

Literature, &c.

THE BRITISH MAGAZINES
FOR SEPTEMBER.From Colburn's New Monthly.
THE WAR WITH CHINA.

BY THOMAS HOOD.

"Mistress of herself tho' China fall"—POPE.

"I can't understand it," said my uncle, throwing down the pamphlet he had been reading, and looking up over the fireplace, at the great picture of Canton, painted by an elder brother, when he was mate of an East Indiaman. My aunt was seated beside my uncle, with her cotton box, playing at working; and cousin Tom was working at playing, in a corner. As for my father, and myself, we had dropped in as usual after a walk to take our tea, which through an old connexion with Cathay, was certain to be first-rate at the cottage. "Why on earth," continued my uncle, "why on earth we should go to war about the opium business, quite passes my comprehension." "And mine too," chimed in my aunt, whose bent it was to put in a word and put out an argument, as often as she had an opportunity; "I always thought opium was a lulling, soothing sought of thing, mere likely to compose people's passions than to stir them up." My uncle looked at the speaker with much the same expression as that of the great girl in Wilkie's picture, who is at once frowning and smiling at the boy's grotesque mockery of the blind fiddler—for my aunt's allusion to the sedative qualities of opium, was amusing in itself, but provoking, as interrupting the discourse. "The sulphur question," she continued, "is quite a different thing. That's about brimstone and combustibles; and it would only be of a piece, if we were to send our men of war, and frigates, and fireships to bombard Mount Vesuvius." "I should like to see it," said my father, in his quietest tone, and with his gravest face, for he was laughing inwardly at the proposed grand display of pyrotechnics! "To go back," resumed my uncle, "to the very beginning of the business; first, we have Captain Elliott, who wishes to give the Chinese admiral a chop—" "And a very civil thing of him to," remarked my aunt. "Eh! what?" exploded my uncle, as snappishly as a Waterloo cracker. "To be sure," said my aunt, in a deprecating tone, "it might be a Friday and a fast day as to meat—" "As to what?" "As to meat," repeated my aunt, resolutely. "I have always understood that the Catholic priests and the Jesuits were the first to go converting the Chinese." "Phoo! nonsense!" ejaculated my uncle. "A chop is a document." "Well, it's not my fault," retorted my aunt, "if things abroad are called by their wrong names. What is a chop then, in Chinese—I mean a pork or mutton one—is it called a document?" My uncle gave a look upwards worthy of Job himself. He was sorely tempted—but he translated the rising English oath in French shrug and grimace. My father tried to mend matters as usual. "After all, brother," he said, "my sister's mistake was natural, and womanly—especially in a mistress of a house, who has to think occasionally of chops and steaks. Besides, she has had greater blunders to keep her in countenance—you remember the needless resentment there was about the 'Barbarian Eye.' "To be sure he does," said my aunt, "and why should I be expected to know Chinese any more than Lord Melbourne, or Lord Palmerston, or Lord-Knows-Who? especially when its such a difficult language besides; and a single letter stands for a whole chapter, like the Egyptian hieroglyphics." "But what says the pamphleteer?" said my father, deliberately putting on his spectacles, and taking up the brochure from the table. "Why, he says," replied my uncle, "that opium is a baneful drug; that it produces the most demoralizing effects on the consumers; and that we have no right to go to war to force a noxious article down the throats of our fellow-creatures." "No, nor a wholesome one neither," returned my father, "as the judge said to the woman when she killed her child for not taking its physic. But what have we here—a return of our exports to the Celestial Empire?" "The author means to imply," said my uncle, "that if the Chinese did not chew and smoke so much opium they would have more money to lay out on Birmingham and Manchester manufactures." "Pretty nonsense indeed!" exclaimed my aunt. "As if the Chinese could smoke printed cottons and calicoes, and chew Brummagem hardware, and cutlery, like the ostriches!" "I believe it is but a Brummagem argument after all," said my father, "a mercantile interest played over with morality. It is the old story in the spelling

book—'There's nothing like leather.' The pamphleteer and commissioner Lin are both of a mind in condemning a drug in which they are not druggists; but how comes it that the deleterious demoralizing effects of the article are found out only in 1840?—The opium trade with China is of long standing—it is as old as—'Robinson Crusoe,' cried a small voice from the corner of the room, where cousin Tom had been listening to the discourse and making a paper kite at the same time. 'Robinson Fiddlesticks!' cried my aunt, 'boys oughtn't to talk about politics. What in the world has opium chewing to do with a desert island?' He had a whole cargo of it; muttered Tom, 'when he went on his voyage to China.' 'The lad's right,' said my father. 'Go Tom and fetch the book,' and Defoe's novel was produced in a twinkling! 'The lad's right,' repeated my father, reading aloud from the book—'here's the very passage. 'From Sumatra,' says Crusoe, 'we went to Siam, where we exchanged some of our wares for opium and some arrack—the first a commodity which bears a great price amongst the Chinese, and which at that time was much wanted there.' 'That is to the point, at any rate,' said my uncle, with a nod of approbation to the boy. But my aunt did not so much relish Tom's victory; and, on some household pretence, took herself out of the room. 'It is a sad job this war, and I am sorry for it,' said my father, with a serious shake of the head. 'I have always had a sneaking kindness for the Chinese, as an intelligent and ingenious people. We have outrun them now in the race of civilization, but, no doubt, there was a time when comparatively they were refined and we were barbarians.' 'It is impossible to doubt it,' said my uncle with great animation. 'To say nothing of their invention of gunpowder, and their discovery of the mariner's compass, look at their earthenware.'

'For my own part, I am particularly fond of old china. It is, I may say quite a passion—inherited perhaps from my grandmother, with several closets full of the antique oriental porcelain. She used to say it was a genteel taste. 'And she had Horace Walpole,' said my father, 'to back her opinion.' 'To be sure she had,' replied my uncle, eagerly; 'and the Chinese must be a genteel people. It is sufficient to look at their elegant tea-services, to convince one that they are not made any more than their vessels of the commoner earth. You feel at once—' 'That Slang Whang is a gentleman,' said my father, 'and Nan King a lady in spite of their names. My uncle paid no attention to the joke, but went on in a strain that would have delighted Father Matthew. 'To look at a Chinese service,' he said, 'is enough of itself to make one a tea totaller. It inspires one—at least it does me—with the exquisite horror of malt liquor and such gross beverages. Indeed to compare our drinking vessels with the Chinese, they are like horse buckets to bird glasses; and, remembering their huge flagons, and black jacks, and wassail bowls, our Gothic and Saxon ancestors must have been a little coarse, not to say hoggish in their draughts.' 'They must, indeed,' said my father. 'Now here's a delicate drinking vessel,' continued my uncle, taking up from a side table a cup hardly large enough for a fairy to get into. 'What sort of liquor ought one to expect from such a pretty little chalice?' 'At a guess,' replied my father, very gravely, 'nothing coarser than mountain dew.' 'Yes,' said my uncle, with enthusiasm, 'to drink out of such a diminutive calyx all enamelled with blossoms, is indeed, like to the poetical fancy of sipping dew out of a flower. And then the sylph to whom only such a cup could belong!—' 'She must have had thinner lips than an Austrian,' said my father. 'And what a lady like hand!' exclaimed my uncle, 'for such a Lilliputian utensil would escape from any but the most feminine fingers.' 'Her hand must be like her foot,' 'which is never bigger than a child's,' 'And there again, we have a proof of refinement,' said my uncle. 'Walking is generally considered in Europe as a vulgar and common exercise for a lady, and it shows the extreme delicacy of the well bred Chinese female, that as far as possible she makes a conventional impropriety a physical impossibility.' 'And it is somewhat remarkable,' said my father, 'that the Chinese gentlemen have an appendage, formerly indispensable with the politest nation in the world in its politest time, the pigtail.' Exactly,' said my uncle. 'But here is the lady,' and he took up another of his grandmother's brittle legacies, 'on a plate that ought to be a plate to Moore's Paradise and the Peri. Just hold it up towards the window and observe its transparency, softening

down the sunshine to a sort of moonlight.' 'Very transparent indeed,' said my father, 'and yonder is Nan King herself fetching a walk by that blue river.' 'Yes, bluer than the Rhine,' said my uncle, 'though it has not been put into poetry. And look at the birds, and fruits and flowers! And then that pretty rural temple.' 'Is it on the earth or in the sky?' asked my father. 'Whichever you please,' said my uncle, 'and the garden is all the more Eden like for that ingenious equivocation. There is no horizon you observe, but a sort of blending, as we may suppose there was in Paradise, of earth and heaven.' 'Very poetical indeed,' said my father. 'And those curly tailed swallows, and those crooked gudgeons, may be flying or swimming at the option of the spectator. 'Exactly so,' said my uncle; 'and there you have the superior fancy of the Chinese. A Staffordshire potter would leave nothing to the imagination. He would never dream of building a castle in the air, or throwing a bridge over nothing.' 'He would not, indeed,' said my father, 'even if he could get an act of parliament for it.' 'Not he,' cried my uncle. 'All must be fact with him, no fiction. But it is otherwise with the Chinese. They have been called servile and literal copyists—but on the contrary they have more boldness and originality than all our Royal Academy put together. For instance here is a road, the further end of which is lost in that white blank which may or may not stand for the atmosphere—' 'And yet,' said my father, 'that little man in petticoats is walking up it, as if he had an errand at the other end.' 'For aught we know,' said my uncle, 'it may be an allegory—and I have often fancied that the paintings on their vessels were scenes from their tales or poems. In the mean time we may gather some hints of the character of the people from their porcelain—that they are literary and musical, and from the frequent occurrence of figures of children, that they are affectionate and of domestic habits. And, above all, that they are eminently unwarlike, and inclined only to peaceful and pastoral pursuits. I do not recollect ever seeing an armed figure, weapons, or any allusion to war and its attributes, in any of their enamels.' 'So much the worse for them,' said my father; 'for they are threatened with something more than a tempest in a teapot. It will belike the china vessel in the old fable coming in contact with the brazen one. There will be a fine smash, brother, of your favourite ware!' 'A smash, where?' inquired my aunt, who had just entered the room, and imperfectly heard the last sentence. 'What are you talking of?' 'Of a bull in a china shop,' said my father, with a hard wink at my uncle. 'Yes; that's a dreadful smash, sure enough,' said my aunt.

'There was Mrs Starkey, who keeps the great Staffordshire warehouse at Smithfield bars—she had an overdriven beast run into her shop only last week. At first, she says, he was quiet enough, for besides racing up and down St. John's street, he had been bullock hunted all over Islington, and Hoxton fields, and that had taken the wildness out of him. So at first he only stood staring at the jugs, and mugs, and things, as if admiring the patterns.' 'And pray,' inquired my uncle, 'Where was Mrs. Starkey in the mean time?' 'Why, the shopman you see, had crept under the counter for safety, and Mrs Starkey was in the back parlour, and saw every thing by peeping through a crack of the green curtain, over the glass door. So the mad bull stood staring at the crockery, quiet enough, when unluckily with a switch of his tail, he brought down on his back a whole row of pipkins that hung over head. I suppose he remembered being pelted about the streets, for the clatter of the earthenware about his ears seemed to put him up again; for he gave a stamp and a bellow that made the whole shop shake again, and down rattled a great jug on his hind quarters. Well, round turns the bull quite savage, with another loud bellow, as much as to say, 'I should like to know who did that?' when what should he see by bad luck, but a china figure of a mandarin, as big as our Tom there, a-grinning and nodding at him with its head.' 'Commissioner Lin,' said my father, with a significant nod to my uncle. 'Mrs. Starkey thinks,' continued my aunt, 'that the mad bull took the China figure for a human creature, and particularly as its motions made it look so life-like,—however, the more the bull stamped and bellowed, the more the mandarin grinned and nodded his head, till at long and at last, the bull got so aggravated, that, sticking his tail upright, Mrs. Starkey says, as stiff as the kitchen-poker, he made but one rush at the china mandarin, and smashed him all

into shivers.' 'And there you have the whole history,' says my father, with another nod to my uncle, 'of a War with China.'

FAMILY CONTRADICTIONS.

'Like father like son.'

WE never found the young Grimaldi like the old one; nor was Cardinal Wolsey as he grew up, remarkable for any striking likeness to his sire. Nor did Claude Lorraine resemble his, nor Nero his, nor was Cleopatra in all things the image of her mother. The first son was not a bit like the first father. Nobody can know the old block by the chips. The cut of the family face comprises wonderful opposites; unlikenesses that seem the work of design. The nose paternal is seldom the nose filial. The handsome aquiline has frequently a snub for its eldest born; and the meek dove's eye becomes a cogle in the next generation. The tall, hardy, finelimbéd veteran looks upon his shrimp of a son, wondering whether he will be mistaken for a man when he is bald; and the father, five feet high, looks up to his long boy, marvelling when he will come to an end. With mental gifts, the rule of contradiction still obtains. Philosophy begets foolery, and from fools issue wisdom. It is often the fate of genius to leave an illustrious name to a dolt; as it is the fortune of a dolt, still more apparently hopeless, to see in his offspring the enligner of nations, the enchanter of all ages. He who could never read a book in his life, stares to find his son writing one; with an eager and applauding public looking on; while he who is justly reputed to have made half the world wiser, feels himself incapable of communicating a particle of his wisdom to the inheritor of his name. Other shades of difference are discernible where these fail. The son of the mathematician has an inveterate turn for poetry; the author of a fairy-tale and fable hails in his boy a young political economist, and the offspring of the sublime expounder of divinity goes upon the stage. With respect to moral qualities, the want of resemblance is commonly as remarkable. The practiser of temperance upon principle, has a five-bottle youth for his son; the miserly gentleman who has starved himself fifty years, and deems the saving of three farthings a virtue, bequeaths his boardings to a lad who could not spend them fast enough were the days eight-and-forty hours long; the country gentleman's heir insists upon going to sea, the city merchant's becomes a fox-hunter, the clergyman's sets up a gambling-house, the justice's pickpockets, the physician's is a rope-dancer; and the honest man's 'young hopeful' willfully turns scrivener. Every body's experience must furnish examples of these truths; and biography is full of them. Could the life of Junius be written, it would turn out beyond question that his father was a blab and could never keep his own counsel. The only facts in favour of the doctrine, "like father like son," that occurs to us, are to be found in the peerage. There we see it clearly authenticated, that one nobleman, "who was a duke had a son, who was a duke also; but else how different! "The owl is a baker's daughter," cries Ophelia, and truly between the baker and Minerva's bird, we detect about the same degree of family likeness (that is discernible half the world over.—(Art.: 'A Quarrel with some of our Old Acquaintances, by Lamen Blanchard.)

From the Metropolitan.
AN ELIGIBLE MATCH,
A TALE OF A COUNTRY HOUSE.

By Mrs Abdy.

I WAS sitting alone in my boudoir in a state of enviable happiness; not in the dreamy indolence of having nothing to do, which would have been the heaviest punishment that the refinement of malice could have inflicted upon me, but in the luxury of abundant and pleasant occupation. My guitar was upon my knee; a stand of new songs was before me; a table at a little distance was covered with books and drawing materials; an embroidery frame stood beside it, which was only at present embellished by three leaves and a half finished rose; and in the distance was a small writing table, on which lay a list of the names of ten friends from whom I had recently received letters, and a quire of Lavenne's most exquisite paper, on which I intended to indite my answers. To all these sources of delight was added the consciousness of unbounded leisure to avail myself of them. We had only arrived a few days before at my father's country house; I was rejoiced to think that the bustle of an unusually gay London season was over, and that I was set free to repair my faded roses and exhausted spirits in the pure air and among the green leaves

of the country determined aid of who bits of London shade; and mer of lib and favour interrupted she move animation her hand. 'Eva, n often hear Terence his, who r 'often but I k I bowed lately com my mother rejoices wrote to c time ago, wished to youthful with his mentioned young man fying and Sir Teren Captain England, stay a wee closed in mond—he to-day.' I felt scheme of thus unex the introd 'Is it n to take p word, wh tion.' 'How hospitable ing to my loved her Now P but of th 'The and as sh ney, nor t her footin sustained court to quently s by a kind my mother cence, in which I that any exemplar 'I like ceeding their free luctance mal invit 'You d smiling, to spend on the ple that you beds.' 'The c replied with Mis thing; but son of a b be allowe 'Very be a mor house on 'Eva, replied mind of in Lewis 'Do n ma; I re ever som am sure ice of the strings o gan to si 'O but I su that the personal who look blest at 'You anything 'I am racter; you by c am sure 'You for the she said, 'Will but wh Am I to the dam loquy or like the times?' 'You Italian to wear 'O m been so