

# The Weekly Observer

BEING

## A NEW SERIES OF THE STAR.

Vol. I.

SAINT JOHN, TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 1829.

No. 34.

### THE GARLAND.

From the FORGET-ME-NOT, for 1829.

#### LANGSYNE.

LANGSYNE!—How doth the word come back  
With magic meaning to the heart,  
As Memory rans the sunny track,  
From which Hope's dreams were loath to part!  
No joy like by-past joy appears;  
For what is gone we peck and pine.  
Were life spun out a thousand years,  
It could not match Langsyne!

Langsyne!—The days of Childhood warm,  
When tottering by a Mother's knee,  
Each sight and sound had power to charm,  
And hope was high, and thought was free.  
Langsyne!—the merry school-boy days—  
How sweetly then life's cup did shine!  
Oh! for the glorious pranks and plays,  
The raptures of Langsyne!

Langsyne!—yes in the sound, I hear  
The rustling of the summer grove;  
And view those angel features near  
Which first awoke the heart to love.  
How sweet it is in passive mood,  
At midnight to recline,  
And fill the mental solitude,  
With spectres from Langsyne!

Langsyne!—ah where are they who shared  
With us its pleasures bright and blithe?  
Riably with some hath fortune shared;  
And some hath how'd beneath the scythe  
Of death; while others scatter'd far  
O'er foreign lands at fate's repine,  
Of wandering forth, 'neath twilight's star,  
To muse on dear Langsyne!

Langsyne!—the heart can never be  
Again as full of guileless truth;  
Langsyne! the eye no more shall see  
Ah no! the rainbow hues of youth.  
Langsyne! with thee resides a spell  
To raise the spirit and refine.  
Farewell!—there can be no farewell  
To thee, loved, lost Langsyne!

From the (Boston) LADIES' MAGAZINE.

### A THOUGHT.

There's a glorious light at the gates of the west,  
When the summer sun passeth through to his rest—  
'Tis bright on the lake where the moonbeam slept,  
And the tear is pure which the dew has wept;  
But there shines no light beneath the sky  
Like that which beams from a mother's eye.  
The harp is sweet at its dying close,  
And the hum of the bee from the breast of the rose—  
And the song of the bird when she rises high  
From her chirping nest, through the vernal sky—  
But earth hath no sound so sweet to hear  
As the voice of a babe to its mother's ear.

"What is't? a Spirit!"  
The Tempest.

In the dance of the Fairies,  
In the mimic case,  
Of the grass of the prairie,  
On foam crested wave;

In meadow and vale,  
In fountain and stream,  
In the breath of the gale,  
And the flash of the beam;

In the playful Aurora  
Of Boreal night;  
In the garland of Flora,  
Of lands the most bright;

With the bark of the sailor  
Mid ocean and foam;  
With the love-lorn wailer  
That waits him at home.

Mid the cataract's roar,  
And the dash of its waters;  
Where vapours rise and hear  
From the spray which it scatters;

Mid the stars of the wain,  
In its glittering rank;  
With Mab and her train,  
Upon Meadow and bank;

There, there, you may count me;  
Tho' sometimes alone,  
I love to dispute me  
Complimented by none;

No winter or spring,  
No summer can shew me,  
To autumn I cling;  
Now, say, do you know me.

### THE MISCELLANIST.

FLOWERS ON GRAVES.—Nothing can be more gratifying to some of the best feelings of human nature, than that amiable, yet almost obsolete custom of adorning with flowers the graves of those we loved. The practice once prevailed among many of the most celebrated nations of the ancient world. The Medes bequeathed it to the Persians, from whom the Greeks adopted it, and Pythagoras introduced it into Italy. Many of those immortal worthies whose names have descended to us through classic channels, have had their memory dignified by the record, that their surviving friends deemed them worthy this token of their love. The urn containing the ashes of Philippena was covered with a wreath of flowers. We learn also, that the grave of Sophocles was embellished with roses and ivy, if the epitaph, written by Simonides, deserves that construction—a beautiful translation by some one unknown, we infer.

"Wind gentle evergreen, to form a shade  
Around the tomb where Sophocles is laid.  
Sweet ivy, wind thy hoags, and intertwine  
With blushing roses and the clustering vine.  
Thus with thy lasting leaves, with beauty hung,  
Prove grateful emblems of the joys he sung."  
Ivy and flowers were also planted at the grave of Anacreon. The tombs of Habiz and Sadi, the great poets of Persia, are honored by their survivors with every token of gratitude. The former stands under the cypress which he planted with his own hand. Sadi is buried in a building, erected in the heart of a mountainous amphitheatre, surrounded with perpetual verdure and fertility. Ninus of Babylon was buried under a white mulberry tree. Klopstock, one of the first German poets, has a monument, over which shadows a lime tree. Flowers were formerly spread over his grave.

Thus we have the authority of example worthy of imitation; but we have more. Poets who have descended from the darkest ages, as patterns of taste, have embellished their descriptions of funeral rites with this amiable custom. Enneas is beautifully represented as sprinkling his father's grave with flowers. Andromache is described raising green alters to the memory of Hector. Gracielus is the tribute of affection seems to be, there are but few, even among those modern nations which by the strongest claim to refinement, who have not let his pathetic rite go to oblivion with many other of those customs which are too innocent and full of tenderness for modern taste. In China, in Java, in the Crimea; in the country of the Moors, and among many of those nations which by our standard are ranked with the half-civilized portions of

the globe, this monument of refinement still stands, a living rebuke to enlightened pride. After the celebrated defeat of the French and Bavarians, among the Tyrolese mountains, one circumstance is worthy of the same immortality which must be the portions of those hardy people. In all the records of bloody strife, we have no instance of the kind. Contrary to the usual mode of interring the dead on the field of battle, the Tyrolese who fell on that day were carefully carried to their homes and buried, each in the church yard of his native village. There the heads of the survivors have planted their graves with living flowers, and the traveller, to this day, can number the little mounds under which repose the sacrifices, offered in that strife, on the altar of their country's liberty. Evident monument for the martyr! Who would not die for a country that will thus cherish the ashes of its defenders. This is the theme for the licentious to deride; it has a real divinity in its lessons, which will find a response in every soul, that is not sunk beneath the sphere it was created for. Many are the eulogies on the life and labours of the departed great; but when we visit their tombs, no flowers are there; no emblems of that state of eternal bloom to which they have passed. We find the dust where their ashes rest shaded with the meagre weeds, trampled by the most degraded animals; and if any memorial of affection is to be found, it is only the cold stone; fitter for any thing else than the type of what was once warm with friendship, and beautiful with smiles.—London Magazine.

ENGLISH COUNTRY LIFE.—The country-seats of England form, indeed, one of the most remarkable features, not only in English landscape, but yet more in what may be termed the genius and economy of English manners. Their great number throughout the country, the varied grandeur and beauty of their parks and gardens, the extent, magnificence, and various architecture of the houses, the luxurious comfort and completeness of their internal arrangements, and their relation generally to the character of the peasantry surrounding them, justify fully the expression we have used. No where has this mode of life attained so high a degree of perfection and refinement. We will allude to two circumstances, amongst many others, in illustration. The first of these is, the very great number of valuable libraries belonging to our family-seats. It has been sometimes remarked as singular, that England should possess so few great public libraries, while a poorer country, like Germany, can boast of its numerous, and vast collections at Vienna, Prague, Munich, Stuttgart, Goettingen, Wolfenbuttel, &c. The fact is partly explained by the many political divisions and capitals, and by the number of universities in Germany. But a farther explanation may be found in the innumerable private libraries dispersed throughout England—many of them equal to public ones in extent and value, and most of them well furnished in classics, and in English and French literature.

The other peculiarity we would name about our English country-houses is, that they do not insulate their residents from the society and business of active life; which insulation is probably a cause, why so many proprietors in other countries pass their whole time in the metropolis or larger towns. The facility and speed of communication in England link together all places, however remote, and all interests, political and social, of the community. The country gentleman, sitting at his breakfast table a hundred miles from London, receives the newspapers printed there the night before; his books come to him still damp from the press; and he debates in parliament travel to every country-house in England within fifty or sixty hours of the time when they have taken place. The like facility exists as to provincial interests of every kind. The nobleman or country gentleman is a public functionary within his district, and no man residing on his estates is, or need feel himself, unimportant to the community.—Quarterly Review.

INVASION OF ENGLAND.—M. de Baussett, the author of the *Memoirs of Napoleon*, at one time doubted whether Bonaparte ever seriously entertained the design of invading this country, but he has since had strong reasons to change his opinion, and he is now inclined to think, that it had not been for the fault of the admiral who commanded the French fleet, the invasion would certainly have been attempted. This admiral had instructions to make a feint upon the West Indies, so as to induce the English fleets to follow him in that direction. He was to take his measures in such a way as to throw the English into the greatest perplexity and uncertainty as to his real intentions. He was then to return suddenly, always veiling his movements in the most impenetrable mystery; he was to join the Spanish fleet and other ships which awaited him at Coruna and Rochefort, set sail with a squadron of seventy vessels, annihilate the English flotilla, sweep the Channel, and thus facilitate the landing of the French armies. In consequence of the neglect of these instructions, and the activity of Nelson, who threw an obstacle in the way of their execution, by compelling the admiral to seek shelter in the port of Cadiz, an enterprise, says M. de Baussett, failed, of which the consequences might have been incalculable, had its success been equal to the grandeur of the design. He repeats the story of Fulton the American having proposed to Bonaparte to make a trial of steam-boats in the invasion of England. The proposition is said to have been rejected, partly on account of the supposed impracticability of the project, and partly because the preparations at Boulogne were too far advanced to admit of any alteration in the plan of operations. It is certainly possible that such an offer might have been made, Fulton having demonstrated, in his native country, the practicability of impelling vessels by steam. He made the first voyage in a steam-boat from New York to Albany, in the year 1807.—Foreign Quarterly Review.

HUMOROUS DESCRIPTION OF THE STEAM-ENGINE.—The steam-engine may be justly regarded as the fourth estate of the realm, and fairly worth the other three. It is the vivifying principle of taxation, which is the great end of all civilized governments. It is a more powerful conservator of the peace than a regiment of constables, or than a whole vice suppressing association; for the instant it stops working, the people immediately become turbulent and discontented. What is the grand counterpoise to the Duke of Wellington and his Tory colleagues?—the steam engine. What balances the national debt?—the steam engine. What feeds the noble army of place-men and sinecurists?—again I say, the steam engine. Even the people themselves, for whom alone wrong-headed radicals presume government exclusively to exist, may become too numerous, but there is nothing exigent in the character of the steam engine. If it cannot work, it does not jacobinically insist upon eating; and, like a good Christian machine as it is, it takes no thought wherewith it shall be clothed. If pressed too hard, it may sometimes make a "blow-up," but so will those living steam-engines—the mob. There is, however, this essential difference between the two, that, the burst once over, the machine becomes as tame and harmless as a child, or a rattling Whig lawyer with a place under government; whereas the people, when duly roused, go on thundering at the door of the legislature with an increasing force; so that if you once indulge their impetuosity, by reforming the most invertebrate abuse, you must go on till "social order" is cut up into ribbons, and nothing remains for a tax-eater to subsist upon. But if steam-engines be better subjects than the people, they have likewise many advantages over the aristocracy. They never combine, for example, to make corn dear; they never tax the public to the amount of thousands, to make places by which they gain only hundreds; nor waste whole provinces by their arbitrary caprice and ignorance of all sound principles of administration. A steam-engine is never a Jesuit, like a Charles; it never sets itself against learning, like a Francis; nor is absurdly tyrannical, like a Ferdinand. It may be as coldly indifferent to human suffering as a Nero or a Henry VIII; and it will certainly chop of the best head that ventures to thrust its nose across its movements;—but then, on the other hand, it never goes out of its way to do mischief, but is contented to leave those alone who let it alone; and as kings in general go, that is no trifling advantage.

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.—It was the gigantic vigour with which the Duke of Wellington, while resisting the fierceness of France, sustained the weakness of three inefficient Cabinets, that delivered the Peninsula. Faults he committed; and who in war has not? but his reputation stands upon a sure foundation, a simple majestic structure, that envy cannot undermine, nor the meretricious ornaments of party panegyric deform. The exploits of his army were great in themselves, and great in their consequences; abounding with signal examples of heroic courage and devoted zeal, they should neither be forgotten nor forgotten, being worthy of more fame than the world has yet accorded them—worthy also of a better historian.—Napier's History of the Peninsular War.

BRILLIANT AFFAIR.—Colonel Napier, in his account of the passage of the Somosierra, in Spain, mentions the following interesting incident as that which effected the object. "At day-break," says he, "three French battalions attacked St. Juan's right, three more assailed his left, and as many marched along the causeway in the centre, six guns supporting the last column. The French wings soon spread over the mountain side, and commenced a warm skirmishing fire. At this moment Napoleon arrived. He rode into the mouth of the pass, and attentively examined the scene before him. The infantry were making no progress; a thick fog mixed with smoke hung upon the ascent; suddenly, as if by inspiration, he ordered the Polish lancers of his guard to charge up the causeway, and seize the Spanish battery. The first squadron was thrown into confusion, by a fire which levelled the foremost ranks. General Krazinski rallied them in a moment, and, under cover of the smoke, and the thick vapours of the morning, the regiment, with a fresh impetus, proceeded briskly up the mountain, sword in hand. As those gallant horsemen passed, all the Spanish infantry fired, and fled from the entrenchments on each side, towards the summit of the causeway; so that, when the Poles fell in among the gunners, and took the battery, the whole Spanish army was in flight, abandoning arms, ammunition, baggage, and a number of prisoners. This surprising exploit, in the glory it conferred on one party, and the disgrace it heaped upon the other, can hardly be paralleled in the annals of war. It is, indeed, almost incredible, even to those who are acquainted with Spanish armies, that a position, in itself nearly impregnable, and defended by twelve thousand men, should, without any panic, but merely from a deliberate sense of danger, be abandoned at the wild charge of a few squadrons, which two companies of good infantry would have effectually stopped. Yet some of the Spanish regiments so shamefully beaten here, had been victorious at Baylen a few months before; and General St. Juan's dispositions at Somosierra were far better than Reding's at the former battle; but thus absolutely does Fortune govern in war! The charge of the Poles, viewed as a simple military operation, was extravagantly foolish,

but taken as the result of Napoleon's sagacious estimate of the real value of Spanish troops, and his promptitude in seizing the advantage offered by the smoke and fog that clung to the side of the mountain, it was a felicitous example of intuitive genius."

HABITS OF THE BEAVER.—Beavers, as if to enable them to live and move either on land or water, have two web-feet like those of ducks or water dogs, and two like those of land animals. When they wish to construct a dwelling-place, or rather city, for it serves the whole body, they choose a level ground with a stream running through it; they then dam up the stream so as to make a pond, and perform the operation as skillfully as we could ourselves. Next they drive into the ground stakes of five or six feet long in rows, waiting each row with twigs, and padding or filling the interstices with clay, which they ram close in, so as to make the whole solid and water-tight. This dam is likewise shaped on the truest principles; for the upper side next the water slopes, and the side below is perpendicular; the base of the dam is ten or twelve feet thick; the top or narrow part two or three, and it is sometimes as long as one hundred feet. The pond being thus formed and secured, they make their houses round the edge of it; they are cells, with vaulted roofs, and upon piles; they are made of stones, earth and sticks; the walls are two feet thick, and plastered as neatly as if the trowel had been used. Sometimes they have two or three stories for retreating to in case of floods; and they always have two doors, one towards the water, and one towards the land. They keep their winter provisions in stores, and bring them out to use; they make their beds of moss; they live on the bark of trees, gums, and crawfish. Each house holds from twenty to thirty, and may be from ten to twenty-five houses in all. Some of their communities are larger than others, but there are seldom fewer than two or three hundred inhabitants. In working they all bear their shares; some gnaw the trees and branches with their teeth to form stakes and beams; others roll the pieces to the water; others, diving, make holes with their teeth to place the piles in; others collect and carry stones and clay; others beat and mix the mortar; and others carry it on their broad tails, and with these bear it and plaster it. Some superstitious the rest, and make signals by sharp strokes with the tail, which are carefully attended to; the beavers hastening to the place where they are wanted to work, or to repair any hole made by the water, or to defend themselves or make their escape, when attacked by an enemy.

The species of fly named "Ichneumon insersera" lays its eggs in the very body of the yellow maggot, while it is feeding busily. It has a long hollow rod, projected at pleasure from its tail, which it thrusts into the body of the worm, and down which it then sends one egg from its body, which egg is hatched within the body of the maggot, and consumes it, thus curiously occupying its place in creation. If the maggot had nerves like us, it would have much pain in submitting to such a fate; but this is not the fact. Animals low in the scale of creation seem to have some strong appetites, and, we should infer, strong pleasure in gratifying them; but they seem scarcely to suffer pain from the mutilation of their bodies. When a horse-fly is sucking the blood on the back of the hand, one may cut or even twist off its wings; and when it has filled its stomach, it will be astonished that it cannot fly away. Other insects will be found which are nowise despitful, or in want of a good appetite, though they have recently lost their legs. Nay, even a crab, which is a large animal, with good eyes and nerves, and moderate habits generally, if by any chance it would get a wound in one of its legs, so that it can no longer use it, even though its motion be backwards, it finds the want of a leg so inconvenient, that it will not scruple to give a curious jerk to the wounded leg, whereupon it will be found that it has thrown it off from the body at the joint, and given Nature an opportunity of producing a new one, which she does as she gives new teeth to children.—Quarterly Journal of Agriculture.

CANDIAN WIDOWS.—Fitz-Simeon, in his *Itinerary*, written in the year 1322, thus alludes to the conduct of the widows of Candia:—"Where the women of the Roman church, like those of Genoa, are commonly adorned with gold, pearls, and brilliant jewels; and, after having lost their husbands, they seldom or never are again married, but wear a black veil as widows, nor do they ever walk with a man, or sit upon the same seat, either in the church or elsewhere. Perpetually heaving sighs, and in a mourning habit, the widow seeks solitary places, and constantly flies from the society of men as she would from that of serpents."

CALAMITIES INCIDENT TO CORPULENCY.—It is upon record, that the fat of a French lady caught fire. The Margravine of Bareuth also notices a fat French princess who melted after she was embalmed. I have since discovered, in the chronicles of Cromwell's time, that these combustible materials in man were turned to good account in those days, and that a woman, who kept a tallow-chandler's shop in Dublin, made all her best candles from the fat of Englishmen, and, when one of her customers complained of their not being so good as usual, she apologized by saying, "Why, ma'am, I am sorry to inform you, that, for this month past I have been short of Englishmen."—Wadd on Corpulency.

In 1776, twenty seven coaches, with not more than two hundred and seventy passengers, left Paris daily for the provinces. The number of public conveyances is now nearly three hundred. The Messageries were first formed, previously to 1792, at 600,000 francs; the annual tax is now 4,000,000. About the middle of the last century, the journey from Paris to Lyons occupied ten days; it is now performed in less than three.

The following remarkable instance of the almost total want of fat, and obliteration of the lymphatic system, is mentioned by Lary:—"A person advanced in years, and affected with melancholy, became without any evident cause, in such a dry state, as to be unable to move without producing a horrid cracking noise in all his bones, even the spine, to such a degree, that (being a priest) he was obliged to give up saying mass, as the noise was so great as to astonish the vulgar, and make children laugh."

A PERSIAN'S OPINION OF WINE-DRINKING.—Hajji Baba, after describing an English dinner at which he was present, alludes to the custom of the ladies leaving the table when dinner is over. "At length (says he) there was a general move, but, to my astonishment, the women only took their departure. This was the nearest approach to our own customs I had yet seen, and I asked my neighbour why this was made? why the women alone went? He seemed puzzled for an explanation. 'Is it thus ordained in your scriptures?' said I, 'or is it ordered by your king?' Still he was at a loss for an answer; and I concluded that this might be a custom borrowed from Islam. My neighbour hinted that the absence of the women left the men at greater liberty to talk and drink wine. 'Ah, then,' said I, 'you must have adopted that maxim of the East, which saith, 'first dinner, then conversation; but if drinking be your object, this is not the way to set about it. Do as we do in Persia; get up betimes in the morning; go into a garden; seat yourself near a running stream; put flowers on your head; have songsters and nightingales; drink till your senses are gone; wait till they return; then drink again, and take no thought of time; let day and night be the same, until at length you have so completely soaked yourself with wine, that it is time to cry out, 'Enough! enough!'"

A few days ago the mistress ordered a sweep to attend on the following morning, for the purpose of cleaning a chimney. The maid was present when Sooty was engaged, and the thoughts of the necessary preparations had probably operated on her mind; for during the night she arose, and proceeding to the foul chimney, actually contrived to introduce herself into it, and with a hand-brush, which she had seized, succeeded in sweeping the lower part most effectually. Satisfied with the result of her operations, she at length returned to bed, but neglected to perform those ablutions which her dirty occupation had rendered peculiarly necessary. When the man of soot arrived, she awoke, and unconscious of what had taken place, let him in. He no sooner perceived her than he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, and said he supposed "as how she had finished the job herself." Not understanding his meaning, the girl had recourse to a glass—and then the mystery was explained. We need scarcely add that the linen of the bed bore ample testimony to the truth of the sweep's supposition.—Hull Packet.

INDIAN CORN.—Amidst all the uses which Cobbett discovers for the stalks, leaves, beard, grain, &c. of his Indian Corn, we doubt if it entered into his head that it would be applied, as it is now in Scotland, to the purpose of distillation. We understand that the enterprising distiller at Underwood, in Shropshire, is or was recently extracting whiskey from it, and that he finds it yields spirits of good quality. We believe, however, that he uses it mixed with barley.—Scotsman.

It is recommended to filter lamp oil through charcoal, it then burns pure and clear as gas. The brilliancy of the lights in the Saloons of Paris is said to be the effect of such filtration.

The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together; our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.—Shakspeare.

Most men take least notice of what is plain, as if that were of no use; but puzzle their thoughts, and lose themselves in those vast depths and abysses which no human understanding can fathom.—Sherlock.

Servants live the best lives; for their care is single, how to please their lord; but all the burthen of a troublesome providence and misadministration makes the outside pompous and more fall of ceremony; but intricates the condition and disturbs the quiet of the great possessor.—Jer. Taylor.

PRIDE.—If a proud man makes me keep my distance, the comfort is he keeps his at the same time.—Dr. Swift.

DRUNKENNESS.—It is an honour to their (the Spaniards) laws, that a man loses his testimony who can be proved once to have been drunk.—William Temple's Works.

NETS.—The reason why so few marriages are happy, is because young ladies spend their time in making nets, not in making cages.—Swift.

ACTIONS.—The actions of men are like the index of a book; they point out what is most remarkable in them.—Wit's Magazine.

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