

# VARIOUS

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**Various**  
**The Mirror of Literature,**  
**Amusement, and Instruction.**  
**Volume 19, No. 543,**  
**Saturday, April 21, 1832.**

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*The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction / Volume 19, No. 543,  
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**MELROSE ABBEY**

**(From a finished sketch, by a Correspondent.)**



These venerable ruins stand upon the southern bank of the Tweed, in Roxburghshire. The domestic buildings of the monastery are entirely gone; but the remains of the church connected with, as seen in the above Engraving, are described by Mr. Chambers<sup>1</sup> as "the finest specimen of Gothic architecture and Gothic sculpture of which this country (Scotland) can boast. By singular good fortune, Melrose is also one of the most entire, as it is the most beautiful, of all the ecclesiastical ruins scattered throughout this reformed land. To say that it is beautiful, is to say nothing. It is exquisitely—splendidly lovely. It is an object of infinite grace and immeasurable charm; it is fine in its general aspect and in its minutest details; it is a study—a glory." We confess ourselves delighted with Mr. Chambers's well-directed enthusiasm.

A page of interesting facts towards the history of the Abbey will be found appended to the "Recollections" of a recent visit by one of our esteemed Correspondents, in *The Mirror*, vol. x., p. 445. In the present view, the ornate Gothic style of the building is seen to advantage, but more especially the richness of the windows, and the niches above them: the latter, from drawings made "early in the reign of King William," were originally filled with statues; and, connected with the destruction of some of them, Mr. Chambers relates the following anecdote "told by the person who shows Melrose:"

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<sup>1</sup> Picture of Scotland, vol. i.

"On the eastern window of the church, there were formerly thirteen effigies, supposed to represent our Saviour and his apostles. These, harmless and beautiful as they were, happened to provoke the wrath of a praying weaver in Gattonside, who, in a moment of inspired zeal, went up one night by means of a ladder, and with a hammer and chisel, knocked off the heads and limbs of the figures. Next morning he made no scruple to publish the transaction, observing, with a great deal of exultation, to every person whom he met, that he had 'fairly stumpet thae vile paipist dirt *nou!*' The people sometimes catch up a remarkable word when uttered on a remarkable occasion by one of their number, and turn the utterer into ridicule, by attaching it to him as a nickname; and it is some consolation to think that this monster was therefore treated with the sobriquet of 'Stumpie,' and of course carried it about with him to his grave."

The exquisite beauty and elaborate ornament of Melrose can, according to the entertaining work already quoted, be told only in a volume of prose; but, as compression is the spirit of true poetry, we quote the following descriptive lines:

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,  
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;  
For the gay beams of lightsome day  
Gild but to flout the ruins gray.  
When the broken arches are dark in night,  
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;  
When the cold light's uncertain shower

Streams on the ruin'd central tower;  
When buttress and buttress, alternately,  
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;  
When silver edges the imagery,  
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;  
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,  
And the howlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,  
Then go—but go alone the while—  
Then view St. David's<sup>2</sup> ruined pile;  
And, home returning, soothly swear,  
Was never scene so sad and fair.

By a steel-clench'd postern door,  
They enter'd now the chancel tall;  
The darken'd roof rose high aloof  
On pillars, lofty, light, and small;  
The key-stone, that lock'd each ribbed aisle,  
Was a fleur-de-lys or a quatre-feuille;  
The corbells<sup>3</sup> were carved grotesque and grim;  
And the pillars, with cluster'd shafts so trim,  
With base and capital furnish'd around,  
Seem'd bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

The moon on the east oriel shone,  
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,  
By foliated tracery combined;

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<sup>2</sup> Built by David I. in 1136.

<sup>3</sup> Corbells, the projections from which the arches spring, usually cut in a fantastic face, or mask.

Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand  
'Twixt poplars straight the osier wand  
In many a freakish knot had twined;  
Then framed a spell, when the work was done,  
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.<sup>4</sup>

The monks of Melrose were caricatured for their sensuality at the Reformation. Their Abbey suffered in consequence; for the condemnator, out of the ruins, built himself a house, which may still be seen near the church. "The regality," says Mr. Chambers, "soon after passed into the hands of Lord Binning, an eminent lawyer, ancestor to the Earl of Haddington; and about a century ago, the whole became the property of the Buccleuch family."

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<sup>4</sup> Sir Walter Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

# LACONICS

(For the Mirror.)

The most important advantages we enjoy, and the greatest discoveries that science can boast, have proceeded from men who have either seen little of the world, or have secluded themselves entirely for the purposes of study. Not only those arts which are exclusively the result of calculation, such as navigation, mechanism, and others, but even agriculture, may be said to derive its improvement, if not its origin, from the same source.

Where a cause is good, an appeal should be directed to the heart rather than the head: the application comes more home, and reaches more forcibly, where it is the most necessary—the natural rather than the improved faculties of the human understanding.

Common sense is looked upon as a vulgar quality, but nevertheless it is the only talisman to conduct us prosperously through the world. The man of refined sense has been compared to one who carries about with him nothing but gold, when he may be every moment in want of smaller change.

The grand cause of failure in most undertakings is the want of unanimity. This, however, we find is not wanting where actual

danger, as well as possible advantage may accrue to the parties concerned. It is whimsical enough that thieves and other ruffians, while they bid open defiance to the laws, both of God and man, pay implicit obedience to their own.

Aristotle laid it down as a maxim "that all inquiry should begin with doubt." Whenever, then, we meet with mysteries beyond our feeble comprehension, would it not be more rational to doubt the very faculty we are employing—the capacity of our reason itself.

The most politic, because the most effectual way of governing in a family, is for the husband occasionally to lay aside his supremacy; so in public, as well as private life, that king will be most popular who does not at all times exercise his full prerogative.

It would appear that there is a great sympathy between the mind of man and falsehood: when we have a truth to tell, it takes better, if conveyed in a fable; and the rage for novels shows, that we may not only divert extremely without a syllable of truth, but truth is even compelled to borrow the habit of falsehood to secure itself an agreeable reception.

In our intercourse with others, we should endeavour to turn the conversation towards those subjects with which our companions are professionally acquainted: thus we shall agreeably please as well as innocently flatter in affording them the opportunity to shine; while we should acquire that knowledge which we could no where else obtain so well.

What an extraordinary method of reducing oneself to beggary

is gambling! The man who has but little money in the world, and knows not how to procure more without risking his life and character, must needs put it in the power of fortune to take away what he has. Put the case in the opposite light, it is just as absurd: the man who has money to spare, must needs make the experiment whether it may not become the property of another.

It is a mistake to suppose a great mind inattentive to trifles: its capacity and comprehension enable it to embrace every thing.

The failing of vanity extends throughout all classes: the poor have but little time to bestow on their persons, and yet in the selection of their clothes we find they prefer such as are of a flaring and gaudy colour.

Philosophy has not so much enabled men to overcome their weaknesses, as it has taught the art of concealing them from the world.

That a little learning is dangerous is one of our surest maxims. If knowledge does not produce the effect of ameliorating our imperfect condition, it were, without question, better let alone altogether; it is not to be made merely an appendix to the mind, but must be incorporated and identified with it.

They who have experienced sorrow are the most capable of appreciating joy; so, those only who have been sick, feel the full value of health.

By the expression "common people," is meant the man of rank as well as the more industrious peasant; for in our estimate of men, the mind, and not the eye, is the most proper judge.

Some men are, of course, more original thinkers than others, but all, without exception, who hope to appear in print with any effect, must first be readers themselves. It was said by Dr. Johnson, that more than half an author's time was occupied in reading what others had said concerning the subject he was himself writing upon.

Every man, in his more serious moments, must confess that he has done few things in the course of his life he would not wish undone; and experience must have shown him that the things he most feared would have been better than those he most prayed for.

Vanity is our dearest weakness, in more senses than one: a man will sacrifice every thing, and starve out all his other inclinations to keep alive that one.

The man who trusts entirely to nature when he is sick, runs a great risk; but he who puts himself in the hands of a physician runs a still greater: of the two, nature would seem the better nurse, for she will, at all events, act honestly, and can have no possible interest in tampering with disease.

A great idea may be thus defined:—it gives us the perception of many others, and it discovers to us all at once what we could only have arrived at by a course of reading or inquiry.

We are told to place no faith in appearances, yet it will be found a wiser course to judge from the human countenance rather than the human voice: most men place a guard over their words and their actions, but very few can blind the expression

that is conveyed by the features.

To assist our fellow-creatures is the noblest privilege of mortality: it is, in some sort, forestalling the bounty of Providence.

There is no doubt that memory, although it may be cultivated, is originally a gift of nature; so, also, application must be regarded as a natural endowment; for there are some men, however well disposed, who can never bring themselves to grapple closely with any thing.

It has been suggested that man has no real necessity for clothing. All other creatures are furnished with every necessary for their existence, and it is improbable one nobler than them all should be left in a defective condition: there are some nations, in severer climates than ours, who have no notion of clothing; and, even in civilized life, the most tender parts of the body are constantly exposed, as the face, neck, &c.

It is the temper of a blade that must be the proof of a good sword, and not the gilding of the hilt or the richness of the scabbard; so it is not his grandeur and possessions that make a man considerable, but his intrinsic merit.

*F.*

# THE KNIGHT'S RETURN

## FROM THE GERMAN

(For the Mirror.)

"Page, what sound mine ears is greeting,  
Whence the lime-trees wave in pride?"  
"Tis, sir knight, the herds that bleating,  
Wander o'er the mountain's side."

"Say, my page, what means this singing?  
Notes so sad, some ill betide;"  
"In the village, crowds are bringing  
From the chapel, home a bride."

"Say then, why so slowly passes  
Yon dark-rob'd and silent train?"  
"From the saying bridal-masses,  
Monks are coming o'er the plain."

"Speak then, why I now behold it;  
Whence yon banner's milk-white hue?"

"Ask no further, they unfold it  
To the bride an honour due."

"Say, my page, what means that writing  
Graven on yon marble-stone?"

"'Tis the youth and maiden plighting  
Love to one, and one alone."

"How, my page, that name the dearest?  
See, and true its meaning tell."

"Know, and tremble as thou hearest,  
"'Twas for secret love she fell."

"What! my page, if thus 'tis written,  
If for love she dar'd to die,  
Bertha dead! if thus 'tis written,  
As she perish'd, so will *I*."

*H.*

# SCOTCH ECONOMY

**(To the Editor.)**

The amusing letter of S.S. in No. 536, of *The Mirror*, has but so very recently met my eyes, that I have been obliged unavoidably to allow some weeks to elapse ere I noticed it. Indeed, to advert to it at all, I should not have considered necessary, but that your correspondent seems to imply a doubt as to the accuracy of my assertion, in the article "Shavings," (vide No. 533, p. 83.) Permit me, for the satisfaction of your readers to state, that I was no "flying tourist," when the fact of a very considerable waste of fuel in Edinburgh, (fuel which would, I thought, sell in England, if not wanted in Scotland,) came repeatedly, I may say, almost daily, under my own personal observation. A residence of two years in Edinburgh (yes, it certainly was "the Scottish capital," for I had previously resided during a longer period in the Irish one,) enabled me to state what I then beheld, with a scrutiny which certainly would not have been warranted by a mere casual visit of two days, two weeks, or two months; that the circumstance should have irritated S.S. I cannot consider any fault of mine; my statement was correct. The possibility of Irish labourers being employed to build in

Scotland, as they are very generally in England, does not seem to have occurred to your correspondent; I confess it did to me, but considered, to mention it in my trifling "Domestic Hint," quite unnecessary, since, had their wastefulness been hitherto unknown to their employers, it might henceforth, if they pleased "to take a hint," be by them materially checked. In days when the complaint of poverty is universal, when the working classes find it difficult to carry on any employment which shall bring them bread, and when thousands wander over the united kingdom with no apparent means of subsistence, I did not imagine that a "Hint," as to a possible source of emolument (were it confined but to half a dozen individuals) to the poor, would be considered a meet subject for ridicule. I said, or intended to say, if shavings and loose chippings of wood are of little value for fuel in Scotland, they are acceptable in England; and why, if the proprietors of new houses choose during their erection, to save the fuel they produce, and of which I repeat I have seen vast quantities burnt, and bestow it as a charity on such persons as might think it worth acceptance for sale, "over the Border;" why they should not do so, I have yet to learn.<sup>5</sup> However, waiving this scheme, which *S.S.* may be inclined to think rather Utopian, and conceding, that if

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<sup>5</sup> **Footnote 5:**Has Scotland no paupers to whom the gift of wood fuel might prove acceptable, in spite of peat? We have in England abundance of wood, yet our own poor are distressed for it, glad to pick up sticks for firing, and often steal it from fences, &c. in their necessity, and the gift of wood is to them a charity, as well as that of coals. Why should aught that could be made of use, be wantonly destroyed? It is contrary to Scripture; it is in opposition to common sense.

Scotland needs not for fuel, her refuse chips and shavings, they would not answer in that light as a marketable commodity in the sister country, still wood and wood-ashes have become of late years, agents so valuable and important in chemistry, and other sciences and arts, as to furnish another, and all-sufficient reason why no reckless destruction should be allowed of an article, every species of which may be rendered, under some modification, of utility.

Respecting the well preserved eggs of Scotland; though *S.S.* is probably aware of the circumstance, yet some of your readers may not be, their sale in England (and indeed I have understood America) brings her in no inconsiderable profit. In this country they arrive, and I have my account from an eye-witness, in large deal boxes, most curiously packed, relying solely on each other for support; since, set up perpendicularly on their ends, with no straw, heather, saw-dust, or any other material to fill the interstices between them, the fate of every box of this fragile ware depends, during its journey and unlading, on the safety or fracture of a single egg; but such is the nicety and compactness of their packing, that rarely, if ever, an accident occurs.

*M.L.B.*

# PRICE OF TEA

(To the Editor.)

As I have been a subscriber to *The Mirror* from its commencement, and very frequently refer to its pages with much pleasure and profit, I hope I may be allowed to correct a statement made in No. 541, p. 222, under the article *Tea*. It is said that the profit of one pound to sell at 7s. is 2s. 2d.

	s.	d.
Thus, cost price	2	5
Duty	2	5
Profit	2	2
	---	---
	7	0

In all retail houses of any respectability in the Tea trade, I am sure that Tea costing 2s. 5d. at the sale is never sold above 6s. per lb. and in five out of six shops of the above description 5s. 4d. and 5s. 6d. is the utmost price demanded for such Tea. I and my family have been in the trade, in one house, considerably more

than half a century, and I can assure you, that from 6*d.* to 8*d.* per lb. is the present retail profit upon Tea sold at the East India Company's sales, under 3*s.* per lb.

S.

In reply to this note, the authenticity of which we do not question, we can only refer the writer to our distinct quotation from "the evidence of Mr. Mills, a Tea Broker, before the House of Lords.' In our 15th volume, No. 414, p. 104, the proportion of profit is differently stated from an article in the *Quarterly Review*

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