

places hard to carry out, and gave us a practical lesson in steeple-chasing. My post was on the high ground towards the left flank, so that I had an admirable view of the whole proceedings, excepting when my path lay through some copse or dell. Next to me was posted a noble lord, who shot in first-rate style. Nothing could be prettier than the effect when at last we simultaneously moved forward. The various colours and costumes, the polished gun-barrels flashing in the sunshine, the puffs of white smoke, and the rolling fire along the line, all combined with the beauty of the scenery to make up a picture which has deeply engraven itself on my memory, and which presented somewhat of the appearance of an army advancing in line of battle. We fired at everything that got up, and could not in the least tell what the next thing might be. On the right wing it is chiefly water-fowl; in the centre, partridges and pheasants; and on the left, grouse and black game, but none of these exclusively. Hares, of course, were everywhere, and we all got a great variety; the result being an enormous heap of miscellaneous game, both beasts and birds, from roe-deer down to wood-pigeons. Thus we swept the vale down to the castle, from the turrets of which the ladies of the party were watching the animated scene. Next day we began at Aberfeldy, and worked our way upwards to the point where we had left off. Many laughable incidents of course occurred, and we had each some adventures to relate when we all met at dinner.

It was now the end of October, and was becoming very cold. Snow was lying on all the mountains; there were sometimes in the morning six degrees of frost; the ponds were beginning to freeze, the curling-stones to be furbished up, and the trees to look bare. The grouse had assembled in large packs, and, having by that time learnt by sad experience the meaning of powder and shot, they were as wild as hawks. We had, moreover, had our fill of sport. We therefore took leave of the "land of cakes," and turned our faces southwards, finding a most perceptible difference in the temperature as we increased our distance from the pole. Pleasant as had been our stay in the

"Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,"

there is something very delightful in returning home after a lengthened absence; and some of us perhaps felt something akin to Dr. Johnson's surly declaration, that "the finest view in Scotland is the road to England."

THE TASSIE GEMS.

"Be mine to bless the more mechanic skill,
That stamps, renews, and multiplies at will;
And cheaply circulates through distant climes,
The fairest relics of the purest times."

ROGERS.

BEING too late for the train at London Bridge the other day, and having before me two hours ere another started, it became a matter of consideration how best to fill up the time. The day was fine; I had never seen much of the Borough of South-

wark; I therefore walked on towards the church of St. George the Martyr, and soon arrived at a turning which led to St. George's Chapel of Ease. In former times there had been a burial-ground attached to this place: was it still used for the interment of the dead? Desirous of ascertaining, I turned my steps in that direction, and, upon inquiry, found that it had been closed up. There was, however, no difficulty in obtaining admittance to the ground; and accordingly I was soon engaged in surveying this quiet spot, and meditating among the tombs. Memories of the past imparted a deep interest to the scene, although the place itself wore the aspect of neglect and desolation. Near the wall to the left, as I entered this receptacle of the dead, a head-stone attracted my notice. More than half of it was sunk in the earth; but there was a well-executed profile medallion portrait on it of "James Tassie, Modeller;" and an inscription of some length informed the reader that the mortal remains of a gifted artist and an estimable man had been deposited in that obscure and unfrequented spot.

James Tassie was the first who effectually awakened public attention in this country to gem engraving—a branch of the arts with which many even in our own day are but little acquainted. For the information of such, I may briefly state that the art of engraving on precious stones is one in which the ancients greatly excelled. In the British Museum, and various private collections in this country, there are numerous antique agates, cornelians, and onyxes, both cameos and intaglios, which in beauty of workmanship surpass anything of the kind that has been produced in modern times. Among the Greeks, Pyrgoteles, and under the first emperors of Rome, Dioscorides, were the most eminent gem engravers of whom we have any record. The former was held in high esteem by Alexander the Great; and the portrait of Augustus, executed by the latter, was considered so admirable that the succeeding emperors used it for their seal. The polite arts in general were buried under the ruins of the Roman empire. No better fate attended the art of stone-engraving. In the beginning of the fifteenth century it was, however, revived in Italy, as we are informed, by John of Florence, and after him by Dominic of Milan, who are both said to have produced creditable specimens of this beautiful art. At a subsequent period, such miniature sculptures became better known in Europe, especially in Germany, from whence many found their way into other countries. But they were never considered equal in excellence to those of the ancients. "If," as a distinguished writer observes, "the statues of Greece had perished, the fame of her arts might have been sustained by the exquisite beauty of her gems." Among English artists who excelled as gem engravers, the names of Marchant, Burch, and Charles and William Brown, held the first rank about thirty years ago.

But to return to James Tassie. He was a native of Scotland, born at Pollockshaws, in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, in the year 1735, and commenced life as a country stone-mason. At an academy established in Glasgow by two eminent

printers, named Foulis, he acquired a knowledge of drawing. Some time after, repairing to Dublin, he became acquainted with Dr. Quin, a physician who resided in that city. The doctor was in the habit of spending some of his leisure time in attempting to imitate precious stones with coloured pastes, and to take off impressions of the antique engraved gems. James Tassie was found to be a valuable assistant to him in completing the discovery. In the year 1766, Tassie proceeded to London, where he adopted as a profession the business of making these paste gems. The finest of the original gems were far too expensive to be procurable to any great extent by private purchasers; but the discovery thus brought to such a degree of perfection, enabled artists and men of taste to cultivate an acquaintance with a branch of art which had been hitherto much neglected. Tassie copied the sculpture and tint of the gem with so much skill, that many of his productions were sold on the continent for real gems. The patience and perseverance which he had manifested, at length met with their reward. So much was his name respected, that the use of the principal collections in Europe was conceded to him. Several years before his death, he published (in 1791) a catalogue of his collection in two volumes quarto.

James Tassie likewise greatly excelled as a modeller in wax, which he moulded and cast in enamel. Some of the most celebrated of the Scottish literati sat to him for their portraits. His likenesses of Adam Smith, Hume, and Dugald Stewart, etc., were much and justly admired. By all who knew him, he was held in high esteem. His character was distinguished by modesty, benevolence, and simplicity. He died in 1799.

And what became of the gem treasures which he had collected with so much industry and care? They were kept together, as we have ascertained, by his nephew and successor, Mr. W. Tassie, at 20, Leicester Square. Diligently following up the work of his uncle, he brought the art of imitative gems to a still higher degree of perfection, and made numerous and important additions to the collection of casts, together with a variety of beautiful impressions from the finest Greek and Roman coins. Public attention became very much attracted to these interesting works of art. There was an increasing demand for them. "The Tassies," as the seals were termed, were in great request. Casts from both ancient and modern gems, in sulphur and plaster of Paris, were extensively purchased and appreciated. The collection at length amounted to not less than twenty thousand, including fac-similes of all the celebrated gems, and is, beyond all question, the most complete in Europe. Like his predecessor, Mr. W. Tassie modelled portraits in wax. One of his most successful likenesses is that of William Pitt, a medallion cast of which was worn by all the members of the Pitt Club, from its commencement. Since 1840, when Mr. Tassie removed from Leicester Square to Kensington, this valuable collection has not been accessible to the public.

For some time previous to Mr. James Tassie's retirement, the taste for this branch of art had much declined; nor have there been, of late years,

any encouraging symptoms of its revival. This is much to be regretted. The decline of taste for any branch of art, the tendency of which is to expand and elevate the mind, must be an evil, inasmuch as it is an obstacle to human progress; for "every work of art," as Cousin beautifully observes, "whatever may be its form, small or great, figured, sung, or uttered, every work of art, truly beautiful or sublime, throws the soul into a gentle or severe reverie that elevates it above grosser tastes. The emotion that the beautiful produces has a civilizing influence; it is the beneficent result that art procures for humanity."

MISSIONARY ITINERATION IN INDIA.

THE reader may have observed in the annual proceedings of the missionaries in India, that visiting the smaller stations contiguous to the one at which the mission has its head-quarters is one of the principal duties of the missionary. These journeys are performed more or less frequently, according to the facilities afforded for locomotion, and the missionary advantages that are likely to be the fruits of it. Such journeys have obtained in Bengal the designation of "itinerating;" and whether the object be to attend a "conference" of the brethren alike devoted to the same sacred cause, who love occasionally, and whenever it is practicable, to meet together for mutual counsel and edification, or whether the itinerating be of a single missionary, whose object is to preach in the highways and bye-ways to the heathen, the journeys are of constant occurrence.

The style of locomotion is varied according to circumstances—the taste and fancies, the health and strength, or, principally, the pecuniary resources of the missionary; for travelling in Bengal is very expensive unless the native vehicles are employed, and few Europeans can put up with the torture of such springless combinations of wood, iron, and string. There are no stage coaches or omnibuses as in England, no railroads worth mentioning, and to invest in the chartering of an "Inland Transit Company's Carriage," or such like conveyance, or even to travel by the orthodox style of progression known as palanquin travelling, would have the effect of clearing from the missionary's little purse his annual income at the first "itineration;" so the wits of the missionary have to be judiciously exercised; and how economy, combined with a minimum of discomfort and jolting as are attainable, not omitting a certain amount of speed and safety, are brought into play by the brethren of the district to which I am attached, and whose system of locomotion I now invariably follow, you may be glad to hear.

In a burning climate such as India, many things that in England would be considered luxurious are here nothing more nor less than actual necessities. Amongst other things, it is indispensable for a missionary to have a vehicle drawn by a horse, not only to enable him to attend more effectually the different points of his always over-extended beat, but when the labours of the day are over to allow of