

HE



Frighted, alarm'd, he sees the fiction rise,
And, unconvinc'd, to tell his friends, he flies ;
A ghost ! a ghost ! near yonder tomb appears !
Fear gives it birth—and Folly life for years.

Witchcraft :

O R

THE ART OF FORTUNE-TELLING

UNVEILED :

From the low ambition of the celebrated

MARY PITCHER,

To the more elevated, but equally vague pretensions of

THE INJUDICIOUS ASTROLOGER.

*Delineated in a Series of Letters, between a Friend and
his Correspondent.*

COMPRIZING

Arguments to prove the Non-existence of Spirits...
Philosophy of the Air and Fire Balloons...Method
of preparing the Gas, or Inflammable Air...Phan-
tasmagora, or Magick Well...Italian Shades...Pup-
pets...Reluminating Automaton...Opinions on An-
cient Oracles...A few Philosophical Experiments...
Art of Balancing...Remarks on Prejudice.

TOGETHER WITH

Poetick Compositions on different Subjects.

BY WILLIAM FREDERICK PINCHBECK,

Author of "The Expositor, or many Mysteries unravelled."

Boston.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1805.

TO THE PUBLICK.

THE generous patronage I have so liberally experienced in publishing a volume, entitled *The Expositor, or many Mysteries unravelled*, has been evidently evinced by the avidity with which the edition has been purchased. As reward is the sovereign stimulus to perseverance, such distinguished favours have encouraged and enabled me to submit to your perusal the subsequent Letters, entitled *Witchcraft, or the Art of Fortune-Telling unveiled*. In these Letters I profess not only to unfold the source and criterion by which fortune-tellers presume to draw their conclusions, from the stars; but also to defeat and expose such impostors as profess to derive the knowledge of looking into futurity, either by foreseeing hidden events in a pack of cards, or palmistry. To combat superstition in all its various forms; to prove the folly and impropriety of attributing that we do not immediately comprehend, to the influence of diabolical agency, is the author's design in transmitting to the Publick the principles of many curiosities, of which these Letters, together with those contained in the *Expositor*, give an account. The reader may readily conclude, that a great privilege is sacrificed by him; as the performanee of the feats, were he so disposed, would procure him more than an ample livelihood. Add to this, proposals have been made to him to divulge no more, and he has refused. His refusing these offers, and like-

wise the exclusive privilege and profit to be derived by exhibiting them, he flatters himself will be deemed worthy of publick notice.

The method of explaining the subjects by a familiar correspondence, first struck me to be the most natural, pleasing, and explicit; in consequence of which, I have adopted the same mode in this as in the former volume. I do not profess to entertain with the luxuriant flowers of rhetorick; but shall unremittingly endeavour that plain truth and moral sentiment pervade the whole. Proud of the success of my last publication, and animated by meeting the approbation of a Publick, esteemed through the world for their literary talents, induces me to attempt this publication; and a sense of gratitude, correspondent to my best wishes, impels my pen to acknowledge the many favours received, and sign myself

The Publick's much obliged

and very humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

WITCHCRAFT,

OR,

The Art of Fortune-Telling unveiled.

LETTER I.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

WHERE I now reside half the town are in arms, and that as they say, in order to defend themselves against the nocturnal ravages, expected to be made by a wicked ghost; which ghost is said to haunt the church-yard every night, precisely at twelve o'clock, and take its solitary walk among the tombs. As I never had the pleasure of paying my respects to a spectre, I intend, to-morrow night, in company with a number of gentlemen, distinguished for their religious qualifications as well as courage, to wait the appearance of this phenomenon, should he not forget his usual hour. I sincerely hope he will prove an inoffensive ghost, and not "a goblin damn'd." Ever since his first appearance, the topick of conversation has been replete with apparitions—direful presages—signs—and dreams. I am out of all patience at hearing so many inchoherent tales; but I

confess myself more astonished, to find rational beings, as they appear to be in every other respect, can possibly be thus duped, and so singularly credulous, as to believe in such idle tales. In my next I will give you a further account of this supposed supernatnal visitor of the night. In the mean time, please to favour me with your real opinion respecting such prodigies.

I am, Sir, with usual sincerity of heart,

Yours, A. B.

LETTER II.

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

THE miracle alluded to in yours is, in my opinion, one of the blind absurdities of superstition; and among the rest of her deformities, she gave birth to this phantom: And hypochondriack persons of the present day obstinately continue to extend her empire and indulge its growth. Thus I trace its origin and progress: Our ancestors saw something they deemed a ghost; with seeming truth and deep concern, they tell it to their offspring, and they to theirs; and being impressed on the young and tender mind, it is a hard task to eradicate the impression. Thus conceived, rooted, and sanctioned by the tongue of a parent or friend, it stalks abroad, unmanacled and unshackled. At eve-

ry stride credit is gained, and ignorance diffused.

There are many, whose fears constantly keep them on the alarm. A direful event is foreboded from the accidental overturning of a cup of salt. Great misfortunes are prefigured from the breaking of a looking-glass. The clicking of a spider behind a paper hanging is a certain sign of death. Every uncommon appearance or sound, without the trouble of searching for a cause, is conceived to be the restless spirit of some unhappy person deceased, or the omen of some friend about to die. A white cat seen upon a post or wall, in the night, is instantly metamorphosed into a ghost, shrouded with a white sheet—or a cow, seen when dark, if her body is so disposed as not to be readily observed, is taken for the devil. I should like to be informed by one of those credulous persons, of what materials they suppose a ghost to be composed, that he should thus have the supernatural power of instantaneously appearing, completely caparisoned, and of vanishing in the same period, and that without leaving a single vestige to trace his flight. He is not vulnerable, and therefore must be of the species of shadows. Then what mysterious sinews nerve his arm? What wonder gives his eyes the sense of vision? What miraculous composition forms the organs of his voice, that he has the power of speech? these being faculties bequeathed to the vulnerable creation.

I wish to know, if the affinity existing between the flesh and the spirit is such, as that the spirit is suffered to appear in behalf of the flesh, wherefore should the garments formerly worn by a person in this life, also appear when thus supernaturally personated? Have woollens, linens, and the like, a secondary life, or do they moulder? For I must say, that all the ghosts of which I ever heard have been modest enough to provide themselves with clothing; or at least to veil their nakedness under a white sheet; and thus accoutred, issue from different places, rising from the floor, as if they found a passage through the grain of the wood; or in a moment rushing through a brick wall, without displacing a brick. Whether the imaginary form issues from the grave of the deceased, and floats like a vapour through the key-hole of the door, into the apartment of the person to be visited, or more wonderfully, without progression, unfolds his awful appearance instantaneously. For my part, excepting such phantoms as may be produced by optical illusions, (the principles of which I will account for to you in my next) I place no confidence in ghosts, believing such appearances to be the imaginary productions of a distempered brain. The ghost mentioned in yours, in my opinion will prove to be a cat, or something of as little consequence.

Your Friend, W. F. P.

LETTER III.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

LAST Saturday night at eleven o'clock, twenty of the best informed, and stoutest persons in the town assembled, and took their several stations in and about the church yard; at twelve o'clock it was expected according to custom, the unhappy ghost would appear—tell the object of his visit—unfold some hidden wonder—and forever after sleep in quiet. Full of terrible expectations, each one silently ruminated what awful form was about to assail his eyes, and what mysterious event might be the history of that night to future ages. Five minutes before twelve, one of our associates fainted, and two others, almost in the same condition, conducted him home; the clock struck twelve, and with the solemn sound each one felt himself a ghost. By the light of the moon I could perceive the blood forsake their faces, some trembled, but by the uncommon gestures of all, I concluded fanaticism had indeed filled every heart brim full of fear; I thought I could perceive my comrades' hats move up and down, as if the hair on their heads arose and fell alternately. This I attributed to sudden changes from hope to fear; after waiting till patience was almost exhausted, at five minutes before one, the imagined ghost appeared! Monstrous ghost!

and horrid to relate! a poor goat having strayed from its owner, was set upon by dogs who almost tore him to pieces; but not satisfied with this, some inhuman person, to divert their cruel inclinations, cut off his fore legs; in this miserable condition he found an asylum under the church, and being afraid of further violence, dare not attempt his awkward walks by day; so every night on his two hind legs, he blundered amongst the tombs, and lived on the grass, that is generally seen spontaneously growing around the repositories of the dead. If this whimsical tale of the ghost, should render you any amusement, or bring a smile into your face, I shall account myself well paid for the fatigue I underwent in watching: But when you reflect on the situation of the poor goat you will lose all relish for the jest, and wish you never heard it.

I am your friend, A. B.

LETTER IV.

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

I HOPE the sufferings of the goat will at least produce this good effect, to reclaim the obstinate believers in ghosts, and convince the condescending to be informed, that the source from whence sprung the belief in apparitions and the like, might have origi-

nated from circumstances of as small importance, as the singularity of the goat, and convince the world that in order to support wisdom, and banish folly, whenever any uncommon sounds are heard, or any unnatural visions seen, it is indispensably necessary to search into the secret causes of such sounds and visions.

Frighted ! alarm'd ! he sees the Fiction rise,
 And unconvinc'd, to tell his friends he lies,
 A ghost ! a ghost ! near yonder tomb appears,
 Fear gives it birth, and folly life for years.

One thus ridiculously abusing his reason misleads the judgment of another, and from forming unnatural opinions, philosophy may be construed into atheism—wisdom into folly—enterprize into intrigue—ingenuity into witchcraft—virtue into vice—and, indeed, as your inquiry has proved, mistake a goat for a ghost. You have no doubt, with disagreeable sensations, remarked some parents, who, in order to exact obedience from their children, earnestly assure them, that some hobgoblin or horrid monster would appear to punish them : these monsters of which they are told seriously possess the young imagination, and is often productive of the most pernicious effects ; a child thus taught to believe, when alone, or left a moment in the dark, the apprehension of something horrible sets its little heart in palpitation, agitates its infant frame, and shakes the slender nerve ; the sensible impression such an education

makes on the memory, has been known to be so deeply implanted and lasting, that even manhood itself could not erase its power; All parents ought well to consider, and take example from the following lines of a celebrated poet.

“ 'Tis education forms the common mind,
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclin'd.”

It is the duty of parents and instructors therefore to avoid that kind of conduct that may tend to injure the constitution and natural capacities of their children, and those intrusted to their care, to weaken the young ideas, to incline it from the knowledge of the truth and teach it fable; whereas a judicious correction has a greater effect, without the apprehension of those worst of evils, which is evidently attached to the former imprudent conduct, which often produces a lasting inheritance of hypochondria or hystericks, and the direful train of maladies, annexed to those calamitous disorders. Concluding you will acquiesce with me in my sentiments on this subject, I proceed to inform you how the artificial man, or apparition, is produced by the power and science of Opticks, which will explain the Phantasmagora, or Magick Well.

To give effect to this optical deception, you must provide yourself with a concave mirror, about eight inches in diameter; also a convex lens of the same diameter. After finding the focus of your mirror, place your lens

directly facing it, and at a distance proportionate to its concavity, and within the focal point of the same. Having provided yourself with a box, of a suitable length, place the mirror at the bottom of the same, and the lens at the top. Now this box being fitted into a partition, behind the partition, the object to be seen is presented to the concave, imperceptible to the company. The vision of the object, (by the particular disposition of the mirror and lens) when reflected from the mirror, will appear as large as reality, and seemingly independent of any primary cause. The gestures, complexion, animation and garments, will be to appearance, to every sense but touch, the object itself. Two candles must be placed on each side the mirror, in such a position as to illuminate whatever is presented to the mirror; which mirror being placed obliquely, reflects the object presented to the lens. In order to favour the appearance of the phantom, near where the box is placed, suspend black curtains, observing to paint your partition black. The room in which the company assemble must be totally darkened, and the vision will be seen in toto by the observer. These phantoms appear to rise in a manner that must strike every beholder with wonder and astonishment, leaving the mind in doubt to determine whether the figure seen be real or imaginary.*

* Such visions as cannot be produced by the Magick. Lanthorn, lately styled Phantasmagora.

By accommodating yourself with the glasses mentioned, you may easily be convinced of the manner in which mankind might have been easily deceived by visions in ancient days.

I conclude, by subscribing myself

Yours, &c.

W. F. P.

LETTER V.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

I RECEIVED yours, and am convinced of the truth of your observations, as they relate to the bad effects on community, to have parents or instructors misconduct in the education of their children, or those intrusted to their care. I am intimately acquainted with a gentleman, who, though a man of sense and science, candidly confesses, he would not walk two miles of a dark night, for the compliment of a fifty dollar bill—he finds himself very uneasy, when alone, though convinced of the non-existence of ghosts—assures me that, the conceit which overwhelms his better judgment, does not arise from the fear of being assaulted by flesh and blood; but a certain apprehension of a something, he knows not what, and for which he cannot account, intrudes itself upon his imagination, depresses his spirits, makes him conceit a thousand evils, without

particularizing any. This disagreeable sensation he attributes to the misconduct of his parents, as described and condemned in your last.

I am delighted with the construction of your Phantasmagora, the vision it produces being the reflection of life itself, both with respect to its approach, colour, and animation, and must be far more striking, than the semblance produced by the late improvement on the magick lanthorn, falsely termed Phantasmagora.

I must inform you of the late arrival of a noted Fortune-Teller, who assures us, his faculty of looking into futurity amounts to certainty, demonstrated by consulting the planets; in which he professes to read the destinies of every mortal, provided he knows the month of their birth. For the sake of the curiosity, I intend trying his skill, and in my next will inform you respecting the secrets of my future destiny.

I am, with usual sincerity,

Yours,

A. B.

LETTER VI.

[In Answer.]

From W. E. P. to A. B.

SIR,

FORTUNE-TELLERS have too long imposed upon the injudicious class of mankind.

Some of these impostors pretend to look into the womb of time by cards; some by Palmistry, that is, by examining the lines on the palms of the hands; others by Astrology. As I feel myself interested in promoting real science, I am induced to expose such pernicious delusions and explain, as far as my abilities will admit. The grounds and principles on which the profession of the above three build their fictitious notions are principally extracted from a book entitled *The Fortune-teller*.

I will now proceed to point out the little dependance to be placed on cards when something similar to the following is all the mystery. Particular significations are given to every card, and each fortune-teller may arbitrarily have their own. I will give you the following specimen. If a male requests his fortune he must choose a king; if a female she must make choice of a queen.

The two red tens being by you, is a sign of
[marriage.

The ace of diamonds is a house
 ace of hearts a ring
 ace of clubs a letter
 ace of spades* death, spite, or quarrel
 ten of diamonds a journey [relling
 ten of spades sickness
 ten of clubs a water-frolick
 ten of hearts a house of entertain-
 [ment

* The ace of spades is called, by these cunning prognosticators, the worst card in the pack.

The nine of spades	is	disappointment
nine of clubs		a merry-making
nine of hearts		feasting
nine of diamonds		business
eight of clubs		confusion
eight of spades		turnpike road
eight of diamonds	}	new clothes
eight of hearts		
seven of clubs		a prison
seven of spades		a removal
seven of diamonds		a ship
seven of hearts		honourable love
six of clubs		a chimney-sweeper
six of spades		a child
six of diamonds		success in business
six of hearts		false love
five of clubs		a bundle
five of spades		a surprize
five of diamonds		a settlement
five of hearts		a present
four of clubs		a strange bed
four of spades		sickness
four of diamonds		a purse
four of hearts		courtship
tray of clubs		fighting
tray of spades		tears
tray of diamonds		speaking with a friend
tray of hearts		a kiss
deuce of clubs		bad tidings
deuce of spades		a false friend
deuce of diamon.		sudden riches
deuce of hearts		reconciliation

Several diamonds coming together	denotes	Money
Several hearts		Love
Several clubs		High times
Several spades		Turnpikes and Vexation

The following will serve for an explanation of this art :

Take a pack of cards, place them face upwards, thirteen in a row ; if a gentleman, let him pitch upon his favourite king ; if a lady, on her favourite queen. All the cards in that row where your king or queen happens to fall, will indicate your future fortune. But wiseacres have different opinions.

Palmistry deserves about as much faith as the former. If the line which is in the middle of the hand, and which is called the table line, be broad, fair and unbroken it is a sign the person will lead a happy, comfortable life. If the line from the wrist goes straight up to the little finger, the person will live to a great old age ; but if the line is broken they are in danger of sudden death ; for they tell us, this is the Line of Death. If the Line of Life, which is that running from the wrist by the ball of the thumb, and ends under the fore finger, is clear and without breaks, it shows riches, prosperity, and old age. Round lines like circles, on the inside of the tips of the fingers, denote houses, lands, and inheritance. As many lines or crosses, as a woman has on her wrists, so many children she may

expect to have. Such like damnable, nonsensical conclusions are drawn from the foregoing marks in the hand.

Others again pretend to foretel by celestial signs and planets. The signs on which they prognosticate are constellations, fixed in the zodiack, at the distance of thirty degrees from each other. Within this great circle of the material sphere, which is said to be eighteen degrees broad, cutting the equinoxial into two equal parts, is the ecliptick, which is the sun's orbit, or path, in which he moveth through the twelve signs of the zodiack, leaving on each side his orbit *six degrees of latitude*. These signs or constellations, having the names of certain animals, rule every month in the year, and the planets the days of the week.

The following exhibits their names and government.

Names of the Planets.	Government.
1 Sun	Sunday
2 Moon	Monday
3 Mars	Tuesday
4 Mercury	Wednesday
5 Jupiter	Thursday
6 Venus	Friday
7 Saturn	Saturday

Roman Names of the Signs.	English Names.	Government.
1 Aries	Ram	March
2 Taurus	Bull	April
3 Gemini	Twins	May
4 Cancer	Crab	June
5 Leo	Lion	July
6 Virgo	Virgin	August
7 Libra	Balance or [Scales	September
8 Scorpio	Scorpion	October
9 Sagittarius	Archer	November
10 Capricornus	Goat	December
11 Aquarius	Water-Bearer	January
12 Pifces	Fifh	February

Thus, having pointed out the planets that rule the days, and the figns that rule the months, I proceed to an explanation.

We are told by aftrologers, that every fign has fome influence upon the human body; that every perfon born into the world is fubjected to the afcendancy of that fign, which ruled at his birth, according to the following remarks.

Those born under Aries, the Ram, that is, in March, are mostly very active, of a retentive memory, fond of going up hills and high places, wantonly inclined, very merry, and not a little addicted to paffion; if born of a Tuefday they will be valiant, as that day is governed by Mars.

Those born under Taurus, the Bull, who governs April, will be ftrong in the head,

have commonly thick necks and broad shoulders; will be people of singular appetites, liable to many accidents, and are seldom long-lived.

Those born under Gemini, the Twins, who govern May, are mostly slender, and of delicate constitutions, subject to much sickness, are of a mild disposition, capable of true love, and sincere friendship, but seldom live to be old. If born on a Sunday it denotes riches.

Those born under Cancer, the Crab, who rules June, are inclined to be short and corpulent, have a jumping gait when they walk, are fond of the water, subject to eruptions and chronick diseases, and are generally very vicious in love.

Those born under Leo, the Lion, who rules July, will be bold and enterprizing, likely to receive many honours, are of a noble, generous disposition, have a great share of understanding, and are particularly happy in their friends.

Those born under Virgo, the Virgin, who governs August, are commonly of a shy and artful disposition, have a little share of address, and generally prefer a single to a married life.

Those born under Libra, the Balances or Scales, who governs September, have a delicate constitution, are sensible, inclined to be haughty, are great favourites of their opposite sex, and generally prosperous through life.

Those born under Scorpio, the Scorpion, who rules October, are spiteful and passionate,

have good sense, but faithless and deceitful in their friendship, are given to carnal pleasures, form hasty connections, seldom happy, and are generally impatient under affliction.

Those born under Sagittarius, the Archer, who governs November, will be meek, wise, and discreet, rather grave than gay, prefer retirement, sincere in love and friendship; often marry very young, their offspring few, meet with many crosses in life, but commonly end their days in happiness.

Those born under Capricornus, the Goat, who rules December, are said to be great travellers both by sea and land, are subject to many dangers, but will surmount them, and become both wealthy and eminent.

Those born under Aquarius, the Water-Bearer, who governs January, are usually of a sweet, affable temper, are kind to their friends, have great possessions, are agreeable, handsome, and liberal in their favours, have many children, are long-lived, and live very happy.

Those born under Pisces, the Fish, who governs February, will be wealthy by trade, much indulged abroad, subject to cold disorders, of a phlegmatick constitution; will be happy in the married state, and have many children, who will succeed to their father's possessions.

Thus it appears on what grounds those pretenders to fortune-telling prognosticate human fate, namely Cards, Palmistry, and judi-

cial Astrology; all of which I believe to be equally correct or incorrect; for if the destiny of our lives can be foretold from our entrance on life's busy theatre to our exit from it, we can no longer be considered as free agents, but merely a set of machines called man—whose business and fortune, fate has decided at the instant of our birth. For if thus written in a planet, marked in the hand, delineated in the face, or formed in any manner, so that the circumstances naturally accruing in a man's life, may be read from his cradle to his grave, and be understood so as to be calculated on, what is this but predestination, a doctrine which formerly originated with the heathens under the name of fate; the precepts of which, (according to my sense) are calculated to destroy all belief of justice in the Creator, or faith in his divine Providence, so that there is no merit attached to virtue, nor demerit to vice, whereby the nature of good and evil is entirely destroyed. Thus I conclude that the power of looking into futurity, must be a special gift of the divine favour, and which gift I dispute any person to be possessed of at the present day. Can we absurdly admit, that the transactions of every man's life, are registered in a planet, under which he happened to be born. If so the astrologer may as easily foretel the eventful history of our fortune, as the astronomer to point out the time of an eclipse. But this is not the case. We are not like planets, destined to make a certain revolution in a stipulated period; but

are intelligent, independent beings, endowed with proper understandings by our all wise Creator, to discern between good and evil, and are thus left to the freedom of our own choice. Man's regularities or irregularities have no influence on the general plan, and mar no link in creation's connecting chain. The sun, the moon and stars, as well as the unwearied earth, may be suitable subjects for astronomical calculations, but were never made to fix the destiny of human beings.

Leaving the propriety of these sentiments to your better decision,

I remain yours,

W. F. P.

LETTER VII.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

WITH respect to your sentiments as they relate to fortune-telling, you and I are precisely of opinion. Without predestination, fortune-telling cannot exist, and who is he that can foretel the uncertainty of time and chance? The professor of such impossibility is, in my opinion, a vile impostor, seeking to decieve the weak and credulous. Convinced of this truth, the selectmen of our town, (before I had an opportunity of gratifying my curiosity, as I mentioned to you in my last) had sagely advised the said gentleman to quit the town, and make his prognostications at

some other place, where they might be more ready to give credit to the like impositions.

I remain yours, A. B.

P. S. I must inform you, a gentleman lately from Paris, who has brought over a magnificent Balloon, has solicited my assistance and influence in procuring subscribers, for the purpose of enabling him to purchase apparatus and necessary materials for making of inflammable air. Could this be procured, he has no objections to embark once more to the upper regions, making the fifth time of his ascension. You will no doubt encourage his efforts.

Yours, &c. A. B.

LETTER VIII.

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

THE conduct of your selectmen in my opinion, is highly commendable. It proves their wise and just discrimination between ingenuity and imposition. For the want of this distinction, the former has too often suffered, and the latter been too frequently rewarded. Ingenious productions, whether they come before us under the title of an exhibition, or we welcome them as an improvement to our manufactures, are both assuredly

the studious effects of the same species of talent; and even that invention we sometimes consider as of trifling consequence, has more than once been proved to possess the very principles, and only medium to some important discovery. The air balloon of which you speak has long been a subject of wonder and admiration; notwithstanding I doubt Monsieur's success in obtaining sufficient subscribers to make his ascension profitable; for novelty, the life and soul of exhibitions, has long since declared balloons out of date. I am, with usual respect and esteem,

Your sincere friend,

W. F. P.

LETTER IX.

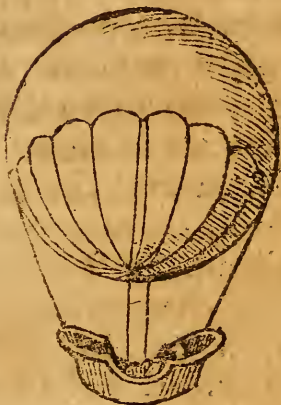
From A. B. to W. F. P.

Sir,

MONSIEUR CASTELLO, seeing no probability of collecting a sum of money sufficient to render the raising of his balloon an object worthy attention, has taken passage for New-York, where he flatters himself a subscription of this kind will be immediately filled. As a number of my acquaintance and gentlemen of the town, who never saw a balloon, nor witnessed the majestick grandeur of its ascension through the aerial regions, and appear very much to regret the loss of so favourable an opportunity; and still wishing to witness the progress of such an experiment, if you can

give me information, so as to enable me to accomplish the construction of a small balloon, you will be the means of gratifying their curiosity, and amusing one who stiles himself

Your sincere friend, A. B.



LETTER X.

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

THE small balloon, possibly large enough to gratify the curiosity of your acquaintance, will be of little trouble and not much expense. To make which, taffety, on account of its lightness, will be most suitable. The quantity must be ascertained agreeably to the size of the balloon you intend making. Whatever composes the balloon, must be shaped in strips, something similar to those that complete the

globular shape of a foot-ball. These strips must be closely sewn together with a double seam, in an orbicular form, this being the best and most approved shape for a balloon. At that point you intend to favour the car, must be left a small orifice sufficiently large to infuse and admit the inflammable air. Having thus far succeeded, suspend it, and let the same be filled with common air; then with a large fitch tool gum size or varnish it wholly over three or four times, as this kind of glutinous preparation is the means of preventing the gas, or rarified air from transpiring through the seams, or thread of the taffety composing the balloon. This preparation being perfectly dry, discharge the common air, and inject the artificial, which is to be made in the following manner. Having provided yourself with as large a glass vessel as the occasion may require, into this put a quantity of iron filings or rusty nails, on these pour a proportionable quantity of oil of vitriol. Being prepared with sufficient length of tube safely to inject the inflammable air, add some clear water to the vitriol, this being the zymoma of fermentation, and from which proceeds the rarified air; with this air you must fill the balloon by help of your tubes, and when full, close the orifice with a string; the balance or car being added or already suspended, cut the fastenings, and as a cork freed from the bottom of the stream, being a much lighter body than water, naturally swims to the surface; so the balloon being

filled with rarified ^{air}, which is much lighter than common air, seeks to find a surface in the atmosphere, of the same medium with its contents. On similar principles, and an adequate proportion of materials, you may make one of those orbiculars to balance any weight. In preference to a number of aerial adventurers, to do justice, the laurel of preeminence is unquestionably due to Monsieur Blanchard, he being the original inventor of the valve, on which the safety of the balloon much depends, and consequently the lives of the passengers embarked to make a visit to the upper atmosphere. As you appear but little acquainted with the principles of these inflammable orbiculars, I will explain to you the great service of the valve. On the top of the balloon and on the inside, is a circular rabbet of the circumference of fifteen inches. To this rabbet the silk of which the balloon is made is closely confined; in this rabbet is a door, being an hoop covered with parchment, similar to the head of a drum, made closely to fit, and open and shut with a spring; opposite to the hinges and spring is fastened one end of a line, the other is secured to the car in which the explorer of the upper regions is seated. Now, finding the balloon ascending too rapidly, by drawing this string which opens the supa, and delivers the inflammable air, its height is limited and its pace retarded. By this great improvement, he not only accommodated himself, but indulged his numerous patrons below, with a sight of him and

his balloon, going to a considerable distance in an horizontal direction. After he had ascended at a certain height, he closed the sapa, and threw out ballast, when to their astonishment, they not knowing the cause, he ascended perpendicularly, till the anxious eyes of the admiring world below lost sight of him. Thus he plays with his balloon, alternately ascending and descending, which none had ever before done. All that now seemed to be wanting to render Monsieur Blanchard complete master of his balloon, was the knowledge of guiding its course horizontally in any other direction than before the wind, and this influence is yet left to the current of the air. Should this knowledge ever be ascertained, we know not of how much utility this singular invention may prove to mankind, nor of how many astronomical discoveries its aerial progressions may be the source. I will close this subject concerning balloons, by sending you the principles on which the fire balloon is constructed. Take silken or thin paper, paste it neatly together, agreeably to the size you mean to have your balloon, then shape it as before mentioned. To the opening at the bottom paste in a light hoop, about the circumference of twenty-four inches, across this hoop fix a wire, to this suspend a balance, with a sponge previously infused in spirits of wine. When prepared for its ascension, let some person hold it at the top by a loop made for that purpose. Now fire the sponge, and when the balloon is well filled, the per-

son may quit his hold, and though simple as the cause appears, the balloon will rapidly ascend, and continue in the air, independent of any accident, until the spirit of the wine is entirely exhausted. Concluding these descriptions will be sufficient to enable you to form a balloon on either construction, I remain as before,

Yours sincerely,

W. F. P.

LETTER XI.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

I RECEIVED yours, containing the principles on which the taffety and paper balloons are constructed. I have attempted to make one, and feel perfectly satisfied of success. I feel singularly ambitious to inform myself of all that's rare and curious both in nature and art, natural history being a great part of my study. Wherever we chance to turn our eyes we behold the immense wisdom of the sublime architect of the universe, and real projector of all things. Through all creation what masterly strokes from the pencil of the author! What wonderful progression from an insect to an angel! What mysterious functions circulate through, buoy up and support the great whole! completed and still directed by him, whose majesty and glory no tongue can express, no pencil paint, no pen describe;

imagination fails; words are too poor to speak. How great the structure of man! His machinery how complex! Where shall we find a limit to his faculties? In fact, seemingly, they have no bounds; for when we view the productions of art displayed in magnificent buildings, marble edifices, sculpture, paintings, and various other efforts of ingenuity; in surveying these productions of art, as well as in contemplating the sublimity of nature's operations, we find ourselves encircled in a labyrinth of amazement, far beyond our immediate conception. But what are all these beauties of nature or art, placed before the vacant eye of him, whose sordid soul soars not beyond the limits of his purse strings? For though his coffers are crammed with gold, he would choose to be richer by an additional four pence half penny, than have placed before his view that wonder of art, the Colossus of Rhodes. Such men, in my humble opinion, but merely exist, who can thus obstinately shut their eyes and senses, to let slip all that's intrinsically valuable in this life, to grasp at trash. But believe me, sir, though I am a sincere advocate for, and admirer of all that's great and good, I am not so over sublime in my sentiments, but that I can condescend to be well pleased with the more trifling productions of humbler ingenuity. Yesternight I went to visit the Italian Shades, and must confess I was agreeably entertained; but particularly delighted with a shadow that danced the tight rope equal to

the most active real rope dancer. As I know you are perfectly acquainted with the method of effecting these shades, your explanation of the same will lay him under an additional obligation, who styles himself as usual,

Your sincere friend, A. B.

LETTER XII.

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

You request information relative to Italian Shades. I must inform you, Signior Falconi had great merit in his exhibitions, for he not only managed them with greater dexterity, but he humoured them to a degree of perfection I never before experienced. The rope dancer mentioned in your last, I no less admired than yourself. This shadow so much attracted my attention with respect to its effect, that with a collection of mechanical figures I already possessed, (in order to lengthen my performance) I introduced the same. The first idea of this figure I must candidly confess I took from Signior Falconi, not that he favoured me with its principles, but happening to be a spectator of his performances at the old theatre in Philadelphia, I readily discovered how the figure was made. I accordingly made one, and represented him as performing

in a small transparent saloon, which saloon must be painted on a piece of taffety, about twenty inches square. Across this painting strain a cord, on the shade of which cord the shadow appears to dance. Now behind the frame, which must closely fit into a partition, place your lights. Let the candle be so disposed as that the rays of light may equally illuminate each side of the figure, or otherwise his appearance will be deformed. Having darkened the room, the saloon will conspicuously appear, with the shape of whatever you place behind it. Now, having your figure ready, bring him for exhibition on one side the rope, by degrees. Let the musicians play some favourite hornpipe, and move him on the rope, imitating the steps of a rope-dancer. The figure must be made and worked as follows: From some close manufactured pasteboard, cut the profile of a man in the dress of a rope-dancer, about eight inches in length, with a balance pole in his hands; then amputate his thighs and legs from his body. This done, join them together again by means of coarse thread, securely and closely knotted on each side, and by this means he will readily take any attitude in which you have a mind to place him. Have a stick secured to the centre of his body, and one to each foot. Now when you perform him, the body must be supported and managed by means of the stick, which is fastened to the same, which you must hold between your teeth, and the feet must be guided by sticks

which you must conduct with your hands. You must not fail in keeping him close to the taffity, as on this depends the perfection of the shadow. Your curtain must be something larger than the saloon, and so made as to drop instantaneously at the close of his feats, or in fact rather before, as it adds much to the effect of the performance. Whatever you choose to exhibit, is actuated in a similar way, with the addition of different views correspondent to the scenes you intend to represent. The contrast between the real merit of these shades, and their pleasing effect, is as singular as that which exists between the well performed puppet and its necessary apparatus.

In giving you a peep behind the curtain of these wooden-headed* theatricals, I shall only deem it necessary to particularize the most ingenious. You have, no doubt, visited the miniature theatres of the noted Flockton, Jobson, Maginnis, and other celebrated managers of these wood-and-wire companies. You must call to mind the particular kind of stage on which these puppets usually appear. You will then recollect an additional curtain is placed close to or near about touching the heads of these acting inanimates. To the hard skull of every puppet, is fastened a wire of a suitable length, the top turned in the shape of a gimblet handle, by which the manager is enabled to dispose of his obedient actors as he thinks proper. On the inside of

* Puppets.

the inner curtain and of its whole length, and between it and the back scene, two strips of wood are nailed, forming a back capable of receiving the wires. Now between these two strips the puppets make their exits and their entrances, and one log in his time plays many parts. By the help of these strips while one is performing his part, the others are conveniently supported. From behind the back scene and between the curtain mentioned, the manager of the exhibition has a secret opportunity of giving the desired action to the puppets, by means of threads fastened to the the hands and legs, and communicating to the tops of the wires. This is the general method by which puppets are actuated.

The Metamorphosed Lady, Scaramouch, and Jack the Sailor, are subjects worthy little more attention. The way in which the lady changes her face three times, is contrived in the following manner. Her cap must be made of tin, and secured to her shoulders. To this cap is fastened a tube, extending to the rack, and secured in the same manner as the wires. In this tube runs a wire to the extent of the tube, made fast to the head, so as conveniently to turn the same. In order to shew either of the faces, which faces being represented on the head as black, white and red, and which head being formed entirely independent of the cap, by turning of the wire either of the faces will appear. The legs and arms are worked by threads, in the same manner as the puppets before mentioned.

To exhibit the Scaramouch and Sailor, as they have no wires, you may venture to raise the curtain. Scaramouch is represented with a prodigious large body, merely a case, to which is hung two laughable legs. To his shoulders are fastened four small strings or two slender wires; to his head is also another string, which head, when he appears, is concealed within his body, so that it appears like a body dancing without a head. Now, while he is dancing, by the help of the string cause his head to peep over his shoulders, and instantly to disappear. This causes great laughter. Now turn the body imperceptibly, which is easily done on account of its sameness; make him again peep his head over his shoulders, shewing a different face, which is easily effected on account of the head's being flat, and having a different phiz painted on each side. To perfect the deception his neck must be made of three pieces, each piece nearly the length of his body, one fitting the other like the tube of a telescope, only much easier. These three, with the addition of his head, when shut together making no more than the length of his body, now being placed in the middle of the stage, deliberately draw out the whole length of his neck, joint by joint. This not only succeeds in rendering merry Comus triumphant in the room, but excites much astonishment; and the wonder arises how a neck three times as long as the body could possibly be concealed in the same.

The Little Sailor displays his superiour construction, by being able to dance a hornpipe, which he may be made to do with great nicety. This puppet must be made much smaller and as light as possible, except his legs, which ought to outweigh all the other parts. To each of his legs must be fastened a thread, and also to each shoulder, and two other threads fastened, one to his head and one to his breast. These six strings must be finished with loops, capable of receiving the thumb and fingers of the right hand, in the following order :

1. Those fastened to the head and breast, the middle finger.
2. Those to the legs, first and third finger.
3. Those to the shoulders, thumb and little finger.

The threads being thus disposed, you may make him dance a hornpipe in a very active manner, by dexterously moving your fingers to the tune. Your left hand must be ready occasionally to slip the loop of the string made fast to the breast, from the middle finger, the motion of which will give him the appearance of breathing. I have to observe, such trifling things are not always the smallest subject of wonder. At an exhibition in London, containing a number of curious mechanical figures, with much dissatisfaction I witnessed the truth of the foregoing remark, by the following circumstance. On a pedestal in the centre of the room was placed an automaton, dressed in a Turkish habit, holding in each hand a lighted

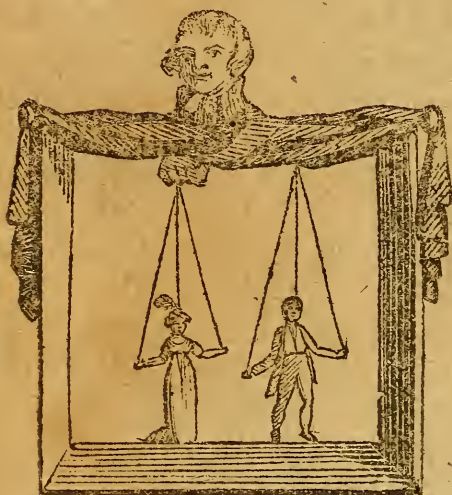
candle; who appeared, before you saw him perform, to be placed there for no other purpose but to hold the candles. The company being desired by the proprietor to view the beauty of this figure, he, the proprietor, immediately blows out one of the candles, and the figure immediately fetched it to his mouth and re-enlightened it, and the same with the other, after being previously blown out; and thus proceeded with the candles alternately, shaking his head at each operation. This gave so much satisfaction, and raised so much wonder in the visitors, that the other automatons of greater merit were totally neglected. Amongst which number was an astonishing flute-player. However, no one in their opinion equalled this, and in the highest terms they extolled the inventor of so great a piece of machinery. I felt so mortified at their want of taste, or rather their want of judgment, that I exclaimed, (addressing myself to the proprietor, in an audible voice, loud enough to be heard by the whole company,) What can this mean sir? I would for my single self sooner give a half-crown, (being the price of admission) to have the pleasure of seeing your flute-player lift one of his fingers, than purchase the whole of this figure so much extolled at the same price. What I advanced, you may easily conceive, met the approbation of the proprietor who knew the greatness of the one and the littleness of the other. The company stared in my face, as if just roused from a lethargy. They then retired to that

end of the hall where the flute-player was stationed, and his wonderful performances took up their chief attention the remainder of that evening.

In my next I will make you acquainted with the method by which the automaton was made to reluminate his candles.

Till then adieu,

W. F. P.



LETTER XIII.

[In continuation.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

HAVING in my last promised to give you the principles of the wonderful Turk or reluminating Automaton, conformably to that promise, I now proceed. In the first place his bringing the candle to his mouth in order to

reenlighten it, you will readily conceive must be effected by machinery. And could this machinery be actuated and regulated by no other means but the proprietor's extinguishing the candles, either right or left, it would indeed be infinitely curious, and more than I could explain, were I furnished with the conception of an Oedipus.* But the extinguishing of the candle not being the influential cause of his bringing it to his mouth, I felt at no loss in determining by what means his arms were made to move, and from whence he obtained the wind necessary to reestablish the lights. Respecting the motion of his head and arms, the following method occurred to my mind. The head and shoulders being carved separate, with part of the neck adhering to each, let that part of the neck left to the shoulders form a socket, and that part left to the head a pivot with shoulders; so that when the head and shoulders come together, that part of neck left to the head will easily

* It is reported that Juno being incensed against the Thebans, sent a monster to afflict them by the name of Sphynx. This monster, it is said, used to propose riddles to all she met, and on their not solving her questions, she immediately destroyed them. The outrages of this animal induced the Thebans to consult the oracle; who answered, the period of their delivery depended on their solving this riddle, which was as follows: What creature is that which has four feet in the morning, two at noon, and three towards night? To which Oedipus answered, It is man, who in his infancy crawled on all fours; in his youth and vigour of manhood went on two legs; and in old age used a staff to support him. Upon this solution, the monster is said to have dashed out his brains against a rock. By which answer the city was saved.

turn in the part left to the shoulders, and the joint of the neck will not be seen when the figure is dressed. To effect and facilitate the motion of the head, there must be a spring formed similar to the main-spring of a watch, adhering to the upper and lower part of the neck, which being placed together forms a box to receive the same. Now a small wire being fastened to the upper part of the neck, and secretly carried through the figure, may be made to play by the help of cranks at a considerable distance. By this means the shaking of the head is performed, for when the wire compels it one way, the spring restores it to its former situation. To fetch the candle to his mouth is as simple, for his arms being carved crooked, the only joints necessary are at the elbows, which joints are made similar to what is termed by carpenters the mortise and the tenant. They must be made to play perfectly easy, the shoulders of the tenant being shaped to favour the bend of the arm. That part of the arm above the elbows forming the mortise, and that below forming the tenant, when pinned together complete the arm and elbow. Now on the outside of the mortise part of the arm, have an elastick spring secured to the tenant part of the arm. The springs when contracted will extend both arms to the stops at the elbow. Now having a wire fastened to that part of each arm below the elbow, secretly convey the wire through the body of the figure by the help of cranks into the apartment where the agent is disposed. In order to reluminate his candles, close

to his lips must be placed a small tin pipe forming an elbow at the centre of his head, from thence running straight through his neck, and jointed like the funnel of a stove, so as not to prevent the movement of his head, and from thence by the help of necessary elbows to the agent, where it enters the chest of the bellows. The whole together, notwithstanding its elbows, has the same effect as a bellows. Thus then the agent has an opportunity of observing the figure through all its performances, by means of a small aperture between his station and that of the figure. It becomes easy to give him the necessary actions, which are produced by means of the wires, and by the assistance of the bellows' breath to reluminate his candles. I am as usual,

Yours to oblige,

W. F. P.

LETTER XIV.

[In answer to Letter 13th]

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

YOURS, containing a description of the wonderful Turk, I found peculiarly interesting, and though simple as you observe it is, his performance a few years since, would have astonished the most enlightened of the best informed of mankind; and the simple principles on which he was actuated, would

have been determined as no less than the effect of diabolical witchcraft. But thank Providence, the human species are better enlightened at the present day, and particularly in this country, where rational liberty extends her glorious empire. Sanctioned by which, men of distinguished talents; unconfined by arbitrary restraint, have free toleration in any laudable pursuit to exercise their genius. Their researches meet with encouragement, and the result of their endeavours, if praise-worthy, not only applause but reward; and their liberal sentiments are sources of information, a bitter cup to priest-craft, antidotes to tyranny and oppression. I remain with sincerity,

Yours with obligations, A. B.

LETTER XV.

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

THE pleasures of life are rendered doubly valuable by a conversation with common acquaintance. But the value is greatly enhanced, when corresponding with friends whose sentiments are congenial to our own. Your observations on the blessed effects of rational liberty in this country, where we have the happiness to breath its all inspiring air! to receive its benefits, resulting from wise laws under an happy administration! induces me to make the following observations subjects of

this letter. But a few years back as you remark, the wonderful Turk would have astonished the most enlightened. Why, my friend, anciently mankind were imposed on by far more absurd and ridiculous follies. In addition to consulting the entrails of birds and beasts, and paying attention to the flights of the winged inhabitants of the air ; supposing that if a raven flew on the right side of them, it betokened prosperity, and if he chanced to fly on the left, adversity would follow. From such absurdities they were led to the consultation of inanimate matter in a certain form, which is called an oracle. Designing men infatuated the world of mankind to such a degree that even the learned were puzzled to account for the responses of the oracle consulted. Statesmen would even make application to them to know the result of entering into alliances with nations, or on other important concerns of state. Warriors would have recourse to them previous to any important enterprize, and all would believe their fate to be determined by the responses supposed to be the sentiments of inspired images. Amongst the ancient oracles, the most distinguished was that of Baalzebub king of Ekron, which the Jews went often to consult. The wise and discerning had their doubts whether these oracles were delivered by the devil, or that the priests and false prophets imposed on the people. Numerous observations have been made relative to the heathen oracles, but they responded in such a doubtful manner,

that let what would happen to the enquirer, it might be accommodated to mean whatever afterward took place. Amongst a variety of others, the oracle at Delphos was the most celebrated. But whoever will take pains to consult my explanations, contained in the *Expositor or many Mysteries unravelled, of the manner the invisible lady responds, may easily conceive how the Pagan priests by making use of tubes—deceived the people, and by thus imposing on their credulity, induced them to believe that these idols or oracles returned answers to their questions. I now conclude, hoping these observations on oracles will be much to your satisfaction, and with your opinion.

W. F. P.

LETTER XVI.

[In Answer.]

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

SENSIBLE that the joys of life are enhanced by a correspondence between congenial minds, with pleasure this convenient hour is embraced to answer your last. Your conceptions respecting the manner in which responses were delivered from the ancient oracles, has been my opinion ever since you favoured me with the principles of the Acoustick Temple. But your manner of exposing the deceptions of these designing men and heathen priests, (who

* Expositor from Letter 9 to 14. Appendix, Letter 2.

mised not only the ignorant, but even the learned, the statesman and the warrior) appears to be so reasonable and grounded on such evident demonstrations, that were I as superstitious as the worshippers of the Grand Lama, I should on reading such a production, abjure my tenets and become a profelyte to principles founded on such a solid basis. I should be happy would you favour me with a demonstration of some philosophical experiments in your next. I must inform you that a critick of our town has undertaken to censure some parts of your Expositor. If in your next, you will give him a few lashes with your poetick whip, it may be the means of making him more reserved in future.

Yours without reserve, A. B.

LETTER XVII.

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

IN your last you request a few poetick lashes for the gentleman who made so free with my Expositor. I shall defer the consideration of the subject to some more convenient opportunity, and gratify you with the demonstration of a few philosophical experiments, calculated to amuse those who are not too wise to be amused.

1st. How to stop a watch or cause it to go without touching the same.

Having excavated a small stick, place a magnet in the excavation, closing the same, that it appear no other than a common stick. Having desired a gentleman to place his watch on a table, you may affirm to the company, the watch which is now going I will now cause to stop and go at my pleasure; at the same time presenting that end of your stick which contains the magnet to the watch, so as the magnet may have power over the balance wheel, which being steel will consequently stop, and withdrawing will restore it to its former movement.

2d. *How you may hang a ring to a thread, burn the thread to ashes, and leave the ring hanging.*

Take a thread, soak the same thirty-six hours in a composition of half salt and half water, placing the thread in the sediment of the salt. When you take it from the salt, place it by the fire to dry; when perfectly dry, rub off the salt adhering to the string. Then fasten a gold ring to one end of the thread, suspend the other end so that the ring may swing freely, then you may set fire to the thread and entirely consume the same, and notwithstanding the thread is burnt to ashes, the ring will remain hanging.

3d. *How to write a sentiment on a looking-glass, and render the same visible or invisible at pleasure.*

Write whatever you please (with French chalk) on a clean looking-glass, wipe the same with your handkerchief until it disappears;

then by breathing on the same it will appear as plain as when first written.

As I am obliged to attend to an appointment, I shall conclude this with my best wishes for your welfare.

W. F. P.

LETTER XVIII.

[In Answer.]

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

Yours containing three experiments came safe to hand. I was highly amused with the trial, and gratified with the ease with which I demonstrated them; and by exhibiting them to amuse myself and a few particular acquaintance, I have so much excited the curiosity of my neighbours, that I should account it a source of trouble, were I not gratified with the pleasing visits of the ladies. I believe without exaggeration, that every gentleman in our village has applied to me to use the power of my magnet on his watch. The ladies likewise assemble in crowds to witness the experiment of the ring, each one supposing that the virtue of her ring may break the charm. As looking-glasses are great favourites of the ladies, not as their monitors, but to enable them to add the arts of captivation to their natural charms, your third experiment has, and no doubt will meet the approbation of the fair.

I shall conclude this, earnestly desiring that you will not delay in assisting me to raise the wonder of the gentlemen, and more especially the admiration of the ladies.

Yours with the greatest regard, A. B.

LETTER XIX.

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

WITHOUT ceremony I shall introduce and conclude this letter with the following experiments.

4th. *How to write on the back of your hand, render the same invisible, and cause it to re-appear.*

Write whatever you please with the acid of a lemon. By drying it, it will disappear. Then rub your hands with the tinder of burnt paper, and whatever is written will be as apparent as though written with the blackest ink.

5th. *How a bird taken alive from a cage may be made to appear as if dead.*

Having laid the bird on a table, wave a small feather over its eyes, (taken from under its wing); he will quickly appear as if dead. In this lethargick state you may do almost as you please with it and it will not arouse. From what mysterious sympathy the feather derives this virtue I am not able to define. Our father Adam, being acquainted with the

nature of birds, might easily have determined the cause. But alas! he is dead.

6th. *How a lighted candle may be placed under water and remain unextinguished.*

Across the top of a pint tumbler place a piece of wood, secured to the tumbler; on this wood and within side of the glass fix a lighted candle; then bringing the mouth of the tumbler exactly horizontal with the surface of the water in which you dip the same, carefully press it down; the air collected in the tumbler follows with the same, and consequently will not admit the water unless you suffer it to deviate from its horizontal position.

7th. *How a piece of pine may be attracted.*

Take a piece of pine about a foot in length, and one inch in width, flat on one side, balance the same on the convex point of a watch glass or the point of any other substance, on which it will turn perfectly easy. Having prepared yourself with a vial of a convenient size that is perfectly dry, rub the same on woollen until it shall become quite warm, and from this friction it will possess a property of electrical magnetism sufficient to influence the pine to go round on its resting point. Supposing these experiments, though trifles, might be the means of beguiling a solitary hour, I thought proper to introduce them. With my sincere wishes for your future health, happiness and prosperity,

I sign myself as usual, W. F. P.

LETTER XX.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

YOUR uniformly kind attention to my many requests, while it lays me under obligations to acknowledge the many favours received, induces the wish to continue the correspondence. I have received your last, containing four experiments, which answered my most sanguine expectation in giving an additional gratification to my associates. You have no doubt witnessed Mr. Harrington's extraordinary performances on the slack wire; also his many feats in the art of balancing. He performed here last evening with his usual success. I was much pleased with his wire-walking, but in balancing he is the best I ever saw; the excellency of which art he displayed by introducing the following feats, viz.

1. Holding a wine glass in his mouth, on the brim of this he places the point of a sword, on the handle of the same a pewter plate, which pewter plate he causes rapidly to turn on the handle of the sword, previous to his putting it on the glass; he then places it as above mentioned, and the sword and the plate are seen turning on the edge of the glass.

2d. He also places a piece of steel between his teeth, on the end of which he places the

bow of a key ; on that part of the key contiguous to the wards, he places a sword and plate, and the key is seen going round in an horizontal direction.

3. Having removed the key from its situation, on the same point he places a dollar, on the edge of the dollar he places the sword and plate, and causes the dollar, standing perpendicularly, to move round horizontally.

4. He also placed two pipes, one on each cheek, and possessed the extraordinary faculty of balancing these two, they having no connection with each other.

5. He also caught a peacock's feather on his forehead, blown from a reed several times by one of the company, which placed across his nose, stem upwards, he blew it above his head, and on its returning caught it on his forehead, stem downwards.

6. He whirls a hoop with a glass of wine placed in the same, in various directions, without spilling any of the wine.

Taking his exhibition collectively I was highly entertained, and the evening's amusement was an ample compensation for twenty-five cents. Be pleased to explain by what extraordinary application these wonderful feats of agility are acquired. Till then I impatiently wait,

And am your friend,

A. B.



LETTER XXI

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

MR. HARRINGTON, the slack-wire walker, mentioned in yours, is decidedly one of the first of his profession. The ease, elegance and certainty with which he walks the wire is not common amongst his competitors, and merits great praise. But balancing pipes, keys, dollars, swords, plates, and the like, is effected by securing them together in a manner of which you are not aware, and which I

shall now proceed to explain, in the order they are disposed in your letter.

1. On the brim of the wine-glass which he holds in his mouth, there is drilled a small hole; in this cavity he places the point of his sword. By the velocity with which he causes the plate to turn on the sword, the performance of the feat is rendered more practicable.

2. His causing the key to move horizontally round the steel, is also effected by having a small hole through, or a point on the outside of the bow of the key. On that part of the key contiguous to the wards is a hole calculated to receive the point of the sword, which supports the plate. These several things being thus contrived to fit together, are attended with no more difficulty than balancing the sword alone.

3. This feat is performed in the same manner as the second, only that the dollar has a pin fitted to enter the hole drilled on the brim of the glass, and a cavity opposite to receive the point of the sword.

4. Towards the bowl of each pipe is fastened a fine hair, and being thus connected, instead of having to preserve two equilibriums, there is but one.

5. In catching and balancing the peacock's feather, but little preparation is necessary. Having loaded the foot of the stem with a small piece of lead, the feather will become regulated in its flight from the reed, may be easily caught on any part of the face and balanced. To place it across his nose.

he splits the end of the feather, and places it in such a manner as that the feather part shall come over his mouth. By forcibly blowing it will naturally ascend to a certain height. On account of the fulness of its plumage, it is longer supported in the air than a common feather; for the same reason it partially resists the gravitating force of the lead in its descent, and consequently gives the performer time to avail himself of completing the feat.

6. The accomplishment of this feat depends on these circumstances, viz. the velocity and regularity with which you whirl the hoop; as a jerk or too suddenly stopping will displace the glass. The hoop must be moved with a rapid motion in order to keep the glass attracted to its place; and when the feat is nearly completed you must gradually stop.

The art of real balancing depends on keeping your eye steadily fixed on the extreme point of the object you support, in order to counteract the attraction of gravity which naturally opposes the equilibrium of all substances attempted to be thus upheld. Presuming you will infer that the greatest merit due to Mr. Harrington is in walking the wire, and that you will readily conceive that there is great deception attached to the art of balancing, for in connecting several objects, as before specified, many are as easily balanced as one. I remain with usual regards,

Your sincere friend, W. F. P.

LETTER XXII.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

FROM the information contained in your last, respecting the art of balancing, I acknowledge that greater merit is due to walking the wire, than in the feats of balancing, which so much raised my astonishment, and I acknowledge had I been requested previously to the receipt of yours, to determine which was the greatest of the two acquirements, I should at once have given the pre-eminence to the latter. Merit in a like manner, is therefore often robbed, and merely from the want of judgment in the umpire. But alas! my friend how much oftener in consequence of uncandid prejudice. In your next, your opinions on these subjects will greatly oblige

Yours,

A. B.

LETTER XXIII.

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

IF we take a retrospective view of human nature and investigate the contrasted propensities of mankind, we shall find them as variegated in their noble designs or low meannesses, as they differ in stature and feature. Pro-

penfity, in my mind, is the very fpring and alone material impulfe of diftinguifhed merit; and as I may fay, the zenith which perfects, and the focal point where every intellectual faculty concurs. Here we may fhine, or like rays of light probably diverge not to be diftinguifhed at any particular point. Give me leave to remark, where nature has not been a niggard of her common gifts, propenfity will fucceed. Though the education of a Shakefpear had originated in the reclufe cottage of a peafant; though fate had placed his birth in the diftant and wild deserts of Arabia; though penury had pent up his faculties; though the clouds of fuperftition, malice and envy had enveloped his intellectual rays; yet like the fun who pierces the atmofpherick clouds that oppofe its beams, fo his genius, by patience and perfeverance, would have difpelled the indignant circle, and his fame have fpread far and wide. A degree of prejudice in decifion, either for or againft, ferpentinely lurks in the breaft of almoft every man, and he muft have a keen eye to his confcience fo as to repel its deceptive influence. For inftance, the British Rofcius* pronounc'd againft the inimitable performances of the celebrated Mrs. Siddons, and this lady we are thoroughly convinced, has far excelled all her female predeceffors in the arduous fcenes of the bufkin mufe, and at the prefent day ftands unrivalled, and has acquired fo much honour in theatricals as to merit and obtain preemi-

* David Garrick.

nence—gain the applause and meet the united approbation of the most competent and experienced judges of theatrical representation. Yet this distinguished character of excellence, our Roscius gave it as his opinion would never be an ornament to any theatre. To what infatuation shall we attribute this unaccountable error? To the influence of prejudice or the want of judgment. The latter would be derogatory to his character, the former inconsistent with the man. Many are the mistakes history recounts to us similar to the foregoing. Permit me to advise agreeably to my sentiments on this important subject. In that breast where a steady propensity exists to accomplish any object, or arrive at any particular point, there must be a firm determination not to be removed by any arguments or difficulties. For this propensity is mother nature's coin, and will go current. To this the world owes its Newtons, its Lockes, its historians, biographers, and poets, and not alone to acquired education. If you wish to become an artist or a poet, give the vaulting pegasus rein and follow up his course in spite of bigotry or buzz, nor calculate to meet the smiles of low ambition, or the immediate approbation of real friends.

When the young eagle feels his wings,
 He fans the air, but feeble clings ;
 Unbound, uncropp'd, in time he'll fly,
 And mix with eagles in the sky.

Concluding your opinion will acquiesce with mine, I subscribe myself

Yours as usual,

W. F. P.

LETTER XXIV.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

WITH your sentiments on prejudice I was highly gratified, and it immediately reminded me of this sentiment of Pope :

“ And hence one master passion in the breast,
“ Like Aaron’s serpent swallows all the rest.”

I would advise you, if you intend publishing our correspondence a second time, to demonstrate as fully as possible, those propositions you may think imperfect; and elucidate such observations as you may think obscure. As these remarks, together with a few metrical compositions, would be very suitable under the head of an appendix, and, as I fancy, would be very pleasing to every reader, and handsomely close your volume. Sir, your last letter reminds me of your promise in letter 17th, that at a more convenient opportunity you would gratify my request contained in letter 16th, respecting the impertinence of a critick. And as I think it will wear the complexion of your opinion on prejudice, contained in your last epistle, an acquiescence with these wishes will greatly relieve the impatience of him who anxiously waits to peruse the effusions of your poetick fancy.

A. B.

LETTER XXV.

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

I RETURN you my sincere thanks for your valuable advice, which I found useful at all times, and candid on all occasions. Please, sir, to continue advancing your opinions freely, leaving formality to the fop, and imitation to the fool. Respecting your sentiments relative to a review of the work, and metrical compositions to be comprized in an appendix, as also submitting the whole to the publick, I shall strictly adhere to your opinion. I now proceed, in compliance with your last request, to inclose you a few lines relative to criticism, which will be contained in a parody on a poem styled

THE CAMELEON.

LONG has it been my much detested fate,
 To mark the fop and hear the coxcomb prate ;
 Whose sharpest wit would keener wit require,
 To insure the witing's safety by the fire.
 Yet would you think't how it comes to pass,
 He's turn'd a critick nature form'd an ass ;
 To his superior knowledge all must bow,
 He's college bred and surely ought to know.
 The brightest work of art he cannot bear,
 So many faults he sees that are not there ;
 Produce whate'er you may in verse or prose,

He'll answer pch, or else turn up his nose.
 Thus with much impudence he bares dominion,
 And bids us acquiesce with his opinion.
 Two just such criticks chatting on their way,
 Would draw extracts from Milton, Pope and Gay ;
 With equal skill they fly from sage to sage,
 Remark the style, and spout at ev'ry page ;
 With equal judgment and dull sense refin'd,
 Much conversation was to friendship join'd.
 But now old discord shook his crimson head,
 Rose from his cell, the sire of mischief said,
 'Trophies adieu ! What wonders do I see,
 Divines will soon, if criticks thus agree.
 Come forth my evils, shew vanity her art,
 And set these criticks fighting e'er they part ;
 Over, around, my faithful phantom train,
 Search their defects, and peep into their brains.
 T' effect this purpose well observe my rule,
 And make one jack-ass call the other fool.
 In haste of praise away the aerials fly,
 Sullen the brow, and venomiz'd the eye ;
 Give vanity and impudence a part,
 And one the wit to say these lines by heart :
 " A little learning is a dang'rous thing,
 " Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring"
 Goldsmith my boy, the other quick replies,
 And just as quick the other friend denies.
 Sir, in the Trav'ler the self same lines,
 I've read them, d—n me sir, a thousand times.
 Spectator, sir, is author of the piece,
 But why dispute, or spend my breath with geese.
 Geese, do you say, I tell you sir at once,
 That I'm your master—blockhead, puppy, dunce.
 D—n you, sir ! replies the other in a rage,

Recall those words, or else I will engage ;
 By muses light, and by the quill I taper,
 My verse shall lash you in a publick paper.
 So each insisting he alone was right,
 They both disinounted to commence a fight.
 When luckily the third came up by fate,
 To him they fly, and quick the question state ;
 Rehears'd the lines as fast as tongue could do it,
 And begg'd he'd tell them if he knew the poet.
 But e'er the man could answer pro or con,
 One bawls out Goldsmith, th' other Addison.
 Poh ! cries the umpire, cease your useles pother,
 The lines belong to neither one nor t'other ;
 This I assert will farther proof provide,
 Step to my house, my library will decide.
 The author's Milton, this I'll prove by print,
 Then you'll believe, or else the devil's in't.
 In print ! " Oh pray sir do," and then but look,
 You'll find that Goldsmith's author of the book.
 I'll bet a thousand pounds you both are wrong ;
 The happy lines were penn'd by Addison.
 You're warm, dear sirs ; but hark ye, I'll engage,
 Milton's the man, and prove it by the page.

Now pass'd the gate, they make the knocker roar,
 The frighted servant trembling op'd the door ;
 The fainting wife her husband's rashness blames,
 Dear soul ! she thought the house must be in flames.
 The three bolt in, the girl astonish'd looks,
 They eye the library, and they seize the books ;
 For Goldsmith, Addison and Milton press,
 But run them through with equal unsuccess.
 The master's son, a ready thriving weed,
 To whom dame nature had been kind indeed ;

Says, (prithee dad) what means this long oration,
 The words you speak I've read in a quotation ;
 And if my mem'ry serves, which will I hope,
 I now affirm the signature was Pope.
 Pope ! Pope ! Yes sir, by all my witticism,
 You'll find the lines wrôte in his criticism.
 Down comes the book, and lo ! with much surprize
 Both blockheads stare, th' man look'd "wond'rous wise."
 When silence broke, the sage with judgment strong,
 Observ'd that none were right, but all were wrong ;
 That many instances will prove this truth,
 That none can be infallible on earth ;
 That here to err, proves not the want of sense,
 But in persisting, lays the impotence ;
 'Twere vain a lib'ral knowledge to pursue,
 Unless that nature has been lib'ral too ;
 That labour'd art might ornament the whole,
 Judgment was still the beauty and the soul.
 All three allow'd, that being deceiv'd in this,
 In judging merit, they might judge amiss ;
 That well consider'd in the genuine light,
 'Twas easier far, to criticise than write.

I conclude, hoping these lines will meet
 with your indulgencè. In diligently perusing
 the work, I thought it unnecessary to make
 any further comments on the demonstration
 of the propositions relative to philosophical
 experiments and balancing, as also the eluci-
 dation of any observations contained in these
 letters, (as you requested in your last) but
 shall submit the work to the candour of an
 enlightened publick.

I remain yours, with every sentimental
 wish,
 W. F. P.

APPENDIX.

LETTER I.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

IN my last, I mentioned to you a review of our correspondence, in order to your demonstrating more fully such propositions as you might think imperfect, and elucidating observations you might conceive obscure. In answer to that letter, you observe that after diligently perusing its contents, you think it unnecessary to make any further comments on the subject. As I have your letters by me, and copies of those I have written you, I took a convenient opportunity to re-peruse them, and was sensibly convinced that the demonstrations of propositions therein contained were extremely accurate. Your opinions respecting unusual visions or sounds, I conceive cannot be more clearly explained. But some further remarks on predictions from palmistry and astrology, and on oracular responses, I conceive would enhance the value of the publication by rendering it more satisfactory to the readers. Your observations on the Phantasmagora, Italian Shades, Rope-dancer, Puppets, &c. Reluminating Automaton, Philosophical Experiments and Balancing, which have so long astonished mankind,

and which arts have been confined to so very few, have by your penetration been discovered, and by your pen described in so intelligible a manner, that he who reads may easily understand. Your parody was very acceptable to a large concourse of my acquaintance, to whom I read the same. I wait with impatience for some further remarks.

Till then, yours, &c.

A. B.

LETTER II.

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

SINCE the receipt of your last, it strikes me, some credulous persons who may peruse this volume, (notwithstanding what I have said on the subject) might possibly be biased in favour of some of the astrological calculations, as they respect fate and fortune; and more especially should features of circumstances that had happened to them since their birth, be predicted conformably to the sign presiding on the month in which they were born. But let those, (who may from this singular circumstance be thus inclined to believe) take into consideration that it would be very extraordinary indeed, if amongst so many thousands who are born every month in the year, none should answer to the portrait drawn by the astrologer. If we predict at

random, we shall find some one correspond to the character prognosticated.

Respecting palmistry, I have to observe, that the principal lines of the palms of the hands, such as those the professors of the art call the table line, line of life, and line of death, may be much altered and greatly defaced, according to the occupation of the person. In using the palms of the hands, some mechanical operations will contract and others expand the lines.

As my opinion respecting fortune tellers has been opposed by people who have had the credulity to believe them, and who have affirmed that their prognostications were true, to such persons I shall further remark, that these pretended peepers into past or future events, have their emissaries to whom they assign their particular stations. Some are stationed under the eaves of houses, some in corners of the streets, and others in places of publick resort, where they can either observe, hear, or inquire into the circumstances of those persons, who they probably think will apply to them respecting their future destiny. It appears to me that the means by which they come to the knowledge where stolen goods are secreted, arises from their agents or themselves taking and secreting the property. If this or something similar is not the case, why need they depend for their livelihood on amusing the weaker part of the community, when the possessor of such a faculty, need not fear the investigation of the most discerning, but on the contrary might rank his abilities

with the most distinguished of mankind. For his singular talents his society would be courted by men of real worth. His services by the exposure of criminal actions amply rewarded in a court of justice. But for fear of detection he shrinks from men of worth, for fear of punishment he flies from a court of justice, and intrudes his impositions on the inexperienced and the young.

You request a few more remarks on oracular responses, but having, in my opinion, sufficiently explained them, (so far as relates to their principles of construction) in my former observations on the *acoustick temple and oracles, I will gratify you with a certain mode of procedure by which the secret consultations of private societies may be made known. Above the ceiling of a hall where societies meet to deliberate on business appertaining particularly to themselves, their consultations may be heard at any distance by the following method. Place a concavity of tin or of plaster, extending to each corner of the room, of the formation of half the globe horizontally, and concave downward as if forming a dome to the room. Now across the rim of this dome strain a canvass, which being covered with paper, paint or white-wash, will appear no other than the ceiling of a common room. Perforate this substituted ceiling with a needle until it become full of small holes, which holes will be unobserved by the company as those are which communicate the

* See Expositor on the subject of acousticks.

found from the pipes to the acoustick temple. At the convex point of this dome must be a circular conveyance of about two inches diameter, for the sound to issue from the room. In order to communicate the conversation of the company, screw a pipe to the orifice on the top of the dome, making directions as may seem most convenient, to a similar concave in another room, into which the pipe must enter, and in this manner every person secreted in the room last mentioned, may overhear the consultations of those societies who assemble in the former room.

I now conclude, wishing to know whether my sentiments on your three last requisitions meet with your approbation.

From yours, &c.

W. F. P.

LETTER III.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

YOUR readiness to comply with my so many importuning requisitions, confers on me obligations which I am fully sensible cannot be repaid. But you request to know my sentiments respecting your farther remarks on fortune telling by palmistry and astrology, as also on oracular responses, calls forth my every exertion once more to write you. The observations on fortune telling by palmistry and astrology, in my opinion very much elucidat-

ed your letter* on that subject. When I came to the clause which contained the impositions of these (as you style them,) peepers into past and future events, I could not withstand the temptation of submitting the contents of the letter to the perusal of some particular confidants, supposing by your usual candour, you would have no objections to my handing it to them to read. They as well as myself were highly gratified with the justness of your observations, and remarked that your prognostications concerning their fate were much nearer the truth than their foresight into the secrets of others. Your method of explaining how the secret consultation of societies may become known, was highly gratifying and superceded the necessity of any further remarks on responding oracles. The probability being that this letter will be the last I shall write previous to an intended voyage, having determined shortly to make the tour of Europe, if it will be convenient for you to write me inclosing in your next letter the specimens of poetry you intend annexing to the publication of our correspondence, (should I never revisit the American shores, or see the intended publication,) will greatly tend to amuse me on my passage, and will, with the letters, always remind me of him whose correspondence has been so much to my amusement and instruction, and from the profit of whose information I am thus necessitated reluctantly to withdraw. As the communicating of our ideas by the medium of paper,

* Sixth Letter, first part of this volume.

in consequence of my proposed intentions must shortly cease, I would advise you still to continue exposing to the publick eye whatever may tend to amuse or inform.

Sincerely lamenting that we must so soon separate, with cordial wishes for your welfare and happiness, I subscribe myself

Yours, &c. A. B.

P. S. I shall not take passage under six weeks.

LETTER IV.

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

I RECEIVED your last by post, which both highly gratified and seriously surprized me. The gratification arose from your candour and that of your confidants; the surprize from your intentions of so suddenly taking an European tour. There not being a convenient opportunity to send on the poetry you mentioned at present, and the interval before you sail allowing me sufficient time to collect and arrange the same, I will inclose it in some future letter. You request me to continue exposing to the publick eye whatever may tend to amuse or inform. I shall make it my business to penetrate into whatever is curious, and persevere in publishing the same. My next will contain more copious observations

on your last. In perusing the *American Universal Magazine*, I was much pleased with remarks on the art of holding a secret correspondence by means of ink, (named *sympathetick*) which is as follows :

“ The secret of the ink of sympathy consists in two waters of different virtues, which though very clear separately, become opaque and of a deep brown colour, after its being mixed together. They are thus composed : A gallon of distilled vinegar, in which has been put an ounce of litharge of silver, is made to boil during half a quarter of an hour. This is the first composition.

The second is made with a piece of quicklime and a little orpiment, infused for four and twenty hours in a sufficient quantity of water. Now very clean and well varnished earthen pots must be used. These two liquors must be filtrated separately, and they will be found perfectly transparent. Their use is in this manner : You write with the first water what you would not have seen, and the writing disappears the moment it is dry ; but by running over the paper a sponge though ever so little humected with the second water, the writing will begin to appear in the colour of a red, bordering upon black. When these waters are newly made and care has been taken to cover the pot close in which the quicklime was infused, it is not necessary that the humected sponge should touch the writing to make it appear, it will be sufficient to hold it at a little distance. It has been frequently seen that the lime water is so efficacious that

after laying upon the table the letter written with the first water and covering it with a ream of paper, by pouring some of the second water on the upper leaf, the only one that is made wet its virtue will penetrate through the thickness of the entire ream, and the writing will grow black. The ink of sympathy acts and obtains its effect through a book and even a wall. The physical cause of these phenomena proceeds from the force of the lime; and this force consists in volatile spirits, which pass through bodies with an astonishing subtilty, and even extend to a considerable distance."

Concluding this mode of holding a secret correspondence will be deemed worthy of an experiment, and considered meriting a place in your repository of curiosities, as well as a gratification to your numerous acquaintance, I conclude with sincere wishes for your health and happiness.

W. F. P.

LETTER V.

[In continuation.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

IN my last, wishing to inclose to you the extract from the American Magazine relative to the sympathetick ink, I delayed making any remarks on your intended tour, and must request the favour of another letter previous to your embarkation. With pain I behold the

approaching epoch which will we know not how long determine our separation ; perhaps forever. How can I submit to part with so valuable a correspondent, by whose interesting advice my soul has oft been divested of a load of intruding cares, by whose sympathetick feelings, sorrow has been driven from my couch, and by whose friendship a double zest has been added to the pleasures of life. But of what avail are compliments ? Let them pass as toys for the amusement of courtiers ; counterfeit coin, current amongst pretended friends ; an ignis fatuus that leads the unwary astray. Still anxious to seek your advice, and to merit your approbation on all I may expose to publick view, I enclose you my sentiments as they occur to my mind relating to the extravagant style of writing and exaggerating of the various performances announced by proprietors of different exhibitions. In order to arrest the curiosity of the publick, and insure their exhibitions credit and success, it has long been the nefarious practice of exhibitors to announce considerable more than they are found to perform. In writing their delusive bills each one seems to vie with the other who shall exaggerate the most. Upon the perusal of their several notifications, the inquiring mind of the curious is alive to the greatest expectation, and calculates (after paying his fee) to indulge his fancy with a something, which upon testing proves itself insignificant, and if possible less than nothing. Consequently such extravagant calls on the publick curiosity, however they may be the means of

attracting the attention of credulity, meet the contempt of the well-informed. To be candid and in honest terms describe an exhibition, is in my opinion much the wisest calculation; observing rather to keep within the boundaries than soar beyond the limits of its due merit. How detestable, to be invited through the medium of a pompous advertisement to witness some great phenomenon, and this pretended phenomenon proves to be neither the production of art or nature, but merely trumpery without contrivance. The friends of ingenuity despising such delusions, become disgusted with the name of exhibitions.

I conclude, presuming the improprieties mentioned in this letter will be deemed in your consideration as they are in mine; I style myself your well wisher and

humble servant,

W. F. P.

LETTER VI.

From A. B. to W. F. P.

SIR,

AGREEABLY to my best feelings, I now cheerfully comply with your requesting my again writing you. Amidst a multiplicity of business which my so sudden departure imposes, you must excuse my brevity. Your extract from the American Magazine respecting the sympathetick ink, I consider as a very valuable acquisition; as correspondents in two

different countries might by this means, (though their letters were intercepted) elude detection. As for instance, one friend may write another on different occurrences, captioning and concluding his letter with common ink, which when opened would appear no other than as letters between correspondents are commonly written; whereas what is apparently blank, by being written with the first ink, is veiled from the detection of an inspector, as he would naturally conclude that what he saw written with black ink contained the intentions of the writer. Observations on exaggerated advertisements, as mentioned in your last, recall to my mind the chagrin and mortification I have myself experienced, by being a deluded witness to the contrast between saying and doing. But being situated as I am excuse my further remarking on the subject.

Please to send on immediately those specimens of poetry you intend annexing to the publication. You observe it is with pain you behold the approaching era of our separation; but I hope that its duration will not be so lasting as to admit the term forever. But the interval, whatever term fate may allot, I view with the same eyes, and feel a similar disagreeable sensation at parting from one whose confidence has ever remained unshaken.

I now take my leave, wishing you health, wealth and long life.

Farewel! adieu! adieu! A. B.

LETTER VII.

[In Answer.]

From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

RESPECTING the specimens of poetry, which I propose annexing to the work, I shall inclose them in my next letter, and it is my earnest hope they will answer the purpose suggested in your last but one. Not having time to adjust them according to my wishes, I forbear to make any comments. From your intentions of making the tour of Europe, I venture to suggest a hint which my presumption trusts, will not be unacceptable to my friend. When in England you will no doubt visit the theatres. The ladies of Covent Garden and Drury Lane, are very fascinating and the charms of these syrens are almost irresistible; and should they convey a spark of the consequence of their favour into your affections, you will consequently find yourself on fire and flaming similar to mount Vesuvius. For this reason I advise you to live temperate, and keep a strong hand to your heart, by which means the bills* daily presented you will become unnecessary to peruse, and their invitations needless. Should you visit Turkey, you must be extremely cir-

* At almost every corner of the streets of London, quack doctors station some person employed by them to present printed invitations, setting forth their long experience and great success in eradicating the venereal disease.

cumſpect, as the ladies are very partial to muſick, and the gentlemen have a ſingular method of making fine fingers. However, leaving digreſſions, I ſincerely wiſh that you may be bleſt with that ineſtimable treaſure, health; that your undertakings may be proſperous, and gales favourable, ſucceeded by a ſafe and happy landing at your deſtined port.

Your ever remaining friend, W. F. P.

LETTER VIII.

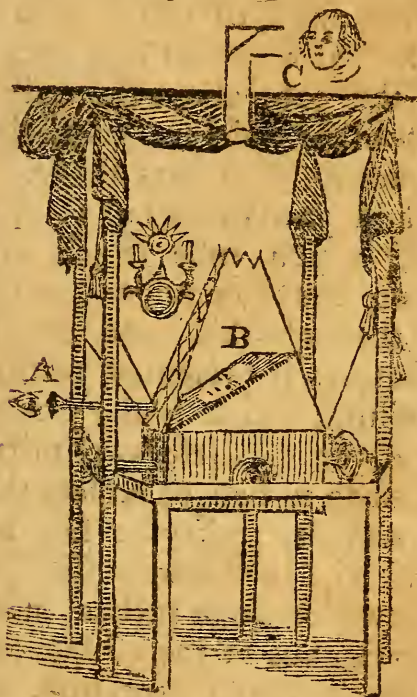
From W. F. P. to A. B.

SIR,

THE poems incloſed in this epiſtle are ſpecimens of the poetry I contemplate annexing to the intended publication. I know my inſufficiency in metrical compoſition, as well as proſe, and alſo know I am not by great preeminence ſo induſtrious as ſome poets, who indeed, with truth on their ſides, may juſtly be ſtyled the ſons and daughters of the muſes. However, from a paper column of my oddities, you perceive I have made out to ſelect a few; and which, indifferent and ſhort of merit as they are, I judged to be the beſt, and ſhall venture to publiſh the ſame, relying on that indulgence which has ever been made manifeſt in all my publick undertakings. The remainder of the poetick pile, to do honour to myſelf and likewise ſave the purchaſer the time and diſagreeable talk of reading them, humanely I have conſigned to the flames, and in order to make amends to the reader for the loſs of what I can at the moſt

consider as waste paper, I shall introduce several curious experiments with my explanations of the same; such experiments as at one time I had no intention should furnish subjects for this volume, and whereby the value of this publication will be much enhanced, but not the price. From the sample of poems preserved, I fear I have much reason to presume the reader will not grievously lament the fate of those destroyed. The following are the additions alluded to :

1st. *The Invisible Lady made visible.*



C is the person stationed to make herself visible to the company.

B is the face of the lady reflected from the mirror above the ceiling, to that in the pyramid of the temple.

A is the observer and the tube.

The principle of this improvement is directly that of the penetrating spy-glass, with some trifling alterations excepted. The railing as originally remains octagonal, with eight posts; four of which posts run to the ceiling of the room in which the temple is exhibited. They seeming to strangers for no other purpose than that of supporting a tester, similar to that of a bed. This tester is curtained from post to post, hanging in swags about a foot and a half from the ceiling; contiguous to the tester is a tube running through and forming an elbow above the ceiling, in the angle of which tube is placed a mirror; so that whatever is presented to the opening of the tube above the ceiling, is reflected to another mirror, concealed in the pyramid obliquely with that above. Secure to the pyramid and made fast to the railing is a tin tube, which tube is placed directly opposite to the above mentioned mirror in the pyramid; through this tube the spectator observes whatever is presented to the mirror above the ceiling, which by the particular position and virtue of these two mirrors, the observer is made to believe he sees the lady in the chest, when in reality he sees her above the ceiling. The tube that possesses the mirror may be two or three inches in diameter, and that contiguous to the railing one; and should, to be the better deception, contain a perspective glass; however, common glass will answer. I suppose the conveyance of the sound in this case is by the tin tubes running

up these very posts that suspend the curtains, as that would be much the readiest and the best way, the agent being above. My publication intituled the *Expositor*, gives, I think, a full explanation of the sounds relative to this acoustick temple. You may suppose it a little surprizing that the company do not detect the opening in the tester or that of the ceiling; the latter is secreted by the tester, and the recess in the tester by puffs and well disposed folds in the curtains. To shew this by day, the temple must be placed about two feet from one side of the room where is a window; in the pyramid mentioned must be a glass three inches square, favouring this window, which window must communicate light through this pane, to the mirror in the pyramid, or the image will be left in darkness. To shew it in the evening, candles must be placed in an horizontal line with the top of the pyramid, and at the same distance as the window, for the same special purpose; and likewise to prevent any light being observed by the company from the lady's apartment above. The chest has now only three trumpets and the company cannot safely be admitted behind for fear of their observing the glass mentioned, in the pyramid. If any dispute the accuracy of the above explanation, let them place their hat or any other substance on the top of the pyramid and the lady will not be able to shew her pretty face.

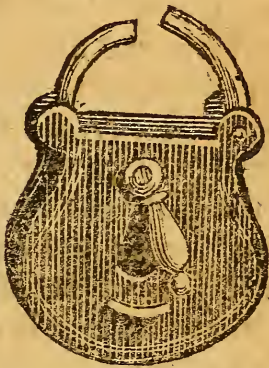
2d. *The Miraculous Inkstand.*

This stand may be made either of tin or pewter; I should give the preference to the

latter. Make your stand on the following plan : Let its form be circular, and the rim two or three inches deep ; the place of access to the ink on the top, a little out of the centre ; the bottom must be made separate. On the inside of the bottom, secured in a half circle, must be three cups, each capable of containing a small quantity of ink, black, red and green. These cups, when the bottom turns round must come directly opposite the place of access for the pen to the ink, which should taper like a tunnel. Made fast to the inside of the stand and reaching to the centre, must project a piece of tin, having a hole punched through the end of the same. The rim must have two rabbets. Exactly in the centre of the bottom must be secured a wire. Now having your inside rabbet smooth and even, put in the bottom, running the wire through the above projecting piece of tin mentioned, and into a socket at the top ; this bottom turning according to your mind, and the cups likewise to their desired place, put on the other rabbet as neatly as possible, and your stand is compleat. Exhibit it as follows :—Having provided three gentlemen with a clean pen each and paper, observe, that they will greatly oblige you by their writing a word or sentiment on that paper. They will no doubt remark they have no ink ; then present your stand, and with your finger underneath the same, you may secretly turn the bottom so as to shift unseen which of the inks you please under the tube at top, in which they place their pens, consequently you will

oblige them to partake of the three different inks. When the writing is exhibited the wonder arises in their minds how this could be possible, seeing they all three filled their pens from the same fountain. In case of a close examination of the stand, a spring might be constructed so as to prevent the bottom from being turned by any one but yourself. Remember to have cotton in your cups or the ink will not be safe.

3d. *The curious Padlock.*



This padlock is made for the purpose of being fastened on the cheek, and the curiosity depends altogether on the dexterity with which it is there placed, and if well done it seldom fails creating universal laughter. This lock is made as follows: It is shaped like the common padlock; the bow must be made to open and shut in the centre, the one half immoveable, the other to play as in other locks, with the addition of a spring only; this spring in the box of the lock, keeps this half close to the

other half bow. To prevent the joint from being detected, the bow is notched regularly all round, about a quarter of an inch apart. To place it on the cheek, with your thumb press that part of the bow back that passes the spring; you may have a key to do this, but I do not see any great utility in it, and I wonder among all the celebrated sons of legerdemain, none have had ingenuity sufficient to contrive this lock so as to open occasionally like any common lock. To affect this, have your lock made on this construction;—have your bow notched as in the former, and separated in the centre; from one of the halves cut off a piece as far as the first notch, being one quarter of an inch, through this piece cut a square hole; now swivel to that half of the bow from whence you took the piece a screw of two or three thread's worm, the remaining part being square and one fourth of an inch long; on this screw put the piece you cut off with the square hole in it; the screw must be shouldered on the side next the worm and a place sunk in the piece to receive it; these together turning easy on the swivel, that half of the bow is compleat. The other half bow at the end of the centre must be sunk screw fashion, so as to receive the screw mentioned in the half bow compleated; these two halves being shut together, with your thumb and finger turn round the piece that contains the screw and the two halves will momentarily become one, and may be made as secure as you please, and by the same move-

able joint divided in the same period of time. Now we suppose the bow in one, and consequently opens and shuts like any common lock. The box of the lock need only be made thus much different, with respect to the inside there must be a spring for the purpose as mentioned in the former padlock, and the key must not only enter the bolt which makes fast that half of the bow, as is pointed out in the other lock, but unconfines the spring, which when unlocked must have no influence on the bow. The advantage of this improvement on the magick lock to the performer is this, he may show it to the company as a common lock, they may put a private mark upon it, they may lock it and retain the key, it may be left in sight and used in sight, and afterwards thrown upon the table for examination. The astonishment arises from the several convincing proofs of its being the same and a common lock. Let the bow be square as the purchase will be greater for the screw.

Yours, &c.

W. F. P.

*Lucubration of an evening, on the Prospect of
Human Expectation, compared to the Cucuyos,
or what is commonly called the Fire-fly.*

CURIOUS wanderer of the night,
Adorn'd with artificial light,

Of inoffensive fire;

Be this way still your constant flight,

That I may view thee with delight,

And nature's works admire.

Little flame of nature's treasure,
Who could harm thy glowing pleasure,
Who put out thy light?
Securely twinkle round my fash,
Say vain is pride, and life's a flash,
But momentary bright.

When pleasing prospects are in view,
And happiness which all pursue,
Thy simile is seen;
For just alike delusive spark,
You fly our grasp and all is dark
When following thy gleam.

Riches we prize, when them we gain,
Not satisfy'd—with toil and pain.
We eager grasp for more;
The phantom then obscures its beam,
Makes itself wings, far off is seen,
With what we had before.

Ambitious views that fire the mind,
To noble deeds which bless mankind,
May for a moment shine;
Usurping power the laurels take,
A wreath for their own brows to make.
They are no longer thine.

If fond of astronomick lore,
And nature's laws would fain explore,
Still you are in the dark;
Uncertain is our ev'ry rule,
The wisest man is but a fool,
His knowledge but a spark.

Each connoisseur approv'd the painting much,
 Confess'd the likeness and admir'd the touch;
 All but our lord, and he, old nick requite him,
 Dislik'd it; why, forsooth, 'twas too much like him.
 This he dispraises, that condemns, and still
 Intriguing to curtail the painter's bill;
 Now raging, he consults the candid glass,
 And more displeas'd, he calls the painter afs.
 This call you me, you stupid, fightless elf?
 Away, sir, with it! and away yourself!
 Yet stay, you've had some trouble, sir, in short
 I'll pay you golden guineas twenty for't;
 Nay do not cavil, here the sequel stands,
 The painting will remain upon your hands.
 Not so my lord, anon, a single touch
 Shall make your portrait fetch me thrice as much.
 That's all a jest, friend brush, it cannot be,
 Since you insist, and all the house agree
 The semblance just; who is it like but me?
 No man, I grant, has nature made so scanty,
 But look, my lord, it favours much your monkey!
 And with the small addition of a tail,
 To-morrow you may see yourself for sale.
 So sir, good bye; my handsome lord, adieu!
 A tail's the thing to make it just like you!
 Much chagrin'd, our lord his meaning nos'd,
 And fearing with a tail to be expos'd,
 Demands his clerk, damn, damn, damnation! Will!
 Call back the faucy dog and pay his bill.

ODE TO MY MONKEY.

IRONY.

SWEET mimick, Jacco, how I love to hear,
 Thy chattering, and admire your grin;

The musick of your throat how very clear,
 The savage breast to sooth, enough to win ;
 Those pretty ears that stand erect like horns,
 Those hedge-hog whiskers shooting round your face ;
 Long ivory teeth your pretty mouth adorns,
 Your hair is cropp'd and all your head is grace.
 What charming eyes, darting their azure blue,
 Whose brows are arch, and what a lovely nose ;
 Your chin to form how most exquisite true,
 Your cheeks are redder than the whitest rose.
 Your body too is form'd in highest taste ;
 What would some fair ones give for shapes like
 thine ?

They girt to imitate thy slender waist,
 But ah ! they thicker grow and girt in vain.
 Your arms tho' hairy, still your hands are white,
 Happy your legs have such a perfect bending ;
 You walk on all fours, or you go upright,
 So supple are your joints and condescending.
 Let me not, muse, o'erlook the greatest gem,
 O Philomel ! sweet warbler, now prevail,
 Choice be the language of my earnest pen,
 Sublime to sing due honours to his tail !
 Sweet tail ! to which your rump much beauty owes,
 Straighten'd or curl'd its faculty I hail !
 Believe me, Jack, there's many handsome beaus,
 Would give the world for such another tail.
 Much gravity upon your aspect sits,
 To catch a louse or overtake a flea ;
 The laurel's thine, you puzzle all our wits,
 There's not a chambermaid can equal thee ;
 And once within your all-sufficient paws,
 There's no escaping from your gripe so dread,
 But quick within your guillotine like jaws,
 Snap goes your teeth and snap goes off a head.

Your mimick fancy proves a genius rare,
 What man can do you imitate, but hope
 You'll never have ; of razors, Jack, beware,
 Since history tells a monkey cut his throat.
 I much delight to see you jump miss puffs,
 The pains you take the chicken's cries to smother ;
 And still you jump her, chatter, and you buffs,
 A better nurse than many a mother.
 Your wonderful agility I note,
 Vast are thy talents, antick, jump ng fire ;
 Placid* you far excel upon the rope,
 And Harrington† eclipse upon the wire.
 Now don't believe I flatter you at all,
 Him that in heart would greater matter give,
 Still many a monkey though not quite so small,
 Shall die forgot when in my verse you'll live.

THE DEVIL, VERSUS TOM PAIN.

IN MY DREAM.

TO the dark regions of infernal hell,
 Where hideous imps and damned devils dwell ;
 Where heavenly comets never deign'd to shine,
 And smoke sulphureous clouds the sickly clime ;
 There too where Satan lives in lasting night,
 And air infectious choaks the gleams of light ;
 There where of sulphur streams of fire flow,
 And flames tremendous ne'er exhausted grow ;
 To this dread place, kick'd from above was sent,
 A sinful spirit that would now repent.
 But ah ! too late ! what power can God's restrain,

* A famous rope-dancer.

† A celebrated slack-wire walker.

What price buy off the punishment and pain ?
As to the gate the trembling sinner came,
Melting with fear and wrapt in purple flame ;
What is his fright when all wide hell appears,
And shrieks of torture stun his listening ears ?
He tears his hair, despairing, wrings his hands,
And wildly stares for self-condemn'd he stands.
The footy emperor to the culprit bawls,
Sworn brother to the emperor of the Gauls,
Sinner ! come in, your deeds, fir, quick relate,
I judge your actions and direct your fate.
Most mighty prince, behold a wretch in chains,
Doom'd to the torture of eternal pains ;
Oh ! if your soul could e'er compassion take,
Let it be mine, when I my deeds relate,
To claim your promise ; mighty prince but deign,
To turn a friendly eye on faithful Pain.
Proceed, the devil answers in a rage,
What mad presumer would my time engage.
Ask here compassion, thou fool with fear so white ?
Torture's my food and misery's my delight !
The wretch, not daring longer to delay,
With fault'ring words, his deeds condemn'd pourtray ;
I when on earth did insurrections breed,
Destroy sweet peace, and savage faction lead ;
For hid designs, my fellow creatures led
To wild destruction and increase of dead.
Or for my ends, for government and place,
I've snatch'd the just and thrust in the base ;
The happy, virtuous, valiant, and the wise,
Were objects in my nature to despise ;
I've advocated vice from pole to pole,
And trust, to hell I've sent many a soul.
All this I've done ; but ah ! religion too
Stares in my face, and holds her scoffs to view.

Vision, avaunt! consume this age of reason,
Let it not live, this mad impious treason.
Come, I confess, tormenters seize my soul,
Force me to truth and tax me with the whole;
For all that's virtuous sure receiv'd my curse,
All that was good I hated, nothing worse.
Fraud, tyranny, and ev'ry ill is mine,
All this I own, and am a jacobine.
A jacobine! roar'd Beelzebub, amain,
And hell thrice echo'd jacobine and Pain;
Thrice from above did liquid fire pour;
Thrice thunder burst and shook the scorching shore;
Thrice did old Satan make the name rebound,
And hell's firm germins trembled with the sound.
Three waiting devils, thus announc'd, appear,
To take commands, and execute with care.
Hence with that wretch the prince of horror cries,
To where wild chaos in confusion lies;
Far as the knowledge of a God can teach,
Verges of space eternal time can reach;
There where existence never felt a spark,
Darker than death ten thousands times as dark,
Deep in the gulf till systems all expire,
Where hell now empties her too furious fire.
The sentence pass'd, the Belial rais'd his head,
Address'd old nick, and thus I think he said,
Prince, prince, turn from me not with such disdain,
Your fav'rite once, your loving, faithful Pain,
Your servant, I to serve you took delight,
And never let slip a chance by day or night.
Here, sir's, the place your services to pay;
Fiends! mark the mandate, instantly obey!
What would this fool thus pray me here to dwell,
To raise an insurrection in my hell?

He, when on earth, would all good systems level,
 Trust him in hell, may circumvent the devil.
 Old Satan's voice so thunder'd in my ears,
 I awoke as with the cracking of the spheres.

ODE,

In imitation of Pope's Dying Christian to his Soul.

WHAT may mean this sudden change,

Langour, pain, sensation strange ;

Clogs my heart and checks my pulse,

O'erwhelms me all at once ?

Darkness only seems to rise,

Function smother'd in surmise ;

Pain and anguish, heavy sighing,

Oh ! my soul ! I must be dying !

Yes, I feel the tyrant's dart,

Death pervades in every part ;

Peace my soul, celestial flame,

Still possess this mortal frame.

Something whispers in mine ears,

Impious wish, unchristian fears ;

Death's decreed to give thee life,

Free from sorrow, pain and strife.

Heaven unfolds before mine eyes,

All the glory of the skies ;

Help me, angels ! must I come,

Is my earthly business done ?

Ah ! I see eternal light,

Anxious soul prepare for flight.

Farewel world ! good bye ! good bye !

Earth has vanish'd into sky,

Oh ! the raptures thus to die !

CONTENTS OF THE WORK.

- ARGUMENTS** to prove the non-existence of spirits—from Letter 1 to 4.
- Phantasmagora, or Magick Well explained—Letter 4.
- Fortune-telling by Cards—Do. by Palmistry—Do. by Astrology, Letter 6.
- Opinions on the absurdity of Fortune-telling—Letter 6, and Appendix, Letter 2.
- Observations on the Air and Fire Balloon—Letter 10.
- Method of preparing the Gas or Inflammable Air—Letter 10.
- Italian Shades—Puppets—Metamorphosed Lady—Scaramouch—Little Sailor—Letter 12.
- Reluminating Automaton—Letter 13.
- Observations on Ancient Oracles—Letter 15.
- How to stop a watch, and cause the same to go, without any visible means—Letter 17.
- How you may hang a ring to a thread and leave the ring hanging after burning the thread—Letter 17.
- How to write a sentiment on a looking-glass, and render the same visible or invisible at pleasure—Letter 17.
- How to write on the back of your hand, render the same invisible and cause it to re-appear—Letter 19.
- How to make a bird appear as if dead—Letter 19.
- How a lighted candle may be placed under water, and remain unextinguished—Letter 19.
- How a piece of pine may be attracted—Letter 19.
- Six of the most distinguished feats in the art of balancing—Letter 21.
- Opinions on prejudice—Letter 23.
- Parody on the poem styled the Cameleon—Letter 25.

APPENDIX.

- Further remarks on astrology and palmistry—Letter 2.
- Opinions on fortune-telling—Letter 2.
- Method by which the conversation of private societies may become known—Letter 2.
- How a correspondence may be held and elude detection—Letter 4 and 6.
- The impropriety of exaggerating advertisements—Letter 5.
- Hints to travellers—Letter 7.
- The Invisible Lady made visible—The Miraculous Inkstand—the curious Padlock, with specimens of poetry—Letter 8.

POETRY.

	Page
PARODY on a poem styled the Cameleon	63
Lucubration of an evening on the Prospect of Human Expectation, compared to the Cucuyos, or what is commonly called the Fire-fly	87
The Painter and a Celebrated Lord	89
Ode to my Monkey	90
The Devil versus Tom Pain	92
Ode in Imitation of Pope's Dying Christian to his Soul	95

[The author's object in giving the following critique a place in his publication, is in order to throw light on the argument, and prove more fully the necessity and propriety of his answer.]

FROM THE BOSTON MAGAZINE.

NOVELTY.

The rage for novelty will never cease, so long as there are persons of *superior ingenuity*, and *imposing talent* to keep it alive; and as the taste and feelings of people in every age, have been less or more the same, and as this world in all probability will for a long time to come continue as it is; so NOVELTY will exist to *improve and charm*, till the earth "passes away as a scroll." NOVELTY, in fact, is a most captivating thing; all sexes, ages, and conditions acknowledge its sway—without it the world would be as barren of *profit and pleasure*, as many essayists are of *wit and intelligence*, and many well meaning people of *judgment and reason*. It is not my intention at present, to go into a minute investigation of the various kinds and effects of NOVELTY; but merely to *touch* upon some of those *particular* kinds, which constitute no small part of an interesting *characteristick* of very many *profound, scientifick, and dignified* persons, in this accomplished and learned quarter of the Union.

Are the *aerial flights* of a PACKARD or a PINCHBECK, or the *puppet shows and sleight-*

of hand tricks of a MAGINNIS or a RANNIE, or the exhibition of a pig, a baboon, or a calf with two heads, announced?—they attract almost universal admiration; the whole town is in a bustle; the country flock in—gaiety and pleasure abound: For to the singularity and elegance of the scene, are to be united the most important experiments in the most abstruse philosophy, &c &c.—all eyes are to be astonished, all minds enlightened—the very “brain of imagination,” is to be distended till it cracks in conceiving how wonder is to follow wonder as “thick as beans in a bushel!”—Business, friends, study, all are pushed aside:—Even were a Cooper to tread the boards at the time, the Theatre, most probably would contain only a few—mere ladies and gentlemen of chaste and correct taste.

The juggler and show man make fortunes out of our CREDULITY and VULGAR TASTE;—while objects of highest moment and most refined gratification, are patronized with a miserly hand. The swallowing of a pewter plate, how enrapturing! the rolling eye in a transparent picture, how admirable! the balancing a sword and pipe, how instructive!—A thousand other pretty things of the superb kind might be mentioned, demanding and receiving superiour praise and support! It is “LITTLE things” that make our elegant LADIES laugh, (and accomplished, of course)—and it is “LITTLE things” that induce our “well-bred GENTLEMEN” to forego the most sublime and greatest.

I have often heard a *reprimander* called a *saucy fellow*;—and, with equal reason, I expect some *buffish* reader will say I have used the language of *petulance* and *falsehood*. TRUTH, however, is the language of candour and ingenuoufness;—and it is the language I pride myself in holding.

THE HUER.

FROM THE FLY.

A CRITIQUE ON A CRITIQUE.

With some candid remarks on the *Theatre*, its *Auditors* and *Actors*.

MESSRS. EDITORS.

In perusing BELCHER & Co's. Magazine of the 9th inst. I observed with much astonishment, an *insufferable critique*, touching the *taste*, *judgment*, *manners*, and *liberality* of the Ladies and Gentlemen of this town and state—wherein they are egregiously accused, by a partizan writer, (who signs himself '*The Huer*') of ignorance, credulity, scrdidness, and the love of patronizing trifles, in preference to matters of higher moment, and refined taste. That the Theatre alone could afford, and was the only place of rational amusement; that all other exhibitions, indiscriminately, were ridiculous and vulgar impositions. Please, Messrs. Editors, conspicuously to inscribe on the useful and intelligent wings of

your sapient *Fly*, the following remarks, whose end is to refute such like base and unworthy aspersions, and render them contemptible as they are wanton—by so doing you will oblige yours,

W. F. PINCHBECK.

TO THE HUER.

SIR,

THAT novelty is amazingly calculated to please, needs no wit to discover; that its appearance captivates in all nations, complexions, ages, sexes, and conditions, by you, sir, is readily acknowledged;—it inhaled its irresistible charms at the beginning of the creation, and the happy system of the Universe (thank Divine Wisdom) wears the beautiful face of novelty—consequently the Naturalist and the Philosopher, the actually ingenious and susceptible mind, must first be exterminated from its possession, ere the passion for curiosity and love of novelty will subside: for as long as these *vulgar* parts of the community (so appellated in yours) shall hold a place on this mysterious globe—I say, till chaos, with rude hand and gigantick arm, break the connecting chain of worlds and beings, and in one vast confused heap “resolve the earth, and all that it inherits;” at this awful moment alone, will men’s passions, pride, pomp, merits and demerits, vanities, frailties, and inclinations, consign themselves to everlasting

oblivion ;—till then, will these classes of people seek after, continue to encourage, and willingly be charmed with novelty. Novelty is desirable to man, (in any comely shape) and circulates through all their various projects and pursuits, impartially speculative ; one feature of which is for instance—admit that the excellent tragedy of *Hamlet* should be performed every night successively through the season, what in the end, would be the relish for its sublimity, were the auditors *all* sages ? The sameness of the thing would pall upon the senses, and all its high seasoned wit and sublime qualities, for which we have now an appetite, would become fulsome and insipid ; and, to have no other play to present, would prove the want of wit, judgment, and genius. So that novelty in the Drama, clearly exercises her variegated influence with the hope of attracting in new scenes, dresses and decorations ; the change of performers and performances, (not with imposing talent but with the same laudable intent she is rendered fascinating by the proprietors or projectors of other exhibitions. Novelty is the sovereign stimulus, and original spring of conception, that sets the ingenious capacity in operation ; and to ingenuity, is the world indebted for all its conveniences, privileges, acquisitions, and amusements. Novelty is the life of this busy world, without which, supineness would pervade the faculties of the brightest genius, and a species of melancholy reign in gloomy triumph o'er all this scene of man.—So fir, whether it be the singular exhibition of the

“ *Knowing Pig,*” that demands attention—
 “ *dexterity of hand, agility of body, activity on rope or wire, balancing pipes, the rolling eye in a transparent painting, or aërostation of the Aeronaut ;*” they all in a partial degree impart pleasure and gratification, to those who are not too wise to be amused—and also, they have no little claim in cultivating and improving the mind, by solid confirmation to the superstitious eye, that ingenuity, patience, and perseverance, are all the *mighty magick* in the wonder they behold ; that all the witchcraft necessary with the human race, to become eminent in art or science, is simply a proportionate and industrious exercise of the adequate faculties, naturally interwoven with man. You boast *truth* and *candour*, but your rigid dislike to the sons of art and mystery, and the passionate partiality you exhibit for the counterfeitors of passions and enactors of mimicry, has more the deformed features of envy, malice, and sour prejudice in its delineation, than either wit or candour. Puffing, though a stale trick, placed by the artful under certain appearances may be veiled from the common eye, and the hired argument of the prejudiced and pecuniary pen, be received by the hands of the unsuspecting, for the pure language and genuine opinion of *candour* and *ingenuousness*.

In order to fix the attention of the publick altogether on Theatrical representations ; to make a monopoly of their liberality ; and, further, to turn their patronage on one man solely—I say to detract from the merits of

others, to attack them with arrogant invectives, and name them unexceptionably as *impostors*, following professions sanctioned by the law, is *ignorance*—and its companion I need not name. I trust your rude and ungentlemanlike aspersions, will be clearly understood, and lose their object aimed at, conscious that a wise and discriminating people, capable of deciding between merit and imposition, will not suffer their opinion to be influenced by such artifices.

It is lamented, that Jugglers and Shew men make their fortunes from the popularity of credulity and vulgar taste.—On my word, I conceive of no juggler in this state; the enactor of sleight of hand is no juggler, provided he performs all he professes, and especially if he candidly declares his art is deception, which is common with RANNIE—he then honestly deceives, and receives the reward of his dexterity with as good a title, and with as much equity as a dollar is demanded in exchange for a box ticket, at the box-office of the Federal Theatre; and it is self-evident the same propriety exists in all other exhibitions of whatever denomination; where the performances or curiosity is equal to the description.

“ Honour, or shame, from no condition rise,

“ Act well your part, there all the honour lies.”

That Mr. COOPER'S talents are not neglected for trifles, witness the brilliant houses at the performance of his favourite characters. That his services are amply rewarded, I well know, and I am well pleased that fortune,

while she lavishes her favours on the indolent and undeserving, at the same time, (praise be to her blindness) smiles on a worthy subject; and as Mr. C's. merit in his profession is matchless, so his pay may with justice be as it is, unprecedented in any theatre on the continent. But who supports all this?—blindness might feel it out—the free heart and open hand of publick spirit—and yet, this unhappy *Huer*, will pompously undertake to tell that *very publick*, to their teeth, they are *close-fisted*, *vulgar in taste*, and their patronage, in support of the Drama, *miserly*. It is not my intention to advance any thing in opposition to theatrical representation; on the contrary,

“Plays are as mirrors, where mankind may see

“How *bad* they are—how *good* they ought to be.”

Neither do I insinuate any thing to censure the present corps—nor will I extenuate their merits. I will risk my opinion, that they form the *most* respectable company that ever drew the attention of a Boston audience, and deserving, from the judgment of a censor, universal praise, even from the luminous talent of a COOPER, whose task is to sustain the most arduous and distinguished characters of dramatick scenes, down to the humbler walks of the less happy gifted, though equally useful, to effect the great end, (as Shakespeare describes it) *to hold up nature's mirror, as 'twere, to nature's self*, shew but a glimmering ray—that the Manager deserves the best commendations to the publick's highest esteem, for his unremitted attention and respect, in obtaining

the same. These requisites fulfilled, where is the propriety of taste? where the justice, equity, wit, or wisdom, to reject all other amusements, owing to these necessary acquisitions to our theatre? Shall every other description of exhibition, in this western world, be deemed irrational? Must the projectors or proprietors of the same, sarcastically suffer themselves to be denounced impostors? That wisdom and refined taste, seeking amusement, shew themselves at the theatre alone—and to have a fancy for any other exhibition, either natural, philosophical, or mechanical, is the *vulgar taste* of fools, I deny it;—wisdom knows to the contrary, for her make is assiduously to search into the heart of all that is curious, and the philosopher speculates, and finds a rich banquet in it.—You observe, that some “*buffish fellow*” would accuse the “*HUR*” with *falsehood* and *petulance*.—No doubt the impulse of conscience reminded you to make that remark, and not the force of your learning. “*Ecce Homo.*”

Though not so *buffish* as represented to be, I am far from being inclined to receive invectives undeservedly with impunity from any man; and, with pleasure affirm, that the Ladies and gentlemen of “this quarter of the Union,” have not that depravity of taste, in the choice of their amusements, you accuse them of—that they do not countenance trifles, and relinquish opportunities of enjoying or supporting the more sublime; that their patronage to the theatre is not miserly, but liberal—and, pray sir, what induces our ladies to

laugh, but good humour? If the wit they applaud is not so genuine as you would have it, why let the critick frown;—the Ladies' smiles are a fair mark of affable dispositions, and shew a willing condescension to be pleased, if not enraptured: and although a great property in the fair sex, is not considered by them the genius of accomplishments; or, what would become of our well supported dancing masters, the preceptresses of numerous academies, teachers of languages and musick?—But above all these, what would be the fate of a number of Orphans,* which generous bounty, and voluntary contributions, not only foster, but liberally educate? Be it eternally registered in the book of fate, that the greatest and most admirable accomplishment the human character can possibly be adorned with, is love and charity for their fellow-creatures; for this is an accomplishment, though not altogether acquired, happily conceived, and is of special moment. It clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, and renders the miserable happy. It will eclipse all others, making them vanities; for its value is intrinsic here and inestimable in heaven.

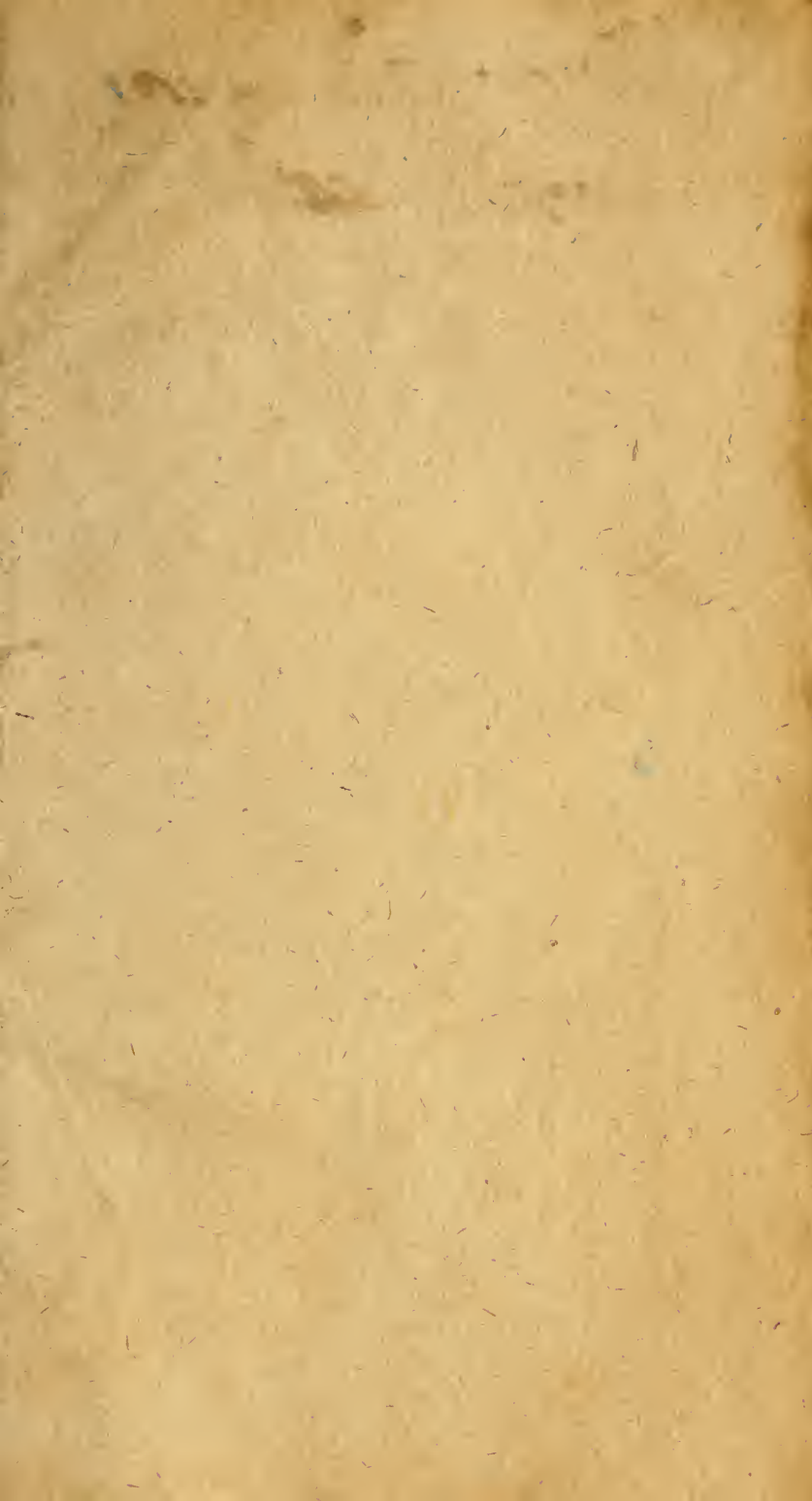
For my own part, as a *shew-man*, I seek not to impose, but to amuse; and the chief talent I have, is the love of variety and enterprize; following the dictates of which propensity, I have within these five years, sacrificed three thousand dollars, a legacy bequeathed me and received from England; consequently I have not made my fortune by the profession, but

* An allusion to the Boston Female Asylum.

lost considerable, and am not rich, but poor. It was my intention at first to appear, in this refutation, under a fictitious signature ; but reflecting that the vicious conduct and bad principles of men, were the only fit subjects for publick or private censure, and not their professions ; that an open resentment is honourable and consistent with the character of man ; that honest truth, candour and plain dealing knows no mask, I subscribe myself,

W. F. PINCHBECK.

THE END.



Huge Finches
Jack Hill

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