

Literature, &c.

From the Knickerbocker for March.
STRAY LEAVES.
FROM THE PORTFOLIO OF A GEORGIA
LAWYER.

ONE of the striking peculiarities of our people is the disposition to talk tall; that is, to use the largest and the longest and the most difficult words to express the simplest ideas. It was this same evil which made Sir James Mackintosh and Sir Edward L. Bulwer fail in their Legislative career. They were both, (especially the first) of eminent literary attainments, highly talented, and good judges of human nature, and it was but fair to presume that thus gifted, they would have distinguished themselves greatly in Parliament; but they spoiled every thing by coming there steeped in dictionary, and 'talking tall,' or to express the idea in the language of an English writer, 'they spoke over the heads of other people.'

This peculiarity is indigenous in Georgia, but it grows elsewhere also. When General Lafayette came to Savannah in 1825, he was feasted and paraded, and invited about until the excess of hospitality made him sick. His son, George Washington Lafayette, seeing his father's condition, and dreading that he might be made seriously ill, exclaimed, wringing his hands Frenchmanlike, in an agony of grief: 'They will assassinate him by kindness!'

This mode of expression develops itself on every occasion; at the bar and on the bench, at home, or abroad, drunk or sober, our people 'talk tall.' Ask a man for instance in one of our frontier or upper counties what kind of ague he had, and he will tell you that it was 'exorbitantly chillish.' Demand of him what kind of fever followed on, and he will answer that 'it was not extravagant, but it rather ascended into billious.'

Another species of this peculiarity is to twist large words out of their original meaning, and give them a signification which no dictionary or usage would sanction. They come to the knowledge of the words by hook and by crook, and they are determined to use them in the same way. An instance of this kind occurred in the county of —, a short time since. In a criminal case which had created considerable excitement, a large number of jurors had been summoned in the afternoon, and it being too late to proceed with the case that day, they were adjourned over until the morning, with strict injunctions from the Judge that they should report themselves then and there duly sober. The morning came, and so did the jurors. They had remembered one part of the court's command, but they had forgotten the other, and some of them were in a very 'spirited manner.'

'Call the first juror,' said the Judge.
'William Jones?' bawled the officer.

'He-e-e-re!' answered, 'Bill,' with a loud shout, and the prolongation of the word for about a minute. As soon as he could be heard, the Judge kindling with indignation, thus addressed the delinquent.

'How dare you come into court, Sir, in this condition? Did I not tell you not to appear here drunk. Stand up, Sir!'

Jones made a desperate effort and stood upright, steadying himself upon the shoulders of his adjacent fellows. 'May it please your Honor,' at last stammered he, 'I am not drunk; I am only slightly interrogated.'

The word has formed ever since a part of the vocabulary of the county; and no one there dreams now of applying any other term to a man who is greatly intoxicated than that he is 'slightly interrogated.' By the bye, I don't know that Jones was much out of the way in his answer, for as a juror he certainly was in a very questionable attitude.

This propensity is displayed in another manner. If a man be a tailor, for example, he will use similes and tropes and words relating to his trade, when he is speaking of quite a different subject. I will give an instance of this, which will enable me also to relate a reminiscence of the circuit. A few years ago I attended the Superior Court for the county of —. The court adjourned late in the night, and the Judge and Bar being very weary, retired to their beds immediately thereafter. We were all in the same room, and immediately adjoining to us was the bar room, and the chinks and

vacant spaces in the partition enabled us to see and hear all that was going on. Shortly after we had retired, about forty men, 'pretty well corned, and up to everything,' entered the liquor room. No sooner had they arrived there than they commenced boasting. 'I'm the stepfather of the earth!' said one. 'I'm the yellow blossom of the forest!' exclaimed another, and requested his fellow citizens then and there being to 'nip the bud if they dared.' 'I'm kin to a rattle snake on the mother's side!' shouted the earth's ancestor. This seemed to be a 'sodoliger;' (which translated into Latin means a *ne plus ultra*;) for the 'yellow blossom' stopped to consider what answer he could possibly make to this high claim of ancestry. A happy thought struck him.

'Will you drink or fight, roared he in a voice like thunder.

A dead silence ensued, or at least a subdued murmur, 'twixt which and silence there was nothing.' Perhaps a more embarrassing question could not have been propounded. The rattle snake's son was exceedingly thirsty; the sands of Arabia were not more so; and liquor was the idol of his heart. He loved it dearly; but he loved fighting also; and here was a glorious chance to 'lick' an adversary he had longed to get at. *Curia vult advisare.* He was deliberating between these equally pleasant alternatives, when it occurred to him that it was possible to accomplish both.

'Both!' responded he, 'both. I'll drink first—I'll fight afterward.'

A loud shout of approbation rose from the crowd. The liquor was called for—a pint of buck eye whiskey—and impartially divided into two tumblers. The adversaries each took one, and grasping each other with their left hands, and touching the glasses together in token of amity, drained their respective goblets to the last drop, and then smashed them over the heads of each other, and at it they went. A clamor ensued so terrific that the English language has no word that would be so sufficiently expressive of it. All sorts of encouragement were offered by the friends of each combatant, and an amateur who had no particular predilection for either, jumped upon the counter, and commenced singing a poetic description of all the naval battles of America, from the time of Columbus to the present day, (which somebody has had the barbarity to put into miserable verse,) keeping time with his heels on the counter. Just as he had got to the one hundred and ninety ninth verse, and was in the midst of what he called 'the Wasp and Hornet arrangement,' his melody was stopped by a shrill cry from the 'yellow blossom of the forest,' who began to fall into the sere and yellow leaf, and have manifest symptoms of being whipped.

'He bites!' screamed he.
'I get my livelihood by biting,' said the other, relaxing his hold for a moment, and then taking a fresh start.

'Nuff 'nuff! take him off!'

Up rose the rattle snake, amidst loud cheerings. His first impulse was to crow like a cock; then he changed his genus very suddenly, and declared that he was a 'sea horse of the mountain,' and that he had sprung from the Potomac of the earth; then he was a bear with a sore head; a lion with a mangy tail; a flying whale; in short he announced himself to be every impossible bird, beast, and fish, that the land or the sea has ever produced.

His wit having exhausted itself, some fresh excitement or novelty was requisite. 'Let's have Bingo!' suggested a bystander. 'Huzza for Bingo!' echoed the crowd. Well thought I, I don't know who and what Bingo is, but I do know that when things reach their worst condition, any change must be for the better; and as any change from this terrible riot must be for the better, I say too 'Huzza for Bingo!' Alas! as the sequel proved, I deceived myself greatly.

A gallon of whiskey with spice in it, and a gallon of Malaga wine were placed on a large table, around which about forty men seated themselves, having first elected a president *viva voce*. The president elect commenced the game by singing at the top of his voice:

'A farmer's dog sat on the barn door,
And Bingo was his name, O!'

And then they all shouted in chorus:

'And Bingo was his name, O!'

If either missed a letter, or said 'a' for example, when he should have said 'i,' his penalty was to take a drink, and the company as a privilege drank with him; and with such slight interruptions as the time for drinking would occupy, this continued for about six hours.

At last the patience of the Judge (who was quite a young man, and who is not more than a squirrel's jump from me while I write) became exhausted, and he called for the landlord. Our host who was a tailor by trade, and also one of the Bingo fraternity, made his appearance with a candle in his hand and a very affectionate and drunken leer upon his countenance.

'Go, Sir,' said the Judge, into the next room, and tell those drunken lunatics that if they don't stop their beastly noise I'll commit every one of them to jail in the morning for contempt of court.'

'O judge!' answered our host, holding up his unoccupied hand in token of his amazement, 'oh! Judge, you'll give me the double breasted horrors! Why, Judge, work is scarce and people's pertikler; and if I was to preliminary your orders to that crowd of gentlemen, why Judge, I'd pick up a lashing in a leetle less than no time; and off he staggered. Bingo was forthwith resumed, until gradually the chorus became more confused and indistinct. Chaos had come again. The actions of the virtuous gentlemen there assembled ceased to be above board, and were carried on under the table. Some were snoring, others hiccuping, others cascading. Bingo had ceased to be, except when some sleeper, feeling some painful sensation from his attitude, etc., would exclaim, 'Oh!' which would wake up his immediate neighbor, who the ruling passion strong in death, would exclaim, 'And Bingo was —,' and then relapse into such silence as a drunken man usually falls into.

Years have passed away since that awful night. Joys have blessed me; affliction pained me; but all the vicissitudes of life have failed to drive out of my memory that terrible game and tune of Bingo. It haunts me like a dun in the day, like a ghost in the night. If I hear any one say, 'O!' the sequel immediately occurs to me; 'And Bingo was his name, O!' I am not much of an anatomist, but I am satisfied that when a post mortem examination is had upon me, the whole matter of Bingo will be found incorporated with my promater or dura mater, or some other portion of my brain. I can't tell the process or the manner by which and in which it has become a part and parcel thereof; but this much I know, that if my operator is a skilful surgeon he will find there developed characters that he can read, the distinct statement, that there was a farmer who had a dog whose peculiar habit and custom was to sit upon the barn door, and that he answered to the classical and melodious name of 'Bingo.'

In a very equity cause which was tried some years ago in our circuit, one of the jurors, who had been inundated with cases from 'Vesey Junior,' expressed a wish that Vesey Junior had died before he (Vesey, Jr.) had been born. 'I have something of the same feeling toward 'Bingo.' Have not you also, reader?

From the Same.

AN INCIDENT OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS

THE morning dawned on the unfortunate Hale's confinement, just as he had committed to paper and secured the information he had forfeited his life to obtain. He knew that he gazed upon the blessed sun for the last time. He felt that in a few short hours a portion of the beautiful earth, now spread out so gloriously, would be lying a cold mass upon his bosom. He knew this, and his heart crumbled like a diseased thing within him. He thought of his parents in their bereaved loneliness, of his betrothed in her broken hearted grief, and again it expanded with sorrowing tenderness. He was as brave a man as ever confronted death, still he thought it was a fearful thing to yield up his life in its young hopes, to enter into the unknown boundlessness of eternity, with a few hours preparation. He asked for the company of a clergyman but none came, for a Bible but none was procured. He knelt down in his last prayer, and the outpouring of his soul was broken in upon by those who came to conduct him to the gallows tree. He went forth to his execution, not seeking man's applause on the very brink of eternity, by a false bravado, against nature, rushing, with his proud soul cased in pride, up to the very presence of the Most High, overcoming nature's just fears, and challenging after ages to admire the boldness with which his ambitious soul could pass the awful face of God,—there was no such presump-

tion in Hale's death. With a full and solemn sense of the awful event, he went to meet his death as a christian—a soldier. His soul was bowed in humility to God, and his last words were, 'Oh that I had more lives to offer up for my country!'

It was a splendid scene; the dinner table of the English commander, from his own land of luxury he had imported the massive plate and delicate china that covered it, loaded profusely with viands. British gold had purchased the tory farmer's cutlery, goblets sparkled with wine like 'molten rubies of liquid amber,' and brined to the lips of the gay young officers, whose glittering uniforms, surrounded by song and wine were reveling on the brink of intoxication. Loud rose their voices of merriment in gleeful chorus, when a servant entered with the information that a female has arrived at their camp with a flag of truce, and demanded an interview with Gen Howe.

A haughty smile curled the Englishman's lip, as he addressed an Aid-de-camp.

'Who is this, think you? the rebels must be in extremities, when they send us woman instead of ambassadors.'

The Aid de camp answered his General's smile, and demanded of the servant if the lady were young or old?

'Young sir.'

'And pretty?' asked a dozen voices at once.

'Rather pale, your honors.'

'Young and interesting; our gallantry is bestirring itself,' exclaimed some of the same voices—'General, pray admit her?'

Most of the young officers were on their feet, and all eyes were turned to the entrance, as Sarah Easton advanced—her deep mourning rendered her pale features almost ghastly, and her crape veil thrown back so as to display her white forehead, and eyes touchingly sweet in their expression, even while resting on the form of him who made her heart desolate. Not a word was spoke by the group that surrounded the dinner table; the merry smile was quenched on the lips of each gay individual as he looked on the young American who stood before them in the beautiful majesty of her grief. Howe advanced with stately politeness to receive her, but she shrank from his approach, and requested the body of Nathaniel Hale for christian burial.

Howe was evidently surprised at the nature of the petition, but courteously answered that it could not be granted, Captain Hale having already been buried three days.

'Yet surely he might be disinterred,' persisted she, eagerly stepping forward—then seeing denial in his looks, she added beseechingly, 'You will not refuse his old parents a look on the face of their son; if you are a father you can not be so cruelly dead to humanity.'

'Are you the sister or wife of the deceased, that you thus urgently ask for his remains?'

'Neither, oh! neither,' replied the tortured girl, pressing her hands over her eyes to hide the burst of tears the question had unlocked. A young officer pitying her distress, handed her a chair. She sat down, and was endeavoring to check her untimely tears, when another advanced—a thing of laced scarlet and huge epaulettes, and touching the tip of her white neck with his finger, demanded 'if she were neither the wife nor sister of the handsome spy, what else could she be unless it were a sweetheart?'

The blood flushed into the cheek of the insulted girl, like a sudden sunset, but without answering him, she turned to General Howe and said—'I expected at least to be secure; but as I find myself mistaken, I request an answer to my petition, and liberty to withdraw.'

Howe cast on the young impertinent stranger a look of stern anger, and then turning to Sarah, he said with a smooth suavity of manner, so common in the men of the world, and difficult to contend against, so artfully does it charm away opposition.

'Young lady, I regret that it is not in my power to grant your request. The remains you seek have been disposed of according to law in such cases, and must not be disturbed, I should be extremely happy to gratify you, but in this as I have said, it is entirely out of my power.'

Sarah was about to speak again, but with a bow of dismissal, he requested the young officer who had banded her a chair to conduct her to the boat in which she came. Sarah shrank from the offered arm of her conductor, though much her trembling limbs needed support, and walked silently to the shore—