

**The electrical eel: or, gymnotus electricus. Inscrib'd to the Honourable
Members of the R***I S*****y / by Adam Strong, Naturalist [i.e. J. Perry].**

Contributors

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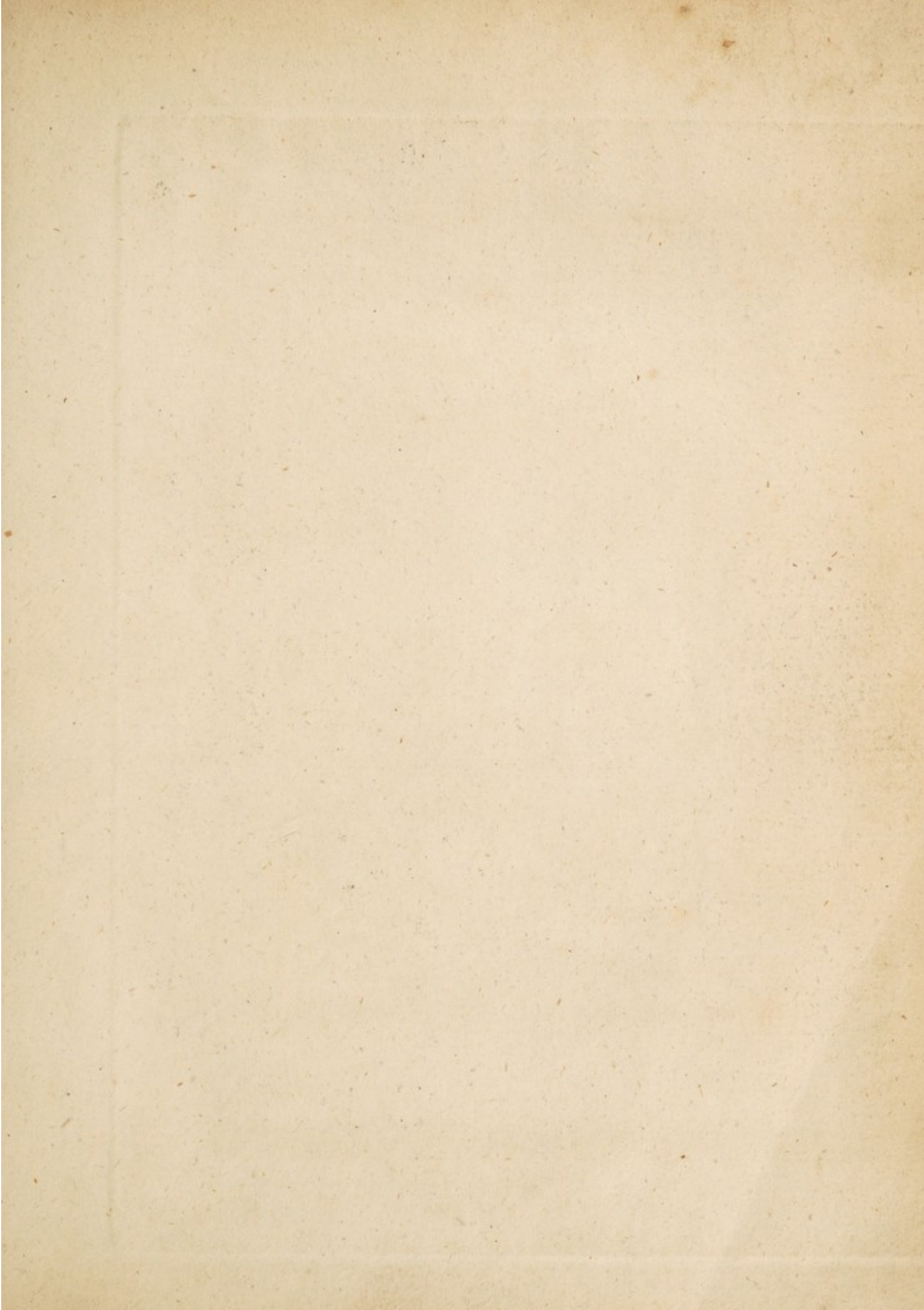
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THE THIRD EDITION,
OF THE
ELECTRICAL EEL:
OR,
GYMNOTUS ELECTRICUS.

PERRY, J.
C





*Pleasing was his shape,
And lovely; never since of Serpent kind
Lovelier;*

MILTON.

T H E
E L E C T R I C A L E E L :
O R ,
G Y M N O T U S E L E C T R I C U S .

INSCRIBED TO THE
Honourable Members of the R***L S*****Y,

B Y
A D A M S T R O N G ,
N A T U R A L I S T .

THE THIRD EDITION, with considerable ADDITIONS,

So glister'd the *smooth Eel*, and into fraud
Led EVE, our credulous Mother, to the tree
Of *Prohibition*, ROOT of all our woe!

MILTON.

L O N D O N :
Printed for J. BEW, in PATER-NOSTER-Row.
M,DCC,LXXVII.

THE
ELECTRICAL

GYMNOTUS ELECTRICUS

PRESENTED TO THE

Honorable Members of the Royal Society

BY

WILLIAM STURGEON



THE Tenth Edition

Printed by J. B. New, at the Press of the Royal Society, 1, Great Marlborough Street, London, W. 1.

LONDON: 1891.

PRINTED BY

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO
The most HONOURABLE
And
LEARNED MEMBERS
Of
The ROYAL SOCIETY of ***** , celebrated for their universal
Researches into the
Occult Mysteries
Of
NATURE :
This
Treatise on the natural, secret, powerful, and most efficacious
Principles of ELECTRICITY,
Not
Derived from the friction of Bodies, but proved and deduced from
The GYMNOTUS ELECTRICUS,
Is
Now offered by an ADEPT,
To
Their sagacious considerations ; to prove,
That
This rare Phænomenon
Of NATURE,
Is the original SERPENT of SIN,—as mentioned
By that very Wise,

But old Philosopher,
 And Phyfician, MOSES,
 To have tempted the divine EVE, in the living Garden of EDEN.
 As thefe Labours and Studies,
 To fix the Genus and Properties
 Of this infinuating Reptile,
 Have been the purfuit of the Author's Life, from Fifteen to
 Thirty Eight,
 He flatters himfelf, that the Reward of his Studies
 Will be an Honourable Admiffion
 Into
 YOUR LEARNED SOCIETY;
 And if
 He has fo well ufed his time, in the pleafing investigations
 Of
 The natural virtues of the EEL,
 He will, with unfeigned
 Gratitude, confefs,
 That it is the only circumftance of his Studies
 That hath
 Produced him any fignal Reward.
 For to obtain
 Such a Meed, and fuch a Difinction,
 For the pleafures of
 Diving into the fecrets
 Of Nature,
 Will be a gratification to his mental faculties,
 Unexpe-

Unexperienced in any former part
Of his Life.

Nor will he be wanting in the most upright
Testimonies of gratitude, to acknowledge the
Insuperable honour confer'd

On, GENTLEMEN,

Your Humble, and

Obedient Servant,

ADAM STRONG, NATURALIST.

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T H E

E L E C T R I C A L E E L :

O R,

G Y M N O T U S E L E C T R I C U S .

IN days of yore, when Mr. Adam
Possess'd fair Eve, as Miss or Madam,
In all the pride of love ;
For Heav'n allowed no other Man
To court as Fop ;—or Bull *, or Swan,
Or chaste coquetting Dove.

* It is scarce necessary to say that Europa received the polite addresses of Jove as a Bull—she liked the low of the animal : as did Miss Leda the feather of the Swan. These, though very old tales, have been put to the blush, by the more accomplished addresses of the Pidgeon.

B

Yet

Yet she, fly creature, could contrive,
(For female fancy's all alive)

To furnish an intrigue ;
As well as modern ladies do,
In spite of husbands strong and true,
With Captain or with Teague *.

Upon the blooming Tree † of Life,
(You know the tale) this beauteous wife,

Fair

* The ladies at St. James's can vouch for the propriety of this observation,
from the celebrated Jemmy H——y, to the Mr. O'—— B——.

† O Serpent cunning to deceive,
Sure 'tis the tree that tempted Eve,
The crimson apples hung so fair,
Alas! what woman could forbear.

Fair as the gentle May* :
 Cast such a fly, bewitching glance,
 The very fruit † began to dance,
 A smart electrick hay.

'Tis very strange—when ladies whims,
 Will risk their slender, taper limbs,

The tree alone which could content her,
 All nature, Susan, seeks the centre :
 Yet let us still poor Eve forgive,
 It is the tree by which we live,
 For lovely woman still it grows,
 And only in the centre blows

ANON.

* Mr. Pope has told this cuckoldom from Chaucer with pleasantry in his Poems.

† And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
 High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
 Of vegetable gold.

MILTON.

Their

Their passion's such to climb.

O could I rise in poesy,

As Eve did to the vital Tree,

I'd reign the true sublime.

By this crab-apple tree of knowledge

The classick fruit of ev'ry college,

There was a pond * most rare,

Where this fair, ancient, country lass,

For want of barber, toilet, glafs,

Comb'd out her auburn hair.

Within

* Milton says it was a river, spread into a liquid plain, on the green bank of which Eve laid down and saw herself—

Within this bright, tranfluent wave,

She to herfelf became a flave,

And did her charms adore ;

There ſhe would gaze away whole hours,

And ſtudy attitudes and lures,

Like A****r--B****y**re.

The beaſts grew amouſous of her face,

Levee'd her beauties, prais'd her grace,

————— I ſtarted back,

It ſtarted back : but pleas'd I ſoon return'd ;

Pleas'd it return'd as ſoon ; with anſwering looks

Of ſympathy and love.

In ſhort, ſhe looked as well in it as any other lady in her glaſs, nor was ſhe a bit better pleas'd with herſelf than Mrs. Baddeley, when ſhe practiſes looks to fing,—

“ No flower that blows, is like the roſe.”

Nor do I think ſhe had finer teeth, or ſhewed them half ſo much.

None her attention drew,
 'Till from the pond the lengthen'd Eel,*
 Bewitch'd, began her pow'r to feel,
 And from the mud he grew.

He grew erect †—he won her eyes,
 Both by his sleekness and his size,

* Mr. Milton has taken the liberty to make this speaking reptile a Serpent, from the authority of Moses; but all Philosophers and Naturalists allow the creature to be the *Gymnotus Electricus*.

† Milton agrees in the erect posture that he stood before Eve—

—————His head,
 Crested aloft—and carbuncle his eyes:
 With burnish'd neck of verdant gold *erect*
 Amid his circling spires——
 Pleasing was his shape and lovely——

And

And thus the Dame * address'd :

“ Fair, beauteous lady—give your hand,

“ For you alone can make me stand,

“ As you have made me blefs'd.”

Pleas'd with his manners and his speech,

She did the creature next beseech,

* All the Poets and Patriachs have given speech to the serpent, therefore the elocation of my Eel is not more surprising than Mr. Cox's self-moving thing, which he calls an Automaton. And as the Eel is of the genus of the Serpent, the mistake might easily be made by some of the old lady authors :—but what further confirms me that it was an Eel, and not a Serpent, the first notice the creature took of the young gentlewoman was, when she came to observe her tresses in the fountain, or the pond.

To leave his oozey bed ;
 He did—and in a moment prefs'd,
 The place—in Paradise the best,
 As by Dan Moses faid.

Th' electrick fire soon warm'd her heart,
 The fire to all she did impart,

And nature own'd the feel :
 From that gay period up to this,

The Wife, the Matron, and the Miss,

Hallow'd—th' Electrick Eel*.

* Many historians continue the worship of Serpents to the Egyptians, but it is a creature universally adored by the fair sex of all countries, under the name of the Eel.

What are so like to Snakes as Eels,

They 're fimilar as two coach wheels,

And what pray 's in a name ?

The Devil's us'd for every thing,

Afs, Monkey, Tyrant, Fool, or King,

And Devil's all the fame.

Fable, and metaphor are things,

Which fledge the Poet's callow wings,

And make them all so civil ;

And if you dare your bard believe,

An Eel electrified dame Eve,

Nor Serpent—or a Devil.

D

Therefore

Therefore to end this long dispute,

And make all classick blockheads * mute,

Who now abuse each other:

Let them this orthodoxy feel,

This arbor vitæ was an Eel,

And long'd for by our mother.

- * Mistaken scholars may dispute,
What kind was the forbidden fruit:
By arguments delusive wrought,
That 'twas an apple, some have thought;
Unlike it both in taste and shape,
It was no apple—but a grape.
What apple with insipid juice,
Effects so wonderous could produce?
But for the grape mankind allow,
In it superior virtues grow.—

Though this author proves the apple a grape, I do not believe a word of it—for I do not think wine is more fatal to the head, than cyder to the bowels.

Is it not since the favourite fish,

And ev'ry matron's standing dish,

That dare to see or feel ?

Is there a dame who loves the joke,

But what hath felt th' electrick stroke *

Of this elastick Eel ?

Therefore the Serpent and the Tree,

Divested of fring'd simile,

* See the Advertisement. The shock felt at 2s. 6d.—the spark extracted at 5s. Nothing of this sort was ever offered so cheap to the public before, particularly in King's-Court, or Covent-Garden.

Is

Is a plain Eel of course ;
Which ev'ry cook-maid in the land,
At certain times doth take in hand,
And skin without remorse †.

Torment no more our tuneful ears,

“ With holy oil and pious tears,

“ Of Moses' beard and rod ;”

The pious father—he lov'd fish ;

At ninety, what was Sarah's dish ?

A very nice crimp'd Cod.

† This barbarity in our servants is obvious ; roasting of Lobsters, and skinning of Eels, are expressions almost proverbial of cruelty.

What makes our first felicity,

But this pure electricity,

Divested of all fiction :

Motion makes heat, and heat makes love,

Creatures below, and things above,

Are all produc'd by friction *.

In David's time the thing was plain ;

For what was old Uriah slain.

* Friction, as defined by Dr. Johnson, in his Dictionary, is the rubbing of two bodies together. Bacon says, in his Natural History, that gentle friction draweth forth the nourishment, by making the parts a little hungry, and heating them,—this friction I wish to be done in a morning.

That man of flint and steel ?

Sure Bethsheba had made it clear,

She did not like Uriah's spear,

As well as David's Eel.

In Cleopatra's * luscious time,

When luxury was in its prime.

And Cæsar in his glory :

What was the wanton Gypfy's joy ?

Not the high mettled hook'd-nos'd boy,

Nor all his deeds in story :

* This riggish gentlewoman, when but fifteen, was carried on the back of Apollodorus, through her brother's camp, and laid at the feet of Cæsar. She afterwards hopped on one leg 150 paces in the public market place, and died by the bite of Mark Anthony's Eel, though historians have confounded it with Asp.

No,

No, it was this phœnomenon,
 This hieroglyphick rais'd on stone,
 The Eel of mighty Tyber *,
 Which always did create a smile ;
 It beat the Snakes of flimy Nile,
 In gristle, nerve, and fibre.

'Twas this the sturdy Tarquin bore †,
 And stab'd Lucretia to the core ;

But

* The world has ever confessed the taste of Cleopatra, and by the preference she gave to Pompey, Cæsar and Anthony, it is plain she preferred the Eels of Tyber to the Serpents of the Nile.

† There is no part of the Roman History so little understood, as this :— it was not that Lucretia did not like the addresses of the sturdy Tarquin, but her slave was privy to the adultery, so she made the best of a lost game. Many

But not with pointed steel :

For she, most chaste, and virtuous dame,

Rather than tarnish Roman fame,

Receiv'd the silver Eel.

The beauties of Indostan's * clime,

Where virtues in its sacred prime,

English Ladies would do the same, but for the happy convenience of divorce,—
for there is no fame they value equal to life.

For she that kisses and is taken,

Still does not hope in vain ;

For tho' she's caught—she saves her bacon,

And lives to kiss again.

* The women of India always burn with their dead husbands ; surely this is a great sacrifice to the Caro sposo.—In England, it is reversed, the wives always burn for any other man than a husband.

Where

Where loving living dames
 Mount gorgeous drefs'd the funeral pile,
 And on the Eel that's dead they smile,
 And for it grill in flames.

More modern Belles, in this great town
 Have added to this fish—renown,
 By sacrifice and zeal :

Pray, who so oft' hath prostrate been,
 As lady Sarah—(beauty's Queen)
 To this erected Eel ?

F

What

What led the Grosvenor astray,

What witch'd the Lady M---- H---

And her simplicity?

Pardon the plainness of my diction.

'Tis thunder that is made by friction,

And electricity *.

What made the pretty H---- fly,

With S----n to a milder sky,

And dance the Cyprian reel?

But this smart, short electric shock,

Which will invig'rate hen or cock,

And flash like flint and steel.

* Bodies electrified by a sphere of glass turned nimbly round, emit flame. A property in bodies when rubbed till they are warm, draw substances to them.

QUINCY.

But see the luscious Ligonier,

Prefers her post-boy to her Peer,

His stable—straw cotillon :

What Devil could possess her head,

To make her leave his Lordship's bed ?

—The Eel of Bob Postillion.

The gaudy——quits her Duke,

Spite of intreaty and rebuke,

Her friends, and little nursery :

The gentle lady could not rest,

This Eel was upper in her breast,

'Till she was under——.

What

What gave the C----- pain and spleen,
To fight and follow Count De G-----

Cet gallant de dix mille ?

His gay high dressing with her took,
He doubtless is the first French cook,
For stuffing spitch'd cock-Eel.

What made poor *****'s Countess burn,
And from her Indian hero turn,

So gallant once and gay :
In taste of colours, Ladies vary,
***** she thought was far more airy,
Than cold and sober *****.

But

But Electricity was vain :

From Grosvenor-square to Drury-lane *,

All sorts of Eels she tried.

Yet poor Gymnotus made remark,

Her wants were such for fire and spark,

No Devil had supplied.

What

* In such a case—what lady cou'd,
(Compos'd of am'rous flesh and blood)

Have any hesitation——

Whether she'd choose a shrivell'd man,
Dry as a chip, from Indostan,

Or one of th' ***** Nation.

A Lady—like a Chinese pig,
And even too with young ones big,

Both frisky, fond, and wild :

Had better tho' her fame's at stake,
A double consumation make,

To help an embryo child.

What made the fair T----- figh,
And troll the tongue and roll the eye,

That wench of manners pith ?

Eccentrick girl — she gain'd a deal,

When she received the Conger-Eel,

Of gallant L----- S---th.

Why

Against her choice, who dare say nay ?

For youth——she left a man quite *****—

A worn-out Maccaronie :

For when we come to wear and tear,

All Matrons will this truth declare,

Work's better for being *****.

And therefore cease to name the duel,

The thing in truth was bold and cruel,

Such men there was no parting :

Or who would stand a--- practise mark,

For twenty minuets in the dark,

Not even *Target Martin* *.

* Who used so to practise before he fought with Wilkes——

Why should the F---r---r hunt the town,

To fix the boy of County Down,

Where harlots make their meal?

Ah---honey dear---her taste is good,

She must have one of Liffey mud,

True, Irish collard Eel.

See

Brave Piercy, bold—in Chevy Field,

To whom the Douglass deign'd to yield,

Ne'er fought so long and well:

Hot Witherington in doleful dumps,

In half the time was on his stumps,

And tumbled down to Hell.

The * deed—the mighty deed is done,

The Heroes fight—the Lady's won,

* There never was known a Rencountre, wherein more true spirit was shown than in this—and though the Gentleman challenged had no ways deserved the violent attack of the other—yet when brought forth—the challenger owned, that he fought like Achilles.

And

See the high priestess of our shore,
Who of this fish hath gorged more,

Than is in Shannon's river :

See C---g---s he droops within her arms,
Says, fighting o'er her faded charms,

No Eel can flash * for ever.

And She, most virtuous dame,
Rises and leaves her man of ****,
And madly throws herself away,
A blot to female fame.

* By the advertisement, the Eel is grown so feeble this cold weather †, that the spark is only extracted three times a week.

† The first Edition of this Poem was published in March.

What is this quick electrick fire,
That raifes every maid's desire,

In little, or in much :

Where is there one—nor longs to feel,
The vigour of th' electric Eel,

T' extract the fire by touch ?

There's not a letcher of these days,
Cold votaries to Charlotte Hayes,

Whose knell the Loves have rang,

Old H-----n, and F-----h dry,

Lank V---l, and poor Captain P---,

And shrivell'd Count H----g.

H

With

With L--y--l--n these tried the flock,

But they were lifeless as a rock,

And dead as County Paris :

He, electricity defies,

Who feels no fire from beauty's eyes,

The eyes of Sally Harris *.

Poor Jemmy Twitcher, pious Sire,

He shambled forth——in hopes the fire,

* The rape of Pomona is well known to the bucks of the turf, and how she took 500l.—the match was weight for inches.

Might help his ancient clay :

For he alas ! for many days,

By Spanish flies * had been in blaze,

To warm his own fair R---y.

But Spanish flies were all in vain,

The Cupids they had left his train,

* The fate of poor General Armiger should be a caution to these old Bucks, how they tamper with such provocatives. When the General died, the King asked Lady Bridget T----- what occasioned his sudden death : She replied, " Please your Majesty, the Night Mare." But it was better explained in the following distich by a wag on the occasion.

On the Death of General Armiger.

He was a Soldier cannot be denied,

For in the Covert-way he fought and died.

ANON.

With him---the Eel was dead :
 Cantharides, did even fail,
 They never touch'd poor Twitcher's tail,
 But fir'd his Lordship's head.

Green * A-----w too desired much,
 To have a smart electric touch,

* Thomas Cecial's nose, was de color amaratado, como de Berengena—of a darkish green colour, like a Berengene, or malum insanum—a mad apple. Covarruvias (a Spanish author) observes, that he who eats this fruit, will be of a dark green colour. SHELTON, p. 2. C. 14.

To help a dull translation * :

Gymnotus said,—the work is trash,

He shall not have a vivid flash,

To save it from damnation.

Ye gaudy guards—ye all might laugh,

To hear the Prince of Paragraph,

* Perhaps no man ever disgraced a stage so highly, by a piece of five acts, as this military hero ; nor any man discredited so much the immortal Voltaire. We may say of it, as of the Rehearsal—if it was not for the character of Bayes—there would not be wit enough about it to keep it sweet ; and was it not for the sweet vernal rose of Sheridan's Epilogue, it would stink.

Invoke a vivid spark :

But Cosmo † did in vain desire,

The Eel, nor his electric fire,

Could touch a Soul so dark.

D---g, that cataract of law,

Who can make out, or mend a flaw,

For the first time did fail ;

His eloquence in vain he rung,

He hath the Eel about his tongue,

But not about his tail.

† Celebrated for his Letters on the Ton, and dealing in scandal at the expense of all he visited,

This strange Electricus Gymnotus,

From Surinam was lately brought us,

To help our dull conditions :

But the Torpedo * numb'd the state,

So all thy fire is brought too late,

To warm our dispositions.

* A fish that benumbs the hand when touched, but may be eaten; so say Naturalists; but I rather think it infects the intellects, and the present system of politicks, proves the diet dangerous to such men as are to conduct a state and its affairs.

ADVER—

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

“ This wonderful electrick fish,

“ Through all the world a standing dish :

“ The first that e’er was shown

“ Of such a size—of such a length ;

“ There’s none—but what applauds it strength,

“ Who’ve felt it in the town.

“ Each Domino, and Domina,

“ Attend these rare phænomena ;

“ Ye

“ Ye maids pray make the trial :

“ It hath the properties of wine,

“ Of fire, of love,—the true divine,

“ It beats the *Leyden* * *Phial*.

“ 'Tis hop'd the virtuosi wife,

“ And ladies too will turn their eyes,

“ And deign the thing to feel :

“ As nature's subject to decay,

“ Their warmth alone can fix its stay,

“ Or cold may freeze the Eel.

* *Leyden Phial*.—There is no occasion to explain the strength of this Phial, every old woman in Billingsgate hath tried its powers.

“ We do not mean by words—t’ impose :

“ The precious time, O do not lose !

“ We mean no false seduction !

“ Here all the virtuosi mingle ;

“ And ’tis allow’d by Sir *John Pringle**,

“ A rare, and great production.

“ It hath been smuggled round the globe,

“ Beneath the petticoat and robe,

“ But not in such condition :

“ Ladies, and Gentlemen attend,

“ This Eel will prove a mutual friend,

“ And please-----on exhibition !”

* Sir John Pringle hath repeatedly declared, he never saw any thing like it in all his practice among the whole College of Physicians.

Lord * M---, to Kitty Frederick brought

An Eel---which was of no great note :

Then be nor coy---or filly !

But now repair to see, and feel---

Lord † Ch---l--y shows this wond'rous Eel,

And—lives in Piccadilly.

CETERA DESUNT.

* This noble Peer of the verdant ribbon and north star, hath systematically proved, and by it destroyed the fame of Euclid, by the plainest demonstration in life, that no man can raise a perpendicular at will---

Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.

† It is difficult to determine where his Lordship procured this Eel :---it is given out that he found it in a river of Surinam, but I believe the Circumstance no more than Lady Grosvenor, or Mrs. E---l--t.

Lord & Mrs. to Kitty Frederick brought

An Act--which was of no great note:

Then he not covet--or silly!

But now repeat to fact, and feel--

Lord & Ch--I--y shows this wordious Fel

And--lives in Piccadilly.

CETERA DESUNT.

* This noble Peer of the verdant ribbon and north star, hath (I lament-
cally proved, and by the dejected splendour of Euclyd, by the plainest demon-
stration in life, that no man can raise a perpendicular at will--

None mention omnibus their paper.

† It is difficult to determine where his Lordship procured this Fel--it is
given out that he found it in a river of Guiana, but I believe the Circum-
stance more than Lady Grosvenor, or Mr. E--I--c.