

Literature, &c.

British Magazines for March.

Blackwood's Magazine.

THE LAW OF THE HAREM.

[From an article in the above named Magazine, entitled "Dumas in his Curricule," we extract the following humorous tale of the ex-dey of Algiers, while residing in Naples. Whether the story is true or false, the reader will have to draw his own conclusions—we cannot give them any information on the subject.]

THE ex-dey of Algiers, on being dispossessed of his dominions by the French, took refuge at Naples, and established himself under M. Zill's hospitable roof. The third floor was entirely occupied by his suite and attendants; the fourth was for himself and treasures; the fifth, or the garrets, he converted into his harem. The curious arms, costumes, and jewels which Hussein Pacha had brought with him were a God-send to the virtuoso tavern keeper, who was never weary of examining and admiring them; and, before the African had been a week in the house, he and his host were sworn friends. Unfortunately this harmony was not destined to last very long. One morning Hussein Pacha's cook (a Nubian as black as ink, and as shining as if he had been polished with a shoe brush) entered the kitchen of the hotel, and asked for the largest knife they had. The head cook gave him a sort of carving knife, some eighteen inches long, sharp as a razor and pliant as a foil. The negro looked at it, shook his head as if in doubt whether it would do, but nevertheless took it up stairs with him. Presently he brought it down again, and asked for a larger one. The cook opened all his drawers, and at last found a sort of cutlass, which he hardly ever used on account of its enormous size. With this the Nubian appeared more satisfied, and again went upstairs. Five minutes afterwards he came down for the third time, and returned the knife, asking for a bigger one still. The cook's curiosity was excited, and he enquired who wanted the knife, and for what purpose. The African told him very coolly that the dey, having left his dominions rather in a hurry, had forgotten to bring an executioner with him, and had consequently ordered his cook to get a large knife and cut off the head of Osman, chief of the eunuchs, who was convicted of having kept such negligent watch and ward over his highness's seraglio, that some presumptuous Giaour had made a hole in the wall, and established a communication with Zaida, the dey's favourite *odalisque*. Accordingly Osman was to be decapitated; and as to the offending lady, the next time the dey took an airing in the bay Naples, she would be put into the boat in a sack, and consigned to the keeping of the kelpies. Thunderstruck at such summary proceedings, the cook desired his Nubian brother to wait while he went for a larger knife; then hastening to M. Martin Zill, he told him what he had just heard. M. Martin Zill ran to the minister of police, and laid the matter before him. His excellency got into his carriage and went to call upon the dey. He found his highness reclining upon a divan, his back supported by cushions, smoking *latakia* in a *chibouque*, while an *iroglan* scratched the soles of his feet, and two slaves fanned him. The minister made his three salaams; the dey nodded his head. "Your highness," said his excellency, "I am the minister of police." "I know you are," answered the dey. "Then your highness probably conjectures the motive of my visit." "No. But you are welcome all the same." "I come to prevent your highness from committing a crime." "A crime! And what crime?" said the dey, taking the pipe from his mouth, and gazing at his interlocutor in the most profound astonishment. "I wonder your highness should ask the question," replied the minister. "Is it not your intention to cut off Osman's head?" "That is no crime," answered the dey. "Does not your highness purpose throwing Zaida into the sea?" "That is no crime," repeated the dey. "I bought Osman for five hundred piastres, and Zaida for a thousand sequins, just as I bought this pipe for a hundred ducats." "Well," said the minister, "what does your highness deduce from that?" "That as this pipe belongs to me, as I have bought it and paid for it, I may break it to atoms if I choose, and nobody has a right to object." So saying, the pacha broke his pipe, and threw the fragments into the middle of the room. "All very well, so far as a pipe," said the minister; "but Osman, but Zaida?" "Less than a pipe," said the dey gravely. "How less than a pipe? A man less than a pipe? A woman less than a pipe?" "Osman is not a man, and Zaida is not a woman: they are slaves. I will cut off Osman's head, and throw Zaida into the sea." "No!" said the magistrate. "Not at Naples at least." "Dog of a Christian!" shouted the dey, do you know who I am? "You are the ex-dey of Algiers, and I am the Neapolitan minister of police; and, if your dayship is impertinent, I shall send you to prison," added the minister very coolly. "To prison!" repeated the dey, falling back upon his divan. "To prison," replied the minister. "Very well," said Hussein. "I leave Naples tonight." "Your highness is as free as air to go and to come. Nevertheless, I must make one condition. Before your departure, you will swear by the Prophet that no harm shall be done to Osman or Zaida." "Osman and Zaida belong to me, and I shall do what I please with them." "Then your highness will be pleased to deliver them over to me, to be punished according to the laws of the country; and, until you do so, you will not be allowed to leave Naples." "Who will prevent me?" "I will."

The pacha laid his hand on his dagger. The minister stepped to the window and made a sign. The next moment the tramp of heavy boots and jingle of spurs were heard upon the stairs; the door opened, and a gigantic corporal of gendarmes made his appearance, his right hand raised to his cocked hat, his left upon the seam of his trowsers. "Gennaro," said the minister of police, "if I gave you an order to arrest this gentleman, would you see any difficulty in executing it?" "None, your excellency." "You are aware that this gentleman's name is Hussein Pacha." "I was not, your excellency." "And that he is the dey of Algiers." "May it please your excellency, I don't know what that is." "You see?" said the minister, turning to the dey. "The devil!" exclaimed Hussein. "Shall I?" said Gennaro, taking a pair of handcuffs from his pocket, and advancing a pace towards the dey, who, on his part, took a step backwards. "No," replied the minister, "it will not be necessary. His highness will do as he is bid. Go and search the hotel for a man named Osman, and a woman named Zaida, and take them both to the prefecture." "What!" cried the dey; "this man is to enter my harem?" "He is not a man," replied the minister; he is a corporal of gendarmes. But if you do not wish him to go, send for Osman and Zaida yourself." "Will you promise to have them punished?" inquired the dey. "Certainly; according to the utmost rigour of the law."

Hussein Pacha clasped his hands. A door concealed behind the tapestry was opened, and a slave entered the room. "Bring down Osman and Zaida," said the dey. The slave crossed his hands on his breast, bowed his head, and disappeared without uttering a word. The next instant he came back with the two culprits. The eunuch was a little round fat fellow, with beardless face, and small hands and feet. Zaida was a beautiful Circassian, her eyelids painted with kool, and her teeth blackened with betel, and her nails reddened with henna. On perceiving Hussein Pacha the eunuch fell upon his knees; Zaida raised her head. The dey's eyes flashed, and he clutched the hilt of his *kangiar*. Osman grew pale; Zaida smiled. The minister of police made a sign to the gendarme, who stepped up to the two captives, handcuffed them, and led them out of the room. As the door closed behind them, the dey uttered a sound between a sigh and a roar.

The magistrate looked out of the window, till he saw the prisoners and their escort disappear at the corner of the *Strada Chiatamone*. Then turning to the dey—"Your highness is now at liberty to leave Naples, if he wishes so to do," said the imperturbable functionary, with a low bow. "This very instant," cried Hussein. "I will not remain another moment in such a barbarous country as yours." "A pleasant journey to your highness," said the minister. "Go to the devil," retorted Hussein.

Before an hour had elapsed, the dey had chartered a small vessel, on board of which he embarked the same evening with his suits, his wives and his treasures; and at midnight he set sail, cursing the tyranny that prevented a man from drowning his wife and cutting off the heads of his slaves. The next day the minister of police had the culprits brought before him and examined. Osman was found guilty of having slept when he ought to have watched, and Zaida of having watched when she ought to have slept. But, by some strange omission, the Neapolitan code allots no punishment to such offences; and, consequently, Osman and Zaida, to their infinite astonishment, were immediately set at liberty. Osman took to selling pastilles for a livelihood, and the lady got employment as dame de comptoir in a coffee house. As to the dey he had left Naples with the intention of going to England, in which country, as he had been informed, a man is at liberty to sell his wife, if he may not drown her. He was taken ill, however, on the road, and obliged to stop at Leghorn, where he died.

Ainsworth's Magazine.

From this periodical, we extract the following sweet piece of Poetry, by Camilla Toulmin, under the title of—

THE DEATH OF THE PAUPER PEASANT.

"Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade,
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied."
GOLDSMITH.

"Neath the summer's sun, and the winter's snow,

Through youth and manhood's time,
He won by the toil that furrow'd his brow,
Deep in his early prime,
The homely food, and the garments rude,
And shelter from wind and weather;
Up—up with the sun, his work was begun,
Ere the birds sprang from the heather.
Plough—sow—delve away,
The harder the work, the less the pay;
Do we not know
The world goes so?

But the shelter that kept out weather and winds

Had the magical name of Home;
A word that is dearer to English minds
Than palace or lordly dome.

There were garments rude, and homely food,
For a little loving band;
And a wife was there, once young and fair,
To clasp the horny hand.

And bless it—through God—that its strength could give,

Not store for old age—but the means to live!

For the poor have hearts—and 'tis thought they know,

A feeling of joy from one of woe.

Old age—he hath pass'd by years the span
That the psalmist, we know, "measured out to man."

And Fortune, the blind, for him doth rehearse
The mournful and terrible Roman curse.

His children have grown grey-headed—and died
Why doth he not lie in the grave beside?
For England is bleak to the poor and old,
She knoweth no worth but the worth of gold;
She doth not attempt to understand
The noble labor of head or hand;
Her soul must be dead, if it never mounts
To a Heaven beyond "red-lined accounts!"

And the horny hand is feeble now,
And the full bright eye is dim;
And his scanty hair is white as snow,
And he totters in every limb.
Yet may it not be, that memory
Lives through the wreck of years?
Does he call on Death, with that gasping breath,
And the fast descending tears?

Oh! the world is cold
To the poor and old,
For he cannot work, and he doth not steal,
And only the poor for him can feel!

'Tis Poverty gaunt the shelter gives,
And a homely couch spreads there;
Though she can no more, and only lives
Herself on the scantiest fare.
But she hath kind words, that wake the chords
Of grateful tenderness!

Oh, spoils the least, of the wealthy's feast,
Would soothe the hours' distress!
But the Law says "No,
It must not be so;

Away from the scene that mirrors Home—
Away, to the parish workhouse come!"

Life's sands are ebbing few and fast;
Thank God, he hardly knows at last,
The meaning of the words they say!
"Up—up, Old Man, come—come away,
Through cold and wet December's day;
But harsher than the melting sky
The hearts that turn him forth—to die.

A pauper dies—what matter where?
Or how he lives, they little care.
Is Poverty so deep a crime?
Bears it the brand—the serpent's slime,
So plainly marked, that by its side,
Seems fair the selfish heart of pride?

That Idleness and Luxury
Are worthier held than Poverty?
No. Honour to the stalwart hand,
And honor to the laboring hand!
And though the pauper's winding sheet
Is all Old England now can mete
To him who till'd her fruitful soil
Till age forbade the hand to toil;
Deep in the heart such things shall sink—
Deep in the hearts that feel and think,
Until OPINION'S mighty sway,
Shall wipe the nation's stain away.

Illuminated Magazine.

DUTIES OF SCHOOLMASTERS.

[From an article in the above named periodical entitled "The Chronicles of the Turveytopians," we take the following truly eloquent remarks on the situation, and duties of a SCHOOLMASTER. We wish we could say that the same spirit was manifested by the people of the Colonies, towards this hard-worked, ill-used, and badly-paid fraternity, as the article records is awarded to one of that profession, by the good folks of Turveytop.]

Benevolent and gentle was the schoolmaster, and worthy of the honors lavished by the state upon him. Aye, sir, you may look; but in Turveytop the school master is not a half-drudge, half-executioner. No, sir; the importance, the solemnity of his mission, is conceded. Children are not sent to him with no more ceremony than if they were terrier-pups packed to the farrier to have their tails docked and ears rounded. In Turveytop the schoolmaster is considered the maker of the future people—the moral artificer of society. Hence, the state pays him peculiar consideration. It is allowed that his daily labours are in the immortal chambers of the mind—the mind of childhood, new from the Maker's hand, and undefiled by the earth. Hence, there is a solemnity, almost a sacredness, in the schoolmaster's function; upon him and his high and tender doings does the state of Turveytop depend, that its prisons shall be few. It is for him to wage a daily war with the gaoler.

His work is truly glorious, for it is with childhood—beautiful childhood! cried the Hermit, passionately—"holy childhood, with still the bloom of its first home upon it! For indeed, there is a sanctity about it—it is a bright new-comer from the world unknown, a creature with unfolded soul! And yet, sir, are there not states where, whilst yet the creature draws its pauper milk—of the same sort, by the way, that nurtured Abel—we give it to those fiends of earth, violence and wrong, and then scourge, imprison, hang the pupil for the teaching of its masters? Childhood, with its innocence killed in the very seed! Childhood, a fetid imp in rags, with fox-like, thievish eyes and lying breath, the foul weed of a city. Such indeed, it is to the niceness of our senses, shrankled at the filth and whining of that world wrinkled babe! But look at it aright, sir,"—cried the Hermit with new animation—

"translate its mutterings into their true meaning. What do you see?—what hear? The lineaments and cryings of an accusing demon; a giant thing of woe and mischief scowling and shrieking at the world that hath destroyed its holiness of life; that, seizing it, yea from the hand of its Maker, hath deuced the divinity of its impress, and made it devil—a devil to do a devil's mischief: then to be doomed and punished by a self-complacent world, that lays the

demon in a felon's grave, and after, sighs and wrings the hand at human wickedness."

In Turveytop the schoolmasters may be said to take the place of our commanding soldiers. We give rank, distinction, high praises, to generals and such folk, for the cunning slaughter of their thousands. We take the foul smell out of bloodshed, and call men-killers heroes. We give them gold lace, and stick feathers upon them, and hang them about with Orders of St. Fire, Saint Pillage, and Saint Slaughter. We strip the skin from the innocent sheep to make rub-a-dub to their greatness, and blow their glory to the world from blatant brass. Now the Turveytopians have no soldiers; but they give the same amount of honor to their schoolmasters. They have a belief that it is quite as noble to build up a mind as to hack a body; that to teach meekness, content, is as high a feat as to cut a man through the shoulder bone; that, in a word, it is as wise and useful, and surely as seemly in the eye of watchful Heaven, to fill the human brain with thoughts of goodness, as to scatter it from a skull, cleft by the sword in twain. Hence, the schoolmaster in Turveytop is a great social authority, honored by the state. The savage counts his glories by scalps; the refined man of war by his gazettes. The general kills five thousand men—defeats some twenty thousand. He may have picked a quarrel with them, that he may pick his aprig of laurel, and rejoice in lawful plunder. He has done his work upon humanity; he has acted his part in the world—a world of human sympathies—and he becomes earl, or he steps up duke. It is his rightful wage, paid by a grateful hand. The school master of Turveytop numbers his scholars; shows the heroes he has made; the victors over self among his army; the troops of wise and peaceful citizens he has marshalled for the field of life, and is honored and rewarded accordingly.

From the same article we extract the following beautiful remarks on

LAUGHTER.

Think of a babe without laughter, as it is, its first intelligence! The creature shows the divinity of its origin and end, by smiling upon us: yes, smiles are its first talk with the world, smiles the first answers that it understands. And then, as worldly wisdom comes upon the little thing, it crows, it chuckles, it grins, and, shaking in its nurse's arms, or in waggish humour playing bo-peep with the breast, it reveals its high destiny—declares, to him with ears to hear it, the heirdom of its immortality. Let materialists blaspheme as gingerly and acutely as they will, they must find confusion in laughter. Man may take a triumphant stand upon his broad grins; for he looks around the world, and his innermost soul, sweet tickled with the knowledge, tells him that he alone of all creatures laugh. Imagine, if you can, a laughing fish. Let man then send a loud ha! ha! through the universe, and be reverently grateful for the privilege.

A CHAPTER ON STEAM.

[A "Tale of a Tea Kettle," is the title of another article in the same periodical. It is a sort of reverie on Steam, or the Steam Engine, by a boy named—James Watt.]

Truth to tell there was something peculiar in the glance of the boy's eye;—there was mind, active, speaking mind, looking through it. He seemed as one who gazed upon a wondrous vision, and whose every sense was bound up in the display of gorgeous pageantry floating before him. He had sat watching the escaping steam, until the thin, vaporous column had appeared to cast itself upward in fantastic-changing shapes. Sometimes the subtle fluid gathering in force and quantity would gently raise one side of the lid of the kettle, emit a white puff, and then let the metal fall with a low clanking sound. There was power—strength in that watery cloud. But still the spout poured forth its regular volume of white vapour—shooting over the ribs of the grate, and curling and rolling in outlines as varying and quaint as those of a rising mist. Suddenly, to the eye of the half-dreaming boy, the steam appeared, instead of escaping up the chimney, to spread itself out in a dense volume before the fire place. He gazed intently at the phenomenon—indistinct outlines, like the wavy robes of spectres, showed themselves—floated dimly for an instant—then melted into the shapeless cloud. Again they re-appeared, and more distinctly than before; and the spell-bound boy saw faces, some terrible, and others gentle and kind, forming, and vanishing, and again re-appearing in the wonderful steam cloud. He gazed, and gazed. To the faces, fanciful forms, woven from the vapour, attached themselves and clung. There was something about them awfully undefined; but they were undefined rather to the mind than to the eye. The latter could see them, but the former could not grasp or form an accurate idea of their strange, shadowy proportions. Some were dimly terrible, others calm and serene—back and fore they floated, not passing, but blending with—gliding through—each other, and waving their misty wings with a slow undulating motion. Gradually the fair and gentle steam spirits seemed as it were to coalesce, to glide together, and became now instinct with mild intellectual grandeur; and round it gathered a threatening phalanx of the dark and gloomy spirits, their forms changing to hideous, undefined, grotesque things, and their faces fearful to look upon. But the mild spirit gazed calmly on them, as if in reliance on its innate power; and raising its white arms it waved the evil spirits back, and as they retired undefinedly, they covered their gloomy foreheads with their wings, for a pale halo of light beamed around the long fair curls of the master phantom. But again they rallied and rushed, dark, evil-minded, like an undefined horror, and