

# VARIOUS

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NO. 4, JULY 22, 1850

Various

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of Literature, Art, and Science  
— Volume 1, No. 4, July 22, 1850**

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# Various International Weekly Miscellany of Literature, Art, and Science — Volume 1, No. 4, July 22, 1850

## LITERARY COTERIES IN PARIS IN THE LAST CENTURY

The revolutions of society are almost as sure if not as regular as those of the planets. The inventions of a generation weary after a while, but they are very likely to be revived if they have once ministered successfully to pleasure or ambition. The famous coteries in which learning was inter-blended with fashion in the golden age of French intelligence, are being revived under the new Republic, and women are again quietly playing with institutions and liberties, perhaps as dangerously as when Mesdames de Tencin, Pompadour, Geoffrin, Deffant, Poplinière and L'Espinasse assembled the destinies nightly in their drawing rooms.

The tendency to such associations is displayed also in most of our own cities. The Town and Country Club of Boston, the Wistar Parties in Philadelphia, the Literary Club in Charleston, the recent *converzationes* at the houses of President Charles King of Columbia College, and others, and the well-known Saturday Evenings at Miss Lynch's, where literature and art and general speculation have for some seasons had a common center, all illustrate the disposition of an active and cultivated society, not engrossed by special or spasmodic excitements, to cluster by rules of feeling and capacity: and clusters of passion and mind are rarely for a long period inert. When they become common they are apt to assume the direction of private custom and public opinion and affairs.

In view of these things, we are sure that the readers of the *International* will be interested in the following translation of Professor Schlosser's brilliant survey of those *bureaux d'esprit* which so much distinguished society and influenced its history in Europe, from the beginning to the middle of the last century. Schlosser is a Privy Councillor and Professor of History in the University of Heidelberg. He is chiefly known in continental Europe by his great work, the History of the Eighteenth Century, and of the Nineteenth till the overthrow of the French Empire, a work which derives its value not merely from the profound and minute acquaintance of the author with the subject, from the new views which are presented and the hitherto unexamined sources from which much has been derived, but from his well-known independence of character—from the general conclusions which he draws from the comparative views of the resources, conduct, manners, institutions and literature of the great European nations, during a period unparalleled in the history of the world for the development of the physical and mental powers of mankind, for the greatness of the events which occurred, for the progress of knowledge, for the cultivation of the arts and sciences, for all that contributes to the greatness and prosperity of nations.

If we venture to bring the Parisian evening, dinner and supper parties into connection with the general history of Europe, and the ladies also at whose houses these parties took place, we can neither be blamed for scrupulous severity, nor for paradoxical frivolity. It belongs to the character of the eighteenth century, that the historian who wishes to bring the true springs of conduct and sources of action to light, must condescend even so far. It must also be borne in mind, when the clever women and societies of Paris are spoken of, that the demands of the age and progressive improvement and culture were altogether unattended to at the court of Louis XV., as well before as after the death of Cardinal Fleury, and that all which was neglected at Versailles was cultivated in Paris. The court

and the city had been hitherto united in their wants and in their judgment; the court ruled education, fashion and the general tone, as it ruled the state; now, however, they completely separated. Afterward the voice of the city was raised in opposition, and the voice of this opposition became the organ of the age and of the country; but it was felt and recognized in Versailles only when it was too late. How easy it would have been then, as Marmontel had shown very clearly in his memoirs, to fetter Voltaire, who was offensive to the people, and how important this would have been for the state, will appear in the following paragraphs, in which we shall show that even the Parisian theatre, whose boards were regarded as a model by all Europe, freed itself from the influence of the court, became dependent on the tone-giving circles of Paris, and assumed a decidedly democratic direction.

As early as the time of Louis XIV., the court had separated itself from the learned men of the age; and at the end of the seventeenth century the houses and societies could be historically pointed out, in which judgments were pronounced upon questions of literature in the same manner as the pit became the tribunal to which plays and play-actors must appeal; we shall not, however, go back so far, but keep the later times always in our view. In those associations in which the Abbé de Chaulieu and other friends of Vendome and Conti led the conversation, literature was brought wholly under the dominion of audacious pretension and immorality, in the time of the Regency and during the minority of Louis XV. In reference to the leaders there needs no proof. What could a Philip of Orleans or his Dubois take under his protection, except what corresponded with his ideas and mode of life?

The time of the minority of Louis XV. and that of the administration of Cardinal Fleury was for several reasons highly favorable to the formation of private societies, which entertained themselves with wit and satire, and carried on a quiet but continual contest with the persons and systems which were protected by the government and the clergy. Fleury regarded everything as sinful which had the appearance of worldly knowledge, or partook of the character of jests, novels, or plays; Louis, as he grew up, showed himself quite indifferent to everything which had no connection with religious ceremonies, hunting, or handsome women. Fleury spoke and wrote in that ecclesiastical phraseology which was laughed at in the world: he favored the clergy, school learning, the tone of the times of Louis XIV.; but the spirit of the age demanded something different from this. All that was regarded with disfavor by Fleury assembled around those celebrated men, who held their reunions in Paris, and this court soon became more important to the vain than the royal one itself, and it was proved by experience that reputation and glory might be gained without the aid or protection of the court at Versailles. This no one could have previously believed, but the public soon learnt to do homage to the tone-giving scholars, to the ladies and gentlemen who fostered them, as it had formerly paid its homage to the ministers of the court. This gave to the ladies, who collected around them the celebrated men of the time (for reputation was much more the question than merit,) and who protected and entertained them, a degree of weight in the political and literary world, which made them as important in the eighteenth century as Richelieu and Colbert had been in the seventeenth.

The queen, on her part, might have been able to exercise a beneficial influence, however little power she had in other respects, when compared with the mistresses of the king; but the daughter of Stanislaus Leckzinski was a gentle, admirable woman, although somewhat narrow-minded, and wholly given up to irrational devotional exercises and bigotry. Like her father, she was altogether in the hands of the Jesuits, blindly and unconditionally their servant; such an attachment to a religious order, and such blind devotedness as hers would be quite incredible, if we did not possess her own and her father's autograph letters, as proofs of the fact. We shall present our readers with some extracts from these letters, which are preserved in the archives of the French empire, when we come to speak of the abolition of the order of Jesuits.

As to the enlightened mistresses who had much more power and influence than the queen, Pompadour seemed, as we learn from Marmontel, desirous of participating in the literature of the age and of doing something for its promotion, when she saw how important writers and the influence of the press had become; but partly because both she and the king were altogether destitute of any

sense for the beautiful in literature or art, and partly because the better portion of the learned men at the time neither could nor would be pleased with what a Bernis, Düclos and Marmontel were disposed to be, who undoubtedly received some marks of favor from her. Voltaire is therefore quite right when he lays upon the court the blame of allowing the influence which literature then exercised upon the people, to be withdrawn altogether from king and his ministers, and to be transferred to the hands of the Parisian ladies and farmers-general, &c. Voltaire, in his well-known verses,<sup>1</sup> admits, with great openness and simplicity, that he attached much importance to the applause of a court, although it neither possessed judgment nor feeling for the merits of a writer, nor for poetical beauties; and he complains at the same time that this court had neither duly estimated his tragedies nor his epic poems. It is characteristic both of the court and of Voltaire that he eagerly pressed himself forward for admission to its favor, and sought to attract attention by a work which he himself called a piece of trash, and that the court extended its approbation and applause to this miserable and altogether inappropriate piece, ('La Princesse de Navarre,') which he composed on the occasion of the Dauphin's marriage with the Infanta of Spain, whilst it entirely neglected his masterpieces.

The Paris societies had got full possession of the field of literature, and erected their tribunals before the middle of the century, whilst at Versailles nothing was spoken or thought of except amusements and hunting, Jesuits and processions, and the grossest sensuality prevailed. The members of the Parisian societies were not a whit more moral or decent in their behavior than those about the court at Versailles, but they carried on open war against hypocrisy, and all that was praised and approved of by the court.

We shall now proceed to mention three or four of the most distinguished of those societies, which have obtained an historical importance, not merely for the French literature and mental and moral culture of the eighteenth century, but for Europe in general, without however restraining ourselves precisely within the limits of the half century. The minute accounts which Grimm has given, for the most part affect only the later periods; we turn our attention therefore the rather to what the weak, vain, talkative Marmontel has related to us on the subject in his 'Autobiography,' because Rousseau was by far too one-sided in his notices, and drew public attention to the most demoralized and degraded members of the circle only.

The first lady who must be mentioned, is Madame de Tencin. She belonged to the period within which we must confine ourselves, and she gained for herself such a name, not only in Paris, but in all Europe, that she was almost regarded as the creator of that new literature which stood in direct and bold opposition to the prevailing taste, inasmuch as she received at her house, entertained and cherished, those who were really its originators and supporters. This lady could not boast of the morality of her early years, nor of her respect even for common propriety. She is not only notorious for having exposed, when a child, the celebrated D'Alembert, who was her natural son, and for regarding with indifference his being brought up by the wife of a common glazier as her own son; but stories still worse than even these are told of her. She enriched herself, as many others did, in the time of Law's scheme, by no very creditable means; and fell under such a serious suspicion of having been privy to the death of one of those who had carried on an intrigue with her, that she was imprisoned and involved in a criminal prosecution, from which she escaped, not through her own innocence, but by means of the powerful influence of her distinguished relations and friends.

All this did not prevent Pope Benedict XIV., who, as Cardinal Lambertini, had been often at her house, as a member of the society of men of talents who met there, from carrying on a continual intercourse with her by letter; he also sent her his picture as a testimony of kind remembrance. This lady succeeded in procuring for her brother the dignity of a cardinal, and through him had great weight with Fleury, with the court, and with the city in general; she is also known as an authoress. As

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<sup>1</sup> Mon Henri quatre et ma Zaire, Et mon Americaine Alzire, Ne m'ont valu jamais un seul regard du roi; J'eus beaucoup d'ennemis avec très-peu de gloire. Les honneurs et les biens pleuvent enfin sur moi Pour une farce de la foire.—La Princesse de Navarre.

we are not writing a history of literature properly speaking, we pass by her novels in silence, with this remark only, that people are accustomed to place the 'Comte de Comminges,' written by Madame de Tencin, on the same footing with the 'Princess de Clève,' by Madame de Lafayette.

The society in the house of Madame de Tencin consisted of well-known men of learning, and some younger men of distinguished name and family; she united, in later years, a certain amiability with her care for the entertainment and recreation of those whom she had once received into her house. This society, after the death of De Tencin, assembled in the house of Geoffrin. It appears, however, that Madame de Tencin, as well as the whole fashionable world to which she belonged, could never altogether disavow their contempt for science, if indeed it be true, that she was accustomed to call her society by the indecent by-name of her *ménagerie*. Fontenelle, Montesquieu, Mairan, Helvetius who was then quite young and present rather as a hearer than a speaker, Marivaux and Astruc, formed the nucleus of this clever society and led the conversation. Marmontel, who was not well suited to this society, in which more real knowledge and a deeper train of thought was called for than he possessed, informs us what the tone of this society was, and speaks of their hunting after lively conceits and brilliant flashes of wit, in a somewhat contemptuous manner. Marmontel, however, himself admits, that he was only once in the society, and that in order to read his 'Aristomenes,' and that greater simplicity and good humor prevailed there than in the house of Madame Geoffrin, in which he was properly at home.

Madame de Tencin's influence upon the new literature of the opposition party, or rather upon the spirit of the age, may be best judged of from the fact, that she largely contributed to the first preparation and favorable reception of Montesquieu's "Spirit of Laws." It is certain, at least, that she bought a large number of copies and distributed them amongst her friends. Madame Geoffrin went further; the society which had previously met at Madame de Tencin's, no sooner held their reunions in her house, than she drew together the whole literary and the fashionable world, foreign ministers, noblemen and princes who were on their travels, etc. Marmontel also says, that the aged Madame de Tencin had guessed quite correctly the intentions of Madame Geoffrin, when she said, that she merely came to her house so often in order to see what part of her inventory she could afterward make useful.

Madame Geoffrin became celebrated all over Europe, merely by devoting a portion of her income and of her time to the reception of clever society. She had neither the knowledge, the mind, nor the humility of Madame de Tencin, which the latter at least affected toward the close of her life; she was cold, egotistical, calculating, and brought into her circle nothing more than order, tact and female delicacy. Geoffrin also assumed the tone of high life, which always treats men of learning, poets and artists, as if they were mantua-makers or hair-dressers; and which must ever value social tact and the tone which is only to be acquired in good society, higher than all studies and arts upon which any one possessed of these properties is in a condition to pass judgment without having spent any time in their investigation. Marmontel is therefore honest enough to admit that he and his friends, as well as Madame Geoffrin herself, were accustomed to make a full parade when foreign princes, ministers, and celebrated men or women dined at the house. On such occasions especially, Madame Geoffrin displayed all the charms of her mind, and called to us, "now let us be agreeable."

Geoffrin's house was the first school of *bon ton* in Europe: Stanislaus Poniatowsky, even after he became King of Poland, addressed her by the tender name of mother, invited her to Warsaw, and received her as a personage of high distinction. All the German courts which followed the fashion, paid correspondents in order to be made acquainted with the trifles which occupied that circle. Catherine II. had no sooner mounted the throne than she began to pay a commissioner at this literary court, and even Maria Theresa distinguished Madame Geoffrin in a remarkable manner, on her return from Poland. Besides, we are made acquainted by Marmontel, who ranked his hostess among the gods of this earth, with the anxiety and cautiousness of this lady of the world, who afterward broke altogether with the chiefs of the new literature, and most humbly did homage to the old faith, because she had never wholly forsaken her old prejudices.

The able writers of the time were used by Geoffrin only as means to promote her objects, to gain a reputation for splendor, and to glorify France. The King of Prussia sought her society, in order to refresh and cheer his mind when he was worn out with the cares and toils of government.

Madame Geoffrin opened her house regularly on Mondays for artists, and on Wednesdays for men of learning; but as she neither understood the arts nor sciences, she took part in the conversation only so far as she could do so without exposing her weak side. She understood admirably how to attract the great men to her house, to whose houses she herself very seldom went; and as long as the appearance of fashionable infidelity and of scoffing, which was then the mode in the higher circles, was necessary to this object, she carefully concealed her real religious opinions.

The weak Marmontel, who, according to his own description, was only fitted for superficial conversation and writing, boasts of the prudence, foresight and skill of his protectress, and shows how she understood the way to gain the confidence of others without ever yielding her own. This distinguished art made the house of Madame Geoffrin invaluable to the great world, and to those learned men who wished to shine in this kind of society, and to cultivate and avail themselves of it, for such people must learn above all things neither to say too much nor too little. This society, indeed, was not calculated for any length of time for a Rousseau or a Diderot. Even the great admirers of Geoffrin admit that *savoir vivre* was her highest knowledge, she had very few ideas with respect to anything besides; but in the knowledge of all that pertained to the manners and usage of good society, in the knowledge of men, and particularly of women, she was deeply learned, and was able to give some very useful instructions.

It would lead us too far into the history of the following period, to enumerate and characterize the members of these regular societies. It may suffice to mention, that in addition to all the guests who frequented Madame de Tencin's, all the friends of Voltaire's school, and at first also Rousseau, made a part of the society at the house of Madame Geoffrin. We have already remarked that no prince, minister, or distinguished man of all Europe came to Paris who did not visit Madame Geoffrin, and think it an honor to be invited to her house, because he there found united all that was exclusively called talent in Europe.

Kaunitz also, who was then only a courtier in Versailles, came to Madame Geoffrin's parties. He was a man who combined in a most surprising manner true philosophy and a deep knowledge of political economy, with the outward appearance of a fop and a trifler. Among the other distinguished men who lived in Paris, Marmontel names with high praise the Abbé Galliani, Caraccioli, who was afterward Neapolitan ambassador, and the Swedish ambassador, Count Creutz.

Marmontel was so much delighted with this society, even at a very advanced age, that he gives us also accounts of their evening parties: "As I was in the habit of dining with the learned and with the artists at Madame Geoffrin's, so was I also of supping with her in her more limited and select circle. At these *petits soupers* there was no carousing or luxuries,—a fowl, spinach and pancakes constituted the usual fare. The society was not numerous: there met together only five or six of her particular friends, or even persons of the highest rank, who were suited to each other, and therefore enjoyed themselves." It appears distinctly from the passage already quoted from Marmontel, how the high nobility on these occasions treated the learned, and how the learned demeaned themselves toward the nobility. It appears, therefore, that Rousseau was not in error when he alleged that emptiness and wantonness only were cherished in these societies, and that the literature which was then current was only a slow poison.

Madame du Deffant appeared on the stage of the great world contemporaneously with Geoffrin, and attained so high a degree of celebrity, that the Emperor Joseph paid her a visit in her advanced period of life, and thus afforded her the opportunity of paying him that celebrated compliment which is found related in every history of France. With respect to Deffant, however, we must not listen to Marmontel; she stood above his rhymes, his love tales, his sentimental wanton stories, and besides, he knew her only when she had become old. What we Germans name feminine and good morals formed

no part of the distinction of Deffant, but talents only. Like Tencin, she was ill-reputed in her youth on account of her amours, and reckoned the Regent among her fortunate wooers; at a later period she turned her attention to literature.

Deffant brought together at her house all those persons whom Voltaire visited when he was in Paris; among these the President Hénault, and, at a later period of which we now speak, D'Alembert attracted to this circle distinguished foreigners and Frenchmen, who made any pretensions to culture and education. Deffant assumed quite a different tone among the learned from that of Geoffrin. She set up for a judge in questions of philosophy and taste, and carried on a constant correspondence with Voltaire. Among celebrated foreigners, the Englishman Horace Walpole played the same character in this house which the Swede Creutz had assumed in that of Geoffrin. Deffant and her Walpole became celebrated throughout Europe by their printed correspondence, which, on account of its smoothness and emptiness, like all books written for the great world, found very numerous readers.

Deffant, moreover, like Geoffrin, was faithless to her friends; she wished indeed to enjoy the most perfect freedom in their society, but she was unwilling that they should publish abroad this freedom. And she strongly disapproved of the vehemence with which her friends assailed the existing order of things.

When she afterward lost a considerable part of her property, and became blind, she occupied a small dwelling in an ecclesiastical foundation in Paris, but continued to receive philosophers, poets and artists in her house; and in order to give a little more life to the conversation, she invited a young lady whose circumstances were straitened to be her companion. This was Mademoiselle L'Espinasse. L'Espinasse was not beautiful, but she was young, amiable, lively, and more susceptible than we in Germany are accustomed either to allow or to pardon. Deffant, on the other hand, was witty and intelligent, but old, bitter, and withal egotistically insensible. The boldest scoffers assembled around L'Espinasse, and there was afterward formed around her a circle of her own. Deffant turned day into night, and night into day. She and the Duchess of Luxembourg, who was inseparable from her, received learned distinguished personages and foreigners, from six o'clock in the evening during the greater part of the night.

The importance in which such ladies and such societies were held, not merely in France but in all Europe, may be judged of from the fact, that the breach between Deffant and her young companion was treated in some measure as a public European event. The French minister and foreign ambassadors took part in it, and the whole literary world felt its effect. After this breach there were two tone-giving tribunals for the guidance of public opinion in matters of literature and taste, and their decisions were circulated by letter over all Europe. Horace Walpole, Hénault, Montesquieu, Voltaire, whose correspondence with Deffant has been published in the present century, remained true to her cause. D'Alembert, whose correspondence with Deffant, as well as that of the Duchess of Maine, have also been published in our century, went over to L'Espinasse. This academician, whose name and influence was next in importance to that of Voltaire, formed the nucleus of a new society in the house of L'Espinasse, and was grievously tormented by his *inamorata*, who pursued one plan of conquest after another when she saw one scheme of marriage after another fail of success. It appears from the whole of the transactions and consequences connected with this breach, however surprising it may be, that this formation of a new circle in Paris for evening entertainment may be with truth compared to the institution of a new academy for the promotion of European culture and refinement. The Duchess of Luxembourg, who continued to be a firm friend of Deffant, took upon herself to provide suitable apartments for the society, whilst the minister of the day (the Duc de Choiseul) prevailed upon the king to grant a pension of no inconsiderable amount to L'Espinasse.

This new circle was the point of union for all the philosophical reformers. Here D'Alembert and Diderot led the conversation; and the renowned head of the political economists, Turgot, who was afterward minister of state, was a member of this bolder circle of men who became celebrated and ill-renowned under the name of Encyclopædists. We shall enter upon a fuller consideration of the tone

and taste which reigned in this assembly, as well as in the society which met in the house of Holbach, and of the history of the Encyclopædia, in the following period, and shall only now mention at the conclusion of the present, and that very slightly, some of the other clever societies of Parisians who were all in their day celebrated in Europe. It is scarcely possible for us to judge of the charm which these societies possessed in the great world. This may be best learned from their own writings and conversation, a specimen of which may be found in Marmontel's 'Memoirs,' and formed the subject of a conversation between him and the Duke of Brunswick (who fell at Jena in 1806) and his duchess.

The society of *beaux esprits* which met at the house of Madame de Poplinière, in the time of Madame de Tencin, was only short-lived, like the good fortune of the lady herself. In her house there assembled members of the great world who were addicted to carousing and debauchery, and learned men who sought to obtain their favor and approbation. The same sort of society was afterward kept up in the house of Holbach. A smaller society, which frequented the house of the farmer-general Pelletier, consisted of unmarried people, who were known as persons who indulged in malicious and licentious conversation. Collé, the younger Crébillon and Bernard, who, notwithstanding his helplessness, was called *le gentil*, played the chief characters in this reunion, and the Gascon nature of Marmontel, which was always forward and intrusive, helped him into this society also. Baron Holbach, who was a native of the Palatinate, and the able Helvetius who was wanton merely from vanity, brought together expressly and intentionally at a later period, around their well-spread table, all those who declared open war against religion and morality. We must, however, return to these men in the following period.

Holbach for a whole quarter of a century had regular dinner-parties on Sundays, which are celebrated in the history of atheism. All those were invited, who were too bold and too out-spoken for Geoffrin; and even D'Alembert also at a later period withdrew from their society.

Grimm, whose copious correspondence has also been published in the nineteenth century, gives minutes and notices of all the memorable sayings and doings that served to entertain and occupy the polite world in Europe. Grimm also entertained and feasted these distinguished gentlemen. He was not at that time consul for Gotha, or employed and paid by that court or the Empress Catherine to collect Parisian anecdotes, neither had he then been made a baron, but was merely civil secretary of Count von Friese. Both J.J. Rousseau and Buffon belonged at first to these societies; but the former, in great alarm, broke off all intercourse with the people who then played the first parts in Paris, and the other quietly retired.

## THE ATHENÆUM UPON HAWTHORNE. <sup>2</sup>

The London *Athenæum*, of the 15th June, has the following remarks upon the last work of NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE:

"This is a most powerful and painful story. Mr. Hawthorne must be well known to our readers as a favorite of the *Athenæum*. We rate him as among the most original and peculiar writers of American fiction. There in his works a mixture of Puritan reserve and wild imagination, of passion and description, of the allegorical and the real, which some will fail to understand, and which others will positively reject,—but which, to ourselves, is fascinating, and which entitles him to be placed on a level with Brockden Brown and the author of 'Rip Van Winkle.' 'The Scarlet Letter' will increase his reputation with all who do not shrink from the invention of the tale; but this, as we have said, is more than ordinarily painful. When we have announced that the three characters are a guilty wife, openly punished for her guilt,—her tempter, whom she refuses to unmask, and who during the entire story carries a fair front and an unblemished name among his congregation,—and her husband, who, returning from a long absence at the moment of her sentence, sits himself down betwixt the two in the midst of a small and severe community to work out his slow vengeance on both under the pretext of magnanimous forgiveness,—when we have explained that 'The Scarlet Letter' is the badge of Hester Prynne's shame, we ought to add that we recollect no tale dealing with crime so sad and revenge so subtly diabolical, that is at the same time so clear of fever and of prurient excitement. The misery of the woman is as present in every page as the heading which in the title of the romance symbolizes her punishment. Her terrors concerning her strange elvish child present retribution in a form which is new and natural:—her slow and painful purification through repentance is crowned by no perfect happiness, such as awaits the decline of those who have no dark and bitter past to remember. Then, the gradual corrosion of heart of Dimmesdale, the faithless priest, under the insidious care of the husband, (whose relationship to Hester is a secret known only to themselves,) is appalling; and his final confession and expiation are merely a relief, not a reconciliation. We are by no means satisfied that passions and tragedies like these are the legitimate subjects for fiction: we are satisfied that novels such as 'Adam Blair,' and plays such as 'The Stranger,' maybe justly charged with attracting more persons than they warn by their excitement. But if Sin and Sorrow in their most fearful forms are to be presented in any work of art, they have rarely been treated with a loftier severity, purity, and sympathy than in Mr. Hawthorne's 'Scarlet Letter.' The touch of the fantastic befitting a period of society in which ignorant and excitable human creatures conceived each other and themselves to be under the direct 'rule and governance' of the Wicked One, is most skillfully administered. The supernatural here never becomes grossly palpable:—the thrill is all the deeper for its action being indefinite, and its source vague and distant."

The Emperor Nicholas has just published an ordonnance, which regulates the pensions to which Russian and foreign actors at the imperial theaters at St. Petersburg shall be entitled. This ordonnance divides the actors (national as well as foreign) into four classes. The first class obtains, after twenty years' service, pensions averaging from 300 to 1140 silver rubles. The others, after fifteen years' service, will receive pensions from 285 to 750 silver rubles.

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<sup>2</sup> The Scarlet Letter: a Romance. By Nathaniel Hawthorne. Boston: Ticknor & Co.

## THE HAIR

CHEMICALLY AND PHYSIOLOGICALLY CONSIDERED.—Each hair is a tube, containing an oil, of a color similar to its own. Hair contains at least ten distinct substances: sulphate of lime and magnesia, chlorides of sodium and potassium, phosphate of lime, peroxide of iron, silica, lactate of ammonia, oxide of manganese and margaim. Of these, *sulphur* is the most prominent, and it is upon this that certain metallic salts operate in changing the color of hair. Thus when the salts of lead or of mercury are applied, they enter into combination with the sulphur, and a black sulphuret of the metal is formed. A common formula for a paste to dye the hair, is a mixture of litharge, slacked lime, and bicarbonate of potash. Different shades may be given by altering the proportions of these articles. Black hair contains iron and manganese and no magnesia; while fair hair is destitute of the two first substances, but possesses magnesia.

No one ever possessed all the requisites of masculine or feminine beauty without a profusion of hair. This is one of the crowning perfections of the human form, upon which poets of all ages have dwelt with the most untiring satisfaction. However perfect a woman may be in other respects; however beautiful her eyes, her mouth, teeth, lips, nose or cheeks; however brilliant her expression, in conversation or excitement, she is positively disagreeable without this ornament of nature. The question is sometimes asked, "What will cure love?" We answer, scissors. Let the object be shorn of hair, and you may take the word of a physiologist, that the tender passion will lose its distinctiveness; it may subside into respect: it is more likely to change into a less agreeable emotion.

In man, the hair is an excellent index of character. As the beard distinguishes man from woman, so its full and luxuriant growth often indicates strength and nobleness, intellectual and physical; while a meager beard suggests an uncertain character—part masculine, part feminine. Was there ever a truly great man, or one with a generous disposition, with a thin beard and a weazen face? On the other hand, show me a man with "royal locks," and I will trust his natural impulses in almost every vicissitude. When we see a genuine man, upon whom Nature has declined to set this seal of her approval, we cannot help an involuntary emotion of admiration for the virtuous and persevering energy with which he must have overcome his destiny.

Pertinent hereto: we have read with unusual satisfaction the arguments for Beards in Dr. Marcy's *Theory and Practice of Medicine* and the pleasant essays in the same behalf which John Waters has printed in the *Knickerbocker*. Our conservatism yields before these reformers, who would bring custom to the properties of nature.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?—A good deal, sometimes. Thus, the truth of the adage of "give a dog a bad name," &c., has lately been exemplified in a singular manner. Eugene Sue, you may remember, causes some of the most terrible events in the *Mysteres de Paris* to occur in the Allée des Venves, a fine avenue in the Champs Elysees. This has had the effect of giving the unfortunate Allée—though as quiet, modest, well-behaved, moral street as need be—a detestable reputation; people have shunned it as if it were a cavern of cutthroats—those condemned to live in it have felt themselves *quasi*-infamous—its rents have fallen, its shops stood empty, its business has dwindled away. The owners of its houses, and its few remaining inhabitants and shopkeepers, have for months past been pestering the municipality of Paris to devise means of restoring its fallen prosperity, and removing the monstrous stigma attached to it. At last, moved by compassion, the municipality has given permission to have the name changed to "Avenue de Montaigne." The ex-Allée, says the writer who informs us of the circumstance, is in great jubilation, and is crying with enthusiasm "*Je suis sauvee!*"

"NAMES HIGH INSCRIBED."—It is stated that the names of nearly every distinguished man in every department of literature and science, from the remotest antiquity down to the present time, are inscribed in letters of gold on the outside of the new *Bibliothèque de Sainte Geneviève*, which is now rapidly approaching completion. The list is naturally one of tremendous length, and covers not

less than three whole sides of the vast building. It is impossible not to admire the spirit in which it has been devised, and the impartiality with which it has been executed. Altogether, it does the highest credit to the Parisians, and especially to their municipal authorities. The names are arranged in chronological order, but without date, and without regard to the nationality of, or to the peculiar distinction achieved by the individual; thus the two last names are those of Berzelius, the Swedish *savant*, and Chateaubriand; and a little above them figures Walter Scott, Byron, and other English immortals. Living celebrities are of course excluded.

MR. HARTLEY, a benevolent English gentleman, directed in his will that £200 should be set apart as a prize for the best essay on Emigration, and appointed the American Minister trustee of the fund. The Vice Chancellor has decided that the bequest is void, for the reason that such an essay would encourage people to emigrate to the United States, and so to throw off their allegiance to the Queen! Another decision equally wise was made at the same time in regard to a prize for a treatise on Natural Theology. The learned Vice Chancellor regarded it as calculated to "subvert the Church."

## Recent Deaths

ROBERT EGLESFELD GRIFFITH, M.D., died in Philadelphia, on the 27th ult., in the fifty-third year of his age. Dr. Griffith possessed fine talents; in addition to a thorough knowledge of his profession, he was familiar with most of the branches of natural science, while in botany and conchology he stood second to few in this country; and his social and moral qualities were of the highest order. He filled in succession the chairs of *Materia Medica* and Pharmacy in the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy; of *Materia Medica*, Therapeutics, Hygiene, and Medical Jurisprudence in the University of Virginia. Whilst laboring in the latter station his health failed him, and he was induced to seek a winters residence in the West Indies in hopes of its restoration. It became evident, however, that his health was permanently broken, and for the last four years he has resided in his native city, Though suffering much, his energy and industry never flagged: and he has given the results of his labors in his *Medical Botany* and his *Universal Formulary*, two works which will secure him a permanent reputation. He also enriched by his annotations a number of works republished in this country, among which we may mention Christison's *Dispensatory*, Taylor's *Medical Jurisprudence*, Ryan's *Medical Jurisprudence*, Ballard and Garrod's *Materia Medica*.

F. MANSELL REYNOLDS, the eldest son of the late F. Reynolds, the dramatic author, died recently at Fontainebleau. He was long intimate with and favorably known to literary circles in England, counting such men as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Bernal, Lockhart, Hook, and many others, among his personal friends. As the editor of "*Heath's Keepsake*," when it started, he proved himself a person of taste and ability. He was also the author of "*Miserrimus*," which excited a considerable sensation when published, and of one or two other works of fiction, which, together with his contributions to several serials, displayed much variety of talent.

JOHN ROBY, author of "*Traditions of Lancashire*," and other works, which have been as popular as any of their class, is mentioned as one of the persons lost in the "*Orion*" steamer. Mr. Roby was long a banker in Rochdale, and partner of Mr. Fielden, and though an excellent man of business, his mind was deeply interested in literary pursuits and in cultivating the friendly intercourse of literary men.

Prof. CANSTATT, of the University of Erlangen, died on the 10th of March, after a long and painful illness. Dr. C. was one of the most distinguished physicians of our times, and had won for himself a lasting reputation by his work on the diseases of old age.

## Original Poetry

The following graphic picture of domestic happiness in humble life, was written by Townsend Haines, Esq., late Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and now Register of the Treasury, at Washington. Mr. Haines is an eloquent and accomplished lawyer, with fine capacities for literature, to which it may be regretted that he has recently given so little attention.

### BOB FLETCHER

I once knew a plowman, Bob Fletcher his name,  
Who was old and was ugly, and so was his dame;  
Yet they lived quite contented, and free from all strife,  
Bob Fletcher the plowman, and Judy his wife.

As the morn streaked the east, and the night fled away  
They would rise up for labor, refreshed for the day,  
And the song of the lark, as it rose on the gale,  
Found Bob at the plow, and his wife at the pail.

A neat little cottage in front of a grove,  
Where in youth they first gave their young hearts up to love,  
Was the solace of age, and to them doubly dear,  
As it called up the past, with a smile or a tear.

Each tree had its thought, and the vow could impart,  
That mingled in youth, the warm wish of the heart:  
The thorn was still there, and the blossoms it bore,  
And the song from its top seemed the same as before.

When the curtain of night over nature was spread,  
And Bob had returned from the plow to his shed,  
Like the dove on her nest, he reposed from all care,  
If his wife and his youngsters contented were there.

I have passed by his door when the evening was gray,  
And the hill and the landscape were fading away,  
And have heard from the cottage, with grateful surprise,

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

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