

Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind  
For which thou whip'st her—'

Neither can we offer Mr. Cumberland much consolation on the other topic of his complaint. He seems to think of this predilection of the public as Trinculo did of losing his bottle in the pool, and grows doubly indignant at the pipe and tabor of the deluding Dæmonologist—'There is not only dishonour in it, but an infinite loss—yet this is your innocent goblin!' The gentlemen of Paternoster-row we are afraid, notwithstanding Mr. Cumberland's diatribe, will continue obstinately to prefer discounting drafts on the present generation, payable at sight, to long-dated bills on posterity, which cannot be accepted till both the drawer and holder have become immortal in every sense of the word.

Upon the whole we rejoice that an old and valued friend has, at the advanced age of seventy-six, strength and spirits to amuse himself and the public with his compositions; and we think it will conduce greatly to both, if he will cease to fret himself because of the success of ballad-singers, ghost-seers, and the young Roscius. If they flourish at present, let him console himself with the transitory quality of their prosperity. We dare not soothe him too much by assenting to the counter-part of prophecy: for, although the hopes of future glory have been the consolation of every bard under immediate neglect, yet experience compels us to confess that they are usually fallacious. Contemporary applause does not once, perhaps, in an hundred times, ensure that of posterity: few names are handed down to immortality, which have not been distinguished in their own generation; and least of all do we anticipate any splendid accession to the posthumous fame of an author, whose talents do not in the present day rank him above a dignified and respectable mediocrity.



**ART. VIII.** *Memoir on Fiorin Grass, by W. Richardson, D.D. late Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin; FROM SELECT PAPERS OF THE BELFAST LITERARY SOCIETY. FASCICULUS I.*

**I**N laying before our readers an account of this remarkable grass, (and if it possessed but half the valuable properties described by Dr. Richardson it would still deserve the most serious attention

attention not only of individuals but even of the legislature,) we shall make an indiscriminate use of the present and of a former memoir on the same subject, contained in the sixth volume of the Communications of the Board of Agriculture, and written by the same author. The former memoir was communicated to the Agricultural Society at the request of Mr. Davy, who witnessed the remarkable characters of this grass on its native spot: and we are persuaded that this circumstance will excite additional interest respecting its history.

The term Fiorin, by which the native Irish distinguish this grass, Dr. Richardson is, somewhat fancifully perhaps, inclined to derive from the words *fave* (grass), and *reem* (butter); observing with respect to this etymology that to his knowledge the term 'butter-grass' is most deservedly applied to the Fiorin: but lest our readers should be carried away by the idea that this grass possesses the properties of the Phulwarah or 'Butter-Tree' of India, it is right to inform them that the butyraceous quality of the Fiorin does not shew itself till the juice of the grass has passed through the lacteals and mamillary glands of the cow; and then not without the aid of a churn: the butter however, that is thus ultimately produced from it, is remarkably excellent. The Fiorin is supposed to be the *Agrostis stolonifera* of Linnæus; but as this point does not seem to have been accurately ascertained, and as Curtis, in his 'Practical Observations,' says that he has experienced more difficulty in ascertaining the several species of the *Agrostis* than of all the others put together, we subjoin the following description of it.

Each plant consists of numerous strings (*stolones*), which are immediately connected with the root; and these strings are knotted or jointed at intervals of from three to five inches: from each joint a thin grassy envelope issues in the direction of the string; within which, lateral sprouts shoot forth nearly at right angles to the joint. These sprouts, together with the extreme point of the strings, are of a most lively green colour: the strings themselves are much paler at all times, and in March are nearly white. The envelope withers as soon as it has discharged its obvious office of protecting the advancing sprout from the effects of the weather, and gives the whole a more decayed appearance than might be expected from its quantity, being itself a very thin membrane. The strings, which are the essential part, and constitute nine tenths of the crop, vary in length from three to seven feet; but are usually between four and five feet long: their number is sometimes very great; and in one instance Dr. Richardson found

140 issuing from one spontaneous root, each of which had six buds. If the joints touch the ground, or even the damp mat formed by the intertexture of the strings, a sprout shoots upwards and fibres strike downwards and form a root. Each joint is therefore a set, from which the plant may be propagated: so that the spontaneous root above mentioned produced 840 sets.\*

The foregoing description corresponds in many points with the *Dúrvá*, or, as it is commonly called, the *Dúb* of India: and Dr. Richardson says that his friend Colonel Macan, who commanded the British cavalry in the late campaigns in the North of India, as soon as he saw the Fiorin, was struck with its exact resemblance to the Indian grass; and was satisfied they were of the same species. The characteristic mark of the *Dúb*, according to Colonel Macan, is this, that from each joint a root strikes downwards, and a sprout shoots upwards. It is propagated in India not by seed, but by scattering its strings on the surface, and dibbling them in: in the rainy season it creeps along the ground; and runs to a considerable length, rooting at every joint: in the dry season it is much covered by the dust and flying sand, whence it derives its name; which in the Persian language signifies 'hidden.' Colonel Macan adds that it is most industriously sought for, and preferred to all other grasses in India, on account of its superiorly nutritive quality as food for cattle.

In Sir W. Jones's catalogue of Indian plants the *Dúb* is classed as a species of *Agrostis*; and the engraving of it, which is copied from Dr. Roxburgh, represents it as a knotted or jointed grass with fibres issuing from the lower, and sprouts from the upper side of each joint: but the panicle or flowering part is very different from that of the Fiorin, and resembles that of the *Panicum dactylon* or creeping Panic-grass; excepting that the spikes, which are there four in number, spread horizontally from the stalk. We shall take the liberty of extracting from Sir W. Jones's Botanical observations on select Indian plants, contained in the second volume of his works, the following account of the *Dúrvá* or *Dúb*. 'Nothing essential can be added to the mere botanical description of this most beautiful grass; which Van Rheeде has exhibited in a coarse delineation of its leaves only—its flowers, in their perfect state, are among the loveliest objects in the vegetable world; and appear, through a lens, like minute rubies

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\* The panicle or flowering part of the Fiorin, judging from a drawing of it which accompanies Dr. Richardson's first Memoir, resembles that of the *Festuca pratensis* or Meadow Fescue grass.

and emeralds in constant motion from the least breath of air. It is the sweetest and most nutritious pasture for cattle; and its usefulness added to its beauty induced the Hindus, in their earliest ages, to believe that it was the mansion of a benevolent nymph. Even the Vêda celebrates it; as in the following text of the A't'harvana: "May Dûrvà, which rose from the water of life, which has a hundred roots and a hundred stems, efface a hundred of my sins, and prolong my existence on earth a hundred years!"

But the excellence of the Fiorin, supposing it to be the *Agrostis stolonifera*, is neither unknown nor uncelebrated in the annals of English agriculture; although, from particular circumstances, its history has been hitherto involved in much obscurity. It constitutes a considerable portion of the produce of a meadow in Wiltshire, the uncommon fertility of which was noticed by herbarists more than 150 years since. This meadow, which is situated near Orcheston, about twelve miles to the north of Salisbury, is spoken of in Howe's *Phytologia Britannica*, which was published in the year 1650; and in Merret's *Pinax*, published in 1667: and references are made to these authors, respecting it, in Bishop Gibson's additions to Camden. It is again mentioned in Stillingfleet's miscellaneous tracts: but no public inquiry took place respecting it, till, some years ago, the Bath Agricultural Society, struck by the accounts of its remarkable fertility, employed agents for the purpose of ascertaining the nature of its produce. Since that time it has been visited by several botanists; from whose accounts we have collected those circumstances of its history which are most applicable to the present occasion. The meadow is situated in the lowest part of a very narrow winding valley, sheltered on each side by gradual but by no means lofty acclivities of chalk. It is subject to frequent and continued inundations during the winter, and is rarely otherwise than swampy throughout the year; being often submerged by the water of a spring, which rises at about the distance of half a mile. It has been constantly observed, that the earlier the spring swells, the more plentiful is the crop. The immediate soil of the meadow consists of a bed of small loose pebbles, which are all of a siliceous nature, with a scanty covering of mould: and though the herbage of the adjoining meadows is altogether very exuberant, yet this exuberance may be traced increasing or declining according as the soil varies more or less from that of the principal meadow. The produce of the meadow consists of several grasses; the chief of which are varieties of the *Poa trivialis*, the *Alopecurus pratensis*, and the *Agrostis stolonifera*:

*stolonifera*: it is mowed twice in summer; and, after a favourable season for watering, the first crop is nearly five tons from each acre; the second, about half as much. The first crop consists principally of the *Poa trivialis*; the last, of the *Agrostis stolonifera*. With respect to the grass of this celebrated meadow, it is observed that all cattle eat it eagerly; and that horses will eat the hay made from it in preference to corn mixed with chaff.

We have carried the foregoing observations on the Indian and the Orcheston grass further than to many may seem necessary, hoping they may help to elucidate the subject of the present memoir; of which we shall now give as short and connected an epitome as we are able.

The testimonies in favour of the excellent pasturage of Ireland are numerous, from Giraldus Cambrensis down to the present day: that which is most to our purpose we found in a letter, dated 1693, contained in a Natural History of Ireland; which was published at Dublin in 1726: this letter, in giving an account of the Giants' Causeway, and describing the neighbouring coast as elevated very far above the sea, but rising gradually on the land side to the edge of the precipice, says, 'that it is all covered with excellent sweet grass.' It was in this very neighbourhood that Dr. Richardson first became acquainted with the Fiorin, in consequence of having purchased a small farm on the little peninsula of Portrush; which is situated a few miles to the South-west of the Giant's Causeway, and projects in the form of a cliff about half a mile into the Northern ocean. This farm, Dr. R. says, has long been famous for the verdure, abundance, and excellence of its pasture: and it has been repeatedly observed that the tallow, and the butter made from the milk of the cattle fed there, surpassed both in quantity and quality those of any other farm in the country. The grass of this pasture consists almost entirely of Fiorin. During three and twenty years, Dr. R. made comparative experiments on the excellence of the Portrush pasturage and that of some glebe which he possesses in the county of Tyrone; and though he had always good grass on the latter, and the glebe itself was in a very rich country, yet he invariably observed that the same cow gave above a third more milk, and of a far superior quality, when fed on the Portrush, than on the Tyrone pasturage. This, he says, is the more remarkable, because the greater part of the Portrush meadow is composed of a very shallow soil, rarely three inches deep, covering a solid basaltic rock; and much burnt up in summer. In  
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like manner the Fiorin is distinguished by its high verdure on the cliffs and steeps facing the Northern ocean, particularly about the Giants' Causeway; occasionally forcing its roots into the crevices of the rock, and even into the diminutive intervals between the pillars of the causeway.

The present occasion does not require a minute statement of the observations and experiments made on this grass by Dr. Richardson: and indeed since he himself is 'almost afraid of entering into a detail of its extraordinary qualities, entertaining faint hopes of obtaining credit or even attention,' our readers will not be surprised if we make our selection with great caution; nor must he be offended with us if we doubt the reasonableness of those expectations, in which, too incautiously perhaps for his future fame, he indulges. Thus, when he describes the Fiorin not only as superior to most if not all other grasses, and better fitted to every separate use to which grass can be applied; thriving almost equally in soils of the most contrary descriptions, the richest, the poorest, the deepest and the shallowest, the tops of mountains and the bottoms of vallies; bearing greater extremes of wet and of drought than any other grass or perhaps vegetable; growing with full vigour under the shade of trees, and equally grateful to cattle when moved from this situation as from the open field; and, lastly, as being perfectly insensible to the highest degree of cold, since he saw the vegetation of its tenderest shoots uninterrupted by one of the bitterest frosts he remembers, and their lively green preserved equally, whether they were above the surface or buried under the snow; when, we say, he describes all these extraordinary and opposite qualities as existing in his favourite grass, who can chuse but smile at his fond partiality? On the report of his experiments we are fully disposed to rely with confidence, though even here we dare not anticipate the same degree of success from the general cultivation of this grass which he met with in the particular instances mentioned by him. The extent of that success may be judged of, by the following statement.

In November 1806 Dr. Richardson planted a piece of ground with Fiorin; of which having obtained a number of distinct plants, he commenced by laying one down, and slightly covering the root with earth: he then stretched its string in a line; laying a little loose earth upon it here and there, merely for the purpose of holding it down: where the string ended, another root was laid down; and its string was stretched in continuation of the former line: and so on to the end of the piece of ground.

At two feet distance he made a similar row, parallel to the former; and thus continued till the whole piece of ground was planted. The strings soon shewed symptoms of vegetation; and in the following July the intermediate spaces were so completely occupied by new strings, that it was difficult to find out the original drills. The succeeding autumn was wet and severe, and the grass was in consequence flattened down; but though matted like a crop of vetches, the under part was very thick; and exclusively composed of long strings, every one of which was in high vegetation from the root to the extreme point.

A portion of this meadow was mowed on Dec. 7, 1807; and, contrary to Dr. Richardson's expectation after so wet and severe a season, the sward instead of sinking was so raised up by the length and coarseness of the strings, that in half an hour it was dry: it was then made up in small heaps, which were afterwards merely turned over every other day, in order to expose the damp side to the wind. At the end of eight days these heaps were opened for half an hour; and then made into larger heaps, four feet high each: these were opened three or four times during a fortnight, and were housed at the end of three weeks; reckoning from the time when the grass was cut: during which the weather was singularly unfavourable, attended with great deluges of rain succeeded by an extraordinary heavy fall of snow, which was followed by close damps.

Another portion of the same meadow was mowed on Dec. 26; and the process of making the hay was conducted in the same manner as in the preceding instance: but, instead of being housed at the end of three weeks, it was suffered to remain under the open air for more than two months; and on the 4th of March it was still fresh and fragrant, and retained the healthy green in its strings: and through the whole of the winter, there was not a single string that shewed the least tendency to rot or decay.

Of the first crop, which was housed on Dec. 28, several strings were set in a hot house on the same day: these soon began to put forth fresh sprouts. Other strings taken from the same hay were planted on the 18th of January and the 5th of February following: these also soon began to vegetate from every point. The same experiment was repeated on Feb. 27, March 18, and April 8, on strings taken both from the hay that was housed, and from that which remained in the field; and the success was the same in every instance.

This retentive faculty of the principle of vegetable life, so conspicuous in the Fiorin, Dr. Richardson thinks may be explained

plained by its peculiar nature in not producing panicles till the second year: for he argues, that as all vegetables appear to advance in a state of progressive improvement until they arrive at the period of flowering and producing their seed, after which the powers of vegetation seem to abate; and as most grasses put forth their seed in the same year in which they were sown: it hence happens that grasses in general will not support the inclemency of the succeeding winter: but the Fiorin not putting forth its panicles till the second year, and consequently not having attained its point of perfection till that time, the strings improve progressively through the whole of the first year; whence it follows that it is even advantageous to defer the mowing of Fiorin till winter.

Another great advantage attending the cultivation of Fiorin is this, that whereas grass seed cannot be sown with prudence earlier than the middle of March, or later than the middle of September, at which seasons the farmer is necessarily very much engaged in other employments, the Fiorin strings may be planted at any time: and, according to Dr. Richardson, a crop may be obtained from this grass more cheaply and more expeditiously than from any other.

But it is unnecessary to dwell longer on the excellencies of this grass. Enough has been said, we conceive, to direct the attention of the agricultural reader to a subject, which, unless the author of the present memoir has greatly deceived himself, must be considered of the highest importance.

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ART. IX. *The Satires of Aulus Persius Flaccus, translated into English Verse, with the Latin Text, and Notes.* 8vo. pp. 280. London, Johnson.

FROM the numerous versions of the Satiric Poets which have lately made their appearance, a reader, unacquainted with the originals, must naturally conclude that the task of rendering them into English presents but few difficulties, and demands but few talents that are not possessed by the generality of writers. In many cases, a similar persuasion seems to prevail among the translators themselves: and, indeed, if the Original be merely used as a text book, and without any reference to its distinguishing characteristics, the labour of giving a desultory version of it

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