

VARIOUS

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UNITED SERVICE CLUB-HOUSE

Modern club-houses are, for the most part, splendid specimens of the style which luxury and good-living have attained in this country. Such are their internal recommendations; but to the public they are interesting for the architectural embellishment which they add to the streets of the metropolis. If we reason on Bishop Berkeley's theory—that all the mansions, equipages, &c. we see abroad, are intended for our gratification—we must soon forget the turtle, venison, and claret that are stored in the larders and cellars of club-houses, whilst our admiration is awakened at the taste which is lavished on their exteriors.

The "United Service" Club-House is, as its name implies, intended for the Officers of the Army and Navy, who, in these pacific times, may here enjoy *otium cum dignitate*, and fill up the intervals of refection, in reading the "history of the war," from the noble quarto to the last dispatches received at the Foreign Office.

The above Club-House, which occupies an angle of Charles-street and Regent-street, is, however, but a meagre specimen of the abilities of the architect, Mr. Smirke. It has none of the characteristic decorations of either service, if we except the bas-relief on the entrance-front in Charles street, which represents Britannia distributing laurels to her brave sons by land and sea. The architecture of the whole is cold and unfeeling, and even the columns supporting the porticoes are of a very rigid order—when we consider that the clubhouse is not an official establishment, but one intended for luxurious accommodation, and that it would have admitted of much more florid embellishment. At the same time, although we quarrel with the frigidity of the exterior, we do not question the warmth of its kitchens, or the potency of its cellars; neither do we affect any knowledge of the latter—nay, not even enough to weave into a "fashionable" novel.

A new mansion is building for the United Service Club, on the site of Carlton House, under the superintendance of Mr. Nash, and which, with another new clubhouse for the Athaenaeum, will form an entrance to the new square opposite Waterloo-Place. The taste of the sword and pen does not, however, agree, and their buildings are dissimilar. In the United Service Club are two rooms of 150 feet by 50, the floors of which are constructed of cast-iron girders. At the back of these club-houses will be a large ornamental garden.

FUNERAL GARLANDS

(For the Mirror.)

The primitive Christians censured a practice prevalent among the Romans, of decorating a corpse, previous to interment or combustion, with garlands and flowers. Their reprehension extended also to a periodical custom of placing the "first-fruits of Flora" on their graves and tombs. Thus Anchises, in Dryden's *Virgil, Aeneid*, book 6, says,

"Full canisters of fragrant lilies bring,
Mix'd with the purple roses of the spring;
Let me with *funeral flowers* his body strew—
This gift, which parents to their children owe,
This unavailing gift I may bestow."

Notwithstanding the anathemas of the church, these simple, interesting, and harmless (if not laudable) practices still remain. The early customs and features of all nations approximate; and whether the following traits, which a friend has kindly obliged me with, are relics of Roman introduction, or national, I leave the antiquary to decide.

On Palm Sunday, in several villages in South Wales, a custom prevails of cleaning the grave-stones of departed friends and acquaintances, and ornamenting them with flowers, &c. On the Saturday preceding, a troop of servant girls go to the churchyard with pails and brushes, to renovate the various mementos of affection, clean the letters, and take away the weeds. The next morning their young mistresses attend, with the gracefulness of innocence in their countenances, and the roses of health and beauty blooming on their cheeks. According to their fancy, and according to the state of the season, they place on the stones snow-drops, crocuses, lilies of the valley, and roses.

A sacrifice such as this, so pure, so innocent, so expressive, is surely acceptable to the great God of nature.

QUAESITOR

To our Correspondent's communication, which is worthy of record, from its originality, we could add many well-authenticated accounts of the rite of decorating graves, &c. There is in our drawer an interesting paper on the subject; but we give *Quaesitor* the priority.

THE SPIDER'S WEB

(To the Editor of the Mirror.)

To the curious among the perusers of the Mirror, it may not be uninteresting to know that a beautiful impression may be taken on paper of the reticulated web of the *field-spider*, by sprinkling it finely with any dark-coloured liquid, and placing the paper intended for the impression behind the web, and drawing it gently towards you. I do not know of what ingredients bookbinders' blue-sprinkle is made, but it seems to absorb the gelatinous matter of which the web is composed. The idea that an impression might be produced in this manner, was suggested to me by observing the dew on the web in the morning.

Rugby. W.I.T

Our ingenious Correspondent has, on the fly-leaf of his letter, furnished us with the impression of a web, as a proof of the practicability of the above.

ATAR GUL

(For the Mirror.)

Who hath not inhaled with ecstasy the delicious, the heavenly odour of "the Atar Gul, more precious than gold?" Who hath not in fancy wandered, as he inspired it, to the terrestrial paradise from whence it is procured? And who that knew not how so volatile an essence was collected, hath not marvelled, over the enjoyment of Otto of Roses? Persia, Turkey, and Egypt, are the principal countries in which it is manufactured, and the Atar of Persia is generally allowed to be the most superior, and the most difficult to be obtained genuine. The rose of Cashmire is proverbial throughout the east for its brilliancy and fragrance; and "the Roses of the Jinan Nile, or Garden of the Nile, (attached to the Emperor of Morocco's palace) are unequalled; mattresses are made of their leaves for the men of rank to recline upon." I transcribe from a published account in my possession, the method of obtaining Atar Gul in the *east* (for I have heard that some *English* chemists have endeavoured to procure it from *English* roses.) merely begging to observe that it exactly corresponds with that given to me by a gentleman who had witnessed the process in Egypt.

"*Otto of Roses*.—The usual method of making it is, to gather the roses with their calyces, and put them into a still with nearly double their weight of pure spring water; which, when sufficiently distilled, will be highly scented with roses; this is then poured into shallow vessels and exposed to the nocturnal air. Next morning, the *Atar, or essential oil* of the flowers is found swimming in small congealed particles on the surface of the water; it is carefully collected and preserved in small glass bottles."¹ A hundred pounds of the flowers scarcely afford in India two drachms of essential oil. "Cent livres de petales de Roses," says a French chemist, "N'en fournissent par la distillation que *quatre* drachmes." Tachenius from the same quantity obtained half an ounce, and Hoffman a much larger proportion. The trials of other chemists have been attended with various results. It is most difficult to procure the *genuine* Otto of Roses, since even in the countries where it is made, the distillers are tempted to put sandal wood, scented grasses, and other oily plants into the still with the roses, which alter their perfume, and debase the value of the Atar; colour is no test of genuineness; green, amber, and light red or pink. The hues of the *real* otto, are also those of the adulterated; the presence of the sandal wood may be detected by the simple sense of smelling; but in order to discover the union of a grosser oil with the *essential*, drop a very little otto on a piece of clean writing paper, and hold it to the fire; if the article is *genuine*, it will evaporate without leaving a mark on the paper, so ethereal is the *essential oil of roses!* if otherwise, a grease-spot will declare the imposition. I need scarcely expatiate upon the delicate and long-continuing fragrance which this luxuriant perfume imparts to all things with which it comes in contact; it is peculiarly calculated for the drawer, writing-desk, &c. since its aroma is totally unmingled with that most disagreeable effluvium, which is ever proceeding from alcohol. Lavender-water, *esprit de rose* &c. &c. are quite disgusting shut up in box or drawer, but the Atar Gul, is as delightful there as in the most open and airy space. Some persons there are, however, who have an antipathy to it, and others will, as they inhale its delicious odour, fancy with myself, what may be.

¹ Having, not long since, purchased a bottle of Persian Otto, warranted *genuine*, (as is all) I laid it carefully by, wrapped thickly round with cotton wool; the Atar which was certainly excellent, was in a curious bottle of rough misshapen workmanship, but ornamented with sundry circles, and lozenges, of various coloured glass. I was inclined to regard this bottle as a more genuine specimen of oriental art, than one of those, which, enamelled, with gold, stands forth in its way an *elegant* of the first water, and I hoped to have kept it long. On visiting my Otto shortly afterwards, I found that not only had it all evaporated, but destroyed its receptacle. Its strength (I conclude) had dissolved the cement of the aforesaid coloured bits of glass, and left me only an empty and plain bottle, the ugliest of the ugly. I mention this circumstance as a caution to amateurs in Atar Gul.

THE SONG OF THE ATAR GUL!

I'm come! I'm come! for you've charm'd me here
Soul of the Rose, from divine Cashmire
I'm come,—all orient, odorous, rare,
An Eden-breath in your boreal air;

I'm come. I'm come! like a seraph's sigh
Breath'd to ethereal minstrelsy,
And well ye'll deem what a sigh must be
From the tearless heirs of eternity!

I've fled my bright frame from Tirnagh's stream,
And, wand'ring here, am sweet as the dream
Of passion, which stirs the Peri's breast,
Whom her dear one's winglets fan to rest;
I've dwelt i' the rose-cup, and drunk the tone—
Of my lover the Bulbul, all low and lone;
And the maid's soul-song, who forth hath crept,
When pale stars peer'd, and night flow'rs wept.

But oh! from the songs of Cashmire's vale,
The rose, the lute, and the nightingale,
From flow'rs, whose odours were *too* divine;
From gems of beauty whose souls were mine;
From floating eyes, that could wound, yet bless,
In their warm, dark, deep, voluptuousness;
I'm come, in young iv'ry breasts to lie,
Betray'd like Love, by my luscious sigh!

I'm come, and my holy, rich, perfume
Makes faint your roses of palest bloom;
Soul, as *I* am, of an orient gem,
My aroma's too divine for them;
I'm come! but mine odorous, elfin wing
Rises from earth, and that one fair thing
First Love's first sigh, which ye know to be,
More exquisite, and more brief than *me*!

M.L.B.

SHOOTING AT THE POPINJAY

(For the Mirror.)

The Popinjay or Poppingo (signifying painted bird) is a very favourite and popular diversion in Denmark, and of which it may be interesting to give some account. A society is constituted of various members, called the "King's Shooting Club," who have a code of laws and regulations drawn up for their observance; and are under the direction of nine managers. The entrance-money is 60 dollars. Members are admitted by ballot, and on election receive a diploma on parchment, with the seal of the society.

The meetings are held in a large building in the environs, and members are decorated with an order or badge of distinction, which is the figure of a gilded bird with outstretched wings, perching on a branch of laurel. This is worn on the left breast, and attached to a button-hole of the waistcoat by a green silk riband. On the breast are marked the letters "*D.C.*" meaning "*Danish Company.*" On one side of the branch is the date 1542, and on the other 1739.² In the month of August, when the amusement commences, the members meet in their hall, and proceed in formal procession to an adjoining field on the western side of the city; where arrangements are previously made for the numerous spectators. The bird to be shot at is about the size of a parrot, gilded, and placed on the top of a high pole. On their way to the field they are attended by a band of music, which precedes the members as they march with their pieces over their shoulders.

According to a law of the institution, the competitors fire at this mark with large rifle pieces charged with balls, and rested on triangular stands. Whoever is so fortunate as to strike the wing of the Poppingo first, is entitled to a prize. This is sometimes a pair of handsome candlesticks, or a silver tea-pot and spoons. Whoever hits the tail is entitled to another prize not inferior to the last; but he who wounds the body of the bird is complimented with the principal one which weighs at least 65 ounces of silver, and is honoured with the title of the "BIRD KING." These prizes are surmounted with the royal cipher and crown. His Danish majesty opens this ceremony in person, and is entitled to the first shot, and the queen to the second, then they are followed by the other branches of the royal family in succession. The firing continues until the bird falls. In returning to the hall, the "Bird King," accompanied by the procession, first enters the room, and is placed at the head of the table laid out for an entertainment, even in the presence of his majesty. On this occasion he is understood to be invested with peculiar privileges, such as proposing toasts, directing the order of the feast, &c. and his own health is first given by the judges. The members pay 100 dollars each. The festival is honoured by the presence of the royal family, and no person excepting the members, the foreign ministers, and other distinguished persons, who are specially invited, can be admitted.

The practice of shooting at the Poppingo or Popinjay, however, is not peculiar to Denmark. In Scotland a nearly similar amusement is observed, where the head marksman receives the title of "Captain." In a future paper, perhaps, I may notice the subject again, as it may prove interesting.

² I imagine this to mean the time of the introduction of the sport, and the year when the company was instituted.

W.H.H

IMMENSE TROUT

(To the Editor of the Mirror.)

In No. 331 of the MIRROR, I observed an article on Trout-fishing in Westmoreland. The writer states, that the largest trout ever caught in that county weighed four pounds and a half. This circumstance induces me to send you the annexed account respecting trout in Kent.

The county of Kent affords a vast number of trout-streams, which are nowhere surpassed in England; and fish of extraordinary size and beauty have frequently been caught in them. Some years ago, at Farningham, (a village through which a noble trout-stream takes its course), stood a flour-mill, the proprietor of which informed my father, that he had often observed an enormous trout in the stream, near the mill-head, and that he would endeavour to catch it, in order to ascertain its real dimensions, as he was very desirous to have a picture done from it. My father having consented to undertake the picture, the proprietor caused the trout, though with much difficulty, to be caught in a stub-net. It appeared of a most beautiful colour, and was finely variegated with spots; but it possessed such exceeding strength, that the assistance of two men was necessary to hold it down on a table while the measurement was made. It proved to be twenty-six inches in length, and weighed *nine pounds*. The proprietor returned it to the water unhurt, for he would by no means suffer it to be killed, but caused food from time to time to be thrown into the stream. This food chiefly consisted of meal and flour, made into small balls, which allured the trout to remain near the mill-head. When the particulars concerning this remarkable fish were circulated, many persons came from different parts of Kent, and even from London, to obtain a sight of it.

Numerous individuals now living at Farningham can attest the truth of this account; and, probably, the painting may still be seen at that place. *September 20, 1828.*

G.W.N

INSCRIPTION FOR A BROOK

(For the Mirror.)

SUR UN RUISSEAU

Coule gentil ruisseau, sous cet épais fouillage:
Ton bruit charme les sens—il attendrit le coeur.
Coule gentil ruisseau, car ton cours est l'image
D'un beau jour écoulé dans le sein du bonheur.

J. J. ROUSSEAU

IMITATED FROM THE ABOVE

Flow, gentle stream, thy course pursue
Beneath the shade of waving bowers,
Where sunbeams lightly glancing through,
The dew-drops kiss from off the flowers.

Thy murmurs charm the list'ning ear,
And soothe the senses to repose—
No wayward passion rages here,
The heart no throbbing tumult knows.

Thy waters, as they glide along,
Reflect but images of peace,
Emblem of days, too swiftly flown,
Pass'd in the midst of happiness.

Flow on, fair stream, thy course pursue
Beneath the shade of waving bowers,
Where sunbeams lightly glancing through,
Kiss the bright dew from off the flowers.

S.N.

NATIONAL VARIETIES

(Continued from page 165.)

It is almost impossible to lay down any rule which would define the variations of national manners as having any reference to climate. We frequently find that the passage of a river, or a chain of mountains, dividing countries of the same natural features, brings us among an entirely new people, and presents us with a fresh scene in the melodrama of life. The inhabitants of Languedoc and Gascony, and the southern parts of France, are the gayest and most lively of the subjects of Charles X.; but the moment we have crossed the Pyrenees, we are among one of the gravest nations in the world, the Spaniards. Again, contrast the solemnity and deep sense of honour of the Turks, with the vivacity and, we regret to add, the deceit and bad faith of the unfortunate modern Greeks. The virtuous spirit will, we trust, revive in the Morea with the return of civilization and freedom; for, as no one will attribute the degradation of the modern Greeks from the high moral cultivation of their ancestors, to any alteration in the climate of their country, so let us never despair of the return of virtue, of poetry, of the arts and sciences, whilst Parnassus and Helicon still enjoy the same glorious sun, and whilst the Isles are still gilded by eternal summer. We want no proofs that patriotism still lives in Greece, and with that feeling will ever be associated the powers that are able to invigorate a nation.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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