

LITERATURE, &c.

FROM THE DIAMOND MAGAZINE.

CHARACTER OF THE PRESS.

It has been said by the Scottish historian of Napoleon that the Revolution of France was partly originated by an undue homage paid in that country to literature, and to learned men. This, like the moral of all his tales, has a snake in the grass. Walter Scott affects very unsuitable airs, when deploring that, in France, the tribe of authors had been freely admitted, and invited, forsooth, into the very first circle of society. Not only was this a very silly and ungracious, as well as invidious, observation, by an author, especially accustomed to praise men, provided they are only powerful, men of the most opposite and conflicting principles, (in the same breath too, thus blowing hot and cold;) but in him it was ungrateful. For he owes the unexampled fortune he has risen to in the reading, (it can scarcely be called the learned, the thinking, and the writing) world—not to any remarkable acquirements, natural, or other, over cotemporary authors; but to the singular felicity of having been brought out early in life, as a man of letters, under [I believe] the fostering patronage of a noble Scottish family; which made him, at once, free of the first circles. Without observing upon his disparagement of men of letters, and his sinking them to the level of mere common actors and singing-people, who are invited, for theatrical effect, to our evening-parties as guests, by the above very harsh insinuation, he even attributes too much sway to letters, and to the press, and thus too much responsibility. Here he mistakes, as poets, who are not philosophers, usually do, means and effects for causes.

Men of mere talent, of whatever kind even, are mere organs; like vision, or the hand; and must obey, more or less faithfully, the will and condition of that community which employs them.

The press, in every country, does not lead, it follows. It takes, chameleon-like, its hue from the people of influence and power who govern such country. It is a sycophant, for example, to affirm, as many do dully, [repeating from others like parrots, who have not the faculty of thinking] that a free press is the father of liberty. On the contrary, liberty is the father of a free press. A licentious and a mercenary, a gambling and sycophant, as well as a sceptical or atheistical taste, prevailing in any government, and its fashionable circles, is the cause of a licentious and a mercenary, a sycophant, and a gambling, as well as a sceptical or atheistical press, also. I speak here of the reading world; for as to works of thought and reflection, these rarely in the form of their first publication circulate widely enough, or sink and penetrate deeply enough, even, to reach the great mass of the people. Would you have a test to prove who is the best writer? certainly he whose writings, like those of Homer, Herodotus, and of some Italian poets, were ever in the mouths, and on the tables, of the great mass of the common people, and also of their most eminent statesmen at the same time; a distinction which has happened to few among us, that I can at present recollect. Swift and Cobbe, are perhaps the only two. Such is the prerogative of the highest genius, in writing or speaking; and, in conduct, of the highest virtue only. Both are, universally, popular. This cannot be attributed, to the pseudo-historian Hume; and if some are pleased to attribute it to Walter Scott, the objection to his moral [the same as that of Hume] still remains. But the ordinary press in every country partakes more or less, of the nature and character, as well as of the blood of that parent-spirit, of which it is the offspring. Thus in France the press had a different character in the time of the old dynasty, from what it, now, has under the restored one; and both differed from the various phrases it assumed during the revolutionary state of things. It reflects every such state; is the index or telegraph of all government-movements, and of the leading, COINED, opinions that are sought to be made current any where. Nay, when it is wholly suppressed and silent, it affords not a less signal indication of that state. The French Press showed itself alike obsequious to a tyrant, an oligarchy, and a mob. On all these several occasions, it exactly contrasted the *jestum, ac tenacem propositum virtum*, of Horace; which proves it to be a mere implement. The nature of virtue, of independence, and of liberty, is, like genius and every other energy of MIND, [having a free will of its own] not so resembling mere MATTER—so pliant, so supple, and so subservient. Still the ordinary press may prove a steady, faithful tool to a virtuous, as well as to a vicious, government; but it always follows the hand of government, whatever that for the time may happen to be. Our's we know is a mixed government; to the leaders of which it is of more consequence than even it is of to us, an open press for the sake of information, pretty much on the principle of the stone-lions' mouths at Venice, open for informers only; or the gaping letter-boxes of our newspaper offices.

NEW AND IMPORTANT INVENTION IN THE ART OF PRINTING.—A new process in the art of printing has just been carried into effect at Brussels, for making fac-similes of French books and journals. This process consists in transferring, by means of an operation which takes scarcely half an hour, the whole of a printed sheet to a lithographic stone, so that the printed letters are removed from the sheet, which is left blank, and are fixed, uninjured, upon the stone. By means of a chemical composition, the application of which requires an hour, at the most, the letters so transferred are raised so as to resemble types. The stone, thus prepared, may be then used as if it were a real form of metallic types, and from 1,500 to 2,000 copies may be printed from it, which will be perfect fac-similes of the original sheet. Those who are at all acquainted with the usual operations of printing, will, at once, perceive what an immense saving of time and labour may be made by this invention; a trial of which has just been made in reprinting the *Gazette des*

Tribunaux, of Paris, to appear at Brussels, under the title of *Causes celebres, et Anecdotes judiciaires: Repertoire de la Jurisprudence des Codes Francais*. This reprint will be very cheap; and the process, it is anticipated, will soon be applied to the reprinting of all the interesting Paris and London periodicals.—*Literary Gazette*.

AN AUTHOR'S CONFESSION.—One may think, on reading over this memoir, that I must have worn out a life of misery and wretchedness; but the case has been quite the reverse. I never knew man or woman who has been so uniformly happy as I have been; which has been partly owing to a good constitution, and partly from the conviction, that a heavenly gift, conferring the powers of immortal song, was inherent in my soul. Indeed, so uniformly smooth and happy has my married life been, that, on a retrospect, I cannot distinguish one part from another, save by some remarkably good days of fishing, shooting, and curling on the ice. Those who desire to peruse my youthful love adventures, will find some of the best of them in those of "George Cochrane," in the following tales.—*Hogg's Autobiography*.

FROM TAILOR'S HISTORIC SURVEY OF GERMAN POETRY.

WATCH SONG.

One Knight stationed as a Centinel, is supposed to sing, while another is venturing into the Chamber of his Mistress.

ALREADY gleams the eastern sky
With gold and silver gay;
Rejoicing that the morn is nigh,
The lark salutes the day.
Arise, ye knights, obey my cry,
Nor with your ladies stay.
At break of day,
In full array,
We must away.

I heard the lay, while yet 'twas night,
The watchman's call to start;
His singing ended my delight,
And chilled my glowing heart.
My lady said, "And is it light?
Alas we now must part.
At break of day,
In full array,
You must away."

The rising sun-beam sparkled o'er
Tears on my lady's face;
A hasty kiss she gave once more,
And yet a soft embrace;
Then reach'd my acton from the floor
The supple loops to lace,
"At break of day
In full array,
You must away."

Her ring she put my finger round,
A ruby set in gold;
Then on my helm a ribbon bound,
And down the stairs I strolled,
Below upon the turf ground
To mount my charger bold.
"At break of day,
In full array,
We must away."

Now at the turret-window stood,
Stately, my lady bright;
She gaz'd upon the marshalled crowd,
And hailed the glittering sight:
"To arms!" with heroine voice aloud,
Waving her kerchief white;
"At break of day,
In full array,
We must away."

"Amid the fight, each pennon white
Recalls to mind my love;
In fields of blood, with swelling mood,
I see her kerchief move.
And, by this ring, I'll bear or bring
Unbroken truth and love.
To arms! 'tis day,
In full array,
To arms! away!"

SOUTHEY.—He certainly is as elegant a writer as any in the kingdom. But those who would love Southey, as well as admire him, must see him, as I did, in the bosom, not only of one lovely family, but of

three, all attached to him as a father, and all elegantly maintained and educated, it is generally said, by his indefatigable pen. The whole of Southey's conversation and economy, both at home and abroad, left an impression of veneration on my mind which no future contingency shall ever either extinguish or injure. Both his figure and countenance are imposing, and deep thought is strongly marked in his dark eye; but there is a defect in his eyelids, for these he has no power of raising: so that, when he looks up, he turns up his face, being unable to raise his eyes; and, when he looks towards the top of one of his romantic mountains, one would think he was looking at the zenith.—*Hogg's Autobiography*.

STATE OF PUBLIC FEELING IN SCOTLAND.

STRANRAER, May 21.

Reform.—The joyful intelligence of the return of Earl Grey to the helm of affairs, was received here last night, and, but for the sacredness of the day, would have called forth a demonstration of the public feeling, that would have sounded like a death-knell in the ears of our few anti-reformers, and those half-and-half reformers, who, when dragged forward, give a lukewarm support to the great national cause. At a time like the present, when all true-hearted reformers should be at their posts, and by every lawful means show those blind bigoted boroughmongers who cry about a reaction, that they are determined to have full possession of that measure of reform which was all but in their grasp,—we have been surprised at the conduct of our men in power, who have hitherto (when there was less need) made a show of their desire for reform,—why did they not call a meeting of the inhabitants to give them an opportunity of publicly declaring their opinions on this subject? Do they really feel no interest in the success of the great cause? Are they afraid that their own ephemeral honour will disappear at the passing of the great charter that will annihilate all boroughmongers? Have they no hopes that their by-past conduct will entitle them to the suffrages of their fellow citizens, when they have the power of election conferred on them? The manner in which the people of Scotland have acted at this important crisis, when the hopes of the nation were sunk from the height to which they were raised by the noble conduct of the House of Commons, to the depth of despair at the bare possibility of the Duke of Wellington giving his reform, shows how fit they are for enjoying that right of which they have been too long deprived.

LANARK, May 24.

The following account which has been transmitted from Symington, will be read with interest fifty years hence, when our children's children will be enjoying the blessings of that Reform for which we have so gloriously struggled:

When the news reached our village of the Wellington Cabinet having been blown up, and Lord Grey having it in his power to resume his office, the whole of the villages gathered into one mass, old and young, and cheered loudly. In a short time there was scarcely a chimney-top, or eminence around, but had a flag hoisted upon it. At the approach of evening, we walked through the village, and part of the parish, in regular procession, with banners flying, two men deep. Upon the green there was a large fire, around which we all assembled, dancing and cheering, until the last ember died away. Then we were addressed by one of our number in the following animated strain:—"Brother and Sister Reformers—With a feeling of surprise similar to that which a man experiences upon opening a draw and finding valuables which he did not expect; so it is with us when we contrast the present blessed change with the late singularly inconsistent conduct of His Majesty;—for, when ruminating upon the convulsions that threatened our ea-girt isle, we were forced to exclaim—And is our liberty gone? But critical exigencies arise, and this is one of them. The community have learned that there is power in combination, for having been long alarmed by the cry about the rights of Kings, they have rasoned themselves into the conviction that they have rights also. These they are determined to maintain, and to show, that for a nation to be free the people have a right to will it. Let us remember the glorious and successful struggles which our forefathers made for freedom, and let each of us bear in mind, that upon the issue of the present measure depends the fate of our pterity. From the slough in which we have been long immersed, with an immense revenue, a ponderous, and mighty establishment to support, there is no other way of extricating ourselves than by the people interposing in order to improve the national representation. In a former age the public were roused by the vices of Monarchy; in this age, we are incited by the corruptions of Parlia-