John Catrup

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POETRY.

THE THIEF.

I tell, with equal truth and grief,
That little C———'s an arrant thief.
Before the urchin well could go,
She stole the whiteness of the snow;
And more—that whiteness to adorn,
She stole the blushes of the morn;
Stole all the softness ether pours
On primrose buds in vernal showers.
There's no repeating all her wiles,—
She stole the Graces' winning smiles:
'Twas quickly seen she robb'd the sky,
To plant a star in either eye;
She pilfer'd orient pearl for teeth,
And stole the cow's ambrosial breath:
The cherry steep'd in morning dew
Gave moisture to her lips, and hue.
These were her infant-spoils; a store
To which, in time, she added more.
At twelve, she stole from Cyrus' queen
Her hair, and love-commanding mien,
Stole Juno's dignity, and stole
From Pallas sense to charm the soul.
She sung—amazed the Syrens heard,
And to assert their voice appear'd.
She play'd—the Muses from their hill
Wonder'd who thus had stole their skill.
Apollo's wit was next her prey.
And then, the beam that lights the day:
While Jove, her piferings to crown,
Pronounced these beauties all her own;—
Pardon'd her crime's and praised her art;
And, t'other day, she stole my heart!
Cupid, if lovers are thy care,
Revenge thy votary on the fair;
Do justice on her stolen charms,
And let her prison be—my arms.

FROM THE EDINBURGH CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL.

THE INVISIBLE ANIMAL WORLD.

In whatever direction we turn our eyes, we every where see around us the most surprising indications of the universality of life. The principle of vitality seems to be scattered with the utmost prodigality over and throughout the whole of the inanimate creation. On the earth, in the air, in the rivers and seas, in all places and in all times, we find life. And in what an astonishing variety of forms and combinations! Reckon up all the varieties of animated creatures from a man to a midge, from a whale to a herring, from an albatross to a humming bird; take the human, the brute, the bird, the reptile, the fish, and the insect creation, and compute the supposable number of individuals in each; after all that we can count, all that we can allow to be in existence, we are yet but begining to begin to sum up the amount of creatures whom the Creator in his almighty power has endowed with that incomprehensible principle—life. The deeper we examine, the more lofty are our conceptions of this infinitude of living creatures. Astronomers, by means of their telescopes, have told us of the bodies which dot the firmament, and given us reason to believe that there exist millions of worlds inhabited by beings which must vary in their forms and properties according to the characteristics of the spheres they inhabit. But to bring down our imaginations from the contemplation of so vast a field for conjecture, we are attracted by the discoveries of the microscope, and find, by the attestation of our senses, that in a single drop of water there are myriads of animals—atoms—creatures, of which it would require nearly a thousand millions to form a cubic inch, all recreating and executing their various functions and evolutions with as much rapidity and apparent facility as if the range afforded them were as boundless as the ocean. Where is the man who can contemplate this scene of busy enjoyment, and not be overawed by the majesty of the works of nature, and not adore the hand that has, in such lavish beneficence, scattered the principle of life throughout every department of creation.

Until within the last fifty years, hardly any was aware of the existence of animalcules; that is, small animals invisible to the naked eye, living in water, and in matter of various kinds. It has only been within a recent period that this branch of natural history has assumed a regular form; and though a classification has been in some measure effected, from what we can learn, the science is still in a very imperfect state. When we are made aware of the characteristics of the animalcule world—for it seems entitled to this term—it does not appear astonishing that even the most patient investigators, assisted by the most powerful magnifying glasses, should be at a loss to average in distinct orders the apparently innumerable and ever-changing classes. Animalcules bear no resemblance whatever to animals which we can see with the naked eye. They are of all imaginable shapes; their figures resemble round balls, ovals, eels, snakes, corkscrews, funnels, tops, cylinders, pitchers, wheels, flasks, purses, semicircles, kidneys, dots with tails, tobacco pipes, flowers, branches of trees, egg-cups, and some have the appearance of a tulip with a flowery bulb and stalk. But their figures are so extraordinary, so finite, that it would be quite impossible to give the least idea of them by description. One thing is tolerably obvious: they all possess forms suitable to their peculiar mode of living. If they have to seize their food by darting, they are given a shape in consonance with that object. If they live by creeping, or swimming slowly, they are of a more inert figure. In these respects, therefore, nature has paid the same degree of attention to the constrution of animalcules as it has done with larger animals

The apparently incalculable number of forms of animalcules is not more puzzling to the investigator than their assumption of new forms. Most creatures that we know of produce young after their kind, either at once bringing forth their progeny in life, or through the medium of eggs, but always producing young resembling themselves in figure. Animalcules, however, have generally a different way of coming into existence. One class propagate by spontaneous scissure, or division of their bodies into two or more portions, each one forming a new creature, which on its arrival to maturity, pursues the same course. In thus cutting themselves in pieces, they are very capricious in their fancy. Sometimes diagonally; and what forms the chief difficulty in understanding them, the pieces so seperated do not resemble the original: an animalcule resembling a ball will give birth—if this word can be properly applied—to a number of triangles. Another class of animalcules propagate by the distribution of the internal substance of the parent, of which nothing is left but the envelope, soon to be dissolved; a third class are produced from germs; shooting out from the sides of the parent; and most likely there are many other ways by which they come into life, of which naturalists have yet no knowledge. In some instances, animalcules appear to live in shells, which are bivalve, and open and shut at pleasure.

Notwithstanding the searching power of certain kinds of microscopes, it would have been difficult to ascertain the functions of animalcules without the aid of coloring matter. Into the water in which they abound, coloring vegetable matter, which supplies them with food, is intoduced; and being partaken of, the internal structure, now transparent with color, is discerned. By this contrivance, it has been discovered that animalcules possess distinct viscera or digestive organs, and which are of various kinds Most descriptions of these creatures are furnished with a species of hairs bristling out from parts of their bodies; these bristles seem to serve the purpose of fins to give locomotion, and they also act the part of arms to agitate the water, and cause a current to flow towards their mouths. They are also provided with hooks, by which they can attach themselves to any object. Independently of these peculiarities, some animalcules possess the extraordinary faculty of thrusting out or elongating portions of their bodies at various points, which, assuming the appearance either of legs or fins, are termed variable processes, and enable the creature to walk or swim.

To those who wish to be informed of the already known orders of this wonderful department of Nature's handiwork, we would recommend a perusal of the recently published work of Andrew Pritchard, Esq, entitled "The Natural History of Animalcules." In this interesting production, which has afforded us matter for some of our present observations, the author describes the following as the best method of procuring animalcules whereon to make examinations: "In the selection of vegetable substances for infusions such as stalks, flowers, seeds of plants, &c. care must be taken that there be no admixture of quinine in them or the intention will be frustrated. Immerse these, whatever they may be, for a few days in some clear water, when, if the vessels which contain them be not agitated, a thin pellicle or film will be discerned on the surface, which, under the microscope, will be seen to be inhabited by several descriptions of animalcules: the first produce are commonly those of the simplest kind, such as the Monads. In a few days more, their numbers will increase to such an amazing extent, that it would be utterly impossible to compute those in a single drop of the fluid. After this, again, they will begin to diminish in numbers, and I have generally observed them supplanted by others of a larger species and more perfect organization; such as the Cyclidia, Paramesia, Kolpodæ, &c. It is worthy of remark here, however, that in their production they do not pursue any regular order, even in similar infusions. If the vessel be large, and the circumstances under which it is placed sufficiently favorable, a still higher description of animulcules will succeed, viz. the Vorticella, and, lastly, the Brachioni; and thus a single infusion will repay for the little trouble of making it, with a great variety of species. Water in which flour has been steeped will be found to abound also with animalcules; and it is remarked by G. Leach, Esq. that the leaden troughs constantly appropriated for birds to drink out of, contain several descriptions of them, and more especially those of the wheel genus. In ponds, too, especially in the shallow parts, near their edges, and in the immediate vicinity of water plants, prodigious quantities of all kinds may be easily procured; so that, possessing as we do such myriads of them around us, that they impregnate almost every thing that we eat and drink, touch and breathe, an anxiety to know more about them, and the effects they produce, cannot but be regarded as rational and laudable."

It appears, also, by the investigations of other inquirers, that animalcules may be produced by any species of decomposition, whether of vegetable or animal substances. It would almost seem, from what is related, that the whole of the vegetable and animal kingdoms are but compounds of matter resoluble into these extraordinary minute creatures. An idea of this kind is by no means new, and it will perhaps be remembered that Buffon tried experiments to prove its accuracy. "To discover," says he, "whether all the parts of animals, and all the seeds of plants, contained moving organic particles, I made infusions of the flesh of different animals, and of the seeds of more than twenty different species of vegetables; and after remaining some days in close glasses, I had the pleasure of seeing organic moving particles in all of them. In some they appeared sooner, in others later: some preserved their motion for months, and others soon lost it. Some at first produced large moving globules resembling animals, which changed their figure, split, and became gradually smaller; others produced only small globules, whose motions were extremely rapid, and others produced filaments which grew larger, seemed to vegetate, and then swelled and poured forth torrents of moving globules." The subsequent examinations of physiologists have, in a great measure, determined that these moving globules of Buffon, or molecules, as they are scientifically termed, are the primary atoms of which plants and animals are composed, although, at the same time, we are not yet beyond the regions of conjecture with respect to how these molcules, or animalcula are either brought into substantial consistency, or how they are developed by the separation of matter during the putrefactive process. So intimately does the vegetable, in its earliest rudiments, sometimes bear an analogy to animal life, that it is occasionally difficult to separate them; it is at least certain that the commencement of the vegetable process is some way connected with the existence and operations of molecules. "Having at the request of Dr. Linnæus (says Mr. Ellis, a writer in the Philosophical Transactions) made several experiments on the infusion of mushrooms in water, in order to prove the theory that these seeds are first animals and then plants, it appeared evidently that the seeds were put in motion by very minute animalcules, which proceeded from the putrefaction of the mushroom; for by pecking at these seeds, which are reddish, light, round bodies, they moved them about with great agility in a variety of directions; while the little animals themselves were scarcely visible, till the food they had eaten discovered them. The satisfaction I received from clearing up this point, led me into many other curious and interesting experiments.

The ingenious Mr. Needham supposes these little transparent ramified filiaments and jointed or coralloid bodies (strung like coral beads) which the microscope discovers to us on the surface of inert animal and vegetable infusions when they become putrid, to be zoophytes, or branched animals; but to me they appear, after a careful scrutiny with the best glasses, to be that genus of fungi called *mucer*, or *mouldiness*. Their vegetation is so amazingly quick, that they may be perceived in the microscope even to grow and feed under the eye of the observer. Mr. Needham has pointed out to us a species that is very remarkable for its parts of fructification. This, he says, proceeds from an infusion of bruised wheat. I have seen the same species proceed from the body of a dead fly, which has become putrid from lying floating for some time in a glass of water where some flowers had been. This species of mucor sends forth a mass of transparent filiamentous roots, from whence arises hollow stems, that support little oblong vessels, with a hole on the top of each. From these I could plainly see minute globules of seeds issue forth in great abundance, with an elastic force, and turn about in the water as if they were animated! Continuing to view them with some attention, I could just discover that the putrid water which surrounded them was full of the minutest animalcula; and that these little creatures began to attack the seeds of the mucor for food. This new motion continued the appearance of their being alive for some time longer; but soon after, many of them arose to the surface of the water, remaining there without motion; and a succession of them afterwards coming up, they united together in little thin masses, and floated to the edge of the water, remaining there quite inactive during the time of observation."

The celebrated botanist Dr. Robert Brown, also entered into experiments of this nature, with the view of identifying the rudiments of vegetable with animal life, which he successfully accomplished. He found that the pollen and tissue of plants were the constituent or elementary, molecules or organic bodies. "On examining," says he, "the various animal and vegetable tissues, whether living or dead, they were always found to exist; and merely by bruising these substances in water, I never failed to disengage the molecules in sufficient numbers to ascertain their apparent identity in size, form, and motion with the smaller particles of the grains of the pollen. I examined also various products of organic bodies, particularly the gum raisins, and substances of vegetable origin, extending my enquiry even to pit coal, and in all those bodies molecules were found in abundance."

Of late, very considerable improvements have been made upon microscopes, by which much interesting information regarding the habits and character of animalcules has been afforded. These microscopes are of immense power in magnifying; and by a contrivance for throwing the light of a bright lamp, on the sun's rays, or of oxy-hydrogen gas, upon the object to be investigated, most astonishing discoveries are made. Mr. Pritchard recommends his Achromatic Engiscope as having certain decided advantages over any other description of the microscope. To the student of nature there could not be presented a more boundless and luxuriant field for useful inquiry than is held out by these powerful instruments; and it will be allowed that in no other department of science is there to be found such a delightful source of leisurely recreation. To the man of humble means we can recommend no better or more rational amusement than a visit to one of the many microscopical exhibitions now to be seen occasionally in every large town, and which cannot be too sufficiently pressed upon public attention.

The Southern Literary Messenger, Richmond, Va.—The second number of this promissing journal, publised by Mr. T. W. White, has been issued. It contains an agreeable variety of matter in prose and verse. We like particularly the notice of Bulwer's Pilgrims of the Rhine. But the most valuable article in the number is a letter of Mr. Wirt to a law student. It was written only a short time before his death, and in style and substance is of first rate excellence. The origin of the letter is thus decribed by the editor of the Messenger: "A young getleman who is about to leave the walls of a University, and looks to the law as his profession, who is not related to or connected with Mr. Wirt, nor even acquainted with him, and knows him only as an ornament to his profession and his country is induced by the high estimate he has formed of his character, and the great confidence that might be reposed in any advice that he would give, to ask at his hands some instruction as to the course of study best to be pursued." We give the letter entire.

BALTIMORE, December 20, 1833.

My dear sir:

Your letter, dated "University of———'December 12," was received on yesterday morning—and although it finds me extremely busy in preparing for the Supreme Court of the United States, I am so much pleaesd with its spirit, that I cannot reconcile it to myself to let it pass unanswered. If I were ever so well qualified to advise you, to which I do not pretend, but little good could be done by a single letter, and I have not time for more. Knowing nothing of the peculiarities of your mental character, I can give no advice adapted to your peculiar case. I am persuaded that education may be so directed by a sagacious and skilful teacher, as to prune and repress those faculties of the pupil which are too prone to luxuriance, and to train and invigorate those which are disproportionately weak or slow; so as to create a just balance among the powers, and enable the mind to act with the highest effect of which it is capable. But it requires a previous acquaintance with the student, to ascertain the natural condition of his various powers, in order to know which requires the spur and which the rein.—In some minds, imagination overpowers and smothers all the other faculties: in others reason, like a sturdy oak, throws all the rest into a sickly shade. Some men have a morbid passion for the study of poetry—others, of mathematics, &c. &c. All this may be corrected by discipline, so far as it may be judicious to correct it. But the physician must understand the disease, and become acquainted with all the idiosyncracies of the patient, before he can prescribe. I have no advantage of this kind with regard to you; and to prescribe by conjecture, would require me to conjecture every possible case that *may* be yours, and prescribe for each, which would call for a ponderous volume instead of a letter. I believe that in all sound minds the germ of all the faculties exists, and may, by skilful management be woed into expansion: but they exist naturally, in different degrees of health and strength, and as this matter is generally left to the impulse of nature in each individual, the healthiest and strongest germs get the start—give impulse and direction to the efforts of each mind—stamp its character and shape its destiny. As education, therefore, now stands among us, each man must be his own preceptor in this respect, and by turning his eyes upon himself, and descrying the comparative action of his own powers, discover which of them requires more tone—which, if any, less. We must take care however, not to make an erroneous estimate of the relative value of the faculties, and thus commit the sad mistake of cultivating the showy at the expense of the solid. With these preliminary remarks, by way explaining why I cannot be more particular in regard to your case, permit me, instead of chalking out a course of study by furnishing you with lists of books and the order in which they should be read, (and no list of books and course of study would by equally porper for all minds,) to close this letter with a few general remarks.

If your *spirit* be as stout and pure as your letter indicates, you require little advice beyond that which you will find within the walls of your University. A brave and pure spirit is more than *half the battle*, 'not only in preparing for life, but in all its conflicts. *Take it for granted, that there is no excellence without great labor.* No mere aspirations for eminence, however ardent, will do the business. Wishing, and sighing, and imagining, and dreaming of greatness, will never make you great. If you would get to the mountain's top on which the temple of fame stands, it will not do *to stand still*, looking, admiring, and wishing you were there. You must gird up your loins, and go to work with all the indomitable energy of Hannibal scaling the Alps. Laborious study, and diligent observation of the world, are both indispensible to the attainment of eminence. By the former, you must make yourself master of all that is known of science and letters; by the latter, you must know *man*, at large, and particularly the character and genius of your own countrymen. You must cultivate assiduously the habits of *reading, thinking*, and *observing*. Understand your own language grammatically, critically, thoroughly, learn its origin, or rather its various orgins, which you may learn from Johnson's and Webster's prefaces to their large dictionaries. Learn all that is delicate and beautiful, as well as strong, in the language, and master all its stores of opulence. You will find a rich mine of instruction in the splendid language of Burke. His diction is frequently magnificent; sometimes too gorgeous, I think, for a chaste and correct taste; but he will show you all the wealth of your language. You must, by ardent study and practice, acquire for yourself a *mastery* of the language, and be able both to speak and to write it, promptly, easily, elegantly, and with that variety of style which different subjects, different hearers, and different readers are continually requiring. You must have such a command of it as to be able to adapt yourself, with intuitive quickness and ease, to every situation in which you may chance to be placed—and you will find no great difficulty in this, if you have the *copia verborum* and a correct taste. With this study of the language you must take care to unite the habits already mentioned—the diligent observation, of all that is passing around you; and *active, close* and *useful thinking*. If you have access to Franklin's works, read them carefully, particularly his third volume, and you will know what I mean by *the habits of observing and thinking*. We cannot all be *Franklins*, it is true; but, by imitating his mental habits and unwearied industry we may reach an emince we should never otherwise attain. Nor would he have been the *Franklin* he was, if he had permitted himself to be discouraged by the reflection that we cannot all be *Newtons*. It is our business to make the most of our own talents and opportunities, and instead of discouraging ourselves by comparisons and impossibilities, to believe all things imaginary possible, as indeed almost all things are, to a spirit bravely and firmly resolved. Franklin was a fine model of *a practical man* as contradistinguished from a *visionary theorist*, as men of genius are very apt to be. He was great in that greatest of all good qualities, *sound, strong, common sense*. A mere book-worm is a miserable driveller; and a mere genius, a thing of gossamer fit only for the winds to sport with. Direct your intellectual efforts, principally to the cultivation of the strong masculine qualities of the mind. Learn (I repeat it) *to think—think deeply, comprehensively, powerfully*—and learn the simple nervous language which is appropriate to that kind of thinking. Read the legal and political arguments of Chief Justice Marshall, and those of Alexander Hamilton, which are coming out. Read them, *study them*; and observe with what an omnipotent sweep of thought they range over the whole field of every subject they take in hand—and *that* with a scythe so ample, and so keen, that not a straw is left standing behind them Brace yourself up to these great efforts.—Strike for this giant character of mind, and leave prettiness and frivolity for triflers.

There is nothing in your letter that suggests the necessity of this admonition; I make it merely with reference to that tendency to efflorescence which I have occasionally heard charged to southern genius. It is perfectly consistent with these herculean habits of thinking, to be a laborious student, and to know all that books can teach.—This extensive acquisition is necessary, not only to teach you how far science has advanced in every direction, and where the *terra incognita* begins, into which genius is to direct its future discoveries, but to teach you also the strength and the weakness of the human intellect—how far it is permitted us to go, and where the penetration of man is forced, by its own impotence and the nature of the subject, to give up the pursuit;—and when you have mastered all the past conquests of science, you will understand what Socrates meant by saying, that he knew only enough to be sure that *he knew nothing, compared with that illimitable tract that lies beyond the reach of our faculties*. You must never be satisfied with the surface of things: probe them to the bottom, and let nothing go, till you understand it as thoroughly as your powers will enable you. Seize the moment of excited curiosity on any subject to solve your doubts; for if you let it pass, the desire may never return, and you may remain in ignorance.—The habits which I have been recommending are not merely for college, but for life. Franklin's habits of constant and deep excogitation clung to him to his latest hour. Form these habits now: learn all that may be learned at your University, and bring all your acquisitions and your habits to the study of the law, which you say is to be your profession;—and when you come to this study, come resolved to master it—not to play in its hallows, but to sound all its depths. There is no knowing what a mind greatly and firmly resolved, may achieve in this department of science, as well as every other. Resolve to be the first lawyer of your age, in the depth, extent, variety and accuracy of your legal learning. Master the science of pleading—master Coke upon Littleton—and Coke's and Plowden's Reports—master—Fearne on Contingent Remainders and Executory Divises," till you can sport and play familiarly with its most subtle distinctions. Lay your foundation deep, and broad, and strong, and you will find the superstructure comparatively light work. It is not by shrinking from the difficult parts of the science, but by courting them, grappling with them, and overcoming them, that a man rises to professional greatness. There is a great deal of law learning that is dry, dark, cold, revolting—but it is an old feudal castle, in perfect perservation, which the legal architect, who aspires to the first honors of his profession, will delight to explore, and learn all the uses to which its various parts used to be put: and he will the better understand, enjoy and relish the progressive improvements of the science in modern times. You must be a master in every branch of the science that belongs to your profession—the law of nature and of nations, the civil law, the law merchant, the maritime law, &c. the chart and outline of all which you will see in Blackstone's Commentaries. Thus covered with the panoply of professional learning, a master of the pleadings, practice and cases, and at the same time a *great constitutional and philosophic lawyer* you must keep way also, with the march of general science. Do you think this requiring too much?—Look at Brougham, and see what man can do if well armed and well resolved. With a load of *professional duties* that would, *of themselves*, have been appalling to the most of *our* countrymen, he *stood* nevertheless, at the head of his party in the House of Commons, and, at the same time set in motion and superintended various primary schools and various periodical works, the most instructive and useful that ever issued from the British press, to which he furnished, with his own pen, some of the most masterly contributions, and yet found time not only to keep pace with the progress of the arts and sciences, but to keep at the head of those whose peculiar and exclusive occupations these arts and sciences *were*. *There* is a model of *industry and usefulness* worthy of all your emulation. You must, indeed, be a great lawyer; but it will not do to be a mere lawyer—more especially as you are very properly turning your mind, also, to the political service of your country, and to the study and practice of eloquence. You must, therefore, be a political lawyer and historian; thoroughly versed in the constitution and laws of your country, and fully acquainted with *all its statistics*, and the history of all the leading measures which have distinguished the several administrations. You must study the debates in congress, and observe what have been the actual effects upon the country of the various measures that have been the most strenuously contested in their origin. You must be a master of the science of political economy, and especially of *financiering*, of which so few of our your young countrymen know any thing. The habit of observing all that is passing, and thinking closely and deeply upon them, demands preeminently an attention to the political course of your country. But it is time to close this letter. You ask for instructions adapted to improvement in eloquence. This is a subject for a treatise, not for a letter. Cicero, however, has summed up the whole art in a few words it is—"*apte—distincte—ornate—dicere*"—to speak *to the purpose*—to speak *clearly and distinctly*—to speak *gracefully*:—to be able *to speak to the purpose*, you must understand your subject and all that belongs to it:—and then your *thoughts and method* must be *clear in themselves* and *clearly and distinctly enunciated*:—and lastly, your voice, style, delivery and gesture, must be *graceful and delightfully impressive*. In relation to this subject, I would strenuously advise you to two things:—*Compose much, and often, and carefully, with reference to this same rule of apte, distincte, ornate*, and let your *conversation* have reference to the same objects. I do not mean that you should be *elaborate and formal* in your ordinary conversation. Let it be *perfectly simple and natural*, but *always in good time*, (to speak as the musician) and well enunciated.

With regard to the style of eloquence that you shall adopt, that must depend very much on your own taste and genius. You are not disposed, I presume to be an humble imitator of any man. If you are, you may bid farewell to the hope of eminence in this walk.—None are mere imitators to whom nature has given original powers. The ape alone is content with mere imitations. If nature has bestowed such a portion of the spirit of oratory as can advance you to a high rank in this walk, your manner *will be* your own. In what style of eloquence you are best fitted to excel, you, yourself, if destined to excellence, are the best judge. I can only tell you that the *florid and Asiatic style* is not the taste of the age. The *strong*, and even the *rugged and abrupt*, are far more successful. Bold propositions, boldly and briefly expressed—pithy sentences—nervous common sense—strong phrases—the *felicite audax* both in language and conception—well compacted periods—sudden and strong masses of light—an apt adage in English or Latin—a keen sarcasm—a merciless personality—a mortal thrust—these are the beauties and deformities that now make a speaker the most interesting. A gentleman and a christian will conform to the reigning taste so far only as his principles and habits of *decorum* will permit. The florid and Asiatic was never a good style either for a European or an American taste. We require that a man should *speak to the purpose* and *come to the point*—that he should *instruct and convince*. To do this, his mind must move with great strength and power: reason should be manifestly his master faculty—argument should predominate throughout; but these great points secured, wit and fancy may cast their lights around his path, provided the wit be courteous as well as brilliant, and the fancy chaste and modest. But they must be kept well in the back ground, for they are dangerous allies; and a man had better be without them, than to show them in front, or to show them too often.

But I am wearying you, my dear sir, as well as myself. If these few imperfect hints, on subjects so extended and diversified, can be of any service to you, I shall be gratified. They may, at least convince you that your letter has interested me in your behalf, and that I shall be happy to hear of your future fame and prosperity. I offer you my respects, and tender the compliments of the season.

WM. WIRT.

GERMAN LEGENDS

We have before drawn copiously from the European correspondency of the Albany Evening Journal, which is known to proceed from the pen of the Hon. *William A. Seward*, the whig candidate for governor of New York.—The following legend, illustrative of the German love of the marvellous, is contained in his last published letter.

LEGEND OF THE DRACHENFELS

"In old times, says the tradition, the cavern which is seen on the summit of this mountain, was the retreat of a monstrous dragon to whom the neighboring inhabitants rendered divine honors and paid human sacrifices. For victims they selected prisoners of war.

One day they found among the captives a young lady of one of the best families of the country and who had been educated in the christian religion. So great was her beauty that the two rival chiefs of the victorious army disputed their claims to her as the reward of their valor. The seniors of the council decided that she should be offered to the dragon, to the end that her beauty might no longer produce dissension among the chiefs. The intended victim was clothed in white, crowned with flowers and conducted to the side of the mountain and bound to a tree, before which a stone served for an altar. A great multitude assembled to witness the terrible spectacle of the damsel devoured by the dragon. But among them all there were very few so insensible as not to compassionate the hard fate of the maiden who remained calm and collected, with her eyes steadfastly fixed on high. At the dawn of day the animal left the cavern and extended his claws towards the altar where he was accustomed to find his horrible sacrifice.—The young christian was unmoved, she drew from her bosom the image of her Saviour upon the cross and presented it at the first approach of the beast. The animal fled affrighted and uttering dreadful cries threw himself into the most profound retreat of the woods whence he never returned.

The people astonished by the miraculous deliverance, pressed around the young Christian, broke her bonds and regarded with admiration the crucifix. The captive instructed them in her firm reliance upon the cross and the power of God whom she adored. They prostrated themselves at her feet and prayed her to return to her own people, and send them a priest who could instruct and baptise them in her miraculous faith. Thus, (adds the tradition) the Drapchenfels (or cave of the dragon) became the first receptacle of the true faith in these Cantons, and a chapel was erected in the place where had stood the stone which served as an altar to the Demon."

This tradition, if genuine, is one among a thousand evidences that the early preachers of christianity availed themselves of the superstitious credulity of the Pagans; and relied upon other miracles besides those well authenticated in the holy gospels. The Legend of the Stromberg is less improbable if not equally instructive.

Legend of the Stromberg.

"Didier de Schwarzeneck was a chevalier of the olden times, who resided not far from the seven Mountains.—He set out for the crusades in the Holy Land and went to Spire, where he met St. Bernard. In passing he entered the Argenfels, and was well received by its Lord, an old Knight, who had two daughters, Bertha the youngest, immediately won his heart by her beauty, grace and sweetness of temper. She appeared by no means insensible to the mien and person of Didier, and it was early discovered that she was melancholy when he had left the Argenfels. Didier's heart was no longer as light as when he entered the Castle. He carried engraven upon his memory the traits of his young beloved, and under the palm trees of Asia thought only of the oaks of the Rhine, and the fair Bertha of Argenfels. At length he was taken prisoner, and during his captivity he made a vow that he would build a church if ever he should regain his liberty and see again his native land. The town of the Saracens was at length taken after a long siege, and Didier was delivered from his chains.

Then he desired nothing so much as to fulfil his vow and see once more the fair Bertha. His happiness was at its height when he landed at Venice and retraced his way along the Bank of the Rhine, measuring without delay the road to the Argenfels. But he saw at a distance only mouldering ruins in the place of the high towers and walls of the castle. His heart beat as his eyes rested only opon those melancholy traces of the castle. Grass was already growing upon the ruins and birds of prey had built their nests in the crevices of the half fallen walls.—An old peasant emerged from the neighboring grove and recounted to him how the enemies of the old knight had surprised and burnt the chateau, whilst its superanuated lord fell bravely defending it; but the peasant could not tell how the daughters had escaped, and no person knew whither they had gone. On hearing this recital, Didier returned to his own castle, which now seemed to him even more gloomy than the ruins of the Argenfels. He regretted that he had not found death in the holy wars of Palestine.

At length he resolved to search out the most gloomy retreat in the whole country, and here to build the church which he had made a vow to erect, and then to construct a cell in which he would end his days as a hermit. Bent on this purpose, he traversed the thickest recesses of the forest, and reached, without knowing how, the Stromberg, crowned with trees to its very summit. In the deepest recess he discovered a small cell. Near it was a cross of stone, and before the cross a recluse kneeled in profound meditation and prayer.—It was Bertha. He could with difficulty contain the joy which he felt at this unexpected interview. The unfortunate heiress of the Burgrave had, with her sister, obeyed the orders of her father given at the commencement of the siege, under the safe conduct of an old squire had escaped by a subterranean path unknown to the enemy, and found an asylum in the cabin of a collier. Having learned the death of their father and the sacking of the castle, the daughters sold their jewels, built this cell, planted a garden around it and gave themselves up for the remainder of their days to lives of solitude and devotion.—Didier's eloquence was so successful that Bertha in a short time threw aside her weeds, became his wife, and accompanied him to his castle. But her sister refused to follow them and enter again upon the world. Didier caused a more convenient dwelling to be built for her

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