

FROM THE WINTER'S WREATH.

THOUGHTS ON HORSEMANSHIP.

BY HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

In brave pursuit of honourable deed,
There is, I know not what great difference
Between the vulgar and the noble seed,
Which, unto things of valorous pretence,
Seems to be born by native influence,
As feats of arms and love to entertain,
But chiefly skill to ride, seems a science
Proper to gentle blood.

SPENSER'S FAERY QUEEN.

To assert his sovereignty over the inferior animals, to overtake the swift—to overreach the crafty, and to overmatch the strong; to extirpate the noxious—and to subdue and appropriate the useful, is the primitive study—the earliest ambition of man. What necessity dictates to the barbarian, the vigorous progeny of cultivated life pursue for convenience, pride, or pleasure. The chase, in its various forms of hunting, fishing, fowling, falconry, &c. is a powerful instinct, that seems originally planted in all healthy males; nor are the softer sex entirely free from its influence. The huntress Diana has many votaries to this day; and her sylvan sport is far from envied than her immortal celibacy. True it is, that the sedentary occupations of the poorer citizens, the intellectual abstraction of a few, the indolent indulgences of others, the scruples of some, the weakness and timidity of more, co-operate with want of leisure, and aristocratic regulations, to extinguish this natural tendency in the greater number of a civilized nation. But, wherever instinct remains in force—in the boy, the rustic, and the country gentleman—the passion for field-sports is as strong as ever; and poets, philosophers, statesmen, and divines, may be found among their staunchest devotees. A healthy boy, bred up in the country, will always be a sportsman, as soon as he is out of petticoats. Though the gun is not to be touched, he shows perseveringly with those truly British weapons, the bow and arrow; and if a sparrow fall, he is as proud as Apollo Belvedere. Perhaps the fox-hounds are unattainable; he can only hear the harriers at a distance; and his mamma has told him that the Otter dogs are vulgar. Still, 'rats and mice, and such small deer,' are his free warren, and he hunts poor pass about the garden as perseveringly as the beautified flowers of Odin pursued the boar in the Scandinavian Paradise; even Isaac Walton might commend the patience with which he holds a crooked-pin in the unhabited fish-pond. There is no cruelty in this, it is the same instinct that drove the beasts of prey into deserts and forests, and made room for agriculture, social security, arts and knowledge.

But to possess animals—to keep them alive is still better than catching and destroying them. An octegenarian raven—a miserable owl, set out of pure kindness against a south wall at noon—a magpie, that can say, 'What's a clock?'—even a guinea pig, the most unintellectual of the four-footed creation, are valuable property. White mice have produced as violent feuds in a little family, as white elephants among the princes of farther India. Monkeys are more respected than the generality of poor relations; but cats are doomed to share the irreverence too frequently bestowed on female eld. Yet they are favourites with little maidens, and with embryo poets; for poets, however manly in courage and intellect, have always something feminine, both in their virtues and their weakness. But a youth that has a poney—of his very own—or even a free admission to his father's stable; go to, he is happier than he is like to be ten years hence.

There is nothing with which the pride of man so strongly connects itself, as with the mastery and management of that noble animal the horse; nothing so humiliating as to be a bad jockey. In martial ages, the term horseman is synonymous with gentleman. Hector is honoured by the epithet horsebreaker. The word chivalry, which implied all that was noble in blood, comely in accomplishment, and valiant in deed, all that a king should honor and a lady love—might, if the sense of words were to be sought in their etymology, be used to characterize the pursuits of the hostler, the farrier, the groom, and the horse-courser. The Equites were the gentry of Rome and Athens. Whole tribes in Asia and even in South America, where the horse is not indigenous, almost live upon horseback, and esteem the print of a man's foot in the earth, as a mark of degradation. From the roving Arab, whose unshod steed scarce leaves a trace in the sand, to the graceful cavalier, whose trained courser, proud of its burden, treads the ground with step elastic, and disdainful as a haughty dame, all degrees of men have their horse-vanity; even those who cannot back the staidest pad that ever grazed in the churchyard, indulge it in imagination. Pope, most likely, was never on horseback in his life; yet hear how the little man talks:

'The impatient courser pants in every vein,
And, pawing, seems to beat the distant plain;
Hills, vales, and floods, appear already cross'd,
And, ere he starts, a thousand steps are lost.
See the bold youth strain up the threat'ning steep—
Rush through the thicket—down the valleys sweep:
Hang o'er their coursers' heads, with eager speed,
And earth rolls back beneath the flying steed!

Soul of Byron! who shall dare to say that Pope was no poet? Why, Alexander the Little!—have none of the heroes of the Dunciad forestalled this Sobriquet?—is as mighty as his Great namesake on Bucephalus. Every man who enters fully into the spirit of poesy, is a poet, though he be incapable of composing a couplet. He that listens with delight to symphony or song, and apprehends the meaning and purport of the successive strains—perceives the unity amid the infinite variety, the evolution and evolution of harmonious elements, has surely music in his soul, though he have none in his voice or fingers. Who, then, am not I an equestrian—though John Gilpin Braggadocio, or Goose Gibbie, were Ducrows compared to me, on corporeal horseback—inasmuch as I thoroughly apprehend the beauties, graces, and expressive terms of the MANEGRE, and feel any violation of propriety in these respects, as keenly as a note out of tune, or a figure out of drawing? If a silent poet be not a contradiction, why should a pedestrian cavalier?

It is common enough to ride well, but to ride poetically, is a very rare accomplishment—never attained by any but such as, to a strong natural sense of beauty and fitness, unite a vigorous mind

in a vigorous body; MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO. That this union of requisites is only to be looked for in noble families, is an assertion better timed in the age of Spenser and Elizabeth, than in that of William the Fourth. But in no age can it exist without refinement—without a certain cultivation of habits—a selection from vulgar associations; the mere cultivation, either of the intellect, or of the muscles, will not suffice. Any body who can ride hard, and long without danger or excessive fatigue, may be said to ride well. The butcher's boy, on his bare backed bit of blood and bone, with the præmonitory halter by way of bridle, knees drawn up to serve as a support to the tray, on which the cleaver rings a martial accompaniment, imitative of blood and slaughter—ride well. The apothecary, whose interest requires that, whether he have any business or none, he should always be in a hurry, rides well; his trunk forming a very acute angle with his horse's neck, and the instruments in his coat pocket having a truly alarming jingle. Tailors, notwithstanding the vulgar prejudice to the contrary—are the best riders you will see on a Sunday within two miles of town. Huntsmen, postillions, rough riders, livery stablemen, blacklegs, all ride well, that is, well enough for themselves, and too well to benefit mankind by affording a hearty fit of laughter; but so far from furnishing poetical pictures, they make the beautiful and picturesque creatures which they bestride, dull, prosaic, and ridiculous.

Again; no gentleman should ride too well; he should not, like certain painters, create difficulties, for the sake of showing how dexterously he can overcome them:—nor should the art or strength whereby he guides his steed be palpable to sight, it should appear as if the simple will did all. Riding A LA MILITAIRE—the modern Heroic poetry of horsemanship—is very imposing when used by a man of military appearance—in a military dress, but should never be attempted by Dissenters, clergymen of the Church of Scotland, aldermen, or respectable burgesses. Steeple-hunting, fox-hunting, &c. which correspond to the Pindaric or dithyrambic styles, are doubtless very animated, and delightfully free from the snaffle of common sense. Dramatic racing, (such as is practised by Ducrow and others) though a beautiful—and in him, performed by a man of imagination—an intellectual art, is not much to be studied by the nobility.

A swan on the water is not so graceful a vision as a lady-like female on a lady-like palfrey. Yet there are not many women whom it is pleasant to see on horseback. If they display too much courage and adroitness, they are in danger of being unsexed, if they be timid and inexperienced, one trembles for their gentle limbs. I wish some court painter would contrive a more agreeable costume for ladies to ride in. On an absolute girl, whose spirits are ethereally brilliant, and whose complexion is of the morning, the round hat and habit are not far amiss, though even by Hebe or Aurora, the habit should never be worn, except on horseback. But for a woman of a certain age, the hood and skirt adopted by our grand-mothers in the days of the pillion, if not more picturesque, were undoubtedly more matronly.

These observations are not directed to such females as ride solely for health or amusement, but those who wish to exhibit had better do it well than badly, for the credit of nature and the advancement of the fine arts—which include not only poetry, painting, sculpture, music, architecture, acting, &c. but riding, walking, eating, dressing, and shuttlecock playing.

SPIRIT OF THE PROVINCIAL JOURNALS.

HALIFAX ACADIAN. Mechanic's Institute.—A meeting was called for the purpose of establishing a society of the above character, and took place on Tuesday evening last, when a large number of Mechanics and other friends to the proposed Society assembled, and organized it into a body. Some differences of opinion, rather warmly expressed, elicited, we believe, a slight display of feeling, which is certainly to be regretted as in so excellent an undertaking, all should be unanimous. The number of fifty-two immediately joined it, which has been greatly increasing since. To this Institution we warmly wish every success. Its establishment has been an object which we long have desired to see, and now that the good seed is sown, we earnestly hope it may bring forth abundant fruit.

QUEBEC GAZETTE.—On Wednesday afternoon last, the market canoes which cross the St. Lawrence among the fields of floating ice at this season, were exposed on their return in the afternoon, to a severe cold, much ice, a high drift, and deep snow on the ice. About fifteen of them are supposed to have drifted up with the tide, and several of them as high as St. Nicholas and St. Augustin, a distance of nine or twelve miles. Considering the exposure the people underwent, it is astonishing that no more than one person was frozen to death, viz: a Mr Carter, tavern keeper at Pointe Levi, who was unable to leave the canoe at the time the others escaped near St. Augustin. Several persons were severely frost bitten, and some property was lost. Carter was a Chelsea Out-pensioner who had arrived this spring, and been married two or three months ago.

The Upper Canada papers of the 17th inst. arrived this morning. They confirm the report of Mr M'Kenzie's expulsion from the assembly, on charges for two libels, declared breaches of the privileges of that body. A new writ had been issued for the County of York. It appears probable that Mr M'Kenzie will be re-elected without opposition. The subject has created much excitement in Upper Canada. Mr M'Kenzie has made himself obnoxious to the House by the very active part he has taken against the Government party both in his paper and at public meetings in every part of the Province. He succeeded in obtaining a majority of the inhabitants of the Province to sign a petition to the King for the redress of grievances. The petition has been sent home, and Mr Ryerson, an agent of the petitioners is in London to support it. It appears that a Mr Draper has gone to London to oppose it.

We have reason to state, the whole population of Lower Canada, very nearly at 507,500, of which the district of Quebec contains, in round numbers, 150,000—Montreal, 288,000—Three Rivers, 56,800—and the remainder may be fairly given to the two Counties forming the District of Gaspé. The County of Quebec, according to Mr M'Donald, contains a population of 36,175 souls, of which we find, 25,936 are of the City and Suburbs—and the Island and County of Montreal is set down at 43,773, of these 27,300 belong to the City and Suburbs.

CANADIAN COURANT.—We have continued the proceedings of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada, against Mr M'Kenzie, down to the latest dates given in the York papers. Letters received in town on Sunday, state that Mr M'Kenzie had been expelled; that processions of his friends had taken place, who carried him in triumph through the streets of York, and made other manifestations of public excitement; that a subscription to purchase a gold medal for him, as a reward of his independent conduct, was about to be opened.

ST. ANDREWS COURANT.—The oldest inhabitant of this County does not recollect any season when the winter set in so early, and continued intensely cold so long. We are happy to observe that it is now moderating, and hope the late snow will have a good effect upon the travelling and also on the Lumbering business.

ST. ANDREWS HERALD.—It will be seen by the following communication, that a meeting is called for this evening, of those persons interested and feeling favorably inclined towards the establishment of a Steam Boat, to be employed chiefly in towing rafts of timber, &c. from the Outports into the harbour of St. Andrews. That the undertaking is feasible, and would be highly advantageous to the trade of the town, we do not entertain a doubt, and we therefore ardently wish that our enterprising Merchants will be enabled to carry the object of the meeting into effect.

KINGSTON CHRONICLE.—The Lower Canada Parliament have been engaged in the impeachment of two of their Judges, Mr Justice Kerr and Mr Justice Fletcher. The charge against the former represents him as arbitrary, inconsistent, undignified, partial, and spleetic in the discharge of his duties—the complaint against the latter is grounded on a petition of the House last March to His Excellency the Governor, the nature of which we do not exactly recollect.

JAMAICA COURANT.—We are happy to learn that the feeling of the Members of the House of Assembly, is decidedly favorable to the measure of voting an ANNUAL grant for the pay and rationing of His Majesty's troops. To this we never objected, as we are satisfied that if a surplus is voted for one year, it will be applicable to the next, which will, of course, reduce the succeeding grant. Our objection has always been to any thing in the shape of a permanent grant: and we do sincerely trust, that no member of our Legislature will have the hardihood to propose a measure so inimical to our interests, and so subversive of the rights of those who hold the purse-strings in trust, for those who sent them to represent their interests in the Assembly.

ORIGINAL.

PATRIOTISM.

WHOEVER will take a view of the political MANEUVERS in Great-Britain, must suppose it to be one of the best governed nations upon earth; he will there see all ranks and professions, all ages and sexes, anxious, even seditious, for what they call the just administration in the affairs of state. This apparent benefit is a great misfortune; it tends to keep the nation ever restless, ever uneasy. I call the benefit apparent, because this zeal for the state, upon inspection, will be found only a zeal of the zealot, who, with all his clamours and pretensions for the public welfare, has no other object at heart, but his own private emolument and aggrandisement.

Ancient and modern history will bear me out in these assertions. Out of more than sixty Patriots, or LIBER-