

"WIT CATCHES OF WIT, AS FIRE OF FIRE."

SMART AND PITHY SAYINGS OF WITTY MEN.

"*Wit is one of the few things which has been rewarded more often than it has been defined. A certain bishop said to his chaplain—'What is wit?' The chaplain replied—'The Rectory of B— is vacant; give it to me, and that will be wit.' 'Prove it,' said his lordship, 'and you shall have it.' It would be a good thing well applied,' rejoined the chaplain.*"—COLTON.

The inimitable actor and mimic, **FOOTE**, dining at the house of Mrs. Thrale, found nothing to his liking, and sat in expectation of something better coming up. A neck of mutton being the last thing, he refused it, as he had the other dishes. As the servant was taking it away, however, understanding that there was nothing more, he called out to the fellow, "Hollo, master, bring that back again; I now find it is neck or nothing!"

The grandfather of the great musical composer, **Mendelssohn**, was, when a youth, clerk to a very rich but exceedingly commonplace, in fact, stupid employer. One day an acquaintance commiserated the clever lad on his position, saying, "What a pity it is that you are not the master, and he your clerk!"—"Oh, my friend," returned Mendelssohn, "do not say that. If he were my clerk, what on earth could I do with him?"

The late **N. P. WILLIS**, when once asked to make a speech, replied that it was not his forte. Said he, "I am by profession a writer, and you cannot expect a pump to give water from the handle as well as from the mouth."

A diplomatist, blessed with a larger amount of curiosity than discretion, was one day discussing politics with **TALLEYRAND**, when Napoleon I. came upon the *tapis*. "Can you explain to me," suddenly exclaimed the diplomatist, "what it was that induced him to undertake the Russian campaign?" "My dear sir," replied Talleyrand, with his habitual stolidity of countenance, "simply a mania for travelling!"

In one of **VOLTAIRE**'s cynical romances, a widow in the depth of her disconsolateness vows that never, "as long as the river flows by the side of the hill," will she marry again. Time passes; the widow, less disconsolate, consults an engineer; and at last, means having been found for diverting the river's course, she allows herself to be consoled.

During the time that the late **SIR ROBERT PEEL** was Premier, Lady Jane Peel was in the habit of pasting on a screen all the articles which appeared in the newspapers opposed to him. "There is nothing very singular in that," remarked Peel; "it is but the duty of every good wife to screen her husband's faults."

The sister of Lord Hailes, **Miss DALRYMPLE**, was a dwarfish and deformed figure, while amiable and judicious above the average of her sex. Taking into view her beautiful place of residence and her large wealth, she remarked to a friend one day, "I can say for the honour of man that I never got an offer in my life."

The Irish orator, **EDMUND BURKE**, was telling Garrick one day that all bitter things were hot. "Indeed," said Garrick, "what do you think, Mr. Burke, of bitter cold weather?"

After **POPE** had written some bitter verses on Lady M. W. Montague, he told a friend of his that he should soon have ample revenge upon her, for that he had set her down in black and white, and should soon publish what he had written. "Be so good as to tell the little gentleman," was the reply, "that I am not at all afraid of him; for if he sets me down in black and white, as he calls it, most assuredly I will have him set down in black and blue."

The following laconic letter was written by **ADMIRAL BLAKE** to the Admiralty:—"Please your honours and glory, yesterday met the French fleet, beat, killed, took, sunk, and burned, as per margin.—Yours, &c."

The **REV. ROBERT HALL**, disgusted by the egotism and conceit of a preacher, who, with a mixture of self-complacency and impudence, challenged his admiration of a sermon, was provoked to say, "Yes, there was one very fine passage of your discourse, sir."—"I am rejoiced to hear you say so—which was it?"—"Why, sir, it was the passage from the pulpit into the vestry."

Remarking upon a couple of talkers **SYDNEY SMITH** said—"There is the same difference between their tongues as between the hour and the minute hand; one goes ten times as fast, and the other signifies ten times as much."

In a speech, on one occasion, **CANON STOWELL** said that, when catechising his school-children, he asked the meaning of "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." For a time there was a pause, when at last the plaintive voice of a poor pale boy replied, "Licking them so as to make them angry."

The witty **SHERIDAN** was once taken ill in consequence of a fortnight's continued dining out and dissipation. He sent for a celebrated doctor, who prescribed rigid abstinence, and calling again soon afterwards asked his patient if he was attending to that advice? The answer being in the affirmative—"Right," said the doctor, "'tis the only way to secure you length of days."—"I do not doubt it," said Sheridan, "for these last three days since I began have been the longest to me in my life."

A friend, in conversation with **ROGERS**, (the poet,) said, "I never put my razor in hot water, as I find it injures the temper of the blade."—"No doubt of it," said the poet; "show me the blade that would not be out of temper, if plunged into hot water."

The Cardinal de Richelieu, when increasing every day in power, met, coming down the steps of the Louvre, the **DUKE D'ESPERON**, who had formerly been the principal favourite of the king. "What news above there, my lord duke?" asked he.—"None," answered the other, "except you are coming up, and I am going down."

The celebrated French dramatic author, **BARTHE**, was remarkable for selfishness. Calling upon a friend, whose opinion he wished to have on a new comedy, he found him in his last moments; but, notwithstanding, proposed to him to hear it read. "Consider," said the dying man, "I have not more than an hour to live."—"Aye," replied Barthe, "but this will occupy only half the time."

The celebrated novelist, **ALEXANDRE DUMAS, père**, was one day asked by a friend to contribute ten francs for the funeral of a bailiff who had died in destitute circumstances. "What!" exclaimed the great novelist; "ten francs for burying a bailiff! Here are one hundred francs—bury ten!"

When the beautiful **DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE**, and her sister, **LADY DUNCANSON** canvassed the electors of Westminster in behalf of Fox, in 1784, it was wittily said, "Never did two such lovely portraits appear on canvas."

DR. CASE, a quack in the reign of Charles II., made a fortune, and set up his carriage with the motto, "The case is altered."

It being reported that **Lady Caroline Lamb** had, in a moment of passion, knocked down one of her pages with a stool, **MOORE**, the poet, to whom this was told by Lord Strangford, observed, "Oh, nothing is more natural for a literary lady than to double down a page."—"I would rather," replied his lordship, "advise Lady Caroline to turn over a new leaf."

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