

twice to thrice the diameters of the primaries, from which they are generated, in which case the entire spot is covered with coloured rings to the center, exactly like primary sets, but if they are much larger, a few rings only at the circumference are seen, and when they are so large as to approach to straight lines, segments only of a few at the circumference can be perceived. Other sets of this new kind of rings, are also formed by the interference of the *intersectionaries*, either with transmitted, or reflected sets, in a beautiful and astonishing variety, which it is scarcely possible to convey an adequate idea of, without seeing the experiment. It is therefore even doubtful, whether the above description can be fully understood, without drawings, which are intended to accompany a future publication, wherein the experiments shall be more fully detailed. This short sketch may therefore be considered as only an *avant courèur*, of that which is to follow. I.K.

Belfast, Sept. 20, 1810.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

#### ON CONVERSATION.

CONVERSATION is a means of improving our minds, much superior to books, or even to reflection. In sensible conversation we are obliged to bring forth the stores of our minds in an orderly and systematic manner; to hear the objections of others, and either be instructed by them, or answer them.

If we have taken any thing upon trust, either from books or men; if we have viewed any thing superficially, and formed an erroneous judgment upon it, it is conversation that will show us our error; and, having made us abandon our weak possessions, will render us stronger in those that are tenable. By this means we become better acquainted with our minds, and more completely masters of our own ideas.

In the conversation of men of sense, hints are sometimes struck out, that would not disgrace the most profound philosopher; and I think we may say that they will make a stronger

impression on the mind, than when met with in reading.

Epaminondas esteemed conversation a very easy method of gaining instruction; and was on such occasions a diligent hearer of the sentiments of others. He never entered any assembly where any question of either politics or philosophy was discussed, without staying till the end; and we have reason to believe that his improvement was proportionate.

How much, then, ought we to repress every thing that tends to discourage rational conversation; drinking, smoking, gaming, the sneers of affectation, and the long, loud laugh of presumptuous ignorance. This practice of laughing in the midst of what ought to be *polite* argument, is often resorted to, for the purpose of gaining an unreal superiority. It is the means of a weak, untutored, and prejudiced mind to effect a cowardly usurpation in conversation, or to put a stop to it, when above its capacity. Such persons as would laugh in the middle of an interesting moral discussion, would probably with the utmost gravity descant upon the last new fashion, or the proper colour of gloves to be given at a wedding. As for drinking, gaming, &c. I presume they are seldom resorted to by those who are capable of any thing better.

One word more and I have done. In the present state of morals, perhaps the intercourse between the sexes ought to be cautious:—but surely it is a folly for a young lady to imagine she cannot converse with a young man without danger of inspiring him with a passion for her. We were made to improve each other, and our improvement is assisted by frequent, rational, and polite conversation.

E.C.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

#### REMARKS ON A JOURNEY.

TRAVELLING lately in one of those coaches, which have become so numerous within a few years in this country, and which by facilitating our transitions have made, and will still make us better acquainted with our neighbours; I fell into my usual employment and a

musement, the inspection of character. We were silent for some time, until a gentleman of good countenance remarked, "what lovely weather we have for travelling;" this had no effect. "Although the sun is so bright yet there is a refreshing breeze," said he, again renewing the attack. I began to feel compassion for this worthy man, and should certainly have replied, but a middle aged, dry looking man who sat beside me, and who had upon the first remark tolded his arms across as if determined to hold out a siege to the last, was not proof against the second discharge of contented good humour—"Yes," says he; "for any body who is in a hurry to swallow his peck of dust, this is fine travelling weather: but I can assure you if this drought continues much longer, the crops will be good for nothing; they are already almost burnt up, and the meadows will not be worth cutting." He uttered these words with such hurried peevishness and with such a look as to make us suppose he was not only dissatisfied with the weather, but with us. Silence ensued, but the good-natured advocate for the weather, obtained his wish in a few seconds, which was merely to procure a little chat, and with this his next neighbour now obliged him. I affected sleep, and fell into a reverie upon the great advantages attending a good temper; especially in the society of strangers it is of the utmost importance; an easy good humoured manner draws out whatever is agreeable in others; and in society it is a sort of a test, like the load-stone it finds out the particles of steel in a mixture of the filings of different metals and gradually produces a confidence which leads conversation from trifling and general subjects, to the useful and most important. In fact without this essential quality, a person has no business to travel in a stage coach. Good humour too, to borrow another simile from the load-stone, like one of the poles repels its opposite, and preserves the equilibrium.

Suddenly roused by the jolting of the wheel over a large stone upon

the road, and the exclamation from my neighbour who had been as silent as myself, of "Damn these bad roads" I found my opposite friend, for so I began to feel him, descending upon the pleasure of travelling in public coaches and passage boats, "For my part," said he, "I find nothing so pleasant, and I always meet with agreeable company in them; this world is sadly traduced and slandered by many talkers and writers. I never yet came into a coach, whose back seats were previously occupied, but that on telling how liable I am to sickness, I have been politely offered a seat wherever I wished." After listening half an hour to an interesting conversation between my opposite fellow-travellers, one of whom proved to be a man of learning, and great modesty, and who had visited many parts of the continent; we stopped at the stage for dinner. For experiment sake I privately said to my surly companion, "very hot sir" Contentedly" said he, "what a bore travelling is in these coaches! a man is crammed in with the Lord knows whom." I dined quietly, and pitied the man whose bad temper deprives him of so much enjoyment, and absolutely makes the world about him almost as unpleasant as it appears to his jaundiced eye.

Z. Z.

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*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

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A DIALOGUE.

*Miss A.* Well Jane how do you like Mr. E.?

*Miss L.* I think he has a good person, and interesting countenance, and affable manners, but he is too plain for me.

*Miss A.* True, I was wishing him to go away, that I might hear your sentiments of him, for your fine discernment is capable of marking those little strokes of character, which are never observed by the common herd, who judge people only by their honesty in dealing, or such coarse standards of worth, Mr. E. wants a certain something which I cannot express.