

BILLINGSGATE MARKET.

BY JAMES BIRD.

Gate of all gates, sweet Billingsgate, I sing!
That soft retreat of the reluctant fishes,
Which carts, and smacks, and boats, and steamers bring
To trim the dainty Cockney's smoking dishes,
Tickle the tastes of citizen and king,
And consummate their gastronomic wishes!
Mart of the scaly, shelly, finny tribes,
I sing of thee, in spite of scoffs and gibes!

Ye little sprats, that swim the salt, salt sea;
Ye shrimps and prawns, that at the bottom creep;
Ye salmon, sporting in the river Dee,
Ye turbot, wallowing in the briny deep!
Ye luscious fish of high and low degree,
Rouse! rouse ye all from your aquatic sleep!
Haste from our shores! in rocky hollows lie;
Hide, hide from man, or ye must boil or fry!

Strange is the appetite of man! to seek
His food in water, on the earth, in air!
Flies a poor bird above the loftiest peak,
It cannot e'en escape his artful snare;
Swims a poor finner in the loneliest creek,
Dangerous, deep—he quickly finds it there!
Fish, flesh, and fowl, green herb, root, fruit, and grain,
Man eager seeks, devours, and seeks again!

I wander from thee, Billingsgate! thou scene
Of many a strange and 'delicate' affray,
Where sweet-mouthed lasses, elegant of mien,
Throw the true English dull reserve away,
And, open-hearted, free from silent spleen,
Give, unabashed, the dulcet words they say:
To prove these words are choice ones, hear, and mind them,
You'll wonder where the chattering jades can find them!
Ye nymphs, who tread the purlieus of this mart,
Ye dames, who bear the fish in tray or basket,
Grant me one favour! from mine inmost heart,
There, from its deep and fervent pulse I ask it,
Let 'evil speaking' from your tongues depart!
Keep your sweet words, like jewels, in a casket!
Oh! woman's tongue (I humbly ask her pardon)
Is the wild scarlet runner of life's garden!

INDIAN WITCHCRAFT.—"The greater part of the cross accidents in life which befall the people are supposed to be caused by the secret machinations of some enemy who has had recourse to this black art for the purpose of circumventing them. If they lose a wife or child by premature death, when their corn is blighted, or a murrian breaks out among their cattle, none of these calamities are attributed to a natural cause, but are all ascribed to preternatural devices, employed by some secret enemy. Diseases, particularly such as are of long continuance, are attributed to the same cause; and, if these occurrences should happen during any quarrel or law-suit, the whole is attributed to the opponent, who is considered to have accomplished it by magical devices. For the first twelve months a Hindu mother carefully secludes her child, lest the evil eye should fall on it. These mischievous magicians are very much dreaded and hated, and never fail to be punished when it is believed that by their spells they have been instrumental in promoting any calamity. Taking further advantage of the credulity of their countrymen, these vagabonds give out that, in the utterance of their mantras, the utmost nicety is required; since in the correctness of their pronunciation depends the pleasure of their god or demon: while any imperfection or defect that occurs, infallibly brings on the head of the utterer all the mischief he was essaying to procure for others. The punishment assigned to them, generally, is to draw their two front teeth, as their loss will for ever afterwards render them incapable of correct utterance. As an instance of the hold which these men sometimes obtain over the minds of their countrymen, the following anecdote, which fell within my own knowledge, will serve to show. A highly respectable Hindu landholder at Saugor, named Baboo Bight, refused one of these men a plot of ground for a garden. Of the motive for the denial of this request I am ignorant, nor is it a matter of any importance. It is sufficient to state, that the fellow received a refusal. Undismayed, he renewed the application, which was again rejected. He became more importunate than ever, and a third time solicited the grant, but met with no better success. He vowed, in consequence, to conjure the life of the landholder away within a year, and made the Baboo acquainted with his intention. From this moment he commenced the diabolical undertaking; but the Baboo, being in good health at the time, took no notice of the threat. The fellow established himself on a plain close to the military cantonments of Saugor, on the confines of Baboo Bight's land. Every evening the incantations would be resumed, and fire be seen blazing about the mystical earthen pot. Days and weeks passed on with, apparently, no effect. At length, it was given out that Baboo Bight was ill. His sleep had deserted him, his appetite was gone, and he became restless and feverish. He affected to treat the threatened machinations with contempt; but it would not do: they were evidently uppermost in his mind, and making a deep impression. Six months or more had elapsed, and the fellow continued unremitting in his acts of conjuration. Baboo Bight's health was gone; a low destructive fever had insinuated itself into

his system, and it was evident that he was fast approaching the grave. The fellow, more vigorously than ever, stirred his fire and invoked his deity; till, at last, the poor man died. Thus, by the operation of fear, in less than twelve months, a mind active and strong became disturbed and anxious, then diseased, till, at last, by the influence of this wretch's slow but sure mystical incantations, life was juggled away, and lost."—*Dr. Spry's Modern India.*

CURIOUS BOOKBINDING.—"A curious specimen of binding is mentioned by Scaliger, as being on a printed Psalter his mother possessed. He says the cover was two inches thick, and in the inside was a kind of cupboard, wherein was a small silver crucifix, and behind it the name of 'Berencia Codronia de la Scala.' This kind of binding was not unusual on small books of devotion, containing, like the above, some small subject of adoration, or relic of a saint. Mr. Hansard speaks of a book he had seen with a recess for a relic, and the relic a human toe. The larger volumes of this period are further protected by the addition of metal clasps, bosses, and bands. The clasps are sometimes attached to strips of strong leather, fastened to the boards with rivets, in which way the catch is also secured. Others are of a more elaborate workmanship and finish, being jointed a piece of the same material, firmly rivetted to the sides. The boards are further protected by corners of brass, frequently much ornamented, and extending a considerable way on the cover. On others, a plain piece of brass, wrapping only a small space over, and others simply protected by brass bands rivetted to the edges of the boards. The centres of boards often present a large plate or boss of brass, similar in character to the clasps and corners. Notices of the earlier use of bosses, clasps, and corners, have before been given. Wood's MS. in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, was once very superbly bound and embossed. Much of its beauty is now defaced; but on the bosses at each corner is still discernible, 'Ave Maria gratia plene.' The colophon states it to have been finished in 1558. A folio Bible, printed by Barker, in Archbishop Whitgift's Hospital, at Croydon, Surrey, given by Abraham Hartwell, secretary to the archbishop, in 1559, presents a very good specimen of the bindings of the period. It has a very curiously ornamented cover, protected by large brass bosses and clasps. In the library at Lambeth Palace, is a characteristic binding of the period, richly covered with gilt ornament, on a copy of Archbishop Parker's edition of the Psalms, 4to. 1570. To prevent the books being abstracted from their libraries, the worthies of this period were accustomed to chain them to the shelves. Of this peculiarity, an early notice occurs relative to the books left by Richard de Bury, to (Durham) Trinity College, Oxford, in 1345. After the college became possessed of them, they were for many years kept in chests, under the custody of several scholars deputed for that purpose; and a library being built in the reign of King Henry IV., these books were put into pews or studies, and chained to them. They continued in this manner till the college was dissolved by Henry VIII., when they were conveyed away, some to Duke Humphrey's library. Leland (1538,) speaking of Wressle Castle, Yorkshire, says, 'One thing I liked exceedingly in one of the towers, that was a Study, caullid Paradise; wher was a closet in the middle, of 8 Squares latished aboute, and at the Toppe of every Square was a Desk ledgid to set Bookes on Cofers with yn them, and these semid as yoined hard to the Toppe of the Closet; and yet by pulling, one or al wold cum downe briste highe in rabettes, and serve for Desks to lay Bookes on.'"
J. A. Arnett.

GOOD BREEDING.—The following anecdote is related by Mr. Walker in his amusing and instructive publication "The Original," as affording a fine instance of good-breeding or politeness, even in circumstances where it could not be expected to produce any personal advantage:—

"An Englishman making the grand tour towards the middle of the last century, when travellers were more objects of attention than at present, on arriving at Turin sauntered out to see the place. It happened to meet a regiment of infantry returning from parade, and taking a position to see it pass, a young captain, evidently desirous to make a display before the stranger, in crossing one of the numerous water-courses with which the city is intersected, missed his footing, and in trying to save himself, lost his hat. The exhibition was truly unfortunate—the spectators laughed, and looked at the Englishman, expecting him to laugh too. On the contrary, he not only retained his composure, but promptly advanced to where the hat had rolled, and taking it up, presented it with an air of unaffected kindness to its confused owner. The officer received it with a blush of surprise and gratitude, and hurried to rejoin his company. There was a murmur of applause, and the stranger passed on. Though the scene of a moment, and without a word spoken, it touched every heart—not with admiration for a mere display of politeness, but with a warmer feeling, for a proof of that true charity 'which never faileth.' On the regiment being dismissed, the captain, who was a young man of consideration, in glowing terms related the circumstance to his colonel. The colonel immediately mentioned it to the general in command; and when the Englishman returned to his hotel, he found an aid-de-camp waiting to request his company to dinner at head-quarters. In the evening he was carried

to court—at that time, as Lord Chesterfield tells us, the most brilliant court in Europe—and was received with particular attention. Of course during his stay at Turin he was invited every where; and on his departure he was loaded with letters of introduction to the different states of Italy. Thus a private gentleman of moderate means, by a graceful impulse of Christian feeling, was enabled to travel through a foreign country, then of the highest interest for its society as well as for the charms it still possesses, with more real distinction and advantage than can ever be derived from the mere circumstances of birth and fortune, even the most splendid."

THE FATE OF MEN OF GENIUS.—Plautus turned a mill. Terence was a slave. Boethius died in a jail. Paulo Borgese had fifteen different trades, and starved with them all. Tasso was often distressed for five shillings. Servin, one of the most learned and accomplished men of the age, died drunk in a brothel. Bentivoglio was refused admittance into the very hospital he founded; and Edmund Allen, cotemporary with Shakspeare, died in his own alms-house. Corneille was poor to a proverb. Racine left his family to be supported by his friends. Crichton lost his life in a midnight brawl. Butler was never master of fifty pounds. Otway is said to have died with hunger. Camoen died in an hospital. Vaughan left his body to the surgeons to pay his debts. Cervantes died for want. Churchill died a beggar. Lloyd died in the Fleet. Bickerstaff ran away for debt. Goldsmith, when he died, owed two thousand pounds more than he possessed. Hugh Kelly was in similar circumstances. Paul Hiffernon was supported by a friendly subscription. Purden Jones, author of the *Earl of Essex*; and Boyce, the poet, died in great distress; the former in a hospital, the latter in a garret. Sterne left his family in penury; and Mrs. Manley, author of *The New Atlantides*, subsisted on charity; as did the widow of Smollett; and Foote died penniless.

IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.—Fragments of time, like pieces of money, individually of trifling value, long saved, and well improved, at length amount to great and useful increase. Let the thrifty of time, and desirous of improvement, be persuaded to lose no hour, any more than the covetous of money can be prevailed on to lose any opportunity of saving or accumulating. Let small and select reading be employed, where leisure admits not of larger. Let close and cogent reflection supply the place of deep thought, where that is inadmissible. Let every hour, and every occurrence, add to the stock of knowledge already acquired. From every lapse of time, however small, and every accident, however uninteresting, let something be learnt—some store laid up for the future use.

From "Count Cagliostro."

SUCCESS.—The sentiment of triumph is the most exquisite of all terrestrial feelings: no matter how wide or narrow the sphere of action—no matter how rich or how vile the prize—the boards of a theatre or the floor of the senate—a game at cards or speculation for millions—a harlot or an angel—a scuffle in the street or an empire-deciding battle—success is still success—the nectar of life; and a few drops of this immortal liquor poured into our cup enables us to endure its bitterness—wins us in spite of reason to live on, and consoles us for the long, long years of wasted labour and ulcerating disappointment.

SOLITUDE AND SOCIETY.—Solitude is a fearful thing to thoughtful minds. By solitude is not meant the mere absence of human beings. The solitude of the library, the laboratory, and the studio, is peopled by the most delightful of companions—ideas of knowledge, of power, and beauty, which throng upon us thicker than the notes that sparkle in the sunbeam. By solitude is meant that state of loneliness in which, from some cause or other, we are compelled to look within our own bosoms, and reflect. In society there is an artificial stimulus arising, perhaps, from the close contact of mind to mind. A mob, no matter of what class it is composed, is always excitable. The gaiety and petulance of one encourages and inflames the others. Our spirits act and are reacted upon by each other, until they are wound up to a pitch of exhilaration and excitement which they cannot for an instant maintain when alone. The combined joyousness of all is discharged, like the electric spark, though each. We are inspired, we gracefully jest away our heaviest cares; and moralize over our worst misfortunes, with scornful and philosophic mirth.

Without effort or fatigue all our energies are arrayed, and on the alert. Every faculty spontaneously exerts itself to dazzle and delight. The overflowing fulness of our hearts is vented in a thousand obliging speeches. We scatter compliments on every side; we flatter all around, and are repaid with an abundant shower of adulation; until, cheered, elated, and encouraged by the delicious commerce, we almost persuade ourselves that we really are what we appear, and what others believe us to be.

It is in the hour of darkness and solitude that the demon of unquiet thoughts arises, and, overshadowing our souls with his gloomy pinions, whispers despair.

PAIN.—Pain is the animating principle of the creation. We are born in pain. We die in pain. From the cradle to the