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# THE TIMES.

No. 8,

SATURDAY EVENING, JANUARY 30, 1808.

Vol. I.

### THE TIMES: DISPLAYED BY LOOKERS-ON.

*"We sit surveying anxiously  
The crowd, and its content—  
"It is not, admitted to our view"—twas round  
"With all its generation—We behold"  
Digested, mean, feeble, and vicious acts,  
And note the time.*

### ORIGINALS, SELECTIONS, &c.

FOR THE TIMES.

### SKETCHES AND VIEWS—No. V.

*"Some coloured from Nature,  
Others merely in outline."*

IN the interior of the country, as you slowly rise a hill, whose ascent, though gradual, leads to a summit of no inconsiderable height, a most beautiful prospect opens to the admiring view. On the left, the waters of the Merrimack, in a stream about half a mile across, rush over innumerable fragments of rocks, some scarcely above the surface of the water, and others projecting their black and shaggy points in a variety of picturesque and fanciful forms. The opposite bank descends in a beautiful slope towards the river, its verdant sides displaying several farms in a state of high cultivation, diversified by small tracts of fir, beech, and oak, whose luxuriant growth and foliage, give a richness to the whole. In the middle of the stream, on a little islet, stands a saw mill, perhaps more romantic from being in a state of decay, around which the water rolls in a kind of eddy, dashing its white foam against the sides of the building. A little further on is a town of some degree of consequence, and though the habitations are scattering, many of them are handsome and commodious, and some few even wear an appearance of taste and elegance. In the vicinity of this place resides the grandfather of Lesbia. His mansion, which has descended from father to son for three generations, and which every successor has added something to, without pulling down the original building, which consisted of little more than three rooms, has the appearance of several houses jumbled irregularly together; but the interior presents every thing of convenience and comfort, good fires, plentiful tables, cheerful looks, and plain but honest language.

Farmer Plainly has past his 70th year, and in that period has only visited the metropolis twice; once when preparing for his own marriage, and once previous to the marriage of Lesbia's mother. She had been educated by a relation residing in a populous sea port, and there captivated a wealthy merchant twice her own age, who, dying soon after Lesbia was born, left her the heiress to a very large property, and her mother a rich widow. It was natural for Ruth and Hetty Plainly to wish to see their fine aunt and cousin; they remembered

their visiting their grandfather when Lesbia was a child; they were all playfellows together, and Ruth and her sister were wonderfully pleased with her fine frocks and silk slip. Their aunt had also invited them to come and visit her the last time she wrote. "I am sure they will be glad to see us, grandsir," said Hetty; "do dear let us go this spring." "Yes, do," added Ruth, "and give us some money to buy new gowns, that we may look smart." The persuasions of the girls succeeded, and a first and second short visit were paid much to the mortification of Lesbia and her mother, who received them with forced civility, and made a few presents of more show than use, and hurried them into the country again. But alas! every visit lessened the happiness of the simple country girls, and greatly retrenched the comforts of their grandfather. Innovations were made in their dress, in their manners, in their furniture; everything must now be tasty, genteel and fashionable. The good old man, declining into the vale of years, bore all patiently, till after the last visit which was made late in September. On the following Sunday the girls came into the parlour, almost totally naked, and the rest of their habiliments so thin and scanty, that their grandfather, who to be sure is rather near sighted, literally supposed they were only half dressed, and telling them it was time to be going, bade them make haste and put their clothes on. "Law, Sir," said Ruth laughing, "we are ready; we only have to put on our hats and gloves." Well, said the old man, deliberately hanging up his hat, if that is the case, you must go by yourselves; for if you are not ashamed to go to meeting half naked, I will not go to see you made the gazing stocks of the whole congregation. Besides, the weather is cold enough for your great coats, you will catch your deaths." This remonstrance at the time prevailed so far as to obtain for their shoulders the covering of a shawl; but the spirit of being tasty had taken possession of the unfortunate girls, and the reasonable reproofs of that aged parent were unheeded, or laughed at as being old fashioned, and formal, and stupid. Time was, when the girls had their young frippery with them of an evening, that Mr. Plainly would sit in the corner in his roundabout arm chair, and enjoy the hilarity of the scene, tell his story, put forth a riddle or a puzzle, and join in the laugh which the explanation might excite, with a hearty good will; then the company sat round the large round table to drink tea, while a plentiful supply of fire-cakes and dough-nuts furnished out the repast; that once, old Cesar would tune up his broken fiddle and scrape away, while the rustic dancers enjoyed the amusement, as well as any beau or belle in the first assembly room upon the continent; then a few apples and nuts, with a mug of cider, was refreshment sufficient for the guests, and at an early hour they separated to enjoy that repose which exercise and innocent amusement had con-

tributed to render sweet and unbroken. But now these social meetings are no more; invitation must be sent in form, to draw a few neighbours together; and to sit round the table to take tea! horrid vulgarity!—It must be handed round, accompanied by a variety of cakes, and followed by wine, almonds and raisins, custards, perhaps whips. All must sit starched up round the room like so many Automotons, and to pretend to employ the fingers in knitting, sewing, or any other useful occupation during the evening, (for they do not meet till after dark) would be the height of rudeness. These fashionable manners, introduced by Ruth and Hetty Plainly, have spread through the town and neighboring villages like a contagion: the silly young folks call it refinement, but the wiser old ones more appropriately term it an awkward imitation of follies, which will lead to ruin of both the fortunes and health of the rising generation.—Those who have greatest simplicity of manners are ever the most happy. Good breeding will ever go hand in hand with good nature; and that Christian spirit which would on all occasions avoid giving offence, leads to the performance of those small sweet courtesies which strewn roses over the rugged path of life; but fine breeding is a different sort of thing; its face is dressed in the sweetest smile, but that is a mask; pull it off, behold the apathy and disgust painted on every feature of the real countenance. Conceit and pride are its associates, affectation in its train, ridicule and detraction follow close behind, and too often envy and malignity complete the group.

—We are polished now. The rural lass,  
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,  
Her artless manners, and her neat attire,  
So dignified that the scoundrel hardly less  
Than the vile shepherdess of old romance,  
Is seen no more. The character is lost.  
The town has flooded the country, and the stain  
Appears a spot upon the vestal's robe,  
The worse for what it is. The fashion runs  
Down into streets still rural, but, alas!  
Scarcely guard with rural manners now.

### FOR THE TIMES.

### SKETCH—No. III.

### "I stand on Holy Ground."

ON ATTENDING MEETING, &c.  
FROM the serious manner in which I introduced this subject, in my last, I now proceed in language less serious, though equally pertinent; and truly.—

"What gets me going, say!—why this the vulgar do—  
Yes, and it is a custom old as Homer too—  
Sate then, we fill of faiths and with this diptone,  
Or differ in some way, from folks of common sense."

GOOD PEOPLE!—Undoubtedly you are sensible how extremely unbecoming it must be, for a gentleman or lady of fashion, to pay any regard to that old superstitious ceremony, of what is gene-

