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THE GARLAND.

[*From Blackwood's Magazine for January.*]

THE FIRST GRAY HAIR.

The matron at her mirror, with her hand upon her brow,
Sits gazing on her lovely face—aye lovely even now:
Why doth she lean upon her hand, with such a look of care?
Why stands that tear across her cheek? she sees her first gray hair.

Time from her form hath ta'en away but little of its grace;
His touch of thought hath dignified the beauty of her face.
Yet she might mingle in the dance where maidens gaily trip,
So bright is still her hazel eye, so beautiful her lip.

The faded form is often mark'd by sorrow more than years;
The wrinkle on the cheek may be the course of secret tears;
The mournful lip may murmur of a love it ne'er confest,
And the dimness of the eye betray a heart that cannot rest.

But she hath been a happy wife;—the lover of her youth
May proudly claim the smile that proves the trial of his truth;
A sense of slight—of loneliness—hath never banish'd sleep,
Her life hath been a cloudless one;—then, wherefore doth she weep?

She look'd upon her raven locks;—what thoughts did they recall?
Oh! not of nights when they were deck'd for banquet or for ball;
They brought back thoughts of early youth, ere she had learnt to check,
With artificial wreath, the curls that sported o'er her neck.

She seem'd to feel her mother's hand pass lightly through her hair,
And draw it from her brow, to leave a kiss of kindness there;
She seem'd to view her father's smile, and feel the playful touch,
That sometimes feign'd to steal away the curls she prized so much.

And now she sees her first gray hair, oh! deem it not a crime
For her to weep—when she beholds the first foot mark of Time;
She knows that, one by one, these mute mementos will increase,
And steal youth, beauty, strength away, till life itself shall cease.

'Tis not the tear of vanity for beauty on the wane—
Yet though the blossom may not sigh to bud, and bloom again,
It cannot but remember with a feeling of regret
The Spring forever gone—the Summer sun so nearly set.

Ah, Lady! heed the monitor! thy mirror tells the truth,
Assume the matron's folded veil, resign the wreath of youth;
Go!—bind it on thy daughter's brow, in her thou'lt still look fair,
Twere well would all learn wisdom who behold the first gray hair!

T. HAYNES BAYLY.

THE MISCELLANEY.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF CONVERSATION.

(*From the Liverpool Times.*)

Various are the rules that have been given, at different times, and by divers persons, for carrying on and regulating conversation, but there appears to us to be a grand deficiency in them all. They act indeed as a chart, on which all the rocks and reefs on which you are likely to split are carefully delineated—they point out where you may put out sail and where you must take it in—they give you excellent rules of regulating your course, but do not tell you how your course is to be commenced—they tell you (to change the metaphor,) like Mrs. Glasse's excellent work, that you are first to catch your hare and then to cook it, but they do not show you how you are to catch it, without which the subsequent directions are of very little practical utility. We will venture to say that there is not one of our readers who has not felt at one time or other the embarrassment of the situation which we are now describing, who has not experienced the extreme difficulties of commencing a conversation, and that even under the most interesting circumstances. How many unfortunate young men are there who have been compelled, after having succeeded in seating themselves beside the handsomest woman in company, to keep a stupid and most discreditable silence, from the total impossibility of commencing a conversation, which, when commenced, they could have carried on most eloquently.

Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.

Having been in such a situation more than once ourselves, we have learned to pity those who are equally unfortunate, and shall endeavour to show them how they may escape from this embarrassment.

The first rule then that we would lay down is this,—lose no time in commencing conversation, for the longer you delay the greater will be the difficulty: speak at first or for ever hold your tongue. This is a most important rule. A silence of one minute's duration renders your situation difficult; a silence of five minutes renders it most alarming; and though there have been cases where parties have recovered after animation has been suspended even for a quarter of an hour, yet there are many where a silence of even half that time has been fatal to the pleasure of a whole evening.

We are, however, falling into the same error as the authors to whom we referred at the commencement of our observations, that is, we are telling our readers what to do, but not telling them how to do it. Suppose, then, that you are placed as we have mentioned above—that your manœuvres have been successful—and that you have taken your seat beside some fair lady to whom all the young men in the party are desirous of paying attention. Suddenly, as you are congratulating yourself on your good fortune, and smiling at the disappointment of your friends and rivals, you recollect that you have never been introduced to your fair partner; that you know neither her name nor place of abode—that you are unacquainted with her friends and connexions—and are equally ignorant of her talents, acquirements, tastes and disposition—in such an embarrassment, what is to be done? In such a situation you must either act the part of a man of sense and vigour, or be contented to pass for a blockhead: there is no middle course. The first blow is not merely half the battle, it is much more; but how is that blow to be struck? "That is the question," and a very hard question it is. In such circumstances as these no one is more likely to look absurd than a modest and sensible man, for while he is "cudgelling his brains" for some common place, which, as the author of Truckleborough Hall says, "is not *very* common place," the opportunity for speaking is past. We maintain that the best way is, as soon as ever you have taken your seat, to commence with "Madam, it is a charming day," or "Madam, it rained very hard last night;" to talk about the weather in fact. We know, indeed, that this is as old as the hills, but then it is as true as that the sun shines at noon day, and it is something to be able to commence with a proposition which nobody can deny. It is a safe and modest way of breaking ground. Besides although the plain and obvious meaning of such forms of expression is common-place enough, every one understands that they have a double meaning, and that when you say "What a charming day it is," you really mean "I should wish to have a little conversation with you, madam." Every lady understands this perfectly, and, if she is disposed to talk, follows it up, by some equally sensible observation, which gives the gentleman a fair opportunity of putting in a rejoinder, by which the ice is effectually broken, and all doubt and difficulty removed: after this, good sense and good temper will be sufficient to carry you very agreeably through the evening.

If, however, you should be too modest, or too vain, to commence with such an ordinary observation as this, the difficulties of your situation are greatly increased, and indeed if you allow many moments to elapse it will never do to commence in this manner. If you sit for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, out avouring to hide the awkwardness of your situation by looking wise, and preserving a solemnity of countenance worthy of an undertaker at a funeral, such an observation would be quite ridiculous. After having sat looking like the Mountain in Labour, you must not bring forth a mouse. You must say something tolerably sensible, or you must look very absurd. In such a case, you would do well to consider whether nothing has happened or is likely to happen in the town that will supply you with small talk.

Much, however, of the inconvenience of which we have complained might be avoided, if every one who invites a party would take the trouble to explain to the guests who each individual is that makes his appearance. This might be done privately and in half a dozen words, and it would greatly reduce the number, if not entirely put an end to those parties in which ladies and gentlemen only meet to stare at each other, and go home to wonder how so many stupid people could have been brought together. No party can possibly "work well," where the individuals who compose it are not tolerably well acquainted with each other. Nothing, however, is easier than to form such an acquaintance, if you have two or three circumstances to go to work with, if you only possess a fulcrum on which your lever may move; if this, however, is not supplied, the party will be almost sure to be a failure.

TRIFLES LIGHT AS AIR.

(*From the London Atlas.*)

There is a set of critics and philosophers who have never read any thing but what has appeared within the last ten years, and to whom every mode of expression or turn of thought extending beyond that period has a very odd effect.—They cannot comprehend how people used such out-of-the-way phrases in the time of SHAKSPEARE; the style of ADDISON would not do now—even JUNIUS, they think, would make but a shabby, thread-bare figure in the columns of a modern newspaper—all the riches that the language has acquired in the course of time, all the idiomatic resources arising from study or accident, are utterly discarded—sink underground; and all that is admired by the weak or sought after by the vain, is a thin surface of idle affectation and glossy innovations. Even spelling and pronunciation have undergone such changes within a short time, that POPE and SWIFT require a little modernizing to accommodate them to "ears polite;" and that a blue-stocking belle would be puzzled in reciting DRYDEN's sounding verse with its occasional barbarous old-fashioned accenting, if it were the custom to read DRYDEN aloud in those serene, morning circles. There is no class more liable to set up this narrow, superficial standard, than people of fashion, in their horror of what is vulgar and ignorance of what really is so, they have a jargon of their own, but scout whatever does not fall in with it as Gothic and *outré*; the English phrases handed down from the last age they think come east of Temple-bar, and they perform a sedulous quarantine against them. The Times, having found it so written in some outlandish *depeche* of the Marquis of Wellesley's, chose as a mark of the *haute literature* to spell the word *dispatch* with an *e*, and for a long time he was held as a novice or an affected and obsolete writer who spelt it otherwise. The Globe, with its characteristic good sense and sturdiness of spirit has restored the old English spelling in defiance of scandal. Some persons who were growing jealous that the author of Waverly had eclipsed their favorite luminaries may make themselves easy; he himself is on the wane with those whose opinions ebb and flow with the "inconstant moon" of fashion, and has given way (if Mr. COLBURN's advertisements speak true, "than which what's truer!") to a set of titled non entities. Nothing solid is to go down, or that is likely to last three months; instead of the standing dishes of old English literature we are to take up with the nickacks and whipt-syllabubs of modern taste; are to be occupied with a stream of title-pages, extracts and specimens like passing figures in a *camera obscura*, and are to be puzzled in a mob of new books as in the mob of new faces in what was formerly the narrow part of the Strand.

Never pity people because they are ill used. They only wait the opportunity to use others just as ill. Hate the oppression and prevent the evil if you can; but do not fancy there is any virtue in being oppressed, or any love lost between the parties. The unfortunate are not a jot more amiable than their neighbours, though they give themselves out so, and our pity takes part with those who have disarmed our envy.

It is a curious speculation to take a modern belle, of some accomplished female acquaintance, and conceive what her great-great-grandmother was like, some centuries ago. Who was the Mrs. —— of the year 200! We have some standard of grace and elegance among eastern nations 3000 years ago, because we read accounts of them in history; but we have no more notion of, or faith in, our own ancestors, than if we never had any. We cut the connexion with the Druids and the Heptarchy: and cannot fancy ourselves (by any transformation) inmates of caves and woods, or feeders on acorns and sloes. We seem engrafted on that low stem, a bright, airy and insolent excrescence!

There is this advantage in painting, if there were no other, that it is the truest and most self evident kind of history. (Mr. CROKER said so in the House of Commons; I did not take it from him, but he took it from me.) You there see not only that there were people long ago, but you see what they were, not as in a book darkly, but face to face. It is not the half-formed clay, the old fashioned dress, as we might conceive; but the living lineaments, the breathing expression. You look at a picture by Vandyke, and there see, as in an enchanted mirror, an English woman of quality two hundred years ago, sitting in an unconscious state with her child playing at her feet, and with all the dove-like innocence of look, the grace and refinement that it is possible for virtue and breeding to bestow. It is enough to make us proud of our nature and our countrywomen; and dissipates at once the idle, upstart prejudice that all before our time was sordid and scarce civilized. If our progress does not appear so great as our presumption had suggested, what does it signify? With such models kept in view, our chief object ought to be not to degenerate; and though the future prospect is less gaudy and imposing, the retrospect opens a larger and brighter vista of excellence.

The French Revolution in the Reign of Terror, with ROBESPIERRE at their head, made one grand mistake. They really thought that by getting rid of the patrons and abettors of the ancient regime, they should put an end to the breed of tyrants and slaves: whereas, in order to do this, it would be necessary to put an end to the whole human race.

NOTES OF A RAMBLER, ON ITALY AND SWITZERLAND.

(*From the London Morning Herald.*)

ITALIAN AND FRENCH ROADS.—How superior are the Italian and Swiss roads to those of France, and the posting as well as the roads; except in the matter of eating, too, the preference should be given to the Swiss and Italian Inns. The Swiss Inns are as cleanly and, in all domestic accessaries, as proper as those in England. You are always sure of finding in them excellent tea, and *really boiling water*—an article you cannot have for love, money, menace, or entreaty, in France. Independently of this, too, the waiters are more quick and apprehensive than the French, and, in general better linguists, at least in Switzerland, which the French never are. In Italy, as well as in Switzerland, you are always sure of finding excellent tea; and they have, too, the copper kettle, which those who have so journied in France know so well how to prize; not from the enjoyment, truly, but from the privations which they suffer in this regard, among the mercurial sons of Clovis. Again, you have not the sanded or the washed floor in Italy as in France, but glorious marble, or clean matter-of-fact boards. There is, however, this drawback—the Italian, though a sprightly, a sentimental, a reflective, and excitable animal, is not a cooking animal; and though skilled in *cavalinas* and canzanettes, knows no touch of the minor mysteries of the *casserole—anglice* stew pan. Then, with an ardent temperament, he is blessed with a strong stomach, and gives as much credit to his neighbour on this score as he allows himself. Hence garlic and onions, oil, and the other "rank compounds," of "villanous smells" and the tastes with which the nostrils as well as the palat of the *forestieri* (or stranger) is assaulted. But one who has travelled on the jog-trot high-ways of France, all equally unequal, with a neat English carriage, will forgive the Italians all this for the marvellous perfection of their roads.—There is no road in England to be compared to the highroad from Bryg to Venice; and the roads in Switzerland alone contest the palm. Hear this James McAdam, surveyor and Scot! After all, it is downright sauciness to call the system that of McAdam, for it was known in Italy centuries ago, and was introduced into Ireland about the time McAdam was born, by the late Richard Lovell Edgeworth, father of Miss Edgeworth, who also introduced the telegraph. But, to return—the question is this, whether the palm of civilisation shall be awarded to cookery or roads, and I unhesitatingly give it in the latter.

ITALIAN FARMING.—In Lombardy as well as in Berne and the Pays de Vaud the farming is excellent. Religion, therefore, it is plain, has nothing to do with the matter; for the Lombards are excellent Catholics, and the Bernese and Vaudians as prim Protestants as the Bishop of London himself. I never could myself, see (though it may be very clear) how a belief that the Pope was infallible, should influence the growth of a crop of wheat. In truth, we English have learned all our farming from the Lombards in the good old Catholic times, and I do not know that even in these days of Protestantism we have improved upon the old system. Every thing relating to irrigation, manuring, frequent succession of crops, came across the Alps to "merry England." Even Mr. Cobbet, will agree with me in this, and I would rather have him on my side than a host of others. Talking of Cobbett (as Mathews says) puts me in mind of Indian Corn, and Indian Corn grows in Lombardy in great abundance; but I observe it is invariably sown in a damp, submerged soil, or a soil that can be easily irrigated. Often times, too, I have observed it growing more luxuriantly where there is a stony vein in the ground. I may come to disfavour with him of Botley for what I am about to say, but I cannot help that.

I doubt that Indian Corn will ever come into general use in England; and, from what I have seen of it, I confess I do not wish that it should. The people in Lombardy use it much, but it rather bloats than gives nutriment; and I also believe it generates jaundice. In the neighborhood of Milan the fowl are fed on it. It induces plumpness, no doubt; but then the fowl becomes of a blackish yellow colour, and loses in flavour what it gains in bulk. In fact, it becomes quite dry and stringy, and tastes as differently from a fowl fed in the English fashion as a tough barnacle does from a plump ortolan.

CONGRESS OF VERONA, IN 1822.—Saw the house in which his Grace the Duke of Wellington lodged during this memorable Congress, in a dark narrow street, and for which I think the guide said he paid 45,000 francs during his sojourn. The Duke of Wellington was 45 days exactly at Verona, so that England must have paid at the rate of £40 per day for his Excellency's lodging. Alack and a well a day! All this money went into the pocket of an Italian Count, who found it convenient (like all his caste) to be absent on the occasion, in order that they might pocket foreign gold by the letting of their houses.

VENICE.—There is an interest about Venice, but it is a melancholy interest: one views it with a mournful preciousness, in remembrance of what it was "in the days of other years." It is now mouldering fast into decay; in fact, sinking into the very waters. But that hope which always clings to the unfortunate still hovers round the Venetians, and they again dream of the golden days of commerce and the republic. As it is, nothing can be more lamentable than their condition. Their harbour, which heretofore was filled with vessels from every clime, now contains only a few fishing boats and some 50 or 60 gondolas.

MODERN LITERATURE.

MRS. HEMANS's POETRY.—We have seen too much of the perishable nature of Modern literary fame, to venture to predict to Mrs. Hemans that hers will be immortal, or even of very long duration. Since the beginning of our critical career, we have seen a vast deal of beautiful poetry pass into oblivion, in spite of our feeble efforts to recall or retain it in remembrance. The tuneful quartos of Southey are already little better than lumber;—and the rich melodies of Keats and Shelley,—and the fantastical emphasis of Wordsworth,—and the plebeian pathos of Crabbe, are melting fast from the fields of our vision. The novels of Scott have put out his poetry. Even the splendid strains of Moore are fading into distance and dimness, except where they have been married to immortal music; and the blazing star of Byron himself is receding from its place of pride. We need say nothing of Milman, and Croly, and Atherstone, and Hood, and a legion of others, who, with no ordinary gifts of taste and fancy, have not so properly survived their fame, been excluded by some hard fatality, from what seemed their just inheritance. The two who have the longest withstood this rapid withering of the laurel, and with the least marks of decay on their branches, are Rogers and Campbell; neither of them, it may be remarked, voluminous writers, and both distinguished rather for the fine taste and consummate elegance of their writings, than for that fiery passion, and disdainful vehemence which seemed for a time to be so much more in favor with the public.

If taste and elegance, however, be titles to enduring fame, we might venture securely to promise that rich boon to the author before us; who adds to those great merits a tenderness and loftiness of feeling, and an ethereal purity of sentiment, which could only emanate from the soul of a woman. She must beware of becoming too voluminous; and must not venture again on any thing so long as the 'Forest Sanctuary.' But if the next generation inherits our taste for short poems, we are persuaded it will not readily allow her to be forgotten. For we do not hesitate to say, that she is beyond all comparison, the most touching and accomplished writer of occasional verse that our literature has yet to boast of.—*Edinburgh Review.*

THE SEASONS.—Poets, aided by the general longing of human nature, have given a reputation to the Spring, that it rarely merits. Though this imaginative class of writers have said so much of its balmy airs and odoriferous gales, we find it nearly every where the most reluctant, churlish, and fickle of the four seasons. It is the youth of the year, and like that probationary period of life, most fitted to afford the promise of better things. There is a constant struggle between reality and hope throughout the whole of this slow-moving and treacherous period, which has an unavoidable tendency to deceive. All that is said of its grateful productions is fallacious; for the earth is as little likely to yield a generous tribute without the quickening influence of the summer heats, as man is wont to bring forth commendable fruits without the agency of a higher moral power than any he possesses in virtue of his innate propensities. On the other hand the fall of the year possesses a sweetness, a repose, and a consistency, which may be justly likened to the decline of a well-spent life. It is in all countries, and in every climate, the period when physical and moral causes unite to furnish the richest sources of enjoyment. If the Spring is the time of hope, Autumn is the season of fruition. There is just enough of change to give zest to the current of existence, while there is too little of vicissitude to be pregnant of disappointment. Succeeding to the nakedness of winter, the Spring is grateful by comparison; while the glories of Autumn are enjoyed, after the genial powers of Summer have been lavishly expended.

In obedience to this great law of the earth, let poets sing and fancy as they may, the Spring and Autumn of America partake largely of the universally distinctive characters of the rival Seasons.—[*From Mr. Cooper's Novel "Wept of Wish-ton-Wish."*

THE STEAM ENGINE.—The following animated description of the powers of the steam engine is from the pen of Dr. Arnolt, in his work on the elements of physics:—"In the present perfect state of the steam engine, it appears a thing almost endowed with intelligence. It regulates with perfect accuracy and uniformity the number of its strokes in a given time, and counts or records them, moreover, to tell how much work it has done, as a clock records the beats of its pendulum; regulates the quantity of steam admitted to work—the briskness of the fire—the supply of coals to the fire. It opens and shuts its valves with absolute precision as to the time and manner; it oils its joints, it takes out any air which may accidentally enter into parts that should be vacuous; and when any thing goes wrong which it cannot of itself rectify, its warns it attendant by ringing a bell!—Yet with all these talents and qualities, and even when possessing the power of 600 horses, it is obedient to the hand of a child. Its aliment is coal, wood, charcoal, or other combustibles; it consumes none while idle—it never tires, and wants no sleep—it is not subject to malady when originally well made, and only refuses to work when worn out with age. It is equally active in all climates, and will do work of any kind;—it is a water-pumper, a miner, a sailor, a printer, a cotton spinner, a weaver, a blacksmith, a miller, &c. and a small engine, in the character of a steam-pony, may be seen dragging after it on a railroad a hundred tons of merchandize, or a regiment of soldiers with greater speed than that of our fleetest coaches. It is the king of machines, and a permanent realization of the genii of eastern fable, whose supernatural powers were occasionally at the command of man."

THE SNAKE.—All the snake tribe, innocuous and pernicious, seem to be viewed with horror and aversion by mankind. This horror, from the knowledge of their power of inflicting harm in countries where such kinds are found, is natural, and often preservative of life; but the aversion generally felt, and that shuddering occasionally uttered at the sight of our harmless snake, is, like a deep-rooted principle. We imbibe in infancy and long retain in remembrance the impression of injuries from the wiles of the serpent; and the "enmity between it and the seed of the woman" appears still in full operation, and is possibly more extensively and insensibly diffused among mankind than we are aware of. The harmless nature of our snake seems to be fully known to the little birds of the hedge, as they in no way give intimation of its presence by any warning of avoidance to their young, or that insulting vociferation so observable when any really injurious creature is perceived, but hop and sport about the basking snake without fear or notice. All the human race seem to have inherited the original anathema against this creature; for though the capricious cruelty of man is very frequently exerted to the injury of many that his power enables him to tyrannize over, yet the serpent appears to be a peculiar object of his enmity, as if it was understood to be an absolute duty to 'bruise his head,' whenever the opportunity should be afforded.—*Journal of a Naturalist.*

REAL DESCENDENTS OF THE "OLD SERPENT."—At a place called "Pond Hollow Woods," in the township of Oysterbay, (L. I.) two boys a few days since, while searching for rabbits, observed a couple of black snakes making their escape from them by crawling under the decayed stump of a tree. Curiosity, and the inherent hatred to the serpent kind, induced them to remove the stump, when lo! what should meet their astonished eyes but a full assembly of snakes, with "crests erected, and forked tongues displayed." No less than *one hundred and thirty black snakes* were dragged "nolens volens," from their snug winter quarters, and forthwith executed, without judge or jury: the mark of the beast found upon their scaly sides being considered a sufficient warrant. Numbers of them measured six feet in length.—*New-York paper.*

UNLUCKY TEXT.—Poor Dr. Sheridan, in an unguarded moment, but in as guiltless a spirit as characterized the Vicar of Wakefield, chose for his text, upon the anniversary of the succession of the House of Hanover, "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Although the sermon did not contain a single political allusion that could have caused uneasiness, or should have given offence, yet it was recorded in judgment against him, and obstructed his preferment ever after.—*Southey's Colloquies.*

The juice of an onion is said to be an instantaneous cure for the sting of a wasp.