

VESTIGES OF THE ROMANS IN BRITAIN.—Many of our Roman cities have become entirely wasted and desolate; Silchester is one of them. Corn-fields and pastures cover the spot once adorned with public and private buildings, all of which are now wholly destroyed. Like the busy crowds, who inhabit them, the edifices have sunk beneath the fresh and alien green sward; but the flinty wall which surrounded the city, is yet firm and the direction of the streets may be discerned by the difference of tint of the herbage; and the ploughshare turns up the medals of the Cæsars, so long dead and forgotten, who were once the masters of the world.—History of England: Family Library, No. XXI.

ENGLISH LITERATURE.—In England, unhappily literary men, as a body, have few feelings in common with the great mass of the people. Our literature has been, and still is, essentially aristocratic: they who write seek their chief applause from aristocratic circles and derive from thence their chief reward, and, so long as a low ambition shall influence their minds, so long will they prove the mere servants of a dominant class. But if, in place of money, a fleeting reputation and an admittance to fashionable circles, the elevated and honest desire of being a nation's instructors, a hope of raising a popular literature, a literature spreading its wide and paramount and beneficial influence among the whole people, had been their ruling spring of action, and the conscious worth of having contributed to such a work had been their sole expected reward, then would the literary men of England have taken their station among the literary bodies of Europe, and would no longer have been ranked with the foot-boys and servile hirelings of an arrogant noblesse. If such a spirit had actuated the body of writers whose works are now under consideration, if they had banded together to rescue the people from the thralldom of ignorance—had boldly determined to brave displeasure, to be careless of immediate renown—had set before themselves the one great purpose of elevating the moral and intellectual condition of the people, and to it had directed all their efforts, and for it sacrificed all paltry ambition—at this day they might have ruled in that nation, where now they are utterly insignificant, and instead of being classed with the pedagogues of a charity school, might honestly, by the power of understanding ever understanding, have swayed the determinations and governed the fortunes of millions. This, however, has appeared an object above their ambition.—They have been content with the pedagogue's renown, and still bear his character. Long may they continue to enjoy that petty fame they covet, still exhibiting themselves with success as the lions of a drawing-room, as the tiny dictators of their little circles, awing into silence all desperate opposition, and by their authoritative nod, guiding the mathematical opinions of a bevy of fluttering belles.—*Westminster Review*.

A conceited actor boasted of the number of characters that he had played in one evening. 'I have seen you play two characters at once,' said a sock-and-buskin brother. 'What were they?' inquired the former. 'Why, you attempted the character of *Caspar*, and played the devil with it,' replied the latter.

OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH IN O TAHITI.—The Russian enterprisers under the command of Captain Kotzebue, made a famous O Tahiti on a Saturday, and they were received with the enthusiastic delight with which the amiable Tahitians of the Friendly Islands always welcome the European stranger. The ceremony of the interchanging names was gone through, and the selection of a friend. The deck was converted into a market, bargains were conducted with laughter, and, in short, all was fun and frolic between the children of nature and the children of the sea. But the next day being Sunday, the scene was changed. On the following morning we were greeted by the sun from a cloudless sky, with a most superb illumination of the country opposite his rising. His rays, glittering on the mountain-tops before they reached our horizon, gradually enlivened the variegated green that clothed their sides down the vaes, till the king of day burst upon our sight in all his splendour, arraying the luxuriant landscape of the shore in still more enchanting beauty. Among the thickets of fruit-trees were seen the dwellings of the happy inhabitants of this great pleasure-ground, built of bamboos, and covered with large leaves, standing each in its little garden, but, to our great astonishment, the stillness of death reigned among them, and even when the sun stood high in the heavens, no one was to be seen. The warm friendships formed but yesterday seemed already to have cooled: we were quite forgotten. At length we obtained from the boat, sent off to us at the break of day with provisions, an explanation of this enigma. The inhabitants of Tahiti were celebrating the Sunday, on which account they did not leave their houses, where they lay on their bellies reading the Bible and howling aloud; laying aside every species of occupation, they devoted, as they said, the whole day to prayer.

EXTRAORDINARY SKILL IN DIVING.—We threw some pieces of barrel hoops into the sea, when numbers of the Islanders instantly precipitated themselves to the bottom, and snatched up the booty, for the possession of which we could plainly distinguish them wrestling with each other under the water.—Kotzebue's New Voyage round the World.

FROM THE NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

EARLY RISING.

I had the pleasure of spending the last Christmas holidays, very agreeably, with a family at Bristol. I am aware that those who have heard nothing of the Bristolians, save through George Frederick Cook's satire on them,* will be amazed at any one's venturing to bring together, in the same sentence, three such words as 'agreeably,' 'Bristol,' and 'pleasure;' but I declare it, on my own knowledge, that there is in that city one family, which, for good sense, good humour, pleasantness, and kindness, is not to be outdone by any in Great-Britain. 'The blood of an African,' indeed! There is not one amongst them, not excepting the ladies—no, nor even excepting Miss Adalaida herself (albeit she sweetens her coffee after the French fashion,) who would not relinquish the use of sugar forever, rather than connive at the suffering of one poor negro. The family I allude to are the Nerringtons. As a rigid recorder, I speak only to what I positively know; there may be others of equal value.

Having an appointment of some importance, for the eighth of January, in London, I had settled that my visit should terminate on Twelfth-night. On the morning of that festive occasion I had not yet resolved on any particular conveyance to town; when, walking along Broad-street, my attention was brought to the subject by the various coach advertisements which are posted on the walls. The 'Highflyer' announced its departure at three in the afternoon—a rational hour: the 'Magnet' at ten in the morning—somewhat of the earliest; whilst the 'Wonder' was advertised to start every morning at FIVE precisely!!!—a glaring impossibility. We know that in our enterprising country, adventures are sometimes undertaken, in the spirit of competition, which are entirely out of the common course of things: thus, one man will sell a bottle of Blacking for ninepence, with the charitable intention of ruining his neighbor (so think the worthy public) who has the audacity to charge his at a shilling—the intrinsic value of the commodity being in either case a fraction less than five farthings. Such a manoeuvre, however, is tolerable; but the attempt to ruin a respectable vehicle, professing to set out on its journey at the reputable hour of three in the afternoon, by pretending to start a coach at five o'clock in the morning, was an imposition tolerable in Dogberry's sense of the word—it was 'not to be endured.' And then, the downright absurdity of the undertaking! for admitting that the proprietors might prevail on some poor idiot to act as coachman, where were they to entrap a dozen mad people for passengers? We often experience an irresistible impulse to interfere, in some matter, simply because it happens to be no business of ours; and the case in question being, clearly, no affair of mine, I resolved to inquire into it. I went into the coach office, expecting to be told, in answer to my very first question, that the advertisement was altogether a RUSE DE GUERRE.

'No, Sir,' said I to the book-keeper, 'you start a coach to London at five in the morning?'

'Yes, Sir,' replied he—and with the most perfect NONCHALANCE!

'You understand me? At five?—in the MORNING?' rejoined I, with an emphasis sufficiently expressive of doubt.

'Yes, sir; five to a minute—two minutes later you'll loose your place.'

This exceeded all my notions of human impudence. It was evident I had here an extraordinary mine to work, so I determined upon digging into it a few fathoms deeper.

'And would you, now, venture to BOOK a place for me?'

'Let you know directly, sir. (Hand down the Wonder Luncheon book, there.) When for, sir?'

I stood aghast at the fellow's coolness.—'To-morrow.'

'Full outside, sir; just one place vacant, IN.'

The very word, 'outside,' bringing forcibly to my mind the idea of ten or a dozen shivering creatures being induced, by any possible means, to perch themselves on the top of a coach, on a dark, dull, dingy, drizzling morning in January, confirmed me in my belief that the whole affair was, what is vulgarly called a 'take in.'

So you will venture then to BOOK a place for me?

'Yes, sir, if you please.'

And, perhaps, you will go so far as to receive half my fare?

'If you please, sir—one pound two.'

Well, you are an extraordinary person! Perhaps, now—pray be attentive—perhaps, now, you will carry on the thing so far as to receive the whole?

'If you please, sir—two pound four.'

I paid him the money: observing, at the same time, and in a tone calculated to impress his imagination with a vivid picture of attorneys, counsel, judge, and jury. 'You shall hear from me again.'

'If you please, sir; to-morrow morning, at five PUNCTUAL—start to a minute, sir—thank'ee, sir, good morning, sir.' And this he uttered without a blush.

'To what expedients,' thought I, as I left the office, 'will men resort, for the purpose of injuring their neighbours! He is one who exposes himself to the consequences of an action at law, or, at least, to the expense of sending me to town, in a chaise and four, at a reasonable hour of the day; and all for so paltry an advantage as that of preventing my paying a trifling sum to a rival proprietor—and on the preposterous pretence, too, of sending me off at five in the morning.'

The first person I met was my friend Mark Nerrington, and—Even now, though months have since rolled over my head, I shudder at the recollection of the agonies I suffered, when assured by him of the frightful fact, that I had, really and truly, engaged myself to travel in a coach, which, really and truly, did start at five in the morning! But as the novel-writers of the good old Minerva school used, in similar cases, to say, 'in pity to my sympathising reader's feelings, I must draw the mysterious veil of concealment over my, oh! too acute sufferings!' These, I must own, were, in no little degree, aggravated by the manner of my

friend. Mark, as a sort of foil to his many excellent qualities, has one terrible failing: it is a knack of laughing at one's misfortunes; or, to use his own palliating phrase, he has a habit of looking at the ridiculous side of things. Ridiculous! Heavens! as if any one possessing a spark of humanity could perceive anything to excite his mirth in the circumstance of a fellow-creature's being forced out of his bed at such an hour! After exhibiting many contortions of the mouth, produced by a decent desire to maintain a gravity suitable to the occasion, he at length burst into a loud laugh; and exclaiming [with a want of feeling I shall never entirely forget] 'Well, I wish you joy of your journey—you must be UP at FIVE!'—away he went. It may be asked why I did not forfeit my forty-four shillings, and thus escape the calamity. No; the laugh would have been too much against me: so, resolving to put a bold face on the matter, I—I will not say I walked—I positively SWAGGERED about the streets of Bristol, for an hour or two, with all the self-importance of one who has already performed some extraordinary exploit, and is conscious that the wondering gaze of the multitude is directed towards him. Being condemned to the miseries, it was but fair that I should enjoy the honours, of the undertaking. To every person I met, with whom I had the slightest acquaintance I said aloud, 'I start at five to-morrow morning!' at the same time adjusting my cravat and pulling up my collar; and I went into three or four shops, and purchased trifles, for which I had no earthly occasion, for the pure gratification of my vain-glory, in saying—'Be sure you send them to-night, for I start at five in the morning!' But beneath all this show of gallantry, my heart—like that of many another hero on equally desperate occasions—my heart was ill at ease. I have often thought that my feelings, for the whole of that distressing afternoon, must have been very like those of a person about to go, for the first time, up in a balloon. I returned to Reeves' Hotel, College-green, where I was lodging. 'I'll pack my portmanteau (the contents of which were scattered about in the drawers, on the tables, and on the chairs)—that will be so much gained on the enemy,' thought I; but on looking at my watch, I found I had barely time to dress for dinner—the Nerringtons, with whom I was engaged, being punctual people. 'No matter; I'll pack it to-night.' 'Twas well I came to that determination; for the instant I entered the drawing-room, Mrs Nerrington rang the bell, and just said to the servant who appeared at its summons—'Dinner; a dissyllable which, when so uttered, timed, and accompanied, is a polite hint that the dinner has not been improved by your late arrival.

My story, however, had arrived there before me; and I must do my friends the justice to say, that all that kindness could do for me, under the circumstances, was done. Two or three times, indeed, Mark looked at me full in the face, and laughed outright, without any apparent cause for such a manifestation of mirth; and once when, after a few glasses of wine, I had almost ceased to think of the fate that awaited me, Miss Adalaida suddenly inquired, 'Do you REALLY start at five?—isn't that rather early?'—'RATHER,' replied I, with all the composure I could assume. But for a smile, and a sly look at her papa, I might have attributed the distressing question to thoughtlessness, rather than a deliberate desire to inflict pain. To parody a well-known line, I may say that, upon the whole—

'To me this Twelfth-night was no night of mirth.'

Before twelve o'clock, I left a pleasant circle, reveling in all the delights of Twelfth-eake, pam-loo, king-and-queen, and forfeits, to pack my portmanteau.

'And inly ruminate the morning's danger!'

The individual who, at this time, so ably filled the important office of 'Boots,' at the hotel, was a character. Be it remembered that, in his youth, he had been discharged from his place for omitting to call a gentleman, who was to go by one of the morning coaches, and who, thereby, missed his journey. This misfortune made a lasting impression on the intelligent mind of Mr. Boots.

'Boots,' said I in a mournful tone, 'you must call me at four o'clock.'

'Do'ee want to get up, zur?' inquired he, with a broad Somersetshire twang.

'WANT indeed! no; but I must.'

'Well, zur, I'll CALL 'ee, but will 'ee get up when I DO call?'

'Why, to be sure I will.'

That be all very well to say overnight, zur, but it bean't at all the same thing whea MARMEN come. I know that of old, zur. Gemmen doan't like it, zur, when the time do come—that I tell 'ee.

LIXX it! who imagines they shoold!

Well, zur, if you be as shure to get up as I be to call ye, you'll not know what two minutes arter vore means in your bed. Sure as ever clock strikes, I'll have 'ee out, dang'd if I doan't! Good night zur; and EXIT Boots.

And now I'll pack my portmanteau.

It was a bitter cold night, and my bed-room fire had gone out. Except the rush-candle, in a pierced tin box, I had nothing to cheer the gloom of a very large apartment—the walls of which [now dotted all over by the melancholy rays of the rush-light, as they struggled through the holes of the box] were of dark-brown wainscot—but one solitary wax taper. There lay coats, trousers, linen, book, papers, dressing-materials, in dire confusion, about the room. In despair I set me down at the foot of the bed, and contemplated the chaos around me. My energies were paralyzed by the scene. Had it been to gain a kingdom, I could not have thrown a glove into the portmanteau; so, resolving to defer the packing till the morrow, I got into bed.

My slumbers were fitful—disturbed. Horrible dreams assailed me. Series of watches, each pointing to the hour of Four, passed slowly before me, then, time pieces, dials, of a larger size, and at last, enormous steeple-clocks, all pointing to Four, Four, Four. A change came o'er the spirit of my dream, and endless processions of watchmen moved along, each mournfully dinning in my ears, 'Past four o'clock.' At length I was attacked by night-mare. Methought I was an hour-glass—old Father Time bestride me—he pressed upon me with unendurable weight—fearfully and threateningly did wave his scythe above my head—he grinned at me, struck three blows, andible blows, with the handle of his scythe, on my breast, stooped his huge head, and shrieked in my ear—

Vore o'clock, zur; I say it be vore o'clock.

Well, I hear you.

But I don't hear you. Vore o'clock, zur.