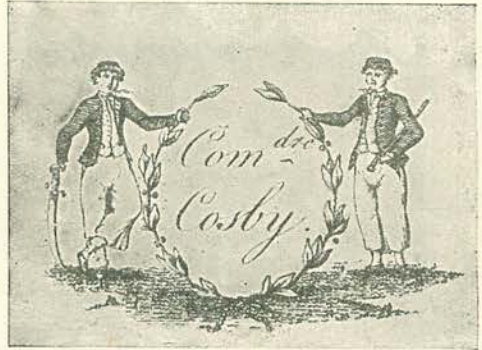


Some Old Visiting-Cards.



THE visiting-card in England is barely two centuries old, but it has existed in China for a thousand years. It was not until the eighteenth century that these cards came into general use in this country; they owe their origin to the writing of messages and invitations upon the backs of playing-cards. Next came plain white cards, but these were later on superseded by cards of a more elaborate design—real works of art, designed and engraved by the foremost artists of the day.



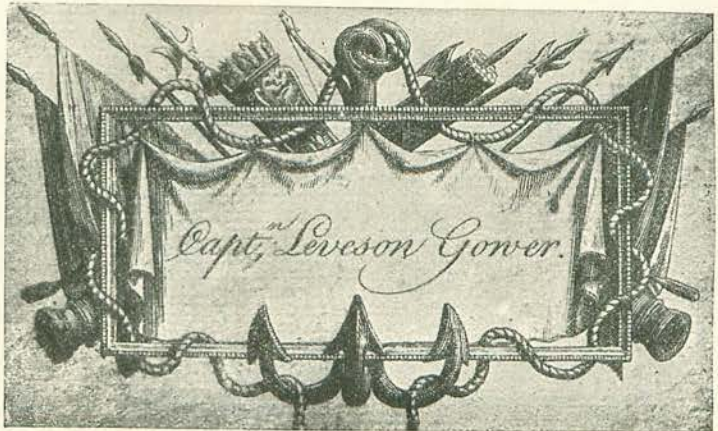
A fine example is the visiting-card of Sir Joshua Reynolds. This was designed by the famous portrait-painter and engraved by Bartolozzi. Art, personified by the figure on the left, is smiling on the wreath-engirdled globe, borne by the child; and the globe bears only the name of "Sir Joshua Reynolds"—as who should say, "*le monde c'est moi.*"

The card of Com-
Vol. xiii.—51.

mander (afterwards Admiral) Cosby also illustrates the emblematical phase of the craze. Two young naval officers guard the name in the design. Phillips Cosby was appointed to the *Robuste* (74 guns) in 1779, and his ship took an important part in the smashing of the French off Cape Virginia two years later.

Captain Leveson Gower was one of the Sutherland family (*temp.* 1783). Look at the spikes and the pikes, the guns and the anchor, the flags and the ropes. One would naturally expect to find that "Capt. Leveson Gower" had, single-handed, wiped out a fleet.

But no rebuke to the



Lord Nelson of the Nile.

obtrusive captain could be more forcible than the mere juxtaposition of the next card—"Lord Nelson of the Nile"—no pikes, mark you, no boarding irons; nothing but the immortal name.

Next we have the card of Viscountess Nelson. Frances Herbert Nelson was the daughter of William Woolward, senior judge of the Island of Nevis, in the West Indies. In 1779 she married a doctor named Nesbit, who went out of his mind and died within eighteen months, leaving her with an infant son, dependent upon her uncle. Whilst living with him she became acquainted with Nelson, then the young captain of the *Boreas*; she married him at Nevis in 1787. When the *Boreas* was paid off Mrs. Nelson lived with her husband at Burnham

Thorpe until February, 1793; and during his first absence in the Mediterranean they corresponded in most affectionate terms. Later came disquieting rumours from Naples about Lady Hamilton, followed by the inevitable domestic broils. After one of these, Nelson wandered all night long through the streets of London in a state of absolute despair and distraction. In 1801 a separation was agreed upon, with a settlement of £1,200 a year on Lady Nelson.

Here is Lady Hamilton's card. The career of this wonderful woman is a remarkable instance alike of the commanding power of beauty and the vicissitudes of fortune. Emma Hart was the daughter of a servant, and was born in a humble Cheshire

*Viscountess Nelson
Duchess of Bronte.*

village. She was successively a labouring hand in a mine; a nurse-girl at Hawarden; a side-show (she was exhibited by a charlatan as the Goddess Hygeia, covered with a transparent veil!); Romney's model; wife of Sir William Hamilton, our Ambassador at the Neapolitan Court; and Nelson's "guardian angel," for whom the hero fought and thought and laboured. An unfinished letter to Lady Hamilton was found on Nelson's desk after the fatal Battle of Trafalgar. Royal Dukes aspired to her favour, and Nelson's jealousy on this point is writ large in his correspondence. After her hero's





death, Lady Hamilton's star began to wane ; and we at length find her flying to Calais to escape from her creditors. Here she died in comparative want in 1815.

Dr. Johnson's card comes next. Obviously the redoubtable doctor designed the thing himself. The writing is a little wobbly, and the border uncertain. One wonders whether the original of this was the identical scrap of pasteboard which Dr. Johnson sent in to Lord Chesterfield, whilst he himself waited

(Mrs. Thrale), is next shown. Her father dying in 1762, the girl was forthwith married to Henry Thrale, a rich brewer, who she declared only took her because other ladies to whom he had proposed refused to live in the Borough.

The famous intimacy with Dr. Johnson began at the end of 1764, and a year later saw the great lexicographer virtually domiciled at Streatham Park, the home of the



Thrales. Thrale himself, who died in 1781, was ultimately ruined by a quack, who pretended he had a wonderful plan whereby beer might be made without hops or malt. In 1780 Mrs. Thrale had made the acquaintance of Gabriel Piozzi, an Italian musician, whom she presently married, much to the annoyance of her children and Dr. Johnson.

Antonio Canova, most celebrated of modern sculptors, had an interesting card whereon was depicted a huge block of marble in the rough. He was born at Pasagno, Italy, in 1757, his father being a

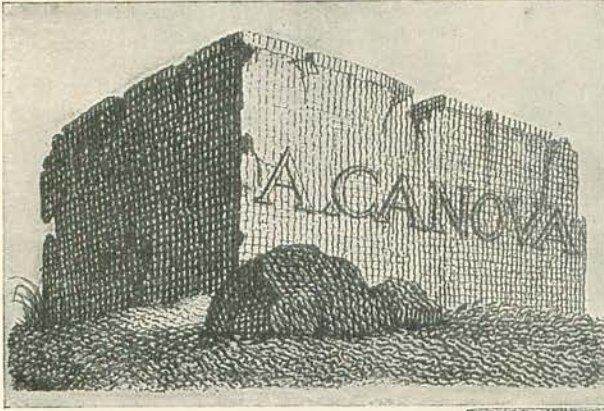


in the ante-room for a few guineas "on account."

To Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire is universally conceded the leadership of all that was brilliant in her generation. In 1783 Gainsborough painted her portrait for the second time, and this was the famous picture that was stolen from Messrs. Agnew, after having been bought by them at the Wynn Ellis sale, in 1876, for £10,605.

The visiting-card of Hester, Madame Piozzi





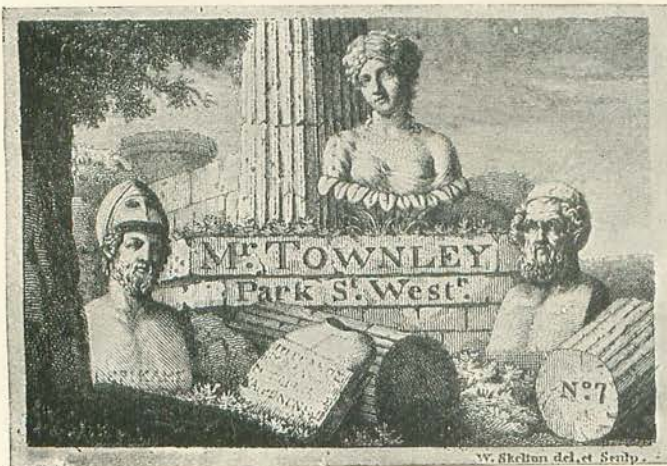
humble stone-mason. Two shrines, cut in Carrara marble by him at the age of nine years, attest his genius. He owed his advancement, however, to the patronage of Giovanni Faliero, the patrician, who had seen a lion modelled in butter by the young Canova.

Below is the visiting-card of Mr. Charles Townley, an eminent English antiquary. So great was his admiration for the busts of Clytie, Pericles, and Homer which he possessed, that he employed an eminent engraver to engrave them on a small scale for reproduction on his visiting-card. These elegant little pictures were then left at the houses of distinguished persons. The bust of Clytie Mr. Townley actually carried about with him from place to place, fearing an accident. At his death, in 1805, the British Museum purchased his marbles for £20,000—probably half their value.

Next we have the beautiful visiting-

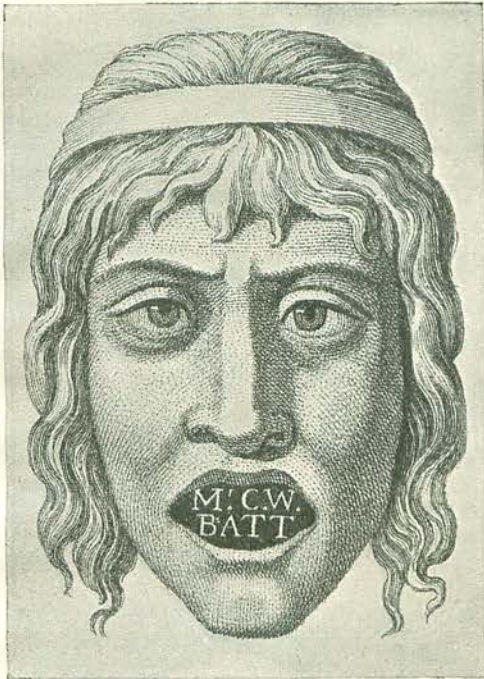


card of the inseparable sisters, Mary and Agnes Berry. They were constantly together for eighty-eight years; and it was their desire to be *buried* together. Thus the introduction of an inscribed tombstone into the design is a play upon their name. In the winter of 1788 the two sisters became acquainted with Horace Walpole, then over seventy. Walpole began writing, in 1788, solely with an eye to



the sisters' amusement, his "Reminiscences of the Courts of George I. and II." He secured a house for his *protégées* at Teddington in 1789, and afterwards prevailed upon them to take possession of Little Strawberry Hill.

Mr. C. W. Batt had a curious card. In this case the card is simply an antique mask, with an open mouth, into which the name of the individual is put; thus it seems as if the mouth were in the act of pronouncing



to Reynolds in 1777, and the resulting portrait is one of Sir Joshua's most famous pictures.

The next facsimile shown here is the visiting-card of "Mister Ralph Sneyd." It is



designed on the principle of the renowned "Bil Stumps" inscription discovered by the immortal Pickwick. Three owls are depicted

the name Batt, to the person who might look upon it.

Lady Bampfylde was the mother of John Codrington Bampfylde, the poet, who proposed to Miss Palmer, Sir Joshua Reynolds's niece; Sir Joshua, however, disapproved of the match, and closed his doors to Bampfylde, who, thereupon, broke the great painter's windows and was sent to Newgate for the offence. Lady Bampfylde, who was one of the reigning beauties of her day, sat



as bewigged judges, pensively guarding the stone on which is engraved, somewhat cryptically, the name of Mr. Sneyd.

The visiting-card of Sir Joseph Banks, P.R.S., opens up an awful prospect. Fancy Nansen with a map of the North Pole on his card, Mr. Henniker-Heaton with a postage stamp, and so on *ad nauseam!* 'Tis an ingenious effort of the inveterate bore. Young Mr. Banks, who had lots of money, deter-



mined to accompany Captain Cook round the world. Soon after his return, the young scientist visited Iceland, and brought away with him a rich harvest of knowledge and specimens. He never forgot Iceland, and he was determined that other people shouldn't forget it either. The little map of Iceland seen on Sir Joseph's card was printed in colours on a white ground.

Lady Mary Fitzpatrick, daughter of John Earl of Ossory, married in 1766 the eldest son of Henry Fox, Lord Holland. She was the mother of the Lord Holland who made Holland House so famous in political and literary circles. Her visiting-card seen in the above facsimile is a good example of the elaborate cards of the period.

The story of Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Argyll, is a remarkable one. She was first married (after midnight, and with the ring of a bed-curtain) to James, sixth Duke of Hamilton, and secondly, to John Campbell, Duke of Argyll. By the two marriages she became the mother



of four dukes. In 1751, she and her sister Maria (afterwards Countess of Coventry) first appeared in London, and created a great sensation. When they appeared in the drawing-room at St. James's, peers and peeresses clambered on the tables and chairs to get a look at them. Hundreds of people sat up all night in and around a Yorkshire inn to see the Duchess of Hamilton get into her chaise in the morning. A Worcester shoemaker got two and a half guineas by showing (at a penny a head) a shoe he was making for the Countess of Coventry.

Many cards bore pictorial jokes, represent-



ing emblematically the individual's name—such as Bird, Monk, and so on. Mr. Green's card (next shown) was printed in green; and, since the faces in the border are remarkable for stupidity of expression, we may hazard a guess that here was another recondite suggestion of the attribute "Green."