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Miscellaneous.

[For the National Journal.]
COLLECTANEA.

In the "Journal Polytype" of France the following fact is stated, which is certainly very curious, if it be true. In Monroe or Fincastle county, Virginia, there is a small fountain, the water of which takes fire, like tinder, when a spark is applied to it. It will then burn like spirituous liquors until wholly consumed; after which the earth presents all the appearance of a bed of ashes. As soon as the water which nourished the flame disappears, it spouts out afresh from the crevices at the bottom, and in half an hour its customary abundance is restored.

Majesty stripped of its externals, is said, with some wit, and a good deal of truth, to be but "a jest." How vain & empty are the titles which men have assumed, and yet how fond they are of them. The Governor of Shiraz calls himself the *flower of courtesy*, the *nutmeg of consolation* & the *rose of delight*. Burton says that man is the most excellent and noble creature of the world—the wonder of nature, as Zoroaster calls him; *audacis naturæ miraculum* as Plato; the abridgement and epitome of the world, as Pliny; the microcosmos, or little world, sovereign lord of the earth, viceroy of the world, and the *imago imaginis* of God. The climax of titles and of absurdity is contained in the title of the Grecian emperor whose arms were a cross between four B's or betas, which stood for "Basileus, Basileon, Basileon, Basileus." The king of kings reigning over kings!

The Emperor of China is called His celestial Majesty, the son of Heaven, and the brother of the sun and moon. The curious designations given by our Indians to themselves and others, as "Walkin-the-water," "Elk's Head," "Long Knife," &c. are not more singular than those which many of our white brethren possess—as Albert, (all bright,) Egbert, (ever bright,) Ethelbert, (nobly bright,) Gilbert, (bright as gold,) Lucius, (shining,) &c.—*Bonum nomen, bonum omen*, was an old maxim.

In the Heraldic Anomalies there are some good puns on names, of which I will take a few specimens. A man named *Cæsar* was married to a woman named *Roma*. The next morning there was found in the hand of Paquin's statue in the *Piazza Navona*, the following paper:

*Cave Cæsar ne tua Roma,
Res publica fiat!*

On two bankers in Ireland, named *Gonne* and *Going*, who had failed:
Going and gone are now all one,
For *Gonne* is going, and *Going's* gone.

The following is on Dr. Lettsom, who always signed his prescriptions—"I. Lettsom."

When any patients call in haste,
I physics, bleeds, and sweats 'em,
If after that they choose to die,
Why, verily— I. Lettsom.

One Alexander Gun having been dismissed from his office for improper conduct, the entry of the fact was as follows: *A. Gun discharged for making a false report.* A man of the same name complaining to a friend that his attorney, in his bill, had not let him off easily—that is no wonder, said he, as he charged you too high.

The following was written on the bankruptcy of a person of the name of *Homer*:

That Homer should a bankrupt be,
Is not so very *Odd-d-ye-see*,
If it be true, as I'm instructed,
So *Ill-he-had* his books conducted.

Of puns in epitaphs, I give the following.

ON JOHN PENNY.

Reader! of *cash*—if thou'rt in want of any,
Dig four feet deep and thou shalt find—a *Penny*.

I cannot omit, here, the pun of Dr. Porson, who declaring to a friend that nothing was so easy as punning, observed that he could pun on any words which might be given him. His friend suggested the Latin gerunds *di do dum*. The Dr. immediately repeated the following:

When *Dido* found *Eneas* would not come,
She mourn'd in silence, and was *Di do dum*.

The origin of attorneys is thus given: In the time of the Saxons, the freemen in every shire met twice a year, under the presidency of the *Shire Reeve*, or sheriff, and the meeting was called the *Sheriff's Torn*. The freemen declining after a time to attend personally, the freeman who attended carried with him the *procurator* of those who did not appear. The

person who went, was said to go *At the Torn*, and hence came the word *attorney*, which signified one that went to the *Torn* for others, with the power to act or vote for those who employed him.

Caldcleugh, in his *Travels in South America*, relates that the lower orders of Brazilians have a strange belief as to the original formation of the negroes. At the creation of Adam, they say, Satan looked on, and formed a man of clay, but every thing he touched becoming black, he determined to wash him in the river Jordan: on his approach, the river retired, and he had only time to push the black man on the wet sand, which, touching the soles of his feet and the palms of his hands, accounts for the whiteness of these parts. The devil, irritated, struck him on the nose, which flattened that organ. The negro begged for mercy, and his creator, being somewhat pacified by his petitions and representations, patted him on the head, and by the heat of his hands curled his hair as it is now seen.

Many of our customs may be traced back to the remotest antiquity, and have varied but little in the succession of ages through which they have passed. It is gratifying sometimes to know their origin. Wakes, or watching by a dead body, is of great antiquity. It owes its origin to the tenderest affections of our nature. Durant asserts, that the ancients watched on the night before the burial, and it would appear that their mode of laying out the dead body was similar to that now observed. They closed the eyes and lips of the deceased—washed, dressed, & wrapped the body in a linen shroud, which, according to Prudentius, should be—

Candore nitentia claro.

Pennant says, that in the Highlands of Scotland, the corpse being stretched on a board, and covered with a coarse linen wrapper, a *wooden platter*, containing a small portion of *salt and earth*, separate and unmixed, was placed on the breast: the *earth*, as an emblem of the corruptible body, and the *salt* of an immortal spirit—"ye are the salt of the earth. Face cloths, too, are of great antiquity. In Northumberland and some other quarters, a *pevter* plate containing *salt*, and, in some places, also a lighted candle are set on the body of the deceased—the first denoting immortality, and the last intended to express the desire of having had the life of the deceased prolonged:—the candle in the Egyptian hieroglyphic, denotes life.

The ancients were accustomed to place burning lamps in the sepulchres—

Ah! hopeless lasting flames! like those that burn,
To light the dead and warm the unfruitful urn.—*Pope*.

The watchings, or *wakes*, in Ireland and parts of Scotland, have been much abused since their origin. According to Pennant, the evening after the death of any person in the highlands, the relations or friends of the deceased, meet at the house, attended by a bagpipe or fiddle—the nearest of kin opens a melancholy ball, dancing and crying violently at the same time, and this continues till day light, but with such gambols and frolics among the youngest part of the company, that the *loss* which occasioned them, is often more than supplied by the consequences of that night. The *coranach*, he says, is also in use in some places of Scotland, as it is in Ireland, and consists of songs in praise of the deceased.

The Paris Constitutional gives the following article, most of the calculations of which are taken from the third part of the *Memories de G. J. Ouvrard*, just published:

France is at present something smaller than it was in 1789, and has lost almost all the colonies it then possessed.

In 1789 the taxes and revenue were 475,284,000fr. and the expenditure 532,598,000fr.

In 1827 the taxes and revenues are 916,668,724fr., and the expenditure 915,773,042fr.

The national debt, as well consolidated as life annuities, was 225,000,000 fr. in 1789, and there was no sinking fund.

The national debt in 1827, is only 204,840,120fr. of which the sinking fund has already absorbed 35,775,343fr.

The civil list and expenditures of the royal family were, in 1789, very nearly what they are in 1827.

The general expenditure of the departments of War, the Marine, the Finances, and the Interior are not greater at present than in 1789.

There are moreover in 1827—

The expenses of worship, which, in 1789, were not at the charge of the state, but in 1827, amount to 32,675,000fr.

The expenses of the judicial system which are 18,825,624fr.

And the pensions, amounting to 59,067,175fr. in 1827, were only 30,000,000fr. in 1789.

But these three sums combined, yield only a total of 110,567,819fr. and not the 382,175,042fr. which form the difference between the expenses of 1789 & those of 1827.

Since the restoration, Ministers have drawn from the country, by way of taxation, 12,017,383,800fr.

Out of this sum the War Department absorbed 3,218,894,264fr., and yet the military state of France, which is far inferior to that of other powers presents an effective force greatly below that set forth in the estimates; our fortresses are not repaired, and the *matériel* of the army is incomplete.

The Marine Department has received 707,915,977 francs. These grants have been expended, and yet the vessels carried to inventory at the Restoration have deteriorated.—France has more vessels fit for nothing but to be broken up, than she has of those that are sea-worthy.

The Department of the Interior has had in the above space of time 291,268,106fr. With this money some canals have been begun, and in great part abandoned; the Tarara road is finished, but in such a manner that it has been necessary to devote large sums to repair it; & the other high roads greatly neglected.

Under the Empire, which had 137 departments, the Budgets of the first thirteen years of the present century yielded a total of 8,922,237 693fr. and the thirteen years following 12,817,146,107fr.

The former sum divided equally among the 137 departments of the Empire, reduce the quota of each department to about 65,130,008fr. The second carries that of each of the eighty six departments of which the kingdom now consists, to 139,700,000fr.

The Debt of England amounts to more than half its Revenue. In this situation she meets an expenditure much more considerable than ours; all the branches of the public service are endowed with most ample grants. With us, the national debt requires only one-fifth of the Revenue, and not only the four-fifths afford no surplus, but leave a deficit to pay, although the public service is in a state of suffering.

After having paid all Europe, England, even since 1814, has abolished the war impost, called Income Tax. Our minister have kept up all the taxes, direct & indirect. The 50 additional centimes, established in 1813, and continued in 1815, are paid at present as in the days of calamity, when they were laid on the people. The taxes of the conquering republic pursue us in all the transactions subject to enregistrement; and the unfortunate man condemned to a fine in our days of peace, is still burdened with that terrible *decime* on all judicial acts, which was established in order to make war with all Europe.

From the *Aurora* and *Franklin Gazette*.
Extract from the *Journal of a Voyage to Canton*.

Whampoa, where the shipping lay, is formed on the south side by French and Danes islands, and to the northward by the eastern part of the island on which the town of *Whampoa* is situated, called *Banks Hall*, from its containing store houses, for the purpose of holding ship stores. The crews of foreign ships, at least a few at a time, are permitted to land on these islands for recreation.—*Dane's* contains the burial place of the British, and French island that of the Americans.

Ship's boats passing between *Canton* and *Whampoa*, always carry the flag of the nations to which they may belong. This prevents their being stopped at the chop, or custom houses on the river, of which there are several between the two places.

Immediately on the arrival of a ship, one and sometime two *Hoppis* or custom house boats are stationed along side in order to prevent smuggling, and no goods are landed or received on board without their permission. They remain with the ship until her departure from the second bar, outward bound.

I left the ship to go to *Canton*. The distance is about twelve or fifteen miles; the river winding in serpentine courses through a low marshy country, converted for the most part into rice fields. A few miles back, the ground swells into hills of considerable height, but all apparently quite naked and barren, with nothing upon them except here and there a *Pagoda*. These towers I am informed are to be seen all over the country, and are supposed to have been erected immediately after the first Tartar conquest, though the Chinese profess to have no history or tradition of their origin or use. As they are in sight of each other the whole way from *Canton* to *Pekin*, it seems very evident that they were erected for the purpose of watch and signal towers.

On the passage up the river there appeared nothing to engage the attention, except the immense floating city of boats, which almost formed a bridge across it for several miles. It seems, the ancestors of this amphibious people emigrated in their boats from a distant part of the coast of China, several centuries ago, but not being permitted to land, have continued from generation to generation, to live in them, with the indulgence of going on shore in the day time only; so that the numerous families that inhabit them are all born, live, and die on the water. How so many, for they are said to amount to about 200,000, an estimate I think much too extravagant, make out to gain a livelihood, I cannot imagine. Yet so far, I have not observed any marks of poverty and distress among them. They all appear healthy and contented, well clothed and well fed.

It is truly astonishing to see with what rapidity boats, and even vessels of considerable burthen, are propelled by means of two large sculls, or oars, working on pivots, and fixed to two pieces of projecting wood on the stern. From six to ten men, according to the size of the vessel, are required to work one of these, in which there appears to be considerable slight necessary, and is equally as well understood by the women and children, as the men. The husband, wife and children down to the tottering infant of three years old, are all seen laboring at the same oar. To prevent these little creatures from drowning, in the event of falling overboard, they have generally a string made fast to them, and some have a hollow gourd tied upon their backs to keep them from sinking.

CANTON.—This evening we were gratified with the sight of a marriage procession; the bride going home to her husband, attended by a band of music and a crowd of followers. In China, it seems a man can have no more than one lawful wife, and her rank as well as age must be nearly equal to his own. If a man absents himself from his wife for the space of three years, she is then at liberty to take another husband, obtaining in the first place the consent of the mandarins.

The Chinese have imposed on their women a much greater degree of humility and restraint than the Greeks of old, or the Europeans in the dark ages. Not satisfied with having nearly incapacitated them for walking by preventing the natural growth of their feet in youth, they have contrived, in order to keep them more confined, to make it a moral crime for a woman to be seen abroad. If they have occasion to pay a visit to a relation or friend, they must be carried in a close sedan chair, for to walk would be the height of vulgarity. The wives and daughters, however, of the lower classes, are neither confined to the house nor exempt from hard and slavish labor; many being obliged to work with an infant tied upon their backs, while, in all probability the husband is idling away his time.

Among the higher ranks, a woman must neither eat at the same table nor sit in the same room with her husband, while the male children at the age of nine or ten are entirely separated from their sisters, by which means the feelings of affection and consanguinity are nipped in the very bud. A cold ceremonious conduct must be observed at all times, between the members of the same family. There is no common focus to attract and concentrate the love and respect of children for their parents; each lives retired and apart from the other. A Chinese youth of the higher class is inanimate, formal, & inactive; constantly endeavoring to assume the gravity of years.

To beguile the tedious and heavy hours that must necessarily be passed by the secluded females, totally unqualified for mental pursuits, they have recourse to the tobacco pipes, and girls, even as young as eight or nine years wear, as an appendage to their dress, a small silken purse or pouch, to contain their tobacco and pipe.

In marriage, daughters may be said invariably to be sold. The bridegroom must always make his bargain with the parents of the girl, in which she has no choice or say, but is disposed of to the highest bidder: Every father of a family is responsible for the conduct of his child, and even domestics. Their faults are imputed to him, whose duty it is to prevent them.

INDIAN SACRIFICE.

A late Missouri paper contains a letter from Mr. Wetmore, an American officer at Council Bluffs, relating the incidents attending the attempt of Mr. Dougherty, the agent of Indian affairs, to save a female prisoner from being sacrificed by the Pawnee Indians, according to their custom. Mr. Dougherty, two or three officers, and an escort, from the garrison, left the Bluff, (Fort Atkinson,) on the 5th of April last, and reached the grand Pawnee village in five days. They were told that the captive had been for some time

fattening for the sacrifice, and that the execution was to take place the next day, the fuel and all the materials being prepared. The captive was a *Paduca* woman, who had been captured by a war-party two or three months before. The chiefs and warriors met in council: and no argument or persuasion was spared by Mr. Dougherty to obtain the release of the intended victim. The principal men of the tribe seated themselves round her up to the Americans, but the women and children, and a few men, were clamorous for the sacrifice. The medicine-man, or chief-juggler, appeared among them, and after some flourishes, said he could so arrange the medicine as to secure plenty of buffalo and corn without a burnt-offering. The captive was then led into the council lodge with evident marks of distress, and audible expressions of grief; but after she was apprised of the interposition in her favour, her face was brightened with a smile. No one present could speak her language, and all communication with her was by signs. The next day she was delivered to the Americans, who placed her on a horse, and started for the Bluffs. They had not proceeded far, when two Indians, who had determined to kill the woman, sprang from their concealment, and one of them let fly an arrow at her which passed through her buffalo robe, and inflicted a mortal wound in her side. A scuffle ensued, during which some disaffected Indians came up, bore off the captive, and threw her down on the ground, still alive. Two hundred warriors from the village immediately assembled around her, that they might dip their weapons in her blood. After her death, the Americans proceeded homeward.

From Mr. Wetmore's account of the Indian Council, we extract the following:

"There was a warrior conspicuous in council, as well on account of his standing in the nation, as his tawdry costume: his name is *Bad Moccasin*. This red gentleman wore a gold laced scarlet coat, a necklace of white bear talons, and stood an upright man in a green leggin and a crimson sash, the advocate for mercy—he had taken his Great Father (at Washington,) by the hand, and pledged himself to oppose these barbarous rites. A young brave likewise told his countrymen, that he knew it was the opinion of Pawnees, that these sacrifices would ensure their prosperity at the hands of the master of life: but, said he, let us distrust our own opinion, for the whites have more intercourse, and are better acquainted with God Almighty than we are: therefore, let us listen to them; let us please them; for we cannot please better men."

The form of conducting human sacrifices among the Pawnees, was detailed to Mr. Dougherty and his party, by a Frenchman, who had witnessed one or two:

"When it is, by the Big Medicine man, deemed advisable to procure a subject for human sacrifice, he commits this medicine to the care of a partizan at the head of a war party; just as he is about to open a campaign, one or more of the prisoners captured by the party, is esteemed the property of the Big Star, that is, the Planet Venus. When the subject is brought in, he is turned over to Old Medicine, the high priest of *Belzebub*: he is then placed in confinement in the medicine lodge, where every possible exertion is made to fatten the victim for the sacrifice—meantime, the medicine men relieve each other in the duty of guarding the subject, and in chanting at his side, unceasingly, infernal lullabies, or anthems of the damned. When the victim is brought out for execution, he is placed between two stakes, resembling may-poles, surmounted by a black flag—the hands and feet being extended, are made fast to the poles, and a small fire is kindled near the feet of the subject, in which irons are heated, and applied to his breast and groins. This torture is continued until the victim begins to sink under it, when the spy, or vidette of a war party, (previously organised for this ceremony,) is seen approaching with the same caution that is observed in actual war. After this mockery, he reports to the chief of the war party, that he has discovered the enemy, and that he is in a bad position and off his guard. Under these circumstances, an immediate attack is determined on, when the valorous war-party rush forward to the place of sacrifice, and dispatch the victim with a literal shower of arrows. After this, the fire is increased, until the fat exudes freely from the roasted subject: and at this stage of the ceremony, the women of the nation, who are corn planters, press around the pile, oil their hoes, and holding them up, implore abundant harvests; the arrows of the warriors having been ingloriously dipped in the blood of the enemy, are fitted for a successful Buffalo hunt."