

THE PHILOLOGY OF SLANG.

DRAMATIC GOSSIP.

THE LITERARY WORLD.

There is a whole sarcastic homily implied in calling a finger-post by the way-side a "parson," in that he showeth other men the way they should go, but goeth not himself. Slang is hard on the parson in various ways. He is known as a "devil-driver" or "devil-scollder," otherwise as the "ungrateful man" inasmuch as once a week, at least, he abuses his best benefactor, the Devil. The record of time-honoured jests preserved in slang dictionaries must sometimes interfere with good stories of more modern date. Thus with the following famous passage in Carlyle's "Life of Sterling"—"I have heard one trait of Sterling's eloquence, which survived on the wings of grinning rumour, and had evidently borne upon Church Conservatism in some form: 'Have they not?'—or, perhaps it was, 'Has she (the Church) not?'—a black dragoon in every parish, on good pay and rations, horse-meat and man's-meat, to patrol and battle for these things?" Very likely, as Carlyle says, the "black dragoon" naturally at the moment ruffled the general young imagination into stormy laughter; but the joke was somewhat elderly, for in "Grose's Dictionary," long before Sterling was born, "a review of the 'black cuirassiers'" is set down as slang for a visitation of the clergy. The same classical authority (its date is 1785) sets down "Turkey merchant" as slang for a poulterer. I must leave it to more precise antiquaries to settle the question whether the story can be true that Horne Tooke (who was born in 1736) made this joke for the first time when he went to school, and the Eton boys asked him the awful social question, "What's your father?" It used to be a common habit of etymologists, when a word was troublesome, to alter it a little, so as to put sense into it—to do, in fact, with scientific pretension just what we have noticed the costermongers doing for colloquial purposes. One of those clever scholars (the great mistake of philologists lies in being too clever) was puzzled that a "Welsh rabbit" should mean a piece of toasted cheese, so he decided that it must be a corruption of "Welsh rare-bit." The public believed him, and took to spelling it accordingly, so that even now the best edition of "Webster's Dictionary" (Bell & Daldy's) gives it as "properly Welsh rare-bit." Now, the whole of this is stuff and nonsense; the very name "rare bit" is a fiction, and "Welsh rabbit" is a genuine slang term, belonging to a large group which describe in the same humorous way the special dish or product or peculiarity of a particular district. For examples: an "Essex stile" is a ditch, and an "Essex lion" a calf; a "Field-lane duck" is a baked sheep's head; "Glasgow magistrates" or "Gourock hams," or "Norfolk capons," are red herrings; "Irish apricots" or "Munster plums" are potatoes; "Gravesend sweetmeats" are shrimps; and a "Jerusalem pony" is a donkey. Puns produce odd new terms, as when the old hangman's machinery of cart and ladder was superseded by the "drop," and the appreciating crowd spoke of its being "autumn" with the criminal, meaning the "fall of the leaf;" or, to take a pleasanter instance, when a vamped-up old shoe came to be called in France a *dix-huit*, as being *dix fois neuf*. The slang-dealer likes wrapping up his meaning in a joke for his customer to unwrap, generally finding something unpleasant inside. You want your money back from him, and he offers a "draught" on Aldgate pump; you confess yourself a fool for trusting him, and he blandly recommends you to go to Battersea (famous for its herb-gardens) to have your "simples" cut. Puns on names of places are a class by themselves. To be off to "Bedfordshire" or to the "Scilly" Isles requires no explanation; a "Greenlander" is a novice, and to have a holiday at "Peckham" is to go without your dinner. Just so in France, *aller à Versailles* is to be upset, a dunce has *fait son cours à Asnières*; and it is a recognised hint of sending a man about his business, to promise him a prebend in the Abbey of *Vatan*.

THE HABITS OF BEES AND WASPS.

At a recent meeting of the Linnean Society, Sir John Lubbock, M.P.F.R.S., read a paper on the habits of bees and wasps, more especially on their power of communicating information to one another. Although Kirby and Spence have given an interesting collection of anecdotes about the instinct of insects, they refer to no experiments as authorities for the correctness of their statements. Sir John Lubbock has made a long series of patient observations on bees and wasps about his own grounds and in his own study. He marked a number of insects, with different coloured paints, selecting the moment when they were most intently feeding for this operation. By giving up whole days to his observations, and keeping a systematic record of the egress and ingress of his marked bees to and from the hive, and the time each spent on the honey he had placed for them, he has been enabled to collect a vast number of facts about the daily life of each bee, on which interesting generalisations can be based. On an average a bee will make five excursions in the hour from its hive in search of honey. There seems no reason to believe, as has been formerly supposed, that bees have the power of communicating to one another intelligence as to the locality of food; and indeed, they seem to have so little intelligence in finding their way about, that when bees visited a supply of honey put in a fresh place they often did not revisit it. When once they became familiarised with a spot where honey was placed they visited it with great regularity. Many popular ideas about bees are, Sir John believes, without any foundation. The sounding of frying-pans and fire-irons at the time of swarming is probably based only on superstition, for there is no proof bees can hear. Sounds from violins, tuning-forks, &c., failed to produce any effects. They distinguish colour, as this experiment shows. A number of different coloured pieces of glass were "baited" with honey, and at each return from the hive the bees selected the glass it had visited before, though their relative position were often changed. They seem to have but little cunning in finding their way about, and a bee placed in a glass ball 18 inches long, with the mouth 3½ inches wide, tried for more than an hour to get out at the closed end, because that was turned towards the light, without ever attempting to escape by the open end. A number of most interesting details were recorded and Sir John hopes to continue his observations during the coming summer. If his example is followed by other apiarists, we shall soon have well-established facts supplying the place of vague traditions about the social hymenoptera.

Mr. Dion Boucicault has arrived in England from the United States.

Dumas is writing a drama for the Odéon, to be called "The Taking of Jerusalem by Titus."

Signor Arditì has been persuaded to accept the direction of the opera establishment at Reggio for a short period.

Gille et Guillotin, a one-act opera by M. Ambroise Thomas, has been successfully produced at the Paris Opéra Comique.

Madame Schneider has purchased a splendid mansion in the Avenue Ulrich, in Paris, on the road to the Bois de Boulogne.

A vocal phenomenon has recently appeared in Vienna—a tenor who from some eccentric formation of the larynx can sing two notes at once.

Herr Kuhe, the pianist, has been appointed grand organist of the United Grand Lodge of the Freemasons of England by the Marquis of Ripon, Grand Master.

Madame Annette Essipoff, a young Russian pianist, of whose praises the German musical papers have lately been full, has made her first appearance in England.

Mr. Brinley Richards, recently delivered a lecture on "The National Music of Wales," before the members of the Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts.

Sir Julius Benedict is to be asked to write a new symphony, and M. Gounod a cantata, specially for the Liverpool Festival, which is to commence on September 28th.

Dr. Von Bulow, who is at present at Warsaw, is ill. The *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, the authority for the statement, gives no particulars as to the nature of the malady.

Signor Campanini has arrived in England from New York; he has left numerous admirers on this side of the Atlantic. At one of his benefits, the enormous sum of \$6,000 was realized.

The death of the well-known tenor singer, Signor Mongini, is announced as having taken place suddenly at Milan, shortly after his return from Cairo, where he had been singing with great success.

Mlle. Sangalli, the dancer, has achieved another success at Vienna, in the ballet of "Sardanapale," by Taglioni. The Empress, during the performance, sent her a present of a magnificent diamond bracelet.

FAME.—The *Sheboygan Herald* states: "Many of our citizens attended the Italian opera at Milwaukee on Monday evening. A lady named Nilsson sang on that occasion and is said to have done quite well."

According to the Vienna papers, a tenor singer has recently presented himself to the physicians of that city, who by means of some normal formation of the vocal organs is able to sing two notes at once. The opera managers will have to double his salary!

The Birmingham Amateur Harmonic Association announces a concert in the autumn, at which "The Woman of Samaria" will be conducted by the composer in person, "it probably being" (it is said) "the last appearance of Sir Sterndale Bennett in public."

Intelligence has been received of the death of Priston, the actor, aged forty-six. After having passed two months in Egypt, applauded by the public, he was preparing to return to France, when he received, in the Place Ibrahim Pacha, at Alexandria, a sunstroke.

"Fair France," a play recently produced at the Queen's Theatre, London, was so very bad that the audience called the author, a Mr. West Digges, before the curtain. Deceived by the presumed sound of approval, West Digges appeared only to be met with a storm of catcalls, hisses, and ironical howls.

The petition of Mrs. Isabella Dallas, known to the playing public as Miss Glyn, praying for a dissolution of her marriage on the ground of desertion and adultery committed by her husband, Mr. Æneas Sweetland Dallas, has come before the Court of Divorce, and a decree nisi, with costs, was granted by Sir James Hannen.

King Victor Emmanuel, on the occasion of the reproduction of "Aida," at the San Carlo Theatre, Naples, sent a rich bracelet in diamonds and turquoises to Mlle. Krauss, who immediately came, in her stage costume, to thank His Majesty in his box. The King told her that he deeply regretted the departure of a singer who could not be replaced.

M. Charles Lecocq, the author of the well-known opéra-bouffe, "La Fille du Mademoiselle Angot," as also of "Giroflé-Girofla," was born in 1834. His father was an employé at the Tribunal de Commerce. At a very early age, Lecocq showed an extraordinary taste for music, and when he was three years old his favourite toy was the flageolet, upon which, without knowing one note of music, he played the popular airs of the period.

Liszt has done it at last—given his whole collection of curiosities works of art, etc., valued at 400,000 florins, to the Hungarian nation. Among the curiosities are Beethoven's American piano, Haydn's and Mozart's harpsichords, and a number of decorations and other articles presented to Liszt by his admirers. The Hungarian nation will be pleased to gaze upon these historical but somewhat rickety old instruments and regalia. It is good to do so.

One of the critic Chorley's last freaks was during some charades at Dickens's home at Gad's Hill. It was at Christmas-tide, and Dickens proposed a dumb pantomime, with Chorley to play the piano. When the evening arrived Chorley "came down dressed in the queerest way, and sat down to the piano in a meek and unobtrusive manner, being a poor old musician and very shy, and very shabby, and very hungry and wretched-looking altogether. He played his part admirably the whole evening, and his get-up was excellent. A great many of the audience did not know him at first."

A correspondent says: "If Patti spends many more as profitable winters as she has the past in St. Petersburg, she, too, can found a museum. Her presents are said to represent a fabulous sum, and her jewelry case contains gifts from all the potentates in Europe. The sum she received in money for her past engagement in St. Petersburg was 280,000 francs, and she is to receive for her next tour in the United States 1,000,000 francs for one hundred evenings. Patti's leading taste seems to be for fine dresses, which she orders from Worth in Paris, by the dozens. Before they are sent to her she permits the autocrat of fashion to have what he calls a Patti exposition. There the entire wardrobe is laid out to be admired by the fashionable world of Paris."

Miss C. Rossetti will bring out, a little before Christmas next, a new volume of tales.

The first number of a new English monthly magazine called *Marble Arch* has been issued.

Mr. Gladstone has contributed to the *Contemporary Review* "The Reply of Achilles to the Essays of Agamemnon."

Another Egyptian romance of an amatory nature has just been discovered by M. Chabas among the Papyri at Turin.

"A Life of David Friedrich Strauss," by Professor Zeller, his friend from early youth to his death, is announced as nearly ready.

Mr. Gardner, of Paisley, announces the complete poetical works of Robert Tannahill, with topographical and biographical notes.

A literary fête is being organised in the department of Vaucluse, for the celebration of the fifth centenary of the poet Petrarch, who died on July 18, 1374.

An edition has lately been published, at Bombay, of an important work for the study of the Prakrit dialects, viz., the grammatical aphorisms on the Prakrits by Hemachandra.

The unprinted part of "Pepys's Diary" is being deciphered away by Mr. Mynore Bright, and it contains several very interesting passages relating to the theatres of the old gossip's time.

M. Brugsch has just discovered, inscribed upon a wall at Karnak, a list of upwards of two thousand Egyptian towns and cities. This very important contribution to the geography of Egypt will shortly be published.

Dr. Anton Bachmaier, secretary of the Munich Anthropological Society, has devised an ingenious and practical method of placing all nations in written communication with each other by means of a system of numbers, to which he has given the name "Passigraphy."

Owing to the insufficiency of funds for the endowment of a professorship of the Celtic language in the University of Edinburgh, it is probable that a lectureship will be instituted in its stead, and three gentlemen have been named as having strong claims to the appointment.

"Prince Florestan," who has been supposed by various journals to be Mr. Matthew Arnold, Lord Pembroke, Lord Montague, Mr. Colvin, Mr. Leslie Stephen, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. G. O. Trevelyan, and several other persons, is in reality Sir Charles Dilke, who, it will be remembered, is sharply satirized in the work.

Mr. J. M. Bellow's friends have formed themselves into a committee for the purpose of making an appeal to the public on his behalf, as he suddenly finds himself struck down by illness, and incapacitated from work. Among the names are those of Mr. Wilkie Collins, Mr. Serjeant Parry, Mr. J. B. Monckton, Town Clerk to the City of London; Mr. G. A. Sala, Mr. Henry Irving, Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A.; and Mr. Edmund Yates. Mr. Wilkie Collins and Mr. Sala will give readings from their published works for the benefit of the fund, and there will be probably a theatrical performance.

Senator Sumner's library, which has recently been placed in Harvard College Library, consists of only about 2,000 volumes. Among the most valuable of these are: A copy of "Claudianus," with autograph of the poet Gray; Walter Scott's own manuscripts of a work on the drama; a fragment of the "Biblia Latina," printed by Faust in 1462; "Oleoro de Officiis," in manuscript of the fifteenth century; Burns's "Scots wha hae," in the author's handwriting; a Dutch manuscript, bound with carved ivory sides, and set with precious stones; "Pindar," with manuscript notes by Milton; a book of autographs, containing Milton's; manuscript notes on "Seneca," by Hugo Grotius; first book of Thomson's "Seasons," with author's autograph; Ben Jonson's autograph on title page of a little book, thus, "Sum Ben Jonson"; "Gellius," with notes by Melancthon; "The Club," with autographs of Pope and Swift on title-page; John Dryden's "Greek Exercise Book," with autobiography; John Bunyan's English Bible, with his autograph; letters of Napoleon to Josephine, with Napoleon's autograph; Haydn's opera of "Armida,"—manuscript by the author; "Ossian's Poems," with Byron's autograph; monastic manuscript, with chain and ring attached; and many other rare and valuable works.

Edmond About's career has been one of constant ups and downs since his eminence as a writer. While his fame has steadily grown, he has made and lost fortunes, and is believed at the present time to have few resources besides his magic pen, principally owing to the blindness with which he has persisted in mistaking his vocation, and has striven to excel in spheres from which his genius should shrink, while he has neglected that field for which he is eminently destined—the novel. To this very day, notwithstanding his incessant failures as such, About believes that he is the newspaper writer of France *par excellence*, and he cannot account for the unpopularity of the journals whose leading writer he has been. He devotes most of his time to the composition of editorials or magazine articles on political topics, and only in his leisure hours throws off every now and then one of those sparkling and often thrilling novelettes, which are the delight of the most cultivated readers of French literature—most of them gems of French belles-lettres, which, as soon as they appeared in About's own country, have been translated into every language of Europe; and yet those whose admiration they excited by their pathos, their brilliant humour, their lucidity of style, have hardly an idea of the incredibly short space of time in which they were written.

Appleton's Journal may safely rank as one of the highest purely American periodicals. The literary cast of the letter is of the choicest, and the translated sketches from the French, German and Italian are a very noticeable feature. The illustrations are remarkable for their finish. Bound volumes of "Appleton's" must form a valuable addition to the library of any person who has refined literary taste.

Expensive, however, as is law in this country—"open to rich and poor alike," said Sydney Smith, "like the London tavern,"—it is not so costly as attire in the neighbourhood of Cape Coast Castle. "The most expensively dressed man I ever saw," writes a sailor correspondent, "was an African chief. His wives had anointed him with palm-oil, and then powdered him from head to foot with gold-dust."