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FOR THE PHILADELPHIA MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

FASHIONABLE HIEROGLYPHICS.

WAS the history of this age shall be written, it will be set down as one of the marks of its refinement, that much of domestic intercourse was carried on through a figurative medium, superior for simplicity and brevity to the Egyptian Hieroglyphics, Peruvian cords, or Arabian cyphers. 'The material employed,' the future Champollion will say, 'was a preparation of paper, which when put into the circulating shape, was called a *card*: the symbols used were merely the name of the individual, and sometimes certain cabalistic emblems were added from the alphabet. This we have reason to believe was the ordinary mode of communication, and there is no invention of antiquity the loss of which is more to be deplored, than this art of steganography.'

The discovery of a card-case in those days, will terminate the fame of the pyramids of Africa; and all the reliques of Herculaneum would be given for a single specimen of the mystical inscriptions of us ancients. All the other literary importations of Cadmus would be surrendered for an insight of the occult meaning of the portentous consonants T. T. L. and P. P. C.: and the Sphinx and the Sybil will be neglected, as mysteries inferior to the broken and bent corners of the incomprehensible pasteboard. Such a prospect of puzzling

the Old Mortalities, and Archæological societies of futurity, should excite the good humoured people of our day, to multiply the uses of this invaluable agent, which is calculated to shed lustre on our age, when the ruins of our Parthenon shall stand in Chesnut street, in the present condition of its prototype of Greece, and the Scotch Novels be to posterity, what the Ionian and Milesian tales are to us.

There is this decided superiority which the card has above all other species of emblematic writing, that it is not merely expressive of language, but is often the actual representative, the εἰδωλον, of the person, and attracts to it all the deference and courtesy, which its principal, in proper person, could command. It satisfies the despotique etiquette of visiting, and makes its recipient the debtor in kind of the represented visitor. The valuable time that is thus saved—the waste of words that is prevented—the quantity of reputation spared a little longer from being gossipped away, throw an inestimable value on this branch of its employment. It reduces friendship to that harmless character, which the poet has been abused for calling 'a name,' and saves the trouble of harbouring certain affections which so often come in the way of some people. The card is a palpable, substantial metonymy: it bids the ten-

For many a year with joyous eye, I watched that active form
 Fast ripening to maturity, with youth and passion warm,
 And fondly hoped that when my frame should moulder in the tomb,
 That thou wouldst picture o'er again thy father's youthful bloom.

Alas ! those sanguine hopes have fled, and I am left in age
 To bear my heavy load of grief, and stem misfortune's rage,
 Like some old oak whose graceful boughs have wither'd one by one,
 Which still erects its naked trunk to brave the storm alone.

That graceful form is soiled with gore, by death's strong hand laid low,
 Those raven locks start fearfully above his pallid brow,
 And that dark eye whose falcon glance but late so brightly shone,
 Now sunk in death is lustreless, its brilliant flashes gone.

But wherefore mourn—in victory's arms, and in the ranks of war,
 My Boy's brave spirit winged its flight to heavenly realms afar ;
 And at his tomb the bugle's voice pours forth its tones of grief,
 And every armed soldier round weeps o'er his youthful chief.

S. G. F.

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THE COMPLACENT MAN.

It is scarcely possible for those who knew George Leslie* and Olinthus Barlow, to think of them apart, so intimately are their names and characters associated. Even now, forgetting the lapse of time, I could close my eyes on the obtrusive objects which surround me, and see them, as I saw them of old, measuring, arm in arm, the length of that shady avenue, which has so often been the scene of my own lonely meditations.

At school, they acquired the significant names of Pylades and Orestes, Damon and Pythias, and Jonathan and David; and at college were familiarly known by the classic epithet, *par no-*

bile fratrum. In their stature, there was not a hair's-breadth's difference; and in form and proportions scarcely more. The advantage in robustness, and, perhaps, in manliness of carriage, was on the side of Barlow; while Leslie would have better pleased the eye of those who admire the graces of delicate symmetry. In age, they were but a month apart. Their rank in society was precisely equal. The mode of their early education was alike. Their principles, and sentiments on fundamental points of morals and religion, so far as they received expression, were wholly correspondent. Their tastes were congenial, and their favourite pursuits the same. Coincidences so exact, and attachments so intimate and constant, are things of rare occurrence; yet not-

* See "The Fastidious Man," in the December number.

withstanding both, their friendship was but a signal illustration of that seeming paradox, the meeting of extremes. There never perhaps was an instance more remarkable of the closest union in sentiment and affection, combined with a total difference in all those peculiarities of intellect and disposition, whose aggregate amount makes up the character of man. The excessive and indiscriminate *fastidium* of Lesslie was more than matched by the universal complacency of Barlow. The one, though he seldom censured, never praised, and always seemed dissatisfied. The other never launched into broad encomium, but appeared to look on all things with that gentle equanimity of taste and temper which accommodates its judgments to the feelings of those with whom it deals, and would rather please by pretended acquiescence or unmerited applause, than wound the modest by salutary censure, or offend the mistaken by an exposure of their errors. His negative was as rare as the affirmative of his friend; and though neither was accustomed to express a positive opinion, either *pro* or *con*, in ordinary matters, so easy was it to interpret the meaning of their looks, and tones, and gestures, that among the friends of both it had grown into a proverb, that Barlow's forehead was for ever saying *Ay*, while Lesslie's lip was an everlasting *No*.

That these singularities, specifically so unlike, and yet so similar in eccentricity and strangeness, arose in part, at least, from affection, was betrayed by the fact, which I am ready to attest, that in private they were both invisible. Surrounded by chosen friends, Lesslie could be pleased, and Barlow disapprove—and, what was stranger still—in relation to the very objects, which in more promiscuous company, the former had censured and the latter praised. A thousand instances start up from oblivion as I write, of this inconsistency so characteristic. One scene above the rest presents itself, which may yield

abundant illustration. The incidents occurred during the same visit to Philadelphia, to which I formerly alluded.

I was walking the streets on a fine Sunday afternoon, when I unexpectedly encountered these inseparable friends; and as I was too familiar an acquaintance to be treated ceremoniously, I gave no interruption to their dialogue. I found them engaged in an animated controversy—for when alone, or in the company of favoured intimates, they often pushed it far—on the merits of a celebrated preacher. Lesslie, I soon perceived, was, in this case, the encomiast, while Barlow sustained, with great ability, the unwonted character of critic. Their comments were far from being limited to vague expressions of delight or censure. They were arguing with logical formality, and appealing, in support of their several opinions, to the principles of theology, philosophy and rhetoric. Lesslie's fine eye was fired with the energy of thought, and Barlow's manly face expanded with animation. From the pleasure which I found in silent admiration of the genius whose dissimilar but congenial bursts I was privileged to witness, neither of my friends thought fit to rouse me. Unlike most petty disputants, they relied too much upon the strength of argument, to need the poor assistance of spectators, or look to their authority for confirmation. Uninvited, therefore, by either combatant to enter the arena, I remained a humble looker on; but forgot to feel my own inferiority, while I listened to the measured suavity of Lesslie, as he lauded the preacher's excellences, and the animated fluency of Barlow, in exposing his defects. The combat thickened. New instances were cited, new principles advanced, and new objections started, until both the disputants,—though neither had the weakness to relinquish that *agis* of debate, the calmness of self-possession—grew evidently more engaged. Their powers apparently expanded in

the ratio of their animation. Lesslie became at once more sweet and strong; Barlow added depth to his speaking tones, and warmth to his glowing language; and both seemed rapidly advancing, though in different ways, to the highest standard of colloquial eloquence which my fancy had conceived, when we turned the corner of a street, and came in unexpected contact with a brace of college bucks. Engrossed as I had been in the interest of the conversation, and amazed as I truly was, at the unwelcome meeting which had broken so exquisite a spell, I could not repress a smile, when I looked at the faces of my friends. Lesslie seemed most aghast. Unused, from affectation or habitual feeling, to join in vulgar admiration or acquiesce in the applause of others, he stood confounded by the dread of being openly detected in the gross enormity of eulogizing—not, *pro more suo*, what every body else despised—but an orator of eminence and popular celebrity. His eye had exchanged its fire for a look of conscious guilt, by no means its habitual expression, but which corresponded well with a convulsive twitching in the muscles of his mouth. Barlow's pride was less, and his temper more elastic. He had no such sensitive regard to propriety of character in the presence of inferiors, as that which tormented Lesslie. But while in these respects they differed, he resembled him in this, that he seldom gave expression to his sentiments, and never publicly engaged in argument. He seemed to take delight in gaining the hearts of his acquaintances by habitual assent to every thing they thought, desired, or proposed; possessing in this facility of acquiescence, a veil for his own concealment, no less secure, and far more manageable, than the reserve of his companion. To be caught in palpable debate, and that with Lesslie as his adversary, gave him, therefore, some disturbance. I saw his vexation

in the knitting of his brow, and something very similar to shame in the fall of his countenance and the biting of his lips.

Both, however, had recovered in a moment their usual self command.—The men, who had so unseasonably joined us, were old acquaintances, but *friends* to none of us—such as Lesslie always treated with distant courtesy; Barlow, with that specious cordiality which seems to tell every thing, while it lets out nothing—and I, with bare good manners.

“Were you at — church this morning?” Our affirmative was soon disposed of.

“A very full house, Mr. Lesslie,” was answered by an inarticulate sound, which might have served with equal convenience for assent or contradiction, together with a look, which seemed to say, ‘I saw no great multitude, I’m sure.’

“A fine sermon, Barlow, don’t you think so?” This was treading on dangerous ground; and it was with unmingled astonishment, that I heard the answer, “Fine—very fine, indeed.” I looked to see expression in his face; but no embarrassment was visible. Another now began to push the subject further.

“There were some very fine figures in the sermon. That, for instance, about the elm and the vine. That was masterly.”

Now this identical part of the discourse had just been torn in pieces between Lesslie and Barlow—the former applauding its liveliness and truth, and the latter denouncing it as strained and artificial. What, then, was my surprise, on hearing him answer, like an echo, “Masterly indeed—I never heard a finer illustration.”

“Rather far fetched, however,” said the first speaker.

“Yes,” said Barlow, “somewhat far fetched, it must be owned.”

“But very striking,” quoth the other.

"Oh yes, very striking, certainly," said my accommodating friend. I looked at Lesslie, who seemed to be on thorns—scarcely able to restrain himself, and yet unwilling to take part in the discourse. "Now," thought I, "he will tax poor Barlow with his tergiversation." I was much mistaken. After visibly repressing his anxiety to speak, his forbearance appeared on the verge of giving way, when one of the newcomers turned to him with a sweeping question.

"Well, Lesslie, what was your opinion of the sermon?"

"I thought it very good," said he, bringing out the *very good*, with that peculiar intonation, by the use of which we make it mean *contemptible*, or any thing, and sanctioning this interpretation, by the curling of his lip and the elevation of his eye-brows.

"Very good! is that all you can say about it? Was it not logical and clear?"

"By no means transparent." "And lively—and polished—and refined?" "Refined to death." "And edifying, and orthodox?" "Humph!" said Lesslie. "And ingenious and learned?" Lesslie turned up his nose. "In short," said the catechist, "acknowledge, at once, that it was the finest sermon you ever heard." "No, Sir," said Lesslie, with marked and deliberate emphasis, "it was not the finest sermon I ever heard." This was evidently a parting blow: for though, in the literal import of the terms, the assertion was, no doubt, true, the manner of its utterance produced an additional and false impression, that he looked upon the sermon as a total failure, and an object of profound contempt.

"And is it possible," thought I, as I reflected on this scene, "that men thus gifted and accomplished can be guilty of perversity so inexplicable and absurd, the one resolving to seem pleased with every thing, and the other to be satisfied with nothing. It is scarcely

credible, yet such was the sober truth; Lesslie, by the habit of perpetual dissent, had almost lost the power of acquiescence; and Barlow, from the pliancy of disposition which nature gave him, and custom had confirmed, had been rendered, as it seemed, unable to say *no*. The effects of these opposite peculiarities were equally great, though widely different. The fastidiousness of Lesslie made him, to mere acquaintances, repulsive; while Barlow's facility of temper soon won him the affection of all who knew him. But with the dislike which many harboured against the former, *respect* was largely mingled; and into the love which the latter inspired, contempt was often unconsciously infused. Among the many whom Lesslie's hauteur or nicety offended, there were few who doubted the extent of his acquirements, and none who questioned his energy of mind. In Barlow, on the contrary, his closest intimates alone discovered intellectual strength. The rest, while they loved him for his amiable qualities, felt compassion for his fancied want of mind. In the very complacency of his aspect, they read the character of weakness, and construed all his acts of misjudged acquiescence, as unerring indications of his mental imbecility.

In this they widely erred. Olinthus Barlow was endowed with some of nature's choicest gifts. An understanding clear and comprehensive—an imagination fertile without extravagance—a heart tender, but not effeminate. To these he added the noblest accomplishments of art. Yet not all these, though aided by the attractions of a manly form and captivating address, could command the respect which his qualities deserved. A man who never contradicts the sentiments of others, is never believed to have any of his own; and loses that esteem which he would otherwise exact, by excessive and disproportionate good-nature. I have related,

already, the catastrophe of Lesslie's subsequent career. The story of Barlow, may be given as a parallel.

I remember well the delicious first of May, on which I received a letter by the favour of the United States mail, which I instantly recognized, by the seal and superscription, as a missive from my friend. It was, like all his acts of social intercourse, affectionate and gentle, but was also marked by a species and degree of animation which might have done the errand without any formal explanation. In short, it was an indirect citation to his nuptials, not as an event beyond all doubt, but one to which he was confidently looking forward. He informed me, that if I visited the place of his abode, between the two extremities of the approaching summer, I might have an opportunity to wish him joy. I smiled, as I read; for, as his confidential friend, I knew that he had five times yielded up his heart, and five times had it cruelly returned upon his hands. Unwilling, however, to believe, that he was for ever to be unsuccessful, I prepared myself, with equal fortitude, to view without envy his felicity, or to sympathize as a brother in his disappointment. The calculation of these chances engrossed my thoughts, as I jolted in the solitude

of a mail coach, on the rugged road to —. One moment, while I thought of Barlow's personal attractions and extraordinary excellence, I dismissed with scorn, the apprehension of his failure: the next, when I recollected his former unsuccessful efforts, I trembled for his happiness. At last, with mingled satisfaction and uneasiness, I saw the house where he resided, glancing among the elms and willows which environed it. Five minutes passed, and I had heard the whole of his sad story. Shall I tell the truth? My fears were in the right. I was grieved, but not surprised. With all his brilliancy of genius and nobleness of spirit, he had so long been accustomed to lavish his tenderness on every object, that he could not, when he would, sufficiently concentrate it to meet the requisitions of a mistress, or match the affections of a wife. I saw from his looks, that his last attempt was over. In this conjecture I was right; and there never, perhaps, was a phenomenon more curious and more full of moral instruction, than that which still presents itself, in the wonderful metamorphosis of these my earliest friends. The fastidious Lesslie is the husband of Mrs. Shuckford, and the complaisant Barlow, a splenetic old bachelor.

A. J. A.

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FRIENDSHIP.

Not lit, like love, by flashing eyes,
Nor fanned by sentimental sighs,
It burns along the poet's lyre—
Friendship's imperishable fire.

Though brighter Love's untoward ray,
Its fuel soon consumes away;
Lavish of all its burning store,
Once quenched, 'tis lost for evermore.