

LITERATURE, &c.

EXTRACTS FROM LATE PUBLICATIONS.

FRASER'S MAGAZINE FOR MAY.

From an article in the above publication, on the Life of Johnson, we extract the following forcible observations on a murderous and foolish practice, that has served to shelter many a 'bold bad man,' and many a blustering bully from deserved reprehension and contempt, and that ought long ago to have been exploded as the relic of barbarous ages:—

"If we ask now by what endowment it mainly was, that Johnson realized such a life for himself and others; what quality of character the main phenomena of his life may be most naturally deduced from, and his other qualities most naturally subordinated to, in our conception of him, perhaps the answer were: The quality of courage, of valour; that Johnson was a brave man. The courage that can go forth, once and away, to Chalk-Farm, and have itself shot, and snuffed out, with decency, is nowise wholly what we mean here. Such courage we indeed esteem an exceeding small matter; co-existing with a life full of falsehood, feebleness, poltroonery, and despicability. Nay oftener it is cowardice rather that produces the result: for consider, is the Chalk Farm Pistolier inspired with any reasonable belief and determination; or is he hounded on by haggard indefinable Fear—how he will be cut at public places, and 'plucked geese of the neighbourhood' will wag their tails at him a plucked goose? If he go then, and be shot without shrieking, or audible uproar, it is well for him: nevertheless there is nothing amazing in it. Courage to manage all this has not perhaps been denied to any man or to any woman. Thus, do not recruiting sergeants drum through the streets of manufacturing towns, and collect ragged fellows enough; every one of whom, if dressed in red, and trained a little, will receive fire cheerfully for the small sum of one shilling per diem, and have the soul blown out of him at last, with perfect propriety. The courage that dares only die, is so the whole no sublime affair; necessary indeed, yet universal; pitiful when it begins to parade itself. On this globe of ours, there are some thirty-six persons that manifest it, seldom without the smallest failure, during every second of time. Nay, look at Napoleon: do not the offerings of creation, when doomed to the gallows, as if they were not men, but vermin, walk forth with decency, and even to the scowls and howlings of the whole universe give their steps goodnight in silence? What is to be undergone only once, we may undergo; what must be, comes almost of its own accord. Considered as a duellist, what a poor figure does the fiercest Irish Whiskerando make, compared with any English game-cock, such as you may buy for fifteen-pence!"

The following extract from the thirteenth number of the *Cabinet Cyclopædia*, offers a frightful picture of one of those numerous persecutions to which the Jews have been subjected by the Spaniards and Portuguese:

"Scarcely had they obtained possession of Grenada, than they promulgated a decree, in which all Jews who refused to embrace Christianity were ordered to be expelled the kingdom in six months; they were allowed within that time, to dispose of their property; but, as they were forbidden to take away its value in the precious metals, they could only change it. Many consented to be baptised; but the far greater number, in profound despair, prepared to leave the country of their birth. Eighty-three thousand removed into Portugal. About 30,000 families retired to France, Italy, and Africa. By the Moors they were treated with characteristic barbarity. Many of them were known, and more suspected, to have swallowed precious stones; their living bodies were opened by the savage miscreants. All who fell into Moorish hands were stripped, not only of their substance, but of their very clothing. Such as escaped, returned gradually, and in small numbers at a time, to the Peninsular, which, to the converts, held out the hand of hospitality, and even of brotherly affection. Those who proceeded to Portugal were not much more fortunate: no sooner had the avaricious king, Joam II., filled his coffers with their wealth, than he published a similar edict, dooming to hopeless slavery all who, within the period of some months, did not either embrace Christianity or leave the kingdom. Don Manuel renewed his predecessor's decree. He not only reduced to slavery all who had no wish to embark, but ordered the children under fourteen years of age, of both exiles and slaves, to be forcibly taken from the parents and baptised. The lamentations of these unhappy wretches would have touched any heart but that of a bigot. Fury in many cases succeeded despair; parents cast their infant children into the sea, or to the bottom of wells, or strangled them, or strangled them. The king was immovable; he even refused to allow the parents, who wished to embark, the means of transport: slavery or baptism

was the alternative. Many thousands did, at length, profess Christianity with their lips, but must have abhorred it in their hearts."

TALES OF THE EARLY AGES.—From the story of the Siege of Caer-broc, in this work, we extract the following fearful description of a band of savage Picts engaged in one of their plundering and slaughtering excursions, and about to land in Kent.

Hark! did you not hear a noise from beyond those projecting and sea-beaten crags to seaward of us? No: I caught no sound. Listen:—There it is again; you have a sluggish ear. But mine eyes are quick, for now I discern a shadow darkening the waters ahead of yonder outmost cliff. Would it were only the shadow of a cloud! but it has a more fearful source; for lo! I perceive a long, dark, mis-shapen vessel looming heavily round the crag, and the dull sound I heard was that of the oars, which are doubtless muffled at the handle with hides, as is usual with these savage marauders.—Is she a pirate then?—She appertains, if I mistake not to a nation of pirates. Her clumsy construction, her wicker-work sides covered with leather, her mast of unbarked pine, and her sail of painted matting, which remains hoisted, although there is not a breath of wind, assure me that she belongs to the Scots or Picts, who never visit the shores of unhappy Britain, except for the purposes of pillage, devastation and massacre. I cannot yet see any of the crew, who are hidden by the high bulwarks of their unwieldy barge, but I can now distinguish an object which confirms my apprehensions. See you not a large raft lashed to the stern of their vessel, bearing, amid lumber and plunder of all sorts, several prisoners chained by the legs to the spars? on which they are floating? Poor wretches! if they reach Scotland in safety, they are destined to pass the remainder of their lives in slavery; but they may perhaps share a happier doom by finding an early grave in the ocean, for their captors, if they encounter blowy weather, or are anxious to expedite their return, will not scruple to cut the raft adrift, and leave all that are upon it to perish of hunger, or be overwhelmed in the waves. Except with a view to slavery, human life is of so little value in the eyes of these barbarians, that they usually murder the young, the old, and the feeble, where they have encountered any resistance; and in their marauding descents upon the coast attach much more value to the quadrupeds, which they come to purloin, than to their biped professors. So frequent and so felt have been their invasions, that the unfortunate Britons, abandoning the northern coasts, have mostly retired with their cattle to inland caves, rocks and forests; and the ravagers are now obliged to extend their predatory voyages as far south as to these coasts of Kent. From the circumstance of her towing so large a raft, I doubt not that the vessel we are contemplating has been successful in her cruise, and that, besides the other plunder in the hold, the brine casks and tubs with which the marauders commonly provide themselves for that purpose, are filled with the cattle they have stolen and slaughtered, for on these more distant expeditions they do not always preserve them alive.

Look! several of the crew are now visible, standing upon the bulwarks, and pointing towards the creek, for which the helmsman is evidently steering. There is something awful in the silence with which they advance through the moon-lighted waters, for it betrays the hostility of their purpose, and methinks the men wear a singularly ghastly and spectral appearance. Is it an apparition of the night, or a real vessel? Alas! I can no longer doubt that it is a pirate of the worst description; the men are Picts, whose half-naked bodies painted of a blue colour, assume in the moonlight a most hideous and corpse-like hue. Ha! she has a comrade. I see another vessel heaving heavily round the crags, the first is now passed into the creek, as far as the depth of water will allow, and the men are preparing to land. Let us crouch down, and hide ourselves, for they will slay all whom they encounter, especially if they be likely to betray their approach.

INQUIRIES OF AN EMIGRANT.—This is the title of a work by an English Farmer named Pickering, who traversed the United States and Canada, from 1824 to 1830, with a view to settle as an emigrant. He strongly recommends Canada in preference to the United States: indeed the Americans appear to be no favourites with our author, as may be gathered from the following rough but piquant sketch of the sort of company to be met with in American taverns in the back settlements:

St. Catharine's is a thriving and rapidly improving village, very pleasantly situated along the pleasantly diversified romantic banks of the Twelve Mile Creek, down in which 100 feet below the houses, is seen meandering the great unfinished canal. The inhabitants are chiefly Americans. A 'darned tarnation' pretty sample of them here "I swear," some 'I guess,' from the 'States' Prison,' and some that have 'broke the

limits," "I calculate," &c. In short "blue bellies" of all sorts and conditions, equal to any of the frontier towns on both sides of the 'lines.' To come at a faint idea of a group of these half-dandified, sleek, smooth-faced, wiskerless, whisky-drinking third commandment breaking, speculating, money-hunting gentry, with various other qualifications, too numerous and too bad to mention, take nine taylor, a few barbers, half a dozen strolling players, three or four quack doctors, some waiters at taverns, hackney coachmen, shoemakers, and lawyers' clerks, half a dozen Jews, and three or four honest men, (perhaps as great a proportion as to be found in some other places,) the last from Yorkshire, one half of the others from that county, and the remainder cockneys! Let the barbers shave all the wiskers off the others and themselves; leave the hair on their heads thick but short, something like a thrum mop. Let them have three very high-crowned hats, some few white or buff; others black, with long nap, and very narrow brim; blue surtouts, black silk vest, faced up tight behind, blue or black trowsers, full enough round the hips to hold fifty dollars' worth of smuggled goods, with boots, of course; yes, all boots, or nearly so. This for the first 'grade' dress, the others as near as their circumstances will admit. Now place them in a large room in an inn, with free liberty of ingress and egress, with benches to lie on, and chairs to set on, to throw themselves back against the wall, or pace up and down, in and out of the room, as they think proper. Partition off one corner of the room, the bottom with boards, the top with laticed wooden bars like palisades, admit two or three hands or more at a time as occasion requires. In this partition, which will be called a bar, place one of the quack doctors, and after he has locked himself in, let him give out drams of whisky, "Jamaica Spirits," (best rum) "bitters," (any kind of liquor &c. &c. from a tier of yellow painted kegs standing behind him, with gin, whisky, &c. in large letters on them, to the others, as they pace up and down the room. By the time they have all taken a 'drink' or two a piece, and swallowed a mouthful of water after it, you will hear guessing and calculating enough, undoubtedly, and something better, 'I don't think!' Be careful they do not tread on your toes at this time, and if you wish to retain a seat, do not get up from it even for a 'York minute.' A 'word to the wise,' &c. You must not suppose them impudent or intruding if they sit down before you, or stand betwixt you and the fire, with their backs to it; nor must you be offended at the number of questions that may be put, about your own business and concerns, not even at being asked if you are an honest man; all this is only the exercise of the refinement of a superior liberty and freedom! Some of them will smoke cigars, and others chew tobacco, therefore be careful, and keep a 'good look out' if you wish to be cleanly: you had better not leave any furniture in the room, as they generally carry 'Rogers' penknives' about them. A few pieces of pine splints, or other woods, put into the room, will, perhaps, keep them from 'whittling' the chairs, tables, and window frames, and, as the saying goes, 'they will make something of them.' You must not be moved should they cast foul abuse and slander on their relation John Bull; this is one of the most delightful privileges 'uncle Sam' and 'brother Jonathan' enjoy! It would be a pity to debar them from such a cheap and innocent amusement, that hurts nobody. But hark! the horn blows and bells ring to call the hulls of them home (home) 'right away straight' to a dinner of 'fat pork and melasses' then 'Johnny cake and pumpkin pie.' After you have awakened 'them' are two men asleep on the benches (who were 'high' when they came in, and full of 'develtry,' having been on a drinking 'scale' of late) and cleaned out the room, I will drop the curtain and leave you to ruminate on a scene in an American tavern, while I proceed on my journey."

THE UNCONSCIOUS CRIMINAL.—Within my own recollection a most horrid occurrence took place at a farm not far from this, where a very clever country workman made an annual visit for the purpose of mending and mending barrows and harrows, and all other farm tools and utensils. It happened, that one of the cotters on the farm, who was constantly employed as a labourer by the farmer, had a very harmless, good-natured idiot boy, who followed his father daily to his work. This poor innocent being was every year the constant object of the wright's tricks and jokes, some of them cruel enough, and, by the way, it is not enough remembered, that every trick is cruel which is felt to be so by those it is practised upon. One hot summer day, after the wright had, as usual, been exerting his ingenuity in pestering the poor boy, and having finished his dinner sooner than the rest of the people, he went into the barn, stretched himself upon the floor, and went to sleep. Before the other workmen had left