

# VARIOUS

THE MIRROR OF  
LITERATURE,  
AMUSEMENT, AND  
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10, NO. 286, DECEMBER  
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Various

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Amusement, and Instruction. Volume  
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To expatiate on the advantages of printing, at this time of day, would be "wasteful and ridiculous excess." We content ourselves with the comparison of Dryden's

"Long trails of light descending down."

In a retrospective glance at our previous volumes (for can the phrenologists tell us of a head capacious enough to contain their exhaustless variety?) our readers will perceive that, from time to time, sundry "accounts" of the origin and progress of printing have been inserted in the MIRROR;<sup>1</sup> and though we are not vain enough to consider our sheet as the "refined gold, the lily, the violet, the ice, or the rainbow," of the poet's perfection, yet in specimens of the general *economy of the art*, the long-extended patronage of the public gives us an early place.

With an outline of the life of CAXTON our readers must be already familiar; but we wish them to consider the above accurate representation of the FIRST ENGLISH PRINTER'S RESIDENCE as antecedent to a *Memoir of Caxton*, in which it will be our aim to concentrate, in addition to biographical details, many important facts from the testimony of antiquarians; for scarcely a volume of the *Archaeologia* has appeared without some valuable communication on Caxton and his times.

In the meantime we proceed with the *locale* of Caxton's house, situate on the south-west of Westminster Abbey, where was formerly the eleemosynary, or almonry, where the alms of the abbots were distributed. Howell in his *Londinopolis*, describes this as "the spot where the abbot of Westminster permitted Caxton to set up his press in the *Almonry*, or *Ambry*," the former of which names is still retained. This is confirmed by Newcourt, in his *Repertorium*, who says, "St. Anne's, an old chapel, over against which the Lady Margaret, mother to king Henry VII., erected an alms-house for poor women, which is now turned into lodgings for singing-men of the college. The place wherein this chapel and alms-house stood was called the Eleemosinary, or Almonry, now corruptly called the Ambry, (Aumbry,) for that the alms of the abbey were there distributed to the poor; in which the abbot of Westminster erected the first press for book-printing that was in England, about the year of Christ 1471, and where WILLIAM CAXTON, citizen and mercer of London, who first brought it into England, practised it." Here he printed *The Game and Play of the Chesse*, said to be the first book that issued from the press in this country.

Hence, according to Mr. M'Creery, the intelligent author of "The Press," a poem, "the title of *chapel* to the internal regulations of a printing-office originated in Caxton's exercising the profession in one of the chapels in Westminster Abbey, and may be considered as an additional proof, from the antiquity of the custom, of his being the first English printer."<sup>2</sup>

Every lover of science, on approaching this spot, will feel himself on holy ground, however the idle and incurious of our metropolis may neglect the scite, or be ignorant of its identity. We are there led into an eternity of reflection and association of ideas; but lest human pride should be too fondly feasted in the retrospect, the hallowed towers of the abbey, seen in the distance, serve to remind us of the imperial maxim, that "art is long, and life but short."

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<sup>1</sup> See MIRROR, vol 3, p 194—vol 5. p 311.

<sup>2</sup> We quote this passage from Mr. M'Creery, as it has already appeared in vol. 5; and in vol. 3, a correspondent denies that the first English book was printed at Westminster; but we are disposed to think that an impartial examination of the testimonies on each side of the controversy will decide in favour of Caxton.

## TEA.—ITS INTRODUCTION INTO ENGLAND

(A correspondent, who signs *M.M.M.* informs us that the article sent to us by *P.T.W.* and inserted in No. 280 of the *MIRROR*, was copied verbatim from the *Imperial Magazine*, a work which we seldom see, and consequently we had no opportunity of ascertaining the origin of our correspondent's paper. It seemed to us a good *cyclopaedian* article on the subject, and we accordingly admitted it. We now subjoin *M.M.M.*'s communication.)

In addition to what has been said in the article upon tea, (by *P.T.W.*) allow me to remark (and which I do not recollect ever to have seen noticed in any work upon the subject) that the seed is contained in *two* vessels, the outer one varying in shape, triangular, long, and round, according to the number which it contains of what may be termed inner vessels. The outer vessel of a triangular shape, measures, from the base to the apex about three quarters of an inch, and is of a dark brown colour, approaching to black, and thick, strong, and rough in texture; within this is another vessel, containing the kernel; this inner vessel is of a light brown colour, thin, and brittle, in shape, seldom perfectly round, but mostly flat on one side: there are three of them in a triangular seed vessel, two in a long one, and one in that which is round. The kernel is of a brown colour, and in taste very bitter. In no other species of teas than Bohea, is the large kind of seed found, which is probably owing to that species being gathered last or in autumn. There is a *small* seed found mixed with the Congou kind of teas, about the size of a pea, which is in every respect similar to the large, except in size. This seed was evidently not permitted to ripen, but the calyx of the flower connected with the peduncle is quite perfect. The Twankey species are of the same appearance, all of which I have had ample opportunity of inspecting.

As an appendage to this note, we are induced to quote the following pleasant page from *Time's Telescope* for 1828; and we take this opportunity of reminding our readers that our customary Supplementary sheet, containing the spirit of this and other popular Annual Works will be published with our next Number.

From a single sheet found in Sir Hans Sloane's library, in the British Museum, and printed by Mr. Ellis in his Original Letters, *Second Series*, it appears that tea was known in England in the year 1657, though not then in general use. The author of this paper says, "That the vertues and excellencies of this leaf and drink are many and great, is evident and manifest by the high esteem and use of it (especially of late years) among the physicians and knowing men in France, Italy, Holland, and other parts of Christendom; *and in ENGLAND* it hath been sold in the leaf for *six pounds*, and sometimes for *TEN pounds* the pound weight, and in respect of its former scarceness and dearness, it hath been only used as a regalia in high treatments and entertainments, and presents made thereof to princes and grandees, till the year 1657."

Secretary Pepys, in his Diary, vol. i. p. 76, without saying where he had his drink, makes the following entry:—"Sept. 25th, 1660. I did send for a cup of tea (a China drink) of which I never had drunk before, and went away."

In a letter from Mr. Henry Savill to his uncle, Secretary Coventry, dated from Paris, Aug. 12, 1678, and printed by Mr. Ellis, the writer, after acknowledging the hospitalities of his uncle's house, quaintly observes, "These, I hope, are the charms that have prevailed with me to remember (that is to trouble) you oftener than I am apt to do other of my friends, whose buttery-hatch is not so open, *and who call for TEA* instead of pipes and bottles after dinner; *a base unworthy Indian practice*, and which I must ever admire your most Christian family for not admitting. The truth is, all nations have grown so wicked as to have some of these filthy customs." In 1678, the year in which the above letter is dated, the East India Company began the importation of tea as a branch of trade; the quantity received at that time amounting to 4,713 lbs. The importation gradually enlarged, and the government, in consequence, augmented the duties upon tea. By the year 1700, the importation

of tea had arrived at the quantity of 20,000 lbs. In 1721, it exceeded a million of pounds. In 1816, it had arrived at 86,234,380 lbs. Something more than thirty millions of pounds is probably the present average of importation: some allowance must be made for tea damaged and spoiled upon the passage. —See more on this subject, well worthy of perusal, in Mr. Ellis's Letters, *Second Series*, vol. iv. pp. 57, et seq.

## **DANGER**

### **FROM L'ADONE OF MARINO**

**(For the Mirror.)**

Like some lone Pilgrim in the dusky night,  
Seeking, through unknown paths, his doubtful way,  
While thick nocturnal vapours veil his sight  
From yawning chasms, that 'neath his footsteps lay;  
Sudden before him gleams the forked light!  
Dispels the gloom, yet fills him with dismay.  
His trembling steps he then retraces back,  
And seeks again the well-known beaten track.

*E.S.J.*

## CATS

**(For the Mirror.)**

The first couple of these animals which were carried to Cuyaba sold for a pound of gold. There was a plague of rats in the settlement, and they were purchased as a speculation, which proved an excellent one. Their first kittens produced thirty *oilavas* each; the new generation were worth twenty; and the price gradually fell as the inhabitants were stocked with these beautiful and useful creatures. Montengro presented to the elder Almagro the first cat which was brought to South America, and was rewarded for it with six hundred *pesos*.

## THE DEATH OF KING JOHN

**Extracted from an old black-letter volume, entitled "The Abridgment of the Acts and Monuments of Martyrs, from the earliest period of Christian suffering to the time of Queen Elizabeth, our gracious lady, now reigning," printed in her reign**

**(For the Mirror.)**

In the yeere 1216, king John was poisoned, as most writers testify, at Swinsted Abbey, by a monk of that abbey, of the order of Cistersians, or S. Bernard's brethren, called Simon of Swinsted. The monk did first consult with his abbot, shewing him what he minded to do, alleging for himself the prophecy of Caiphaz, 11th of John, saying, it is better that one man die, than the whole people perish. I am well content, saith he, to lose my life, and so become a martyr, that I may utterly destroy this tyrant. With that the abbot did weep for gladness, and much commended his fervent zeal. The monk then being absolved of his abbot for doing this fact, went secretly into the garden, on the back side, and finding there a most venomous toad, did so prick him and press him with his penknife, that hee made him vomite all the poison that was within him; this done, he conveyed it into a cup of wine, and with a flattering and smiling countenance he sayeth to the king, "If it shall please your princely majesty, here is such a cup of wine as you never drank better in your lifetime. I trust this wassall shall make all England glad," and with that he drank a great draught thereof, and the king pledged him; the monk then went out of the house to the back, and then died, his bowels gushing out of his belly, and had continually from henceforth three monks to sing mass for him, confirmed by their general charter. The king, within a short space after, feeling great grief in his body, asked for Simon, the monk; answer was made he was dead. "Then God have mercy on me," said the king; so went he to Newark-upon-Trent, and there died, and was buried in the cathedral church at Worster, in 1216, the 19th day of October, after having been much fered with the clergy 18 years, 6 months, and a day.

*MALVINA.*

## LILLIARD EDGE

(For the Mirror.)

Near the border between the parishes of Maxton and Ancrum is a bridge, called Lilliard Edge, formerly Anerum moor, where a battle was fought between the Scots and English soon after the death of king James V., who died in the year 1542. When the Earl of Arran was regent of Scotland, Sir Ralph Rivers and Sir Bryan Laiton came to Jedburgh with an army of 5,000 English to seize Merse and Teviotdale in the name of Henry VIII., then king of England, who died not long after, in the year 1547. The regent and the Earl of Angus came with a small body of men to oppose them. The Earl of Angus was greatly exasperated against the English, because some time before they had defaced the tombs of his ancestors at Melrose, and had done much hurt to the abbey there. The regent and the Earl of Angus, without waiting the arrival of a greater force, which was expected, met the English at Lilliard Edge, where the Scots obtained a great victory, considering the inequality of their number. A young woman of the name of Lilliard fought along with the Scots with great courage; she fell in the battle, and a tombstone was erected upon her grave on the field where it was fought. Some remains of this tombstone are still to be seen. It is said to have contained the following inscription:—

"Fair maiden Lilliard lies under this stane;  
Little was her stature, but great was her fame.  
On the English lads she laid many thumps,  
And when her legs were off she fought on her stumps."

*T.S. W.*

## BOOKS AND BOOKWORMS

(For the Mirror.)

Books were anciently made of plates of copper and lead, the bark of trees, bricks, Stones, and wood. Josephus speaks of two columns, the one of stone, the other of brick, on which the children of Seth wrote their inventions and astronomical discoveries. Porphyry mentions some pillars, preserved in Crete, on which the ceremonies observed by the Corybantes in their sacrifices were recorded. The leaves of the palm-tree were used, and the finest and thinnest part of the bark of such trees as the lime, the ash, the maple, and the elm; from hence comes the word *liber*, which signifies the inner bark of the trees; and as these barks are rolled up, in order to be removed with greater ease, these rolls were called *volumen*, a volume, a name afterwards given to the like rolls of paper or parchment. By degrees wax, then leather, were introduced, especially the skins of goats and sheep, of which at length parchment was prepared; also linen, then silk, horn, and lastly paper. The rolls or volumes of the ancients were composed of several sheets, fastened to each other, rolled upon a stick, and were sometimes fifty feet in length, and about a yard and a half wide. At first the letters were only divided into lines, then into separate words, which, by degrees, were noted with accents, and distributed by points, and stops into periods, paragraphs, chapters, and other divisions. In some countries, as among the orientals, the lines began from the right, and ran to the left; in others, as in northern and western nations, from the left to the right; others, as the Grecians, followed both directions alternately, going in the one and returning in the other.

In the Chinese books, the lines run from top to bottom. Again, the page in some is entire and uniform; in others, divided into columns; in others, distinguished into text and notes, either marginal or at the bottom; usually it is furnished with signatures and catch-words, also with a register to discover whether the book be complete. The Mahometans place the name of God at the beginning of all their books. The word *book* is derived from the Saxon *boc*, which comes from the northern *buech*, of *buechans*, a beech, or *service-tree*, on the bark of which our ancestors used to write. A very large estate was given for one on Cosmography by king Alfred. About the year 1400, they were sold from 10*l.* to 30*l.* a piece. The first printed one was the Vulgate edition of the Bible, 1462; the second was *Cicero de Officiis*, 1466. Leo I. ordered 200,000 to be burnt at Constantinople. In the suppressed monasteries of France, in 1790, there were found 4,104,412 volumes; nearly one-half were on theology. The end of the book, now denoted by *finis*, was anciently marked with a <, called *coronis*, and the whole frequently washed with an oil drawn from cedar, or citron chips strewed between the leaves, to preserve it from rotting.

Thus far books; now for the *bookworms*. Anthony Magliabecchi, the notorious bookworm, was born at Florence in 1633; his passion for reading induced him to employ every moment of his time in improving his mind. By means of an astonishing memory and incessant application, he became more conversant with literary history than any man of his time, and was appointed librarian to the grand duke of Tuscany. He has been called a living library. He was a man of a most forbidding and savage aspect, and exceedingly negligent of his person. He refused to be waited upon, and rarely took off his clothes to go to bed. His dinner was commonly three hard eggs, with a draught of water. He had a small window in his door, through which he could see all those who approached him; and if he did not wish for their company, he would not admit them. He spent some hours in each day at the palace library; but is said never in his life to have gone farther from Florence than to Pratz, whither he once accompanied Cardinal Norris to see a manuscript. He died at the age of 81, in the year 1714. In the present age we have *bookworms*, who wander from one bookstall to another, and there devour their daily store of knowledge. Others will linger at the tempting window filled with the "*twopenny*," and

read all the open pages; then pass on to another of the same description, and thus enjoy literature by the way of *Cheapside*.

*P.T.W.*

## MIDNIGHT—A TOUCH AT THE EPIC

(For the Mirror.)

"The iron tongue of midnight hath toll'd twelve."  
*SHAKSPEARE.*

Amid the pauses of the midnight storm,  
When all without is cold, within all warm!  
Amid the pauses of the midnight blast,  
When ev'ry bolt and ev'ry sleeper's fast!  
In that dire hour, when graves give up their dead,  
And men for once agree in their pursuit—a bed!  
When heroes, statesmen, senators, and kings,  
Lords, and et ceteras of meaner things,  
Forget the road to fortune—or to jail,  
And Morpheus all their equal guardian hail!  
When each forgets each 'vantage or mishap.  
And all are equal in one common nap!  
At that dread hour...  
Caetera desiderantur.

*Carshalton W. P-n.*

## ON OATHS

**(For the Mirror.)**

Since lately we have had a great deal of prevarication in our courts of justice about receiving the oaths of deists, &c., I have thought it meet to furnish the MIRROR with an account of the first usage of the words, "So help me God." The word oath is a corruption of the Saxon *eoþ*

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