

FOR THE CASKET.
EPISTOLARY EASE.

The spirit and beauty of epistolary composition is defined in one short word—*Candor*—which is as indispensable to an easy, agreeable style, as agility is to graceful dancing. Many persons, on sitting down to address a friend, have such a high sense of decorum, that they hobble along like a monkey in boots. We have a prominent instance, of this class, in an old school fellow, who has always been a punctual correspondent. The postage on his letters has cost us enough to purchase ten new friends; and we intend soon to have them bound in a gilded quarto, and deposited among the curiosities of Peale's Museum. On comparing 48 of these epistles, whose dates were comprised between two bissextiles, we find such a sameness, that we cannot pardon our remissness in not having abridged the writer's labor, by throwing the heads of one into type, and forwarding him forty or fifty impressions, about as full as a blank indenture. The form begins thus: "Dear Friend—I take my pen in hand, to inform you that I enjoy good health, and hope these lines will find you participating the same"—and ends—

"My pen is poor, my ink is pale;
My love to you shall never fail."

Excuse the rest. But, "In love's the cat catches no mice"—away with your letter books, and hackneyed formulas. We want the letters of our friend, to afford a graphic picture of their temperament and circumstances at the moment of writing.

About 11 o'clock, on the last night of St. Andrew's, we popped into the closet of a jovial young friend who had just returned from the Saint's festival, and sat down to answer a family letter—i.e.—an epistle in which each member of his father's family had addressed him a few lines. A sheet which he had just written over was submitted to our perusal while he went on to address the whole progeny, and we were so amused with the matter and manner, that nothing short of a specimen for our Casket would pacify us, and he consented to the following extract:

"DEAR PARENTS—(And here I must pause while you both wipe your spectacles—the scone of "Welcome Lafayette," and blend a pinch of Riel's best with your olfactory inspirations—and then go on)—I shall first proceed to answer mother's letter, as well as may be. You complain that "a long time has elapsed without enabling you to hear whether I were dead or alive." Well, fond Mother, I can give you a reason for not hearing from me, which will not be doubted, and that is in

explain the feelings of parents," &c. Well, I rolled this on my tongue with as much uneasiness as our district pedagogic, Master R—son, did the hot potatoe, though it did not burn much. "Experience!" I reiterated—"Experience!"—no, by all the stars of my horoscope; it will be a long time before I experience this." So you see I could not get the lesson in this way. Just then it occurred to me, (being secluded in a private apartment,) that I might come at a parent's feelings by the force of *Imagination*. So I drew my phiz into a sorry, lengthened expression, gave my legs an air of rigidity, and tottered away to an old elbow chair standing in a dark corner of the room, where I gravely reclined, fancying myself a little younger than Methuselah, with about as many descendants as Adam, and these scattered here, there, and every where, "on the world's wide stage." I imagined myself seated by the side of my Eve, a blind, toothless old woman, who was bitterly deploring the unknown fate of a sort of faithless son, who was somewhere, and would not write to us. But what finally spoiled the picture, was that we had a numerous posterity of grand-children, to whom my old wife was particularly partial: and she happened to have one of these in charge when we sat down. An just as we were discussing the fortunes of this son and that son, and such and such a daughter—the squalling bantling who was lying in the same old cradle that had been continually rocking something for more than forty years—yes; which had rocked so much, that the very approach of a child would put it in a motion which nothing but wrenching the babe from beneath its canopy could stop—the little urchin awoke at this instant, with such annoying cries, that I sprang involuntarily from the old chair, at the same time exclaiming—"Experience! Experience!—I want no such experience as this." So after all, I failed to sympathize in your feelings either by experience or imagination. You say, "when I get your letter poor as it is, I must say to myself, 'this is from mother, and I must answer soon.'" Well, after reading it several times over, says I to myself, "this is from mother, and I must answer it soon—this is from mother, and I must answer it soon." And I repeated the sentence so often, that like the old cradle, my tongue acquired a kind of instinctive motion; and it might probably have continued the repetition if I should have returned to old G—ville and answered your letter verbally. But at a sumptuous dinner, this evening, from whence I am just returned, I met with one of mother's favorite dishes, which gave

lections of home—so there was no possibility of procrastinating any longer. And now, indulgent Parents, stop a little for breath, and calculate the double postage you pay for such nonsense.

MISCELLANY.

"Various that the mind of desultory man,
Studios of change and pleas'd with novelty,
May be indulg'd."

ANECDOTE OF GAMBLING.—Tho' I never in my life won or lost five pounds at play, I was a frequent visitor at Frascati. I went as a looker-on, and, to confess the truth, for the purpose of indulging in the excitement occasioned by watching the various changes of the game, and their effects upon those who were more seriously interested in them. To a mere observer this excitement is intense: to the player, deeply involved, it must be fearful. I remember a very old gentleman who was daily carried by his ser-