

ILLUSIONS OF FANCY.

only the merits of a favorite, the splendor of an exhibition, or the horror of a calamity, are exaggerated by the force of their imaginations, but what consists in mere number and quantity is apt to be increased or diminished by the same cause. One lady, boasting of the beauty who have led her daughter out to dance, will convert twelve into twenty; while an envious neighbor by an opposite deception, will diminish the number to five or six; and yet both of these ladies may be innocent of voluntary falsehood. The fact is, that each listened to that suggestion of fancy which was most agreeable to her feelings.

I once knew two ladies dispute, and at length bet, on the height of their respective gallants, who were very well known to both. The gentlemen turned out to be of equal height, but each lady had been confident that her own favorite was at least two inches taller than the other. Very ardent lovers have observed, that when they first meet, after long separation, they feel disappointed in each other's appearance. It is because the picture of the beloved object was not in the mind merely as memory had drawn it—imagination had superadded the colors of her own bright pencil. Sometimes we see the imagination so lively, so completely master of the mind, that it prevails over the plain and direct communications of the senses. On occasion of a riot, Gov. C. of New York, put himself at the head of a chosen party to quell the tumult. The sword he carried was by some accident broken off near the hilt. With this fragment in his hand he pushed on, and endeavored to force his way through the crowd. One man, feeling the pressure of the mutilated weapon, looked back, and fixing his eyes on the spot, exclaimed, "a dead man," and fell senseless on the ground, under a temporary conviction that he was run through the body. Major H. whose life was spent in mischievous waggery, having given a frolicking fiddler some liquor, pressed him to repeat his draught with great earnestness. By winks and nods to the bystanders, suspicions were artfully excited in the poor fiddler—at length he was told with a face of gravity and condolence that he had taken an emetic which would be good for his health. Warm water was accordingly prepared, and the credulous son of Orpheus was made to vomit as freely, by the energy of his own imagination, as he could have been by the most powerful drugs of pharmacy. A clergyman and his daughter were once viewing the face of the full moon.—The young woman was clear the law in it the figure of a young man; but the father, rebuking the daughter for not seeing a church, says, "why child, don't you see the steeple!" To ordinary palates good wine at the table of a poor man will seem bad, and ordinary wine at the house of a reputed epicure, has a most exquisite flavor. Stop, by way of characterizing the blind partiality of a mother, makes the owl, in describing her young to the eagle, dwell with great emphasis on their pretty faces. Persons who feel a dread of apparitions need but meet with a white cow or linen garment, and their fancy supplies whatever is wanting to complete a picture of horror—gives it form, colour, motion, nay even a distinct and articulate voice.—Ghosts were never yet seen by those who did not previously have a dread or belief of them. When Wilkes was in the zenith of his popularity, one of his most enthusiastic female admirers, would not admit that he squinted. Yielding to the effect of a nearer inspection, she replied to her triumphant adversary, "Well, I am sure if it is so, he squints no more than a gentleman ought to do." The wretch who has been for years the helpless victim of disease, has imagined himself cured by the touch of an iron bodkin; and on one occasion I knew a rheumatic patient to be scratched with a quill (imposed on him for one of Perkin's points) till he was able "to take up his bed and walk." It is a similar illusion of fancy which procures the ready sale of the nostrums of empirics, and vouches with such grateful zeal for the cures they have wrought. Jugglers and ventriloquists owe their success chiefly to the deluded imaginations of their beholders. Hypochondria, delirium and madness, tho' remotely caused by corporeal disease, are the immediate effects of an imagination stimulated to preternatural vigor. The false promises of hope are nothing but the judgment led astray by the imagination. Ambition derives its strength from one species of mental illusion, and avarice from another. Jealousy, envy, revenge, make the imagination convert beauty into deformity and virtue into vice, while love, pity and admiration, cause an opposite metamorphosis. When party spirit runs high, the same essay, the same speech is thought to have of to want merit, according to the sentiments they express. This prejudice, as it is commonly called, or this illusion of fancy, is often extended most judiciously to the cut of a coat, the air of a popular song, or even to a color that happens to be the badge of a party. A few years since a black cape probably often excited more horror in Paris than a street murder; and we daily believe some zealous partisans joining ourselves have thought the very rainbow hideous from its resemblance to the *serpenter* of France.

If imagination is capable not only of substituting its own copies of the perceptions of sense for those of memory, but even of cutting us out of these perceptions themselves, how much and how often must it pervert the judgment! How little is every chain of reasoning to be trusted this or that way from the right line of truth, when every link is so likely to be distorted! Few are the opinions we can form which are not connected with some sentiment of pleasure or pain, and these sentiments are always nourished more or less by fancy. Let these considerations teach charity and moderation to zealots of every description, and let them recollect that the opinions of whose truth they have the deepest conviction, if they were formed when the mind was much excited by feeling, are less likely to be the demonstrations of reason than the illusions of fancy. X. From the BOSTON CHRONICLE. [Concluded from yesterday's AMERICAN] This was a critical and distressing period. In the language of Dr. Ramsay, "The patriots who had hitherto guided the helm, knew well, that if the other colonies did not support the people of Boston, they must be crushed, and it was equally obvious that in their coercion a precedent injurious to liberty, would be established. It was, therefore, the interest of Boston to draw in the other colonies. It was also the interest of the patriots in all the colonies, to bring over the bulk of the people to adopt such efficient measures as were likely to extricate the inhabitants of Boston, from the unhappy situation in which they were involved. To effect these purposes much prudence, as well as patriotism, was necessary. The other provinces were but remotely affected by the state of Massachusetts. They were happy, and had no cause, on their own account, to oppose the government of Great Britain. That a people so circumstanced, should take part with a distressed neighbour, at the risk of incurring the resentment of the mother country, did not accord with the selfish maxims, by which states as well as individuals, are usually governed. The ruled are, for the most part, prone to suffer, as long as evils are tolerable, and in general they must feel before they are roused to contend with their oppressors; but the Americans acted on a different principle." 1 vol. 112. Virginia did not desert her sister colony in this time of anxiety and distress. "In Virginia, says the same elegant Historian, the house of Burgesses, on the 26th day of May, 1774, resolved, that the first of June, the day on which the operation of the Boston Port Bill was to commence, should be set apart by the members, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, devoutly to implore divine interposition, for averting the heavy calamities which threatened destruction to their civil rights, and the evils of a civil war,—to give them one heart and one mind, to oppose by all just and proper means, every injury to American rights.—On the publication of this resolution, the royal Governor, then Earl of Dunmore, dissolved them. The members, notwithstanding their dissolution, met in their private capacities, and signed an agreement, in which among other things, they declared that an attack made on one of their sister colonies, to compel submission to arbitrary taxes was an attack on all British America, and threatened ruin to the rights of all, unless the united kingdom of the whole be applied." 1 vol. 117. This portion of our revolutionary History is so characteristic and honourable for Virginia, so interesting to the people of Massachusetts, and the citizens of Boston in particular, that the reader will be gratified with a re-perusal of it in the language of Judge Marshall. "The Legislature of Virginia, he says, was in session when the first intelligence of the Boston Port Bill reached that province. The House of Burgesses appointed the first of June, the day on which the bill was to commence in operation, to be set apart for fasting, prayer, and humiliation, to implore the divine interposition to avert the heavy calamity which threatened destruction to their civil rights, and the evils of a civil war; and to give one heart and one mind to the people, firmly to oppose every invasion of their liberties." Similar resolutions were adopted almost every where, and the first of June became throughout the old colonies, a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, in the course of which, sermons were universally preached to the people, well calculated to inspire them with the utmost horror against the authors of the unjust suffering of their fellow subjects in Boston. In consequence of this measure the assembly was dissolved; but, before their separation, an association was entered into, signed by eighty-nine members, in which they declared that an attack on one colony to compel submission to arbitrary taxes, is an attack on all British America, and threatens ruin to the rights of all, unless the united wisdom of the whole be applied in prevention. They, therefore, recommended to the committee of correspondence, to communicate with the several committees of the other Provinces, on the expediency of appointing Deputies from the different colonies to meet annually in general Congress, and to deliberate on those general measures, which the united interests of America might

from time to time render necessary. This measure had already been proposed in local meetings in New-York and Boston." 2 vol. 162. The reader will observe, this was the third time the House of Burgesses were dissolved by their royal Governors, for their spirited measures in opposition to Parliamentary taxation. Their two last dissolutions were incurred by their exertions in support of their brethren in Massachusetts, and particularly the suffering citizens in Boston. Such patriotic sympathy, such prompt and effective co-operation, in a time of need, is entitled to a grateful recollection and acknowledgement, rather than crimination and reproach. It is observable that Massachusetts proposed the Congress of New-York, in 1765, on the occasion of the Stamp Act, and Virginia readily concurred in the measure. Virginia now was the first colony, which proposed a Congress, to be holden annually. The General Court of Massachusetts met a few weeks afterwards, and "soon after assembling, the House of Representatives, mindful of the importance of combining the wisdom of America in one great and common council, passed resolutions declaring the expediency of a meeting of committees from the several colonies for the purposes therein specified, and appointed five gentlemen as a committee on the part of Massachusetts." Marsh 2 vol. 164. The Congress met, at Philadelphia, in Sept. 1774, was repeated in May 1775, and continued during the Revolution. Payton Randolph, Speaker of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, was chosen the first President, and John Hancock, President of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, the second. When it became necessary to raise an army, and appoint a commander in chief, the Delegates from Virginia supported the election of their colleague, Colonel Washington, and the Delegates from Massachusetts cordially united in his support. Independence was not originally the object of our patriots in their opposition to the claim of Parliament. Samuel Adams, however, and some others, early foresaw its necessity and took seasonable measures to prepare for it. The progress of the public mind towards it was accelerated by the "Common Sense" of Mr. Paine, the most popular pamphlet, perhaps ever published. Boston and some other towns in Massachusetts instructed their Representatives to use their influence in the Provincial Assembly to have the Delegates of that Colony in Congress advised to move for a Declaration of Independence. But Virginia was the first Colony which set the bold example. According to the historian, Gordon, the House of Burgesses of that State, on the fifteenth day of May 1776, when there were present one hundred and twelve members, resolved unanimously, that their Delegates should be instructed to propose to Congress, that the United Colonies be, by that respectable body, declared free and independent States." 1 vol. 84. "In Virginia," says Marshall, "the public sense was so decisive on the subject, that the convention not only instructed their representatives to move the resolution in the grand council of the continent, but declared that colony an independent state, before the measure was sanctioned by Congress. "The public opinion having manifested itself in favor of independence, the great and decisive steps was determined on, and the following resolution was moved [June 7th] by Richard Henry Lee, and seconded by John Adams, "resolved, that the United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be totally dissolved." Vol. 2. 409. Dr. Ramsay says, "the motion for declaring the colonies free and independent, was first made in Congress, by Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia. He was warranted in making this motion by the particular instructions of his immediate constituents, and also by the general voice of the people of all the states.—When the time for taking the subject under consideration arrived, much knowledge, ingenuity and eloquence were displayed on both sides of the question. The debates were continued for some time, and with great animation. In these, John Adams, and John Dickinson, took leading and opposite parts." Vol. 1. 340. The motion thus made by a Virginian, seconded by a member from Massachusetts, and supported by all the representatives of both these colonies, although it was strenuously opposed by Mr. Dickinson from Delaware, & some other delegates of the middle states, was finally carried by a vast majority. The eventful Declaration was adopted and signed on the 4th of July, 1776. Mr. Marshall adds, in a note, "Mr. Jefferson, Mr. John Adams, Mr. Franklin, Mr. Sherman and Mr. R. Livingston, were appointed to prepare this declaration; and the draft reported by the committee has been generally attributed to Mr. Jefferson." Vol. 2: 411. The late venerable Dr. Stiles, president of Yale College, speaking of this measure in his eulogical sermons, preached before the governor and general assembly of Connecticut, in 1783, says, in figurative language, that Jefferson "poured the soul

of the continent into the monumental act of independence." Further proofs might be added. But those already adduced are sufficient to substantiate Mr. Bidwell's assertion, that Massachusetts and Virginia pre-eminently harmonized on the momentous questions of opposition to parliamentary taxation, the prosecution of the war and the declaration of independence. He might have added, that the same harmony between these two states continued until a period subsequent to the great measure of forming and adopting the federal constitution. "While the country," says Ramsay, who, being a member of congress personally knew the fact, "while the country, free from foreign force and domestic violence, enjoyed tranquility, a proposition was made by Virginia to all the other states to meet in convention, for the purpose of digesting a form of government equal to the exigencies of the Union. The first motion for this purpose was made by Mr. Madison and he had the pleasure of seeing it acceded to by twelve of the states; and finally to issue in a new constitution, which bids fair to repay the citizens of the United States for the toils, dangers and wastes of the revolution." Vol. 2. 341. In the state conventions of Massachusetts and Virginia, according to the printed debates, the constitution was advocated and opposed upon substantially the same grounds, and adopted by about the same majorities; and the amendments recommended by the two conventions, were similar in substance, when the government was organized, under this system, Mr. Madison, who had first proposed a national convention for forming a new constitution; who, in that convention, had himself drafted the most material parts of the constitution, and been its most distinguished advocate in the convention of Virginia, moved, in the house of representatives, the subject of amendments; in consequence of which the most essential of those which had been recommended by Massachusetts and Virginia, and several other states, were proposed by congress and ratified by a constitutional majority of the states; and many of our citizens who had before been dissatisfied were thereby reconciled to the constitution, and became its warmest supporters. Without detailing the patriotic exertions of other states, because they are not within the scope of our present design, we are warranted by historical evidence in asserting that, until a period later than the establishment of the constitution of the United States; that is until Federalism, under the auspices of Alexander Hamilton and his party, diverged from the Republican principles of the revolution, Massachusetts and Virginia were happily united and harmonious in their sentiments, and in their views on the interests of their common country. It becomes the people of both these states to recollect their former political concordance, to reflect upon the causes and consequences of that process of mutual alienation, which has lately been the parent object of a certain party among us, and to consider seriously the importance of renewing their former friendship, respect and co-operation in the Republican cause. A YANKEY. PROVIDENCE, (R. I.) Jan 31. On Tuesday evening last, about 10 o'clock, after an incessant continuance for about 75 hours, ended the nineteenth severe cold storm, experienced at Providence, since the beginning of December. The present winter probably exceeds all that this place has ever experienced, since its settlement, for severity of frost, and frequent interchanges of snow and rain. The river and harbour still continue strongly frozen and no prospect appears of their soon being open. NEWBURYPORT, January 29. A tremendous snow storm, from N. W. commenced on Sunday morning, and continued with increasing violence, through that day, the succeeding night and yesterday.—We have heard of no damage sustained by shipping on our coast as yet, but as there has been a number of sail expected, we entertain fears for their safety. BOSTON, January 31. MELANCHOLY INTELLIGENCE. On Saturday night last, commenced a heavy snow storm from the N. E. which continued, with unabating violence, until Tuesday evening. The melancholy effects which have been experienced on our coast, from this severe and protracted storm, are, we fear, greater, than it is now our painful task to narrate. Loss of ship Favorite. The ship Favorite, Nathaniel M. Farley, master, sailed from hence, on Saturday morning, for Lisbon.—After standing off, with a light breeze from N. A. M. until 5 P. M. the wind began to haul to the N. E. and blowing on to snow, the weather very thick.—Capt. F. thought best to heave about and stand in, and endeavour to make a harbour.—he ran in about a mile above the light, and came too, with both anchors ahead, and rode until 3 o'clock on Monday morning, then blowing very hard from E. N. E. the ship parted both cables, and in 10 minutes struck on Rocky Point, and is bilged; it is expected a large part of the