Various

THE MIRROR OF LITERATURE, AMUSEMENT, AND INSTRUCTION. VOLUME 12, NO. 339, NOVEMBER 8, 1828

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Great Milton

Great Milton, a picturesque village, near Thame, in Oxfordshire, is entitled to notice in the annals of literature, as the family seat of the MILTONS, ancestors of Britain's illustrious epic poet. Of this original abode, our engraving is an accurate representation. One of Milton's ancestors forfeited his estate in the turbulent times of York and Lancaster. "Which side he took," says Johnson, "I know not; his descendant inherited no veneration for the White Rose." His grandfather was under ranger of the forest of Shotover, Oxon, who was a zealous Papist, and disinherited his son for becoming a Protestant. Milton's father being thus deprived of his family property, was compelled to quit his studies at Christ Church, Oxford, whence he went to London, and became a scrivener. He was eminent for his skill in music;[1] and from his reputation in his profession, he grew rich, and retired. He was likewise a classical scholar, as his son addresses him in one of his most elaborate Latin verses. He married a lady of the name of Caston, of a Welsh family, by whom he had two sons, John, THE POET,[2] and Christopher, who studied the law, became a bencher of the Inner Temple, was knighted at a very advanced age, and raised by James II. first to be a Baron of the Exchequer, and afterwards one of the Judges of the Common Pleas. He was much persecuted by the republicans for his adherence to the royal cause, but his composition with them was effected by his brother's interest.

Besides these two sons, he had a daughter, Anne, who was married to a Mr. Edward Philips, of Shrewsbury; by him she had two sons, John and Edward, who were educated by the poet, and from whom is derived the only authentic account of his domestic manners.

MILTON was thus by birth a gentleman; but had his descent been otherwise, his works would ennoble him to posterity.

The lord, by giddy fortune courted,
Stalks through a part by thousands played;
The minstrel, proud and unsupported,

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[1] Dr. Burney says he was "equal in science, if not in genius, to the best musicians of his age."

[2] Born in his father's house, at the Spread Eagle in Bread-street, Cheapside, December 9, 1608.

Stands forth the Noble God has made[3]

We sought our illustration of GREAT MILTON in the "Oxfordshire" of that voluminous and expensive work, "the Beauties of England and Wales;" but, strange to say, the family name of Milton is not even mentioned there, although the house is still

By chance or Nature's changing course untrimm'd.

The editor, however, tells us, on the authority of Leland, that there was at Great Milton a priory "many yeres syns;" and quotes the following quaint lines from a tablet in the church:—

> Here lye mother and babe, both without sins, Next birth
> will make her and her infant, twins.

ANCIENT FEASTINGS IN GUILDHALL, &c

(*For the Mirror*.)

The first time that Guildhall was used on festive occasions was by Sir John Shaw Goldsmith, knighted in the field of Bosworth. After building the essentials of good kitchens, and other offices, in the year 1500, he gave here the mayor's feast, which before had usually been done in Grocers' Hall. None of these bills of fare (says Pennant) have reached me; but doubtless they were very magnificent. They at length grew to such excess, that in the time of Queen Mary a sumptuary law was made to restrain the expense both of provisions and *liveries*; but I suspect, (says Pennant,) as it lessened the honour of the city, it was not long observed, for in 1554, the city thought proper to renew the order of council, by way of reminding their fellow citizens of their relapse into luxury. Among the great feasts given here on public occasions, may be reckoned that given in 1612, on occasion of the unhappy marriage of the Prince Palatine with Elizabeth, daughter of James I. The next was in 1641, when Charles I. returned from his imprudent and inefficacious journey into Scotland. But our ancestors far surpassed these feasts. Richard, Earl of Cornwall, brother to Henry III. had, at his marriage feast, (as is recorded,) 30,000 dishes of meat. Nevil, archbishop of York, had, at his consecration, a feast sufficient for 10,000 people. One of the abbots of St. Augustine, at Canterbury, invited 5,000 guests to his installation dinner. And King Richard II., at a Christmas feast, had daily 26 oxen, 300 sheep, besides fowls, and all other provisions proportionably. So anciently, at a call of sergeants-at-law, each sergeant (says Fortescue) spent 1,600 crowns in feasting.

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[3] W. Kennedy—in the *Amulet* for 1829.

P.T.W.

MAXIMS TO LIVE BY

(*For the Mirror*.)

To have too much forethought is the part of a wretch; to have too little is the part of a fool.

Self-will is so ardent and active that it will break a world to pieces to make a stool to sit on.

Remember always to mix good sense with good things, or they will become disgusting.

If there is any person to whom you feel a dislike, that is the person of whom you ought never to speak.

Irritability urges us to take a step as much too soon, as sloth does too late.

Say the strongest things you can with candour and kindness to a man's face, and make the best excuse you can for him with truth and justice, behind his back.

Men are to be estimated, as Johnson says, by the mass of character. A block of tin may have a grain of silver, but still it is tin; and a block of silver may have an alloy of tin; but still it is silver. Some men's characters are excellent, yet not without alloy. Others base, yet tend to great ends. Bad men are made the same use of as scaffolds; they are employed as means to erect a building, and then are taken down and destroyed.

If a man has a quarrelsome temper, let him alone; the world will soon find him employment. He will soon meet with some one stronger than himself, who will repay him better than you can. A man may fight duels all his life if he is disposed to quarrel.

A person who objects to tell a friend of his faults, because he has faults of his own, acts as a surgeon would, who should refuse to dress another's wound because he had a dangerous one himself.

Some evils are irremediable, they are best neither seen nor heard; by seeing and hearing things that you cannot remove, you will create implacable adversaries; who being guilty aggressors, never forgive.

W.J.

Manners & Customs of all Nations

CUSTOMS RELATING TO THE BEARD

(*For the Mirror*.)

It was a custom among the Romans to consecrate the first growth of their beard to some god; thus Nero at the Gynick games, which he exhibited in the Septa, cut off the first growth of his beard, which he placed in a golden box, adorned with pearls, and then consecrated it in the Capitol to Jupiter.

The nations in the east used mostly to nourish their beards with great care and veneration, and it was a punishment among them, for licentiousness and adultery, to have the beard of the offending parties publicly cut off. Such a sacred regard had they for the preservation of their beards, that if a man pledged it for the payment of a debt, he would not fail to pay it. Among the Romans a bearded man was a proverbial expression for a man of virtue and simplicity. The Romans during grief and mourning used to let their hair and beard grow, (Livy) while the Greeks on the contrary used to cut off their hair and shave their beards on such occasions.[4](Seneca.) When Alexander the Great was going to fight against the Persians, one of his officers brought him word that all was ready for battle, and demanded if he required anything further. On which Alexander replied, "nothing but that the Macedonians cut off their beards—for there is not a better handle to take a man by than the beard." This shows Alexander intended close fighting. Shaving was not introduced among the Romans till late. Pliny tells us that P. Ticinias was the first who brought a barber to Rome, which was in the 454th year from the building of the city. Scipio Africanus was the first among the Romans who shaved his beard, and Adrianus the emperor (says Dion,) was the first of all the Caesars who nourished his beard.

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[4] From this custom probably originated that in England, of widows concealing their hair for a stated period after the death of their husbands. Indeed, we know of more than one instance of a widow closely *cutting off* her hair. But these sorrowful observances

The Roman servants or slaves were not allowed to poll their hair, or shave their beards. The Jews thought it ignominious to lose their beards, 2 Sam. c. x. v. 4. Among the Catti, a nation of Germany, a young man was not allowed to shave or cut his hair till he had slain an enemy. (Tacitus.) The Lombards or Longobards, derived their Fame from the great length of their beards. When Otho the Great used to speak anything serious, he swore by his beard, which covered his breast. The Persians are fond of long beards. We read in Olearius' Travels of a king of Persia who had commanded his steward's head to be cut off, and on its being brought to him, he remarked, "what a pity it was, that a man possessing such fine mustachios, should have been executed," but added he, "Ah! it was your own fault." The Normans considered the beard as an indication of distress and

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are becoming less and less frequent.—ED.</>

misery. The Ancient Britons used always to wear the hair on the upper lip, and so strongly were they attached to this custom, that when William the Conqueror ordered them to shave their upper lip, it was so repugnant to their feelings, that many of them chose rather to abandon their country than resign their mustachios. In the 15th century, the beard was worn long. In the 16th, it was suffered to grow to an amazing length, (see the portraits of Bishop Gardiner, and Cardinal Pole, during Queen Mary's reign,) and very often made use of as a tooth-pick case. Brantome tells us that Admiral Coligny wore his tooth-pick in his beard.

C.B.Z.

SINGULAR CUSTOM AT ROUEN

(*For the Mirror*.)

The chapter of Rouen, (which consists of the archbishop, a dean, fifty canons, and ten prebendaries,) have, ever since the year 1156, enjoyed the annual privilege of pardoning, on Ascension-day, some individual confined within the jurisdiction of the city for murder.

On the morning of Ascension-day, the chapter, having heard many examinations and confessions read, proceed to the election of the criminal who is to be pardoned; and, the choice being made, his name is transmitted in writing to the parliament, which assemble on that day at the palace. The parliament then walk in procession to the great chamber, where the prisoner is brought before them in irons, and placed on a stool; he is informed that the choice has fallen upon him, and that he is entitled to the privilege of St. Romain. After this form, he is delivered into the hands of the chaplain, who, accompanied by fifty armed men, conveys him to a chamber, where the chains are taken from his legs and bound about his arms; and in this condition he is conducted to a place named the Old Tower, where he awaits the coming of the procession. After some little time has elapsed, the procession sets out from the cathedral; two of the canons bear the shrine in which the relics of St. Romain are presumed to be preserved. When they have arrived at the Old Tower, the shrine is placed in the chapel, opposite to the criminal, who appears kneeling, with the chains on his arms. Then one of the canons, having made him repeat the confession, says the prayers usual at the time of giving absolution; after which service, the prisoner kneeling still, lifts up the shrine three times, amid the acclamations of the people assembled to behold the ceremony. The procession then returns to the cathedral, followed by the criminal, wearing a chaplet of flowers on his head, and carrying the shrine of the saint. After mass has been performed, he has a very serious exhortation addressed to him by a monk; and, lastly, he is conducted to an apartment near the cathedral, and is supplied with refreshments and a bed for that night. In the morning he is dismissed.

G.W.N.

THE SKETCH-BOOK

ABBOTSFORD,

And Sir Walter Scott's Study.

[The following extracts are from the private letter of a distinguished American gentleman, and form part of one of the most striking articles in "The Anniversary for 1829," edited by Allan Cunningham. We intended the whole article for our Supplementary "Spirit of the Annuals;" but as our engraving will necessarily occupy a few days longer, during which time this description of *Abbotsford* will be printed in fifty different forms, we are induced to take it by the forelock, and appropriate it for our present number. It is, perhaps, one of the most, if not the most, graphic paper in the whole list of "Annuals," notwithstanding there are scores of brilliant gems left for our Supplement. Certain arts must have their own pace; but, in our arduous catering for novelties for the MIRROR, we often have occasion to wish that *block-machinery* could be applied to engraving on wood.]

"Stepping westward," as Wordsworth says, from the hall, you find yourself in a narrow, low, arched room, which runs quite across the house, having a blazoned window again at either extremity, and filled all over with smaller pieces of armour and weapons, such as swords, firelocks, spears, arrows, darts, daggers, &c. &c. &c. Here are the pieces, esteemed most precious by reason of their histories respectively. I saw, among the rest, Rob Roy's gun, with his initials, R.M.C. i.e. Robert Macgregor Campbell, round the touch-hole; the blunderbuss of Hofer, a present to Sir Walter from his friend Sir Humphrey Davy; a most magnificent sword, as magnificently mounted, the gift of Charles the First to the great Montrose, and having the arms of Prince Henry worked on the hilt; the hunting bottle of bonnie King Jamie; Bonaparte's pistols (found in his carriage at Waterloo, I believe), *cum multis aliis*. I should have mentioned that stag-horns and bulls' horns (the petrified relics of the old mountain monster, I mean), and so forth, are suspended in great abundance above all the doorways of these armories; and that, in one corner, a dark one as it ought to be, there is a complete assortment of the old Scottish instruments of torture, not forgetting the very thumbikins under which Cardinal Carstairs did *not* flinch, and the more terrific iron crown of Wisheart the Martyr, being a sort of barred headpiece, screwed on the victim at the stake, to prevent him from crying aloud in his agony.

Beyond the smaller, or rather I should say, the narrower armoury, lies the dining parlour proper, however; and though there is nothing Udolphoish here, yet I can well believe that when lighted up and the curtains drawn at night, the place may give no bad notion of the private snuggery of some lofty lord abbot of the time of the Canterbury Tales. The room is a very handsome one, with a low and very richly carved roof of dark oak again; a huge projecting bow window, and the dais elevated *more majorum*; the ornaments of the roof, niches for lamps, &c. &c. in short, all the minor details, are, I believe, fac similes after Melrose. The walls are hung in crimson, but almost entirely covered with pictures, of which the most remarkable are—the parliamentary general, Lord Essex, a full length on horseback; the Duke of Monmouth, by Lely; a capital Hogarth, by himself; Prior and Gay, both by Jervas; and the head of Mary Queen of Scots, in a charger, painted by Amias Canrod, the day after the decapitation at Fotheringay, and sent some years ago as a present to Sir Walter from a Prussian nobleman, in whose family it had been for more than two centuries. It is a most deathlike performance, and the countenance answers well enough to the coins of the unfortunate beauty, though not at all to any of the portraits I have happened to see. I believe there is no doubt as to the authenticity of this most curious picture. Among various family pictures, I noticed particularly Sir Walter's great grandfather, the old cavalier mentioned in one of the epistles in Marmion, who let his beard grow after the execution of Charles I., and who here appears, accordingly, with a most venerable appendage of silver whiteness, reaching even unto his girdle.

A narrower passage leads to a charming breakfast room, which looks to the Tweed on one side, and towards Yarrow and Ettricke, famed in song, on the other: a cheerful room, fitted up with novels, romances, and poetry, I could perceive, at one end; and the other walls covered thick and thicker with a most valuable and beautiful collection of watercolour drawings, chiefly by Turner and Thomson of Duddingstone, the designs, in short, for the magnificent work entitled "Provincial Antiquities of Scotland." There is one very grand oil painting over the chimney-piece, Fastcastle, by Thomson, alias the Wolf's Crag of the Bride of Lammermoor, one of the most majestic and melancholy sea-pieces I ever saw; and some large black and white drawings of the Vision of Don Roderick, by Sir James Steuart of Allanbank (whose illustrations of Marmion and Mazeppa you have seen or heard of), are at one end of the parlour. The room is crammed with queer cabinets and boxes, and in a niche there is a bust of old Henry Mackenzie, by Joseph of Edinburgh. Returning towards the armoury, you have, on one side of a most religious looking corridor, a small greenhouse, with a fountain playing before it—the very fountain that in days of yore graced the cross of Edinburgh, and used to flow with claret at the coronation of the Stuarts—a pretty design, and a standing monument of the barbarity of modern innovation. From the small armoury you pass, as I said before, into the drawing-room, a large, lofty, and splendid *salon*

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