

**John Mitford's Eccentricities.**

John Mitford was, perhaps, the most eccentric character of his day. He was originally in the navy, and fought under Hood and Nelson. He was born at Mitford Castle, Northumberland; and the authoress of *Rienzi* and *Our Village*, and the author of the *History of Greece*, were his cousins. He was also related to Lord Redesdale. His name will long be remembered in connection with Lady Percival in the Blackheath affair, for his share of which he was tried and acquitted. For several years he lived by chance, and slept frequently in the open air, when his finances did not admit of his paying threepence for a den in St. Giles's. Though formerly a nautical fop, for the last fourteen years he was ragged and loathsome. He never thought of necessities but for the present moment. Having had a handsome pair of Wellington boots given him, he sold them for a shilling. The fellow who bought them went and pawned them for fifteen shillings, and returned in triumph with the money.—“Ah,” said Jack, “but you went out in the cold for it!”

He was the author of *Johnny Newcome* in the Navy. The publisher gave him a shilling a day until he finished it. Incredible as it may appear, he lived the whole of this time in Bayswater Fields, making a bed of grass and nettles. Two-penny worth of bread and cheese, with an onion, was his daily food; the rest of the shilling he expended for gin. He thus passed forty-three days, washing his shirts and stockings himself in a pond when he required *clean* linen. He formerly edited the *Scourge* and *Bon Ton Magazine*.—He was latterly employed by publishers of a certain description. A hundred efforts were made to reclaim him, but without avail. Mr. Elliot, a printer and publisher, took him into his house, and endeavored to render him decent. For a few days he was sober; and a relative having sent him some clothes, he made a respectable appearance. But he soon degenerated into his former habits; and, whilst editing the *Bon Ton Gazette*, Mr. Elliott was obliged to keep him in a place, half kitchen, half cellar, with a loose grate tolerably well filled, a candle, a bottle of gin, where he passed his days, and with the covering of an old carpet, his nights, never issuing from his lair but when the bottle was empty. Sometimes he got furious with drink, and his shoes were taken from him to prevent him from migrating; he would then run out without them, and has taken his coat off in winter and sold it for half a pint of gin. At the time of his death he was editing a penny publication called the *Quizical Gazette*. He wrote the popular song, *The King is a true British Sailor*, and sold it to seven different publishers. Notwithstanding his habits, he was employed by several religious publishers.

**A SINGULAR CASE OF SUICIDE.**—A French physician has published the case of a woman, aged twenty-six, who, being in prison, and dreading to be brought to trial, resolved to destroy herself. This she accomplished by thrusting about thirty pins and needles in her chest in the region of the heart. She introduced them with great gentleness, and used to press them inwards with the aid of her prayer book. She died on the day preceding her trial. On a post mortem examination, numerous needles were found in the chest, all of which were more or less travelling inwards; some had reached the lungs, and some had reached the back part of the right auricle. The windpipe was found also perforated by a needle, and several were found in the liver.

**Incredible Punishment.**

“A great book is a great evil,” says an ancient writer, an axiom which an unfortunate Russian author felt to his cost.

“Whilst I was at Moscow,” says a traveller, “a quarto volume was published in favor of the liberties of the people, a singular subject when we consider the place where the book was printed. In this work, the iniquitous venality of the public functionaries, and even the conduct of the sovereign, was scrutinized and censured with great freedom. Such a book, and in such a country, naturally attracted general notice, and the offender was taken into custody. After being tried in a summary way, his production was determined to be a libel, and he was condemned to eat his own words. The singularity of such a sentence induced me to see it put into execution. A scaffold was erected in one of the most public streets in the city; the imperial provost, the magistrates, the physicians and surgeons of the czar, attended; the book was separated from the binding, the margin cut off, and every leaf rolled up like a lottery ticket when taken out of the wheel. The author was then served with them leaf by leaf, by the provost, who put them into his mouth, to the no small diversion of the spectators; and he was obliged to swallow this unpalatable food, on pain of the knout, in Russia more feared than death. As soon as the medical gentlemen were of opinion that he had received into his stomach as much at a time as was consistent with his safety, the transgressor was sent back to prison, and the business was resumed the two following days. After three very hearty, but unpleasant meals, I am convinced by ocular proof, that every leaf of the book was actually devoured.”

**The Change 'Twixt Now and Then.**

We have read of an artist who painted a picture of innocence—a gentle boy it was, sitting with a hold of his mother's hand. Many years after he wished to paint, as a companion to the former, a representation of guilt; and for this purpose he sought and obtained admission to a condemned criminal in his cell. He made this poor wretch his model, and produced a picture of anguish and remorse which was truly affecting.

He then brought in the former picture, that by placing the two side by side, he might be better able to judge of the effect. The moment the eyes of the prisoner fell upon this one, he was greatly excited, and burst into tears. The truth was that he had been the model for *both*. He had sat for the first picture as well as the second, and now he was looking on both, and on himself in both—his own image. There it was, first as the artless and innocent boy; and then as the wretched, condemned fellow, in his cell. The very same, and yet how different! Did he ever fancy he would come to this? Ah, but then the period between! The terrible process had been going on day by day, and year by year. He had ventured out on the downward path, and the wheel of time and the momentum of passion had done the rest.

The story, doubtless, has been often told, but the truth which it embodies cannot be too often uttered, or too deeply pondered. No one day leaves any man as it found him; for just as certainly do we either grow better or worse—more strengthened for good or more ripened for woe.

**YOUTH**, enthusiasm and affection, resemble three days in spring; let us not, therefore, complain of their short duration, but endeavor to enjoy them.

**CONDENSED NEWS ITEMS.**

—Chief Justice Taney, of the U. S. Supreme Court, died in Washington on Wednesday last.

—Orders have been issued to suspend all requisitions upon the Treasury until the soldiers are paid to October 1st.

—Our Government continues its official relations with the Liberal or Constitutional Government of Mexico, and the President has recently recognized Jose Santero Prieto as Consul of that Republic at the port of San Francisco.

H. H. Dodd, the Grand Commander of the Sons of Liberty, who is on trial for treason or conspiracy, escaped from his prison at Indianapolis on Thursday night. He was assisted by outside friends, and let himself down from a third story window.

—It is stated that an order will at once be issued by General Grant directing the shooting of every guerrilla, the burning of every house, and the driving out of men, women and children from the Shenandoah Valley and the guerrilla-infested region between Washington and the Potomac.

—In response to a communication from Governor Seymour, Secretary Stanton writes that it is the design of the War Department, as was the case last year, to furnish all New York soldiers in hospital who are unfit for duty, but able to go home, and desirous of exercising the elective franchise, furlough and transportation for that purpose.

—By direction of the Secretary of War all stoppages against the pay of officers of the army at the request of the Ordnance Office, for non-remission of *Ordnance Returns* for the years 1861 and 1862, will be removed, except against such regiments as have been mustered out of the service, and those that are to be so mustered out during the present quarter.

—Two new scenes in the proceedings against Franz Muller, the supposed murderer of Mr. Briggs, in an English railway car, have transpired at London. He has been found guilty of “wilful murder” by a Coroner's jury, and he has been committed by a Bow street magistrate to take his trial. There does not seem to be much more evidence against him thus far than was presented before the Commissioner at New York.

—The report of General Sherman of his campaign against Atlanta appears in this week's Army and Navy official Gazette. It is quite lengthy, occupying six pages of the Journal, and is dated at Atlanta, September 18th, 1864.

It shows further that Lieutenant-General Grant has exercised a directing influence over the campaign, saying that during the month of April Sherman received from Grant a letter of instructions, and subsequently received notice from the Lieutenant-General that he would move from his camp above Culpepper on the 5th of May, and requesting Sherman to move simultaneously from Chattanooga.

General Sherman speaks in the most eulogistic terms of McPherson, and of the three army Generals, Thomas, Howard and Schofield, saying: “My three armies in the field were commanded by able officers, my equals in rank and experience.”

Sherman also commends the spirit of harmony that has prevailed among his officers, and in closing says:—“A more harmonious army does not exist.” The whole report is very interesting, shedding much light on the operations of the past summer.