

The Ladies' Garland.

VOL. 4.

HARPERS-FERRY, VIRGINIA, JULY 14, 1827.

NO. 9.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY EVENING,
BY JOHN S. GALLAHER.

TERMS.—One dollar and fifty cents per annum, payable at the expiration of the first quarter, or one dollar and twenty-five cents, to be paid at the time of subscribing. Payment in advance, from distant subscribers, who are not known to the publisher, will invariably be expected. Should payment be deferred to the end of the year, \$2 will be required.

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THE REPOSITORY.

FROM THE ARIEL.

THE MATCH GIRL.

"Will you buy a bundle of matches, Sir?—only a cent,"—said a wretched looking child of apparently twelve years old, in modest, but imploring accents, as we were about to leave the office after the irksome labors of a sultry day. She was dressed in something which might once have been clean calico, for it was now soiled and ragged, while the flaming figure which yet lingered among a cloud of dirt, presented a melancholy relic of departed finery. A wretched straw hat barely hid her ragged locks, which seemed as if they had long been strangers to the beautifying powers of the comb, and her countenance was marked with that pathetic expression of wretchedness which professed beggars know so well how to assume. Yet there was something in her looks which arrested my attention. Though the sadness of her features betrayed the deep and soul-felt sorrow that had been laid upon her, yet there was a silence in her grief, an unobtrusiveness in her petition, which, from its dissimilarity to the urgent impudence of a veteran pauper, wound itself insensibly into my sympathies, and would have staggered the forbearance of the most penurious charity. I looked at her with a degree of interest which others in her situation but seldom excite,—and the picture of her patient misery made my very heart ache. I stepped back into the office, and bought a few bundles of her matches.

To be supplicated for charity in the streets of Philadelphia, is now of rare occurrence. Open beggary has very sensibly decreased within a few years past; but the laziness of pauperism has assumed other and more plausible means to gratify its endless wants. The artlessness of childhood is used to tax the sympathies of the public, when the more systematic efforts of adult knavery have been found to be unavailing. Children are sent out by their vagrant parents to prey upon the community by moving tales of misery and suffering at home, and, if their habits do not teach them, they are instructed to seize every opportunity of petty theft and imposition. Born to the inheritance of poverty; nursed in the cradle of misfortune and neglect; and tutored even in their infancy in every species of petty dishonesty; taught to imitate the whine of suffering, and to blend with it the obsequiousness of a beggar, they are turned out to depredate upon the public—paupers in appearance, but villains in the heart.

There are, however, other children who roam

our streets in search of charity—the children of honest parents—parents who have been suddenly struck prostrate by the blasting hand of sickness, and to whom no resource remains, except the withering alternative of sending them abroad to solicit a portion of that charity, which the public has too much reason to believe is thrown away. Various, indeed, are the schemes adopted to enlist our sympathies. A basket of knick nacks, a bundle of matches, or almost any other portable commodity of fireside manufacture, is the plea for arresting the attention. But so many are the calls upon our time, that most of them are unregarded—oftentimes with that heart chilling insolence and indifference

"Which virtue, sunk to poverty, would meet
From giddy passion and low-minded pride."

Of the latter class of children was the poor Match Girl who stood before me, relating in pathetic artlessness, the history of her parents' troubles. It was brief, and like the thousand others which we read of as the unavoidable attendants on a crowded population—such, indeed, as the newspapers furnish us for every day's perusal. The father had been disabled by an accident, and as his little family had subsisted by his daily labor, a confinement of two months had brought them to the very brink of starvation. Friends they had not; and the Howard-like benevolence which would search them out in their forlorn abode, and administer to their wants, was a hopeless resource. The mother, too, was ill—borne down by the darkness of the prospect which surrounded them.—As a last and only hope, this child was sent out to procure them food, with a basket of matches in her hand. They had instructed her not to ask for any thing—not to beg—but to sell her matches. The spirit of independence—

"Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye,"

still bore them up, leaving them to hope that they might yet obtain a living by their own exertions, until the father was restored to health. Her success was discouraging—for she was a novice in the business; and when chance (or shall I say Providence?) directed her to the office door of the Ariel, the destitute family were almost ready to despair, and to believe that an Almighty hand had laid its rod of affliction on them more heavily than upon the rest of their fellow-mortals. I mentioned the case to a friend. His heart was touched at the recital—his means were ample—and at the end of four and twenty hours after I parted from the Match Girl the family had been relieved effectually.

How many hundred children are there, mostly girls, of all ages from six to twelve years, constantly prowling through our streets, soliciting with offensive importunity, the charity of the public, and seeking opportunities to plunder from their houses. These children are indeed born in caprice and bred in ignorance.—Tutored to iniquity from their very childhood; practised to distort their infantile features into the semblance of grief; and employed by worthless parents in the most abject of all occupations, beggary itself, how lamentably deficient must their minds be found in all that constitutes a good and virtuous citizen. With boys, the penitentiary, and perhaps the gallows, ends their career. With these unprotected girls, guarded by none, but preyed upon by every villain—how certainly are they drawn aside from virtue in

mature years, and how faint the hope of their return! We hail, with feelings of gratitude to Him who placed in their hearts the efforts of the ladies of this city to establish *Infant Schools*. They will be productive of inestimable blessings. If they draw aside a single Match Girl from the path to certain ruin, the effort is worthy of being made. To such unfriended wanderers of our city their protecting care should be extended. It is such noble efforts in so good a cause, that beautify and raise the female character—and

"Whose incense smells to heaven."

BIOGRAPHY.

From *Ann Maria Lee's Memoirs of eminent Female writers.*

JANE PORTER, a powerful and elegant writer, is the eldest sister of Sir Robert Porter, a gentleman distinguished for his talents as an artist and author. At an early age Miss Porter exhibited talents of no ordinary kind, and made large contributions to the periodical publications of the day. The first work of any magnitude which came from her pen was "The Spirit of the Elbe," in three volumes. This was followed by "The Scottish Chiefs," a romance in five volumes, which was also successful. Between the publication of these works, however, she published two volumes of "Aphorisms of Sir Philip Sidney, with remarks." Miss Porter has indeed caught much of the spirit of the hero whose character she so highly admires. Hence the lofty and magnanimous style of thinking and feeling which distinguishes her works, all of which are calculated to improve the heart, while they elevate the mind.

ANN MARIA PORTER is the youngest of this family so remarkable for their literary attainments, and is the rival of her sister Jane, as a writer of novels. When only thirteen years of age, she published "Artless Tales," two volumes; which was quickly succeeded by "Walsh Colville," in one volume.—She has since published "Octavia," three volumes; "The Lake of Killarney," three volumes; "A Sailor's Friendship, and a Soldier's Love," two volumes; "The Hungarian Brothers," three volumes; "Don Sebastian, or the House of Braganza," four volumes; "The Recluse of Norway," four volumes; "The village of Mariendorp," four volumes; "The Fast of St. Magdalen," three volumes; "Honor O'Hara," two volumes, &c.

ANN RADCLIFFE.—Among the eminent women who have contributed by their talents to the intellectual character of their country, the name of this lady will always stand highly distinguished. She was born in London on the 9th of July, 1764, and was the only child of William and Ann Ward, persons of great respectability. At an early age she exhibited extraordinary powers of mind, but the peculiar bent of her genius was not developed until after her marriage. In the twenty-third year of her age she married Mr. William Radcliffe, a student of law, but who afterwards became the proprietor of "The English Chronicle." Thus connected in