

WHO IS THE MAID.

ST. JEROME'S LOVE.

These lines were suggested by the following passage in St. Jerome's reply to some calumnious remarks that had been made concerning his intimacy with the matron Paula, which we translate for the benefit of the unlearned readers of the *Saturday Evening Magazine*.—"And can you think that I was allured by light muslin vestments, by glittering jewels, by an artificial complexion, or by the thirst of gold? The only Roman matron who possessed any influence over my feelings was one whose power lay in sighs and fasting, and the brilliancy of whose eyes is nearly blinded with tears." Santi Hieronymi Epist. *Si tibi putem.*

Who is the maid my spirit seeks,
Through cold reproof and slander's blight?
Has *she* Love's roses on her cheeks?
Is *hers* an eye of this world's light?
No,—wan and sunk with midnight prayer
Are the pale looks of her I love;
Or if, at times, a light be there,
Its beam is kindled from above.

I choose not her, my soul's elect,
From those who seek their Maker's shrine
In gems: 'nd garlands proudly deck'd,
As if themselves were things divine!
No—Heaven but faintly warns the breast
That beats beneath a broider'd veil;
And she who comes in glittering vest
To mourn her frailty, still is frail.

Not so the faded form I prize
And love, because its bloom is gone;
The glory in those sainted eyes
Is all the grace her brow puts on.
And ne'er was Beauty's dawn so bright,
So touchling as that form's decay,
Which, like the altar's trembling light,
In holy lustre wastes away!

THE POSTAGE OF LETTERS.

The postage of letters, now so important a branch of the revenue, was first established in the short reign of Richard the Third. The plan was originally formed in the reign of his brother Edward, when stages were placed at the distance of twenty miles from each other, in order to procure the king the earliest intelligence of the events that passed in the course of the war, which had arisen with the Scots; but Richard commanded in the expedition, and it is, probably, more to his sagacity and talents that the merit of the invention ought to be given. In the reign of the latter the practice was extended over the greater part of the kingdom.

The penny post office was established in 1683. Its original institutor was a Mr. Povey, author of a pamphlet now obsolete and quite forgotten, entitled, "The Virgin of Eden, with the Eternity of Hell Torments." He formed a design of conveying letters, messengers, to different parts of the city and its environs; and for some time he executed this plan with great approbation, and was distinguished by the title of the halpenny carrier. But the then ministry, suspecting it to be too lucrative for a private subject, laid their injunctions on the inventor, and without making him any satisfaction (as is said) laid their hands upon the job.

KILL DEVIL—WHY RUM PUNCH SO CALLED.

Rum punch is not improperly called kill devil, for thousands lose their lives by its means.—*History of Jamaica, 1740.*

Of the ancient doings of Christmas, there is a bountiful imagining, by a modern writer, in the subjoined verses:—

The great King Arthur made a sumptuous feast,
And held his Royal Christmas at Carlisle;
And thither came the vassals, most and least,
From every corner of this British Isle;
And all were entertained, both man and beast,
According to their rank, in proper style;
The steeds were fed and littered in the stable,
The ladies and the knights sat down to table.

The bill of fare (as you may well suppose)
Was suited to those plentiful old times,
Before our modern luxuries arose,
With truffles and ragouts, with various crimes;
And, therefore, from the original in prose
I shall arrange the catalogue in rhymes:
They served up salmon, venison, and wild boars
By hundreds, and by dozens, and by scores.

Hogsheads of honey, kilderkins of mustard,
Muttons, and fatted beeves, and bacon swine;
Herons and bitterns, peacocks, swan and bustard,
Teal, mallard, pigeons, widgeons, and, in fine,
Plum-puddings, pancakes, apple-pies and custard,
And herewithal they drank good Gascon wine,
With mead, and ale, and cider of our own;
For porter, punch, and negus, were not known.

All sorts of people there were seen together,
All sorts of characters, all sorts of dresses;
The fool with fox's tail and peacock's feather,
Pilgrims, and penitents, and grave burgesses;
The country-people, with their coats of leather,
Vintners and victuallers, with caps and messes;
Grooms, archers, varlets, falconers, and yeomen,
Damsels and waiting-maids, and waiting-women.

WHISTLECRAFT.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

JOHN ABERNETHY,

A distinguished surgeon born in the year 1763-4, either at the town of Abernethy in Scotland, or at that of Derry in Ireland, for each claims the honour of having been the place of his birth. He died at Enfield, after a protracted illness, on the 18th of April, 1831, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. In early youth he removed from the place of his birth, and resided with his parents in London. He received the elements of grammatical and classical instruction at a day-school in Lothbury, but it does not appear that he enjoyed the advantage of any higher education than that afforded by the ordinary day-school of that period. At the usual age he was apprenticed to Sir Charles Blicke, surgeon to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, under whom, and especially in the wards of the hospital, he had ample opportunities of acquiring a thorough knowledge of his profession, of which he availed himself with diligence. Competent judges, who observed at this early period the qualities of his mind and his habits of study, predicted that he would one day acquire fame if not fortune. Though he appeared before the public early as an author, and though his very first works stamped him as a man of genius, endowed with a philosophical and original mind, yet he did not rise into reputation nor acquire practice with rapidity. In 1786 he succeeded Mr. Pott as assistant surgeon to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and shortly afterwards took the place of that gentleman as lecturer on anatomy and surgery. For a considerable time he had but few pupils, and he was at first by no means a good lecturer, his delivery being attended with a more than ordinary degree of hesitation. On the death of Sir Charles