

ANECDOTES OF CELEBRATED PERSONS.

FROM GERMAN WORKS.

Louis XIV.—The grand monarch was noted for his imposing look. On one occasion, however, as he was reviewing some of his troops, he was unable to put a soldier out of countenance, so stern and unbending was the man's gaze. "How is it," said the king, "that you dare thus look at me?" "Sire," replied the undaunted son of Mars, "none but the eagle can fix his eyes on the sun." This man, from the fixed nature of his gaze, was surnamed "the Eagle."

Fontenelle.—This celebrated man lived to be a hundred years of age. A few months before his death he was at the theatre, when being accosted by an English nobleman, who professed to have come all the way from England on purpose to see him, he replied: "My lord, I have left you plenty of time."

Frederick II.—His majesty, looking out of the window one day, saw a number of people reading a paper stuck against a wall. "Go and see," said the king to a page in waiting, "what those people are reading." "Sire," said the page, on his return, trembling with fear, "It is a satire on your person." "Indeed," replied his majesty, coolly; "just step down again, and put the paper more on a level with their visual organs, I am afraid it is rather too high."

This monarch was of an exceedingly familiar turn of mind: "Come," said he, one day to the Abbe Raynal, who was presented to him, whilst surrounded by his generals, "Come my good fellow, we are both old, let us sit down and have a chat."

Reuchlin.—The celebrated author of "De Arte Cabalistica," having reached a village where he was obliged to wait for his carriage at an inn, filled with drunken obstreperous peasants, hit upon one of the strangest plans for silencing such an assemblage, as was ever heard of. He called for a glass of water and a piece of chalk. With the latter he described on the table a circle surmounted by a small cross; on the right of this circle he placed the glass, on the left a knife, and in the very middle his book, and so began to read, at times uttering strange sounds. The peasants taking him for nothing less than a sorcerer, held their tongues in amazement, and Reuchlin was thus enabled to read for a good half hour in peace, when at length his carriage came.

Montesquieu.—On leaving Rome, Montesquieu waited on the Pope, Benedict XIV., with the intention of taking leave. His holiness, desirous of conferring on the Savan some signal marks of his favour, said to him, "We grant you the permission to eat flesh on all fast days, and of our goodness extend this favour to your posterity for ever." Montesquieu tendered his thanks to his holiness, and took his leave. The bishop who acted the part of chamberlain, conducted the author to an adjoining apartment, where the Pope's bull of dispensation was handed over to him, accompanied with the demand of a pretty considerable fee. Montesquieu having cast his eyes on the document, returned it to the donor, observing, that as the Pope was so righteous a man, he would not think of doubting his word, which he certainly would do, in taking the bull of dispensation.

Frederick II. was, on the occasion of his passage through a small town, accosted by several of the dignitaries of the place. One of these, stepping forward to deliver his speech, was most unceremoniously interrupted by a donkey a few feet off, which began to bray in a most unmusical strain. The king was unable to restrain his merriment, and laughing outright, exclaimed, "Do, I beg of you, each speak in your turn; it is impossible for me to understand you, if you will both talk together."

Philip the Good.—As Philip, Duke of Burgundy, was walking through the streets of Bruges, he found on his path a drunken man, sound asleep. He had him removed and carried to the ducal palace, where having caused him to be stripped of his rags, he was placed in one of the richest beds, with a costly night-shirt on his body, and a perfumed night-cap on his head. As may be supposed, the poor drunkard was not a little amazed when he awoke, to find himself in such strange circumstances—he was much more so when he saw several fine gentlemen approach him with low bows, inquiring what dress his highness would be graciously pleased to wear on that day. This question, of course, completed the poor fellow's astonishment; he was, he said, nothing more than a wretched cobbler—but it was all to no purpose, the attentions paid to him were redoubled, and he at length found himself compelled to submit to all their officiousness. When he was dressed, the transformed cobbler was conducted in state to the chapel, to hear mass; at the end of which ceremony, he good-naturedly allowed his hand to be kissed, which, however, as may be supposed, was not one of the fairest. After this pantomime, he was sumptuously fared, then taken for an airing in a superb chariot, then to the opera, and to wind up all, to a magnificent ball, where the most lovely creatures he ever beheld vied with each other to please and to amuse him. A substantial supper followed the dance; bottle after bottle passed before the eyes of the enraptured cobbler, glassfuls after glassfuls followed each other in rapid succession down his throat; till at length, completely overwhelmed by liquor and excitement, he dropped off into a sound sleep, during which he was once more reinvigorated in

his old clothes, and carried to the spot whence he was conveyed to the Duke's palace. The next morning he could not find words enough to relate to his wife with sufficient effect, the delightful dream he had had. H. M.

WAR AS IT IS.—The United Service Journal for April contains an account of the capture of Constantine in 1837 by the French Army. The sketch is written by Sir Grenville Temple, Bart. and, we presume, may be relied upon for the correctness of its statements. Two or three specimens of the diabolical fury, and the deathless hate which modern christians sanction, we present to our readers—"The Turks, Moors, and Arabs defended themselves most obstinately, and they did not commence to bend till they found the French surrounding them. This had been effected by the sapeurs having cleared on the left, in the direction of Bah Jedid, away through the houses and ruins. The same system had also been commenced on the right. The contest however continued to rage with the greatest fury: the garrison generally, but especially the Turkish soldiers, behaved nobly, fighting as lions (!) defending their young. It required the full development of the well-proved French courage to maintain the strife with these gallant warriors, who, even when lying on the ground in the agonies of death, continued cutting with their yataghans and sabres. Many men were cut down in this manner, and, it became prudent to cast an examining glance on the bodies on which you were to place your foot. Under an ancient gateway, the struggle was the greatest and most bloody, for, independently of the fire of musketry, man was opposed to man in close contest, and the yataghan and the bayonet reaped the harvest of each other's lives. The fray was, however, not confined to this spot, it raged with equal spirit in all the adjoining streets, and in every house. At last, covered with blood and foaming with rage, the Moslem soldiers retired, still fighting, to the Kasbah, though this former fortress was unable to afford them protection, from the French entering it with them. A few were taken, but the greater part descending the steep and precipitous face of the rock, gained the valley, not however without losing many of their numbers, who were dashed to pieces by falling headlong into the ravine below. When the inhabitants found that their town was lost, many mounted their horses, and issuing from Bah Jedid, dashed at a gallop down the steep declivity along the road which leads to Milah; but the great mass of the population, especially the women, the aged, and the children, endeavoured to escape from the fate they supposed to await them, by climbing down the rocks and lowering themselves by ropes, thus gaining the gardens and the rivers below the town. A great number perished by the ropes breaking, the feet slipping, or by the wearied hands being no longer able to maintain their hold. The ravines at the foot of the rock were filled with the bodies of those which rolled from above; heaps were seen of the dead, the dying, the wounded, and the mutilated. Men, women, and children, lay in masses, perishing miserably and in agonies, for all others were too much occupied to assist them. The sight of men who have been killed fighting is one which does not inspire any sensibilities (!) for it is nothing more than you are prepared to see; but when women and children are included among the killed such is not the case, and few can gaze upon them in this state unmoved. In the town, I was witness to a little scene which considerably affected me. Entering a house whose passage was paved with the numerous bodies of the valiant defenders, we found a door which was locked; the soldiers burst it open, and found that it had been still further secured by the inmates with boxes and trunks placed against it. A woman had locked herself in with two children, one of these at the breast: she thought herself secure, but we found them all three killed, a shell having entered by the ceiling and burst in the room. The mother and the little boy appeared to have been, when struck, at different extremities of the room. We found them in the centre embracing each other with the grasp of death, and the train of blood showed that they had drugged themselves there from opposite corners. The floor was strewn with little toys and playthings, many dabbled in blood. Although these are events which unfortunately often occur in besieged towns, still you cannot avoid starting with horror and pain when they present themselves to view." That Mahometans should believe in the lawfulness of war, does not excite surprise; but that the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus should be as ready to fight for their country, etc. as the votaries of the false prophet, does almost surpass belief. And yet such alas! is the fact.

A New Member of Parliament.—Lord North, one day, in the House of Commons, was interrupted in the most important part of his speech by a dog who had taken shelter and concealed himself under the table of the house, and then making his escape, ran directly across the floor, barking with a violent howl. A burst of laughter ensued, which would have disconcerted any ordinary speaker. But North, who knew how to turn any occurrence, however ludicrous, to his own advantage, having waited with all gravity until the roar was subsided, then addressed the chair, saying, "Sir, I have been interrupted by a new member, but as he has concluded his argument, I will resume mine."

Warton notices the common practice, about the reign of Elizabeth, of our authors dedicating a work at once to a number of the nobility. Chapman's Translation of Homer has sixteen sonnets addressed to lords and ladies. Henry Lock, in a collection of two hundred religious sonnets, mingles with such heavenly works the terrestrial composition of a number of sonnets to his noble patrons; and not to multiply more instances, our great poet Spenser, in compliance with this disgraceful custom, or rather in obedience to the established tyranny of patronage, has prefixed to the Fairy Queen fifteen of these adulatory pieces, which in every respect, are the meanest of his compositions. At this period all men, as well as writers, looked up to peers, as on beings on whose smiles or frowns all sublunary good and evil depended. At a much later period, Alkanah Settle sent copies round to the chief party, for he wrote for both parties, accompanied by addresses, to extort pecuniary presents in return. He had latterly one standard ELEGY, and one EPITHALAMIUM, printed off with blanks, which by ingeniously filling up with the printed names of any great person who died or was married, no one who was going out of life or was entering into it, could pass scot free.

One of the most singular anecdotes respecting Dedications in English bibliography, is that of the Polyglot bible of Dr. Castell. Cromwell, much to his honor, patronised that great labor, and allowed the paper to be imported free of all duties, both of excise and custom. It was published under the protectorate, but many copies had not been disposed of ere Charles II. ascended the throne. Dr. Castell had dedicated the work gratefully to Oliver, by mentioning him with peculiar respect in the preface, but he wavered with Richard Cromwell. At the restoration, he cancelled the two last leaves, and supplied their places with three others, which softened down the republican strains and blotted Oliver's name out of the book of life! The differences in what are now called the REPUBLICAN and the LOYAL copies have amused the curious collectors; and the former being very scarce are most sought after. I have seen the republican. In the LOYAL copies the patrons of the work are mentioned, but their TITLES are essentially changed; SERENISSIMUS ILLUSTRISSIMUS, and HONORATISSIMUS, were epithets that dared not show themselves under the LEVELLING influence of the great fanatic republican.

It is a curious literary folly, not of an individual, but of the Spanish nation, who, when the laws of Castile were reduced into a code under the reign of Alfonso X, surnamed the Wise, divided the work into SEVEN VOLUMES; that they might be dedicated to the SEVEN LETTERS which formed the name of his majesty!

Never was a gigantic baby of adulation so crammed with the soft pap of DEDICATIONS as Cardinal Richelieu. French flattery even exceeded itself.—Among the vast number of very extraordinary dedications to this man, in which the divinity itself is disrobed of its attributes to bestow them on this miserable creature of vanity, I suspect that even the following one is not the most blasphemous he received. "Who has seen your face without being seized by those softened terrors which made the prophets shudder when God showed the beams of his glory? But as he whom they dared not to approach in the burning bush, and in the noise of thunders, appeared to them sometimes in the freshness of the zephyrs, so the softness of your august countenance dissipates at the same time, and changes into dew, the small vapors which cover its majesty." One of these herd of dedicators, after the death of Richelieu, suppressed in a second edition his hyperbolic panegyric, and as a punishment he inflicted on himself, dedicated the work to Jesus Christ!

The same taste characterises our own dedications in the reign of Charles II and James II. The great Dryden has carried it to an excessive height; and nothing is more usual than to compare the PATRON with the DIVINITY—and at times a fair inference may be drawn that the former was more in the author's mind than God himself! A Welsh bishop made an APOLOGY to James I, for PREFERRING the Deity—to his Majesty! Burke has admirably observed on Dryden's extravagant dedications, that they were the vices of the time more than of the man; they were loaded with flattery, and no disgrace was annexed to such an exercise of men's talents; the contest being who should go farthest in the most graceful way, and with the best turns of expression.

An ingenious dedication was contrived by Sir Simon Degge, who dedicated "the Parson's Counsellor" to Woods, Bishop of Lichfield, with this intention. Degge highly complimented the Bishop on having most nobly restored the church, which had been demolished in the civil wars, and was rebuilt but left unfinished by Bishop Hacket. At the time he wrote the dedication, Woods had not turned a single stone, and it is said, that much against his will he did something from having been so publicly reminded of it by this ironical dedication—*Curiosities of Literature.*

T. Majer, in his "History of Trials by Ordeal," 1795, asserts, that on weighing some witches and magicians in Hungary in 1728, a tall jolly dame weighed only a drachm and a half—her husband, not by any means a diminutive man, five drachms—the others, three or four drachms, or less!