

ODDS AND ENDS.

(From Chambers's Journal.)

BOBBY.—It is not wise to do or say anything to a child under an injunction not to tell. Here is a story in point, which was reported to me from the ladies at Fingask, Perthshire (1853). A Highland family of some dignity, but not much means, was to receive a visit from some English relations for the first time. Great was the anxiety and great the efforts to make things wear a respectable appearance before these assumedly fastidious strangers. The lady had contrived to get up a pretty good dinner; but, either from an indulgent disposition, or from some defect in her set of servants, she allowed her son Bobby, a little boy, to be present, instead of remanding him to the nursery. But, little was she aware of Bobby's power of torture.

Bobby, who was dressed in a new jacket and a pair of buff-colored trousers, had previously received strict injunctions to sit at table quietly, and on no account to join in conversation. For a little while he carried out these instructions by sitting perfectly quiet till the last guest had been helped to soup, whereupon, during a slight lull in the general conversation, Bobby quietly said:

'I want some soup, mamma.'

'You can't be allowed to have any soup, Bobby. You must not be always asking for things.'

'If you don't give me the soup immediately, I'll tell you!'

The lady seemed a little troubled, and instead of sending Bobby out of the room, quietly yielded to his demand. Soup being removed, and fish introduced, there was a fresh demand.

'Mamma, I want some sea-fish' (a rarity in the Highlands.)

'Bobby,' said the mother, 'you are very forward. You can't get any fish. You must sit quietly, and not trouble us so much.'

'Well, mamma, if I don't get some fish, mind I'll tell you.'

'O Bobby, you're a plague!' and then she gave him the fish.

A little further on in the dinner, Bobby observing his papa and the guests taking wine, was pleased to break in once more.

'Papa, I would like a glass of wine.'

By this time, as might well be supposed, the attention of the company had been pretty fully drawn to Bobby, about whom, in all probability, there prevailed but one opinion. The father was irritated at the incident.

'Bobby, you must be quiet; you can have no wine.'

'Well, papa, if I don't get some wine, mind—I'll tell you.'

'You rascal, you shall have no wine!'

'You had better do it,' answered Bobby firmly. 'Once, twice—will you give me the wine? Come now, mind I'll tell you. Once, twice—'

The father looked canes and lashes at his progeny, Bobby, however, was not to be daunted. 'Here goes now! Once—twice—will you do it? Once—twice—thrice! My trousers were made out of mother's old window-blinds!'

Stiff English party dissolves in unconstrainable merriment.

Mrs. CHISHOLM (1853).—We have heard much of the extraordinary and disinterested efforts of Mrs. Chisholm to assist poor girls to emigrate and do well in Australia. I understand she never looks for gratitude for her services. She has had the good judgment, as well as good feeling, to dismiss this idea entirely from her mind. She tells some noteworthy facts illustrative of the bribery which goes on in London to get business. A number of provision-merchants, of front rank in character and appearance, have applied to her, offering her large percentages on orders she might procure for them for emigrant vessels. Their surprise at her refusing, and at professions of a different principle of action, is such as to shew how common it is to accept commissions in this way. She once had occasion to call on a poor woman who let lodgings somewhere near the docks, having understood she had a room which might serve as a temporary residence for intending emigrants when detained in waiting upon vessels. The woman asked ten shillings a week for the room, under an impression that she would, as usual in the circumstances, have to allow Mrs. Chisholm two shillings a week for commission. On learning that she would take nothing, the woman gladly let the room at eight shillings a week. [This kind of rapacity agrees with what now often comes under observation. Petty civilities are to be requited by money. People give bribes to get off from juries. Articles of food are adulterated—as, for instance, tea with iron filings. Calico is loaded with white clay, to give it the requisite thickness. Woollen cloth is mixed with shoddy, silk with juté. Rools of thread consist almost entirely of wood, with only a small number of yards of thread deceptively on the surface.]

A NOTABLE JACOBITE.—Oliphant of Gask, a most notable Jacobite, survived Prince Charles, and was inexpressibly mortified when the Scottish episcopal clergy soon after agreed to pray for King George. He had long been unable to attend public worship; but the clergyman was in the habit of coming periodically and saying prayers in the old gentleman's own house. Hearing, however, that this divine had acted in common with the rest, he packed up an old surplice which the parson had always kept there for sacerdotal purposes, and sent it to him, with a request that he would never again come to say prayers at Gask. It happened that George III. took his serious illness soon after the Scottish episcopal clergy began to pray for him. 'Ye see what ye've done,' said an old stickler one day to his

clergyman; 'the honest man has never had a day to do weel, since ever you took him in hand!'

MIGRATORY HOUSES.—Any one who has travelled in the United States will remember seeing houses moved from one place to another, sometimes only across the street, at other times for a considerable distance, through the agency of jack-screws, rollers, and other mechanism. It says little for builders in England that they do not attempt operations of this nature in cases, for example, where streets require widening. I have just seen (1846) an account in a newspaper of New York, of several migrations of buildings in that city. 'We have at the corner of Grand Street and Broadway, a large mansion, formerly the country seat of a resident of this city, that, some years since, stood on a hill in the open country forty feet higher than now. One side of John Street, from Broadway to Nassau Street, has been bodily moved back fifteen feet, without injury to any of the buildings. At the late improvements in William Street, a frame-house was sold, and moved from its locality there into an adjoining street, being the third journey it has made since its first erection! Another church was moved from Murray Street, steeple and all, to Astor Place. The immense block of brick buildings at the east corner of Ann and Nassau Streets, has been bodily raised, and a basement and range of stores built under it. Two houses in Chambers Street have lately had two full floors erected under what was originally the first floor; and several houses in Broadway, near Broome Street, were not only raised two stories, but built up two stories more over the roofs. No day passes in the city or suburbs that houses may not be observed crossing some roads, travelling down others, or taking their journeys backwards or forwards, as the improvement of the locality shall suggest to their enterprising proprietors. Although we should much rather see new buildings taking the places of the old fabrics thus moved, yet we award our full meed of praise to the ingenuity and enterprise exhibited.' [Since the foregoing was written, the extraordinary operation of lifting up bodily blocks of houses in Chicago several feet, in order to raise the town to a proper height above Lake Michigan, has been successfully performed. Now, why can something of this kind not be done in those towns in Great Britain, the situation of which is too low for a proper system of sewage? Ignorance or neglect on this score looks very much like a piece of *Chinism*.]

SUCCESS IN LIFE.—Accidental circumstances, as regards time and place, of course, contribute much to success in life; but it may be laid down as a general rule, that men who seem to be successful have not attained to eminence without intense and continued thought and perseverance. A sticking about hours of work, professedly for the sake of recreation, is obstructive of all success beyond a humble mediocrity. Never was there a truer word uttered than that 'the hand of the diligent maketh rich. In the book, *Physic and Physicians* [issued about 1846], there occur some remarks worth quoting: 'In no department of life do men rise to eminence who have not undergone a long and diligent preparation; for whatever be the difference in the mental powers of individuals, it is the cultivation of the mind alone that leads to distinction. John Hunter was as remarkable for his industry as for his talents, of which his museum alone forms a most extraordinary proof. If we look around and contemplate the history of those men whose talents and acquirements we must esteem, we find that their superiority of knowledge has been the result of great labor and diligence. It is an ill-founded notion to say that merit in the long-run is neglected. It is sometimes joined to circumstances that may have a little influence in counteracting it, as an unfortunate manner and temper; but it generally meets with its due reward. The world are not fools—every person of merit has the best chance of success; and who would be ambitious of public approbation, if it had not the power of discriminating?' [We would qualify the latter remark, 'every person of merit has the best chance,' by observing that it is only where such persons are allowed fair play. If subjected to artificial restrictions, they have no chance at all. When a man, by excelling in any particular craft, gives offence to his fellows, and is punished by contumelious treatment, or by the destruction of his tools, any special success, such as leads to fortune is out of the question.]

ERSKINE OF DUN.—Mr. Erskine of Dun, a Scottish gentleman in a past age, had an old man-servant who took great liberties in virtue of his long and faithful service. He had grown quite gray in the family, and no one thought of taking amiss almost anything he said, though he often spoke very bitter things. At length, getting into an altercation one day with his master, he so far forgot himself as to call Mr. Erskine a leech. 'Well, Gabriel, this cannot be put up with any longer. We must part at last.' 'Hoot, toot, laird; where wad your honor be better than in your ain house?'

VALUE OF ARISTOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.—The extreme gauche politicians who decry our aristocratic institutions are not in all instances aware of the great merits which belong to many of the nobility. The value of an aristocracy lies, as many of us know, not purely in the personal accomplishments and abilities of the men, but to a great degree in the *abloom* of an institution not liable to be blown about by every wind of doctrine, and which forms a sort of court of appeal and redress to soften the hard action of the majority in the more popular parts of the constitution. The principle of hereditary family distinction in connection with property, has, in short, something of the quality of a co-operation which survives amidst national vicissitudes, and which, with constant recruitment, has a steadying effect on the national machine. Yet, as might be expected by a considerate person, who reflected on the great opportunities and advantages of the nobility of England, many of them are highly accomplished men, and men of very considerable powers of business. As a body, the House of Lords usually makes as good an appearance in

the debates as the Lower House. It really is not for nothing that a nobleman has leisure, pecuniary means for study, and a kind of professional reason for fitting his mind to take a part in public affairs. He often does become fitted for the exercise of an influence in such matters. These remarks are suggested (1852) by a casual reference of Mr. Kingston to the late amiable Marquis of Northampton [who died in 1851]. He mentioned that this nobleman was able to converse in four languages, English, French, German, and Italian, and had been known to dictate to secretaries in all the four at one time. He also possessed an extensive acquaintance with science and antiquities, fitting him to be the President of the Royal Society and of the Archaeological Institute. Mr. Kingston referred to a fact of a different kind, but also creditable to the nobility, that the Duchess of Northumberland, wife of the late duke, used to spend ten thousand a year in benevolent objects. Another fact to similar purport—the present Duchess of Sutherland has been in almost every house in her husband's estate in Sutherlandshire, and knows something of the circumstances of the inmates.

GENEROUS DOCTORS' SIGNS.—The following caustic remarks are taken from the *Canadian Journal of Medical Science*:—"We believe it is frequently remarked by strangers visiting Toronto that the doctors' signs are the most extensive and gorgeous now known in the world. It is but a few years since the modest and old-fashioned door plate with 'Mr. Smith, surgeon,' or 'Dr. Jones,' sufficed. Suddenly, however, an enterprising medico exhibited a fan-light, adorned with his name over the door, much to the horror of the numerous conservative members of the profession. This was but the beginning, and they soon became generally used, the patterns and embellishments being numerous and varied. At first simply the name appeared, and perhaps street number; now we have office hours, covering immense spaces, beautifully colored, in some cases; in others a good portion of the alphabet, in capital letters, after the name. Sometimes tin plates adorn various parts of the doctor's abode, being specially profuse about the corners of the house and fence. Enterprise has not, however, stopped here, and we have occasionally added a street lamp, or a huge grey stone slab, fashioned after the model of a modern tomb-stone, and decorated with the doctor's name."

GERMAN DINING CARS.

Another German triumph is the "travelling dinners" in vogue on the line between Cologne and Berlin. Between these two points, a matter of ten hours' journey, the train stops nowhere longer than five minutes. To enable the passengers to refresh themselves en route, therefore, the guard enquires before starting who will dine at Hanover, and when the train arrives at that station waiters deposit trays in the carriages according to the number indicated by slips stuck by the guard on the windows of each compartment. These trays are electroplate, with a velvet support to rest them on the knees, and contain a whole assortment of covered electroplated dishes, fitting into holes to keep them firm during the oscillation of the train. Removing the lids the traveller finds a soup or bouillon in one, a cutlet with peas or beans in another, a fine cut of a joint with two vegetables in a third, and some stewed strawberries in a fourth. Add a pint bottle of white wine, and such conveniences as a napkin and a toothpick, and the usual condiments and bread, and even the stingiest traveller cannot begrudge the half-a-crown which is asked for this neat little entertainment. By the time the train has arrived at Hamm, half an hour distant, the meal is over, and the traveller handing the tray out of the window, throws himself back with satisfaction in the carriage to indulge in an after-dinner nap, while the *Courierzug* rushes on with the same admirable speed as before to its destination.

RAW COAL AS FUEL.

A great amount of waste is involved in the use of raw coal as a fuel, the by-products derived from a given quantity of coal exceeding the value of the coal itself by more than one-half. Wherever smoke is produced, it seems, fuel is being consumed wastefully. The superiority of gas as a fuel is evident from the fact that the combustion of a pound of gas yields twice as much heat as the combustion of a pound of ordinary coal. The effects expected to result from the adoption of the practice of distilling instead of burning coal are intimated by Dr. Siemens in the following striking forecast:—"Before many years have elapsed we shall find in our factories, and on board our ships, engines with a fuel consumption not exceeding one pound of coal per effective horse-power per hour, in which the gas producer takes the place of the somewhat complex and dangerous steam boiler. The advent of such an engine, and of the dynamo machine, must mark a new era of material progress, at least equal to that produced by the introduction of steam power in the early part of our century."

THE SAFEST LINE.—At the half-yearly meeting of the shareholders of the London and North-Western Railway company a statement was made by the chairman which must have been as gratifying to the shareholders as it is re-assuring to the public. One of the gentlemen present complained of the amount that has to be paid annually for compensation to passengers who have sustained injuries on the line. The chairman explained that the company are only paying arrears of compensation, and added that no passengers have been killed on the London and North-Western railway during the past two years and a half, and that only one passenger had been killed during the past three years and a half. And this immunity from accident was secured on one of the greatest railway systems in the kingdom, running many fast trains, and with a heavy local traffic.