

THE LITERARY TRANSCRIPT.

MISCELLANEOUS SELECTIONS.

PARISIAN TOMB-STONE WAREHOUSE.

Le Sieur M. N. is the owner of a most magnificent establishment in this way: taste, order, and smiling politeness, there reign; and, walking along the first gallery into which I entered, surrounded by angels and geni, and lamps shining in the purest alabaster, conducted by a loving *employee*, I thought to myself, "This is indeed something the passage to the tomb." The delicacy of the tenderest nerves would not be startled here by the monuments of death.

I found it would be necessary to write a little before I could explain the purpose of my visit, for the master had customers with him. His talents were well known, and no gentleman in Paris likely to want a monument, would think for a moment of being furnished by any other than M. N. His improvements in his art had been recorded in the *Magazine of Invention*, and some of his finest articles were exhibited at the *Fetes of French Industry*, as a proof of the increased consumption of the nation. As I advanced towards the great man, I found him too much occupied with a couple of gentlemen, dressed in deep mourning, to observe my approach; and I was, I must confess, struck by the simple dignity with which he conducted business. In the *Almanac des Gourmands*, it is said of Beauvilliers, one of the master-spirits of French cookery, who did things in his art which the world will not willingly let die, that, with one of his sauces, a man with a good appetite might eat his own father! It would be doing great injustice to Le Sieur M. N. to limit his panegyric to saying of his monuments, that a man might desire one for his own father—this would be affirming but little; but if I may speak from my own feelings, I would say that no one who enters this warehouse can quit it without being seduced into desiring a monument for himself, and sent home without delay.

When I came up to the party, I found the customers had but just commenced their bargain:—

"I want a tombstone," said the elder of the two.

"For man or woman, sir?" asked the master, with Lacedaemonian brevity, and Parisian quickness.

"For a worthy gentleman, who was rather advanced in life before he left it."

"Have the goodness to step this way then; the men above forty are to the right. Bachelor or husband, sir?"

"Our late friend was a married man."

"Vastly well; John, be ready to show the articles for the married men above forty."

"We wish a stone that shall express the virtue of the deceased; his children greatly regret his loss."

"Ah! that's quite another thing; you ought to have mentioned at first that he was the father of a family; John, the gentlemen wish to see the fathers of families above forty—they're on the other side, you know, close to the friends in need."

The mourners proceeded with the attendants towards another wing of the extensive building, when I took advantage of the opportunity thus afforded me, by addressing the master. First, I complimented him on his powers of classification, which I considered as unsurpassed by those of Linnaeus himself.

"Sir, I find this arrangement convenient," was the modest reply of the hero of stone.

"Time and trouble are saved to all parties. People by this means are always prepared for death, as one may say, and I avoid getting into scrapes with the living. Formerly, sir, nothing could be more precarious or puzzling than the trade of a maker of monuments."

It was as bad as portrait-painting; no satisfying the first demands of grief without exceeding the decisions of reflection. I have seen an epitaph in gold letters ordered with tears in the eyes; and when the bill has been presented, the inheriting sorrower has insisted that they were commanded in black, as most suitable for mourning. Inscriptions to the memory of faithful wives and affectionate husbands have been given to me, where epithets had vied with epithets, and exclamation with exclamation, to make a phrase of sorrow, and, sit, would you believe it, after the chisel had done its duty, I have had the charge disputed on the ground that the eulogium was extravagant and inapplicable!—Surely we could not have said so, I have been doomed to hear, when the instructions have been entered, right to a letter, in my warehouse book of inconsolables. In short,

sir, grief is prodigal; but reflection calculates. I thought it therefore best, as customers increased, and we had the prospect of an epidemic, to prepare a stock of ready-made articles at ready-money prices; so that a gentleman might, if he pleased, be waited upon with his monument some days before his death, or, at all events, his bills be fixed at once, and no opportunity be left for after-reflecting."

I could not help expressing my admiration of a plan founded on such an exquisite knowledge of human nature, and apparently executed with an ability and industry worthy of the excellence of the original idea. At the same time, I expressed some doubt whether the variety of the demand could be fully met by anticipation, and inquired whether they were not, after all, often obliged to make to order.

"Seldom, sir, seldom; not but that we are exposed to caprice and eccentricity sometimes. No great, however, is the extent and assortment of our stock, that one piece or other in it seldom fails to give satisfaction.—The only persons we may see, whom we have found at all troublesome, are the heirs of insolvents and fugitives. It is true, we have taken the precaution to engrave virtues suited to all the professions and classes of society; we have them too at all prices, and of every material, from marble to plaster. Good husbands may be had here from a shilling upwards, and friends to the poor at a still lower rate. Faithful wives, being a large assortment, go with a very cheap apparatus, and are finely cut and engraved. Our prices, as pointed out by the line, but notes of advertisement are charged separately. If you will take the trouble to walk round with me, I shall be happy to show you our philanthropists in marble, and widows in freestone. We have also a handsome assortment of politicians in wood. Of philosophers, it must be confessed, we are at present rather out; for the lead has been applied last July for bullets; but you will see several physicians in the block, and a number of men of letters, complete except the heads."

"I readily availed myself of this invitation; and as we proceeded, my interesting conductor left me nothing to desire in the way of explanation, while I was lost in astonishment at the infinite sagacity which directed his great establishment."

"I observe," said I, "that all the tablets in this division are particularly precise of moral qualities and religious professions. They are designed for the clergy, I suppose."

"No, sir, for the actors and actresses; these are the only people we now have that set much store by a character for morality and religion. They demand, however, a great deal in this way, and we are almost obliged to be too full for a handsome distribution of the lines, in order to satisfy their ambition to be exemplary."

"I have lost," continued he, much good material and capital workmanship, by the political changes. Legions of honour are now a drug, and senators useless. Many a magnificent slab, connected with the imperial regime, I have been obliged to sell at the price of granite, for building the fountains; and the same police officer has commanded their preparation, has brought me the order for their destruction."

What vexes me most, however, is, that we are obliged to bear the damage when the selfishness of individuals speculates on gain.—How many family monuments, executed to order, have been left on our hands, because relations have suddenly found it inconvenient to claim the titles and achievements which they had given in with pride! How many alterations have we been obliged to make at our own expense, to save the article from being rejected altogether?"

Le Sieur M. N. was interrupted in his complaint by suddenly meeting with his two customers, who were in fact seeking him.—They had seen a monument of which they much approved; and the head of the establishment, when their choice was pointed out to him, complimented them very much on their good taste.

They could not have selected any thing, he said, of a prettier melody, or of a purer marble. The price was only five hundred francs, and as there was at present no inscription on it, they might have any inscription they pleased engraved, for which, however affectionate, he would charge moderately by the letter. The gentlemen seemed startled by the price; they, however, proposed an inscription, and inquired how much the best of parents, the tenderest of husbands," would come to. M. N. made his calculation; on hearing its amount, they

seemed more appalled than before, and one of them instantly said, "Suppose, then, we were to leave the best of parents' out of our lamented friend's monument? It would come a cheaper than; and, in truth, perhaps the less we say of his conduct as a father, the better."

"I was just thinking," replied the other, "that propriety as well as economy seemed to require us to drop the allusion to his conjugal life; it was not in the domestic circle that our departed relative (and here the speaker's voice faltered) displayed most brilliantly the many virtues and amiable qualities by which his character was unquestionably adorned."

The result of the discussion I did not wait to hear. Finding that the dealer in monuments was likely to be occupied for some time with these sincere mourners, I made an appointment with him for another day; and when I saw him again, I learned, on inquiry, that the two gentlemen had gone away without ordering any monument at all.

REMARKS ON BEAUTY AND DRESS.—Beauty has been with very pleasing similitude called "a flower that fades and dies almost in the very moment of its maturity;" but there is a kind of beauty which escapes the general mortality, and lives to old age, a beauty that is not in the features, but that shines through them. It is not merely comely or the object of mere sense, and is not easily discovered, except by persons of true taste and sentiment. There are strokes of sensibility and touches of delicacy, which, like the masterstrokes in a fine picture, are not to be discerned by vulgar eyes, that only are captivated with vivid colours and gross decorations.—There are emanations of the mind which, like the vital spark of celestial fire, animate the form of beauty with a living soul. Without this, the most perfect symmetry in the bloom of youth only reminds us of a kneaded clay; and with this, the features, that time itself has defaced, have a spirit, a sensibility, and a charm, which those only do not admire who want faculties to perceive.

By dress, beauty is adorned, and a want of that attraction is rendered less unpleasing.—The rules of dress have been, not inaptly, compared to those of composition. It must be properly adapted to the person, as, in writing, the style must be suited to the subject.—A woman of quality should not appear in coarse, nor a farmer's wife in *herms*. The dress of a handsome female should be an *effort*; neat, noble, and free from tinsel and all the luxuries of fancy. To the pretty woman greater licence may be allowed; she may dress up to the figns and fancies of the season and the *modish*. One whose face is natural, and whose personal charms reach no higher than *gentle*, should be *epigrammatic* in her dress;—neat, clever, and unadorned; the whole merit and attraction lying in the thing. But the ugly woman should by all means restrict her dress to plain *humble prose*; any attempt beyond that is *mock heroic*, and can only excite ridicule.

MATERNAL AFFECTION.—Miry, Countess of Orkney, was both deaf and dumb; she was married in the year 1753, by signs. Shortly after the birth of her first child, the nurse, with considerable astonishment, saw the mother cautiously approach the cradle in which the infant was sleeping, evidently full of some deep design. The Countess having perfectly assured herself that the child really slept, raised an immense stone which she had concealed under her shawl, and, to the horror of the nurse (who was an Irishwoman, and like all persons of the lower orders in her country, and indeed in most countries, was fully impressed with an idea of the peculiar cunning and malignity of "dumbies,"²⁷) lifted it with an apparent intent to fling it down vehemently. Before the nurse could interpose, the Countess had flung the stone,—not, however, as the servant had apprehended, at the child, but on the floor, where, of course, it made a great noise. The child immediately awoke, and cried. The Countess who had looked with maternal eagerness to the result of her experiment, fell on her knees in a transport of joy. She had discovered that her child possessed the sense which was wanting in herself. She exhibited on many other occasions similar proofs of intelligence, but none so interesting.

The greatest pleasure I know, is to do a good action by stealth, and to have it found out by accident.

"This unpleasant to meet a beggar. It is painful to deny him; and, if you relieve him, it is so much out of your pocket.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

PRICES OF MEAT, POULTRY, VEGETABLES, &c. IN THE QUEBEC MARKET.

Saturday Morning, 17th February.

	a. d.	s. d.
Beef, per lb.	0	4 0 0
Mutton, per lb.	0	4 0 6
Do. per quarter	2	6 4 3
Veal, per lb.	0	6 4 7 1/2
Do. per quarter	3	6 5 0
Pork, per lb.	0	5 4 0 1/2
Bones of Beef, cured, do.	0	5 0 0 0
Birds, do.	0	5 0 0 0
Tergon, each do.	2	0 2 6
Hams, per lb.	0	8 4 0 0
Bacon, per lb.	0	8 0 0 0
Pow., per couple	3	0 4 0 0
Ducks, per couple	4	6 5 0 0
Turkeys, per couple	10	0 0 0 0
Geese, per couple	6	0 7 6
Fish, Cod, fresh, per lb.	0	4 0 0 0
Butter, fish, per lb.	1	3 1 6
Do. salt, in tins, per lb.	0	9 0 10 0
Eggs, per dozen	1	3 0 0 0
Potatoes, per bushel	1	6 2 0 0
Turnips, per bushel	1	3 0 0 0
Apples, per bushel	2	0 3 0 0
Pears, per bushel	6	0 7 6
Onions, per bushel	1	8 2 0 0
Hay, per hundred bundles	25	0 37 6
Straw, do.	12	0 15 6
Fire-wood, per cord	10	0 12 0

DRESS, OR NIGHT CARES.—Rub with the hand two lbs. of butter into four lbs. of sifted flour, two lbs. of cream, two lbs. of cast sugar, two lbs. eggs, mixed together with a pint of milk; roll it out thin, and cut it into round or square cakes with a cutter; lay them on a clean baking sheet, and bake them about five minutes in a sliding heated oven.

PUDDING THAT SHE QUICKLY MADE WITHOUT MUCH ENDEAVOUR.—Beat up four spoonful of flour with a pint of milk and four eggs to a good batter, mix eggs and sugar to your taste; butter tins, fill them three parts full, and send them to the oven. A quarter of an hour will bake them.

TO MAKE OYSTER CATSUP.—One hundred of large oysters, with all their liquor; one lb. of anchovies; three pints of white wine; one lb. of butter with half the peel; boil together for half an hour, then strain, and add cloves and mace, of each a quarter of an ounce, one nutmeg sliced, boil a quarter of an hour; then add two ounces of shalots. When cold, bottle it with the spice and shalots. If the oysters were large, they should be cut.

RECENT COLD.—A tea-spoonful of sal-volatile, taken in a small quantity of water or white wine when at bedtime, is a good remedy for a recent cold. Filling the nose in warm water is also a great relief.

PROSPECTUS

OF THE LITERARY TRANSCRIPT, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

[Submitting a new paper to the judgment of the public, it becomes a duty incumbent on the conductors to state what are the objects contemplated in its publication.

Briefly then,—the design of this paper will be to yield instruction and amusement to the domestic and social circle. It will contain choice extracts from the latest European and American periodicals,—selections from new, popular and entertaining works of the most celebrated authors, with other interesting literary and scientific publications.

The news of the day, compressed into as small a compass as possible, yet sufficiently comprehensive to convey a just and general knowledge of the principal political and miscellaneous events, will also be given.

Its columns will at all times be open to receive such communications as are adapted to the character of the work; and the known talent and taste existing in Quebec justify the hope we entertain that the value of our publication will be enhanced by frequent contributions.

The publication in this city of such a paper as the one now proposed has by many been long considered a desideratum; and the kind disposition which has already been evinced in behalf of our undertaking warrants our confident anticipations that THE LITERARY TRANSCRIPT will meet with encouragement and success.

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