

VARIOUS

ENGLISH JESTS

AND

ANECDOTES

Various English Jests and Anecdotes

*http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25715317
English Jests and Anecdotes / Collected from Various Sources:*

Содержание

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

86

Various English Jests and Anecdotes / Collected from Various Sources

LACHRYMAL CANALS

A lady who kept a boarding-school some years ago, near London, wrote a novel, in which, among other extravagant expressions, occurred the following: – “His Lordship could not weep; the tale of sorrow had frozen his lachrymal canals.” A person to whom the fair author lent a copy of her work, returned it, after a perusal, with this note appended in pencil to the word *canals*: “Madam, I am a keen skater; would they bear?”

THE DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE

This famous lady, who wrote many plays and romances, in the most extravagant taste of the reign of Charles II., asked Bishop Wilkins, how she could get up to the world he had discovered in the moon; for, as the way must needs be long, a person travelling thither would require to have some resting places by the way?

“Oh, madam,” said the bishop, “your grace, who has built so many castles in the air, can be at no loss.”

PENNANT’S ANTIPATHY TO WIGS

Mr. Pennant had an unaccountable antipathy to *wigs*. Dining at Chester with an officer who wore a wig, when they had drunk pretty freely, he, after much impatience, and many wistful looks, started up, seized the wig, and threw it into the fire. It was in flames in a moment, and so was the officer, who ran to his sword. Down stairs flew Pennant, and the officer after him, through all the streets of Chester. But Pennant escaped from superior local knowledge. This a wag called *Pennant’s Tour in Chester*.

A LINE FOR THE OTHER WORLD

A felon who was just on the point of being turned off, asked the hangman if he had any message to send to the place where he was going? “I will trouble you with *a line*,” replied the finisher of the law, placing the cord under his left ear.

WIT AND THE OPPOSITE

Dryden and Otway lived opposite to each other in Queen Street. Otway coming one night from the tavern, chalked upon

Dryden's door, "Here lives John Dryden; he is a *wit*." Dryden knew his handwriting, and, next day, chalked on Otway's door, "Here lives Tom Otway; he is *oppo-site*."

PURGATORY

"With regard to purgatory," says an old popish writer, "with regard to purgatory, I will not *say* a great deal; but this much I *think*, – that the Protestants may go farther, and fare worse."

GREED IN LETTERS

It being proved, on a trial at Guildhall, that a man's name was really *Inch*, who pretended that it was *Linch*. "I see," said the judge, "the old proverb is verified in this man, who being allowed an *Inch*, has taken an *L*."

KEEPING ONE'S BED

A drunken fellow, to maintain himself at his pot, having sold all his goods, except his feather bed, at last made away with that too; when, being reproved for it by some of his friends, "Why," said he, "I am very well, thank God; and why should *I keep my bed*?"

JUDGE JEFFRIES

When Jeffries was told that the Prince of Orange would very soon land, and it was reported that a manifesto, stating his inducements, objects, &c., was already written: “Pray, my lord chief-justice,” said a gentleman present, “what do you think will be the *heads* of this manifesto?” “*Mine will be one,*” replied he.

A WARLIKE PRELATE

Richard II., on the pope reclaiming, as a son of the church, a bishop he had taken prisoner in battle, sent him the prelate’s *coat of mail*, and, in the words of Scripture, asked him, “Know whether this be *thy son’s coat* or no?”

OTHER IRONS IN THE FIRE

Mrs. B – desired Dr. Johnson to give his opinion of a new work she had just written; adding, that if it would not do, she begged him to tell her, for she had other *irons in the fire*, and in case of its not being likely to succeed, she could bring out something else. “Then,” said the Doctor, after having turned over a few of the leaves, “I advise you, madam, to put it where your *other irons* are.”

FAMILY PRIDE

The proud Duke of Somerset employed Seymour the painter to make some portraits of his running horses. One day, at dinner, he drank to him with a sneer: "Cousin Seymour, your health." The painter replied, "I really do believe that I have the honour to be of your grace's family." The duke, offended, rose from the table, and sent his steward to pay Seymour and dismiss him. Another painter of horses was sent for, who, finding himself unworthy to finish Seymour's work, honestly told the duke so. On this the haughty peer condescended once more to summon his cousin. Seymour answered his mandate in these words: "My Lord, I shall now prove that I am of your grace's family, for I will not come."

JOKES OF ARCHY ARMSTRONG

James I. was complaining of the leanness of his hunting horse, and swore by his soul, he could see no reason why the animal should not be as fat as the horses of his subjects, seeing that he bestowed upon him good feeding and keeping, and rode him very easily. Archy Armstrong, his fool, who was standing by, said he would tell his majesty how to raise the animal's flesh, and that very speedily. "I pray thee, fool, how?" inquired the king.

“Make him a bishop,” answered Archy, who seems to have had an antipathy to that class of dignitaries, “and if he is not soon as fat as he can wallow, *ride me!*”

Being desired to say a grace at the royal table, where Archbishop Laud was present, he gave one in these emphatic and ambiguous words: “All praise to God, and little Laud to the deil.” (Laud, it must be understood, was a man of very small stature; the Puritans gave him the punning epithet of his *Little Grace*.)

SIR GODFREY KNELLER

Being informed that Jervis the painter was come from London to – in a coach and four, Sir Godfrey, who had an unaccountable antipathy to that gentleman, cried, “By gar, if de horses draw no better dan himself, he will never get back to town again.”

PACE, THE JESTER

Pace, jester to Queen Elizabeth, was so bitter in his retorts upon her, that he was forbid her presence. After he had been absent for some time, a few of his friends entreated her Majesty to receive him back into favour, engaging for him, that he would be more guarded in his discourse for the future. The very first time they again met Pace was as bad as ever. “Come on, Pace,”

said the Queen in a gracious humour; “now, we shall hear of our faults.” “No, madam,” said Pace; “I never talk of what is discoursed by all the world.”

QUEEN ELIZABETH AND SIR THOMAS GRESHAM

When Queen Elizabeth was at Osterby, near Brentford, the seat of Sir Thomas Gresham, who built the Royal Exchange, she pointed out to him a wall on one side of the garden, which confined, in some respect, the prospect. Sir Thomas seemed to take no farther notice of her majesty’s remark at that time, than to coincide in it; but as soon as she retired to her chamber, he had a number of workmen in readiness, who had the wall entirely pulled down by morning. The Queen, upon her walking in the gardens, was surprised at the alteration; but, turning about to Sir Thomas, with great readiness observed, “She did not wonder that he that could build *a Change*, could so readily *change a building*.”

QUEEN ELIZABETH’S DELICACY OF SCENT

Sir Roger Williams, who was a Welshman, and had been a tailor, though afterwards a good soldier, preferred a request to Queen Elizabeth: she refused him; but he, another time, moved it again. He had on a pair of new boots, and the Queen could not

bear the smell of leather. Stopping him short, she put her hand to her nose, and cried, "Fah, Williams, prithee be gone; for thy boots stink." "Tut, tut," answered he; "it is my suit that stinks."

WIT IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

William the Conqueror being sick, long kept his chamber; whereat the French King scoffing, said, "The King of England lies long in child-bed." When William heard this, he said, "When I am churched, there shall be a thousand lights in France." He made good what he said, by wasting the French frontier with fire and sword.

CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT

A Catholic asked a Protestant where his religion was before the time of Luther? "Where was your face this morning," said the Protestant, "before it was washed?"

SELLING LANDS

A yeoman of Kent selling some lands, the lawyer was puzzled as to the designation which he should have in the deeds. "Say *gentleman*," suggested a bystander; "for selling lands is a gentleman's trade."

LORD BURLEIGH

Queen Elizabeth was naturally dilatory enough in suits, and the Lord Treasurer Burleigh, being a wise man, and willing therein to feed her humour, would say to her, “Madam, you do well to let visitors stay; for, you know, *bis dat cito dat*: if you grant them speedily, they will come again the sooner.”

WISE PRECAUTION

Captain Robert Bacon, revelling at Sir William Paston’s, had his sack served him in a curious Venice glass, very much under the size he used to trade in. So, after a long contemplation of his measure, “Sir William,” said he, “If you value this glass, as I believe you do, tie a good long string to it, to draw it up again; for I am sure I shall swallow it some time or other.”

YOUNG PRIVY-COUNSELLORS

In the time of James the First, when privy-counsellors multiplied very fast, and were sometimes admitted at a very green age, some one remarked one day that the table would be soon too little to hold them. “Why,” said another, “some must just do like other children, then, and sit on the joint stools

without.”

WINKING AT NEGLECT

As a regiment of soldiers were marching through a country town, the captain (a strict disciplinarian) observed that one of the drums did not beat, and ordered a lieutenant to inquire the reason. The fellow, on being interrogated, whispered to the lieutenant, “I have two ducks and a turkey in my drum, and the turkey is for his honour:” which, being whispered to the captain, “D – n the fellow,” cried the captain, “why did he not say he was lame? I don’t want men to do their duty when they’re not able.”

TRAVELLING POST

A traveller speaking of the many countries and cities he had seen, one of the company asked him if he had ever been in Cosmography? He, taking it for the name of a city, said, “We saw it at a distance; but, as we went post, we could not visit it.”

CROSS ANSWERS

A prisoner being brought up to Bow Street, the following dialogue passed between him and the sitting magistrate: “How do you live?” “Pretty well, sir; generally a joint and pudding at

dinner.” “I mean, sir, how do you get your bread?” “I beg your worship’s pardon; sometimes at the baker’s, and sometimes at the chandler’s shop.” “You may be as witty as you please, sir; but I mean simply to ask you, how do you do?” “Tolerably well, I thank your worship: I hope your worship is well.”

CHARLES THE SECOND’S POCKETS

No prince was more addressed than Charles II., while the very people who sent these generous, nay, extravagant offers, scarcely allowed him the necessary supplies. Killigrew saw this in the proper view, and once gave private orders to the king’s tailor to make one of his majesty’s coat-pockets of a most enormous size, and the other scarcely larger than a thimble. The king being informed that this was done at the desire of Killigrew, asked him the reason. “May it please your majesty,” replied the arch wag, “the large pocket is to receive the *addresses* of your subjects, and the other is to put the *money* in, which they intend to present you with.”

SINGULAR MALAPROPOS

A gentleman sitting in one of the boxes in company with Lord North, not knowing his lordship, entered into conversation with him, and seeing two ladies come into an opposite box,

turned to him, and addressed him with, "Pray, sir, can you inform me who is that ugly woman that is just come in?" "O," replied his lordship, with great good humour, "that is *my wife*." "Sir, I ask you ten thousand pardons, I do not mean her, I mean that shocking monster who is along with her." "That," replied his lordship, "is *my daughter*."

PUNISHMENT OF THEFT

Lord North who was very much troubled with the gout, one day feeling some symptoms of an approaching fit, ordered his servant to bring him his gouty shoes. The fellow, after looking for them some time in vain, returned, and told his master he believed they were stolen, and as an addenda to the information, muttered a few hearty curses against the thief. "Poh! poh!" said the good-humoured peer, "do not be ill-natured; all the harm I wish the rascal is, that the shoes may fit him."

CUTTING MISTAKE

A Frenchman, on landing at Dover, went into a barber's shop to get shaved. The poor man's cheeks were so much collapsed, that the barber was under the necessity of thrusting his fingers into his customer's mouth to assist the operation. "O mon Dieu, mon Dieu!" exclaimed the Frenchman, whilst the barber was

dashing away, “me be damnably cut.” “Confound your thin lanthorn jaws,” replied Strop, “I have cut my fingers cursedly *through your cheek.*”

DO THAT IF YOU CAN

In the great Dutch war, in the reign of Charles II., the English fleet and that of Holland fought in the Channel for three days successively; engaging in the day, and lying-to at night. But, just as they were preparing to renew the action, advice came off that an armistice had been concluded, and the hostile parties began to exercise mutual civilities. On board a Dutch man of war, which lay alongside of an English first-rate, was a sailor so remarkably active, as to run to the mast head and stand upright upon the truck, after which he cut several capers, and concluded with standing on his head, to the great astonishment and terror of the spectators. On coming down from his exploit, all his countrymen expressed their joy by huzzahing, and thereby signifying their triumph over the English. One of the British tars, piqued for the honour of his country, ran up to the top like a cat, and essayed, with all his might, to throw up his heels as the Dutchman had done; but, not having the skill, he missed his poise, and came down rather faster than he went up. The rigging, however broke his fall, and he lighted on his feet unhurt. As soon as he had recovered his speech, he ran to the side, and exultingly cried out to the Dutchmen, “There, d – n your eyes, do that if you can.”

PUN UPON PUN

Strange, Moore, and Wright, three notorious punsters, were on a certain occasion dining together, when Moore observed, "There is but one knave among us, and that's *Strange*." "Oh no," said Wright, "there is one *Moore*." "Ay," said Strange, "that's *Wright*."

CAT O' NINE TAILS

The captain of one of the British frigates, a man of undaunted bravery, had a natural antipathy to a cat. A sailor who, from misconduct, had been ordered a flogging, saved his back by presenting to his captain the following petition: —

By your honour's command
A culprit I stand —
An example to all the ship's crew;
I am pinioned and stript,
And condemned to be whipt,
And if I am flogged – 'tis my due!
A cat I am told,
In abhorrence you hold:
Your honour's aversion is mine! —
If a cat with one tail
Makes your stout heart to fail,

O, save me from one that has nine!

PUNCTILIO

The students at Oxford stand much upon punctilio in the matter of making acquaintance; insomuch that one will not hold the least intercourse with another, unless the proper formula of introduction has been gone through. It is told, as a quiz upon them for this peculiarity, that a young gentleman, who had recently entered one of the colleges, happening to be seized with cramp while bathing in the Isis, and being on the point of sinking, probably to rise no more, a youth of older standing, who leant over a bridge near the scene, thus soliloquized: – “Good God! what a pity I was not introduced to that fresh-man – perhaps I might have saved him.”

MAKING FREE

Some time ago, a member of Parliament applied to the post-office to know why some of his franks had been *charged*. The answer was: “We supposed, sir, they were not of your writing; the *hand* is not the *same*.” “Why, not *precisely* the same; but the truth is, I happened to be *a little tipsy* when I wrote them.” “Then, sir, will you be so good, in future, to write ‘*drunk*’ when you make *free*.”

HENRIETTA MARIA

Henrietta, queen of Charles I., when pregnant of her first child, longed very much for some cheese. An attendant expressed surprise at her majesty having an appetite for such coarse meat, and remarked that if the Welshmen heard of it they would take it as a high compliment. "Oh," said the queen, "content yourself; what do you know but the Prince of Wales may long for it."

A TRUE JOE MILLER

In the time of Joe Miller there was an old deaf player of the name of Cross, who, being very vain, took every pains to conceal his infirmity. Joe, walking along Fleet Street with a friend, saw Cross on the opposite side, and told his acquaintance he should see some fine sport. So beckoning to Cross with his finger, he opened his mouth wide, and began to assume the attitude and gestures of one who bawls very loud to a distant object. Cross, thinking that Miller had halloosed to him, and taking that as too broad a signification of his infirmity, came puffing across the street as hard as he could, and "What the devil," cried he to Joe, "do you make such a noise for? do you think one cannot hear?"

CHARLES MATTHEWS

Matthews being asked what he was going to do with his son (the young man's profession was to be that of an architect), "Why," answered the comedian, "he is going to *draw houses* like his father."

GENEALOGY

James the First, when he came from Scotland to England, stopped at Lumley Castle, which contained some curious portraits of the ancestors of the Lumleys in the habits of their several times. These were shewn to the king, together with a genealogical tree of the ancient pedigree of the family, carrying it far beyond what his majesty thought credible; upon which, he said to the Bishop of Durham, who shewed it, that he "did not know before that Adam's surname was Lumley?"

STOCKS LOW

A wag passing through a country town in the north, observed a fellow placed in the stocks, – "My friend," said he, "I advise you by all means to sell out." "I should have no objection, your honour," he replied drily, "but at present they seem much too

low.”

HISTORICAL DOUBTS

An auctioneer, at a sale of antiquities, put up a helmet, with the following candid observation: – “This, ladies and gentlemen, is a helmet of Romulus, the Roman Founder; but whether he was a brass or iron founder, I cannot tell.”

FEMALE CONSTANCY

It was a beautiful turn given by a great lady, who, being asked where her husband was, when he lay concealed for being deeply concerned in a conspiracy, resolutely answered, “She had hid him.” This confession drew her before the king, who told her, nothing but her discovering where her lord was concealed, could save her from the torture. “And will that do?” said the lady. “Yes,” replied the king, “I give you my word for it.” “Then,” answered she, “I have hid him in my heart, where you’ll find him.” Which answer so charmed the king that he granted a free pardon to both the husband and wife.

BOND TO THE DEVIL

Colonel Bond, who had been one of King Charles the First’s

judges, died a day or two before Cromwell; and it was strongly reported everywhere that the Protector was dead. "No," said a gentleman, who knew better, "he has only given *Bond* to the devil for his further appearance."

HANGING FOR FASHION'S SAKE

Lord Mansfield, being willing to save a man who stole a watch, desired the jury to value it at tenpence; upon which the prosecutor cried out, "Tenpence, my lord! why the very fashion of it cost me five pounds!" "Oh," said his lordship, "We must not hang a man for *fashion's sake*."

TIME ENOUGH

An officer in the fleet of Earl St. Vincent, asked one of the captains, who was gallantly bearing down upon the Spanish fleet, "Whether he had reckoned the number of the enemy?" "No," replied the latter, "it will be time enough to do that when we have made them strike!"

POSTS AND RAILING

Mr. Pitt was forming a park about Walmer Castle, thinking to enclose it with posts and rails. As he was one day calculating the

expense, a gentleman stood by, and told him that he did not go the cheapest way to work. "Why?" said the Premier. "Because," replied the gentleman, "if you will find *posts* the country will find *railing*."

SUPERFICIAL KNOWLEDGE

A young man, in a large company, descanting very flippantly on a subject, his knowledge of which was evidently very superficial, the Duchess of Devonshire asked his name. "'Tis Scarlet," replied a gentleman who stood by. "That may be," said her grace, "and yet he is not *deep read*."

JAMES THE FIRST

King James the First gave all manner of liberty and encouragement to the exercise of buffoonery, and he took great delight in it himself. Happening once to bear somewhat hard on one of his Scotch courtiers, "By my soul," retorted the peer, "he that made your majesty a king, spoiled the best fool in Christendom!"

PRECEDENCY AT THE GALLOWS

Two gentlemen, one named Chambers, the other Garret,

riding by Tyburn together, said the former, "That is a very pretty tenement, if it had but a *Garret*." "You fool!" replied Garret, "don't you know there must be *Chambers* first."

THE LEAST EVIL

One asked his friend, why he married so *little* a wife? "Why," said he, "I thought you had known that of all evils we should choose the *least*."

MANFUL ASSISTANCE

The master of a ship, walking about on deck, called into the hold, "Who is there?" A boy answered, "Will, sir." "What are you doing?" "Nothing, sir," "Is Tom there?" "Yes," cried Tom. "What are you doing, Tom?" "Helping Will, sir!"

GOOD ADVICE

A forward young scholar wishing to appear in the pulpit, consulted an older preacher as to what text he should choose. The latter, wishing him well, and knowing he was too young, suggested this text, – "Go to Jericho till your beard be grown." The scholar, it is said, took the sage's advice, and waiting a few years, proved eventually an excellent preacher.

“I WISH I COULD.”

A gentleman, travelling in a long lane, where his horse could hardly get through the mire, met a peasant, of whom he inquired the way to a certain place. “Straight forward,” said the man, “you cannot go out of your way.” “Faith, I fear so,” said the querist; “I wish I could!”

LENTHALL, THE SPEAKER

In the time of the Long Parliament, Sandys, a gentleman of bold spirit, was examined before the House, when Lenthall, the Speaker, put some ridiculous and impertinent questions to him, asking, at last, what countryman he was! “Of Kent,” said Sandys; “and pray, may I demand the same of you?” “I am out of the west,” said Lenthall. “By my troth,” replied Sandys, “so I thought, for all the wise men come out of the east.”

EXHUMATION OF THE REGICIDES

In the crowd which attended the exhumation of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw, after the Restoration, some one exclaimed, “Who would have ever thought to see Cromwell hanged for high treason!” “Oh, sir,” said another, “this is nothing strange: see,”

he added, pointing to Bradshaw, “there is a *president* for it.”

GOOD SUBSTITUTE FOR LAW

“I defy you,” said a stubborn culprit to a justice during the Civil War; “there is no law now.” “Then,” said the justice gravely to his servants, “if there be no law, bring me a rope.” The knave instantly knocked under.

JUDGE JEFFRIES

Jeffries, examining an old fellow with a long beard, told him, he supposed he had a conscience quite as long as that natural ornament of his visage. “Does your lordship measure consciences by beards?” said the man; “that is strange, seeing you are yourself shaven.”

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT

Sir William Davenant, the dramatic poet, had no nose. He was one day walking along the Mews, when a female beggar followed him, crying, “Ah, God preserve your eyesight, sir! the Lord preserve your eyesight!” “Why, good woman,” said he, “do you pray so anxiously for my eyesight?” “Ah, dear sir,” answered the woman, “if it should please God that you grow dim-sighted,

you have no place to hang your spectacles on!”

CHARLES II

Charles the Second laid it down as a rule, that in his convivial parties the *king was always absent*. Being one night in a select party of this kind, one of his courtiers, who had contributed a good deal to his mirth, ventured to ask him for a place. Charles, though he liked the man as a companion, was yet unwilling to break through a fixed rule; and he therefore quickly replied, — “You may depend on it, I will speak to the king to-morrow about it.”

CHARLES II. UPON HONOUR

Charles the Second, being at hazard one Twelfth Night at court, with the Duke of Buckingham and others, a well-dressed sharper, who stood behind the Duke’s chair, took the liberty to pick his pocket of a diamond snuff-box, which was very valuable. Just in the instant of his stealing it, the king happened to fix his eyes on him; on which the sharper, with great presence of mind, put his finger up to his nose, thereby insinuating it was done out of fun. The king knew the world too well to be gulled even by such an artifice; but, however, held his tongue. Some time after, the Duke missing his box, his majesty told him the circumstance.

“Good God, sire,” says his grace, “why did not your majesty tell me of it in time?” “Oh!” says the king, “I could not do that; I *was upon honour*.”

DUKE OF NORFOLK

The first Protestant Duke of Norfolk, carrying the sword of state before James II. to his chapel, stopped at the door, and would go no further. The king said, “Your father would have gone farther:” to which the Duke answered, “Your father would not have gone so far.”

HUGH PETERS

Hugh Peters, the puritan, preaching on the Devil entering the swine, said, – “My beloved, for conclusion, I shall give three observations on the text; which, for your better remembrance, I shall clothe in three English proverbs. 1. The Devil went from men into swine: *he had rather play at small game than stand out*. 2. When he possessed them, they ran down a bank into the sea: *they must needs go whom the Devil drives*. 3. They were all, no less than two thousand, drowned in the sea: *the Devil brought his hogs to a fair market*.”

HANGING TOGETHER

Hugh Peters, preaching a sermon to one of the Companies of London, the object of which was to exhort them to love and unity, he concluded by expressing a wish, that they might all join in concord, accord, or any other cord, so that they might all hang together.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON

Sir Isaac Newton was once riding over Salisbury Plain, when a boy keeping sheep called to him, "Sir, you had better make haste on, or you will get a wet jacket." Newton, looking round and observing neither clouds nor a speck on the horizon, jogged on, taking very little notice of the rustic's information. He had made but a few miles, when a storm suddenly arising, drenched him to the skin. Surprised at the circumstance, and determined, if possible, to ascertain how an ignorant boy had attained a precision and knowledge in the weather of which the wisest philosophers would be proud, he rode back, wet as he was. "My lad," said Newton, "I'll give thee a guinea, if thou wilt tell me how thou canst foretell the weather so truly." "Will ye, sir? I will then!" and the boy, scratching his head, and holding out his hand for the guinea; "Now, sir," having received the money, and

pointing to his sheep, “when you see that black ram turn his tail towards the wind, ’tis a sure sign of rain within an hour.” “What!” exclaimed the philosopher, “must I, in order to foretell the weather, stay here and watch which way that black ram turns his tail?” “Yes, sir.” Off rode Newton, quite satisfied with his discovery.

SHERIDAN AND THE STRANGER

Sheridan was one day accosted by a gentlemanly looking elderly man, who had forgotten the name of the street to which he was going, when the following dialogue ensued:

Stranger. “Sir, I wish to go to a street the name of which I have forgotten; it is a very uncommon name; pray, sir, can you tell me of any such street near?”

Sheridan. “Perhaps, sir, you mean *John Street*?”

Stranger. “No; it is a street with an unusual name.”

Sheridan. “It can’t be *Charles Street*?”

Stranger (a little impatiently). “It is not a common name – the most unusual name for a street.”

Sheridan. “Surely, sir, you are not looking for *King Street*?”

Stranger (growing more impatient). “I tell you, sir, it is a street with a very odd name.”

Sheridan. “Bless me, sir, it is not *Queen Street*, is it?”

Stranger (evincing some degree of irritation). “*Queen Street!* no, no! it is a sort of a curious name, I tell you.”

Sheridan. "I wish, sir, I could assist you: let me think. It may be Oxford Street?"

Stranger (getting testy). "Sir, for Heaven's sake, think; I keep telling you, that it is a street with any thing but a common name; any body knows Oxford Street."

Sheridan. "Perhaps, the street has no name after all."

Stranger. "No name, sir! Why, I tell you it has, – confound the name!"

Sheridan. "Really, sir, I am very sorry that I am unable to assist you; but let me suggest Piccadilly."

The stranger could no longer restrain his irritation, but bounced away, exclaiming, "Oh, damn it, what a thick-headed fellow!" Sheridan, calling to him and bowing, replied, "Sir, I envy your admirable memory;" then walked on, enjoying his joke.¹

SYMPATHY BETWEEN PRACTICAL JOKERS

Between Tickell and Sheridan there was a never-ending "skirmish of wit," both verbal and practical; and the latter kind, in particular, was carried on between them with all the waggery, and, not unfrequently, the malice of school-boys.

On one occasion, Sheridan having covered the floor of a dark passage, leading from the drawing-room, with all the plates

¹ It has been said, that the stranger was looking for Lamb's Conduit Street. This and the following anecdote, together with one or two others, are from an exceedingly amusing work, entitled "The Clubs of London," published in 1828.

and dishes of the house, ranged closely together, provoked his unconscious play-fellow to pursue him into the midst of them. Having left a path for his own escape, he passed through easily, but Tickell falling at full length into the ambushade, was very much cut in several places. The next day, Lord John Townshend, on paying a visit to the bedside of Tickell, found him covered with patches, and indignantly vowing vengeance against Sheridan for his unjustifiable trick. In the midst of his anger, however, he could not help exclaiming, with the true feeling of an amateur of this sort of mischief, "But how amazingly well done it was!"

A POLITE GRAVEDIGGER

Stevens (who died gravedigger of Clerkenwell, in 1768, at the age of ninety), was once on an examination before one of the courts in Westminster Hall, relative to some parochial affairs, when, being asked who he was, he replied "I am gravedigger of the parish of St. James's, Clerkenwell, *at your honour's service.*"

PRIDE OF ANCESTRY

An anecdote is told of Mr. Roger of Werndee, in Monmouthshire, which exhibits the pride of ancestry in a striking point of view. His house was in such a state of dilapidation, that the proprietor was in danger of perishing

under the ruins of the ancient mansion, which he venerated even in decay. A stranger, whom he accidentally met at the foot of the Skyrrid, made various inquiries respecting the country, the prospects, and the neighbouring houses, and among others, asked, "Whose is this antique mansion before us?" "That, sir, is Werndee, a very ancient house; for out of it came the Earls of Pembroke of the first line, and the Earls of Pembroke of the second line; the Lords Herberts of Cherbury, the Herberts of Coldbrook, Ramsay, Cardiff, and York; the Morgans of Acton; the Earl of Hunsdon; the houses of Ircowm and Lanarth, and all the Powells. Out of this house, also, by the female line, came the Duke of Beaufort." "And pray, sir, who lives there now?" "I do sir." "Then pardon me, and accept a piece of advice; come out of it yourself, or you'll soon be buried in the ruins of it."

IMPROVEMENT ON THE FRILL

George Selwyn one day dining at the Duke of Richmond's, a French marquis was declaiming on the ingenuity of his countryman; "who," he said, "were de grande artistes for de modes and de fashions, *pour tout le monde*. For instance," said he, "look at de roffel (*ruffle*), dat fine ornament for de hand and for de breast: de Frenchman invent it, and all de oder nations in Europe quickly adopt de same plan." "True," replied Mr. Selwyn, "we allow that your countrymen have great merit in invention; but you must at the same time admit, that, though the English are not

an inventive, they are at least an improving people: for example, to the very articles which you mention they have made a very important and useful addition.” “*Les Anglois*, Mistare Selvin,” returned the Frenchman, stroking and pulling down the ruffles on his breast and hands, “are, sans doute, ver clever men; *mais je ne connois pas quelle* improvement dey could make to de roffel; *que ce la, Monsieur?*” “Why, by adding a *shirt* to it,” replied Selwyn.

PETER THE GREAT

A Russian officer, named Valensky, who had a command in the Persian expedition, had once been beaten by the Emperor Peter’s order, mistaking him for another. “Well,” said Peter, “I am sorry for it, but you will deserve it one day or other, and then remind me that you are in arrears with me;” which accordingly happened upon that very expedition, and he was excused.

SHERIDAN AND THE WESTMINSTER VOTER

As Mr. Sheridan was coming up to town in one of the public coaches for the purpose of canvassing Westminster, at the time when Paull was his opponent, he found himself in company with two Westminster electors. In the course of the conversation, one of them asked the other to whom he meant to give his vote? When his friend replied, “To Paull, certainly; for though I think

him but a shabby sort of fellow, I would vote for any one rather than that rascal Sheridan!”

“Do you know Sheridan?” asked the stranger.

“Not I, sir,” answered the gentleman, “nor should I wish to know him.”

The conversation dropped here; but when the party alighted to breakfast, Sheridan called aside the one gentleman, and said, —

“Pray who is that very agreeable friend of yours? He is one of the pleasantest fellows I ever met with, and I should be glad to know his name?”

“His name is Mr. T — : he is an eminent lawyer, and resides in Lincoln’s Inn Fields.”

Breakfast over, the party resumed their seats in the coach; soon after which, Sheridan turned the discourse to the law. “It is,” said he, “a fine profession. Men may rise from it to the highest eminence in the state; and it gives vast scope to the display of talent: many of the most virtuous and noble characters recorded in our history have been lawyers. I am sorry, however, to add, that some of the greatest rascals have been lawyers; but of all the rascals of lawyers I ever heard of, the greatest is one Mr. T — , who lives in Lincoln’s Inn Fields.”

“I am Mr. T — ,” said the gentleman.

“And I am Mr. Sheridan,” was the reply.

The jest was instantly seen; they shook hands, and, instead of voting against the facetious orator, the lawyer exerted himself warmly in promoting his election.

A BULLY

A bully telling a gentleman, that in manhood and valour he came far behind him, “You are not far wrong,” answered the other; “the last time I fought with you, you ran away so fast that I could not overtake you, run as I might.”

BUCKINGHAM AND SIR ROBERT VINER

The second Duke of Buckingham talking to Sir Robert Viner in a melancholy humour about his personal extravagance, “I am afraid, Sir Robert,” he said, “I shall die a beggar at last – the most terrible thing in the world.” “Upon my word, my lord,” answered the mayor, “there is another thing more terrible which you have reason to apprehend, and that is, that you will *live a beggar* at the rate you go on.”

PROPHECY FULFILLED

One coming into a cathedral, where the choir consisted of very bad voices, said, that the prophecy of Amos was fulfilled; “and the songs of the temple shall be howlings.”

LORD THURLOW AND THE DISSENTERS

The dissenters waited upon Lord Thurlow by appointment, to request his vote for the repeal of the test act. After he had heard their sentiments in a long harangue, with more than his ordinary patience, when the speech was concluded, he thus addressed them: – “Gentlemen, you have requested me to vote for the repeal of the test act. I shall not vote for it. I do not care whether your religion or mine has the ascendancy, or whether any religion or none; but as I know when you were uppermost, you kept us down; so now that we are uppermost, we will, by the help of God, keep you where you are.”

SHERIDAN AND HIS SON

Sheridan took his son one day to task upon his celibacy, and strongly urged that he should take a wife. “Very well, father,” answered Tom, “whose wife shall I take?”

THE BELLOWS-BLOWER

In a cathedral, one day after service, the bellows-blower said to the organist, “I think we have done very well to-day.” “*We!*” said the organist, in no small surprise at the impudence

of his menial, "how can you pretend to have any merit in the performance? Never let me hear you say such a thing again." The man said nothing more at the time, but when they were next playing, he suddenly intermitted in his task of inflating the organ. The organist rose in wrath to order him to proceed, when the fellow thrusting his head out from behind the curtain, asked slyly, "Shall it be *we* then?"

A FAMILY HUNG UP

A lady, who, by virtue of an immense fortune, acquired by her father in the profession of a pawnbroker, had married a poor nobleman, was shewing her new and elegantly furnished house to George Selwyn. Having led him from room to room, and displayed the whole of her rhetoric and taste, she at last threw open a pair of large folding doors that led into the grand saloon, which was superbly furnished, but contained no pictures. "Here, Mr. Selwyn," said she, "I intend to hang up all my family." "I thought," replied George, "your ladyship might have spared yourself that trouble; for I always understood they were *hung up* long ago."

LORD KENYON

A friend having pointed out to Sheridan, that Lord Kenyon

had fallen asleep at the first representation of Pizarro, and that, too, in the midst of Rollo's fine speech to the Peruvian soldiers, the dramatist felt rather mortified; but, instantly recovering his usual good humour, he said, "Ah poor man! let him sleep! he thinks he is on the *bench*."

A MATCH FOR SHERIDAN

Sheridan sometimes met with his match, and that in quarters where it might have been least expected. He was one day endeavouring to *cut* a suit of new clothes out of a tailor's shop in the city. Flattery was the weapon he employed. "Upon my word," said he, "you are an excellent finisher; you beat our snips in the West End hollow. Why don't you push your thimble amongst us? I'll recommend you every where. Upon my honour your work does you infinite credit." "Yes," replied the artist, "I always take care that my work gives *long credit*, but the wearers *ready money*."

BENEFIT OF STAMMERING

A stammering Lord Deloraine, being in a cock-pit, and offering several bets, which he would have lost if he could have replied in time, at length offered ten pounds to a crown. A gambler who stood by, said, "Done;" but, his lordship's fit

of stuttering happening to seize him at that moment, he could not repeat the word “done” till the favourite cock was beat. “Confound your stuttering tongue!” cried the *leg*, “if you could speak like other folk, you would be ruined.”

GOOD MANNERS

Dunning the celebrated barrister, was addicted to the low and unpardonable vice of turning witnesses into ridicule at their examinations. One morning, he was telling Mr. Solicitor-General Lee that he had bought a few *good manors* in Devonshire, near his native village of Ashburton. “I wish,” said Lee, “you would bring some of them into Westminster Hall; for upon my honour, you have most need of them there.”

HANDEL AND THE SERPENT

The first time the musical instrument called *The Serpent* was used in a concert where Handel presided, he was so much surprised with the coarseness of its tones, that he called out hastily, “Vat de devil is dat?” On being informed it was the serpent, he replied, “It never can be de serpent vat seduced Eve.”

A MONARCH IN FAULT

About the time when Murphy so successfully attacked the stage-struck heroes in the pleasant farce of *The Apprentice*, an eminent poulterer went to a sporting-club in search of his servant, who, he understood, was that evening to make his debut in Lear; he entered the room at the moment when Dick was exclaiming, "I am the king – you cannot touch me for the coining!" "No, you dog," cried the enraged master, catching the mad monarch by the collar; "but I can for not picking the ducks."

SOTTISE OF A FRENCHMAN

A Frenchman, who had learnt English, wished to be particularly polite, and never neglected an opportunity of saying something pretty. One evening, he observed to Lady R – , whose dress was fawn-coloured, and that of her daughter pink, "Milady, your daughter is de *pink* of beauty." "Ah monsieur, you Frenchmen always flatter." "No madam, I only speak de truth, and what all de world will allow, dat your daughter is de *pink*, and your ladyship de *drab* of fashion!" It was with great difficulty that the Frenchman could be made to comprehend his *sottise*.

AN EAST INDIAN MAJOR LONGBOW

An old East Indian, who had returned from Calcutta, with a large fortune and a liver complaint, had retired to his native place (Banffshire), and was availing himself one evening of the usual privilege of travellers to a very large extent. His Scotch friends listened to his *Major Longbows* with an air of perfect belief; till, at last, the worthy nabob happened to say, that in a particular part of India it was usual to fatten horses upon the flesh of sheep's heads reduced to a pulp and mixed with rice. "Oh," exclaimed all his auditors with one voice, "Oh, that will never do. We can believe all the rest; but really, feeding horses upon sheep's heads is too bad." "Well, gentlemen," said the man of the East, "I assure you, that my story about the horses is *the only bit of truth that I have told you this evening!*"

A QUERULOUS MAN

Mr. Tyers, the proprietor of Vauxhall Gardens, was a worthy man, but indulged himself a little too much in querulous complaints, when anything went amiss; insomuch that, he said, if he had been brought up a hatter he believed people would have been without heads! A farmer once gave him a humorous reproof for his kind of reproach of Heaven; he stepped up to him very

respectfully, and asked him when he meant to open his Gardens. Mr. Tyers replied, the next Monday fortnight. The man thanked him repeatedly, and was going away; but Mr. Tyers asked him in return, what made him so anxious to know. “Why, sir,” said the farmer, “I think of sowing my turnips on that day, for you know we shall be sure to have rain.”

IMPROMPTU

A gentlemen paying a visit one morning to a family in Hanover Square, was shewn into a room, where on a writing desk was a paper, on which a lady had begun to transcribe a song from the opera of *Love in a Village*: remarking that she had left off at the end of the two following lines, —

In love should there meet a fond pair,
Untutor'd by fashion or art;

he took up a pen, and completed the verse by adding, —

If on earth such a couple there be,
I'll be whipt at the tail of a cart!

SHUT THE DOOR

Among the many peculiarities of Dr. Burney, were two of a very innocent kind: the first was, the constant possession of wine of the best vintage, the next the dread of a current of air. "Shut the door," was the first salutation uttered by him to any one who entered his apartment; and but few of his associates ever neglected the rule. This custom did not abandon him on the most trying occasions; for having been robbed by footpads while returning home one evening in his carriage to Chelsea Hospital, of which national asylum he was organist, he called them back as they were making off, exclaiming to them, in his usual peremptory tone, "Shut the door." A voice so commanding had the desired effect; he was instantly obeyed.

MR. JEKYLL

Mr. Jekyll being told that Mr. Raine, the barrister, was engaged as counsel for a Mr. Hay, inquired, if Raine was ever known to do good to Hay?

HANDEL

While Handel was presiding at the organ, during the

performance of his oratorio, entitled "Israel in Egypt," the prima donna, Figuria Galli, commenced a song entirely out of tune — "I am an Israelite;" upon which Handel stopped the accompaniment, glared ferociously down upon the offender, and exclaimed, in a voice of ten thousand thunders, "*You are von dam beesh!*"

FOOTE AND THE EARL OF KELLY

When the Earl of Kelly paid Foote a visit at his country villa, that celebrated wit took him into his garden, and, alluding to the beaming honours of his lordship's face, said, "Pray, my lord, look over the wall upon my cucumber bed; it has had no sun this year."

A COMPLIMENT QUIZZED

A gentleman walking in the fields with a lady, picked a *blue bell*, and taking out his pencil, wrote the following lines, which, with the flower, he presented to the lady.

This pretty flower, of heavenly hue,
Must surely be allied to you;
For you, dear girl, are heavenly too.

To which the lady replied: —

If, sir, your compliment be true,
I'm sorry that *I look so blue.*

KILLING THE DEVIL

A young girl from the country, on a visit to Mr. H – , a Quaker, was prevailed on to accompany him to the meeting. It happened to be a silent one, none of the brethren being moved by the spirit to utter a syllable. When Mr. H. left the meeting-house with his young friend, he asked her, “How dost thou like the meeting?” To which she pettishly replied, “Like it? why, I can see no sense in it; to go and sit for whole hours together without speaking a word, – it is enough to kill the Devil.” “Yes, my dear,” rejoined the Quaker, “*that* is just what we want.”

THE GREATEST BORE IN LONDON

When Sir William Curtis returned from his voyage to Italy and Spain, he called to pay his respects to Mr. Canning, at Gloucester Lodge. Among other questions, Sir William said, “But, pray, Mr. Canning, what do you say to the tunnel under the Thames?” “Say,” replied the secretary, “why, I say it will be the greatest *bore* London ever had, and that is saying a great deal.”

RADCLIFFE OF DERWENTWATER

It has often been observed, that a habitual sayer of good things will have his joke under whatever circumstances he may be placed. Radcliffe, brother of the unfortunate Earl of Derwentwater, and who was himself executed in 1746, for his concern in the insurrection of 1715, was brought to the bar to receive sentence of death, in company with an old man of Falstaffian dimensions. The judge asking the usual question of this other prisoner, "Plead your belly, plead your belly," said the grandson of Charles II, with a sly look at that part of his companion's person.

SHERIDAN UPON REGULARITY, WITH NOTES BY THE EARL OF GUILDFORD

Just about the time that Mr. Sheridan took his house in Saville Row, he happened to meet Lord Guildford in the street, to whom he mentioned his change of residence, and also announced a change in his habits. "Now, my dear Lord, everything is carried on in my house with the greatest regularity; everything, in short, goes like clockwork." "Ah!" replied Lord Guildford, "tick, tick, tick, I suppose."

ANTI-CLIMAX

Mr. H — , the Professor of Chemistry in the University of Dublin, who was more remarkable for the clearness of the intellect than the purity of his eloquence, adverted in one of his lectures to the celebrated Dr. Boyle, of whose talents he spoke with the highest veneration: he thus concluded his eulogy: — “He was a great man, a very great man; he was the *father* of chemistry, gentlemen, and *brother* of the Earl of Cork.”

MR. FOX'S ESTIMATE OF THE FRENCH CHARACTER

In one of the latter days of Fox, the conversation turned on the comparative wisdom of the French and English character. “The Frenchman,” it was observed, “delights himself with the present; the Englishman makes himself anxious about the future. Is not the Frenchman the wiser?” “He may be the merrier,” said Fox; “but did you ever hear of a savage who did not buy a mirror in preference to a telescope.”

UPRIGHT JUDGE

Judge Richardson, in going the western circuit, had a great

stone thrown at him, which, as he happened to stoop at the moment, passed clear over his head. "You see," he said to the friends who congratulated him on his escape, "you see, if I had been an upright judge I had been slain."

KITES

Boys fly kites for recreation, and men for other motives; the first require the wind to raise the kite, the second the kite to raise the wind.

COLLEGE JOKE

They have, at the very head-quarters of orthodoxy, Oxford, sayings which would be termed profane anywhere else. For instance, when a tradesman has grown rich by trusting the scholars, they say, that "his faith hath made him whole."

SEA CAPTAIN'S OPINION OF A FUTURE STATE

A sea captain, being asked for his opinion of a future state, answered, "he never troubled himself about state affairs."

“DO YOU SMOKE, SIR?”

“Do you smoke, sir?” said a London sharper to a country gentleman, whom he met in a coffee-house, and with whom he wished to scrape acquaintance. “Yes,” said the other, with a cool steady eye, “anyone who has a design upon me.”

PROMISING CANDIDATE

A young clergyman, who possessed every requisite for the pulpit but a good voice, having occasion to preach a probation sermon for a lectureship, a friend congratulated him, as he descended from the pulpit, observing that, “he would certainly carry the election: he had nobody’s voice against him, but his own.”

A FRIEND IN NEED

A person being arrested for a large sum of money, sent to an acquaintance, who had often professed a great friendship for him, to beg he would bail him. The other sent back a note, to the effect that he had promised never to be bail for anybody. “I will tell you, however, what you may do,” added he; “you may get somebody else, if you can.”

SINGULAR STAKES

A lady, who loved gaming very much, and who, at the same time was very covetous, falling sick in the country, in a village where her estate lay, sent for the curate and proposed play to him. The curate, being also fond of gaming, accepted the proposition with joy. They played, and the curate lost. After having won all his money, she proposed to play him for the parson's fees at her burial, in case she died. They played; and he lost. She obliged him to give a note for the sum at which interments then stood; and dying eight or ten days after, the curate withdrew his note by the interment.

PRECEDENCY

Two little girls of the city of Norwich, one the daughter of a wealthy brewer, the other the daughter of a gentleman of a small fortune, disputing for precedency, – “You are to consider, miss,” said the brewer's daughter, “*that my papa keeps a coach.*” “Very true, miss,” said the other, “and you are to consider that he likewise keeps a dray.”

Three ladies meeting at a visit, a grocer's wife, a cheesemonger's, and a tobacconist's, who perhaps stood more upon the punctilios of precedence than some of their betters

would have done at the court-end of the town; when they had risen up and taken their leave, the cheesemonger's wife was going out of the room first; upon which the grocer's lady, pulling her back by the skirt of her gown, and stepping before her, "No, madam," says she, "nothing comes after cheese." "I beg your pardon, madam," replies the cheesemonger's wife, pulling the tobacconist's lady back, who was also stepping before her, "after cheese comes tobacco."

MY OWN STEWARD

"I cannot conceive," said one English nobleman to another, "how it is that you manage. I am convinced you are not of a temper to spend more than your income; and yet though your estate is less than mine, I could not afford to live at the rate you do." "My Lord," said the other, "I have a place." "A place! you amaze me. I never heard of it till now. Pray what place?" "*I am my own steward.*"

CURE FOR LOVE

When Mrs. Rogers, the actress, was young and handsome, the Lord North and Grey used to dangle after her; and one night being behind the scenes, standing with his arms folded, in the posture of a desponding lover, he asked her, with a sigh, "What

was a cure for love?" "Your lordship," said she, "the best in the world."

LORD RICHARDSON AND THE CARMAN

Lord Richardson, riding abroad in his coach to take the air, and passing by a carman whose horses were of unequal fatness, called out, "Sirrah, sirrah, resolve me one question: why is your foremost horse so lusty and pampered, and the rest such lean jades?" The carman, not knowing the judge, but deeming him a lawyer, from his habit, answered, "Whoy, the reason is plain enough; my fore horse is the counsellor, and all the rest his clients."

A POT I CARRY

A fat apothecary having got drunk at a tavern in Fleet Street, was sent home by his companions in a porter's basket. When the man came to Temple Bar, he was asked by the keeper within what was his business. "A thing of great weight," was the answer. After being admitted, he was asked what was in his basket. "A pot I carry," replied the porter.

GROSVENOR HOUSE

When Grosvenor House, Millbank, was the extreme house on one of the ways leading out of London, somebody asked another, in passing, "Who lived in it?" "Lord Grosvenor," was the reply. "I do not know what estate his lordship has," said the querist; "but he ought to have a good one; for nobody lives beyond him in the whole town."

A JOINT CONCERN

Mrs. Sheridan was anxious to secure an income by her vocal powers; and she earnestly entreated her husband to relax from his opposition, so far as to allow of her occasional performance, until their circumstances should render it unnecessary. But he still continued inflexible, though it was with great difficulty he could raise the necessary supplies for the ordinary purposes of life, and that by very equivocal means. One of his sources was that of writing for the fugitive publications of the day, in which he was materially assisted by his wife; and many years after his entrance into the sphere of politics, he has been heard to say, if he had stuck to the law, he believed he should have done as much as his friend, Tom Erskine; "but," continued he, "I had no time for such studies. Mrs. Sheridan and myself were often obliged to

keep writing for our daily leg or shoulder of mutton, otherwise we should have had no dinner." One of his friends, to whom he confessed this, wittily replied, "Then, I perceive, it was a *joint concern*."

WIT IN THE GALLERY

Soon after the accession of George III., an additional tax was laid on beer, to the great discontent of the populace. His majesty was one night attending the theatre, when a fellow in the upper gallery called to another to come and drink with him, as he had got a full pot. "What did you give for your full pot?" inquired the invited person. "Threepence-halfpenny." "Threepence-halfpenny! Why, where did you send for it?" "To George the Third." "You fool," said the other, "why did you not send to George the Second? you would have had it there for threepence."

PROFESSIONAL OBLIQUITY OF UNDERSTANDING

A gentleman, passing a woman who was skinning eels, and observing the torture of the poor animals, asked her, how she could have the heart to put them to such pain. "Lord, sir," she replied, "they be used to it."

A fishmonger of famous London town was telling a neighbour that he intended to take a trip to Margate, where he should spend some time. "And will you bathe?" inquired the other. "O, Lord, no!" answered the worthy citizen; "the fishes would know me."

SET FORMS

A person, going into a meeting-house, happened to stumble over one of the forms which were set near the entrance. "Who the devil," he cried, as he rubbed his irritated shins, "would have expected to find *set forms* in a meeting-house?"

FAVOR AND SODORINI

Soon after M. Favor was appointed first ballet-master of the Opera (towards the close of the last century), Signor Sodorini, another performer there, came one day upon the stage, after the rehearsal, and said to him: "Allow me, my dear sir, to introduce myself to you. You are the dearest friend I have on earth. Let me thank you a thousand times for the happiness you have conferred upon me by coming amongst us. Command me in any way; for, whatever I do for you, I can never sufficiently repay you." The ballet-master, who had never seen or heard of Sodorini before, was astounded. At last, he said, "Pray, sir, to what particular piece of good fortune may I attribute the compliments and professions

with which you favour me.” “To your unparalleled ugliness, my dear sir,” replied Sodorini; “for, before your arrival, I was considered the ugliest man in Great Britain.” The ballet-master (strange to say) took this joke in good part; and the two were ever after warm friends.

MUSICAL PRIDE

Fischer, a first rate oboe player, at Dublin, was a man of great professional pride, and had also much of the ex-professional gentleman in his composition. A nobleman once asked him to sup after the conclusion of the opera; and, although very averse to going, he at last consented, on being assured by his patron that it was only for his society and conversation, and not for his musical proficiency, that he was invited. He had not, however, been many minutes in his host's company, when the latter approached him, and said: “I hope, Mr. Fischer, you have brought your oboe in your pocket.” “No, my lord,” said Fischer, “my oboe never sups.” So saying, he turned on his heel, and instantly left the house; nor could any persuasion ever induce him to return to it.

NEGRO WIT

A gentleman driving on the road between Little River and Brighton, was overtaken by a negro boy on a mule, who

attempted for a long while, without success, to make the animal pass the carriage. At length the boy exclaimed to his beast, "I'll bet you one fippeny I make you to pass this time;" and, after a short pause, again said, "you bet? very well." The boy repeated the blows with renewed vigour, and at last succeeded in making him pass; when the gentleman, who overheard the conversation between Quashee and his steed, said to him, "Well, my boy, now you have won, how are you going to make the mule pay you?" "Oh, sir," says the negro, "me make him pay me very well; massa give me one tenpenny for buy him grass, and me only buy him a fippeny worth!"

A TRUE KING

When Dr. Franklin applied to the King of Prussia to lend his assistance to America, "Pray, doctor," says the veteran, "what is the object you mean to attain?" – "Liberty, sire," replied the philosopher of Philadelphia; "liberty! that freedom which is the birthright of man." The king, after a short pause, made this memorable and kingly answer: "I was born a prince; I am become a king; and I will not use the power which I possess to the ruin of my own trade."

SHERIDAN AND MONK LEWIS

Sheridan never gave Lewis any of the profits of the Castle Spectre. One day, Lewis, being in company with him, said, "Sheridan, I will make you a large bet." Sheridan, who was always ready to make a wager (however he might find it inconvenient to pay it if lost), asked eagerly, "What bet?" "All the profits of my Castle Spectre," replied Lewis. "I will tell you what," said Sheridan (who never found his match at repartee), "I will make you a very small one – what it is worth."

DR. KITCHINER

Some people have an objection to thirteen at dinner. Dr. Kitchiner, the culinary, happened to be one of a company of that number at Dr. Henderson's, and, on its being remarked, and pronounced unlucky, he said, "I admit that it is unlucky in one case." "What case is that?" "When there is only dinner for twelve."

NAME RECOLLECTED

At a dinner party, one day, somebody talked of a rich rector in Worcestershire, whose name he could not recollect, but who

had not preached for the last twelve months, as he every Sunday requested one of the neighbouring clergy to officiate for him. "Oh!" replied a gentleman present, "though you cannot recollect his name, I can – it is England – England expects every man to do his duty."

BON-MOT OF SIR WILLIAM CURTIS

A coach proprietor complained to Sir William Curtis that he suspected his guard of robbing him, and asked what he should do? "*Prenez-garde,*" said Sir William.

BON-MOT ON A TEA-URN

Lady S – r was complaining one morning at breakfast that the tea was very bad, and said she was quite sure the water didn't boil; "Nay," said she, "the urn didn't even hiss when it was brought in." "No," said Sir W. E., "it was *tacit-urn.*"

WHERE HURT

A gentleman who was relating an accident he had met with from a fall, was asked by a surgeon, if it was near the *vertebrae* that he had been hurt? "No, sir," was the reply, "it was near the Observatory."

PRECEDENCY IN SHAVING

A barber having come up to poll at a Berwick election, one of the candidates, with evident marks of disappointment, asked, "What! did you not shave me this morning?" "Yes," answered the barber, "but I have shaved Mr. — (meaning the opposing candidate) since."

CONSUMPTIVE APPETITE

Doctor Thomson was called in to attend a gentleman, who persuaded himself that he was, to use a popular expression, "dying by inches." The doctor caught the invalid at dinner, and having seen him demolish some soup, a slice of salmon, two cuts of chine of mutton, and half a partridge, inquired what other symptoms of disease he felt. "None particularly, sir," said the invalid, "only every thing about me tends to convince me that I am consumptive." "Your appetite is, at all events, sir," said the doctor, and walked off.

FIREWORKS

The fireworks for the peace of Ryswick were made by a colonel in the army, and were much admired. This gentleman

one day commending Purcel's epitaph, "He is gone to that place, where only his harmony can be exceeded." – "Why," said a lady present, "that epitaph will serve for you, with a very small alteration: there is nothing to do, but to change the word *harmony* for *fireworks*."

CURIOUS FACT

In the great catalogue of the British Museum Library many of the books are classed according to the subjects of which they treat. Against the head "Rebellion" there appears this notice (only) – "*Vide Hibernia*."

A SUDDEN RECOLLECTION

An Indian of the Abipones, an equestrian people of South America, was about to be baptized. "You will certainly go to heaven after this ceremony, when you die," said the Jesuit who was to christen him. The Indian was content. Just as the water was on the point of being thrown, however, a doubt arose in the mind of the savage. "By this water I shall go to heaven?" said he. "As sure as there are mosquitoes in America," answered the father. "But my friends, who will not be baptised." – "They must go to hell: assuredly, they shall not miss; not a man of them." "Then excuse me," said the savage; "I am sorry to have given you

this trouble; but I shall choose to go too.”

ADVANTAGE OF BUTTONS ON LUTESTRING

Sir Baptist Hickes was telling how his gold buttons were cut off in a crowd, and he never the wiser, though the poorer. Sir Edmund Bacon asked him, if they were not strung upon lutestring? “No,” answered he. “Oh, fie,!” said Sir Edmund, “that was the cause it was not discovered; for if they had been strung upon lutestring, as soon as it was cut it would have cried *twang*.”

WILLIAM III. AND SERGEANT MAYNARD

When the public bodies at London paid their court to the Prince of Orange on his arrival in the ever-memorable 1688, Sergeant Maynard, a man near ninety years of age, headed the deputation of lawyers. William, remarking his great age, expressed a supposition that he must have outlived all the men of law of his time. “Why,” said Maynard, with wit admirably suited to the crisis, “I was like to have outlived the law itself, if your Royal Highness had not come over.”²

² Burnett's *History of his Own Times*, iii. 1350.

TWO REASONS AGAINST THE PRETENDER

A staunch Whig of the old school, disputing with a Jacobite, said he had two reasons for being against the interest of the Pretender. “What are those?” inquired the Tory. “The first is, that he is an impostor, and not really King James’s son.” “Why, that,” said the Jacobite, “is a good reason, if it could be proved; but, pray, what is the other?” “That he *is* King James’s son.”

TRUMPINGTON

An ignorant preacher, the vicar of Trumpington, near Ely, having occasion to read that passage in Scripture, – “Eloi, Eloi, Lama sabbathani,” and considering with himself that it might be ridiculous and absurd in him to read it as it stood, since he was vicar of Trumpington, and not of Ely, actually bawled out, “Trumpington, Trumpington, Lama sabbathani.”

BRILLIANT MAIDEN SPEECH

A young but ambitious M.P. of the last age, having long resolved upon attempting some speech which should astonish the House, at last rose solemnly up, and, after three loud hems, spoke as follows: – “Mr. Speaker, have we laws, or have we not laws?”

If we have laws, they are not observed, to what end were those laws made?" So saying, he sat down, his chest heaving high with conscious consequence; when another rose up, and delivered his thoughts in these words: – "Mr. Speaker, did the honourable gentleman who spoke last, speak to the purpose, or not to the purpose? If he did not speak to the purpose, to what purpose did he speak?" It is needless to describe the roar of laughter with which the House was instantly shaken, or to say that the orator never spoke again in that place.

A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF PUFFING

Some years ago, a gentleman at Windsor took the place of the organist, with a view to shew his superiority in execution. Among other pieces, he was playing one of Dr. Blow's anthems; but, just as he had finished the verse part, and begun the full chorus, the organ ceased. On this, he called to Dick, the bellows-blower, to know what was the matter. "The matter?" says Dick; "I have played the anthem below." "Ay," says the other, "but I have not played it above." "No matter," quoth Dick, "you might have made more haste, then; I know how many puffs go to one of Dr. Blow's anthems, as well as you do: I have not played the organ so many years for nothing."

DR. BUTLER

Dr. Butler was a man of peculiar manners. Being sent for to a lady's house, the lady desired a servant to ask what he would have for supper. "A roasted horse," said the doctor. The man stared, and vanished; but, turning upon the stairs, soon re-appeared, and said to the reverend divine, "Sir, will you please to have a pudding in his belly?" Butler, laughing, said, "Thou hast a pudding of wit in thy head, and I like thee well. But why ask me what I choose for supper? I came here to give advice and not to eat. I shall eat as the rest."

WEST INDIAN BEES

A travelled man was descanting one day upon what he had seen in his peregrinations. He was particularly impressive on the largeness to which common reptiles and insects grew in tropical climates. "In the West Indies," said he, "bees are about the size of our sheep." "And how large may the bee-hives be?" inquired one of the company. "Oh, about the ordinary size," said the traveller, without thinking of the exaggerated size he had just ascribed to the tenants of these receptacles. "Then," said the inquirer, "how do the bees get into the hives?" "Oh," replied the detected Manhausen, "let the bees look to that!"

A THROUGH-GOING MINISTRY

Tom Burnet, son of Bishop Burnet, happening to be at dinner at the Lord Mayor's, in the latter part of Queen Anne's reign, when the Tories were for a space triumphant, after two or three healths, "The Ministry" was toasted. Tom, unwilling to compromise his principles by drinking to a cabinet he could not approve of, endeavoured to escape, by telling a story to a person who sat next him. This, however, would not do with the Lord Mayor, who, observing a full glass on the table, called out, "Gentlemen, where sticks the Ministry?" "At nothing," replied the Whig, and immediately drank off his glass.

TORY FIREWORKS

A Whig, of the same stamp with Tom Burnet, being asked what he thought of the fireworks which celebrated the peace of Utrecht (a peace concluded by the Tory ministry much against the wishes of the opposition), "I think," said he, "they were a burning shame."

GENERAL CAMPBELL

George II., at a review of his horse guards, asked Monsieur de

Bussy, the French Ambassador, if he thought the King of France had better troops. "Oh, yes, sir," answered the ambassador, "the King of France has his gendarmes, which are reckoned the best troops in the world. Did your majesty never see them?" The king answered, "No;" upon which General Campbell, colonel of the Scots Greys (who afterwards lost his life at the battle of Fontenoy), stepped up and said, "Though your majesty has not seen those troops his excellency speaks of, I have seen them: I have cut my way through them twice, and make no doubt of doing the same again, whenever your majesty shall command me."³

CAWDOR AND CORDER

The tragedy of Macbeth was acted at a town in Suffolk, and amongst the audience was a man who had been nearly fifty miles, in the course of the day, to see Corder, the memorable murderer, hanged at Bury. Such was the belief entertained to the last, in some parts of the country, that the extreme penalty of the law would not be inflicted, that the man who had seen him die was pestered on all sides for an account of the melancholy spectacle. At last he actually betook himself to the theatre, to avoid further importunities. Just as he entered, the fourth scene of the tragedy was commencing, and he was quietly setting himself down in a box near the stage, when Duncan began, in the words of the

³ The most remarkable thing in this anecdote is certainly the king's want of good manners, in asking such a question of the representative of a foreign nation.

author, —

“Is execution done on Cawdor?”

“Yes, sir,” said the man, “I saw him hanged this morning — and that’s the last time I’ll answer any more questions about it.” The audience was convulsed with laughter at the strange mistake, and it was some time before the performance could be proceeded with.

PATIENCE OF ANGLERS

The late Dr. Franklin used to observe, that of all the amusements which the ingenuity of man had ever devised for the purpose of recreation, none required the exercise of most patient attention so much as angling; a remark which he frequently illustrated by the following story: — “About six o’clock, on a fine morning in the summer,” said the doctor, “I set out from Philadelphia, on a visit to a friend, at the distance of fifteen miles; and, passing a brook where a gentleman was angling, I enquired if he had caught anything? ‘No, sir,’ said he, ‘I have not been here long; only two hours.’ I wished him a good morning, and pursued my journey. On my return in the evening, I found him fixed to the identical spot where I had left him, and again inquired if he had any sport? ‘Very good, sir,’ says he. ‘Caught a great many fish?’ ‘None at all.’ ‘Had a great many bites though, I suppose?’

‘Not one, but I had a *most glorious nibble.*’”

PROMISING ACTRESS

A few days previous to Foote’s opening the Haymarket Theatre, amongst a variety of applications for engagements, a lady came to him warmly recommended. Some time after she was introduced ensued the following scene: – “Pray, madam,” says Foote, “are you for tragedy or comedy?” No answer. “Are you married, madam? for if you are, by God, your husband is very happy in regard to your tongue.” By this time, the lady perceived she was spoken to; when, drawing her chair close up to the wit’s, and turning one of her ears to him at the same time, she replied, – “Speak a little louder, sir, for *I am deaf.*”

PRIME MINISTERS

A person, speaking of the remarkably short lives of prime ministers, said, “that almost as soon as they’re *primed* they go off.”

QUEEN ANNE’S BATCH OF NEW PEERS

The peace of Utrecht sticking in the House of Lords, Queen Anne, or rather her prime minister, the Earl of Oxford, found

it politically necessary to create a majority, by calling up twelve commoners to the House of Peers. The celebrated Duke of Wharton, who was in the opposition, took care to be in the House the day of their introduction, and, as they passed by him, very deliberately counted out aloud, “One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve: well, gentlemen of the jury, who shall speak for you?”

The same nobleman, soon after, meeting the Earl of Oxford, addressed him with, – “So, Robin, I find what you lost by tricks, you have gained by honours.”

SCARCITY OF FIRING

Foote once went to spend his Christmas with C – B – n, Esq., when, the weather being very cold, and there being but bad fires, occasioned by the scarcity of wood in the house, Foote was determined to make his visit as short as possible. Accordingly, on the third day after he went there, he ordered his chaise, and was preparing to set out for town. Mr. B – n, seeing him with his boots on in the morning, asked him what hurry he was in, and pressed him to stay. “No, no,” says Foote, “you would not let me have a leg to stand on.” “Why, sure,” says Mr. B – n, “we do not drink so much.” “No,” says the wit, “but there is so little wood in your house, that, by God, I am afraid one of your servants may light the fires some morning with my right leg.”

QUIN

Quin one day complaining of his old age and infirmities, in the public rooms at Bath, a pert young coxcomb asked “What would he give to be as young as he was?” “I do not know,” says Quin, measuring him very contemptuously, “but I should be almost content to be as foolish.”

COUNSELLOR C –

Counsellor C – being chosen a friendly arbitrator between two near relations, one of whom had a very deservedly bad character, it happened, in the warmth of stating their grievances, the one gave the other the lie. “Lie, sir!” says the man with the bad character; “know that is amongst the actions of my life I *dare* not do.” “My dear friend,” says the counsellor, “do not be in a passion: upon my soul, you have too mean an opinion of your own courage.”

VERY LITTLE OF ITS AGE

Foote being at a nobleman’s house, his lordship, as soon as dinner was over, ordered a bottle of Cape to be set on the table, which, after magnifying its good qualities, and in particular,

its *age*, he sent round the table in glasses that scarcely held a thimble-full. "Fine wine, upon my soul," says the wit, tasting, and smacking his lips. "Is it not very curious?" says his lordship. "Perfectly so, indeed," says the other; "I do not remember to have seen anything so little of its age in my life before."

AT WHAT GAME?

Foote, meeting at Bath, his old acquaintance, Major B – (a character well known in the annals of gaming), came up to him, and asked him, with great cordiality, how he was? "Ah, Foote," says the other, "I have had a terrible accident since I saw you last; no less than the *loss* of an eye." "My dear fellow," says the wit, "I am heartily sorry for it: pray, at what game?"

DIRTY HANDS

A well beneficed old parson being at a public dinner, he entertained them with nothing else but the situation and profits of his parochial livings, which last, he said, he kept entirely to himself. The company in general despised him too much to make any remarks on his egotisms; but Quin being of the party, and observing the parson, as he stretched across the table, to shew a pair of very dirty yellow hands, he immediately called out, – "So, so, doctor, I think you do keep your glebe in your own hands."

MESS-ROOM GOSSIP

The late Duke of York once remarked to Colonel W. at the mess of the 11th regiment, that the colonel was uncommonly bald, and, although a younger man than his royal highness, he stood in more need of a wig. The colonel, who had been of very long standing in the service, and whose promotion had been by no means rapid, informed his royal highness that his baldness could be very easily accounted for. "In what manner?" asked his royal highness, rather eagerly. To which Colonel W. replied, "By junior officers stepping over my head." The duke was so pleased with the reply, that the gallant colonel obtained promotion in a few days afterwards.

BEAU BRUMMELL

When Brummell was the great oracle on coats, the Duke of Leinster was very anxious to bespeak the approbation of the "Emperor of the Dandies," for a "cut" which he had just patronised. The duke, in the course of his eulogy on his Schneider, had frequently occasion to use the words "my coat." "Your coat, my dear fellow!" said Brummell, "what coat?" "Why, this coat," said Leinster; "this coat that I have on." Brummell, after regarding the vestment with an air of infinite scorn, walked

up to the duke, and, taking the collar between his finger and thumb, as if fearful of contamination, said, "What! duke, do you call that thing a coat?"

COUNSELLOR C –

Counsellor C – being very infirm and goutified from his excesses, meeting one day with an old friend of his, a permit officer of the custom-house, the latter asked how he did? "Ah?" says the counsellor, "you will not have me long amongst you." "Come, come," says the other, "do not be cast down; you shall not have a permit to die yet a while." "Shall not I, indeed?" says the counsellor; "why, then, I would have you keep a sharp look-out for death; for, if you don't, I am afraid he will smuggle me."

PURITANISM AT BOWLS

The Puritans carried their peculiar tenets into the minutest affairs of life. When Lord Brook, one of the number played at bowls, he would sometimes run after his cast, and cry, "Rub, rub, rub," in the eager, but absurd hope that such a cry would give effect to his play. On such occasions, his chaplain would run after him with equal eagerness, and earnestly exclaim, "Oh, good my lord, you must leave that to God."

FIAT LUX

A bishop of Lincoln adopted the strange conceit of having the grand Scripture sentence, "Fiat Lux," painted on all the windows of his house. In his hall, in particular, it was so thickly painted, that the reverse of the command was observable, and, as a wag remarked, you could scarcely see for light. A mad scholar, at last, happened to wait upon the bishop, and, observing the opacity of the light, fell a-breaking the windows with his stick. Being carried by the servants into the presence of the bishop, and questioned as to the cause of his conduct, "Why, my lord," answered he, "I was only obeying your lordship's commands: *Fiat Lux.*"

WIT IN CHOOSING TEXTS

A young preacher, in the time of James I., being appointed to hold forth before the vice-chancellor and heads of the colleges of Oxford, chose for his text, "What! cannot you watch one hour?" which carried a personal allusion, as the vice-chancellor happened to be one of those heavy-headed persons who cannot attend church without falling asleep. The preacher repeating his text in an emphatic manner, at the end of every division of his discourse, the unfortunate vice-chancellor as often awoke; and

this happened so often, that, at last, all present could very well see the joke. The vice-chancellor was so nettled at the disturbance he had met with, and the talk it occasioned, that he complained to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who immediately sent for the young man, to reprove him for what he had done. In the course of the conference which ensued between the archbishop and the preacher, the latter gave so many proofs of his wit and good sense, that his grace procured him the honour of preaching before the king. Here also he had his joke: he gave out his text in these words, – “James First and Sixth, *Waver not;*” which, of course, everybody present saw to be a stroke at the indecisive character of the monarch. James, equally quick-sighted, exclaimed, “He is at me already;” but he was upon the whole so well pleased with this clerical wag, as to make him one of his chaplains in ordinary. He afterwards went to Oxford, and preached a farewell sermon on the text, “Sleep on now, and take your rest.”

BALLOTING

It sometimes happens that a candidate for admission into a society, or club, finds every individual member to whom he speaks during the canvass agreeable to his wishes; but when the day of ballot arrives, discovers that there is a majority of black balls. We would recommend to the attention of all such unhappy individuals, the practical joke which a curate once played off

under similar circumstances. Being a candidate for some vacant benefice, which was at the disposal of the clergy of the district, he sounded them all beforehand as to their disposition to serve him, and found each more disposed to favour and support him than another. When they met, however, to deliberate on the subject in full synod, he found himself by no means so well treated. Afraid that he should lose his election, he invited the whole to a feast. They, knowing that he should be unable to provide for them from his own resources, sent, as was customary, each a certain portion of the materials of the entertainment – one fish, another flesh, a third wine, a fourth oil, and so forth. The whole he boiled together in one kettle. Of course, when the guests were all arranged, and the food brought in, it was found to be the most unpalatable stuff in the world. They asked what sort of food this was, and he answered with oblique veracity, that it was what they had sent to him. “Ah,” said they, “but what, if cooked each thing by itself, and presented in a separate dish, would have been very good, it is quite disgusting in this hotch-potch style.” “Just so are ye to me,” replied the host; “you are very fair and kind to me when single, and one by one; but when you are gathered together, you are the most disagreeable people in the whole world.”

CLASSICAL PUN

As William Spencer was contemplating the caricatures at Fores's, somebody pointed out to him the marine piece, entitled

“*The Ostend packet in a Squall*,” when the wit, without at all sympathizing in the nausea visible on some of the faces represented in the print, exclaimed, “*Quodcunque Ostendis mihi sic incredulus odi.*”

LUDICROUS MISTAKE

When Mrs. Mary Robinson published her *Sappho and Phaon*, she wrote to Mr. Boaden, then editor of a newspaper, in the following terms: – “Mrs. Robertson would thank her friend Boaden for a dozen puffs for *Sappho and Phaon*.” By mistake of the twopenny post, this note was delivered to Mr. Bowden, the pastry-cook, in the Strand, who sent this answer: – “Mr. Bowden’s respectful compliments to Mrs. Robertson; shall be very happy to serve her; but, as Mrs. R. is not a constant customer, he cannot send the puffs for the young folks without first receiving the money.”

PUNNING FLATTERY

One day, when Sir Isaac Heard was in company with George III., it was announced that his majesty’s horse was ready for hunting. “Sir Isaac,” said the king, “are you a judge of horses?” “In my younger days, please your majesty, I was a great deal among them,” was the reply. “What do you think of this, then?”

said the king, who was by this time preparing to mount his favourite; and without waiting for an answer, added, "we call him *Perfection*." "A most appropriate name," replied the courtly herald, bowing as his majesty reached the saddle; "for he bears the best of characters."

IF YOU CAN, I CANNOT

An American gentleman, who was so passionately fond of backgammon, that, even to be a spectator of it much interested him, happened to be surveying a game in which one of the players shewed an evident inferiority to the other. As the game proceeded, he was wrought up to a pitch of perfect fury at the bad play of this individual, who on the other hand, maintained, under all his reverses, a coolness perfectly admirable. "Can you bear that?" cried the American at every hit made by the good player. "Why not?" said the other, with perfect indifference. At last, on the good player gaining an advantage of a particularly brilliant nature, "Can you really bear that?" exclaimed the American. "Why not?" drawled out the loser, with his usual philosophic coolness. "Well," cried the American, "if you can I cannot;" and seizing the board, he threw the whole, dice, men, and everything, into the fire.

A COMPLICATION OF DISORDERS

“What did Mr. — die of?” asked a simple neighbour. “Of a complication of disorders,” replied his friend. “How do you describe this complication, my good sir?” “He died,” answered the other, “of two physicians, an apothecary, and a surgeon!”

GOOD EXCHANGE

Garrick having remarked at the Beef-Steak Club, that he had so large a mass of manuscript plays submitted to his perusal, that they were constantly liable to be mislaid, he observed, that, unpleasant as it was to reject an author's piece, it was an affront to the poor devil's feelings if it could not instantly be found; and that, for this reason, he made a point of ticketing and labelling the play that was to be returned, that it might be forthcoming at a moment's notice. “A fig for your hypocrisy!” exclaimed Murphy, across the table: “you know Davy, you mislaid my tragedy two months ago, and I make no doubt you have lost it.” “Yes,” replied Garrick; “but you forget, you ungrateful dog, that I offered you more than its value; for you might have had two manuscript farces in its stead.”

STAKE VERSUS STEAK

On one occasion, Garrick dined in the beef-steak room at Covent Garden, ready dressed in character for the part of Ranger, which he was to perform the same night at the other theatre. Ranger appears in the opening of the comedy; and as the curtain was not drawn up at the usual time, the audience began to manifest considerable impatience, for Garrick had not yet arrived. A call-boy was instantly despatched for him, but he was unfortunately retarded by a line of carriages that blocked up the whole of Russel Street, which it was necessary for him to cross. This protracted still further the commencement of the piece; and the house evinced considerable dissatisfaction, with cries of "Manager, manager!" When Garrick at length reached the green-room, he found Dr. Ford, one of the patentees, pacing backwards and forwards in great agitation. The moment the doctor saw him, he addressed him in a strong tone of rebuke. "I think, David, considering the stake you and I have in this theatre, you might pay more attention to its business." "True, my good friend," returned Garrick, "I should have been in good time; but I was thinking of my *steak* in the other." The appearance of their favourite soon pacified the audience, and Garrick went through the character with more vivacity than ever.

HYPERCRITICISM

When Colman read his admirable opera of *Inkle and Yarico* to the late Dr. Moseley, the doctor made no remark during the progress of the piece; but, when it was concluded, being asked what he thought of it, "It won't do," said the doctor; "stuff, nonsense!" Every body else having been delighted with it, this decided disapprobation puzzled the circle: he was asked why? "I'll tell you why," answered the critic; "you say in the finale,

'Now, let us dance and sing,
While all Barbadoes' bells shall ring.'

It won't do: there is but one bell in the whole island."

APPROPRIATE ILLUSTRATIONS

Some one was asked what works he had in the press? "Why, the History of the Bank, with *notes*; the Art of Cookery, with *plates*; and the Science of Single-Stick, with *wood-cuts*."

DISTINCTION BETWEEN A LORD AND A GENTLEMAN

In the reign of King James the First, it is said, that titles were not always well placed; which made an extravagant young fellow very smart upon a courtier, whom he desired to move the King to make him a lord. “What pretensions, either of blood or merit,” replies the courtier, “have you to recommend you to that dignity?” The young man confessed modestly, that “he hoped he stood possessed of all the qualities requisite for a fashionable nobleman; that he loved dogs, dice, and drabs; scorned wit in poor clothes; and had beat his shoemaker, and ruined his tailor.” The matter came to the king’s ear; but the young candidate’s preferment was opposed by a person in waiting, who, it seems, had had no feeling in the affair. The king demanded what reasons there were against the man’s being made a lord; the courtier insisted, that “he was a mean obscure person, and not so much as a gentleman.” “Oh! it is no matter for that,” replies the monarch, merrily, “I can make a lord, though I cannot make a gentleman.”

SIGNS

A noted wag remarked the absurdity of a tradesman putting his name plump in the middle of the words expressing his trade, –

a practice very common in London. “For example,” said he, “how ridiculous it is to see *General*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.