

Watt's Corner.

A PRODUCTION ON A NEW CONSTRUCTION. Lines addressed by the Poet Cowper to the Rev. JOHN NEWTON, Rector of St. Mary's Woolnoth, London, on completing his poem on CHARITY.

My very dear friend, I am going to send what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose, there's nobody knows whether what I have got, be verse or not—by the tone and the time, it ought to be rhyme; but if it be, did you ever see of late as of yore, such a ditty before!

I have writ CHARITY, not for popularity, but as well as I could, in hopes to do good; and if the reviewer should say "to be sure, the muse and her bard have little regard for the taste and fashions, and ruling passions, and hoidening play of the modern day; and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a titivating air, 'tis only her plan, to catch, if she can, the giddy and gay, as they go that way, by a production on a new construction; she has baited her trap, in hopes to snap all that may come, with a sugar-plum." His opinion in this will not be amiss; 'tis what I intend, my principal end; and if I succeed, and folks should read, till a few are brought to a serious thought, I should think I am paid for all I have said, and all I have done, though I have run many a time after a rhyme as far as from hence to the end of my sense, and by hook or crook write another book, if I live and am here another year.

I have heard before, of a room with a floor, laid upon springs, and such like things, with as much art, in every part, that when you went in, you was forced to begin a minuet pace, with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in and now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string, or any such thing; and now I have writ, in a rhymical fit, what will make you dance, and as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you come to an end of what I have penn'd; which that you may do, ere Madam and you are quite worn out with jiggling about, I take my leave, and here you receive a bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me W. C.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

JAMES WATT has become celebrated by the great improvements which he applied to the steam-engine. That important piece of mechanism had been invented during the preceding century, but had been turned to very little practical use, until Watt discovered means for its widely extended application. He was born at Greenock in Scotland, in the year 1736, and his delicate health led him at an early age to seek amusement different from the noisy sports of boys possessed of robust constitutions. Thus he became observant of the things around him, while persons who did not know what passed within, thought him listless or trifling. An anecdote in the last volume of the BEREAN (p. 132) describes how he was scolded by his aunt Muirhead for opening and shutting, and opening and shutting the lid of the tea-kettle, which she thought was sad wasting of time: but the boy was making observations upon the properties of steam, all the while.

At the age of eighteen, James Watt went to London, and worked with a skilful maker of mathematical instruments; but he had to return to his native city, on account of ill health, after twelve months. Yet, he had acquired so much skill that in his twenty-first year he was appointed maker of mathematical instruments to the University of Glasgow. He also applied himself to Architecture, and drew plans for canals and other great works. In 1769 he obtained a patent for his improvements of the steam-engine, and the great manufacturer Boulton induced him to remove to Birmingham, where they commenced in partnership the manufacture of improved steam-engines, and soon received orders for them from the proprietors of mines in Cornwall, where they were greatly valued for raising the water which constantly interferes with mining labours. While engaged in further improving the steam-engine, Watt also invented a mechanism for copying letters which is, in the main, the copying-machine now so extensively employed in counting-houses. He was honoured by being made a Member of the Royal Society of London, and of the Academy of France. His son stepped into his business, when advancing years obliged the father to retire from active labour; and in 1819, at the age of eighty-four, James Watt died in his country-seat of Heathfield, near Birmingham.

Herschel, the celebrated astronomer, was son of a musician in Hanover, in Germany. His father brought him up for his own profession, and placed him in the year 1752 in the band of the Hanoverian guards, the boy being at that time fourteen years old. At the age of nineteen, he quitted his regiment and went to England, where he was fully employed as

teacher of music at Durham and Halifax; in the year 1766, he obtained an engagement as organist at Bath, and made a comfortable living from that situation, together with the receipts from private pupils. But he had for some time been attracted by the study of mathematics and astronomy, and his thirst for accurate observation of the heavenly bodies caused him to attempt the construction of larger telescopes than what used to be made for sale; and when he had suited himself with a good instrument, he devoted so much time to a survey of the heavens as gradually withdrew him from his musical engagements.

In 1781, he discovered a planet till then unknown, to which he gave the name of *Georgium Sidus* (the Georgian star) in honour of the reigning Sovereign, George III. Public attention now was drawn upon the self-made astronomer, and the King assigned a handsome salary to him, which enabled him to live from that time wholly to the science of astronomy. He took up his residence in the neighbourhood of Windsor, where King George III. resided, and set about the construction of a forty feet telescope which he completed in 1787. His discoveries were numerous; and both in observing the movements of heavenly bodies and in noting down his observations he was much assisted by his sister Caroline who, indeed, herself made several discoveries. The University of Oxford conferred upon Herschel the degree of Doctor of Laws; the Prince Regent, in 1816, invested him with the Gaolphic order of knighthood, and he was then called Sir William Herschel. His mental faculties remained unimpaired to the advanced age of eighty-four, at which he died (1822) leaving behind him a son who, with his father's title and honours, seems to have inherited his genius, and ranks now among the distinguished men of science in Great Britain.

HENRY CAVENDISH was the son of Lord Charles Cavendish, of the family of the Dukes of Devonshire. He was born in 1731, and died in 1810, having acquired a distinguished rank among scientific men. While his father lived, the young man's income was rather narrower than that of other sons of noble houses, and perhaps that was the occasion of his engaging in pursuits so very different from what that class of persons generally fancy. He became exceedingly economical and studious; but at the same time he contracted several oddities of character. By the death of his father, and afterwards of an aunt who bequeathed a fortune to him, he became possessed of great wealth; but he lived in close retirement at a little distance from town, seeing no visitors, while at the same time he kept a house in London, furnished with an excellent library, to which scientific men had the most unrestrained access.

His only intercourse was with men of science. He furnished seventeen papers to be published in the "Philosophical Transactions" all very short, but full of important discoveries, and the result of profound investigations, especially in chemistry. To him is to be ascribed the discovery of the component parts of water. His retired life caused his wealth to accumulate, so that it was correctly said of him, he was the richest among men of science, and the most scientific among rich men. But he himself gave very little thought to his possessions. On one occasion, his bankers caused him to be waited upon in order to inquire whether the large balance in their hands had not better be invested to advantage; to which he gave the short answer, "You may invest it, if you please;"—and he stopped all further inquiry about it, by leaving the room. His bashfulness was extreme. At a large assembly of scientific men, one evening, a distinguished foreigner was introduced to him; who expressed in a prolix address the great desire which he had entertained to see and converse with so great an ornament of the age. Cavendish answered not a word; he watched his opportunity when he might be able to escape without any one stopping him; seeing an opening in the crowd, he darted through it with all the speed he was master of, and rode away in his carriage—leaving the eulogistic foreigner utterly amazed at the bitter disappointment of his expectation to converse with the great ornament of the age. H.S.L.

THE FOLLY OF REMAINING IN BONDAGE TO SATAN.

If a traveller should arrive at a city in a distant and unknown country, where he saw all the houses deserted—the pillars and ornaments of the buildings broken, and buried in the dust—he would say, "Surely some great evil has befallen this place." If he should find that this had been done by a tyrant who had invaded that country, and reduced the inhabitants to slavery; if he should see them working in chains in the fields, under the lash of cruel taskmasters, and should learn that after they had completed their time of labour, they were put to death, his abhorrence of this savage tyrant would know no bounds. But suppose he is told, that they may escape from their desperate condition, and that by calling in the aid of the Sovereign of the whole country, their cruel master would be obliged to give them up; that also they had offended their Prince, and suffered themselves to be brought into slavery by rebellion against him; and

that he will only set those free who seek his aid; the stranger asks in astonishment, "Why do they not all escape? surely they are mad if they do not." He is told that some have done so, but that by far the greater part will continue as they are, though they know that misery and certain destruction will be their portion. Upon enquiring the reason, he is answered in language like that in which the children of Israel expressed their desire to return into Egypt, "The fish that we do eat of freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic, our souls delight in. We must give up all these, if we call in the aid of the King; nor will he admit us unto his kingdom, till we have imbibed, by means which he has provided, the principles of his government, and have divested ourselves of former habits and sentiments." "Can it be so?" he replies,—"wretched men! do you prefer these paltry pleasures to life and liberty? Oh! think how terrible is your fate; consider what folly it is to endure these evils, rather than to make the necessary exertion to acquire help from your Prince, and to submit to that course of discipline which is required to make you his faithful subjects."

This cruel tyrant is the Devil, and many remain in his service in preference to that of God, because they love the pleasures of sin, "which are but for a moment," too well to give them up, though the end is death. What folly can be compared to this! Resolve that you will be wise, resolve that you will not continue the servants of Satan any longer, but seek the aid of the King of kings in humble prayer, and endeavour by his grace, to avoid all wickedness.—Illustrations of the Catechism.—Ep. Rec.

A BENEFACTOR IN HUMBLE LIFE.

From a letter written by John Augustus, a Shoemaker at Boston, and published by the Massachusetts Legislative Temperance Society.

As soon as my attention was called to the subject, which was by accident, I thought I would try an experiment, by standing bail for a man who was found guilty of being a common drunkard. I was in court, and stepped up to him and asked if he would sign the pledge if I would get his sentence put off for a fortnight, and stand his bail in order to give him a chance to try to do better. He agreed to do so—kept the pledge, and became a sober man. At the end of the fortnight he was let off, upon payment of a small fine. I continued this practice, and the result is as follows:—From January 1st, 1832, to January 1st, 1846, I bailed three hundred persons brought up as common drunkards, male and female. Of this number more than two hundred have done well. The balance might have been saved if there had been a place for them to stop a few days, to recover from the effects of rum and wait for employment. I do not know how many of them fell back, because I lost the track of them. I have heard that some are doing well in other places. I have also been bail in cases of simple drunkenness and other petty offences, to the number of 100—making in all 400 instances. The whole sum for which I have been bail is \$25,000, and have only suffered one forfeiture, which was for \$100. Of the 300 common drunkards whom I bailed, 175 were, after signing the pledge, and being under probation a week or two, discharged upon paying a fine of one cent and costs—about \$4 in each case—making in all \$1,100 paid into the treasury of the county or state. If they had been sent to the house of correction, nothing would have been paid on their account, and the officers would have been paid fees for carrying them over. By my plan money has been both paid and saved to the state, unless they make a profit on the labour of such convicts in the house of correction—a fact which I have not yet learnt. If the Legislature should see fit to give a few thousand, or a few hundred dollars, to aid us in saving the drunkard in our own way, there need not be any fears as to the loss of the money; for, by saving the drunkard, we keep him from being supported at the public expense in prison.

A WELL SPENT EVENING.

I was invited to the house of Mr. L.* to take tea and spend the evening. I found on arriving, that there were present eight ladies and seven gentlemen. Among the latter was a Bachelor from England. The party was one of the first respectability. They were refined and well educated. During tea, the conversation was of a cheerful character; but at the same time, there was no frivolity and nonsense. There was an intellectual cast about the intercourse, which I have seldom met with. After tea, the Bible was produced—not in that restrained and austere manner which often acts injuriously upon the minds of the young—but with an ease and cheerfulness, that enlisted our interest in what was to be said. Mr. L. opened the Bible and started a topic of conversation, upon the 3d chap. of Cor. This was done in an easy and familiar manner, which removed all reserve from the company. Questions were proposed of so interesting a nature that every one desired to say something about them. An animated conversation continued for an hour

and a half. No one was weary of the subject; although some of the party, I believe, were no professors of religion. I could not but think how rich and inexhaustible is the word of God, and how easy it would be to make it the subject of familiar discourse, where the most unprofitable conversation is indulged. This should be done not as a stern duty, but as an entertainment. I do not believe the Bible so wanting in interest that duty only can lead us to the study of it. God has lavished upon his Message to man, every thing which could serve to win his attention and interest. The Bible rests its claim not solely upon its sublime authority, but upon its own intrinsic excellence.

Mr. L. is the minister of the *Marboef Chapel*, which was established in Paris in 1824. He is of the Church of England, but his piety is of that glowing and practical character which leads him to constant exertion in the cause of his Divine Master. At the breaking up of our company, the Minister made a fervent extempore prayer, which breathed the true spirit of godliness.

As I walked home, I felt that one evening had been well spent. I saw that it was possible to make religious things interesting in themselves; and even to make the impatient *love* serious conversation. It was in fact a Bible class, conducted with so much ease and cheerfulness, that it seemed only familiar conversation. Well would it be, if the Christians of our land would endeavour to reform our social circles in this matter. A little effort on their part, might render popular those subjects which are now banished from the parlor, Ministers of the Gospel might learn from this example to tax their ingenuity to enlist the attention of the young and gay in serious things. This can be done; and surely no one can doubt that great good would be likely to result from such a practice.

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