

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE BRITISH MAGAZINES.

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

## TWO KINDS OF HONESTY.

SOME few years ago, there resided in Long Acre an eccentric old Jew, named Jacob Benjamin: he kept a seed shop, in which he likewise carried on—not a common thing, we believe in London—the sale of meal, and had risen from the lowest dregs of poverty, by industry and self-denial, till he grew to be an affluent tradesman. He was, indeed, a rich man; for as he had neither wife nor child to spend his money, nor kin to borrow it of him, he had a great deal more than he knew what to do with. Lavish it on himself he could not, for his early habits stuck to him, and his wants were few. He was always clean and decent in his dress, but he had no taste for elegance or splendor in any form, nor had even the pleasures of the table any charms for him; so that, though he was no miser, his money kept on accumulating, while he now and then wondered, what he should do with it hereafter. One would think he need not have wondered long, when there was so many people suffering from the want of what he abounded in; but Mr Benjamin, honest man, had his crotchets like other folks. In the first place, he had less sympathy with poverty than might have been expected, considering how poor he had once been himself; but he had a theory, just in the main, though by no means without its exceptions—that the indigent have generally themselves to thank for their privations—Judging from his own experience, he believed that there was bread for every body that would take the trouble to earn it; and as he had had little difficulty in resisting temptation himself, and was not philosopher enough to allow for the varieties of human character, he had small compassion for those who injured their prospects by yielding to it. Then he had found, on more than one occasion, that even to the well doing assistance was not always serviceable. Endeavor was relaxed, and gratuities, once received, were looked for again. Doubtless, part of this evil result was to be sought in Mr Benjamin's own defective mode of proceeding; but I repeat, he was no philosopher, and in matters of this sort he did not see much farther than his nose which was, however, a very long one.

To public charities he sometimes subscribed liberally; but his hand was frequently withheld by a doubt regarding the judicious expenditure of the mounds, and this doubt was especially fortified after chancing to see one day, as he was passing the Crown and Anchor Tavern, a concourse of gentlemen turned out, with very flushed faces, who had been dining together for the benefit of some savages in the Southern Pacific Ocean, accused of devouring human flesh—a practice so abhorrent to Mr Benjamin, that he had subscribed for their conversion. But failing to perceive the connection betwixt the dinner and that desirable consummation, his name appeared henceforth less frequently in printed lists, and he felt more uncertain than before as to what branch of unknown posterity he should bestow his fortune.

In the meantime, he kept on the even tenor of his way, standing behind his counter, and serving his customers, assisted by a young woman called Leah Leet, who acted as his shop-woman, and in whom, on the whole, he felt more interest than in any body else in the world, inasmuch that it sometimes glanced across his mind, whether he should not make her the heiress of all his wealth. He never, however, gave her the least reason to expect such a thing, being himself incapable of conceiving that, if he entertained the notion, he ought to prepare her by education for the good fortune that awaited her. But he neither perceived this necessity, nor, if he had, would he have liked to lose the services of a person he had been so long accustomed to.

At length, one day an idea struck him.—He had been reading the story of his namesake, Benjamin, in the Old Testament, and the question occurred to him, how many among his purchasers of the poorer class—and all who came to his shop personally were of that class—would bring back a piece of money they might find among their meal, and he thought he should like to try a few of them that were his regular customers. The experiment would amuse his mind, and the money he might lose by it he did not care for. So he began with shillings, slipping one among the flour before he handed it to the purchaser. But the shillings never came back—perhaps people did not think so small a sum worth returning; so he went on to half-crowns and crowns, and now and then, in very particular cases, he even ventured a guinea; but it was always with the same luck, and the longer he tried, the more he distrusted there being any honesty in the world, and the more disposed he felt to leave all his money to Leah Leet, who had lived with him so long, and to his belief, had never wronged him of a penny.

What's this you have put into the gruel, Mary? said a pale, sickly-looking man, one evening, taking something out of his mouth, which he held toward the feeble gleams emitted by a farthing rush-light standing on the mantelpiece.

What is it, father? enquired a young girl approaching him. Isn't the gruel good?

It's good enough, replied the man; but

here's something in it: it's a shilling, I believe.

It's a guinea, I declare! exclaimed the girl, as she took the coin from him and examined it near the light.

A guinea! repeated the man; well, that's the first bit of luck I've had this seven years or more. It never could have come when we wanted it worse. Show it us here, Mary.

But it's not ours, father, said Mary. I paid away the last shilling we had for the meal, and here's the change.

God has sent it us, girl! He saw our distress, and He sent it us in His mercy! said the man, grasping the pieces of gold with his thin bony fingers.

It must be Mr Benjamin's, returned she. He must have dropped it in the meal-tub that stands by the counter.

How do you know that? inquired the man with an impatient tone and a half angry glance. How can you tell how it came into the gruel? Perhaps it was lying at the bottom of the basin, or at the bottom of the sauce-pan. Most likely it was.

Oh, no, father, said Mary: it is long since we had a guinea.

A guinea that we knew of; but I've had plenty in my time, and how do you know this is not one we had overlooked?

We've wanted a guinea too much to overlook one, answered she. But never mind, father; eat your gruel, and don't think of it: your cheeks are getting quite red with talking so, and won't be able to sleep when you go to bed.

I don't expect to sleep, said the man, peevishly; I never do sleep.

I think you will, after that nice gruel! said Mary, throwing her arms round his neck and tenderly kissing his cheek.

And a guinea in it to give it a relish too, returned the father, with a faint smile and an expression of archness, betokening an inner nature very different from the exterior which sorrow and poverty had encrusted on it.

His daughter then proposed that he should go to bed; and having assisted him to undress, and arranged her little household matters, she retired behind a tattered, discolored curtain which shaded her own mattress, and laid herself down to rest.

The apartment in which this little scene occurred, was in the attic story of a mean house, situated in one of the narrow courts or alleys betwixt the Strand and Drury-lane. The furniture it contained was of the poorest description; the cracked window panes were coated with dust; and the scanty fire in the grate, although the evening was cold enough to make a large one desirable—all combined to testify to the poverty of the inhabitants. It was a sorry retreat for declining years and sickness, and a sad and cheerless home for the fresh cheek and glad hopes of youth; and all the worse, that neither father nor daughter was to the manner born: for poor John Glegg had, as he said, plenty of guineas in his time: at least, what should have been plenty, had they been wisely husbanded.—But John, to describe the thing as he saw it himself, had always 'had luck against him.' It did not signify what he undertook, his undertakings invariably turned out ill.

He was born in Scotland, and had passed a great portion of his life there; but, unfortunately for him, he had no Scotch blood in his veins, or he might have been blessed with some small modicum of the caution for which that nation is said to be distinguished. His father had been a cooper, and when quite a young man, John had succeeded to a well established business in Aberdeen. His principal commerce consisted in furnishing the retail-dealers with casks, wherein to pack their dried fish; but partly from good-nature, and partly from indolence, he allowed them to run such long accounts, that they were apt to overlook the debt altogether in their calculations, and to take refuge in bankruptcy when the demand was pressed and the supply of goods withheld—his negligence thus proving in its results, as injurious to them as to himself. Five hundred pounds embarked in a scheme projected by a too sanguine friend, for establishing a local newspaper, which died ere it was born; and a fire, occurring at a time that John had omitted to renew his insurance, had seriously damaged his resources, when some matter of business having taken him to the Isle of Man he was agreeably surprised to find that his branch of trade which had of late years been alarmingly declining in Aberdeen, was there in the most flourishing condition. Delighted with the prospect this state of affairs opened, and eager to quit the spot where misfortune had so unrelentingly pursued him, John, having first secured a house at Ramsay, returned to fetch his wife, children, and merchandise, to this new home. Having freighted a small vessel for their conveyance, he expected to be deposited at their own door; but he had unhappily forgotten to ascertain the character of the captain, who, under pretence, that if he entered the harbor, he should probably be windbound for several weeks, persuaded them to go ashore in a small boat, promising to he-to till they had landed their goods; but the boat had no sooner returned to the ship, than, spreading his sails to the wind, he was soon out of sight, leaving John and his family on the beach, with—no recur to his own phraseology—nothing but what they stood up in.

Having with some difficulty found shelter for the night, they proceeded on the following morning in a boat to Ramsay; but here it was found that, owing to some informality, the people who had possession of the house refused to give it up, and the wanderers were obliged to take refuge in an inn. The next thing was to pursue and recover the lost

goods; but some weeks elapsed before an opportunity of doing so could be found; and at length, when John did reach Liverpool, the captain had left it, carrying away with him a considerable share of the property. With the remainder, John, after many expenses and delays, returned to the Island and resumed his business. But he soon discovered to his cost, that the calculations he had made were quite fallacious, owing to his having neglected to inquire whether the late prosperous season had been a normal or an exceptional one. Unfortunately it was the latter; and several very unfavorable ones that succeeded reduced the family to great distress, and finally to utter ruin.

Relinquishing his shop and his goods to his creditors, John Glegg, heart sick and weary, sought a refuge in London—a proceeding to which he was urged by no prudential motives, but rather by the desire to fly as far as possible from the scenes of his vexations and disappointments, and because he had heard that the metropolis was a place in which a man might conceal his poverty, and suffer and starve at his ease, untroubled by importunate curiosity or officious benevolence; and above all believing it to be the spot he was least likely to fall in with any of his former acquaintances.

But here a new calamity awaited him, worse than all the rest. A fever broke out in the closely crowded neighborhood in which they had fixed their abode, and first two of his three children took it, and died; and then himself and his wife—rendered meet subjects for infection by anxiety of mind and poor living—were attacked with the disease. He recovered—at least he survived, though with an enfeebled constitution, but he lost his life, a wise and patient woman, who had been his comforter and sustainer through all his misfortunes—misfortunes which, after vainly endeavoring to avert, she supported with heroic and uncomplaining fortitude; but dying, she left him a precious legacy in Mary, who with a fine nature, and the benefit of her mother's precept, and example, had been to him ever since a treasure of filial duty and tenderness.

A faint light dawned through the dirty window on the morning succeeding the little event with which we opened our story, when Mary rose softly from her humble couch, and stepping lightly to where her father's clothes lay on a chair, at the foot of his bed, she put her hand into his waistcoat pocket, and extracting therefrom the guinea which had been found in the gruel the preceding evening, she transferred it to her own. She then dressed herself and having ascertained that her father still slept, she quietly left the room. The hour was yet so early, and the streets so deserted, that Mary almost trembled to find herself in them alone; but she was anxious to do what she considered her duty without the pain of contention. John Glegg was naturally an honest and well intentioned man, but the weakness that had blasted his life adhered to him still. They were doubtless in terrible need of the guinea, and since it was not by any means certain that the real owner would be found, he saw no great harm in appropriating it; but Mary wasted no casuistry on the matter. That the money was not legitimately theirs, and that they had no right to retain it, was all she saw; and so seeing, she acted unhesitatingly on her convictions.

She had bought the meal at Mr Benjamin's, because her father complained of the quality of that she procured in the smaller shops, and on this occasion he had served her himself. From the earliness of the hour, however, though the shop was open, he was not in when she arrived on her errand of restitution; but addressing Leah Leet, who was dusting the counter, she mentioned the circumstance, and tendered the guinea; which the other took and dropped into the till, without acknowledgement or remark. Now Mary had not restored the money with any view to praise or reward: the thought of either had not occurred to her; but she was, nevertheless, pained by the dry, cold thankless manner with which the restitution was accepted, and she felt that a little civility would not have been out of place on such an occasion.

(To be continued.)

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

## A LITTLE TOO LATE.

There is a class of persons who appear to be brought up under the sad fatality of being always a little too late. This seems to be the rule of their life, for it takes place with surprising regularity. It would almost appear that the clock by which they regulated their actions could not be made to keep pace with the common time piece, and they were fated to abide by its tardy movement. They are not found to be occasionally late, but are invariably so many minutes behind the proper hour. After careful examination, we have discovered that the space of ten minutes is the common degree of difference between this order of men and the rest of mankind. Among them are some of the most diligent laborious, and calculating of our species; yet they are ten minutes too late for every occupation.

A gentleman of our acquaintance, who is subject to this mental affection, if so it may be termed, is one of the most shrewd and active persons of the neighbourhood; but nobody who knows him expects him to be in time for any engagement at home or abroad. Ten minutes are always allowed for his appearance. His friends have often rallied him on the subject, and he takes their banter with the utmost good-humour, knowing himself to

be in fault, although this consciousness does nothing towards curing him of the malady. He has sometimes suffered great inconvenience in his transactions with strangers, and even sustained pecuniary loss through his tardiness; but he seems to have no moral power to stee over the little chasm by which he is separated from the marching-hour of the world. He was advised by an acquaintance to rise a little earlier than usual one fine summer morning, that he might overtake Fataer Time, and keep beside him all the day. With considerable effort he did rise at half-past seven instead of twenty minutes to eight, but he was not at his business till ten minutes past nine. His friend did not understand the nature of the disease, but thought it originated from sloth: no such thing—he is a most industrious man. We found, however, upon very careful investigation, that there is a tincture of carelessness about his habits; yet only a tincture. In all he does one small flaw may be detected by a minute observer. He forgets to say something, though it is a mere trifle; he omits one of his engagements, but one of no importance; he narrates an incident very nicely, but leaves out one of the circumstances. He dresses in a neat style, but probably goes out without a handkerchief (it is in the pocket of his other coat), or there is a hole in one of his gloves which he has neglected to have repaired; and he sometimes comes home having done all his business, but without his umbrella or walking-stick.

We hoped that the punctuality of railways might possibly cure our neighbour, as he frequently had occasion to travel a particular road. He used seldom to take a place in the stage-coach lest he might be too late but trusted to their being a vacant inside or outside seat, with which he was content. But when the business was important, and he had previously secured a seat in the vehicle, the guard knew his habits, and for the expected duncer compromised the hour of starting by finding some cause for five minutes' delay; and if this did not suffice, the coachman drove warily through the streets till the passenger overtook them in a 'Hansom's patent' at full gallop. But the 'Fair-trader' was knocked up by the railway. Many were the warnings he now received that the steam-trains, like time and tide, waited for no man, and he buckled up his courage for the next occasion. Being advised that he should be at London Bridge ten minutes before the time of starting, he made a desperate effort to be punctual. He rose before half-past seven, but was not ready for breakfast till five minutes past eight. He lost the other five minutes in opening his portmanteau to put in a small article which he had forgotten. Still, he was ready to enter the cab at ten minutes to nine, and was not a full mile to the station. He congratulated himself upon the ease with which the distance would be cleared, and already began to bless the railway for curing him of his inveterate lateness. Mr Cab drove lustily, and reached the north end of London Bridge at precisely five minutes to nine. Two or three minutes were amply sufficient to land him in the booking office. He had never been so early in his life for he would have two minutes to spare. But, alas! some coal-waggons blocked up to the way and caused a stoppage on the bridge; and when the cabman had extricated his vehicle and dashed furiously into the station, our friend heard the guard's whistle while paying for his ticket. He was told to run; and as he gained the platform, he saw the train move off majestically before him, like a ship in full sail. 'Stop, stop!' The coach had often stopped for him; but steam engines have no ears, and the engineer is deaf to every sound but that of the whistle.—So he had to wait two hours for another train. When he reached his destination, his friends who were to wait at the station with a carriage had gone home, not expecting him to come that day; so he hired a coach and drove to their residence, entering the parlor just as the servant was clearing away the dinner things. Though much mortified, he laid the whole blame his disaster upon the thoughtless waggons who obstructed the bridge; and next time instead of starting ten minutes earlier, he went round by a different way. We have several physicians, physiologists, and natural philosophers on this subject, asking them to explain the phenomena of this habitual lateness; but we cannot learn the cause of the complaint, nor obtain a remedy for our very worthy friend; so that we fear he must continue to the end of his life 'a little too late.'

From "Pictures of Rural Life in Austria and Hungary." By Mary Norman.

## WINTER IN GERMANY.

When we reached the depths of the valley and the wood, which extends into it from the heights above, had begun to darken our way, we suddenly heard a most unwonted sound proceeding from the Black Forest which crowns the projecting rock; it was as though thousands or rather millions of glass tubes were rattled together. The Black Forest was so far off that we could not hear any sound therefrom distinctly; this strange noise therefore, bursting forth as it did amid the silence in which heaven and earth were enveloped, had a most startling and impressive effect. We had driven some distance further ere we could stop the horse, who had just begun to scent home and had quickened his pace; when he halted there was nothing to be heard but an indistinct rustling in the air, not at all like the distant roar which we had heard before, and which had drowned the noise of the animal's hoofs. We drove on