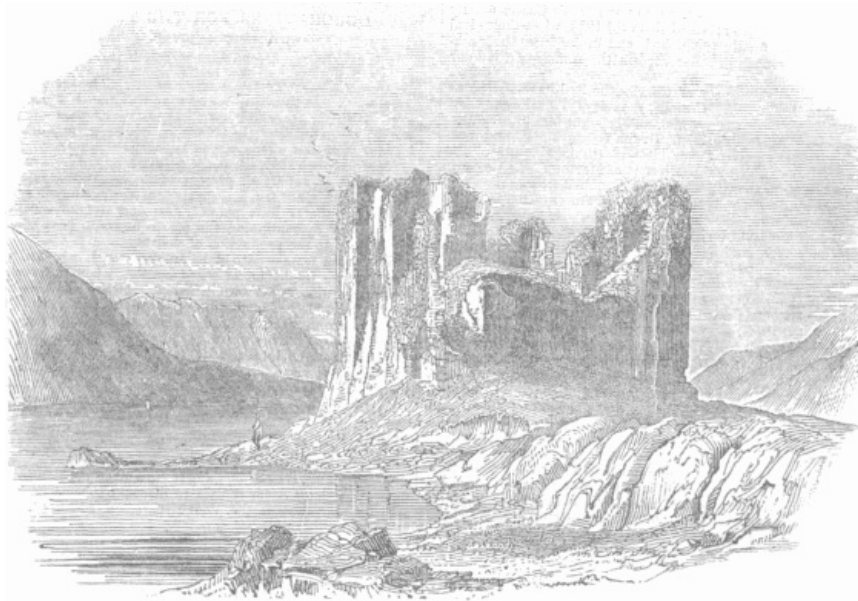
THE IRISH PENNY JOURNAL.

[Pg 25]

NUMBER 4.

SATURDAY, JULY 25, 1840.

VOLUME 1.



CAISLEAN-NA-CIRCE, OR THE HEN'S CASTLE.

Our prefixed illustration gives a near view of one of the most interesting ruins now remaining in the romantic region of Connemara, or the Irish Highlands, and which is no less remarkable for its great antiquity than for the singularly wild and picturesque character of its situation, and that of its surrounding scenery. It is the feature that gives poetic interest to the most beautiful portion of Lough Corrib—its upper extremity—where a portion of the lake, about three miles in length, is apparently surrounded and shut in by the rocky and precipitous mountains of Connemara and the Joyce country, which it reflects upon its surface, without any object to break their shadows, or excite a feeling of human interest, but the one little lonely Island-Castle of the Hen. That an object thus situated—having no accompaniments around but those in keeping with it—should, in the fanciful traditions of an imaginative people, be deemed to have had a supernatural origin, is only what might have been naturally expected; and such, indeed, is the popular belief. If we inquire of the peasantry its origin, or the origin of its name, the ready answer is given, that it was built by enchantment in one night by a cock and a hen grouse, who had been an Irish prince and princess!

There is, indeed, among some of the people of the district a dim tradition of its having been

erected as a fastness by an O'Conor, King of Connaught, and some venture to conjecture that this king was no other than the unfortunate Roderick, the last King of Ireland; and that the castle was intended by him to serve as a place of refuge and safety, to which he could retire by boat, if necessity required, from the neighbouring monastery of Cong, in which he spent the last few years of his life: and it is only by this supposition that they can account for the circumstance of a castle being erected by the O'Conors in the very heart of a district which they believe to have been in the possession of the O'Flahertys from time immemorial. But this conjecture is wholly erroneous, and the true founders and age of this castle are to be found in our authentic but as yet unpublished Annals, from which it appears certain that the Hen's Castle was one of several fortresses erected, with the assistance of Richard de Burgo, Lord of Connaught, and Lord Justice of Ireland, by the sons of Roderick, the last monarch of the kingdom. It is stated in the Annals of Connaught, and in the Annals of the Four Masters, at the year 1225, that Hugh O'Conor (son of Cathal Crovedearg), King of Connaught, and the Lord Justice of Ireland, Richard De Burgo, arriving with their English at the Port of Inis Creamha, on the east side of Lough Corrib, caused Hugh O'Flaherty, the Lord of West Connaught, to surrender the island of Inis Creamha, Oilen-na-Circe, or the Hen's Island, and all the vessels of the lake, into Hugh O'Conor's hands, for assurance of his fidelity.

[Pg 26]

From this entry it would appear that the Hen's Island, as well as the island called Inis Creamha, had each a castle on it previously; and this conclusion is strengthened by a subsequent entry in the same Annals, at the year 1233, from which it appears that this castle, as well as others, had been erected by the sons of Roderick, who had been long in contention for the government with Cathal Crovedearg, and his sons Hugh and Felim, and had, during these troubles, possessed themselves of O'Flaherty's country. On the death of Hugh O'Conor, who was treacherously slain by Geoffry De Mares, or De Marisco, in 1228, they appear to have again seized on the strongholds of the country, that of the Hen's Castle among the rest, and to have retained them till 1233, when their rival Felim O'Conor finally triumphed, and broke down their castles. This event is thus narrated in the Annals of the Four Masters:—

“1233. Felim, the son of Charles the Red-handed, led an array into Connaught. Cormac, the son of Tomaltagh (Lord of Moylurg), went to meet him, and brought him to Moylurg, where they erected a camp at Druim Greagraighe, and were joined by Cormac, by Conor his son, the inhabitants of the three Tuathas, and by the two sons of Mortogh Mac Dermot, Donogh and Mortogh. They here consulted with each other, and resolved upon going in pursuit of Hugh (King of Connaught) and the other sons of Roderic. After overtaking them, they defeated Hugh, slew himself, his brother, Hugh Muimhneach his son, and Donogh More, the son of Dermot, who was the son of Roderic, and many others besides. There were also slain Raghallach O'Flanigan, Thomas Biris, Constable of Ireland, his relative John Guer, and many other Englishmen. This was after the bells and croziers had been rung against them, after they had been cursed and excommunicated by the clergy of Connaught; for Hugh Muimhneach had violated and plundered Tibohine and many other churches, so that he and his adherents fell in revenge of their dishonour to the saints whose churches they had violated. The kingdom and sovereignty of Connaught were wrested from the sons of Roderic, the son of Torlogh, on that day. Felim, the son of Charles the Red-handed, then assumed the government of Connaught, *and demolished the castles which had been erected by the power of the sons of Roderic O'Conor and Mac William Burke*, namely, the Castle of Bon Gaillimbe, *Caislen-na-Circe*, Caislen-na-Caillighe, and the Castle of Dunamon.”

In subsequent times the Hen's Castle reverted to the O'Flahertys, and was repaired and garrisoned by them till the time of Cromwell, when, as we are informed by Roderick O'Flaherty, it was finally dismantled and left to decay. Still, however, enough remains to exhibit its original plan, which was that of an Anglo-Norman castle or keep, in the form of a parallelogram, with three projecting towers on its two longest sides; and the architectural features of the thirteenth century are also visible in some of its beautifully executed windows and doorways.

The Hen's Castle is not without its legendary traditions connected with its history anterior to its dilapidation; and the following outline of one of these—and the latest—as told at the cottage firesides around Lough Corrib, may be worth preserving as having a probable foundation in truth.

It is said that during the troubled reign of Queen Elizabeth, a lady of the O'Flahertys, who was an heiress and a widow, with an only child, a daughter, to preserve her property from the grasp of her own family and that of the De Burgos or Burkes, shut herself up with her child in the Hen's Castle, attended by twenty faithful followers, of tried courage and devotion to her service, of her own and her husband's family. As such a step was, however, pregnant with danger to herself, by exciting the attention and alarm of the government and local authorities, and furnishing her enemies with an excuse for aggression, she felt it necessary to obtain the queen's sanction to her proceedings; and accordingly she addressed a letter to her majesty, requesting her permission to arm her followers, and alleging as a reason for it, the disaffected state of the country, and her ardent desire to preserve its peace for her majesty. The letter, after the fashion of the times, was not signed by the lady in her acquired matron's name, but in her maiden one, of which no doubt she was more proud; it was Bivian or Bevinda O'Flaherty. The queen received it graciously; but not being particularly well acquainted with the gender of Irish Christian names, and never suspecting, from the style or matter of the epistle, that it had emanated from one of her own sex, she returned an answer, written with her own hand, authorising her good friend “Captain Bivian O'Flaherty” to retain twenty men at her majesty's expense, for the preservation of the peace of the country; and they were maintained accordingly, till the infant heiress, becoming adult, was

united to Thomas Blake, the ancestor of the present Sir John Blake of Menlo Castle, and proprietor of the Castle of the Hen.

To these brief notices of an ancient castle, not hitherto described, or its age ascertained, we shall only add, that there are few military structures of lime and stone now remaining in Ireland that can boast an equal antiquity.

P.

OCCUPATIONS FOR THE YOUNG.

BY MARTIN DOYLE.

Habit is said to be a second nature, and it is often stronger than the first. At first we easily take the bend from the hand of the master, but the second nature, which is of our own making, is frequently proof against any alteration. How important, then, is *education*, which gives the turn and moulding to the mind while it is flexible, fixes the habits, and forms the character! The discipline of the mind, with respect to its natural bias, is either misdirected or misunderstood in nine cases out of ten, and latent talents or tendencies, which by proper culture might be rendered sources of enjoyment to the possessor, and useful to the community, are restrained, if not too powerful for suppression, from their proper developement, by absurd and artificial treatment.

In the upper classes, a parent, perhaps, incapable of estimating the capacity of his son, determines with himself that the profession, suppose of divinity, of law, or of medicine, is the most lucrative, gentlemanlike, or otherwise eligible, and that the boy shall be educated accordingly.

The unfortunate youth who has no talent for the acquisition of languages, and cannot comprehend the simplest proposition in geometry, is condemned to pursue a prescribed routine, and to pass many of the most precious years of his life in the unavailing effort to learn, through the drudgery of a classical school, what is repugnant to his taste, and beyond his powers of comprehension; and all this time, from being constantly engaged in *thumbing* the elementary books of the dead languages (which are never at his *finger ends*, in the acceptation of the common phrase), he grows up shamefully ignorant of his vernacular tongue, in which he can neither read with fluency nor spell with correctness.

The schoolmaster, however, is expected to prepare him for the university within a given time, and he must be *made up* for entrance accordingly. If the parents are told that Young Hopeful has no turn for a literary life, no capacity for learning what is required, they doubt the judgment of the informant, who tells them the truth; for the acknowledgment of this would be an indirect admission of their own incapacity; and in proportion to their ignorance and dullness, is their self assurance that their booby has excellent abilities. The youth is therefore forced forward in spite of his natural repugnance to books; and if afterwards smuggled through the university into a profession which may give him place or emolument, without ability or exertion on his part, he disgraces his station by general ignorance and unfitness; and if he be admitted into a profession which yields honour or emolument only in proportion to talents and industry, he totally fails of the object, and it is discovered too late that the selection of his avocation was in some way *unlucky*.

Now, it is very probable that if such an every-day boy had been permitted to pursue some track for which his inclinations qualified him, instead of being limited to a course of unsuitable and distasteful occupations, he might have acquired useful knowledge of some sort. For example, supposing him to stumble at metrical "longs and shorts," or to be stuck between the horns of a dilemma, or be lost amidst the mazes of metaphysics, he might have that peculiar turn which would render him a good farmer, an excellent judge of "long and short wools" or of "long and short horns," or that shrewdness which would render him a clever tradesman, a man

"Who knows what's what, and that's as high
As metaphysic wit doth fly."

And so certain am I that many young men who enter our university would prefer and far better comprehend the plain and practical lecture of a professor of agriculture, surrounded by models of machinery and plates of cattle, &c., than lectures of a far more pretending character, that I cannot avoid lamenting the deficiency in the department of agriculture which Socrates designated "the nurse and mother of all the arts," and Gibbon "the foundation of all manufactures."

[Pg 27]

The example afforded in this respect by the University of Edinburgh is worthy of the imitation of Trinity College. To afford at least the opportunities of gaining such information on this subject as the mind may be capable of receiving or predisposed to receive, cannot but be deemed judicious. And the theoretical knowledge of husbandry is incalculably more needed by the gentry and

middle classes of Ireland than by those of the same grades in Scotland, where almost every land-proprietor and farmer understands the subject more or less.

Far be it from me to decry the advantages of what is called learning, but I would have a more diversified course, both in our schools *of every class*, and in the universities, so as to comprehend those useful branches of information, to which the student, if denied by Providence the faculties requisite for the attainment of others, may apply himself with pleasure or advantage.

I have met with many young persons of exceeding dullness in *book learning*, of decided distaste to the pursuits of *literature*, who have manifested a quick apprehension of *mechanical contrivances*, practically exhibited a love of natural history, of gardening, of agriculture, of something, in short, of a utilitarian character. If these tendencies had been duly cultivated, the results would have been favourable to the individuals themselves, and probably to the public also.

I have often been puzzled to account for the pre-eminence of the Scotch as a clever and a *thinking* people: it cannot be from atmospheric influence; and I am disposed to question the correctness of the assertion of a grave Caledonian, that the fine spirit of philosophical inquiry which distinguishes his countrymen is mainly attributable to their use of oatmeal porridge; it must rather be from well-directed education, from the early acquired habit of *thinking for one's self*, and of giving *a reason* for every thing as far as they can, that the Scotch are so intelligent and so fitted for their respective stations in the social circle.

My own countrymen are *naturally* as shrewd and intellectual as the Scotch, but their minds are too generally ill disciplined, and school education, for all classes, is too generally defective *every where*. Several hours of the day are passed in wearisome restraint within the walls of a schoolroom, in learning words without ideas, sounds without sense; the mind being seldom engaged in the tasks with either pleasure or profit.

And besides the impediments which obstruct the progress of useful occupation, arising from the blindness of parents, the unfitness of teachers, and the incapacity of pupils, there are to be encountered in all schools the natural preference of idleness to any kind of systematic occupation, the love of mischief and freaks, which prevail among combinations of boys, and the difficulty of analysing character and dispositions in crowded seminaries.

But in schools for the poor, where order and discipline are easily enforced; in places of *private* education, and under the paternal roof, where, by far the greatest degree of happiness and simplicity of character are enjoyed and preserved—in such cases, in which instructors and parents are qualified to educate, a system of literary instruction, combining with it relaxation of a useful kind, may be pursued.

Among the latter I would place gardening and botany foremost among the out-of-door occupations, and these pursuits apply to both sexes, and to the humblest of the peasantry, as well as to the nobles of the land, for with the idea of a garden is connected every association that is pure and heaven-born. I myself even now look back upon those of my childish hours which were employed in the garden, with unmixed pleasure, and the first early crop of radishes which I raised with my own hands in a garden border, afforded me more innocent pride than any far more valuable crop that I have subsequently raised upon my farm. The care of flowers and shrubs, and the absence of corrupting influences, during the indulgence of this pursuit, render it a subject of extreme interest in the formation of individual and national character.

Those of the poor who are disposed to take a real interest in their gardens as is the case of thousands of the English peasantry, instead of finding their summer evening occupations in their allotments wearisome after their day of other toil, seem to find relaxation in the comparatively light work which they thus perform for *themselves*; and in the pleasurable contemplation of their own flowers, though they be but *common* beauties, and of their own tiny crops, they feel that calmness and tranquillity, that quiet satisfaction, which lay the passions at rest, and therefore indispose for the boisterous mirth and the ungodly society of the frequenters of the beer-house or the gin-shop.

Poultry, pigeons, and rabbits, may be reared by young people, both for amusement and profit. The child who understands much of the natural history of domestic animals from practical observation, and perceives the force of those influences which unite the parent and the offspring, will so far sympathize with, and apprehend the nature of, those influences, as to feel pain at the thought of wantonly dissociating that connection, and would be far less likely “to rob the poor birds of their young,” than the child who had not been familiarized with the nature and habits of the feathered race.

Children who have watched over a brood of chickens from the moment of their first disengagement from the shell, and witnessed the instinct with which the Creator causes them to come at the call of their mother, and contemplate the love with which “the hen gathers her chickens under her wings,” will take no pleasure in destroying that life of which they had anxiously traced the progress from the hour in which the first sign of developed animation appeared. It is improbable that the boy (and far more so that the girl, who is naturally kind) to whose hand the birds have fearlessly looked for food, while they clamorously delighted in his presence, could in his manhood witness any torturing of the feathered race, such as the diabolical barbarity of throwing at cocks on Shrove Tuesday, which used to disgrace Great Britain; or take pleasure in the barbarities of a cock-fight^[A] or a gander-fight.^[B]

For those who are excluded from the enjoyments of rural life, and those occupations to which I have referred, there remain other pursuits of extreme interest, according to their respective tastes—geology, chemistry, mechanics, which employ both the head and the hand. Many a youth may be taught “sermons in stones,” &c.—see the quotation in Shakspeare, *As You Like It*—and be kept from bad company, by having access to a lathe, and becoming practically “a tool-making animal,” who, from his distaste to books, would be otherwise miserably destitute of rational employment. I do not wish to see either young or old persons too much

“Agog for novelty where’er it lies,
In mosses, fleas, or cockleshells, or flies” —

But natural history, to a reasonable extent, is surely a useful and improving study for both rich and poor; it leads them to look from the creature to the Creator; to contemplate His works, His glories, and His beneficent *designs*, both in the material and the spiritual world. In short, I would supply the mind and body with those occupations which best harmonise together, and most powerfully tend to overcome the degrading and demoralising effects of ignorance, which is confessedly the greatest enemy to religion, to peace, good order, and social happiness.

FOOTNOTES:

[A] We learn from a German writer the origin of this cruel custom. When the Danes ruled in England, the native inhabitants of some town formed a conspiracy to regain possession of it by murdering the Danish usurpers. Their design, however, was defeated by the crowing of some cocks. When the English afterwards regained authority, they instituted the barbarous and childishly resentful practice of throwing at cocks tied to a stake on the commemoration day of their disappointment through the vigilance of the cocks.

[B] “At St Petersburg, in Russia (says Dr Granville), they have no cock-pits; but they have a goose-pit, where in the spring they fight ganders trained to the sport, and to peck at each other’s shoulders till they draw blood. These ganders have been sold as high as five hundred roubles each; and the sport prevails to a degree of enthusiasm among the hemp-merchants. Strange that the vicious and inhuman curiosity of man can delight to arouse and stimulate the principles of enmity and cruelty in these apparently peaceful and sociable birds!

The barbarities of which the human character is capable from habitual indulgence in such brutal sports are almost inconceivable.

Every one has heard the horrible story of Ardesolf of Tottenham, who, about forty years since, being disappointed by a famous game-cock refusing to fight, was incited by his savage passion to roast the animal alive whilst entertaining his friends. The company, alarmed by the dreadful shrieks of the victim, interfered, but were resisted by Ardesolf, who threatened death to any who should oppose him; and in a storm of raging and vindictive delirium, and uttering the most horrid imprecations, he dropped down dead. I had hoped to find this one among the thousand fanatical lies which have been coined in the insane expectation that truth can be advanced by the propagation of falsehood; but to my sorrowful disappointment, on a late inquiry among the friends of the deceased miscreant, I found the truth of the horrible story but too probable.”—*Mowbray’s Treatise on Poultry*.

[Pg 28]

ALEXANDER AND THE TREE.

“From this tree it was that the Voice came which spake of old to Iskander (Alexander the Great), saying, as an oracle, ‘Iskander indeed cometh into India, but goeth from thence into the Land of Darkness.’”—*Apocryphal History of Alexander the Great*.

The sun is bright, the air is bland,
The heavens wear that stainless blue
Which only in an Orient land
The eye of man may view;
And lo! around, and all abroad,
A glittering host, a mighty horde—
And at their head a demigod
Who slays with lightning-sword!

The bright noon burns, but idly now
Those warriors rest by copse and hill,
And shadows on their Leader’s brow
Seem ominous of ill:
Spell-bound, he stands beside a tree,
And well he may, for through its leaves
Unstirred by wind, come brokenly

Moans, as of one that grieves!

How strange! he thought:—Life is a boon
Given, and resumed—but *how?* and *when?*
But now I asked myself how soon
I should go home agen!
How soon I might once more behold
My mourning mother's tearful face;
How soon my kindred might enfold
Me in their dear embrace!

There was an Indian Magian there—
And, stepping forth, he bent his knee:
"Oh, king!" he said, "be wise!—beware
This too prophetic tree!"
"Ha!" cried the king, "thou knowest, then, Seer,
What yon strange oracle reveals?"
"Alas!" the Magian said, "I hear
Deep words, like thunder-peals!

"I hear the groans of more than Man,
Hear tones that warn, denounce, beseech;
Hear—woe is me!—how darkly ran
That stream of thrilling speech!
'Oh, king,' it spake, 'all-trampling king!
Thou ledest legions from afar—
But Battle droops his clotted wing!
Night menaces thy star!

"Fond visions of thy boyhood's years
Dawn like dim light upon thy soul;
Thou seest again thy mother's tears
Which Love could not control!
Ah! thy career in sooth is run!
Ah! thou indeed returnest home!
The Mother waits to clasp her son
Low in her lampless dome!

"Yet go, rejoicing! He who reigns
O'er Earth alone leaves worlds unscanned;
Life binds the spirit as with chains;
Seek thou the Phantom-land!
Leave Conquest all it looks for here—
Leave willing slaves a bloody throne—
Thine henceforth is another sphere,
Death's realm, the dark Unknown!"

The Magian paused; the leaves were hushed,
But wailings broke from all around,
Until the Chief, whose red blood flushed
His cheek with hotter bound.
Asked, in the tones of one with whom
Fear never yet had been a guest—
"And when doth Fate achieve my doom?
And where shall be my rest?"

"Oh, noble heart!" the Magian said,
And tears unbidden filled his eyes,
"We should not weep for thee!—the Dead
Change but their home and skies:
The moon shall beam, the myrtles bloom
For thee no more—yet sorrow not!
The immortal pomp of Hades' gloom
Best consecrates thy lot.

In June, in June, in laughing June,
And where the dells show deepest green,
Pavilioned overhead, at noon,
With gold and silken sheen—
These be for thee—the place, the time;
Trust not thy heart, trust not thine eyes,
Behind the Mount thy warm hopes climb,
The Land of Darkness lies!"

Unblenching at the fateful words,
The Hero turned around in haste—

“On! on!” he cried, “ye million swords,
Your course, like mine, is traced;
Let me but close Life’s narrow span
Where weapons clash and banners wave;
I would not live to mourn that Man
But conquers for a grave!”

M.

APOLOGUES AND FABLES,

IN PROSE AND VERSE, FROM THE GERMAN AND OTHER LANGUAGES.

(Translated for the Irish Penny Journal.)

No. II.—THE THREE RINGS.

In the reign of the Sultan Sal-ad-Deen there lived in the city of Damascus a Jew called Nathaniel, who was pre-eminently distinguished among his fellow-citizens for his wisdom, his liberality of mind, the goodness of his disposition, and the urbanity of his manners, so that he had acquired the esteem even of those among the Mooslemin who were accounted the strictest adherents to the exclusive tenets of the Mahommedan creed. From being generally talked of by the common people, he came gradually to attract the notice of the higher classes, until the sultan himself, hearing so much of the man, became curious to learn how it was that so excellent and intelligent a person could reconcile it with his conscience to live and die in the errors of Judaism. With the view of satisfying himself on the subject, he at length resolved on condescending to a personal interview with the Jew, and accordingly one day ordered him to be summoned before him.

The Jew, in obedience to the imperial mandate, presented himself at the palace gates, and was forthwith ushered, amid guards and slaves innumerable, into the presence of the august Sal-ad-Deen, Light of the World, Protector of the Universe, and Keeper of the Portals of Paradise; who, however, being graciously determined that the lightning of his glances should not annihilate the Israelite, had caused his face to be covered on the occasion with a magnificent veil, through the golden gauze-work of which he could carry on at his ease his own examination of his visitor’s features.

“Men talk highly of thee, Nathaniel,” said the sultan, after he had commanded the Jew to seat himself on the carpet; “they praise thy virtue, thy integrity, thy understanding, beyond those of the sons of Adam. Yet thou professest a false religion, and showest no sign of a disposition to embrace the true one. How is this obstinacy of thine reconcilable with the wisdom and moderation for which the true believers give thee credit?”

“If I profess a false religion, your highness,” returned the Jew modestly, “it is because I have never been able to distinguish infallibly between false religions and true. I adhere to the faith of my fathers.”

“The idolaters do so no less than thou,” said Sal-ad-Deen, “but their blindness is wilful, and so is thine. Dost thou mean to say that all religions are upon the same level in the sight of the God of Truth?”

“Not so, assuredly,” answered Nathaniel: “Truth is but one; and there can be but one true religion. That is a simple and obvious axiom, the correctness of which I have never sought to controvert.”

“Spoken like a wise man!” cried the sultan;—“that is,” he added, “if the religion to which thou alludest be Islamism, as it must be of course. Come: I know thou art favourably inclined towards the truth; thou hast an honest countenance: declare openly the conviction at which thou must have long since arrived, that they who believe in the Koran are the sole inheritors of Paradise. Is not that thy unhesitating persuasion?”

“Will your highness pardon me,” said the Jew, “if, instead of answering you directly, I narrate to you a parable bearing upon this subject, and leave you to draw from it such inferences as may please you?”

“I am satisfied to hear thee,” said the sultan after a pause; “only let there be no sophistry in the argument of thy narrative. Make the story short also, for I hate long tales about nothing.”

The Jew, thus licensed, began:—“May it please your highness,” said he, “there lived in Assyria, in one of the ages of old, a certain man who had received from a venerated hand a beautiful and valuable ring, the stone of which was an opal, and sparkled in the sunlight with ever-varying hues. This ring, moreover, was a talisman, and had the secret power of rendering him who wore it with a sincere desire of benefiting by it, acceptable and amiable in the eyes of both God and man. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that the owner continually wore it during his lifetime, never taking it off his finger for an instant, or that, when dying, he should adopt precautions to secure it to his lineal descendants for ever. He bequeathed it accordingly first to the most

beloved of his sons, ordaining that by him it should be again bequeathed to the dearest of *his* offspring, and so down from generation to generation, no one having a claim in right of priority of birth, but preference being given to the favourite son, who, by virtue of the ring, should rule unconstrained as lord of the house and head of the family. Your highness listens?"

"I listen: I understand: proceed," said the sultan.

The Jew resumed:—"Well: from son to son this ring at length descended to a father who had three sons, all of them alike remarkable for their goodness of disposition, all equally prompt in anticipating his wishes, all equally loving and virtuous, and between whom, therefore, he found it difficult to make any distinction in the paternal affection he bore them. Sometimes he thought the eldest the most deserving; anon his predilections varied in favour of the second; and by and bye his heart was drawn towards the youngest:—in short, he could make no choice. What added to his embarrassment was, that, yielding to a good-natured weakness, he had privately promised each of the youths to leave the ring to him, and him only; and how to keep his promise, he did not know. Matters, however, went on smoothly enough for a season; but at last death approached, and the worthy father became painfully perplexed. What was to be done? Loving his sons, as he did, all alike, could he inflict so bitter a disappointment upon two of them as the loss of the ring would certainly prove to them? He was unable to bear the reflection. After long pondering, a plan occurred to him, the anticipated good effects of which would, he trusted, more than compensate for the deceit connected with it. He sent secretly for a clever jeweller; and, showing him the ring, he desired him to make two other rings on the same model, and to spare neither pains nor cost to render the three exactly alike. The jeweller promised, and kept his promise: the rings were finished, and in so perfect a manner that even the father's eye could not distinguish between them as far as mere external appearance went. Overjoyed beyond expression at this unlooked-for consummation of his wishes, he summoned his three sons in succession into his presence, and from his deathbed bestowed upon each, apart from the other two, his last blessing and one of the rings; after which, being at his own desire left once more alone, he resigned his spirit tranquilly into the hands of its eternal Author. Is your highness attentive?"

"I am," said Sal-ad-Deen, "but to very little purpose, it would seem. Make an end of thy story quickly, that I may see the drift of it."

"It is soon ended, most powerful sultan," said Nathaniel, "for all that remains to be told is what doubtless your highness already half conjectures—the result, namely, of this good-natured deception. Scarce was the old man laid in his grave, when each of the sons produced his ring, and claimed the right of being sole master and lord of the house. Questions, wranglings, complaints, accusations, succeeded—all to no end, however; for the difficulty of discovering which was the true ring was as great then as that of discovering which is the true faith now."

"How!" interrupted the sultan indignantly, "this to me? Dost thou tell me that the faith of the Mooslemin is not acknowledged by all right-thinking persons to be the true one?"

"May it please your highness," said the Jew, calmly, "I am here at your own command, and I answer your questions according to the best of my poor ability. If the allegory I relate be objectionable, it is for the sultan to find fault with it alone, and not with the reflections which it must necessarily suggest."

"And dost thou mean, then, that thy paltry tale shall serve as a full answer to my query?" demanded Sal-ad-Deen.

"No, your highness," said Nathaniel, "but I would have it serve as my apology for not giving such an answer. The father of these youths caused the three rings to be made expressly that no examination might be able to detect any dissimilarity between them; and I will venture to assert, that not even the Sublimest of Mankind, the Sultan Sal-ad-Deen himself, could, unless by accident, have placed his hand on the true one."

"Thou triflest with me, Nathaniel," said the sultan; "a ring is not a religion. There are, it is true, many modes of worship on the earth: but has not Islamism always remained a distinct system of faith from the false creeds? Look at its dogmas, its ceremonies, the modes of prayer, the habits, yea, the very food and raiment of its professors! What sayest thou of these?"

"Simply," returned the Jew, "that none of them are proofs of the truth of Islamism. Nay, be not wroth with me, your highness, for what I say of your religion I say equally of all others. There is one true religion, as there was one true ring in my parable; but you must have perceived that all men are not alike capable of discovering the truth by their own unassisted efforts, and that a certain degree of trust in the good faith of others as teachers is therefore essential to the reception of religious belief at all. In whom, then, I would ask, is it most natural for us to place our trust? Surely in our own people—in those of whose blood we are—who have been about us from our childhood, and given us unnumbered proofs of love—and who have never been guilty of intentionally practising deception upon us. How can I ask of you to abandon the prepossessions of your fathers before you, and in which, true or false, you have been nurtured? Or how can you expect, that, in order to yield to your teachers the praise belonging solely to the truth, I should virtually declare my ancestors fools or hypocrites?"

"Sophistical declamation!" said the sultan, "which will avail thee little on the Judgment Day. Is thy parable ended?"

"In point of instruction it is," replied Nathaniel, "but I shall briefly relate the conclusion to which

the disputes among the brothers conducted. When they found agreement impossible, they mutually cited one another before the tribunal or the law. Each of them solemnly swore that he had received a ring immediately from his father's hand—as was the fact—after having obtained his father's promise to bestow it on him, as was also the fact. Each of them indignantly repudiated the supposition that such a father could have deceived him; and each declared, that, unwilling as he was to think uncharitably of his own brethren, he had no alternative left but that of branding them as impostors, forgers, and swindlers."

"And what said the judge?" demanded Sal-ad-Deen; "I presume the final decision of the question hung upon his arbitration?"

"Your highness is correct: the judge at once pronounced his award, which was definitive. 'You want,' said he, 'a satisfactory adjudication on this question, which you have contested among yourselves so long and so fruitlessly. Summon then your father before me: call him from the dead and let him speak; it is otherwise impracticable for me to come at the knowledge of his intentions. Do you think that I sit here for the purpose of expounding riddles and reconciling contradictions? Or do you, perhaps, expect that the true ring will by some miracle be compelled to bear oral testimony here in court to its own genuineness? But hold: I understand that the ring is endowed with the occult power of rendering its wearer amiable and faultless in the eyes of men. By that test I am willing to try it, and so to pronounce judgment. Which of you three, then, is the greatest object of love to the other two? You are silent. What! does this ring, which should awaken love in all, act with an inward influence only, not an outward? Does each of you love only himself? Oh, go! you are all alike deceivers or deceived: none of your rings is the true one. The true ring is probably lost; and to supply its place your father ordered three spurious ones for common use among you. If you will abide by a piece of advice instead of a formal decision, here is my counsel to you: leave the matter where it stands. If each of you has had a ring presented to him by his father, let each believe his own to be the real ring. Possibly your father might have grown disinclined to tolerate any longer the exclusiveness implied in the possession of a single ring by one member of a family; and, certainly, as he loved you all with the same affection, it could not gratify him to appear the oppressor of two by favouring one in particular. Let each of you therefore feel honoured by this all-embracing generosity of your parent; let each of you endeavour to outshine his brothers in the cultivation of every virtue which the ring is presumed to confer—assisting the mysterious influence supposed to reside in it by habits of gentleness, benevolence, and mutual tolerance, and by resignation in all things to the will of God; and if the virtues of the ring continue to manifest themselves in your children, and your children's children, and their descendants to the hundredth generation, then, after the lapse of thousands of years, appear again and for the last time before this judgment seat! A Greater than I will then occupy it, and He will decide this controversy for ever.' So spake the upright judge, and broke up the court. Your highness now, I trust, thoroughly comprehends my reason for not answering your question in a direct manner?"

[Pg 30]

"Is that the end of thy story?" asked Sal-ad-Deen.

"If it please your highness," said the Jew, who had by this time arisen, and was gradually, though respectfully, proceeding to accomplish his retreat.

"By my beard," said the sultan, after a considerable pause, "it is an ingenious apologue that of thine, and there may be something in it too; but still it does not persuade me that thou art excusable in thy pertinacious rejection of Islamism. I own I tremble for thee after all. Go thy ways, however, for the present, with this purse of tomauns, by way of premium for thy mother-wit; but I shall shortly send for thee again; and as I do not much fancy remaining in any man's debt, thou shalt then, as a wholesome counterpoise to thy sophistry, obtain from me in reply either a parable of my own, or one from the Koran, upon which I will argue with thee to thy signal confusion!"

M.

ANECDOTES OF MACKLIN,

THE IRISH COMEDIAN.

Macklin was exceedingly quick at a reply, especially in a dispute. One day Doctor Johnson was contending some dramatical question, and quoted a passage from a Greek poet in support of his opinion. "I don't understand Greek though, Doctor," said Macklin. "Sir," said Johnson, pompously, "a man who undertakes to argue, should understand all languages." "Oh, very well," returned Macklin; "how will you answer this argument?" and immediately treated him to a long quotation in Irish.

One night, sitting at the back of the front boxes with a gentleman of his acquaintance, one of the underbred box-lobby loungers of the day stood up immediately before him, and being rather large in person, covered the sight of the stage from him. Every body expected that Macklin would have knocked the fellow down notwithstanding his size, but he managed the matter in another temper. Patting him gently on the shoulder with his cane, he respected of him with much apparent

politeness, "that when he saw or heard any thing *very* entertaining on the stage, he would be pleased to turn round and let him and the gentleman beside him know of it; for you see, my dear sir," added the veteran, "that at present we must totally depend upon you as a telegraph." This had the desired effect, and the lounger walked off.

Talking of the caution necessary to be used in conversation amongst a mixed company, Macklin observed, "Sir, I have experienced to my cost that a man in any situation of life should never be off his guard. It is the fault of the Irish that they are too ready to 'commit' themselves. Now, this never happens with the Scotch:—a Scotchman is always on the look-out; he never lives a moment *extempore*, and that is one great reason why he is so successful in life as we see."

Macklin was very intimate with Frank Hayman (at that time one of our best historical painters), and happening to call on him one morning soon after the death of the painter's wife, with whom he (Frank) had lived but on indifferent terms, he found him wrangling with the undertaker about his high charge for the funeral expenses. Macklin listened to the altercation for some time; at last, going up to Hayman—"Come, come, Frank," said he, "this bill is to be sure a little extravagant, but you should pay it, if it were only on account of the respect you owe your wife's memory; for I am sure," he added with the greatest gravity, "she would have paid twice as much for your burial with the greatest gladness, if she had had the opportunity."

A notorious egotist one day in a large company, indirectly praising himself for a number of good qualities which it was well known he did not possess, asked Macklin the reason why he should have the singular propensity of interfering in the concerns of others for their benefit, when he so often met with unsuitable returns. "I could tell you, sir," said Macklin. "Ah! well do, then, my good fellow; you are a man of some observation; and—I—a—should be glad of your—a—definition." "Why, then, sir," replied Macklin, "the cause is *impudence*—nothing but stark staring *impudence!*"

A gentleman at a public dinner asking him, rather inconsiderately, whether he remembered Mrs Barry the celebrated Irish actress, who died about the latter end of Queen Anne's reign, he stared him in the face with considerable ferocity, and bawled out, "No, sir, nor Harry the Eighth neither!"

An Irish dignitary of the church, not remarkable for his veracity, complaining that a tradesman of his parish had called him a liar, Macklin asked what reply he had made him. "I told him," said the bishop, "that a lie was among those things that I *dared* not commit." "And why, doctor," returned Macklin, with an indescribable sort of comic frown, "why did you give the rascal *so erroneous a notion of your courage?*"

One of the band of the Covent-Garden theatre, who played the French horn, was telling some anecdotes of Garrick's curiosity, and withal praising the great actor incessantly. Macklin, who heard him from the lower end of the table, and who always fired up like lighted straw at the praises of Garrick, exclaimed aloud, "I believe, sir, you are a trumpeter." "Well," said the bandman, "and what if I am?" "Nothing more, sir," vociferated Macklin, "than this, that, being a trumpeter, you are by profession a dealer in *puffs!*"

BAD AIR AND GOOD AIR.

In a former number we directed attention to the many remarkable properties of the air we breathe, and pointed out how dependent we are for comfort and even existence on the maintenance of the air in a state fit for respiration. The difference between good air and bad air can be easily collected from that article; but as the peculiar conditions of the air which are capable of affecting health deserve very careful consideration, we are tempted to resume the subject.

The even balance which, as was explained, is struck between the two sorts of breathing, that of the animal which gives out carbonic acid, and that of the vegetable which takes it in, is capable of maintaining the air upon the large scale always in the proper state. But in order that the people may be benefited by this wise arrangement, it is necessary that they should be living abroad in the open air and in the fields; that a man, in proportion as he destroys the oxygen of the air, should have around him plants to give out an equal quantity in its place; that, in fact, mankind, in order to avail themselves of the providential security for breathing permanently good air, should live out of doors, engaged, at least principally, in agricultural employments, as was the condition of society in the early ages, and in some portions of the globe to a certain extent is so still.

But in countries like ours, where vast numbers of families are collected in cities, with narrow streets and lanes; where an open place like Stephen's Green or Merrion Square is anxiously sought after, and disproportionate rents paid for the houses which are around it, this immediate restoration of the injury done to the air by breathing, and the burning of lights and fuel, cannot occur. The air is vitiated permanently, and those resident in towns require for their health's sake to understand how the evil may be rendered as small as possible. Even in a town, the total quantity of air is so great, that if it all come into play, it can be but slightly injured. But such is often not the case. How often, when there is a fine healthful breeze outside the town, do we find,

on entering a narrow street, the mass of air perfectly motionless, and all the mischievous vapours which are produced, collecting until they become almost irrespirable. This is a great source of disease in towns; and to prevent or remedy it, requires but frequent change of the air which a room or a street contains: it requires but ventilation.

It is by means of a fireplace that a room is generally ventilated. The air which has served for the burning of the fuel is thereby made very hot, and hot air, being much lighter than cold air, rises up the chimney, generally mixed with soot, and is then called smoke. According as the hot air leaves the room, cold air enters to supply its place through the open doors or windows, or, if these be closed, through every little crevice which can give it passage. There is thus produced a rapid current of air, or draught, as it is termed. The air vitiated by the breathing of persons in the room is carried away along with that vitiated by the fire, and at any one moment the air in the room is found to be almost completely pure. It is therefore to proper ventilation that the inhabitants of towns must look for the maintenance of health. Disregard to this precaution has been the means of increasing to a frightful extent the mortality of large cities, and instances have been given, where an infectious disease, which had ravaged a number of low and confined streets in a large English town, stopped suddenly, and avoided a street otherwise no better than the rest, but which had been kept clean, and the rooms ventilated, by the exertions of some well-informed persons. For the preservation of the health of the poorer classes in large towns, medicine is of far less importance than cleanliness and ventilation.

[Pg 31]

We are sure, however, that many of our intelligent readers are ready now to start an objection to the account just given of the cause of bad air in cities. If the air of a city be injured by the large quantity of carbonic acid which is formed, a city should be the best place possible for the health of vegetables. If the air which is bad for man be good for plants, the vegetation in a confined street should surpass, in brilliancy and verdure, that of the most open and best attended gardens. It is true, unfortunately, that the only produce of our once industrious Liberty is now the grass which is growing in the seats of former bustle; but we have not even the satisfaction of knowing that that flourishes. It is pale, sickly, and stunted; for the air of the city is vitiated by causes different from that which alone has hitherto occupied us, and these causes are as injurious to plants as to man. The carbon of our fuel produces, in burning, carbonic acid, but carbon is not the only substance in ordinary fuel. Most coals contain sulphur, and in burning, this body produces sulphurous acid, also a gas, which is highly irritating and poisonous, particularly to plants, and which, mixing with the air, renders the city as injurious to the organization of a plant as the carbonic acid to the respiration of an animal.

To render air fit for respiration, it is necessary to do more than keep the proper quantity of oxygen in it; the carbonic acid must be taken away. Plants, our readers have already remarked, do both, and hence the admirable fitness of external nature to the objects for which the Creator has designed it. If the carbonic acid were not taken away, all animals would be poisoned, even if the proper quantity of oxygen remained, for carbonic acid is a positive poison, which kills by acting on the brain like opium. A person can live, breathing with only one lung; in the disease of consumption, an individual may live for months with only one lung, or even only part of a lung, remaining fit for use; but if perfectly good air be breathed with one lung, and carbonic acid with the other, the person will be poisoned after a very short time; consequently, it is of great importance to prevent the accumulation of carbonic acid, even where it is not produced at the expense of the oxygen of the air.

Carbonic acid is indeed produced in a great variety of ways, besides by animals in breathing, and fuel in burning. It is remarkable that it is only the green parts of plants which breathe as has been described; the leaves and stems giving out oxygen, and absorbing carbonic acid. The flowers and the ripe fruits of plants act on the air in the same way as animals, and hence deteriorate it; and the rooms where stores of fruit are kept, are known to be very unwholesome, and persons have been suffocated by sleeping in a room where there was a very great quantity of flowers. Oils, particularly drying oil, and spirit of turpentine, act on air also, absorbing oxygen and giving out carbonic acid; and the air of a newly painted house, if the doors and windows are kept close, is consequently found to be very unfit for respiration. In many countries, particularly where there are burning mountains, carbonic acid is given off from the ground, and it collects in every hollow or cave, in consequence of being much heavier than the air. There is a cave in Italy, called the Dog's Grotto, because a dog on entering it is instantly suffocated, though a man may walk in without injury. The cause is, that the cave is filled up by carbonic acid to about four feet deep; a dog, or any animal that holds its head lower than that height, breathes carbonic acid and is choked, but a man breathes the pure air which is above it, and escapes. In deep dry wells which have been neglected, carbonic acid accumulates, and workmen who go down to clean the pit are sometimes suffocated. In such cases a candle should first be let down, and if it burns, the air is fit to breathe. If the candle be extinguished, it is unsafe for an individual to descend.

In the Island of Java, however, perhaps the most remarkable collection of carbonic acid is to be found. On the summit of the highest mountain there is a circular valley of considerable depth, and presenting to the eye a spectacle combining the utmost beauty and horror. The sides of the valley are clothed with the richest perennial verdure of the tropics; all the plants which grow on that fine island are there found of surpassing magnitude and beauty, but intermixed with the skeletons of tigers, wolves, and men. There is no living animal. The greatest development of vegetable life goes hand in hand with absolute destruction to all animal existence. The natives call this place *the Valley of Death*. It is the crater of an extinct volcano. From its bottom issue perpetually watery vapour and carbonic acid, the elements which clothe its sides with vegetable

riches; but the whole being an invisible lake of carbonic acid, proves instant destruction to the unwary animal that passes over its brink. Some deserters from an English regiment concealed themselves in it, and their bodies, seen through the transparent but deadly gas by which they were surrounded, verified a fact which had been previously suspected to be a fable of the natives.

In the fermentation of corn, for making malt liquors or ardent spirits, a large quantity of carbonic acid is generated, and workmen who heedlessly descend into the vats to cleanse them, are very often suffocated. The trial by a lighted candle should never in such cases be omitted. In the burning of lime there is a very large proportion of carbonic acid set free; and poor persons who are tempted to sleep on the platform of a lime-kiln for the sake of the warmth it affords, are sometimes suffocated by the vitiated air they breathe.

The air, so far as regards its influence on health, is modified in a very important manner by causes which are not so positively known and measured as those we have hitherto examined. The spreading of odours through the air, whether they be the "spicy gales of Araby the blest," or the more unwelcome indications of putrescent matter, takes place by means of quantities of substances so small as to defy the powers of detection we possess. Many diseases, it is well established, arise from the formation and diffusion through the air of peculiar poisons in amazingly small quantity. Thus ague is produced by a specific poison generated in marshes. These poisons resemble other ordinary poisons, inasmuch as we can decompose them, and thus destroy their power. The chemical substance chlorine decomposes almost every vegetable or animal material that it touches. Thus it destroys all colours, and is hence of the greatest use in bleaching; it also destroys all atmospheric poisons, and, consequently, in hospitals and in private houses it is used to disinfect or prevent the spreading of disease, by decomposing the material which conveys it through the air.

For change of air we therefore, with reason, go to the country when we can; but whether to the sea side or to the interior, to Enniskerry or Kingstown, is not dependent on the nature of the air. Wherever the invalid finds most amusement, and agreeable occupation which does not fatigue; wherever the beauty of scenery, and the society of those to whom the heart is bound in ties of mutual esteem and love, present to the mind of one harassed by intense exertion of thought, or broken down by disease of body, a relief in admiration of the wisdom and goodness of his Creator, and in sympathy and kindness towards his fellow men, the atmosphere is clearest; the bracing, enlivening influence of the pure country air is the most sensible, and the mind and body are most effectually restored to the condition of perfect health.

IRELAND FOR EVER! AND KILMAINHAM TO THE DEVIL!—

Mr Egan, better known as "Bully Egan," held the chairmanship of Kilmainham at the time that the government were using their utmost endeavours to pass the Act of Union, and, of course, expected to be deprived of his office if he should oppose it. However, when the time for the division had arrived, his love of country preponderating over his love of self, he voted against the measure, exultingly exclaiming, "Ireland for ever! and Kilmainham to the devil!"

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[Pg 32]

PERSEVERANCE.

Perseverance in the steady pursuit of a laudable and lawful object, is almost a sure path to eminence. It is a thing which seems to be inherent in some, but it may be cultivated in all. Even those children who seem to be either indolent like the sloth, or changeful as the butterfly, by the skilful training of a watchful parent, may be endowed with the habit of perseverance. The following anecdotes may aid in illustrating to youth the nature and value of this virtue. The celebrated Timour the Tartar, after a series of the most brilliant victories, was at length conquered and made captive. Though confined in a prison, whose massive walls and thick iron bars discouraged every attempt to escape, he still strove at each chink and crevice to find some way of deliverance. At length, weary and dispirited, he sat down in a corner of his gloomy prison, and gave himself up to despair. While brooding over his sorrows, an ant, with a piece of wood thrice as large as itself, attracted his attention. The insect seemed desirous to ascend the perpendicular face of the wall, and made several attempts to effect it. But after reaching a little elevation, it came to a jutting angle of the stone, and fell backward to the floor. But again, again, and again the attempt was renewed. The monarch watched the struggles of the insect, and in the interest thus excited forgot his own condition. The ant persevered, and at the sixtieth trial surmounted the obstacle. Timour sprang to his feet, exclaiming, "I will never despair—perseverance conquers all things!"

A similar anecdote is told of Robert Bruce, the restorer of the Scottish monarchy. Being out on an

expedition to reconnoitre the enemy, he had occasion to sleep at night in a barn. In the morning, still reclining his head on a pillow of straw, he beheld a spider climbing up a beam of the roof. The insect fell to the ground, but immediately made a second essay to ascend. This attracted the notice of the hero, who with regret saw the spider fall a second time from the same eminence. It made a third unsuccessful attempt. Not without a mixture of concern and curiosity, the monarch twelve times beheld the insect baffled in its aim; but the thirteenth essay was crowned with success. It gained the summit of the barn; and the king, starting from his couch, exclaimed, "This despicable insect has taught me perseverance! I will follow its example. Have I not been twelve times defeated by the enemy's superior force? On one fight more hangs the independence of my country!" In a few days his anticipations were fully realised, by the glorious result, to Scotland, of the battle of Bannockburn.

A few years since, while travelling in an adjacent state, I came to a little valley, surrounded by rocky and precipitous hills. In that valley was a single house. It was old, and, by its irregularity of form, seemed to have been built at various periods. It was, however, in good condition, and bespoke thrift and comfort. Not a shingle was missing from the roof, no dangling clapboards disfigured its sides, no unhinged blinds swung idly in the wind, no old hats were thrust through the windows. All around was tidy and well-conditioned. The woodhouse was stored with tall ranges of hickory, the barns were ample, and stacks of hay without declared that it was full within. The soil around, as I have said, was rocky, but cultivation had rendered it fertile. Thriving orchards, rich pastures and prolific meadows, occupied the bed of the valley and the rugged sides of the hills. I was struck with the scene, and when I reached a village at the distance of two or three miles, I made some inquiries, where I learnt the story of the proprietor. He was originally a poor boy, and wholly dependent upon his own exertions. He was brought up as a farmer, and began life as a day labourer. In childhood he had read that "procrastination is the thief of time." He did not at first understand its meaning, and pondered long upon this desperate thief who bore the formidable title of PROCRUSTINATION. It was at length explained to him; but the struggles he had made to comprehend the adage fixed it deep in his mind. He often thought of it, and, feeling its force, it became the ruling maxim of his life. Following its dictates with inflexible *perseverance*, he at length became proprietor of the little valley I have described. Year by year it improved under his care, and at the period of which I am speaking, he was supposed to be worth at least twenty thousand dollars.

Such is the force of perseverance. It gives power to weakness, and opens to poverty the world's wealth. It spreads fertility over the barren landscape, and bids the choicest fruits and flowers spring up and flourish in the desert abode of thorns and briars. Look at Boston! Where are the three hills which first met the view of the pilgrims as they sailed up its bay? Their tops are shorn down by man's perseverance. Look at the granite hills of Quincy? Proudly anchored in the bosom of the earth, they seem to defy the puny efforts of man, but they are yielding to man's perseverance. Forbidden and hopeless as they would appear to the eye of indolence and weakness, they are better than the treasures of Peru and the gem-strewn mountains of Brazil, to a people endowed with the hardy spirit of perseverance! They are better, for, while they enable them to command the precious metals yielded by other climes, they cherish a spirit and a power which all the gold of Golconda could not purchase.—*Fireside Education*, by S. G. Goodrich.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP.

"Look before you leap," is an advice applicable to many circumstances of human life, besides the mere examination of the locality in which, on which, or over which, you are about to exhibit your own or your horse's agility in the performance of a saltation. Such was the course of meditation that suggested itself to my mind, as I beheld an old woman step slowly and deliberately off the foot-path of Carlisle Bridge, and, without looking right or left, walk directly across the path of the Kilkenny mail-coach, that was just then coming in, the driver, of course, making his cattle do the thing handsomely, as they were so near home. Before he could pull up, the leaders had upset her, and the coroner had tenpence of his shilling surely counted, when a tall, athletic-looking gentleman, stooping suddenly, seized her by the legs, and dragged her from under the horse's feet, somewhat to the disarrangement of her attire. "Look before you leap," said he, giving her a smart shake; "did you never hear that adage, you stupid creature?"

"Arrah!" said she, with the most perfect innocence, "sure I was'nt goin' to jump. Such a sayin' was'nt made for the likes iv me." "Poh! you stupid being," said he, and walked on.

I followed, making the above reflection, when, about half way over, the actively benevolent gentleman saw a little boy about nine or ten years old put his hand into a gentleman's pocket; he instantly, with a promptitude similar to what he had just exhibited, dealt him a blow that nearly knocked the breath out of him.

The proprietor of the pocket, startled by the "*Hagh*" that announced the sudden and almost total expulsion of the sufferer's breath, turned sharply round, and, as the boy staggered over against the balustrades, fiercely asked, "Who did that?"

"That young rascal, sir, had his hand in your pocket," said the striker.

“Well, sir, and what if he had?—He’s *my son*.”

“Your son! Sir, I beg a thousand pardons. I—I—I—”

There is nothing I hate more than to see an unfortunate individual in an awkward dilemma. Maybe it is from having so often suffered, that I have a sort of fellow feeling. So, merely repeating to the recent promulgator of the old adage his own words, “Look before you leap,” I passed on.

N.

EPITAPHS.—The shortest, plainest, and truest, are the best.

I say the *shortest*, for when a passenger sees a chronicle written upon a tomb, he takes it on trust that some great man lies there buried, without taking pains to examine who it is. Mr Cambden, in his “Remains,” presents us with examples of great men who had little epitaphs. And when once a witty gentleman was asked, what epitaph was fittest to be written on Cambden’s tomb, “let it be,” said he, “Cambden’s remains.” I say also the *plainest*, for except the sense lie above ground, few will trouble themselves to dig for it. Lastly, it must be *true*; not as in some monuments, where the red veins in the marble may seem to blush at the falsehoods written on it. He was a witty man who first taught a stone to speak, but he was a wicked man who first taught it to lie. A good memory is the best monument; others are subject to casualty and time; and we know that the Pyramids themselves, dotting with age, have forgotten the names of their founders.—*Scrap Book*.

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