CLARK & BIDDLE,

## MODERN ECCENTRICS.

Bcores, nay, hundreds of volumes have been gathered upon the oddity of character which mankind, in all ages, have presented to the observant writer who loves to "shoot folly as it fices." Voltaire has said, "Every country has its ioelish notions. . . Let us not laugh at any people;" but it would be difficult to find any age which has not its curiosities of character to be laughed at and turned to still better account; for, of whatever period we write, something may be done in the way of ridicule towards turning the popular opinion. Diogenes owes much of his celebrity to his contempt of comfort, by living in a tub, and his oddity of manner. Orator Henley preached from his "gil! tub" in Clare Market, and thus earned commemoration in the Dunciad:-

Still break the benches, Henley, with thy strain, While Sherlock, Hare, and orbson preach in vain; Oh, worthy thou of Egypt's wife acodes, A decent priest, where monkeys were the gods! But Fate with butchers placed thy priestly stall, Meek modern faith to murder, back, and hau.

Eccentricity has its badge and characteristics by which it gains distinction and notoriety, and by which it gains distinction and notoriety, and which, in some cases, serve as a lare to real excellence. The preaching of Rowland Hill is allowed to have been excellent; but his great popularity was won by his eccentric manner, and the many piquant anecdotes and withitiams, and sallies of humor unorthodox, with which, during his long ministry, he interlarded his ser-mons. However, he thought the end justified the means; and certain it is that it drew very large congregations. The personal allusions to his wite, which Rowland Hill is related to have used in the pulpit, were, however, fletitious, and used in the pulpit, were, however, fictitious, and at which Hill expressed great indignation. "It is an abominable untruth," he would exclaim, "derogatory to my character as a Christian and a gentleman. They would make me out a bear," The success of Edward Irving, the popular minister of the National Scotch Church in London, was of a more mixed character. His ser-mons were not liked at first, and it was not until he was recognized by Dr. Chalmers that Irving became popular. But he was-turned out of his church, and treated as a madman, and he did died an outcast heretic. "There was no harm in the man," says a contemporary, "and what errors he entertained or extravagances he allowed, in connection with supposed miracu-lous gifts, were certain, in due time to burn themselves out. It was not so much the error of his doctrine as the pecuharity of his manner, the torrent of his eloquence, his superlative want of tact, that provoked his enemies and frightened his friends. The strength of his faith was wonderful. Once, when he was called to the bedside of a dying man late at night, he went forth, but presently returned, and beckoned one of his friends to accompany him. The reason was, that he really believed in the efficacy of prayer, and held to the promise, If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that ye shall ask, it shall be done.' It was necessary, therefore, that two should go to the sick man. So, also, he had a child that died in infancy, to whom he was in the habit of addressing words of godliness to nourish the faith that was in him; and Irving adds, that 'the patient heed of the child was wonderful.' He really believed that the infant, by some incomprehensible process, could group what he was saying, and profit by it. His love for children verged upon eccentricity; and he, a man of mark in London at that time, might be seen day by day, stalking along the streets of Pentonville of an afternoon, his wite by his side, and his baby in his arms."

No great cause was ever inaugurated with more eccentric or more genuine fervor than the advocacy of temperance principles by Father Mathew, the Capuchin friar. "Here goes, in the name of God!" said the Father, on the 10th of April, 1838, when he pledged his name in the cause of temperance, and together with the Protestant priest, Charles Duncombe, the Uni-tarian philanthopist, Richard Dowden, and the stout Quaker, William Martin, publicly inaugurated a movement at Cork destined in a few years to count its converts by millions, and to spread its influence as far as the English language was spoken. In this good work, the habitually impulsive temperament of the Irish was acted upon for the purest and most bene-ficial of purposes; and one element of its success lay in the unselfishness of the Father, who was himself a serious sufferer by the resuits of his philanthropic exertions. A distil-lery in the south of Ireland, belonging to his family, and irom which he himself derived a large income, was shut up in consequence of the disuse of whisky among the lower orders, occasioned by his preaching. But his "Rive-rance" was most unscrupulously tyrannized over by his servant John, a wizened old bachelor, with a red nose, privately nourished by Bacchus; and he was only checked in his evil doings when the Father, more exasperated than usual, exclaimed, "John, if you go on in this way, I must certainly leave this house." On one occasion there was a trightful smack of whisky pervading the pure element which graced the board. which he accounted for by saving he had placed the forbidden liquid, with which he "cleansed his tine," in the jug by mistake. The temperance cause prospered, but Father Mathew, through his excentric love of giving, sound it impossible to keep out of debt, which ever kept him in thraidom. The hour of his deepest bitterness was when, while publicly administering the pledge in Dublin, he was arrested for the balance of an account due to a medal manufacturer; the bailiff to whom the duty was intrusted kneeling down among the crowd, asking his blessing, and then quietly showing him the writ. This is one of the many anecdotes told by Mr. Maguire, in his admirable "Life of Father Mathew," who, we learn from the same authority, at a large party, attempted to make a convert of Lord Brougham, who resisted, good-humoredly but resolutely, the efforts of his dangerous neighbor. "I drink very little wine," said Lord Brougham; "only half a glass at luncheon, and two half lasses at dinner; and though my medical iviser told me I should increase the quantity, refused to do so." "They are wrong, my lord, advising you to increase the quantity, you are wrong in taking the small quantity yo do; but I have my hopes of yoa," And so, after a pleasant resistance on the part of be learned lord, Father Mathew invested his rdship with the silver medal and rib-bon, he insignia and collar of the Order of the Bath. "Then I will keep it," said Lord hougham, "and take it to the House, where I hall be sure to meet the old Lord in." the womeof liquor, and I will put it on him." Lord Brogham was as good as his word; for lordship, whick ept his word, to the great amusement of his frands. One of the nost eccentric emblems set up in our time was the woodcut of a gridinon, which for many year headed the *Political Register* of William Coblet, as a sign of the political martyrdom which he avowed he was premartyrdom which he avowed he was pre-pared to undergo, upon certain conditions. He often threatened to set up an iron gridiron over his publishing, office in Bolt court and Fleet street, but did not carry his threat into execution. The gridiron will be recol-lected as one of the explemes of St. Lawrence, and we see it as a large gitt vane of one of the city churches dedicated to the saint. As he was broiled on a gridiron or refusing to give up the treasures of the cauch committed to his care, so Cobbett vowed that he would consent to be broiled upon a gridiron in his *Register*, dated be broiled upon a gridirm, in his Register, dated Long Island, on the 24th of September, 1819, wherein he wrote the well-known prophecy on wherein he wrote the well-known prophecy on Peel's Cash Payment bill of that year, as follows: --''I, William Cobbett, assert that to carry their bill into effect is impossible; and I say that if this bill be carried into full effect, I will give Castlereagh leave to lay me on a grinirou, and broil me alive, while Sidmouth may stir the coals, and Canning stand by and laugh at my stroams." groans."

On the hoisting of the gridiron in trumph, he wrote and published the fulfilment of his pro-phecy by the iollowing statement:-"Peel's Bill, together with the law about small notes, which last were in force when Peel's Bill was passed— these laws, all taken together, if they had gone into effect, would have put an end to all small notes on the 1st day of May, 1823; but to pre-cede this blowing up of the whole of the funding system, an act was passed, in the month of July, 1822, to prevent these laws, and especially that part of Peel's Bill which put an end to small Bank of England notes, from going into full effect; thus the system received a respite, but thus did the Parliament fulfil the above pro-

phecy of September, 1819." A large sign gridiron was actually made for Mr. Cobbett. It was made of dimensions suffi-cient for him to have lain thereon (he was six feet high); the implement was gift, and we refeet high); the implement was gilt, and we re-member to have seen it displayed in the office window in Flect street; but it was never holsted outside the office. It was long to be seen on the gable end of a building next Mr. Cobbett's house at Kensington. Cobbett possessed extraor-dinary native vigor of mind; but every portion of his history is marked by strange blunders. Shakespeare, the British Museum, antiquity, posterity. America, France, Germany, are, one posterity, America, France, Germany, are, one and all, cither wholly indifferent to him, or the objects of his bitter contempt. He absurdly designated the British Museum as a "bundle of dead insects." When he had a sub-ject that suited him, he is said to have handled it not as an accompliabed writer, but "with the perfect and inimitable art with which a dog picks a bone."

Eccentricity in men of science is not rare, The Hon, Henry Cavendish, who demonstrated, in 1781, the composition of water, was a remarkabie instance. He was an excellent mathemati-cian, electrician, astronomer, meteorologist, geologist, and as a chemist shot far ahead of his contemporaries. But he was a sort of me-thodical recluse, and an enormous fortune left h'm by his uncle did little to change his habits. His shyness and aversion to society bordered on disease. To be looked at or addressed by a disease. To be looked at or addressed by a stranger seemed to give him positive pain, when he would dart away as if hurt. At Sir Joseph Banks' sources he would stand for a long time on the landing, airaid to face the company. At one of these parties the titles and qualifica-tions of Cavendish were formally recited when he was introduced to an Austrian gentleman. The Austrian became complimentary, saying his chief reason for coming to London was to see and converse with Cavendish, one of the greatest ornaments of the age, and one of the most Illus-trious philosophers that ever existed. Cavondish answered not a word, but stood with his eyes cast down, abashed, and in misery. At last, seeing an opening in the crowd, he flew to the door, nor did he stop till he reached his carriage and drove directly home. Any attempt to draw him into conversation was almost cer-tain to fail, and Dr. Wollaston's recipe for treating with him usually answered best:--"The way to talk to Cavendish is, never to look at him, but to talk as if if were into a vacancy, and then it is not unlikely you may set him going.

Among the anecdotes which floated about, it is related that Cavendish, the club Crœsus, at-tended the neetings of the Royal Society Club with only money enough in his pocket to pay for his dinner; that he declined taking tavern soup, picked his teeth with a fork, invariably hung his hat upon the same peg, and always stuck his cane in his right boot. More apocryphal is the anecdote that one evening Caven-dish observed a pretty girl looking out from an upper window on the opposite side of the street, watching the philosophers at dinner. She attracted notice, and one by one they got up, and mustered noice, and one by one they got up, and mustered round the window to admire the lair one. Cavendish, who thought they were looking at the moon, bustled up to them in his odd way, and when he saw the real object of attraction, turned away with intense disgust, and grunted out, "Pshaw!" the more amorous conduct of his brother philosophers having hor-rified the women.hating Cavendish rified the woman-hating Cavendish.

If men were a trouble to him, women were his abhorrence. With his housekeeper he generally communicated with notes deposited on the halt-table. He would never see a female ser-vant; and if an unlucky maid showed herself, she was instantly dismissed. To prevent in-evitable encounters he had a second staircase evitable encounters he had a second staircase erected in his villa at Clapham. In all his habits he was punctitiously regular, even to his hanging his hat upon the same peg. From an unvarying walk he was, however, driven by being gazed at. Two ladies led a gentleman on his track, in order that he might obtain a sight of the philosopher. As he was getting over a stille he saw, to his horror, that he was being watched, and he never appeared in that path again. That he was not quite merciless to the sex was proved by his saving a lady from the sex was proved by his saving a lady from the pursuit of a mad cow. Cavendish's town-house was near the British Museum, at the corner of Gower street and Montague place. Few visitors were admitted, and those who crossed the threshold re-ported that books and apparatus were its chief furniture. He collected a large library of scientific books, hired a house for its re-ception in Dean street, Soho, and kept a librarian. When he wanted one of his own books, he went there as to a circulating library, and left a formal receipt for whatever he took away. Nearly the whole of his villa at Clapham was occupied as workshops; the upper rooms were an observatory, the drawing-room was a laboratory. On the lawn was a wooden stage, from which access could be had to a large tree to the top of which Cavendish, in the course of his astronomical and meteorological observations and electrical experiments, occasionally Asserded. His apparatus was roughly eon-structed, but was always exact and accurate. His household was strangely managed. He received but little company, and the few guests were treated on all occasions to the same lare-a leg of mutton. One day, four scientific friends were to dine with him; when his housekeeper asked him what was to be got for dinner, Cavendish replied, "A leg of mution." "Sir," said she; "that will not be enough for

consequence of relationship, and not at all owing to any flowers or powers of conversation at the Royal Society Club,"

at the Royal Society Club," Cavendish never changed the fashion or cut of his dress, so that his appearance in 1810, in a costume of sixty years previously, was odd, and drew upon him the attention which he so much distiked. His complexion was fair, his temperament nervous, and his voice squeaking; the only portrait that exists of him was sketched without his head date. Do Gauges Without his without his knowledge. Dr. George Wilson, who has left a clever memoir of Cavendish, says, "an intellectual head, thinking, a pair of wonderful

intellectual head, thinking, a pair of wonderful acute eyes, observing, a pair of very skilful hands, experimenting or recording, are all that I realize in reading his memorials." It may take some readers by surprise to learn that there have been true believers in alchemy in our days. Dr. Price is commonly set down in popular journals as "the last of the alche-mists;" he died in 1783, in his twenty-fifth year, by taking a draught of laurel-water rather than repeat his experiments before a committee of the Boyal Society, on pain of ex-pulsion.

pulsion. At the beginning of the present century, some persons of eminence in science thought favor-ably of alchemy. Professor Robison, writing to James Watt, February 11, 1800, says, "The analysis of alkalies and alkaline carth will pre-sently lead, I think, to the doctrine of a recipro-cal convertibility of all things into all . . . . and I expect to see alchemy revive, and be as universally studied as ever." Sir Walter Scott tells us that "about 1801, an adept lived, or rather starved, in the metropolis.

adept lived, or rather starved, in the metropolis, in the person of an editor of an evening newspaper, who expected to compound the alka-hest, if he could only keep his materials di-gested in his lamp-furnace for the space of seven gested in his implurnace for the space of seven years." Scott adds, in pleasant banter, "the lamp burnt brightly during six years, eleven months, and some odd days besides, and then unluckily it went out. Why it went out, the adept could never guess; but he was certain that if the flame could only have burnt to the and of the septemary cycle his experiment must have users edded."

have succeeded." The last true believer in alchemy was not Dr. Price, but Peter Woulle, the eminent chemist, and a fellow of the Royal Society, and who made experiments to show the nature of Mosnic sold. Little is known of Woulfe's private life. Sir Humphrey Davy states that Woulfe used to affix written passages and inscriptions of recommendations of his processes to Providence, Woulfe lived many years in Providence. Woulfe lived many years in chambers in the oldest portion of Barnard's Inn, Holborn, where his rooms were so filled with Holdorn, where his rooms were so filled with furnaces and apparatus that it was difficult to reach his fireside. Dr. Babington told Mr. Brande (the venerable chemist, who died last mobth) that he once put down his hat, and never could find it again, such was the contusion of boxes, packages, and parcels that lay about the room. Woulle's breaktast-hour was 4 in the morning: a few of his select friends were occasionally invited, and gained entrance by a secret signal, knocking a certain number of times at the inner door of the chamber. He had long vainly searched for the Elixir, and attributed his repeated failures to the want of due preparation by pious and chari-table acts. Whenever he wished to break an acquaintance, or felt himself offended, he resented the supposed injuries by sending a present to the offender, and never seeing him of an expensive chemical product or preparation. He had a heroic remedy for which was a journey to Edinburgh and back by the mail coach; and a cold taken on one of these expeditions terminated in inflammation of the lungs, of which he died in the year 1805. Of his last moments we received the following account from his executor, then treasurer of Bar-nard's Inn. By Woulfe's desire, his laundress shut up his chambers and left him, but returned at midnight, when Woulfe was still alive; next morning, however, she found him dead ! His

morning, however, she found him dead ! His countenance was calm and serene, and appa-rently he had not moved from the position in his chair in which she had last left him. Twenty years after Woulfe's death, in 1825, there was living at the village of Lilley, be-tween Luton and Hitchin, one Kellerman, an "alchemist," who was believed by some of his neighbors to have discovered the philosopher's stope and see universal solvent. Here he had stone and the universal solvent. Here he had lived for twenty-three years, during fourteen of which he had pursued his alchemical researches with unremitting ardor, keeping eight assistants for superintending his crucibles, two at a time relieving each other every six hours; and he assured a visitor that he had exposed some pre parations to intense heat for many months at a time; but that all except one crucible had burnt,

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"Well, then, get two," was the reply. Cavendish extended his eccentric reception to his own family. His heir, Lord George Cavendish, visited him cnce a year, and was allowed an audience of but half an hour. His great income was allowed to accumulate without attention. The bankers where he kept his ac-count, finding they had in hand a balance of £80,000, apprized him of the same. The messenger was announced, and Cavendish, in great agitation, desired him to be sent up; and, as he entered the room, the ruffled philosopher cried, "What do you come here for ? what do you want with me?"

"Sir, I thought it proper to wait on you, as we have a very large balance in hand of yours, and

we wish your orders respecting it." "If it is any trouble to you, I will take it out of your hands. Do not come here to plague me !?

"Not the least trouble to us, sir, not the least; but we thought you might like some of it to be

invested."

"Well, well, what do you want to do?" "Perhaps you would like £40,000 invested ?" "Do so, do so ! and don't come here to trouble "Do so, do so ! and don't come here to trouble me, or I'll remove it," was the churlish finale of

me, or I'll remove it," was the charlish finale of the interview. Cavendish died in 1810, at the age of seventy-eight. He was toen the largest holder of bank-stock in England. He owned £1,157,000 in dif-ferent public funds; he had besides freehold property of £8000 a year, and a balance of £50,000 at his bankers'. He was long a member of the Royal Society Club, and it was reported at his death that he had left a thumping legacy to Lord Bessborough, in gratitude for his lord-ship's piquant conversation at the club meetings; but no such reason can be found in the will ship's piquant conversation at the club meetings; but no such reason can be found in the will lodged at Doctors' Commons. Therein, Caven-dish names three of his club-mates, namely:-Alexander Dalrymole to receive £5000, Dr. Hun-ter £5000, and Sir Charles Blagden (co-adjutor is the water question), £15,000. After certain other bequests, the will proceeds:--"The remainder of the funds (nearly £100,000) to be divided-one-exth the Earl of Bessborough" while Lord George Henry Cavendish had two-sixths, instead of one: "it is, therefore," says Admiral Smyth, it his "History of the Royal Society Club," "patent that the money thus passed over from unck to nephew was a mere May be obtained at current rates.

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and that, Kellerman said, contained the true "blacker than black," or "the powder of projection for producing gold." One of his assist-ants, however, protested that no gold had ever been found, and that no mercury had ever been fixed; adding that Kellerman could not have concealed it from his assistants, who frequently witnessed his severe disappointment at the result of his most elaborate experiments.

Kellerman's room was a realization of Tenier's alchemist; the floor was strewed with retorts, crucibles, alembics, jars, and bottles of various forms, intermingled with old books. He had been assured by some persons of kin-dred pursuits in London that they had made gold. He had studied the works of the ancient alchemists, and believed that he had discovered gold. the key which they had kept secret, adding that he had pursued their system under the influence of new lights; and after suffering numerous disappointments, owing to the ambiguity with which they describe their processes, he had at length happily succeeded: had made gold, and could make as much more as he pleased, even to the extent of paying off the national debt in the coin of the realm. Kellerman grew eloquent upon the merits of the old alchemists, but ridiculed the blunders and impertinent assumptions of modern chemists. He quoted Roger and Francis Bacon Paraceisus, Boyle, and Borhaowe, and Woulfe (of Barnard's Inn) to rectify his pursuits. He alleged the Philopher's Stone to be a mere phrase to deceive the vulgar; but he fully cre-dited the silly story of Dee's finding the Elixir of Glastonbury, by which means Kelly for a long time lived in princely splendor. Here we must

leave our village alchemist Of late years there have of alchemical pursuits. In in London a volume of entitled, "A Suggestive metic Mystery"-the worl it has been suppressed; we as ''a learned and valuable

By this circumstance w some five-and-thirty years knowledge that a man of in the city of London, an held in terrorem by an who extorted from him money under threats of e have affected his mercant Nevertheless, alchemy h

its prophetic advocates, be considered a return to A Gottingen professor says Chimie, No. 100, that in th the transmutation of met known and practised. Ev artist will make gold; kl of silver and even gold, w more than anything el poisoned at present by lead, and iron, which we our food. Before all this doubtless, have many add eccentrice.- Temple Bar.

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