

The Muse! whatever the Muse inspires,
My soul the tuneful strain admires... SCOTT.



A NIGHT AT VENICE.....BY LORD BYRON.

Around me are the stars and waters—
Worlds mirror'd in the ocean, godlier sight
Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass;
And the great element, which is to space
What ocean is to earth, spreads its blue depths,
Softened with the first breathings of the spring;
The high moon sails upon her beautiful way,
Serenely smoothing o'er the lofty walls
Of those piles and sea-girt palaces,
Whose porphyry pillars, and whose costly fronts,
Fraught with the orient pearls of many marbles,
Like altars rang'd along the broad canal,
Seem such a trophy of some mighty deed
Rear'd up from out the waters, scarce less
strangely

Than those more massy and mysterious giants
Of architecture, those Titanian fabrics,
Which point in Egypt's plains to times that have
No other record. All is gentle: nought
Stirs rudely; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.

The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,
And cautious opening of the casement showing
That he is not unheard; while her young hand,
Fair as the moonlight, of which it seems a part,
So delicately white, it trembles in
The act of opening a forbidden lattice,
To let in love though music makes his heart
Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight—the dash
Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
Of the fair lights of skimming gondolas,
And the responsive voice of the choir
Of boatmen answering back with verse for verse,
Some dusky shadow chequering the Rialto,
Some glimmering palace roof, or tapering spire
Are all the sights and sounds which here pervade
The ocean-born and earth commanding city—
Now will I to my couch, although to rest
Is almost wronging such a night as this—

Literary Extracts, &c.

Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavor.

From the New-York Daily Advertiser.

WITCHCRAFT.

The following concise history of Witchcraft, as it occurred in the province of Massachusetts Bay, from the middle to near the close of the 17th century, is copied from President Dwight's Travels, the first volume of which has just been published. As it is the only connected account of this extraordinary infatuation that we have ever met with, we think it will prove amusing to our readers.

From the year 1645, when the first suspicion of witchcraft in New-England began at Springfield, several persons were accused of this crime. Of those who were accused, four (to wit, one at Charleston, one at Dorchester, one at Cambridge, and one at Boston,) were executed. For almost thirty years afterwards, the subject seems to have slept in tolerable quiet.—But in the year 1687, or 1688, four of the children of John Goodwin, a respectable inhabitant of Boston, united in accusing a poor Irish woman of bewitching them. The accusation was unhappily regarded with an attention, which it very ill deserved. Not only did the citizens in the neighborhood treat the subject as a thing of consequence; but a number of the clergy held a day of fasting and prayer on the occasion at the house of Mr. Goodwin. This unhappy measure gave the affair a solemn aspect at once. The poor woman, who seems to have been stupefied with terror, or bewildered by distraction, was apprehended. An inquest of physicians pronounced her to be of sound mind. In consequence of this decision she was tried and executed. An account of the whole transaction was published; and so generally were the wise and good, as well as the weak and wicked of this country convinced of the reality of witchcraft, that we find, not only Mr. Baxter writing a preface to the account, and declaring him who would not believe it, to be an obdurate Sadducee, but Glanville publishing stories of witches; Sir Matthew Hale trying in the Court of King's Bench; several eminent Lawyers laying down rules for convicting them; and several grave Clergymen, such as Perkins and Bernard, undertaking to prove the existence, and defining the characteristics, evidences, and boundaries, of witchcraft. With all these preparatives, it cannot be surprising, that at a time, when the reality of witchcraft had never been questioned, and in a country, where it scarcely ever had been doubted, the case of

these children should make a deep impression. The same general conviction prevailed every where. Every where persons suspected of being witches, and wizzards, were tried, condemned, and executed, by the authority of the first tribunals of Europe, as well as by inferior judicatories. In England more persons were executed in a single county, than in all the colonies of New-England, from the arrival of the Plymouth settlers, to the present time.

The truth, as every intelligent and candid man will acknowledge, is: the existence of witchcraft had never been taken up by the human mind as a subject of investigation.—This capital point had been uniformly omitted; and every inquirer, instead of examining whether there was any such thing as witchcraft, directed all his efforts to determine what were its causes, characteristics, proofs, limits, and effects. Where such was the nature of discussions, formed by Statesmen, Judges, Lawyers, and Divines; the only proper question concerning this subject must, it is obvious, be naturally, and universally forgotten.

Near the close of February, 1692, two girls, about eleven years of age, (a daughter and a niece of Mr. Paris, minister of Paris, then Salem village,) and two other girls in the neighborhood, began, as the children of Mr. Goodwin had done before, to act in a peculiar and unaccountable manner; creeping, for example, into holes, and under chairs, using many unnatural gestures, and uttering many ridiculous observations, equally destitute of sense and sobriety. This behaviour excited the attention of the neighborhood. Several physicians were consulted; all of whom, except one, declared themselves unable to assign a cause for these singular affections of the children.—This man, more ignorant or more superstitious than his companions, confessed his suspicion, that the children were bewitched. The declaration appears to have been decisive. The connections of the children immediately applied themselves to fasting and prayer; and summoned their friends to unite with them in their devotions. On the 11th of the following March, Mr. Paris invited several of the neighboring ministers to unite with him in prayer at his own house. It was observed, that during the religious exercises the children were generally decent and still; and that after the service was ended they renewed their former inexplicable conduct.

A few days before this, an Indian man and woman, servants in the house of Mr. Paris, formed a kind of magical cake, which, like the *mola* among the Romans, was esteemed sacred in Mexico, the native country of the woman: and was supposed by these ignorant creatures to possess an efficacy, sufficient to detect the authors of the witchcraft. This cake was given to the house dog, as having the common canine prerogative of corresponding with the invisible world.—Soon after the spell was finished, the children acquainted, probably, with its drift, and therefore naturally considering this as the proper time to make disclosures, began to point out the authors of their misfortunes.—The first person accused was the Indian woman herself; who was accordingly committed to prison; and after lying there sometime, escaped without any further punishment, except being sold to defray the expense of her prosecution.

Two other women of the names of Good and Osborn, one long sunk in melancholy, the other bedrid, were next accused by the children; and after being examined were also committed to prison. Within five weeks, a Mrs. Corey, and a Mrs. Nurse, women of unblemished character, and professors of religion, were added to the number of the accused. Before the examination of Mrs. Corey, Mr. Noyes, minister of Salem, highly esteemed for his learning, and benevolence, made a prayer. She was then vehemently accused by Mrs. Putnam, the mother of one of them, and by several other persons, who now declared themselves bewitched, of beating, pinching, strangling, and in various other ways afflicting them.

Mrs. Putnam, particularly, complained of excruciating distress; and with loud piercing shrieks, excited in the numerous spectators emotions of astonishment, pity, and indignation, bordering upon frenzy. Mrs. Corey was, of course, pronounced guilty, and imprisoned.

The examination of Mrs. Nurse was introduced by a prayer from Mr.

Hale of Beverly. The accusation, the answers, the proof, and the consequences, were the same.

Soon after her commitment, a child of Sarah Good, the melancholy woman mentioned above, between four and five years old, was accused by the same women of bewitching them, and accordingly was imprisoned.

In the mean time fasts were multiplied. Several public ones were kept by the inhabitants of the village; and finally a general fast was held throughout the colony. By these successive solemnities the subject acquired a consideration literally sacred; and alarmed and engrossed the minds of the whole community. Magistrates and Clergymen gave it the weight of their belief, and their reputation; led their fellow-citizens into a labyrinth of error and iniquity; and stained the character of their country in the eye of all succeeding generations.

Had Mr. Paris, instead of listening to the complaints of the children in his family, and holding days of fasting and prayer on so preposterous an occasion, corrected them severely; had the physician mentioned above, instead of pronouncing them bewitched, administered to them a strong dose of Ipecacuanha; had the magistrates who received the accusations, and examined the accused, dismissed both, and ordered the accusers to prison; or finally, had the Judges of the Superior Court directed the first indictment to be quashed, and sent the prisoners home; the evil, in either of these stages, might undoubtedly have been stopped. But, unhappily, all these were efforts of reason, which lay beyond the spirit of the times.

That Mr. Paris, Mr. Noyes, and Mr. Hale, believed the existence of the witchcraft in Salem Village, cannot be questioned. That they seem to have been men of a fair religious character must be acknowledged. But, it must also be acknowledged, that both they and Messrs. Hawthorn and Corwin, the magistrates principally concerned, men of good character likewise, were, in the present case, rash and inexcusable.

They were not merely deceived; but they deceived themselves, and infatuated others. They were not merely zealous, but unjust. They received, from persons unknown, in judicial proceedings as witnesses, evidence equally contradictory to law, to common sense, and to the scriptures. Spectral evidence, as it was termed; that is, evidence founded on apparitions, and other supernatural appearances, professed to be seen by the accusers; was the only basis of a train of capital convictions. Children, incapable of understanding the things about which they gave testimony were yet, at times, the only witnesses; and what was still worse, the very things which they testified were put into their minds and mouths by the examiners, in the questions which they asked. In one case, a man named Samuel Wardwell, was tried, condemned, and executed, on the testimony of his wife and daughter, who appear to have accused him merely for the sake of saving themselves.

Soon after the above examinations, the number of accusers, and by necessary consequence, of the accused also, multiplied to a most alarming degree. To recite the story would be useless, as well as painful. In substance, it would be little else than what has been already said.—All those who were executed denied the charge, and finally declared their innocence; although several of them, in the moment of terror, had made partial confessions of their guilt. A considerable number, for the same purpose, acknowledged themselves guilty, and thus escaped death. To such a degree did the frenzy prevail, that in the January following, the grand jury indicted almost 50 persons for witchcraft.

Nor was the evil confined to this neighborhood. It soon spread into various parts of Essex, Middlesex, and Suffolk. Persons at Andover, Ipswich, Gloucester, Boston, and several other places, were accused by their neighbors, and others. For some time, the victims were selected from the lower classes. It was not long, however, before the spirit of accusation began to lay hold of persons of more consequence. On the 5th of August, 1692, Mr. George Burroughs, who had formerly preached in Salem Village, and after at Wells, in the Province of Maine, was brought to trial for bewitching Mary Wolcott, an inhabitant of the Village, and was condemned. Mr. English, a respect-

able merchant in Salem, and his wife; Messrs. Dudley and John Bradstreet, sons of the late Gov. Bradstreet; the wife of Mr. Hale; the lady of Sir Wm. Phipps; and the Secretary of Connecticut; were all among the accused. Mr. English and his wife fled to New-York. Mr. Dudley Bradstreet had already committed between 30 and 40 persons for this supposed crime; but being weary and discouraged, declined any further interference in the business. Upon this he was charged with having killed nine persons by witchcraft, and was obliged to flee to the province of Maine. His brother John, being accused of having bewitched a dog and riding upon his back, fled into New-Hampshire.—At Andover, a dog was accused of bewitching several human beings and put to death.

The evil now became too great to be borne. A man named Giles Corey, had been pressed to death for refusing to plead; and 19 persons had been executed. More than one third of these were members of the christian church; and more than one half had borne an unblemished character. One hundred and fifty were in prison; two hundred others were accused.—Suspense and terror spread through the Colony. Neither age nor sex, neither ignorance nor innocence, neither learning nor piety, neither reputation nor office, furnished the least security. Multitudes appear to have accused others merely to save themselves. Among the accused not a small number confessed themselves guilty for the same reason; for by a strange inversion of judicial process, those who confessed the crime escaped; while those who protested their innocence died without proof, and without mercy.

While the mischief was thus rolling up to a mountainous size, the principal persons in the colony began seriously to ask themselves where it would end. A conviction began to spread that the proceedings were rash and indefensible.—Mr. Hale probably changed his opinion because his wife was accused.—The same consideration undoubtedly influenced Sir William Phipps. A respectable man in Boston having been accused by some persons at Andover, arrested his accusers for defamation, and laid his damages at a thousand pounds. In consequence of this spirited conduct, the frenzy in that town disappeared. In other places the distresses, the fair character and the apparent innocence of many of the sufferers, wrought silently but powerfully on the people at large. At the last special court of Oyer and Terminer holden on this subject, of fifty who were brought to trial, all were acquitted, except three; and these were reprieved by the Governor.—These events were followed by a general release of those who had been imprisoned.—Thus the cloud which had so long hung over the colony slowly and sullenly retired; and like the darkness of Egypt, was, to the great joy of the distressed inhabitants, succeeded by serenity and sun-shine.

At this period and for some time after attempts were made in various places to revive these prosecutions; but they failed of success. It has been said that an inhabitant of Northampton accused another of bewitching him, to the Hon. Mr. Patridge, a very respectable magistrate in Hatfield. This gentleman, understanding perfectly the nature of the accusation, and foreseeing the mischiefs which would spring from any serious attention to it, told the accuser that as it was out of his power to try the case immediately, he would hold a court at Northampton for that purpose on a specified day of the succeeding week; but that he could now finish a part of the business. It was a rule he said that the informant should in various cases receive half of what was adjudged. A person convicted of witchcraft was by law punished with twenty stripes. He should therefore order ten to the accuser.—They were accordingly inflicted on the spot.—At the appointed time the court was opened at Northampton, but no accuser appeared.—This confessedly illegal, but exemplarily wise and just administration, smothered the evil here in its birth. Had measures equally wise been adopted throughout the colony, the story of New-England witchcraft would never have been told. From this period the belief of witchcraft seems gradually and almost entirely to have vanished from New-England.—There is perhaps no country in the world, whose inhabitants treat the whole train of invisible beings which

people the regions of superstition and credulity with less respect, or who distinguish religion from its counterfeit with more universality or correctness.

Religious.

FROM THE BALTIMORE MORNING CHRONICLE.

That there should be one day in seven, on which all the common worldly cares and anxieties should be allowed to rest—on which we are not suffered by the laws of the land to encounter the perplexities of our usual avocations, and on which we are reminded by the messengers of divine grace from the pulpit, that this is but typical of that eternal Sabbath that awaits the righteous man: All this must be considered as the peculiar and distinguishing felicity of the Christian. Once in every seven days, he feels himself in company with men who possess, like himself, immortal souls, and who are, at the same time, as busily engaged in enquiring out the road to salvation. In the church, we may look for the natural equality of man. Kings and subjects, the poor and the rich, the master and servant, all lay down their respective honours and dignities, and the badges of their servitude, at the footstool of Calvary. Here the monarch throws by his crown and sceptre, and the slave his fetters and chains. Furthermore, each of these parties derive, at such seasons, the most consolatory reflections; the lords of the earth are reminded, that, in the midst of all their glory and greatness, they are dying men; that they are hastening to the place where popular applause and the grandeur of the world will avail them nothing; the poorest man is reminded that the crown that glitters on the temple of the monarch, is but a pitiful emblem of that eternal crown which awaits virtuous poverty in another and a better existence. He is told of the promises of a King that cannot lie, and whose word will survive the extinction of the sun, and the dissolution of the rolling universe. He is told that he is to be made the future companion of saints, of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; that those christian patriots, saints and martyrs, who have fought the good fight of faith, and left behind the splendors of their example to shine like stars in the moral firmament, are only gone before to await, with shouts of acclamation, his arrival in the regions of the blest. The Sabbath is the day devoted to such enjoyments; and in the same proportion as the lustre of the noon day sun exceeds the lustre of the glowworm, does the joy of the Sabbath, to the mind of a religious man, exceed every other enjoyment. He calls the day peculiarly and emphatically his own; he feels at this time the dignity of his nature; his consolation amidst the cares and vicissitudes of life, and his assurance in the protecting mercies and the superintending care of his Father and his God. Well may the idolator of the world believe that the Sabbath is a dull and irksome day; he can, on this day, make no contract; he cannot amass, still more, his golden gains, and he knows of no other deity to worship. He looks, with anxiety for the rising of one more sun when he may not be compelled to think of eternal things; when he may be allowed to grasp and hoard and die with his cold hand upon his gold. To the son of pleasure and dissipation, the Sabbath likewise affords no rest. He does not wish to believe, what he is then told, that he is growing hoary in the pursuit of butterflies throughout all the roseate bowers of enjoyment; that the ruddy face of female beauty which he admires, will soon be ploughed with the wrinkles of age; that the limbs which moved down the dance with such elastic energy, will soon require the aid of crutches; all these are unwelcome, are bitter truths: and what is the future society of saints, of angels and glorified spirits, to him whose highest ambition is to go smiling, dancing and carousing to his grave; whose whole morality can be summed up in one short and mean sentence—a short life and a merry one. These are enjoyments, for the absence of which, to such a man, the joys of heaven proffer no indemnity, no remuneration, no compensation, no attractive delights; to laugh and smile, and dissipate and die, constitute the summum of his wishes—the ne plus ultra of his felicity; what is the Sabbath to the monkey who can only dance, or the swine who can only grunt and gorge his appetite?

Avoid the friendship of a fool. Even when he means to serve, he will probably injure you.