

# The Ladies' Garland.

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## THE REPOSITORY.

### FASHIONABLE WATERING PLACES.

BY A VILLAGE BEAU.

A person of taste may spend a few days very pleasantly at a genteel watering place. The continual succession of new faces; the interesting variety of character, and the harmonious intermixture of grades exhibited here, are such, that the mind of desultory man, however studious of change cannot fail to be amused. I say nothing of the beauties of the landscape, the invigorating breeze of the country, or the medicinal virtues of the mineral fountain—because the last may be imitated in perfection by a bungling apothecary, and the others are easily purchased by the fatigue of a morning's ride from the most crowded metropolis. These vulgar enjoyments which are within the reach of the whole human race, are properly disdained by persons of fashion. Much also is said of the keen appetites which are found at these healthful places of resort. Portly gentlemen, and pale faced ladies, exult equally in the quantity of fish, flesh and fowl, which the talismanic effects of the sea breeze, or the chalybeate draught enable them to consume. But this is surely false taste. What can be more ungentle than eating, or rather devouring flesh and vegetables like so many locusts of Egypt, or the lean king of Pharaoh? Can that be styled a polite employment which is common to the philosopher and the savage, the belle and the washer woman? Eating is certainly a vulgar occupation—and I cannot but marvel that wits and beauties—the curled darlings of the nation—should hie to Long Branch or Balston for the purpose of gratifying that voracious propensity which gives celebrity to the boa constrictor, and the man who swallows tallow candles for a wager! The preacher condemns the epicure who fares sumptuously every day; and physicians live by repairing the inroads of the cook. Besides, we certainly know that the literati of every age, have deplored the appetite for food as the most impertinent and vexatious of the human propensities. That it has caused many an honest gentleman to turn author cannot be disputed; and that it has peopled Parnassus with gaunt forms and hungry aspects is equally unquestionable. Gentlemen therefore who write for bread, should not go to watering places. For my part I have always viewed this subject with the eye of a philosopher, and have never ceased to deplore the inflexibility of that ordinance of our nature

which bestows the best appetite upon those who are least able to supply them. Physicians display a most unfeeling apathy to the sufferings of their fellow creatures, when they inconsiderately administer provocations to the palate of every one who fancies himself deficient in voracity without inquiring into the ability of the patient to sustain and cherish the newly awakened sense. If I was a practitioner of the healing art, I would ask my patient if he was a poet, and if he answered in the affirmative, I should congratulate him upon the delicacy of his appetite, and positively forbid the exhibition of tonics. I would conscientiously regulate the appetites of those who had the fortune to be placed under my care, by the dimensions of their purses. Thus my patients would be rated like ships of war, by their metal; he who could compass three full meals a day, with a launch at noon and a hot supper at midnight, should ruralize at Bedford or Saratoga, and have bark and wine to his heart's content; a less plethoric purse should be placed on allowance; and where the income was in a low state of debility, meagre diet and nauseous draughts should be prescribed. But as it seems natural that the force of reason should forbid men from pursuing that which when obtained would be burthensome, I am in the habit of believing all the visitors whom I meet at watering places to be persons of fortune, who purchase pleasure with their superfluous wealth, or seek appetites because they have wherewithal to gratify them.

But a watering place has other uses and attractions. Dashing blades may lawfully resort thither to sport their equipages, and beauties to display their charms. Southern gentlemen find the flavor of a mint julap greatly enhanced by the refreshing coolness of the mountain spring, and city ladies bloom like wild flowers in the salubrious retreats. Your watering place is moreover a notable school for good manners, for as the parties are for the most part strangers to each other, all are free and equal; and thence result that absence of restraint and ease of manner, which are so much admired in high life. There is no herald's office kept here. Here is no balancing of straws and weighing of feathers—no tossing of heads and winking, and whispering to find out who is who. One gentleman may wear blue and another black, but 'a man's a man for a' that—and as every man may place his own name on the books with whatever title or addition he pleases, he has only to choose his own rank, and he passes current accordingly. Misery, it is said brings us into strange company—so does misery's opposite.—Here are singular combinations, not to be explained by any of the established rules of affinity, attraction, or cohesion.

To the lover, this is a congenial climate. Is it not strange that a sympathy should exist between the palate and the heart? Will my fair and gentle readers believe that love and hunger, the one a gross, vulgar appetite, the other a genteel, delicate, sentimental passion, may be awakened and invigorated by the same stimulants? It is even so. The air of the country is alike salubrious to a feeble frame, or a debilitated attachment. The sight of hay-stacks and waving corn, and flowery meads, create a sweet delusion around the intoxicated senses of the lover, and people the fairy scene with nymphs

and swains, and all the delightful paraphernalia of pastoral love. Mineral water is as nutritious to the heart, as it is invigorating to the body—Why is it that the young lady,

Whose soul blythe cupid never taught to stray  
Beyond the coxcombs that infest Broadway,  
no sooner gets to Balston than her ambition soars to nobler objects, and she, who a few days before submitted patiently to the address of a *dandy*, now aims at the subjugation of a manly heart? No wizard ever invented a love inspiring potion so potent as the medicated fountain; but to which of the elements that enter into the composition of the chalybeate draught, this effect is to be attributed, I am at a loss to determine. If I were a chemist, I could account for the phenomenon, because a chemical genius is never at a loss for a theory, and dives into causes with an expertness which by no means depends upon any previous or present knowledge of the subject. He who deals in retorts can solve any question—though not always by the *retort courtois*. I once, indeed, attempted to philosophise upon this matter myself, and achieved a moral analysis of the manner used and approved by the chemical professors. I carefully examined the various properties of a celebrated spring, and in a few minutes arrived at a conclusion, quite as satisfactory as the results of ordinary experiments. 'Here is a magnesia,' said I, 'which corrects acidity, and which, by a sympathetic influence upon the mind, converts a sour old maid into a well conditioned miss, and neutralizes the acerbities of the bachelor's temper, leaves his mental system in a healthful state, well suited to the reception of soft and agreeable impressions. And here is sulphur, which combined with villainous salt petre, commits such havoc in the world, under the name of gunpowder. Can ladies, who imbibed the sulphur water and gunpowder tea be otherwise than inflammable? Is it any wonder then, that maidens who take in such combustible materials should go off with any spark with whom she comes in contact. Then here is iron—mercy preserve the dear girls! what a collection of mortal engines! what fatal implements of destruction are here assembled!—an artillery officer would be quite at home in such a magazine of ordnance stores. We have only to convert this iron into steel—let it act mechanically upon the flinty heart of the lady, and is it any wonder that Cupid should strike fire, or Hymen light a match?' Such was my theory, and I will vouch it to be as correct as many of the systems in which the scientific repose implicit faith. If it has not more good sense than the theory of specific gravity, I will forfeit my ears—provided a future generation be allowed to decide the question. But whether I am right or wrong, I shall still exclaim, 'if mineral water be the food of love, drink on!' and that it is, will, I think, be satisfactorily proved by the following little history. I have suppressed the real names of parties, but the facts will be instantly recollected by those of my readers, who have been in the habit of visiting the celebrated spot where they occurred.

Miss Simper appeared at Saratoga in an elegant suit of sable. She was said to be in mourning for her father, an opulent broker in Baltimore, recently deceased. Grief had wasted her health, and weeping had washed away her rosee