

Literature, &c.

From Bentley's Miscellany.

BELSHAZZER'S FEAST.

The King sat in his regal pride,
Proud nobles throng'd the festal board;
High foam'd the wine, whose purple tide
Was from God's sacred vessels poured.

Music and minstrelsy were there,
Loud echoing to the vaulted roof,
And queenly dames, whose jewels rare
Blazed in the torch-light far aloof.

With revelry the palace rung;
Yet suddenly 'midst the banquet's cheer
Alarm hark hushed each tanel tongue,
And every eye glared wild with fear.

Why start the proud in mute amaze?
Why quail the mighty? shriek the fair?
Why on one spot in horror gaze,
With features marbled by despair?

What hand is that whose fingers mark
With awful characters the wall?
Whose hidden mysteries, stern and dark,
Can e'en Belshazzar's soul appal?

Stand forth, Astrologers! and read
That scroll, with dreadful import fraught;
Wealth, fame, and power shall be his meed
By whom th' interpretation's taught.

What! silent all? And is there none
That fearful secret to unfold?
'Lo! cried the seer, 'the Holy One
To me its mystery hath unroll'd.

'Tremble, proud King! thy reign is o'er,—
Thy sceptre shall the Median sway,—
Thy pomp and glory are no more,—
Thy kingdom, it hath passed away.

'Thou has lift up thy haughty brow
Against the Lord of earth and heaven:
That God, O King! hath weighed thee now,
And judgment is against thee given.

'Hark! even now the voice of war
Is thundering at thy brazen gates;
I hear the battle shout from far—
Destruction, Monarch, on thee waits.'

The Prophet ceased. That very night
Belshazzar's power and life were gone,
And ere the morning star was bright,
'Darius reigned in Babylon.

NEW WORKS.

Zanoni. By the Author of 'Night and Morning,' 'Rienzi,' &c.,
How beautiful—how Italian—is the following sketch:—

'She was seated outside her door—the young actress! The sea before her in that heavenly bay seemed literally to sleep in the arms of the shore,—while to the right, nor far off, rose the dark and tangled crags to which the traveller of to day is duly brought to gaze on the tomb of Virgil, or compare with the cavern of Posilipo the archway of Highgate hill. There were a few fishermen loitering by the cliffs; and, at a distance, the sound of some rustic pipe (more common at that than at this), mingled now and then with the bells of the lazy mules, broke the voluptuous silence—the silence of declining noon on the shores of Naples;—never, till you have enjoyed it—never, till you have felt its enervating but delicious charm, believe that you can comprehend all the meaning of the *Dolce far niente*; and when that luxury has been known, when you have breathed that atmosphere of faery land, then you will no longer wonder why the heart ripens into fruit so sudden and so rich beneath the rosy skies, and the glorious sunshine of the south.

'The eyes of the actress were fixed on the broad blue deep beyond. In the unwonted negligence of her dress might be traced the abstraction of her mind. Her beautiful hair was gathered up loosely, and partially bandaged by a handkerchief, whose purple colour served to deepen the golden hue of the tresses. A stray curl escaped, and fell down the graceful neck. A loose morning robe, girded by a sash, felt the breeze, that came over and anon from the sea, to die upon the bust half disclosed; and the tiny slipper, that Cinderella might worn, seemed a world too wide for the tiny foot which it scarcely covered. It might be the heat of the day that deepened the soft bloom of the cheeks, and gave an unwonted languor to the large dark eyes. In all the pomp of her stage attire—in all the flush of excitement before the intoxicating lamps—never had Viola looked so lovely.'

Another Neapolitan view introduces us to a scene of a still more striking cast. Here is a morning ride out of Naples—the arid country—the ghastly wretchedness that sears its surface—the banditti! All characteristic features:—

'He bent his way into those picturesque but dangerous parts of the country, which as that time were infested by banditti, and which few travellers dared to pass, even in

broad daylight, without a strong escort. A road more lonely cannot well be conceived than that on which the hoofs of his steed, striking upon the fragments of rock that encumbered the neglected way, woke a dull and melancholy echo. Large tracts of waste land, varied by the rank and profuse foliage of the south, lay before him; occasionally, a wild goat peeped down from some rocky crag, or the discordant cry of a bird of prey, startled in its sombre haunt, was heard above the hills. These were the only signs of life; not a human being was met—not a hut was visible. Wrapped in his own ardent and solemn thoughts, the young man continued his way, till the sun had spent its noonday heat, and a breeze that announced the approach of eve sprung up from the unseen ocean which lay far distant to his right. It was then that a turn in the road brought before him one of those long, desolate, gloomy villages which are found in the Neapolitan dominions: and now he came upon a small chapel on one side the road, with a gaudily painted image of the Virgin in the open shrine. Around this spot, which in the heart of Christian land, retained the vestige of the old idolatry (for just such were the chapels that in the pagan age were dedicated to the demon saints of mythology), gathered six or seven miserable and squalid wretches, whom the curse of the leper had cut off from mankind. They set up a shrill cry as they turned their ghastly visages towards the horseman; and without stirring from the spot, stretched out their gaunt arms, and implored charity in the name of the merciful mother! Glyndoo hastily threw them some small coins, and turning away his face, clapped spurs to his horse, and relaxed not his speed till he entered the village. On either side the narrow and miry street, fierce and beggarly forms—some leaning against the ruined walls of blackened huts, some seated at the threshold, some lying at full length in the mud—presented groups that at once invoked pity and aroused alarm; pity for their squalor, alarm for the ferocity imprinted on their savage aspects. They gazed at him, grim and sullen, as he rode slowly up the rugged street; sometimes whispering significantly to each other, but without attempting to stop his way. Even the children hushed their babble, and ragged urchins, devouring him with sparkling eyes, muttered to their mothers. 'We shall feast well to-morrow!' It was, indeed, one of those hamlets in which law sets not its sober step, in which violence and murder house secure—hamlets common then in the wilder parts of Italy—in which the peasant was but the gentler name for the robber.

Glyndoo's heart somewhat failed him as he looked around, and the question he desired to ask died upon his lips. At length from one of the dismal cabins emerged a form superior to the rest. Instead of the patched and ragged overall, which made the only garment of the men he had hitherto seen, the dress of this person was characterized by all the trappings of the national bravery. Upon his raven hair, the glossy curls of which made a notable contrast to the matted and elfin locks of the savages around, was placed a cloth cap with a gold tassel that hung down to his shoulder, his moustaches were trimmed with care, and a silk kerchief of gay hues was twisted round a well shaped but sinewy throat;—a short jacket of rough cloth was decorated with several rows of gilt flagree buttons,—his nether garments fitted tight to his limbs, and were curiously braided,—while, in a broad parai coloured sash, were placed two silver hilted pistols, and the sheathed knife, usually worn by Italians of the lower order, mounted in ivory elaborately carved. A small handsome carbine was slung across his shoulder, and completed his costume. The man himself was of middle size, athletic yet slender, with straight and regular features, sunburnt, but not swarthy,—and an expression of countenance which, though reckless and bold, had in it frankness rather than ferocity, and if defying, was not altogether unprepossessing.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

The late Dr. Stakely says that one day by appointment, visiting Sir Isaac Newton, the servant told him he was in his study. No one was permitted to disturb him there; but as it was near dinner time, the visitor sat down to wait for him. After a time the dinner was brought in—a boiled chicken under a hot cover. An hour passed, and Isaac did not appear. The Doctor ate the fowl, and covering up the empty dish, bid them cook their master another. Before that was ready, the great man came down; he apologized for his delay, and added, 'give me but leave to eat my short dinner, and I shall be at your service; I am fatigued and faint.' Saying this, he lifted up the cover, and without any emotion, turned about to Stakely with a smile. 'See,' he said, 'what we studious people are; I forgot I had dined.'

SURPRISING PROPERTY OF OIL.

The action of oil in stopping the violent ebullition of various substances is surprising. It is well known that if a mixture of sugar,

honey or the like, be boiling upon the fire and in danger of rising over the sides of the vessel, the pouring in of a little oil makes it immediately subside. In many cases the marking a circle round the inside of a vessel in which a liquor of this kind is to be boiled with a piece of hard soap, will like a magic ring, confine the ebullition to that height, and not suffer it to stir any further.

This is wholly owing to the oil of fat contained in the soap; but there is besides this, another very important use of oil on a like occasion, which is—the pouring a little of it on any metallic solution while making; this restrains the ascent of the noxious vapours, preserves the operator from danger, and at the same time, by keeping down the evaporating matter, gives redoubled strength to the menstruum. Pliny has mentioned an extraordinary effect of it, in stilling the surface of water and the use made of it by the divers for this purpose.

WOMAN.

Let woman know that she ministers at the very fountain of life and happiness. It is her hand that leads out with overflowing cup its soul refreshing waters, or casts in the branch of bitterness which makes them poison and death. Her ardent spirit breathes life into all enterprise. Her patience and constancy are mainly instrumental in carrying forward to completion the best human designs. Her more delicate moral sensibility is the unseen power which is ever at work to purify and refine society.

From the Natchitoches Herald.

THE CHOCTAWS.

Few of our citizens know that we live nearer to civilized Indians, than almost any other section of the United States. The country owned by the Choctaws extends from Arkansas to Red River, commencing at Fort Smith, and running up the Arkansas to the Canadian, to the limits of the United States, and with said limits to Red River, down Red River. The Choctaws number about fifteen thousand, and are unquestionably highly advanced in civilization. The constitution upon which their laws are based, has been printed in English and Choctaw, and circulated through the nation. Their government is systematic, and regularly organized by the people, in a democratic form. It consists of a council of forty members. The territory being divided into four districts, each district elects representatives as we do, in proportion to the amount of their population. Each of the four districts has a chief, who sit as a body, for the approval of such laws as are enacted by the council. In the council a speaker and clerk are annually chosen. The members receive \$2 a day and their mileage. The council convenes annually on the first Monday in October, and is in session generally about two weeks. The house in which the assembly meets, is a spacious and comfortable building, erected by treaty stipulations, with convenient rooms for committees, a gallery, and seats for spectators.

There is no laws among the Choctaws in regard to debt, and the creditor when he trusts, trusts to the honor of the debtor. It is curious how beautifully republican this one fact makes the government. The people are left with the largest limit of power, and it is their loss if this power is not honestly exercised. For the arbitration of civil matters, and the trial of criminals, there exists in form, a judicial system; judges are appointed by the Legislature, and they hold their courts at stated periods. The judicial system is, with some exceptions, very similar to the codes of many of our States.

The cotton produced by the Choctaw planters on Red River will amount this year to over one thousand bales. There are several grist and saw mills. On Baggy, about fifteen miles from Red River, a very intelligent Choctaw of the name of Col. David Folsom, has very excellent salt works which supplies even Taxes planters with a large quantity of salt. There are eight or ten blacksmiths' shops, four of which have blacksmiths furnished under treaty stipulations, and the rest, principally in the ploughing season, are worked by natives.

The schools of the Choctaws are well attended, and an ambitious rivalry exists among their pupils. By our treaty stipulations, the United States have expended from the date of the first treaty with them (January 20th, 1825,) to that of the two last; (September 27th, 1830,) the sum of \$20,500; \$2,500 of this sum was appropriated to the general schools in the nation, and the (\$18,000) dedicated to the 'Choctaw Academy.'

The effect of education is visible at every step. The rude wigwag is gone, and in its stead, may be seen neat and comfortable frame and log dwellings; the matrous sewing, spinning, and weaving; and around them large plantations, yielding corn, oats, pumpkins, potatoes, and great varieties of vegetables. There have been lately erected several splendid mansions, entirely by native mechanics, and they are now filled and adorned with all fashionable furniture.

It must be pleasing to all our citizens to behold this advanced state of society among the Indians of their border country. To every one, indeed, under the American flag, it will be highly interesting.

The Choctaws will greatly add to the trade of Red River. This season, they will double it. The rapid increase of the Indians, when employed in civilization, is astonishing. An Indian patriarch will have a dozen pickaninies, where we can raise but two or three; while the difference in physical strength is unequivocally in favor of the Indian.

From Graham's Magazine for April.

HARRY CAVENDISH.

By the Author of 'Cruising in the last War,' 'the Reefer of '76,' etc. etc.

THE PIRATE.

It was a tropical night. The moon had gone down, but the stars shone clear and lustrous, with a brilliancy unknown to more temperate climes, painting a myriad of silvery lines along the smooth swell of the sleeping ocean. A light breeze was murmuring across the waters, now and then rippling the waves in the starlight, and flapping the reef points occasionally against the sails. A heavy dew was falling, bringing with it, from the island that lay far up to windward, a thousand spicy odors mingled into one delicious perfume. On the extreme verge of the horizon hung a misty veil, shrouding the sea-board in obscurity. Up to windward the same delicate gauze-like vapor was perceptible and the position of the island which we had made at twilight, was only to be told from the denser masses of mist, that had gathered on one particular spot on the horizon in that quarter.

It was the morning watch and I was standing, wrapped up in my monkey jacket, looking out dreamingly on the ripples that played under our side in the starlight, when the bluff voice of the boatswain addressed me, at the same time that the old fellow wrung an enormous piece of tobacco from a still larger mass that he held in his brawny hand.

'A still night, Mr Cavendish,' began Hinton—'it looks as if the old salt-lake were dreaming, and had drawn around her that fog as a sort of curtain to keep herself quiet, as I've heard King George and other big folks do when they go to sleep. For my part I've no notion of such sort of sleeping, for I'd stifle to death if I had to be wrapt in every night like the Egyptian mummies that I've seen up the straits. Give me a hammock for sleeping comfortable like—I never slept out of one since I went to sea but once, and then I'd as lief slept head downwards, for I didn't get a wink all night.'

'You mean to say that you tried to sleep,' said I, smiling.

'Exactly—I'm no scollard, and none the worse for that I think. Them as is borne to live by head work ought to be sent to 'cademies and colleges and such high places,—but them as have to get a living by their hands had better leave book larnin' alone, for—take my word for it—it only ends in making them rascals; and there's other ways of killing a dog without choking him with bread and butter. Them's my sentiments, and so when I've got to speak, instead of skulking about the business in search of big words, like the cook in the galley, I come out at once in the plain style my fathers taught me. The devil came flying away with them that can't speak without shaking in their shoes lest they make a mistake. What's not to be expected of them can't be, and big words don't make an honest man much less a good boatswain—the proof of the pudding is in the chewing,' and the old fellow paused and looked in my face for a reply. He had scarcely done so when he started, looked around and turned as pale as ashes. A low melancholy strain, seeming to pervade the air, and coming now from above and now from some other quarter, could be distinctly heard rising solemnly across the night. The phenomenon baffled even myself, but on Hinton it had an extraordinary effect. Sailors are at all times superstitious, and the bluff boatswain possessed a large share of this faculty. These singular sounds, therefore, appealed to one of the strongest feelings in his bosom. He looked at me doubtfully, turned round on tip toe, and listened attentively in moment in every direction. His scrutiny did not satisfy him, but rather increased his wonder. There could be no doubt that the sounds existed in reality, although they died away for a moment now and then, they would almost instantly be heard again, apparently coming from a different quarter of the horizon. The burden of the strain could not be