

CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.

The ambition of adopting "professional life" of all things at the present day is the source of countless instances of misery; misery, if more secret than that of the theatrical novice, not less pungent. Every profession in England is overstocked; not merely the prizes are beyond the general reach, but the merest subsistence becomes difficult. "The three black Graces, Law, Physic and Divinity," are weary of their innumerable worshippers, and yearly sentence crowds of them to perdition of the aching sense of failure. A few glittering successes allure the multitude; Chancellorships, Bishoprics and Regiments, figure before the public eye; and every aspirant from the cottage, and the more foolish parents of every aspirant, set down the houbles as gained, when they have once plunged their unlucky offspring into this sea of troubles which men call the world. But thousands have died of broken hearts in these pursuits, thousands who would have been happy behind the plough, or opulent behind the counter, thousands, in the desperate struggles of thankless profession, look upon the simplicity of a life of manual labour with perpetual envy; and thousands, by a worse fate still, are driven to necessities which degrade the principle of honour within them, accustom them to humiliating modes of obtaining subsistence, and make up, by administering to the vices of society, the livelihood which is refused to their legitimate exertions. Among all the pursuits of life, there is but one which is not overstocked, and which, from its nature, seems capable of endless expansion, and that one is Commerce. To this the world is the field; every newly discovered region, every increase of mankind, every new progress of civilization, opens a new career for this great principle of human employment: and reckoning, as we always feel inclined to reckon, Britain among those nations which have been most especially favoured by the Great Disposer of all, we almost go the length of seeing a direct and peculiar bounty of Providence in the fact that commerce has been appointed the peculiar province of British energy. There the rising generation, may find employment, not merely unobstructed by numbers, but actually distending by numbers, not merely unexhausted by variety of effort, but deriving new resources from every new application of the dexterity, diligence, or sagacity of man. The force of circumstances is, even more directly than ever, turning the powers of the country into this vast and overflowing channel of national production. We shall speedily see the younger branches of our proudest aristocracy occupying themselves in commerce, from the simple fact that their habitual professions have no longer room for them. The army is reduced to nothing; the navy offers no hope of promotion, or of service; diplomacy cannot find space for the hundredth part of the candidates for office. The Government clerkships can afford little more than bread, and that bread only to a few; and how long will the contrast between this narrow and dependent condition, and the ease, interest, and opulence of commerce on the grand scale, suffer men to prefer official pride, made ridiculous by official poverty,

to the boundless prospects of wealth, and with it, of power, growing out of the mighty traffic of England with all nations?—Where her merchants are princes, princes will be glad to become the merchants, and the connexion will render infinite benefit to both, and to their countries. Education, high-mindedness, the manly spirit of the noble, and the honour of men who have to sustain a hereditary name, will give new dignity to the vigour, acuteness, and indefatigable industry of the commercial spirit; and this combination may effect results at present beyond the farthest vista of national pre-eminence. Let none call these views Utopian; the progress of the world may be but begun; there are evidences of new and fervid impulses surrounding us; and, unless war or civil convulsion come to break up their progress, we may see noble and powerful spirits in the path of national advancement, even before this generation shall pass away.—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

**Manufacture of Snuff Boxes at Cumnock.**—Cumnock has long been famed for the ingenious and beautiful manufacture of wooden snuff-boxes, which has been carried on in it for the last thirty years. It rose from a very small and rude beginning to its present state of perfection. An ingenious artist of the name of Crawford, caught the first idea of them from a box made at Laurencekirk, which had been sent to him to repair. The distinguished excellence of the Cumnock snuff-boxes lies in its hinge, which is extremely ingenious in point of contrivance, as well as exquisitely delicate in point of execution, so that it is with much propriety styled "the invisible wooden hinge." The principle on which the hinge is formed, as well as the instrument employed in making it, were for many years kept a secret, but are now no longer so. The wood used in the manufacture is plane tree, it being preferable to all others by reason of its close texture. The tree is first of all cut from the centre to the circumference into triangular pieces. These are then put to dry, and season for at least five months under cover. One set of artists make the boxes, another paint those beautiful designs which embellish the lids, while women and children are employed in varnishing and polishing them. The process of varnishing a single box takes from three to six weeks. Spirit varnish takes three weeks, and requires about thirty coats; while copal varnish, which is now mostly used, takes six weeks, and requires about fifteen coats to complete the process. When the surface is polished with ground flint; and then the box is ready for the market. These ingenious and elegant specimens of art have been brought by successive improvements to an astonishing degree of perfection; and the skill of the artists, sharpened and stimulated by keen rivalry is continually advancing this curious and beautiful manufacture to a higher pitch of improvement. The yearly value of the boxes made in Cumnock may average about £1,600; while fifteen years ago, the number of boxes would have brought £5,000 sterling. The total number of persons employed in this manufacture is about fifty.

The period of work is eleven hours a-day. *New Statistical Account of Scotland.*

The *Quilichene*, a Carlist organ states that Cabrera attacked and defeated General Diego Leon at Armella, and took two battalions and three squadrons prisoners, besides capturing three pieces of cannon. It is a less questionable fact that the same Cabrera caused the unfortunate Brigadier-General Berengero to be shot, for proposing an accommodation with the Queen's government. Among the inhuman atrocities committed on both sides we learn with horror and indignation that the Christmas, by way of reprisal, caused the daughter of Pahllos, a young girl only seven-teen years of age, to be led forth and publicly shot!

**Buenos Ayres.** The Casimir, Captain Monte Video on August 20th, has arrived at Havre, with advices from Buenos Ayres—Lamentable details are given of the critical position in which the French residents are placed, being incessantly liable to the extravagant caprice, and sanguinary whims of Rosas. Some intercepted letters had rendered Rosas furious. He had proclaimed that a new conspiracy had been discovered; twenty-three persons had been arrested, and several of them ordered to prepare for death; one had actually been shot. General Lavalle has been for some days in the island of Martin Garcia, and had issued a proclamation to the Buenos Ayreans. Several light ships of the French squadrons were raising between the island and the mainland to assist in the operations, the result of which would have a decisive influence on the question between France and the Argentine Republic.

The Madrid papers of the 20th instant state, that the question of the dissolution of the Cortes again absorbed public attention. The ministry held an extraordinary council on the evening of the 19th, at which the expediency of that measure was debated, and warmly opposed by General Anix. In the evening the cabinet again met, at the palace, and after an animated discussion, in which the same general opinion avowed his sympathy for the Esclavos, and declared that it was contrary to all constitutional rules that a cabinet should persist in maintaining itself in opposition to the wishes of the majority, the council agreed on proposing to the Queen, either to dissolve the chambers, and preserve all the Ministers, with the exception only of such as disapproved the measure, or to dismiss the present council, and replace them by men professing the same political opinions, under the express condition of dissolving the Cortes. After the council, which lasted until three o'clock in the morning, the Queen remained with M. Perez de Castro, whom her Majesty was, it seems, determined on continuing at the head of affairs.

**A Faithful Dog.**—A few nights ago, as the Hon. Mr. Westera, M. P. was returning home on foot to his residence at Bishopgate, he was attacked by a ferocious dog of the mastiff breed, against which he defended himself with a stick until it was broken in pieces. A fine Newfoundland dog which he had with him had stood perfectly quiet during the encounter, but, on perceiving his master entirely open to the enraged animal, rushed forward, and after a desperate struggle, succeeded in conquering the enemy; he then, singular to relate, dragged it to a ditch some yards distant where he kept it beneath water until it was drowned.—*Reading Mercury.*

**Royalty in a Convent.**—It is affirmed that the Queen Dowager of Sardinia has come to the resolution of withdrawing from the world, and ending her days in a convent. Her Majesty is said to have already returned to the order of Jesuits, to whom it formerly belonged, the Villa Rufinella, situate on Mount Tusculum, which is her property, and where she now resides.—*Cork Southern Reporter.*

**JAMES WATT'S BOYHOOD.**—A friend of Mr. Watt one day came upon young James, stretched upon the ground, tracing with chalk all sorts of cross lines. "Why do you suffer this child thus to trifle away his time?" exclaimed the visitor, "send him to school." "You will do well to delay your judgment," said the father, "before concerning him be good enough to find out his occupation." The harsh judgment was speedily reversed.—The child of six was solving a problem in geometry. "James," said Mrs. Muirhead, one day, to her nephew, "I never saw any boy more giving to trifling than you are; can't you take a book and employ yourself usefully? There have you been sitting a whole hour without speaking a single word. Do you know what you have been about all this time? You have done nothing but shut and open, open and shut, the lid of the teakettle; and, first, you have put the saucer in the steam from the spout, and then you have held the silver teaspoon in it; and then you have done nothing but pore over them, and bring together the drops formed by condensation on the surface of the china or clear spoon.—Aren't you ashamed of spending your time in that way?"—*M. Arago's Eloge.*

**MR. TACT AND MR. TALENT.**—Talent is something, but Tact is everything.—Talent is serious, sober, grave, and respectable—Tact is all that, and more too, it is the open eye, the quick ear, the judging taste, the keen smell, the lively touch, it is the interpreter of all riddles, the tormentor of all difficulties, the remover of all obstacles, it is useful in solitude, for it shows a man his way into the world, it is useful in society, for it pleases every one. Talent is power—Tact is skill. Talent is might—Tact is momentous.—Talent knows what to do, Tact knows how to do it. Talent makes a man respectable—Tact makes him respected. Talent is wealth—Tact is ready money. For all these practical purposes of life, Tact carries it against Talent ten to one. Talent is fit for employment, but Tact is fittest, for it has a knack of slipping into place, with a sweet and silent glibness of movement, as a billiard ball insinuates itself into the pocket, it seems to know every thing without learning any thing, it has served an invisible and extemporaneous apprenticeship, it wants no drilling, it never ranks in the awkward squad, it has no left hand, no deaf ear, no blind side, it puts on no wondrous wisdom, it has no air of profundity, it has all the air of common place, and all the force and power of genius.

A new and substantial vessel recently launched at Lance Cove, Belleisle, arrived in this harbor to-day, called the "Martha Harrison," and built by Mr. Robert Gosse, of Spaniards' Bay, for Messrs. Ridley, Harrison & Co. of this town.—She is about 130 tons burthen, (new measurement), and reflects much credit upon the builder and her enterprising owners, and adds one more to the many fine vessels belonging to this port.

The Star.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1839.

Dirtd,

At St. John's, on Sunday morning last, aged 72 years, deeply regretted by his family and friends, SIMON SOLOMON Esq. Postmaster of this island.

Ship News.

- Port of Harbor Grace.**  
ENTERED  
Dec. 12.—Jane, Walker, Danzig, 1030 bags bread, 400 bls. flour, 100 bls. pork.
- Port of Carbonear.**  
ENTERED  
Dec. 6.—Brig Providence, Pike, Liverpool; 61 tons coal, 2 trusses canvass, candles, soap, oakum, cordage, &c.  
CLEARED  
Nov. 30.—Schr. Cornelia, Parsons, Portugal; 1533 qtls fish.  
Dec. 2.—Samuel, Meadus, Poole; 17,415 gals cod oil, 3 bls. fish, 11 kegs berries, 31 bds codfish, 1 box fish, 3 bls & boxes caplin, 1 otter skin &c.
- Port of St. John's.**  
ENTERED  
December 6.—Industry, M'Kinnon, Cape Breton, coal.  
Mary Ann, Taylor, Cadiz, salt.  
Bonanza, Cragg, Copenhagen, pork.