

tail, amidst the fumes of tea and coffee, which were made from kettles of water, boiling on fires in the centre of the room, and drank by the gallon, in little pigeon-hole boxes by the most exalted and distinguished persons in the realm, whose conversation was sufficiently mystified by the music of a particularly bad orchestra to make it safe—but Ranelagh was for years all in all; the carriages have been known to reach from the top of St. James's street in one continuous line to its doors; and within these few years the road now called Ranelagh-street, I believe, was divided down the centre with posts and rails, to keep the "trains" going and returning, on their respective lines.

Ranelagh has vanished from the face of the earth; another ladies' seminary occupies part of its site; a steam-engine puffs forth its noisome smoke, where in other days the sighs of lovers filled the air, and a thing called a dolphin, constructed for the purpose of pumping up pure water from the embouchure of the common sewer of Westminster, rears its head, where formerly a splendid flight of steps invited the anxious guests who preferred visiting the terrestrial paradise by water, to the perils of the crowd of carriages by land.

To Ranelagh succeeded Vauxhall; and odd enough to say, the report which was recently circulated, that Vauxhall was also gone the way of all "public amusements," induced the writing of this paper. The report, the newspapers tell us, is not true; but whether it be or not, Vauxhall has ceased to be what it was, its amusements and the hours at which they are given are varied. The custom of supping at Vauxhall is abandoned, and the class of its visitors altered. Thirty years since it was the resort of the greatest and gayest. The Duchess of Devonshire, the Duchess of Gordon, the Duchess of Bedford, Lady Castlereagh, and all the leaders of fashion collected around them within its glittering ring, crowds, not only of those who belonged to their own immediate set, but of those, who, emulating the gaiety of their dresses, and their grace of manner, thronged the gardens to excess.

The *fetes* which are now given by the nobility "at home," eclipse and supersede altogether the attempts at gaiety and splendor made in public places, which are regulated by an expectation of profit. The private *fete* is an affair of one night—the public garden the continuous business of a season. The moment, therefore, that it becomes the fashion for the aristocracy by turns to give *fetes*, their meeting at any common place of assembly is rendered needless. The people of fashion, therefore, do not go to Vauxhall. With all the vaunted independence of our countrymen and countrywomen, the love of rank, and the desire to be in any way associated with it, is an universal passion. If the people of fashion choose to stay away, so will the people of no fashion; and down goes the whole affair.

SMOKING.

The abstemiousness of which I speak—but which even yet has not obtained entire influence over some circles—is unquestionably attributable to our intercourse with the continent, which continued peace, steamboats, and railroads, render constant and almost continuous. But if the stock of national enjoyment has received an important addition by the association, it must be confessed that the introduction of smoking, as a "public amusement" (a custom also of continental origin), operates as something more than a set-off, *per contra*. A hundred years—smoking having continued from the first introduction of the "weed"—the custom was the "fashion," pipes were the order of the day, and the House of Commons itself would not have been considered a fit receptacle for the "collective wisdom" of the nation without a smoking-room. But all this had worn out; the custom had fallen into desuetude, and the habit was confined exclusively to the lower classes. Continental intercourse has renewed the nuisance in another form, and it has become universal—not confined, as in the days of legitimate pipe-smoking, to taverns, or ale-houses, but generalized in public places, and public conveyances, and even in the public streets and roads.

COFFEE-HOUSES.

Another remarkable alteration in the "amusements" of the metropolis is the almost entire annihilation of taverns and coffee-houses. As an adjunct to an hotel, a coffee-room, for the accommodation of its inmates may yet be generally found; but a tavern coffee-room, for the reception of promiscuous "diners," is indeed a rarity, except in the city, where the appetites of men of business must be satisfied, and where the club system does not prevail to any great extent; but even there the refreshment taken in these refined times, administered in the way of luncheon, the recipients retiring to dinner at their "villas," "lodges," "cottages," and "pavillions."

THE CLUBS.

The spread and increase of clubs are remarkable signs of the times; their uses and advantages are such as to make one wonder not only why such things were not established years ago, but how men about town existed without them. White's, Brookes's, and Boodle's were the clubs of London for very many years. White's being the oldest, and famous as a "chocolate-house" in the time of Hogarth.

The origin of Brookes's was the blackballing of Messrs. Boothby and James at White's—they established it as a rival, and it was at first held at Almack's. Sir Willoughby Aston subsequently originated Boodle's; but these clubs were clubs of amusement, politics, and play, not the matter-of-fact meeting-places of general society, nor offering the extensive and economical advantages of breakfast, dinner, and supper, now afforded by the present race of establishments.

GAMING.

In the Gentleman's Magazine for 1753 (p. 49.) is the following account of the result of this annual performance in that year:—

"Saturday, Jan. 6.—In the evening his Majesty played at hazard for the benefit of the groom-porter; all the royal family who played were winners—particularly the Duke, £3000. The most considerable losers were the Duke of Grafton, the Marquis of Huntingdon, the Earls of Holderness, Ashburnham, and Hertford. Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and Prince Edward, and select company, danced in the little drawing-room till eleven o'clock, when the royal family withdrew."

The custom of hazard-playing was discontinued after the accession of George III.; but it is odd enough upon looking back only eight years, to find the sovereign, after attending divine service with the most solemn ceremony in the morning, doing that in the evening which in these days, subjects men to all sorts of pains and penalties; and for the prohibition and detection of which a bill, now before Parliament, is to arm the police with the power of breaking into the houses of her Majesty's lieges at all hours of the day and night.*

Another change in amusements is observable from the disappearance of cards in general society. Young people seldom or ever play at cards; and as, in the present state of the world, old ones are rarely to be seen, the diversion has become scarce. Cards are played, but then they are played by particular persons for particular purposes; but taking the whole round of society, they cease to form, as they did when accomplishments were more rare, an essential portion of all evening entertainments.

PUGILISM.

Prize fighting, or pugilism, as it is "genteelly" called, has fallen into decay, owing, in a great degree, to the want of confidence in its patrons as regarded their *protéges*. Brutal as this "amusement" seemed, it was always justified by its advocates, on the ground that it kept up the British spirit, which in case of quarrel, brought the contending parties to a manly conflict, in contradistinction to the insidious and assassin-like conduct of nations in which the "fistic art" was neither encouraged nor even known.

COCK-FIGHTING.

Cock-fighting is punishable by law. Bull and bear baiting have also disappeared; but archery and hawking have of late years shown themselves in a state of revivification, equal in wisdom and utility to the active endeavors in progress to restore the ancient Welsh language in the Principality.

ROWING.

Rowing, or as it is classically called, "boating," occupies a very distinguished position amongst the "amusements" of the day. At the beginning of the last century, and up to the middle of it, this "aquatic exercise" was by no means in repute. The stiff skirts and gold-laced waistcoats of the dandies of those days were as ill suited to its enjoyment as their manners and habits were to the associations which it naturally induces. It is one of those recreations, however, which, by uniting exercise with recreation, produces both health and pleasure,—not, however, as we too frequently see, altogether unattended by danger.

*The room in St. James's appropriated to the play was remarkably dark, and conventionally called by the inmates of the palace, Hell. Whence, and not, as generally supposed, from their own demerits, all the gaming-houses in London are designated by the same fearful name. Those who play, or have played English hazard, will recollect that for a similar inconsequent reason, the man who raked up the dice, and called the odds, was called "the groom-porter."—*London New Monthly Magazine for July.*

The pride of Boulogne is an attendant at the baths—a young creature who has spent some years in the coarse employment of a bathing-woman, but whose beauty is so dazzling, that she not only surpasses all her companions, but may vie with the proudest of the court. Her face is a model of Grecian beauty, not a coarse line about it; it is all softness, refinement—and, one may add, dignity. She is called by her friends, the *Venus de la Mer*, from her occupation—and, what is more gratifying to add to the praises of her person, her character is irreproachable, her manners gentle and unassuming, though she has been accustomed to flattery enough to turn a wiser girl's head, and assailed with offers to pervert her principles. Genieve, for that is her proper name, says she is now completely happy, as she has lately been married, after five years' attachment, to a young fisherman of that port. She is twenty, and her husband five-and-twenty; they are admitted to be the finest couple in Boulogne. She still continues her humble duties at the baths, while he takes his turn out to sea—one of the happiest young fishermen in the world.

FURIOUS DRIVING.

At the top of one of the steepest mountain-roads in the west of Ireland, Lord Guillemore stopped the driver of the chaise he was seated in, proclaiming his intention to wait it down rather than proceed in the carriage—the rather as one of the horses, a young, long-tailed chesnut, had given, even on the level road, some very unequivocal signs of hot temper and unsteadiness.

"I'd rather get out here," said the Chief Baron.

"Auan!" said the postillion, purposely turning a deaf ear to what he conceived a slur upon his coachmanship.

"I'll get down—open the door, my man," reiterated his lordship.

"True for ye, it's a fine bit of road, yer honor," said the incorrigible fellow, still pretending to mistake what was said, and all the while approaching slowly and insidiously to the verge of the hill. "Now, hold fast," said the wretch, as he laid the first over one, then over the other of his horses, and set off down the mountain at a most furious pace. The horses both flying out at either side from the pole, and the chaise spinning and bumping through ruts and over stones that every minute threatened annihilation—the long-tailed chesnut contriving, even in his top speed, to show both his hind hoofs very near the Judge's nose as he sat in the chaise, the postillion springing with wonderful agility from one side to the other, to avoid kicks that threatened every instant to smash his skull. Down they went, the pace increasing, the windows broken by the concussion, and one door flung wide open, and increasing by its banging noise the confusion of the scene. The road terminated at the foot of the mountain in a narrow bridge that led off at a very sharp angle from the line; and had here the terrified judge expected as inevitable the fate that he had hitherto by miracle escaped. Down they came, the hot chesnut, now half mad from excitement, springing four and five feet every bound, and dragging along the other horse at the most terrific rate. They reached the bridge—round went the chaise on two wheels, and in a moment more they pulled up in safety at the opposite side, both the horses being driven, collar-up, into a quick-set hedge. Before the Chief Baron had time to speak, the fellow was down mending the harness with a piece of cord, as leisurely as if nothing remarkable had happened.

"Tell me, my fine fellow," said his lordship, "was that chesnut ever in harness before?"

"Never, my lord; but the master says he'd give eight pounds for her if she'd bring your lordship down this bit of Sliev-na-muck, without breaking the chaise, or doing ye any harm."—*Dublin University Magazine.*

THE LAST OF THE MAMELUKES.—The Pacha of Egypt, I believe in 1818, assembled together the whole corps of Mamelukes, as if for a feast; and having secured all egress except a steep and precipitous descent over the sides of the elevation, (the platform of the Citadel) he destroyed them with cannon and musketry.—They came, according to custom, in their richest costume, with arms, and bearing with them their wealth. At a signal given by the pacha, death burst forth on all sides. Crossing and enflaming batteries poured forth their flames and iron, and men and horses were at once weltering in their blood. Many precipitated themselves from the summit of the Citadel and were destroyed in the abyss. Two, however, recovered themselves. At the first shock of the concussion both horses and riders were stunned; they trembled for an instant like equestrian riders, shaken by an earthquake, and then darted off with the rapidity of lightning; they passed the nearest gate, which fortunately was not closed, and found themselves out of Cairo. One of the fugitives took the road to Eli Aziah, the other darted up the mountains; the pursuers divided, one half following each.

It was a fearful thing, that race for life and death! The steeds of the desert, let loose on the mountains, bounded from rock to rock, forded torrents, now along the edges of precipices.—Three times the horse of one Mameluke fell breathless; three times, hearing the tramp of the pursuers, he arose and renewed his flight.—He fell at length not to rise again. His master exhibited a touching instance of reciprocal fidelity; instead of gliding down the rocks into some desile, or gaining a peak inaccessible to cavalry, he seated himself by the side of his courser, threw the bridle over his arm, and waited the arrival of his executioners. They came up, and he fell beneath a score of sabres, without a motion of resistance, a word of complaint, or a prayer for mercy. The other Mameluke, more fortunate than his companion, traversed Eli Aziah, gained the desert, escaped unhurt, and in time, became the Governor of Jerusalem.

HYDRANGEA.—This flower, which is usually of a pink color, may be made to come out a beautiful rich blue, by the simple means of filling the pot or box with the swamp or bog earth. Common garden loam produces the pink.

TO TAKE GREASE OUT OF SILK.—If a little powdered magnesia be applied on the wrong side of the silk, as soon as the spot is discovered, it is a never-failing remedy, the dark spot disappearing as if by magic.