

## LITERATURE, &amp;c.

## The British Magazines.

From the London People's Journal.

## HOW TO SELL A CLOCK.

AN AMERICAN SKETCH.

On emerging from the premises of farmer M——, he turned south towards V——n Court house, situated some few miles distant. He now ascertained that the Court was in session, and his plan of operation was prejudicated upon this unwelcome intelligence.

On reaching the green, he was satisfied that the court was in Session. Accordingly he drew up at some little distance from the door, unhitched horses and made ready. Shortly after the court adjourned. The throng issuing from the building in great good humor—a cause having just been decided the right way to please the populace. At this critical moment the pedlar stepped upon his cart, and in a civil way begged to announce that he had some few articles on sale, which he would be happy to shew them.

The crowd gathered round, and the inquiry rose the thicker and faster, 'What have you got?'

Responding to the already clamorous demand, the pedlar with a calm and composed front said 'that if the gentlemen pleased he would take the liberty to exhibit a specimen of flax seed. He had paid a large price for it, and not having a great quantity, he would only sell a single spoonful of it to one individual. In this way he could give them all a chance; but mark it, gentlemen, if you please,' said he, 'I sell only one spoonful to an individual; one spoonful—not a thimbleful more.'

'Price?' inquired a farmer.

'One dollar, gentlemen, per spoonful,' said the pedlar, 'I know its high—but such flax seed, gentlemen, you don't see every day.'

'A dollar for a spoonful of flax seed!' exclaimed an old settler, with a long pendent queue at his back, 'I never heard of such a price.'

'A fair price, I dare say,' said a man standing by; 'a fair price if its the genuine—the genuine—there, now, I can't think of the kind—its a new sort. I'd give five dollars if I could get a spoonful without. Only for seed sir—for seed.'

'Pray Mr Pedlar, said another, 'is the seed imported?'

'Why, I rather think it was. I imported it.'

'From what country did it come?' asked another.

'Well, really, that's more than I can say, whether from Flanders, or Ireland, or New Holland.'

But these names were enough; and as the last seemed to linger longest on some one's mind, he immediately exclaimed, 'New Holland—yes, I dare say—a grand country for flax; and presently the multitude had improved upon these hints, and round it went, that there was flax seed of a choice kind just in from New Holland; and one man, who seemed to know something about geography, and whose logic was about equal to what he knew of the face of the earth, declared that it had come some thousands of miles, it was therefore probably a very long or tall hind.

'Gentlemen,' said the pedlar, who had watched the increasing enthusiasm with great satisfaction—'gentlemen, one dollar per spoonful for this flax seed—your only chance—don't expect ever to offer flax seed here again—who'll—'

He was cut short by the advance of a staid looking man, who said 'I'll take a spoonful.'

'And I, and I,' said half a dozen voices all together.

'One at a time, gentlemen. Serve you all as fast as I can.'

And so he went on, parcelling out the flax seed, and pocketing the dollars, till at last he had the profound satisfaction of stowing away in his money-wallet, the seventy fifth dollar for the seventy fifth spoonful of flax seed taken from an old cask in the out-room of Mr M——, in part pay for a clock, but which some of the purchasers, would have it had come direct from New Holland.

'Seventy-five dollars for the flax seed,' said the pedlar, 'seventy five dollars—seventy five—that will do.'

And now the pedlar's voice was again heard, and in a somewhat higher key. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'I have a still more remarkable article to dispose of—only one, and only one can have it; and the question is, who will be the fortunate purchaser. Gentle-men, this calf is for sale.'

The welkin rung. 'A calf for sale!' said half a dozen. 'Come, walk up, who'll buy? Who wants a calf?'

'You'd better sell yourself,' said a strippling.

'Quite likely, my man,' responded the pedlar. 'I lately felt a good deal more like a calf than I do just now. But I'll sell the calf first, and think about selling myself. Who bids?'

'Price?' said one.

'Twenty five dollars,' answered the pedlar.

'What breed?' asked another.

'Well, you all see, as for that matter, that he's short horns.'

'Very plain matter of fact,' said a good-natured jolly sort of fellow. 'Is he Durham, or what is he?'

'That's more than I know—he's short

horns, but whether Durham or Dedham—how can I tell.'

'Durham,' exclaimed a prompt, rosy-cheeked fellow, stepping up; why, you simpleton, don't you know the value of the creature you are selling—even a bigger simpleton might see with half an eye that he's Durham; look at his white spots—he's handsome as a picture.'

'Handsome!' retorted another; 'I don't know where you see beauty.'

'Well,' said another, 'never mind for beauty—what's his name?'

'Durham,' said the pedlar. 'I don't exactly know what to call him. I guess we'll call him Dromeo.'

'Romeo, you fool,' said a voice in the crowd.

'Oh, yes; what a mistake; funny enough,' said the pedlar. 'Romeo, gentlemen, Romeo—who'll buy?'

And now, as in the case of the flax seed, the praises of Romeo went round, till there was a controversy who should be the purchaser.

'A square-built man took him. The money was paid, even before it was let down on terra firma. But that operation was now gone through with, and the first result was that the calf felt like a flounder.

Oh, aint you ashamed of yourself,' said the pedlar; come, stand up in the presence of these gentlemen.'

'The calf, however, could not find his legs, as they say; and the pedlar had to explain and apologise for his want of manners. He had been a little ailing,' he believed, 'but the person of whom he purchased him, said he looked better.'

'No wonder if he does a little,' said a man who was helping him to stand up; 'it's a long voyage he's come, and cattle are quite likely to get sick on a voyage.'

'That indeed,' said another, 'he looks like as if he had been very sea sick; I daresay he was.'

'He needs something to eat,' said the pedlar, 'it's a good while that he has been fasting.'

'Well,' said the purchaser, with some assurance, and well satisfied with his bargain, 'plenty of milk hard by—come, boys, give him a lift into the wagon, and I'll import him a little further.'

Accordingly some half dozen hands were soon occupied in raising the calf into the farmer's cart.

Meanwhile the pedlar rolled up the bills, and safely deposited them in his pocket book, which, on returning to its usual place, he said, 'One hundred dollars! one hundred dollars for a clock!—that will do.'

No time was lost by the pedlar in re-hitching his horses; which done, he left for head quarters, there to tell and exult over the success of his experiment in selling a clock. The multitude which had been some time thinning, now left the court house and its precincts to their solitude.

About half seven that evening, farmer M. having returned, was quietly seated with his wife at the supper table. He seemed, though wearied, in excellent spirits. Several circumstances had occurred during the day to put him in good humor. And for some reason his wife looked, he thought, more than usually interesting; she was dressed with more taste. The room was neat and tidy; the light shone more brilliantly, and the table had a better bill of fare; in short, Mrs M—— had exerted herself to give her husband as kind and as welcome a reception as well she could. And she had evidently succeeded. He seemed pleased, while she herself was unusually cheerful and sociable.

She had just poured out a third or fourth cup of tea, and was in the very act of handing it to her husband across the table, when from an adjoining room was heard the clock striking one, two, three, four.

Mr M—— had taken the cup, but it fell suddenly as if at that instant a paralysis had seized his arm—the cup broke, and the tea flooded the table, at the same time the glance of a kindled eye shot across at his wife.

'Caroline!' said he in a sharp and inquisitive tone.

'Husband,' at the same time exclaimed Mrs M——. 'My dear husband, will you hear me?'

'No,' said the exasperated man; 'hear what? What is the meaning of all this? No, I don't want to hear any explanation. You have violated—'

'My dear husband,' interrupted Mrs M——, 'only hear me one instant—one brief explanation.'

'None,' said he, rising from his chair. At the same time his wife rose, and approaching him, gently laid her hand upon his shoulder, and supplicating his calm and kind attention to her explanation.

'Have you purchased that clock?' he inquired.

'Husband, may be I have done wrong, she replied, 'but how can you judge till you hear.'

Mr M—— was a man of impulse, as the reader will readily perceive; and yet he was kind in his nature; and when reason was permitted to speak, he was disposed to listen and judge with candour.

At his wife's request he resumed his seat. She drew her chair to his side. She explained. First she spoke of the calf, and the ten dollars allowed for it.

'You recollect,' said she, 'that only yesterday you wished it dead.'

'Ah, that indeed,' said Mr M——, his choler beginning again to wax hot, 'but I

had rather lose twenty calves than patronise one of those detestable pedlars. You knew my wishes.'

'I did, my husband; and but for the opportunity of getting rid of articles absolutely valueless to us, I should never have presumed to have made such a purchase.'

'Well, let that pass,' said the husband, his own good sense confessing that she had got a large price for the calf, only he did not wish to be thought patronizing a pedlar.

'You got a large price,' he added.

'Well, replied Mrs M——, 'the clockman,' she avoided the mention of the word pedlar, 'allowed me to name my own price, and I aimed to please you.'

'To please me!' exclaimed Mr M——, petulantly.

'Not to excite your displeasure, rather, I should have said.'

'Well, what next?'

'Well, then, husband, you recollect that cask of old flax seed in the—'

'Flax seed!' he exclaimed, his voice absolutely sounding through the whole house, at the same time the blood rushing to his face—'did you sell that flax seed?'

'Pray,' said Mrs M——, 'what is the matter? What have I done to raise this awful storm?'

'Done?' said he, 'done? That flax seed!—was it, then, that?' He paused. 'And pray what did you get for it?'

'There was nearly a bushel of it,' replied Mrs M——, 'and I was allowed three dollars for it.'

'Three dollars a bushel,' he exclaimed.

'Yes, it must be that—'

The whole truth was now before him. He understood the length and breadth of the matter. His wife was the dupe of a keen and practised pedlar; but she was less a dupe than himself. Slowly putting his hand into his pocket, he took thence a paper, which he handed to his wife, and bid her open it. She did so, and in it was a spoonful of what was once flax seed.

Judge her surprise.

'Husband,' said she, 'what is the meaning of this?'

'Meaning!' said he, 'why it means that I am more of a fool than yourself. You sold a bushel of flax seed for three dollars, and I paid one dollar for a spoonful of it. That is what it means.'

The story was soon told. He was one of the seventy five who had that day purchased the flax seed. He had left the ground before the selling was over, and was ignorant as to the fate of the calf. But now the whole was unravelled. And while husband and wife both experienced some mortification, the joke was too good to allow any protracted disturbance of their composure.

Mrs M—— poured out another cup, as her husband declared that the matter of the clock should not deprive him of his usual allowance, especially after a day of such fatigue.

The meal was at length finished; but before that, both had recovered their equanimity, and even smiled at the strange events of the day. The pedlar did not escape some little malediction for the part he had acted; but Mr M. declared that a man deserved some credit who could carry his purposes despite of such obstacles; but after all, he thought his wife the best salesman, who could dispose of a bushel of old flax seed for three dollars, and a calf as good as dead for ten dollars.

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## ON THE EXERCISE OF MEMORY.

BY MRS C. M. KIRKLAND.

Verbal memory, a faculty possessed at will by almost all young persons of tolerable ability, is in most cases almost the exclusive property of youth. Whether from the encroachment of the cares and pursuits of life, or from some physical change in the condition of the brain, it is certain that the power of committing to memory verbatim, rarely endures long after we leave school. When we first discover its loss we begin to look back upon our school-days with regret; and as we go on in life this regret increases, for we learn more and more the value of what we have learned, and to feel the disadvantages of ignorance. It was once easy for us to commit to memory a piece of poetry that pleased us; now, the most laborious study will hardly secure it. What we then read with delight, remained in the mind without an effort; now though we may retain a general idea correctly enough, we find accurate recollections out of our power, and feel that we have lost at least a part of the pleasure, if not the entire advantage of reading what charms us. The fresh memory enjoys not only the present pleasure, but lays up with little trouble rich stores for after enjoyment. How many of the sad and heavy hours of life are thus cheered! The languor of disease, the tortures of suspense, the turbulence of passion, even the anguish of bereavement, may be soothed and calmed by the timely aid of memory, our own or another's, calling up from its stores precious things, whose possible appropriateness we little suspected when we committed them to that great store house. It is the lot of some to make the discovery of the value of such stores late in life; and what is their vexation when they find it wholly beyond their power to remedy the carelessness which wasted the seed time. The toil now required in order to commit to memory half a dozen stanzas, would in school days have sufficed to lay up a volume; and the volume then committed would have lain *perdu* until it was was wanted, occupying the place of nothing

else, and sure to recur if ever the dangers and chances of life gave occasion for to use, as they almost surely would, since our mental needs are boundless.

One of the wisest things, therefore, is the laying up of vast stores of poetry and eloquence while the verbal memory is strong. And, by way of commencement, let us not forget to recommend committing selections from the Psalms, not as turned into rhyme, but in the sublime simplicity of the Bible, to serve as perpetual aid to the better thoughts, and as suggestions of consolation in the day of trouble. Once fully learned, the hallowed words are ours forever, and by their sublime imagery, their deep devotion of sentiment, and their wonderful applicability to the affairs of life, and the phases of human character, they will repay our pains a hundred fold. These we should be disposed to recommend as the objects of earnest study, while the constant reading of the other scriptures will improve the sacred expressions and the divine truths they contain upon the young mind, to a degree of exactness of which those who study them first later in life can hardly be aware.

It may doubtless appear odd and old fashioned in these matter-of-fact days, if we still further urge the learning by heart of much other poetry. But poetry is the natural food of the human imagination, and we need it now as much as ever, and are suffering every day more from the want of it than for the lack of anything else but religion. Indeed, it is questionable whether we shall make much progress in religion until we become less suspicious of poetry. At least we may venture to commend the furnishing of the mind with poetry as a perpetual source of refined and innocent pleasure—pure gold to plate the coarseness of our existence, sunshine for our darkness, flowers for our thorns. Certain it is, that a pure taste for the best poetry, and a mind well stored with it, will render distasteful the frivolous and pernicious reading which turns so many female minds into mere wastes, haunted only by spirit unbelief.

Inaccuracy of citation, again, is an absolute vice, and it were better to learn no poetry at all than learn it in the wretched style in which it is often quoted. It is injustice to the author to quote as his, expressions which he never used; it is confessing a want of all delicacy of appreciation in ourselves, to be content with our own bungling paraphrase, instead of the words which in their due place and order have won the admiration of the world. So general has carelessness in this particular become, that it is a rare thing to hear even Shakespeare cited correctly, in passages which have become current, more from their exquisite felicity of expression than anything else. It is to be hoped that those who desire to enrich their thoughts and sweeten their existence by the aid of remembered poetry, will feel it a sacred duty to the authors to whom we are so deeply indebted, to cling to their very words and the order in which they have thought proper to set them, following the golden rule in this as in all other things.

## THE POOR PREACHED TO IN THE GOSPEL.

In speaking of the poor as particularly addressed by the Gospel, these poor are meant, who, to the situation, add the proper dispositions of an humble station; not a proud, sulky, discontented, or licentious poor; not those who would, if they possessed the means, practice the vices of the rich; and who make up for their deficiencies by the cravings of envy, the wishes and hopes of disaffection, the tricks of dishonesty, or the boldness of blasphemy: but those who use the common reason, which God hath vouchsafed to them in equal measure with the rich; who reflect wisely on their natural condition; who receive thankfully their proper mercies; who bear patiently the common uncertainties of life; and providing with honest diligence for ordinary wants, look up with a simple desire to that heavenly Instructor, whose presence they feel, and whose providence they own. It is to the poor, indeed, but to the humble, the obedient poor that the Gospel is preached.—Archdeacon Hoare.

An English stock-jobber, known for unexampled parsimony, although possessed of an immense fortune, one day met a very poor man, one of his own relations. 'Come hither, George,' said the miser, 'do you know I have just made my will, and remembered you handsomely, my boy?'

'God bless your honor,' said the grateful man, 'you will be rewarded for so charitable an action, for you could not have thought of a more distressed family.'

'Are you indeed so very poor, George?'

'Sir, my family is starving,' said the man, almost crying.

'Hark ye, then, George, if you will allow me good discount, I will pay your legacy immediately.'

We need not add that the terms were accepted of, and that the parties were equally pleased with the bargain they had concluded.

A distinguished Statesman of our country who is now no more on earth, while a member of Congress was insulted and abused by coarse, harsh epithets and ungentlemanly language, applied by another member of the same body. He took little notice of it further than to say, 'I leave him to his worst enemy, that is himself.' There are those occasionally found that might be left thus. None could wish them greater torments.