

THE BEAR AND VENTRILOQUIST.

A Ventriloquist having arrived at Hopefield, England, and being at the Red Lion, beheld from a window a ludicrous scene. A showman and his bear were in view of his window, and he having formed an opinion of the ignorance and credulity of the inhabitants, resolved to amuse himself at the expense of the showman, left the window, and joining the assemblage of spectators, approached him.

"Your bear can doubtless speak?" said he, in a serious air.

The showman looked at him cunningly, shrugged his shoulders, and answered, roughly,—

"Speak to him yourself, and you'll then find out."

This was just what the ventriloquist expected. He approached Bruin, and assuming a most comical expression, said to the bear, in a droll tone of voice:

"Allow me to compliment you, Mr. Bruin; you are as graceful as an operadancer. What country claims the honor of your birth?"

A voice which seemed to issue from the grisly jaws of the bear, replied:

"The Alps—in Switzerland!"

We will not attempt to describe the amazement of the crowd; every one was struck mute with fear and astonishment, but the amazement of the showman would have offered an admirable subject for the pencil of Hogarth, surrounded by all those faces in which consternation was so strongly depicted. His black, lustrous eyes seemed starting from their sockets; he stretched wide his toothless mouth, and remained aghast and motionless, as if his feet had taken root where he stood.

The ventriloquist turned towards him, and said:

"Your bear speaks very good English, and has very little remaining of the Helvetic accent."

Then turning to Bruin he observed, in a kind tone:

"You look sad; are you not well?"

"The fogs of England has given me the spleen," replied the animal.

Here the affrighted crowd began to move off.

"How long a time have you been with this master?"

"Quite long enough to be tired of him."

"Is he not kind to you, Bruin?"

"Oh, yes! as kind as the hammer to the anvil."

"Will you not seek revenge some day?"

"Assuredly! one of these mornings I will eat him like a radish for my breakfast."

At these words the crowd, whose curiosity had led them, in spite of their fears, gradually once more to approach, now suddenly fell back on each other; and great was the confusion that ensued; the showman had heard enough, and forcibly drew the chain of the animal to enforce his control, but the wearied bear only growled fearfully.

The ventriloquist, perfectly satisfied by the experiment, turned suddenly about and hurried towards the tavern. This augmented still more the fear of the spectators, and each one took to his heels as if the bear was in pursuit of him.—

The ventriloquist laughed heartily to see the effect it had produced, and the poor showman with Bruin was now consulting whether he had not, in future, better give Bruin his freedom, lest the promise he had made in answer to the inquiry of the ventriloquist might prove true at some early hour in the future.

AN HONEST BOY.

"That is right, my boy," said a merchant smiling approvingly upon the bright face of his little shop-boy. He had brought him a dollar that lay among the dust and paper of the sweepings.

"That is right," he said again; "always be honest—it is the best policy."

"Should you say that?" asked the boy timidly.

"Should I say what? that honesty is the best of policy? Why, it is a time-honored old saying—don't know about the elevating tendency of the thing—the spirit is rather narrow, I'll allow."

"So grandmother taught me," replied the boy; "she said we should do right, because God approved it, without thinking what man would say."

The merchant turned abruptly toward the desk, and the thoughtful-faced little lad had resumed his duties.

In the course of the morning a rich and influential citizen called into the store. While conversing, he said, "I have no children of my own, and I fear to adopt one. My experience is, that a

boy of twelve (the age I should prefer) is fixed in his habits, and if they are bad—"

"Stop," said the merchant; "do you see that lad yonder?"

"With that noble brow?—yes, what of him?" "He is remarkable—"

"Yes, yes—that's what everybody tells me who have boys to dispose of—no doubt he'll do well enough before your face. I've tried a good many, and have been deceived more than once."

"I was going to say," replied the merchant calmly; "that he is remarkable for principle. Never did I know him to deviate from the right, sir—never. He would restore a pin—indeed (the merchant continued), he's a little too honest for my employ. He points out flaws on the goods and I can not teach him prudence in that respect. Common prudence, you know, is—common—common prudence—a-hem!"

The stranger made no assent, and the merchant hurried on to say—

"He was a parish orphan—taken by an old woman out of pity, when yet a babe. Poverty has been his lot—no doubt he has suffered from hunger and cold uncounted times—his hands have been frozen, so have his feet. Sir, that boy would have died rather than have been dishonest. I can't account for it, upon my word I can't.

"Have you any claim upon him?"

"Not the least in the world; except what common benevolence offers. Indeed, the boy is entirely too good for me."

"Then I will adopt him: and if I have found really one honest boy, thank God."

This little fellow rode home in a carriage, and was ushered into a luxurious room; and he who sat shivering in a cold corner listening to the words of a poor old pious creature who had been taught of the Spirit, became one of the best and greatest divines that England ever produced.

"Them that honor Me, I will honor."

MRS. PARTINGTON ON MARKETS.—Mrs Partington says she can't understand these market reports. She can understand how cheese can be lively, and pork can be active, and feathers drooping—that is, if it's raining; but how whiskey can be steady, or hops quiet, or spirits dull, she can't see; neither how laid can be firm in warm weather, nor iron unsettled, nor potatoes depressed; nor flour rising—unless there had been yeast in it—and sometimes it wouldn't rise then.