

—these are instances of inconsistency that shock the credulity of the pretended oracles of wisdom: but—that the last breath of Narcissa should expire in sighs for Brussels lace and chintzes, and her dying injunction direct the cheeks of her corpse to be beautified with rouge; or that the fawning courtier should play the sycophant on the awful brink of eternity, with an affected

‘If—where I’m going—I could serve you, Sir,’

is an extravagance, they gravely tell you that not even the licence of poetical hyperbole can excuse.

But, peace, ye cold cautious critics, and suspend your scepticism! Silence, ye philosophic dogmatists, who study the heart of man in the solitude of your musty cells, and then torture stubborn facts to support your systems! Enquire abroad, and learn that there are innumerable instances to countenance the assertion of Warburton, ‘that these stories are all founded in fact;’ nay, to persuade us, they might be even literally true.

It is very well known that the poet Walth, the particular friend of our ethical hard, retained to the last moment his characteristic love of humour; and that having, for one joke, and to entitle her to his fortune, married a young woman on his death-bed, he, for the sake of another, made her promise most solemnly to perform his last injunction; which (when she had bound herself to compliance) he told her, with a smile, was—never to marry an old man again.

There are other anecdotes of this nature, less known, that are equally authenticated.

Frederick William, King of Prussia, (the father of the late Frederick, so generally flattered with the title of *the Great*) was very tyrannically addicted to the ostentation of military pomp, and is known to have piqued himself particularly on a regiment of the tallest men in Europe; which he exhausted every resource of ridiculous tyranny to perpetuate. This attachment, strange and frivolous as it may appear, did not forsake him even in the agonies of death.

Feeling his end approaching, he sent for his son, and, among other things, particularly enjoined him never to let this tall regiment moulder away. Not being satisfied with the answer of the Prince on this topic, with parental anxiety, he ordered his darling giants to be drawn out under arms before the windows of his apartment, and in sight of his couch, that

his last feeble glance might linger on this staking monument of military parade; and his latest thoughts be occupied with the anxious doubt of its perpetuity.

But the fact upon which I shall particularly dwell, relates to the death of a more private character. And as the anecdote is in itself of a very curious nature, and has the recommendation of originality, it may perhaps recompense those, to whom the former incidents are familiar, for the time devoted to perusing this little essay.

Mr. C—rt—r, a gentleman not many years ago of respectable patrimonial estate, in the neighbourhood of Whitney in Oxfordshire, was, in the complete acceptance of the term, a fox hunter. He could boast a kennel of the finest hounds in that part of the country, and was in possession of a stud of mettled couriers, to whom, as to their master, neither hedge nor ditch, nor five barred gate, nor river, nor precipice, had appearance formidable enough to interrupt the sport, or damp the frantic ardour of the pursuit.

In his dress, his manners, and his conversation, the huntsman and the whipper-in were the evident models of his imitation. Over the hilarity of the briskly flowing bowl, in the intercourse of friendship, and even in the endearments of domestic life, the jargon of the chase was never forgotten: in short, throughout the surrounding country, fox hunting C—rt—r was the epithet by which he was universally known and with indisputable propriety distinguished. Even his nearest relations were esteemed in proportion only to their attachment to the chase: those who wished for his affections, had no hope of success, but by leaping into them over a five barred gate; and to be sent to him with a *tantivy* was the inevitable consequence of standing in awe of broken limbs, or a dislocated neck.

It happened, one day, while the heroic votary of Diana was endeavouring to leap a gate of unusual height, that the leg of his favourite hunter caught between the upper bars, and throwing him on the other side, and tumbling with all his weight upon him, crushed and fractured one of his legs in so dreadful a manner, as rendered vain all the healing efforts of surgical skill, and left to the unhappy sufferer only the dreadful alternative of amputation or death.

Mr. C—rt—r was not long deliberating on his choice. Recollecting that he should never be able to keep the saddle at a fox chase with a wooden leg, he swore that he came into the world with two legs, and with two he would go out of it. In this resolution he obstinately persevered; and,