

Literature, &c.

FROM BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE FOR JANUARY.

L'ENVOY.

We are sick and surly—and no wonder. The Whigs are In; and "Who, pray," we ask ourselves in soliloquy, "brought them In?" A well-known voice replies, "Even We—Christopher North." Yes—true it is, and of verity, that We drove that apostate and renegade Ministry Out—We—Christopher North—taking that Proper Name in its largest sense as designating all the True Tories of Great Britain. "See how Kit will trim!" (taking that Proper Name in its narrowest sense as designating the old man with the crutch) exclaimed, from a hundred holes, the Sneakers, and the Shufflers, and the Snobs, and the Scoffers, at the unhallowed hour when Wellington ordered Peel to sacrifice his principles, and was obeyed—aye to sacrifice—as the Tyrant afterwards insolently said—his political existence—which no man, we should think, can do without having previously sacrificed his personal honour. Kit did trim. He trimmed the Frigate of Athole Fir, no whit inferior to Norwood Oak, in which, for some dozen years, he had "braved the battle and the breeze;" and scorning to take, in an inch of canvass, though the currents were cross, and the winds baffling, and the breakers surging on a lee-shore, he laid the head of the *NIL TIMEO* right in the storm's eye, with "the silver cross to Scotland dear" flying at the main—and now, while the craft, in ludicrous alarm, are seen scudding, under bare poles, helter-skelter, for any haven, lo!

She walks the waters like a thing of life,
And seems to dare the elements to strife!

We are sick and surly—and no wonder. The Whigs are In. But yet there is a comfort left!—The Traitor-Tories are Out. On the whole, therefore, sick and surly though we be, we are in better health and spirits—and more amiable—than we were a month ago; our face and forehead, our Physiognomical and Craniological Development is like a majestic pile of frowning clouds fitfully illuminated by smiling sunshine. They lower but to lighten; and ere long our Countenance and Temples will be as the untroubled sky.

We know and feel our strength. It lies not, like Samson's, in our hair—for we are bald—but in our brain, and in our bosom. There it burns and beats, and will henceforth, as heretofore, speak "with most miraculous organ." Apostasy has not palsied our tongue, nor padlock'd our lips. Our garb is homely, but we are no turncoat—

"An honest man, close button'd to the chin;
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within;"

on our paw a sort of half-shovel, half-quaker hat, a bold but not a braggart beaver, and in our paw, still pointed Whigward,

"A staff that makes them skip!"

"There is too much politics in Blackwood!" mutters some numskull. No. There has been too little—but there shall be more. All the most sacred blessings of freedom are now at stake—in danger of being beaten down by bestial feet. That many-mouthed Monster, the Swinish Multitude, erects its bristles, and grunts fiercely in the sty, pretending to be the people. The people indeed! Blaspheme them not—

"THEY are strong
From earth's first blood—have titles manifold."

And we, the Friends of the People, will uphold those titles—even while they "imagine a vain thing"—and assert—not with a sword, but a pen of steel—their true liberty and independence. The great engine now of peace and of war—of good and of evil—is the Press and we know how to work it.

"FALSE TRAITORS, AVANT! We have marshall'd our clan—
Their pens are a thousand—their bosoms are one!"

The first of February shall see a double Number of Two Hundred and Eighty victorious pages—one half of which shall be devoted to Liberty, and one half to Literature. Not such Liberty as ye would give us—not such Literature; but both native to our own soil, and sky—racy—and to endure, like Trees, at once Forest and Fruit-Trees, after the rootless stumps ye would plant have rotted in their own fungous poison.

Ha! Maga is neither sick nor surly—but healthy

as Hebe still—and sweet as all the Muses. She rejoices loyally to stoop—but scorns slavishly to prostrate herself before a Hereditary and Constitutional Throne. She pays obeisance due to a time-honoured Nobility, but star and garter glitter in her eyes, only because they are emblems of good or great deeds done for the Land of Liberty. She venerates the Priesthood—because they being by nature but frail as their flocks—do, nevertheless, minister well at the altars of a pure religion. She admires the "Gentlemen of England," because they care for the people whom she loves—and she loves that People because it is writ in their annals that they have been good men and true—impatient unto the death of foreign or domestic tyranny—and the only People worthy to be called—and may they never be deluded into forgetfulness, or ingratitude to Heaven for that blessing—because they are the only People now worthy to be called—FREE.

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From the Diary of a late Physician.

THE TURNED HEAD.

Concluded.

After quitting the house, I could not help laughing immoderately at the recollection of the scene I had just witnessed; and Mrs. M—, who happened to be passing on the other side of the street, and observed my involuntary risibility, took occasion to spread an ill-natured rumour, that I was in the habit of "making myself merry at the expense of my patients!"—I foresaw, that should this "crick in the neck" prove permanent, I stood a chance of listening to innumerable conceits of the most whimsical and paradoxical kind imaginable—for I knew N—'s natural turn to humour. It was inconceivable to me how such an extraordinary delusion could bear the blush of daylight, resist the evidence of his senses, and the unanimous simultaneous assurances of all who beheld him. (Though it is little credit to me, and tells but small things for my self-control—I cannot help acknowledging, that at the bed-side of my next patient, who was within two or three hours of her end, the surpassing absurdity of the "turned head" notions glared in such ludicrous extremes before me, that I was nearly bursting a blood-vessel with endeavours to suppress a perfect peal of laughter!

About eleven o'clock the next morning, I paid N— a second visit. The door was opened as usual by his black servant, Nambo; by whose demeanour I saw that something or other extraordinary awaited me. His sable swollen features, and dancing white eye-balls, showed that he was nearly bursting with laughter. "He—he—he!" he chuckled, in a sort of *sotto voce*, "hm massa head turned!—him back in front! him waddle!—he—he—he!"—and he twitched his clothes—jerking his jacket, and pointing to his breeches, in a way that I did not understand. On entering the room where N—, with one of his favourite silent smoking friends, (M—, the late well-known counsel,) were sitting at breakfast, I encountered a spectacle which nearly made me expire with laughter. It is almost useless to attempt describing it on paper—yet I will try. Two gentlemen sat opposite each other at the breakfast table, by the fire: the one with his face to me was Mr M—; and N— sat with his back towards the door by which I entered. A glance at the former sufficed to shew me, that he that he was sitting in tortures of suppressed risibility. He was quite red in the face, his features were swelled and puffy—and his eyes fixed strainingly on the fire, as though in fear of encountering the ludicrous figure of his friend. They were averted from the fire, for a moment, to welcome my entrance—and then re-directed thither with such a painful effort—such a comical air of compulsory seriousness—as, added to the preposterous fashion after which poor N— had chosen to dress himself—completely overcame me. The thing was irresistible; and my utterance of that peculiar choking sound, which indicates the most strenuous efforts to suppress one's risible emotions, was the unwitting signal for each of us bursting into a long and loud shout of laughter. It was in vain that I bit my under lip almost till it brought blood, and that my eyes strained till the sparks flashed from them, in the vain attempt

to cease laughing; in full before me sat the exciting cause of it, in the shape of N—, his head supported by the palm of his left hand, with his elbow propped against the side of the arm chair. The knot of his neck-kerschief was tied, with its customary formal precision; back at the nape of his neck; his coat and waistcoat were buttoned down his back;—and his trowsers, moreover, to match the novel fashion, buttoned behind, and, of course, the hinder parts of them bulged out ridiculously in front!—Only to look at the coat-collar fitting under the chin, like a stiff military stock—the four tail buttons of brass glistening conspicuously before, and the front parts of the coat buttoned carefully over his back—the compulsory handwork of poor Nambo!

N—, perfectly astounded at our successive shouts of laughter—for we found it impossible to stop—suddenly rose up in his chair, and almost inarticulate with fury, demanded what we meant by such extraordinary behaviour. This fury, however, was all lost on me; I could only point in an ecstasy of laughter, almost bordering on frenzy, to his novel mode of dress—as my apology. He stamped his foot, uttered volleys of imprecations against us, and then ringing his bell, ordered the servant to shew us both to the door. The most violent emotions, however, must in time expend their violence, though in the presence of the same exciting cause; and so it was with Mr M— and myself. On seeing how seriously affronted N— was, we both sat down, and I entered into examination, my whole frame aching with the prolonged convulsive fits of irrepressible laughter.

It would be in vain to attempt the recital of one of the drollest conversations in which I ever bore part. N—'s temper was thoroughly soured for some time. He declared that my physic was all a humbug, and a piece of quackery; and the "d-d puddling round his neck," the absurdest farce he ever heard of; he had a great mind to make Nambo eat it, for the pains he had taken in making it, and fastening it on—poor fellow!

Presently he lapsed into a melancholy reflective mood. He protested that the laws of locomotion were utterly inexplicable to him—a practical paradox; that his volitions as to progressive and retrogressive motion neutralized each other; and the necessary result was, a cursed circumgyratory motion—for all the world like that of a hen that had lost one of its wings! That henceforward he should be compelled to crawl, crab-like, through life, all ways at once, and none in particular. He could not conceive, he said, which was the nearest way from one given point to another; in short, that all his sensations and perceptions were disordered and confounded. His situation, he said, was an admirable commentary on the words of St. Paul—"But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind." He could not conceive how the arteries and veins of the neck could carry and return the blood, after being so shockingly twisted—or "how the wind-pipe went in," affording a free course to the air through its distorted passage. In short, he said, he was a walking lie! Curious to ascertain the consistency of this anomalous state of feeling, I endeavoured once more to bring his delusion to the test of simple sensation, by placing one hand upon his nose, and the other on his breast, and asking him which was which, and whether both did not lie in the same direction; he wished to know why I persisted in making myself merry at his expense. I repeated the question, still keeping my hands in the same position; but he suddenly pushed them off, and asked me with indignation, if I was not ashamed to keep his head looking over his shoulder in that way—accompanying the words with a shake of the head, and a sigh of exhaustion, as if it had really been twisted round into the wrong direction. "Ah!" he exclaimed, after a pause, "if this unnatural state of affairs should prove permanent—hem!—I'll put an end to the chapter! He—he—he! He—he—he!" he continued, bursting suddenly into one of those short abrupt laughs, which I have before attempted to describe. "He—he—he! how d-d odd!" We both asked him, in surprise, what he meant, for his eyes were fixed on the fire in apparently a melancholy mood.

"He—he—he!" exquisitely odd, by G—! He—he—he!