

VARIOUS

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Various
**The Mirror of Literature,
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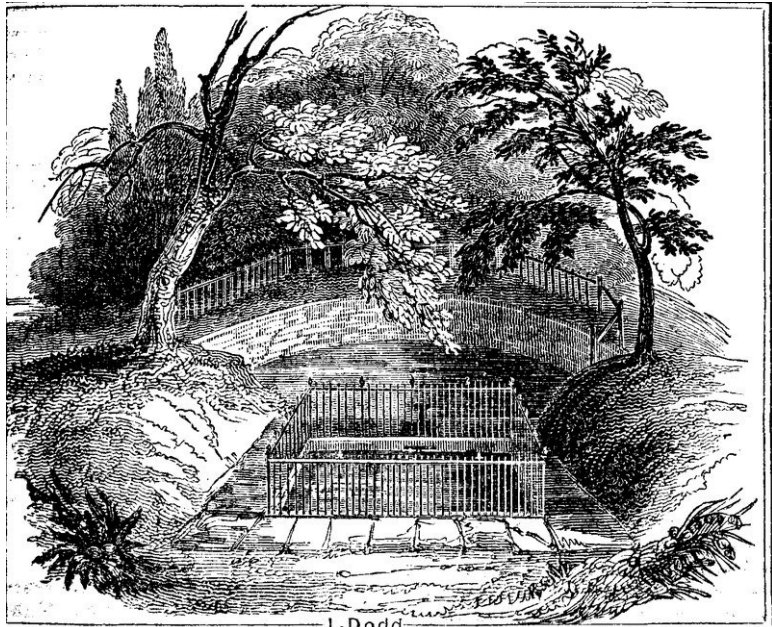
*The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction / Volume 12, No. 327,
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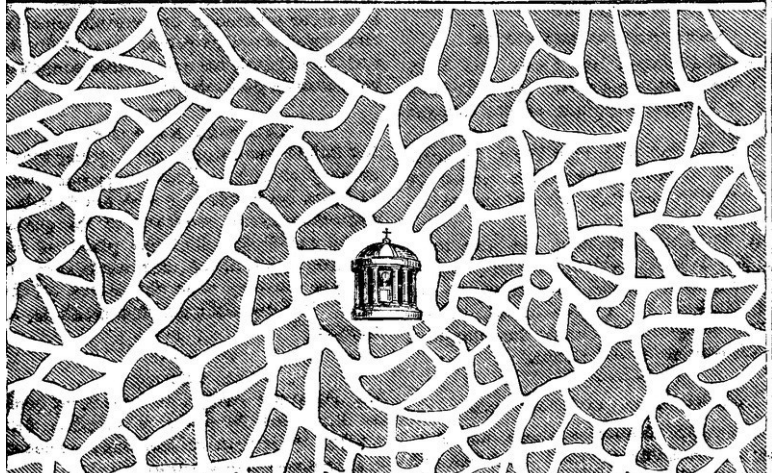
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**ROSAMOND'S WELL
AND LABYRINTH**



I. Dodd



Rosamond's Well and Labyrinth at Woodstock.

For the originals of the annexed engravings we are indebted to the sketchbooks of two esteemed correspondents.¹ The sites are so consecrated, or we should rather say perpetuated, in history, and the fates and fortunes of Rosamond Clifford are so familiar to our readers, that we shall add but few words on the locality of the Well and Bower. Their existence is thus attested by Drayton, the poet, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth:—"Rosamond's Labyrinth, whose ruins, together with her Well, being paved with square stones in the bottom, and also her Tower, from which the Labyrinth did run, are yet remaining, being vaults arched and walled with stone and brick, almost inextricably wound within one another, by which, if at any time her lodging were laid about by the queen, she might easily avoid peril imminent, and, if need be, by secret issues, take the air abroad, many furlongs about Woodstock, in Oxfordfordshire."

Sir Walter Scott (of whom, as of Goldsmith, it may hereafter be said, he "left no species of writing untouched or unadorned by his pen") has resuscitated the interest attached to this spot, in his masterly novel of *Woodstock*.² It is here that the beautiful Alice meets the facetious Charles in his disguise of an old woman; and on the bank over the Well is the spot where tradition

¹ SAGITTARIUS—and T.W. of Hoxton.

² For an abstract of "Woodstock," an engraving, and much valuable information respecting the palace, see our vol. vii. pp. 289—316—322—327—338, &c.

relates fair Rosamond yielded to the menaces of Eleanor. Our correspondent, *T.W.*, jocosely observes, that he sends us the Labyrinth "without the silken cord which guided the cruel Eleanor to her rival, in the hope that the ingenuity of the reader will be sufficient to serve him in its stead. Observe," continues he, "the maze is entered at one of the side gates, and the bower must be reached without any of the barriers (—) being passed over—that is, by an uninterrupted pathway."³

³ As there is a vulgar error on Rosamond's being buried in the labyrinth, we subjoin the following by another correspondent. Many readers of the MIRROR, perhaps, have hitherto been only acquainted with the fictitious part of Fair Rosamond's history. The few subjoined facts, relative to the eventful life of that lady, may be implicitly relied on, as they are very carefully gleaned from the *most authenticated sources*. The first mistress to king Henry II. was Rosamond, daughter of Walter Clifford, Baron of Hereford. She was esteemed the greatest beauty in England, and her intrigue with Henry was most probably began when he was not much above sixteen years of age. Very soon after his amorous acquaintance with this lady, the state of political affairs in England required his absence, and he did not again return to this country until the year 1153; so that there must have been a lapse of nearly six years from the period of his first intimacy with Rosamond, to the renewal of that intimacy at his return. About the year 1157, king Henry took extraordinary precautions to conceal his intrigue from the knowledge of queen Eleanor, a woman, of wonderful spirit and penetration, to whom he had been espoused at the period of his accession to the throne, in 1155. This circumstance has given rise to the romantic tradition of his forming a sort of labyrinth at Woodstock Palace, for the purpose of concealing his fond mistress from the vengeance of Eleanor; but the story of her being murdered in that palace by the queen is perfectly false, for it is sufficiently evident that she retired to the nunnery of Godstow, where she ended her days in peace, though in what year it is difficult to decide. After Rosamond's decease, the king bestowed large revenues on the convent, in return for which, he required that lamps should be kept continually burning about the lady's remains, which were interred near the high altar, in a tomb covered with silk. We may naturally conclude from these circumstances, that, as long

The bower consists of fine tall trees, whose branches hang entwined over the front of the well. The spring is contained in a large basin, formed by a plain stone wall, which serves as a facing and support to the bank; the water flows from hence through a hole of about five inches in diameter, and is conveyed by a channel under the pavement into another basin of considerable dimensions, fenced with an iron railing. Hence it again escapes by means of a grating into the beautiful lake of Woodstock Park, or, as it is more modernly termed, Blenheim.

In these days of "hobgoblin lore," it may not be incurious to add, that Woodstock is distinguished in Dr. Plot's *History of Oxfordshire* (the *title* of which is well known to all readers of the marvellous) as the scene of a series of hoax and disturbance played off upon the commissioners of the Long Parliament, who were sent down to dispark and destroy Woodstock, after the death of Charles I.; and Sir Walter Scott thinks it "highly probable" that this "piece of phantasmagoria was conducted by means of the secret passages and recesses in the Labyrinth of Rosamond"—it must be admitted, a very convenient scene for such a farce. Sir Walter says, "I have not the book at hand"—neither have we; but we may probably allude to this curious affair on some future occasion. In the meantime, if our present

as the connexion between king Henry and Rosamond continued, the former had no other object in his affections; yet we are informed by a writer of Thomas à Becket's life, that there lived a remarkably handsome girl, at Stafford, with whom king Henry was said to cohabit. However, observes the same writer, Rosamond *might* have been dead before the second intrigue was commenced. G.W.N.

reference should kindle the curiosity of the reader, and he may not be disposed to await our time, we beg to recommend him to Glanville's well-known work on witchcraft, which not only contains Dr. Plot's narrative of the Woodstock disturbances, but a multitude of argument for all who are sceptical of this and similar mysteries. This is an age of inquiry, and we do not see why such follies should be left unturned—from Priam's shade to the murderous dreams and omens of our own times.

THE "NAPOLEON" CHILD

On Friday the 8th inst. we paid a visit to the Bazaar in Oxford-street, to witness this extraordinary sport of Nature, about which the French and English newspapers have lately been so communicative.

The child is an engaging little girl, about three years old. The colour of her eyes is pale blue, and on the iris, or circle round their pupils, the inscriptions on

Left Eye.

NAPOLEON
EMPEREUR.

Right Eye.

EMPEREUR.
NAPOLEON.

may be traced in the above sized letters, although all the letters are not equally visible, the commencement "NAP" and "EMP" being the most distinct. The colour of the letters is almost white, and at first sight of the child they appear like *rays*, which make the eyes appear vivacious and sparkling. The accuracy of the inscriptions is much assisted by the stillness of the eye, on its being directed upwards, as to an object on the ceiling of the room, &c.; and with this aid the several letters may be traced with the naked eye.

This effect is accounted for by the child's mother earnestly

looking at a franc-piece of Napoleon's, which was given to her by her brother previous to a long absence; and this operating during her pregnancy, has produced the appearance in question. It was visible at the child's birth, and has increased with her growth. She has been seen by Sir Astley Cooper and other leading members of the profession, and probably before our Number is published, she will have been shown to the King. She is an interesting little creature, prattles playfully, and will doubtless receive the caresses of thousands of visitors.

Our contemporaries are, we perceive, somewhat divided as to the distinctness of the inscription; but we have given our opinion fairly—and, as the proverb runs, "seeing is believing." One of them describes the child as "a little *boy*, about two years old." This reminds us of the man in the *Critic*, "give these fellows a good thing, and they never know when to have done with it."

PORTUGUESE PRISONS

(For the Mirror.)

Most of the Portuguese prisons are horrible in the extreme; and it is utterly impossible for the most hardy individuals, who have the misfortune to be long confined within them, to preserve their health from ruin.

The famous prison of the *Limoeiro*, at Lisbon, is a dreadful place of durance. It is situated on one of the mountainous streets in the Portuguese metropolis, and was formerly the archbishop's palace. A vast proportion of the crimes committed in the city are plotted between the persons confined within, and those without, the prison; for there is nothing to prevent constant communication with the street through the double iron-bars, so that an unchecked and unobserved intercourse is maintained, much to the furtherance of crime. Through these bars all sorts of food, liquors, raiment, weapons, &c. can be conveyed from the street; and, indeed, through these bars the meals of the prisoners are served. The prison is capable of containing about 700 people; the usual number, however, is 400. The state of the apartments in which the criminals pass their time is truly distressing. The stench is overpowering; and though visitors remain in the rooms only a few minutes, they often retire seriously indisposed. The expense

of maintaining the prisoners is 8,000 cruzados, or about 1,000*l.* per annum. Of this sum, one-half is paid by the city, and the other by the *Misericordia*, a benevolent association, possessing large funds from various bequeathed estates. Nevertheless, the food appears insufficient; it consists chiefly of a soup made of rice. The allowance of bread is one pound and a half per day for four persons.

G.W.N.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STREET

(For the Mirror.)

In London's variegated streets
The eye, whatever pleases, meets;
For like another Street, I know,
Those Streets each day more charming grow.

As if by magic's changeful wand,
Taste, beauty, order, strength combine;
And shew a mighty master's hand
In every graceful curve and line.

But meaner temples strive in vain
Perfection's envied height to gain;
For in our matchless Street alone,
The charm of perfect beauty's known.

How blest, if at that living shrine,
With deepest feeling, warm and true,
The nameless happiness were mine,
To bend in form—and spirit too.

But no—though in my ardent breast,

The fires of love must ever rise,
Th' adverse circles of my fate,
Forbid the outward sacrifice.

My spirit breathes its inmost breath,
In this my first—my last confession:—
The passion will survive till death,
But never more can know expression.

W.

CHILDE'S TOMB

(For the Mirror.)

From "time out of mind" a tradition has existed in Dartmoor, Devon, and is noticed by several writers, that one *John Childe*, of Plymstock, a gentleman of large possessions, and a noted hunter, whilst enjoying that sport during a very inclement season, was benighted, lost his way, and perished through cold and fear, in the south quarter of the forest, near Fox-tor, after taking the precaution to kill his horse, (which he much valued), as a last resource, and for the sake of warmth and prolonging life, to creep into its bowels, leaving a paper, denoting, that whoever should find and bury his body, should have his lands at Plymstock.

"The furste that fyndes and bringes me to my grave,
The landes of Plymstoke they shal have."

This couplet was found on his person afterwards. Childe, having no issue, had previously declared his intention of bestowing his estates upon the church wherein he might be buried, which coming to the knowledge of the monks of Tavistock, they eagerly seized the body, and were conveying it to that place; but learning on the way, that some people of

Plymstock were waiting at a ford to intercept the prey, they cunningly ordered a bridge to be built out of the usual track, thence pertinently called *Guile*-bridge, and succeeding in their object, became possessed of the lands until the dissolution, when the Russell family received a grant of them, and still retain it.

In memory of Childe, a tomb was erected to him in a place a little below Fox-tor, where he perished, which stood perfect till about fifteen years since; but it has been destroyed by some ignorant "landlord or tenant," for building materials, and it is now in a ruinous condition. It was composed of hewn granite, the under basement comprising four stones, six feet long by four square, and eight stones more, growing shorter as the pile ascended, with an octagonal basement, above three feet high, and a cross affixed to it. The whole, when perfect, wore an antique and impressive appearance, and it may now, as it is, be looked upon as an object of antiquity and curiosity.

A socket and groove for the cross, and the cross itself, with its shaft broken, are the only remains of this venerable tomb, on which Risdon says there was an inscription, but now no traces of it are visible.

W. H. H.

REMEMBER THEE

(For the Mirror.)

Remember thee! thou wouldst not cherish—breathe,
One claim for Memory in a heart like mine;
Yet, all it-all its hopes for Heaven, or Earth beneath.
Were worthless, if unshared by thee and thine!

Remember thee! yes, bound in strongest ties
Are those blest ones, that at thy feet may fall,—
The heart whom Fortune such dear bonds denies,
Is proud to love thee dearer than them all!

Remember thee! there is no shame in this,
Though oft my heart may wander, and my eye,
Picturing fair shapes of too ideal bliss,
Forgets the "cold world of reality."

Remember thee! there is no error here—
To love the gay, the beautiful, the bright,
With fondest passion, then to turn with fear
To sterner duties—tasks forgotten quite.

Remember thou that one, who loved thee well

Though scorned, and broken-hearted, and undone,
When, without shame, thy ruby lips may tell
How deep the passion of that nameless one!

Remember! oh, remember! in those years
Which fleet so fast—which I may never see;
Then, whilst I linger in this "vale of tears,"
What should I think upon, but God and thee!

THOMAS M-s.

ANCIENT ROMAN FESTIVALS

AUGUST

(For the Mirror.)

The *Portumnalia* was a festival in honour of *Portumnus*, who was supposed to preside over ports and havens, celebrated on the 17th of August, in a very solemn and lugubrious manner, on the borders of the Tiber.

The *Vinalia* were festivals in honour of Jupiter and Venus. The first was held on the 19th of August, and the second on the 1st of May. The *Vinalia* of the 19th of August were called *Vinalia Rustica*, and were instituted on occasion of the war of the Latins against Mezentius; in the course of which war, that people vowed a libation to Jupiter of all the wine in the succeeding vintage. On the same day likewise fell the dedication of a temple to Venus; whence some authors have fallen into a mistake, that these *Vinalia* were sacred to Venus.

The *Consuales Ludi*, or *Consualia*, were festivals at Rome in honour of *Consus*, the god of counsel, whose altar Romulus discovered under the ground. This altar was always covered, except at the festival, when a mule was sacrificed, and games and horse-races exhibited in honour of Neptune. It was during

these festivals (says Lempriere) that Romulus carried away the Sabine women, who had assembled to be spectators of the games. They were first instituted by Romulus. Some say, however, that Romulus only regulated and re-instituted them after they had been before established by Evander. During the celebration, which happened about the middle of August, horses, mules, and asses were exempted from all labour, and were led through the streets adorned with garlands and flowers.

The *Volturnalia* was a festival kept in honour of the god Volturnus, on the 26th of August.

The *Ambarvalia* were festivals in honour of Ceres, in order to procure a happy harvest. At these festivals they sacrificed a bull, a sow, and a sheep, which, before the sacrifice, were led in procession thrice around the fields; whence the feast is supposed to have taken its name, *ambio*, *I go round*, and *arvum*, *field*. These feasts were of two kinds, *public* and *private*. The *private* were solemnized by the masters of families, accompanied by their children and servants, in the villages and farms out of Rome. The *public* were celebrated in the boundaries of the city, and in which twelve *fratres arvales* walked at the head of a procession of the citizens, who had lands and vineyards at Rome. These festivals took place at the time the harvest was ripe.

The *Vulcanalia* were festivals in honour of Vulcan, and observed at the latter end of August. The streets of Rome were illuminated, fires kindled every where, and animals thrown into the flames as a sacrifice to the deity.

P.T.W.

THE NOVELIST

BEBUT THE AMBITIOUS

"Hear this true story, and see whither you may be conducted by ambition."

HAFIZ, the Persian Poet.

In one of the suburbs of Ispahan, under the reign of Abbas the First, there lived a poor, working jeweller. In his neighbourhood he was known by the name of Bebut the Honest. Numberless were the proofs of probity and disinterestedness which had gained for him this title.

In all disputes and quarrels, he was the chosen arbiter. His decisions were generally as conclusive as those of the Kazi himself. Laborious, active, and intelligent, and esteemed by all who knew him, Bebut was happy; and his happiness was still enhanced by love. Tamira, the beautiful daughter of his patron, was the object of his attachment, which she returned. One thought alone disturbed his felicity; he was poor, and the father of Tamira would never accept a son-in-law without a fortune. Bebut, therefore, often meditated upon the means of getting rich. His thoughts dwelt so much on this subject, that ambition at length became a dangerous rival to the softer sentiment.

There was a grand festival in the harem. In the midst of it, the great Schah Abbas dropped the royal aigrette, called jigha, the mark of sovereignty among the Mussulmans. In changing his position, that it might be sought for, he inadvertently trod upon it, and it was broken. The officer who had charge of the crown jewels, knew the reputation of Bebut; to him he applied to repair this treasure. None but the most honest could be trusted with an article of such value, and who was there so honest as Bebut? Bebut was enraptured with the confidence. He promised to prove himself deserving of it.

Now Bebut holds in his hands the richest gems of Persia and the Indies. Ambition has already stolen into his bosom. Could it be silent on an occasion like this? It ought to have been so, but it was not.

"A single one of these numerous diamonds," said Bebut to himself, "would make my fortune and that of Tamira! I am incapable of a breach of trust; but were I to commit one, would Abbas be the worse for it? No, so far from it, he would have made two of his subjects happy without being aware. Now, any body else situated as I am, would manage to put aside a vast treasure out of a job like this; but one, and that a very small one, of these many gems will be enough for me. It will be wrong, I confess, but I will replace it by a false one, cut and enchased with such exquisite taste and skill, that the value of the workmanship shall make up for any want of value in the material. It will be impossible to see the change; God and the Prophet will see it

plainly enough, I know; but I will atone for the sin, and it shall be my only one. Sometime or other I will go a pilgrimage to Mashad, or even to Mecca, should my remorse grow troublesome."

Thus, by the power of a "but," did Bebut the Honest contrive to quiet his conscience. The diamond was removed: a bit of crystal took its place, and the jigha appeared more brilliant than ever to the courtiers of Abbas, who, as they never spoke to him but with their foreheads in the dust, could, of course, form a very accurate estimate of the lustre of his jewels.

One day during the spring equinox, as the chief of the sectaries of Ali, according to the custom of Persia, was sitting at the gate of his palace to hear the complaints of his people, a mechanic from the suburb of Julfa broke through the crowd; he prostrated himself at the feet of the Abbas, and prayed for justice; he accused the kazi of corruption, and of having condemned him wrongfully. "My adversary and I," said he, "at first appealed to Bebut the Honest, who decided in my favour." Being informed who this Bebut was whose name for honesty stood so high in the suburb of Julfa, the Schah ordered the kazi into his presence. The monarch heard both sides and weighed the affair maturely. He then pronounced for the decision of Bebut the Honest, whom he ordered the kalantar, or governor of the city, immediately to bring before him.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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