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THE MINOR WORKS OF DOCTOR JOHNSON.

Johnson, as is familiarly known, was a copious writer for the old fashioned English magazines, from a very early date. Many of his contributions, including some of his characteristic and perhaps invented reports of parliamentary debates, are now undistinguishable in the mass; but a number of his hackney pieces have been collected and made public. His fondness for biography, of which he was to become the most noted subject in modern times, was early remarkable. Not to speak of his 'Lives of the Poets,' which we exclude, as belonging to his greater productions, there are a number of truly valuable sketches, which retain all the importance they ever possessed. Such are his memoirs of Father Paul, of the prodigy Barretier, of the great navigators Blake and Drake, of the great physician Boerhaave and Sydenham, of Ascham, Sir Thomas Browne and Frederick the Great. These may now be read with much instruction. Their moral tone is high from the very first, and they abound in those sagacious observations on life and manners, which afterwards won for Johnson the name of the British Moralist. At the same time they are singularly free from that affected balance in the periods, which reached its maximum in the Rambler.

## OUR VISIT TO THE SOMERSET FARMER.

The visit had been intended for some time, but the delays of threshing and so on, made it a little later than we meant. At length neighbour Snuggs and I found ourselves mounted on a pair of colts, and on a fair trot towards Swamp Desert. The name was given by Breck's father, and is odd enough, for there is neither swamp nor desert, but as fine an upland farm as ever was seen and as beautiful crops as ever brought up the tail of the year. We found the farmer feeding his pigs, real Berkshire, all body and no legs.

Somerset farmers have a shy look when you come upon them at unawares, as if they were not half glad to see you, but it is all a pretence, and I knew by the sheeps-eye Breck cast over his pen, that he was wishing he had been ready with a spare-rib. He did not take time to whip off his sacking-apron, but came right up and gave us his broad palm, and passed his hand over the colts' necks, as he called an Irishman to put them up for us. The fondling of a farmer is apt to be bestowed on the live stock. It is really a good sight to see a man in such condition as farmer Breck; he might have gone to a fair, if fairs gave prizes for human specimens. His face was ruddy as a tomato, in the right places, without a touch of the bottle, and his hair as curly as a poodle's; the drops stood on his forehead like the bead of proof spirits. His legs were like posts and his gripe like a vice.

Commend me to a strong, sinewy, hearty Jerseyman! This is the kind of flesh and blood you might expect to see on a cavalry horse in case of an invasion, and Somerset could turn out a troop of such farmers as well as the best county in the land. The children came in from school just then, red, white-headed creatures with baskets in their hands, and a rabbit which they had knocked over in their walk. They were barefooted and bashful, but showed good stuff, and by

the cries which I soon heard were on a grand chicken-chase, so that we knew in part what we were going to have for dinner.

Breck took us in by the back door; it is a good country fashion; here he washed off by a well which he has under cover. The long piazza, or *back-stoep*, as he called it, is well tiled, and had a fine show of milk-pans in the sun, one of the finest ornaments of a country-house. The maids were ironing in the kitchen, with a brisk young fellow looking on, and there was some scampering; but I defy you to steal a march upon Madam, who came down the main stairs within two minutes, as brave as could be, with a new cap, and surprising ribbons, in bows like dahlias, and two or three dabs of powder on her cheeks, which only set off the carnation of her complexion. You may talk of English blood if you please, but I will pit a genuine young Jerseywoman, in the country, against all the farmer's wives in Queen Victoria's empire, for housewifery, health and spirit. After some warm chat about our wives, Madam was slyly missing, "on hospitable thoughts intent;" and we were not so careless or so far from the kitchen, but that we heard the beating of eggs and those simmering sounds which premonish of good cheer.

What should we talk about, but the extraordinary yield of corn, which stood in shocks over an immense field, the millions of peaches last month and the short crop of apples, the subsoil-plough as recommended by the year's experiment, and the ticket for the coming election? If the reader is a man indifferent to his dinner, he is therein unlike me, and may skip the particulars. The meal was bountifully served up in the large room next to the kitchen, and things came in smoking. A sirloin of capital beef, a pair of fowls, a game-pie, not to speak of an excellent cold ham, and Amboy oysters, gave us good occupation; and were set off with tomatoes, broccoli, lima-beans, sweet-potatoes, and other vegetable dainties that may be imagined at the season. There were no kickshaws, I assure you, but plentiful cheer, on

homespun cloth as white as this paper. I always loved a great apple-pie, country-fashion, with the top in little hills like a hayfield; we had it in perfection, with custards, and the first trials of the late preserving operations. Madam sat at the head of the table like a princess, with your humble servant at her right hand, and next to me Joanna, the modest blooming daughter, unspoiled by boarding-school or city visits. In true farmer style several honest working people sat at the table with us, and enjoyed themselves as much as the best.

I will not deny that we sat a good while at the table; that is the good couple and their guests. The weather was of the finest; true Indian-summer. The fruits were fit for a horticultural exhibition; which reminds me that a silver salver, an heir-loom in Mrs. Breck's family, was set on the table, bearing a mountain of grapes, not from forcing houses, but from the open air. "See there," said Breck, "my Isabel-las and Catawbas claim your attention; though our palates have been so spoiled by a season of sweet peaches that every thing tastes acid. I can show you winter pears on the tree, which beat any thing in these parts." Here Madam smiled at her good man's bragging, but said it was his hobby, and that his head was turned by the prize he had taken for the greatest variety of apples; she was sorry they could not have been kept, for they were more than sixty in number.

"Yes," said Breck, taking up the topic with zeal, "I can say a good word for my apples. Do you know I thought of having a painter to make a picture of them? You must look at my orchard; it has given me a succession for months. There is my July Pippin, which we had on the Fourth, and my Red Margaret (that's my wife's name gentlemen—don't verify the name, Peggy;) beautiful blushing stripes, and beautiful flavour. Fall Pippins? Those are the true Jersey apples: I'll stake Somerset against the world for them; we bake them by dozens. Jersey Sweet I like for the name—not forgetting Peggy—and the Maiden's Blush is another

fall apple; we used to have more it twenty years ago—eh, my dear? You see it before you; there's no sightlier fruit. Then for winter, I should be weary of telling. First and foremost come the Newtown Pippin and 'Sopus Spitzenberg, and no mistake. I wish in my heart Queen Victoria had a barrel of each; I'd give them and pay freight, if I knew how to contrive it. Don't despise the Belle Fleur, much as it has depreciated, nor the Lady Apple, dear little thing—ah! Peggy takes that home again—nor the Lady's Sweeting—but I shall tire you out with my catalogue, and so I'll dismount."

Mr. Breck's discourse upon apples had one good effect on my companion and me: it caused us to reflect that a Jersey farmer has sources of comfort and enthusiasm without going off his own grounds, which a prince might envy. Over and above the profit and pleasure afforded by rich and varied fruits, there is something elevating in the cultivation. The delicate tending, the comparisons and rivalries, the exhibition and prizes, the feasts and presents, connected with such business, partake of an elegant entertainment, and mingle the warmth of a game with the refinement of an art. I hold therefore that the propagation of a taste for flower and fruit culture among our farmers, bears very directly on moral improvement. Nor is there a state in the Union combining greater advantages for this than New Jersey. Our apples, pears, and peaches may compete with any; the same is true of the smaller fruits; and we can hold up our heads even in the rarer articles.

A visit to a farmer would be a very incomplete affair if it did not include a survey of the farm. You may be sure we took a view of Swamp Desert, and paced all the grounds, coming in well-tired at sunset. A fine stream flows through the farm, and my friend's father continued to keep a large body of hickory timber unbroken. Breck, whether right or wrong, goes upon a method which some think will not pay in America. He is a bit of a book-farmer, and

saves no expense. Hence there was much talk of threshing machines, guano, marl, and the subsoil plough. He is afraid of weeds and rubbish, and not afraid of a new seed-wheat, even though his father never heard of it. I should raise a laugh among some of my neighbours, if I should tell all I saw in regard to his brute dependants. The stables, sheds, and folds were certainly expensive, but it has been the cautious and gradual increase of years, and as yet there is no alarm of a sheriff at the door.

Travellers have celebrated the Scotch breakfast, but I will boldly compare with it the Jersey country supper; I will not name it *tea*, from that unsubstantial ingredient. Our Jersey farmers unite at this meal the solid sustenance of the English, with the savoury cates of the Hollander. Some satisfactory resemblance of dinner viands is sure to be present. In its season a Delaware shad, or frost-fish, in the fall a cold quail or pheasant, in winter sausage or beef. Then the white and brown loaf, and the endless variety of buttered cakes. Add the saucers of preserved fruits and baskets of sweet pastry, with coffee and flagons of milk; and you may well wonder how farm-houses escape the nightmare.

These are not philosophical nor sentimental matters; but you may rely on it where these things abound among the yeomanry, better things are not far off. If the good king wished every Frenchman might have *poule au pot*, I could with great justice wish every one of my countrymen the good luck of a Somerset Farmer.

COLD SOIL.