

# **The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 07, No. 40, February, 1861 eBook**

## **The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 07, No. 40, February, 1861**

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# Page 1

## OUR ARTISTS IN ITALY.

*William page.*

Among artists, William Page is a painter.

This proposition may seem, to the great public which has so long and so well known him and his works, somewhat unnecessary. There are few who are not familiar with his paintings. Whether these seem great or otherwise, whether the Venus be pure or gross, we may not here discuss; the public has, and will have, many estimates; yet on one point there is no difference of opinion, apparently. The world willingly calls him whose hand wrought these pictures a painter. It has done so as a matter of course; and we accept the title.

But perhaps the title comes to us from this man's studio, charged with a significance elevating it above the simply self-evident, and rendering it worthy of the place we have given it as a germ proposition.

Not every one who uses pigments can say, "I also am a painter." To him who would make visible the ideal, there are presented the marble, the pencil, and the colors; and should he employ either of these, just in proportion to his obedience to the laws of each will he be a sculptor, a designer, or a painter; and the revelations in stone, in light and shade, or on canvas, shall be his witnesses forevermore,—witnesses of him not only as an artist, in view of his relation to the ideal world, but as possessing a right to the especial title conferred by the means which he has chosen to be his interpreter.

The world has too much neglected these means of interpretation. It has condemned the science which would perfect the art, as if the false could ever become the medium of the true. The art of painting has suffered especially from the influence of mistaken views.

Nor could it be otherwise. Color-manifestation, of all art-utterance, is the least simple. It requires the fulfilment of a greater number of conditions than are involved in any other art. He who has selected colors as his medium cannot with impunity neglect form; light and shade must be to him as important as they are to the designer in *chiaro-scuro*; while above all are the mystery and power of color.

There is perplexity in this. The science of form seems to be vast enough for any man's genius. No more than he accomplishes is demanded of the genuine sculptor. His life has been grand with noble fulfilments. We, and all generations, hold his name in the sacred simplicity which has ever been the sign of the consummate. Men say, Phidias, Praxiteles, and know that they did greatly and sufficiently.



Yet with the science which these men had we combine elements equally great, and still truth demands the consummate. Hence success in painting has been the rarest success which the world has known. If we search its history page by page, the great canvas-leaves written over with innumerable names yield us less than a score of those who have overcome the difficulties of its science, through that, achieving art, and becoming painters.

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Yes, many men have painted, many great artists have painted, without earning the title which excellence gives. Overbeck, the apostle artist, whose rooms are sacred with the presence of the divine, never earned that name. Nor did thousands who before him wrought patiently and earnestly.

We think that we have among us a man who *has* earned it.

What does this involve? Somewhat more than the ability critically to distinguish colors and to use them skilfully.

Although practice may discipline and develop this power, there must exist an underlying physiological fitness, or all study and experience will be unavailing. In many persons, the organization of the eye is such that there can be no correct perception of the value, relation, and harmony of hues. There exists often an utter inability to perceive differences between even the primary colors.

The late sculptor Bartholomew declared himself unable to decide which of two pieces of drapery, the one crimson and the other green, was the crimson. Nor was this the result of inexperience. He had been for years familiar not only with Nature's coloring, but with the works of the best schools of art, and had been in continual contact with the first living artists.

The instances of this peculiar blindness are exceptional, yet not more so than is the perfection of vision which enables the eye to discriminate accurately the innumerable tints derived from the three primitives.

Nothing can be finer than the sense of identity and harmony resulting from this exquisite organization. We have been told that there is a workman at the Gobelin manufactory who can select twenty-two thousand tints of the material employed in the construction of its famous tapestries. This capability is, of course, almost wholly dependent upon rare physical qualifications; yet it is the basis, the very foundation of a painter's power.

Still, it is *but* the foundation. An "eye for color" never yet made any man a colorist.

Perhaps there can be no severer test of this faculty of perception than the copying of excellent pictures. And among the few successful copies which have been produced, Page's stand unsurpassed.

The ability to perceive Nature, when translated into art, is, however, a possession which this painter shares with many. Nor is he alone in the skill which enables him to realize upon his own canvas the effects which some master has rendered.

It is in the presence of Nature itself that a power is demanded with which mechanical superiority and physical qualifications have little to do. Here the man stands alone,—the only medium between the ideal and the outward world, wherefrom he must choose

the signs which alone are permitted to become the language of his expression. None can help him, as before he was helped by the man whose success was the parent of his own. Here is no longer copying.

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In the first place, is to be found the limit of the palette. Confining ourselves to the external, what, of all the infinitude of phenomena to which the vision is related, so corresponds to the power of the palette that it may become adequately representative thereof?

Passing over many minor points in which there seems to be an imperfect relation between Nature's effects and those of pigments, we will briefly refer to the great discrepancy occasioned by the luminosity of light. In all the lower effects of light, in the illumination of Nature and the revelation of colored surfaces, in the exquisite play and power of reflected light and color, and in the depth and richness of these when transmitted, we find a noble and complete response on the palette. But somewhere in the ascending scale a departure from this happy relation begins to be apparent. The *color*-properties of light are no longer the first. Another element—an element the essential nature of which is absorbed in the production of the phenomena of color—now asserts itself. Hitherto the painter has dealt with light indirectly, through the mediatorship of substances. The rays have been given to him, broken tenderly for his needs;—ocean and sky, mountain and valley, draperies and human faces, all things, from stars to violets, have diligently prepared for him, as his demands have arisen, the precious light. And while he has restrained himself to the representation of Nature subdued to the limit of his materials, he has been victorious.

Turner, in whose career can be found almost all that the student needs for example and for warning, is perhaps the best illustration of wise temperance in the choice of Nature to be rendered into art. Nothing can be finer than some of those early works wrought out in quiet pearly grays,—the tone of Nature in her soberest and tenderest moods. In these, too, may be observed those touches of brilliant color,—bits of gleaming drapery, perhaps,—prophetic flecks along the gray dawn. Such pictures are like pearls; but art demands amber, also.

When necessity has borne the artist out of this zone, the peaceful domain of the imitator, he finds himself impelled to produce effects which are no longer the simple phases of color, but such as the means at his disposal fail to accomplish. In the simpler stages of coloring, when he desired to represent an object as blue or red, it was but necessary to use blue or red material. Now he has advanced to a point where this principle is no longer applicable. The illuminative power of light compels new methods of manipulation.

As examples of a thorough comprehension of the need of such a change in the employment of means, of the character of that change, of the skill necessary to embody its principles, and of utter success in the result, we have but to suggest the name and works of Titian.

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But the laws which Titian discovered have been unheeded for centuries; and they might have remained so, had not the mind of William Page felt the necessity of their revival and use. To him there could be no chance-work. Art must have laws as definite and immutable as those of science; indeed, the body in which the spirit of art is developed, and through which it acts, must be science itself. He saw, that, if exact imitation of Nature be taken as the law in painting, there must inevitably occur the difficulty to which we have before referred,—that, above a certain point, paint no longer undergoes transfiguration, thereby losing its character as mere coloring material,—that, if the ordinary tone of Nature be held as the legitimate key-note, the scope of the palette would be exhausted before success could be achieved.

Any one of Turner's latest pictures may serve to illustrate the nature of this difficulty. Although in his early practice he was remarkable for his judicious restraint, it is evident that the splendors of the higher phenomena of light had for him unlimited fascination; and he may be traced advancing cautiously through that period of his career which was marked by the influence of Claude, toward what he hoped would prove, and perhaps believed to be, a realization of such splendors.

It must have been observed by those who have studied his later pictures, that, while the low passages of the composition are wonderfully fine and representative, all the higher parts, those supposed or intended to stand for the radiance of dazzling light, fail utterly in representative capacity. There is an abundance of the most brilliant pigment, but it is still paint,—unmitigated ochre and white lead. The spectator is obliged to recede from the picture until distance enables the eye to transmute the offending material and reconcile the conflicting passages.

To accomplish the result of rendering the quality and effect of high light was one of the problems to which Mr. Page years ago turned his attention; and he found its solution in the transposition of the scale. The pitch of Nature could not be adopted as the immutable in art. That were impossible, unless art presumed to cope with Nature.

More than he, no man could respect the properties and qualities of the visible world. His ideas of the truthful rendering of that which became the subject of his pencil might seem preposterous to those who knew not the wonderful significancy which he attached to individual forms and tints. Yet, in imitation, where is the limit? What is possible? Must there be any sacrifice?

Evidently there must be; and of course it follows that the less important must be sacrificed. Nature herself has taught the artist that the most variable of all her phenomena is that of *tone*. Other truths of Nature have a character of permanency which the artist cannot modify without violating the first principles of art. He is required to render the essential; and to render the essential of that which art cannot sacrifice, if it would, and continue art, he foregoes the non-essential and evanescent.

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Not only is this permitted,—it is demanded. It is a law through which alone success is attainable. In obedience to it, Mr. Page adopts a key somewhat lower than that of Nature as a point of departure, using his degrees of color frugally, especially in the ascending scale. With this economy, when he approaches the luminous effects of Nature, he finds, just where any other palette would be exhausted, upon his own a reserve of high color. With this, seeking only a corresponding effect of light in that lower tone which assumes no rivalry with the infinite glory of Nature, he attains to a representation fully successful.

We would not have it understood that a mere transposition of the scale is all that is required to accomplish such a result; only this,—that in no other way can such a result be secured. To color well, to color so that forms upon the canvas give back tints like those of the objects which have served as models, is only half the work. Quality, as well as color, must be attained. Local, reflected, and transmitted color can be imitated; but as in the attempt to represent light its luminousness is the element which defeats the artist, so, throughout Nature, quality, texture, are the elements which most severely test his power.

Could any indispensable truth be considered secondary, it might be assumed that rendering truthfully the qualities of Nature is the first and highest of art. The forms and colors of objects vary infinitely. It might be said that the law of all existence is, in these two particulars, that of change. From the time a human being is born until it disappears in the grave, from the day when the first leaves break the mould to that which sees the old tree fall, the form of each has been modified hourly.

But that which differentiates objects more completely than any other property is quality. The sky over us, and the waters of the earth, are subject to infinite variations. Yet, whether in the tiny drop that trembles at the point of a leaf or in the vast ocean-globe of our planet, in the torpor of forest-ponds or in the wrath of cataracts, water never loses its quality of wetness,—the open sky never that of dryness. These two characteristics are of course entirely the reverse of each other,—as unlike as are the properties of transparency and opacity,—which they involve.

So, throughout Nature, one truth, that of texture, is the distinguishing; and this distinctive element is that which cannot be sacrificed; for through it are Nature's finest laws manifested. And the painter finds in his obedience to her demands his highest power over the material which serves him in his efforts to embody the true and the beautiful.

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It is, then, this which compels us to estimate Mr. Page a painter,—a man especially organized for his profession,—chosen by its demands,—set apart, by his wonderful adaptation to its requirements, from all the world. In virtue of this specialty, the necessity arose early in his life to seek excellence in his department of art,—to search the depths of its philosophy and discover its vital principles,—to analyze its methods and expose its errors. It led him to investigate the relation between the phenomena of Nature and the effects of painting; it guided him to a clear perception of the laws of art-translation; above all, it compelled him to practise what he believed to be the true.

Thus much of the painter;—now what of the artist?

It does not necessarily follow, that, because a man is a great painter, he is also a great artist. Yet we may safely infer, that, if he has been true in one department of the several which constitute art, he cannot have been false in others. Should there be a shortcoming, it must be that of a man whose mission does not include that wherein he fails. Fidelity to himself is all we should demand. We say this for those who are disposed to depreciate what an artist actually accomplishes, because in some one point Turner or Overbeck surpasses him. Nor do we say it apologetically. The man, who, basing his action upon the evident purpose of the organization which God has given him, fulfils his destiny, requires no apology.

We have seen something of the faithfulness which has marked Mr. Page's pursuit of excellence in the external of his art. He has wrought that which proves his claim to a broader title than that of painter. Were it not for the vagueness which involves the appellation of historical painter, it might be that. Even were we obliged to confine our interest and study to the portraiture which he has executed, we might, in view of its remarkable character, designate it as historical.

Than a really great portrait, no work of art can be more truly historical. We feel the subjectiveness of compositions intended to transmit facts to posterity,—and unless we know the artist, we are at a loss as to the degree of trust which we may place in his impressions. A true portrait is objective. The individuality of the one whom it represents was the ruling force in the hour of its production; and to the spirit of a household, a community, a kingdom, or an age, that individuality is the key. There is, too, in a genuine portrait an internal evidence of its authenticity. No artist ever was great enough to invent the combination of lines, curves, and planes which composes the face of a man. There is the accumulated significance of a lifetime,—subtile traces of failures or of victories wrought years ago. How these will manifest themselves, no experience can point out, no intuition can foresee or imagine. The modifications are infinite, and each is completely removed from the region of the accidental.

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But, although details and their combinations in the human face and form cannot be wrought from the imagination, the truthfulness or falsity of their representation is instantly evident. It is because of this, that the unity of a portrait carries conviction of its truth and of the unimpeachability of its evidence, that this phase of art becomes so valuable as history. Compared with the worth of Titian's Philip II.,—the Madrid picture, of which Mr. Wild has an admirable study,—what value can be attached to any historical composition of its period?

It has not been the lot of Mr. Page to paint a mighty man, so inlocked with the rugged forces of his age. His sitters have come from more peaceful, nobler walks of life,—and their portraits are beloved even more than they are admired. Not yet are they the pride of pompous galleries, but the glory and saintliness of homes.

Could we enter these homes, and discuss freely the character of their treasures, we would gladly linger in the presence of the more precious. But so inseparably associated are they with their originals, so much more nearly related to them than to the artist, that no fitting analysis can be made of the representation without involving that of the individual represented.

Three portraits have, however, such wonderful excellence, and through this excellence have become so well known, that we may be forgiven for alluding to them. In a former paper, the writer spoke of the portrait of a man in his divinest development. The first of these three works is the representation of a woman, and is truly "somewhat miraculous." It is a face rendered impressive by the grandest repose,—a repose that pervades the room and the soul,—a repose not to be mistaken for serenity, but which is power in equilibrium. No brilliancy of color, no elaboration of accessories, no intricacy of composition attracts the attention of the observer. There is no need of these. But he who is worthy of the privilege stands suddenly conscious of a presence such as the world has rarely known. He feels that the embodiment before him is the record of a great Past, as well as the reflection of a proud Present,—a Past in which the soul has ever borne on through and above all obstacles of discouragement and temptation to a success which was its inheritance. He sees, too, the possibilities of the near Future; how from that fine equipoise the soul might pass out into rare manifestations, appearing in the sweetness and simplicity of a little child, in the fearful tumultuousness of a Lady Macbeth, in the passionate tenderness of a Romeo, or in the Gothic grandeur of a Scotch sorceress,—in the love of kindred, in the fervor of friendship, and in the nobleness of the truest womanhood.



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Another portrait—can it have been painted in this century?—presents a widely different character. We have seen the rendering of a nature made too solemn by the possession of genius to admit of splendor of coloring. This picture is that of ripe womanhood, manifesting itself in the fulness of summer's goldenest light. Color, in all its richness as color, in all its strength as a representative agent, in all its glory as the minister of light, in all its significance as the sign and expression of plenitude of life,—life at one with Nature;—thus we remember it, as it hung upon the wall of that noble room in the Roman home of Crawford.

A later portrait, and one artistically the finest of Mr. Page's productions, although executed in Rome, has found a home in Cambridge. Here no grave subdual of color was called for, nor was there any need of its fullest power,—but, instead thereof, we have color in the purity of its pearl expression. A mild lustre, inexpressibly clear, seems to pervade the picture, and beam forth the revelation of a white soul. Shadows there are none,—only still softer light, to carry back the receding forms. But interest in technicalities is lost in the nobler sense of sweet influences. We are at peace in the presence of a peace which passeth all understanding. We are holy in the ineffable light of immortal holiness. We are blessed in the consciousness of complete harmony.

Surely, none but a great painter could have achieved such success; surely, no mere painter could thus have appealed to us.

These works we have chosen to represent the artist's power in the direction of portraiture,—not only because of their wonderful merit as embodiments of individualism, but to illustrate a law which has not yet had its due influence in art, but which must be the very life of its next revival, when painting shall be borne up until it marks the century.

We refer to the expressional power of color,—not the conventional significance whereby certain colors have been associated arbitrarily with mental conditions. This last has often violated all the principles of natural relation; yet no fact is more generally accepted than this,—that colors, from the intensity of the primitives to the last faint tints derived therefrom, bear fixed and demonstrable relations to the infinite moods and phases of human life. As among themselves the hues of the palette exist in immutable conditions of positive affinity or repulsion, so are they all related to the soul as definitely in harmony or in discord. There has been imperfect recognition of this at various times in the history of painting since the age of Giotto,—the most notable examples having occurred in the Venetian school.

But even in that golden age of art, this property of color was but rarely perceived and called into use under the guidance of principles. Still, the sense of the value and the harmonies of colors was so keen among the Venetian artists, that, intuitively, subjects were chosen which required an expression admitting of the most lavish use and magnificent display of color.

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Paul Veronese, the splendor of whose conceptions seemed ever to select the pomp and wealth of banquets and ceremonies,—Giorgione, for whom the world revolved in an atmosphere of golden glory,—each had a fixed ideal of noble coloring; and it is questionable whether either ever modified that ideal for the sake of any expressional purpose.

Titian, from whom no property or capability of color was concealed, could not forego the power which he secured through obedience to the law of its relation to the human soul. Were we asked which among pictures is most completely illustrative of this obedience, we should answer, "The Entombment," in the Louvre. Each breadth of color mourns,—sky and earth and all the conscious air are laden with sorrow.

In portraiture, however, the great master was inclined to give the full perfection of the highest type of coloring. That rich glow which is bestowed by the Venetian sun did, indeed, seem typical of the life beneath it; and Titian may have been justified in bringing thither those who were the recipients of his favors. One only did he not invite,—Philip II.; him he placed, dark and ominous, against a sky barred with blood.

Is it in virtue of conformity to law, and under the government of the principles of correspondence, that Mr. Page has wrought with mind and hand?

Otherwise it cannot be; for, in the three portraits to which allusion has been made, such subtle distinctions of character find expression in equally subtle differences of tint, that no touch could have been given from vague apprehensions of truth. No ambiguity perplexes the spectator; he beholds the inevitable.

Other works than those of portraiture have won for Mr. Page the attention of the world. This attention has elicited from individuals praise and dispraise, dealt out promptly, and with little qualification. But we have looked in vain for some truly appreciative notice of the so-called historical pictures executed by this artist. We do not object to the prompt out-speaking of the public. So much is disposed of, when the mass has given or withheld its approval. We know whether or not the work appeals to the hearts of human beings. Often, too, it is the most nearly just of any which may be rendered. Usually, the conclusions of the great world are correct, while its reasonings are absurd. Its decisions are immediate and clear; its arguments, subsequent and vague.

This measure, however, cannot be meted to all artists. A painter may appeal to some wide, yet superficial sympathy, and attain to no other excellence.

That Mr. Page might have found success in this direction will not be denied by any one who has seen the engraving of a girl and lamb, from one of his early works. It is as sweet and tenderly simple as a face by Francia. But not only did he refuse to confine himself to this style of art, as, when that engraving is before us, we wish he had done,—he passed out of and away from it. And those phases which followed have been such



as are the least fitted to stand the trial of public exhibition. His pictures do not command the eye by extraordinary combinations of assertive colors,—nor do they, through great pathos, deep tenderness, or any overcharged emotional quality, fascinate and absorb the spectator.



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Much of the middle portion of this artist's professional life is marked by changes. It was a period of growth,—of continual development and of obvious transition. Not infrequently, the transition seemed to be from the excellent to the crude. Nevertheless, we doubt not, that, through all vicissitudes, there has been a steady and genuine growth of Mr. Page's best artistic power, and that he has been true to his specialty.

We should like to believe that the Venetian visit of 1853 was the closing of one period of transition, and the beginning of a new era in Mr. Page's artistic career. It is pleasant to think of the painter's pilgrimage to that studio of Titian, Venice,—for it was all his,—not in nebulous prophetic youth,—not before his demands had been revealed to his consciousness,—not before those twenty long years of solitary, hard, earnest work,—but in the full ripeness of manhood, when prophecy had dawned into confident fulfilment, when the principles of his science had been found, and when of this science his art had become the demonstration. It was fine to come then, and be for a while the guest of Titian.

There is evidence that he began after this visit to do what for years he had been learning to do,—yet, of course, as is ever the case with the earnest man, doing as a student, as one who feels all truth to be of the infinite.

The result has been a series of remarkable pictures. There are among these the specimens of portraiture, a few landscapes, and a number of ideal, or, as they have been called, historical works. Of these last named there is somewhat to be said; and those to which we shall refer are selected for the purpose of illustrating principles, rather than for that of description. These are all associated with history. There are three representations of Venus, and several renderings of Scriptural subjects.

If these pictures are valuable, they are so in virtue of elements which can be appreciated. To present these elements to the world, to appeal to those who can recognize them, is, it is fair to assume, the object of exposition. Not merely praise, but the more wholesome meed of justice, is the desire of a true artist; and as we deal with such a one, we do not hesitate to speak of his works as they impress us.

First of all, in view of the artist's skill as a painter, it is well to regard the external of his work. Here, in both Scriptural and mythological subjects, there is little to condemn. The motives have been bravely and successfully wrought out; the work is nobly, frankly done. The superiority of methods which render the texture and quality of objects becomes apparent. There is no attempt at illusion; yet the representation of substances and spaces is faultless,—as, for instance, the sky of the "Venus leading forth the Trojans." Nor have we seen that chaste, pearly lustre of the most beautiful human skin so well rendered as in the bosom of the figure which gleams against the blue.



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But there is a pretension to more than technical excellence in the mythological works; there is a declaration of physical beauty in the very idea; in both these and the Scriptural there is an assumption of historical value.

While we believe that the problem of physical beauty can be solved and demonstrated, and the representations of Venus can be proved to possess or to lack the beautiful, we choose to leave now, as we should be compelled to do after discussion, the decision of the question to those who raise it. It is of little avail to prove a work of art beautiful,—of less, to prove it ugly. Spectators and generations cannot be taken one by one and convinced. But where the operation of judgment is from the reasoning rather than from the intuitive nature, facts, opinions, and impressions may exert healthful influences.

The Venus of Page we cannot accept,—not because it may be unbeautiful, for that might be but a shortcoming,—not because of any technical failure, for, with the exception of weakness in the character of waves, nothing can be finer,—not because it lacks elevated sentiment, for this Venus was not the celestial,—but because it has nothing to do with the present, neither is it of the past, nor related in any wise to any imaginable future.

The present has no ideal of which the Venus of the ancients is a manifestation. Other creations of that marvellous Greek mind might be fitly used to symbolize phases of the present. Hercules might labor now; there are other stables than the Augean; and not yet are all Hydras slain. Armor is needed; and a Vulcan spirit is making the anvil ring beneath the earth-crust of humanity. But Venus, the voluptuous, the wanton,—no sensuousness pervading any religion of this era finds in her its fitting type and sign. She, her companions, and her paramours, with the magnificent religion which evolved them, were entombed centuries ago; and no angel has rolled the stone from the door of their sepulchre. They are dead; the necessity which called the Deistic ideal into existence is dead; the ideal itself is dead, since Paul preached in Athens its funeral sermon.

As history of past conditions, no value can be attached to representations produced in subsequent ages. In this respect all these pictures must be false. The best can only approximate truth. Yet his two pictures of Scriptural subjects—one from the remoteness of Hebrew antiquity, the other from the early days of Christianity—are most valuable even as history: not the history of the flight from Egypt, nor that of the flight into Egypt, but the history of what these mighty events have become after the lapse of many centuries.

Herein lies the difference between Mythology and Christianity: the one arose, culminated, and perished, soul and body, when the shadow of the Cross fell athwart Olympus; the other is immortal,—immortal as is Christ, immortal as are human souls, of which it is the life. No century has been when it has not found, and no century can be when it will not find, audible and visible utterance. The music of the “Messiah” reveals

the relation of its age to the great central idea of Christianity. Fra Angelico, Leonardo, Bach, Milton, Overbeck, were the revelators of human elevation, as sustained by the philosophy of which Christ was the great interpreter.

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Therefore, to record that elevation, to be the historian of the present in its deepest significance, the noblest occupation. Dwelling, as an artist must dwell, in the deep life of his theme, his work must go forth utterly new, alive, and startling.

Thus did we find the "Flight into Egypt" a picture full of the spirit of that marvellous age, hallowed by the sweet mystery which all these years have given. Who of those who were so fortunate as to see this work of Mr. Page will ever forget the solemn, yet radiant tone pervading the landscape of sad Egypt, along which went the fugitives? Nothing ever swallowed by the insatiable sea, save its human victims, is more worthy of lament than this lost treasure.

Thus, too, is the grandest work of Mr. Page's life, the Moses with hands upheld above the battle. Were we on the first page instead of the last, we could not refrain from describing it. Yet in its presence the impulse is toward silence. We feel, that, viewed even in its mere external, it is as simple and majestic as the Hebrew language. The far sky, with its pallid moon,—the deep, shadowy valley, with its ghostly warriors,—the group on the near mountain, with its superb youth, its venerable age, and its manhood too strong and vital for the destructive years;—in the presence of such a creation there is time for a great silence.

### KNITTING SALE-SOCKS.

"He's took 'ith all the sym't'ms,—thet 's one thing sure! Dretful pain in hez back an' l'ins, legs feel 's ef they hed telegraph-wires inside 'em workin' fur dear life, head aches, face fevered, pulse at 2.40, awful stetch in the side, an' pressed fur breath. You guess it's neuralogy, Lurindy? I do'no' nothin' abeout yer high-flyin' names fur rheumatiz. I don't guess so!"

"But, Aunt Mimy, what *do* you guess?" asked mother.

"I don' guess nothin' at all,—I nigh abeout know!"

"Well,—you don't think it's"——

"I on'y wish it mebbe the veryaloud,—I on'y wish it mebbe. But that's tew good luck ter happen ter one o' the name. No, Miss Ruggles, I—think—it's—the raal article at first hand."

"Goodness, Aunt Mimy! what"——

"Yes, I du; an' you'll all hev it stret through the family, every one; you needn't expect ter go scot-free, Emerline, 'ith all your rosy cheeks; an' you'll all hev ter stay in canteen a month ter the least; an' ef you're none o' yer pertected by vaticination, I reckon I"——



“Well, Aunt Mimy, if that’s your opinion, I’ll harness the filly and drive over for Dr. Sprague.”

“Lor’! yer no need ter du *thet*, Miss Ruggles,—I kin kerry yer all through jest uz well uz Dr. Sprague, an’ a sight better, ef the truth wuz knowed. I tuk Miss Deacon Smiler an’ her hull family through the measles an’ hoopin’-cough, like a parcel o’ pigs, this fall. They *du* say Jane’s in a poor way an’ Nathan’l’s kind o’ declinin’; but, uz I know they say it jest ter spite me, I don’ so much mind. You *a’n’t* gwine now, be ye?”



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“There’s safety in a multitude of counsellors, you know, Aunt Mimy, and I think on the whole I had best.”

“Wal! ef that’s yer delib’rate ch’ice betwixt Dr. Sprague an’ me, ye kin du ez ye like. I never force my advice on no one, ’xcept this,—I’d advise Emerline there ter throw them socks inter the fire; there’ll never none o’ them be fit ter sell, ’nless she wants ter spread the disease. Wal, I’m sorry yer ’ve concluded ter hev that old quack Sprague; never hed no more diplom’y ’n I; don’ b’lieve he knows cow-pox from kine, when he sees it. The poor young man’s hed his last well day, I’m afeard. Good-day ter ye; say good-bye fur me ter Stephen. I’ll call ag’in, ef ye happen ter want any one ter lay him eout.”

And, staying to light her little black pipe, she jerked together the strings of her great scarlet hood, wrapped her cloak round her like a sentinel at muster, and went puffing down the hill like a steamboat.

Aunt Mimy Ruggles wasn’t any relation to us, I wouldn’t have you think, though our name was Ruggles, too. Aunt Mimy used to sell herbs, and she rose from that to taking care of the sick, and so on, till once Dr. Sprague having proved that death came through her ignorance, she had to abandon some branches of her art; and she was generally roaming round the neighborhood, seeking whom she could devour in the others. And so she came into our house just at dinner-time, and mother asked her to sit by, and then mentioned Cousin Stephen, and she went up to see him, and so it was.

Now it can’t be pleasant for any family to have such a thing turn up, especially if there’s a pretty girl in it; and I suppose I was as pretty as the general run, at that time,—perhaps Cousin Stephen thought a trifle prettier; pink cheeks, blue eyes, and hair the color and shine of a chestnut when it bursts the burr, can’t be had without one ’s rather pleasant-looking; and then I’m very good-natured and quick-tempered, and I’ve got a voice for singing, and I sing in the choir, and a’n’t afraid to open my mouth. I don’t look much like Lurindy, to be sure; but then Lurindy’s an old maid,—as much as twenty-five,—and don’t go to singing-school.—At least, these thoughts ran through my head as I watched Aunt Mimy down the hill.—Lurindy a’n’t so very pretty, I continued to think,—but she’s so very good, it makes up. At sewing-circle and quilting and frolics, I’m as good as any; but somehow I’m never any ’count at home; that’s because Lurindy is by, at home. Well, Lurindy has a little box in her drawer, and there’s a letter in it, and an old geranium-leaf, and a piece of black silk ribbon that looks too broad for anything but a sailor’s necktie, and a shell. I don’t know what she wants to keep such old stuff for, I’m sure.



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We're none so rich,—I suppose I may as well tell the truth, that we're nearly as poor as poor can be. We've got the farm, but it's such a small one that mother and I can carry it on ourselves, with now and then a day's help or a bee,—but a bee's about as broad as it is long,—and we raise just enough to help the year out, but don't sell. We've got a cow and the filly and some sheep; and mother shears and cards, and Lurindy spins,—I can't spin, it makes my head swim,—and I knit, knit socks and sell them. Sometimes I have needles almost as big as a pipe-stem, and choose the coarse, uneven yarn of the thrums, and then the work goes off like machinery. Why, I can knit two pair, and sometimes three, a day, and get just as much for them as I do for the nice ones,—they're warm. But when I want to knit well, as I did the day Aunt Mimy was in, I take my best blue needles and my fine white yarn from the long wool, and it takes me from daybreak till sundown to knit one pair. I don't know why Aunt Jemimy should have said what she did about my socks; I'm sure Stephen hadn't been any nearer them than he had to the cabbage-bag Lurindy was netting, and there wasn't such a nice knitter in town as I, everybody will tell you. She always did seem to take particular pleasure in hectoring and badgering me to death.

Well, I wasn't going to be put down by Aunt Mimy, so I made the needles fly while mother was gone for the doctor. By-and-by I heard a knock up in Stephen's room,—I suppose he wanted something,—but Lurindy didn't hear it, and I didn't so much want to go, so I sat still and began to count out loud the stitches to my narrowings. By-and-by he knocked again.

“Lurindy,” says I, “a'n't that Steve a-knocking?”

“Yes,” says she,—“why don't you go?”—for I had been tending him a good deal that day.

“Well,” says I, “there's a number of reasons; one is, I'm just binding off my heel.”

Lurindy looked at me a minute, then all at once she smiled.

“Well, Emmy,” says she, “if you like a smooth skin more than a smooth conscience, you're welcome,”—and went up-stairs herself.

I suppose I had ought to 'a' gone, and I suppose I'd ought to wanted to have gone, but somehow it wasn't so much fear as that I didn't want to see Stephen himself now. So Lurindy stayed up chamber, and was there when mother and the doctor come. And the doctor said he feared Aunt Mimy was right, and nobody but mother and Lurindy must go near Stephen, (you see, he found Lurindy there,) and they must have as little communication with me as possible. And his boots creaked down the back-stairs, and then he went.

Mother came down a little while after, for some water to put on Stephen's head, which was a good deal worse, she said; and about the middle of the evening I heard her



crying for me to come and help them hold him,—he was raving. I didn't go very quick; I said, "Yes,—just as soon as I've narrowed off my toe"; and when at last I pushed back my chair to go, mother called in a disapproving voice and said that they'd got along without me and I'd better go to bed.



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Well, after I was in bed I began to remember all that had happened lately. Somehow my thoughts went back to the first time Cousin Stephen came to our place, when I was a real little girl, and mother'd sent me to the well and I had dropped the bucket in, and he ran straight down the green slippery stones and brought it up, laughing. Then I remembered how we'd birds-nested together, and natted, and come home on the hay-carts, and how we'd been in every kind of fun and danger together; and how, when my new Portsmouth lawn took fire, at Martha Smith's apple-paring, he caught me right in his arms and squeezed out the fire with his own hands; and how, when he saw once I had a notion of going with Elder Hooper's son James, he stepped aside till I saw what a nincom Jim Hooper was, and then he appeared as if nothing had happened, and was just as good as ever; and how, when the ice broke on Deacon Smith's pond, and I fell in, and the other boys were all afraid, Steve came and saved my life again at risk of his own; and how he always seemed to think the earth wasn't good enough for me to walk on; and how I'd wished, time and again, I might have some way to pay him back; and here it was, and I'd failed him. Then I remembered how I'd been to his place in Berkshire,—a rich old farm, with an orchard that smelled like the Spice Islands in the geography, with apples and pears and quinces and peaches and cherries and plums,—and how Stephen's mother, Aunt Emeline, had been as kind to me as one's own mother could be. But now Aunt Emeline and Uncle 'Siah were dead, and Stephen came a good deal oftener over the border than he'd any right to. Today, he brought some of those new red-streaks, and wanted mother to try them; next time, they'd made a lot more maple-sugar on his place than he wanted; and next time, he thought mother's corn might need hoeing, or it was fine weather to get the grass in: I don't know what we should have done without him. Then I thought how Stephen looked, the day he was pall-bearer to Charles Payson, who was killed sudden by a fall,—so solemn and pale, nowise craven, but just up to the occasion, so that, when the other girls burst out crying at sight of the coffin and at thought of Charlie, I cried, too,—but it was only because Stephen looked so beautiful. Then I remembered how he looked the other day when he came, his cheeks were so red with the wind, and his hair, those bright curls, was all blown about, and he laughed with the great hazel eyes he has, and showed his white teeth;—and now his beauty would be spoiled, and he'd never care for me again, seeing I hadn't cared for him. And the wind began to come up; and it was so lonesome and desolate in that little bed-room down-stairs, I felt as if we were all buried alive; and I couldn't get to sleep; and when the sleet and snow began to rattle on the pane, I thought there wasn't any one to see me and I'd better cry to keep it company; and so I sobbed off to dreaming at last, and woke at sunrise and found it still snowing.



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Next morning, I heard mother stepping across the kitchen, and when I came out, she said Lurindy'd just gone to sleep; they'd had a shocking night. So I went out and watered the creatures and milked Brindle, and got mother a nice little breakfast, and made Stephen some gruel. And then I was going to ask mother if I'd done so very wrong in letting Lurindy nurse Stephen, instead of me; and then I saw she wasn't thinking about that; and besides, there didn't really seem to be any reason why she shouldn't;—she was a great deal older than I, and so it was more proper; and then Stephen hadn't ever *said* anything to me that should give me a peculiar right to nurse him more than other folks. So I just cleared away the things, made everything shine like a pin, and took my knitting. I'd no sooner got the seam set than I was called to send something up on a contrivance mother'd rigged in the back-entry over a pulley. And then I had to make a red flag, and find a stick, and hang it out of the window by which there were the most passers. Well, I did it; but I didn't hurry,—I didn't get the flag out till afternoon; somehow I hated to, it always seemed such a low-lived disease, and I was mortified to acknowledge it, and I knew nobody'd come near us for so long,—though goodness knows I didn't want to see anybody. Well, when that was done, Lurindy came down, and I had to get her something to eat, and then she went up-stairs, and mother took *her* turn for some sleep; and there were the creatures to feed again, and what with putting on, and taking off, and tending fires, and doing errands, and the night's milking, and clearing the paths, I didn't knit another stitch that day, and was glad enough, when night came, to go to bed myself.

Well, so we went on for two or three days. I'd got my second sock pretty well along in that time,—just think! half a week knitting half a sock!—and was setting the heel, when in came Aunt Mimy.

"I a'n't afeard on it," says she; "don't you be skeert. I jest stepped in ter see ef the young man wuz approachin' his eend."

"No," said I, "he isn't, any more than you are, Aunt Mimy."

"Any more 'n I be?" she answered. "Don't you lose yer temper, Emerline. We're all approachin' it, but some gits a leetle ahead; it a'n't no disgrace, ez I knows on. What yer doin' of? Knittin' sale-socks yet? and, my gracious! still ter work on the same pair! You'll make yer fortin', Emerline!"

I didn't say anything, I was so provoked.

"I don' b'lieve you know heow ter take the turns w'en yer mother a'n't by to help," she continued. "Can't ye take up the heel? Widden ev'ry fourth. Here, let me! You won't? Wal, I alluz knowed you wuz mighty techy, Emerline Ruggles, but ye no need ter fling away in thet style. Neow I'll advise ye ter let socks alone; they're tew intricate fur sech ez you. Mitt'ns is jest about 'ithin the compass uv your mind,—mitt'ns, men's single



mitt'ns, put up on needles larger 'n them o' yourn be, an' by this rule. Seventeen  
reounds in the wrist,—tew an' one's the best seam"——



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"Now, Miss Jemimy, just as if I didn't know how to knit mittens!"

"Wal, it seems you don't," said she, "though I don' deny but you may know heow ter give 'em; an' ez I alluz like ter du w'at good I kin, I'm gwine ter show ye."

"Show away," says I; "but I'll be bound, I've knit and sold and eaten up more mittens than ever you put your hands in!"

"Du tell! I'm glad to ha' heern you've got sech a good digestion," says she, hunting up a piece of paper to light her pipe. "Wal, ez I wuz sayin'," says she, "tew an' one's the best seam, handiest an' 'lastickest; twenty stetches to a needle, cast up so loose thet the fust one's ter one eend uv the needle an' the last ter t'other eend,—thet gives a good pull."

"I guess your smoke will hurt Stephen's head," said I, thinking to change her ideas.

"Oh, don't you bother about Stephen's head; ef it can't stan' thet, 't a'n't good fur much. Wal, an' then you set yer thumb an' knit plain, 'xcept a seam-stetch each side uv yer thumb; an' you widden tew stetches, one each side,—s'pose ye know heow ter widden? an' narry?—ev'ry third reound, tell yer 've got nineteen stetches acrost yer thumb; then ye knit, 'ithout widdenin', a matter uv seven or eight reounds more,—you listenin', Emerline?"

"Lor', Miss Jemimy, don't you know better than to ask questions when I'm counting? Now I've got to go and begin all over again."

"Highy-tighty, Miss! You're a weak sister, ef ye can't ceount an' chat, tew. Wal, ter make a long matter short, then ye drop yer thumb onter some thread an' cast up seven stetches an' knit reound fur yer hand, an' every other time you narry them seven stetches away ter one, fur the gore."

"Dear me, Aunt Mimy! do be quiet a minute! I believe mother's a-calling."

"I'll see," said Aunt Mimy,—and she stepped to the door and listened.

"No," says she, coming back on tiptoe,—“an' you didn't think you heern any one neither. It's ruther small work fur ter be foolin' an old woman. Hows'ever, I don' cherish grudges; so, ez I wuz gwine ter say, ye knit thirty-six reounds above wheer ye dropped yer thumb, an' then ye toe off in ev'ry fifth stetch, an' du it reg'lar, Emerline; an' then take up yer thumb on tew needles, an' on t'other you pick up the stetches I told yer ter cast up, an' knit twelve reounds, an' thumb off 'ith narryin' ev'ry third”——

"Well, Miss Jemimy, I guess I shall know how to knit mittens, now!"

"Ef ye don't, 't a'n't my fault. When you've fastened off the eends, you roll 'em up in a damp towel, an' press 'em 'ith a middlin' warm iron on the wrong side. There!"



After this, Miss Mimy smoked awhile in silence, satisfied and gratified. At last she knocked the ashes out of her pipe.

“Wal,” says she, “I must be onter my feet. I’d liked ter seen yer ma, but I won’t disturb her, an’ you can du ez well. Yer ma promised me a mess o’ tea, an’ I guess I may ez well take it neow ez any day.”



## Page 18

“Why, Miss Mimy,” said I, “there a’n’t above four or five messes left, and we can’t get any more till I sell my socks.”

“Wal, never mind, then, you can le’ me take one, an’ mebbe I kin make up the rest at Miss Smilers’s.”

So I went into the pantry to get it, and Aunt Mimy followed me, of course.

“Them’s nice-lookin’ apples,” said she. “Come from Stephen’s place? Poor young man, he won’t never want ’em! S’pose he won’t hev no objection ter my tryin’ a dozen,”—and she dropped that number into her great pocket.

“Nice-lookin’ butter, tew,” said she. “Own churnin’? Wal, you *kin* du sunthin’, Emerline. W’en I wuz a heousekeeper, I used ter keep the family in butter an’ sell enough to Miss Smith—she thet wuz Mary Breown—ter buy our shoes, all off uv one ceow. S’pose I take this pat?”

I was kind of dumfounded at first; I forgot Aunt Mimy was the biggest beggar in Rockingham County.

“No,” says I, as soon as I got my breath, “I sha’n’t suppose any such thing. You’re as well able to make your butter as I am to make it for you.”

“Wal, Emerline Ruggles! I alluz knowed you wuz close ez the bark uv a tree; it’s jest yer father’s narrer-contracted sperrit; you don’ favor yer ma a speck. She’s ez free ez water.”

“If mother’s a mind to give away her eye-teeth, it don’t follow that I should,” said I; “and I won’t give you another atom; and you just clear out!”

“Wal, you kin keep yer butter, sence you’re so sot on it, an’ I’ll take a leetle dust o’ pork instead.”

“Let’s see you take it!” said I.

“I guess I’ll speak ’ith yer ma. I shall git a consider’ble bigger piece, though I don’t like ter add t’ ’er steps.”

“Now look here, Miss Mimy,” says I,—“if you’ll promise not to ask for another thing, and to go right away, I’ll get you a piece of pork.”

So I went down cellar, and fished round in the pork-barrel and found quite a respectable piece. Coming up, just as my head got level with the floor, what should I see but Miss Jemimy pour all the sugar into her bag and whip the bowl back on the shelf, and turn



round and face me as innocent as Moses in the bulrushes. After she had taken the pork, she looked round a minute and said,—

“Wal, arter all, I nigh upon forgot my arrant. Here’s a letter they giv’ me fur Lurindy, at the post-office; ev’rybody else’s afeard ter come up here”;—and by-and-by she brought it up from under all she’d stowed away there. “Thet jest leaves room,” says she.

“For what?” says I.

“Fur tew or three uv them eggs.”

I put them into her bag and said,

“Now you remember your promise, Aunt Mimy!”



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“Lor’ sakes!” says she, “you’re in a mighty berry ter git me off. Neow you’ve got all you kin out uv me, the letter, ‘n’ the mitt’ns, I may go, may I? I niver see a young gal so furrard ’ith her elders in all my born days! I think Stephen Lee’s well quit uv ye, fur my part, ef he hed to die ter du it. I don’t ‘xpect ye ter thank me fur w’at instruction I gi’n ye; —there’s some folks I niver du ‘xpect nothin’ from; you can’t make a silk pus out uv a sow’s ear. W’at ye got that red flag out the keepin’-room winder fur? ‘Cause Lurindy’s nussin’ Stephen? Wal, good-day!”

And so Aunt Mimy disappeared, and the pat of butter with her.

I called Lurindy and gave her the letter, and after a little while I heard my name, and Lurindy was sitting on the top of the stairs with her head on her knees, and mother was leaning over the banisters. Pretty soon Lurindy lifted up her head, and I saw she had been crying, and between the two I made out that Lurindy’d been engaged a good while to John Talbot, who sailed out of Salem on long voyages to India and China; and that now he’d come home, sick with a fever, and was lying at the house of his aunt, who wasn’t well herself; and as he’d given all his money to help a shipmate in trouble, she couldn’t hire him a nurse, and there he was; and, finally, she’d consider it a great favor, if Lurindy would come down and help her.

Now Lurindy’d have gone at once, only she’d been about Stephen, so that she’d certainly carry the contagion, and might be taken sick herself, as soon as she arrived; and mother couldn’t go and take care of John, for the same reason; and there was nobody but me. Lurindy had a half-eagle that John had given her once to keep; and I got a little bundle together and took all the precautions Dr. Sprague advised; and he drove me off in his sleigh, and said, as he was going about sixteen miles to see a patient, he’d put me on the cars at the nearest station. Well, he stopped a minute at the post-office, and when he came out he had another letter for Lurindy. I took it, and, after a moment, concluded I’d better read it.

“What are you about?” says the Doctor; “your name isn’t Lurindy, is it?”

“I wish it was,” says I, “and then I shouldn’t be here.”

“Oh! you’re sorry to leave Stephen?” says he. “Well, you can comfort yourself with reflecting that Lurindy’s a great deal the best nurse.”

As if that was any comfort! If Lurindy was the best nurse, she’d ought to have had the privilege of taking care of her own lover, and not of other folks’s. Besides, for all I knew, Stephen would be dead before ever I came back, and here I was going away and leaving him! Well, I didn’t feel so very bright; so I read the letter. The Doctor asked me what ailed John Talbot. I thought, if I told him that Miss Jane Talbot wrote now so that Lurindy shouldn’t come, and that he was sick just as Stephen was, he wouldn’t let me go. So I said I supposed he’d burnt his mouth, like the man in the South, eating cold

pudding and porridge; men always cried out at a scratch. And he said, "Oh, do they?" and laughed.

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After about two hours' driving, there came a scream as if all the panthers in Coos County were let loose to yell, and directly we stopped at a little place where a red flag was hung out. I asked the Doctor if they'd got the small-pox here, too; but before he could answer, the thunder running along the ground deafened me, and in a minute he had put me inside the cars and was off.

I was determined I wouldn't appear green before so many folks, though I'd never seen the cars before; so I took my seat, and paid my fare to Old Salem, and looked about me. Pretty soon a woman came bustling in from somewhere, and took the seat beside me. There she fidgeted round so that I thought I should have flown.

"Miss," says she, at length, "will you close your window? I never travel with a window open; my health's delicate."

I tried to shut it, but it wouldn't go up or down, till a gentleman put out his cane and touched it, and down it slid, like Signor Blitz. It did seem as if everything about the cars went by miracle. I thanked him, but I found afterward it would have been more polite not to have spoken. After that woman had done everything she could think of to plague and annoy the whole neighborhood, she got out at Ipswich, and somebody met her that looked just like our sheriff; and I shouldn't be a bit surprised to hear that she'd gone to jail. When she got out, somebody else got in, and took the same seat.

"Miss," says she, "will you have the goodness to open your window? this air is stifling."

And she did everything that the other woman didn't do. When she found I wouldn't talk, she turned to the young gentleman and lady that sat opposite, and that looked as if there was a great deal too much company in the cars, and found they wouldn't talk either, and at last she caught the conductor and made him talk.

AH this while we were swooping over the country in the most terrific manner. I thought how frightened mother and Lurindy'd be, if they should see me. It was no use trying to count the cattle or watch the fences, and the birch-trees danced rigadoons enough to make one dizzy, and we dashed through everybody's back-yard, and ran so close up to the kitchens that we could have seen what they had for dinner, if we had stayed long enough; and finally I made up my mind that the engine had run away with the driver, and John Talbot would never have me to tend him; and I began to wonder, as I saw the sparks and cinders and great clouds of steam and smoke, if those tornadoes that smash round so out West in the newspapers weren't just passenger-trains, like us, off the track,—when all at once it grew as dark as midnight.

"Now," says I to myself, "it's certain. They've run the thing into the ground. However, we can't go long now."



And just as I was thinking about Korah and his troop, I remembered what the Doctor had told me about Salem Tunnel, and it began to grow lighter, and we began to go slower, and I picked up my wits and looked about me again. I had only time to notice that the young gentleman and lady looked very much relieved, and to shake my shawl from the clutch of the woman beside me, when we stopped at Salem, safe and sound.



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I had a good deal of trouble to find Miss Talbot's house, but find it I did; and the first thing she gave me was a scolding for coming, thinking I was Lurindy, and her tongue wasn't much cooler when she found I wasn't; and then finally she said, as long as I was there, I might stay; and I went right up to see John, and a sight he was!

It was about three months I stayed and took the greater part of the care of him. Sometimes in the midnight, when he was quite beside himself, and dreaming out loud, it was about as good as a story-book to hear him. He told me of some great Indian cities where there were men in white, with skins swarthier than old red Guinea gold, and with great shawls all wrought in palm-leaves of gold and crimson bound on their heads, who could sink a ship with their lacs of rupees; and of islands where the shores came down to the water's edge and unrolled like a green ribbon, and brooks came sparkling down behind them, and great trees hung above like banners, and beautiful women came off on rafts and skiffs loaded with fruit,—the islands set like jewels on the back of the sea, and the sky covered them with light and hung above them bluer than the hangings of the Tabernacle, and they sent long rivers of spice out on the air to entice the sailor back,—islands where night never came. Sometimes, when he talked on so, I remembered that I'd felt rather touched up when I found that Lurindy'd had a sweetheart all this time, and mother knew it, and they'd never told me, and I wondered how it happened. Now it came across me, that, quite a number of years before, Lurindy had gone to Salem and worked in the mills. She didn't stay long, because it didn't agree with her,—the neighbors said, because she was lazy. Lurindy lazy, indeed! There a'n't one of us knows how to spell the first syllable of that word. But that's where she must have got acquainted with John Talbot. He'd been up at our place, too; but I was over to Aunt Emeline's, it seems. But one night, about this time, I thought he was dying, he'd got so very low; and I thought how dreadful it was for Lurindy never to see him again, and how it was all my selfish fault, and how maybe he wouldn't 'a' died, if he'd had her to have taken care of him; and I suppose no convicted felon ever endured more remorse than I did, sitting and watching that dying man all that long and lonely night. But with the morning he was better,—they always are a great deal worse when they are getting well from it; he laughed when the doctor came, and said he guessed he'd weathered that gale; and by-and-by he got well.

He meant to have gone up and seen Lurindy, after all, but his ship was ready for sea just as he was; and I thought it was about as well, for he wasn't looking his prettiest. And so he declared I was the neatest little trimmer that ever trod water, and he believed he should know a Ruggles by the cut of her jib, (I wonder if he'd have known Aunt Mimy,) and if ever he went master, he'd name his ship for me, and call it the Sister of Charity. And he kissed me on both cheeks, and looked serious enough when he sent his love to Lurindy, and went away; and no sooner was he gone than Miss Talbot said I'd better have the doctor myself; and I didn't sit up again for about three weeks.



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All this time I hadn't heard a word from home, and, for all I knew, Stephen might be dead and buried. I didn't feel so very light-hearted, you may be sure, when one day Miss Talbot brought me a letter. It was from mother, and it seemed Stephen'd only had a bad fever, and had been up and gone home for more than a week. So I wrote back, as soon as I could, all about John, and how he'd gone to sea again, and how Miss Talbot, who set sights by John, was rather lonely, and I thought I'd keep her company a little longer, and try a spell in the mills, seeing that our neighbors didn't think a girl had been properly accomplished till she'd had a term or two in the factory. The fact was, I didn't want to go home just then; I thought, maybe, if I waited a bit, my face would get back to looking as it used to. So I worked in the piece-room, light work and good pay, sent mother and Lurindy part of my wages, and paid my board to Miss Talbot. She'd become quite attached to me, and I to her, for all she was such an old-maidish thing; but I'd got to thinking an old maid wasn't such a very bad thing, after all. Fourth of July came at last, and the mills were closed, and I went with some of the other girls on an excursion down the harbor; and when I got home, Miss Talbot told me my Cousin Stephen had been down to see me, and had been obliged to go home in the last train. I wondered why Stephen didn't stay, and then it flashed upon me that she'd told him all about it, and he didn't want to see me afterwards. I knew mother and Lurindy suspected why I didn't come home, and now, thinks I, they *know*; but I asked no questions.

When September came, I saw it wasn't any use delaying, and I might as well go back to knitting sale-socks then as any time. However, I didn't go till October. You needn't think I'd stayed away from the farm all that time, while the tender things were opening, the tiny top-heavy beans pushing up, the garden-sarse greening, the little grass-blades two and two,—while all the young creatures were coming forward, the chickens breaking the shell, and the gosling-storm brewing and dealing destruction,—while the strawberries were growing ripe and red up in the high field, and the hay and clover were getting in,—you needn't think I'd stayed away from all that had been pleasant in my life, without many a good heart-ache; and when at last I saw the dear old gray house again, all weather-beaten and homely, standing there with its well-sweep among the elms, I fairly cried. Mother and Lurindy ran out to meet me, when they saw the stage stop, and after we got into the house it seemed if they would never get done kissing me. And mother stirred round and made hot cream-biscuits for tea, and got the best china, and we sat up till high midnight, talking, and I had to tell everything John did and said and thought and looked, over and over again.

By-and-by I unpacked my trunk, and there was a little parcel in the bottom of it, and I pulled it up.



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“There, Lurindy,” says I, “John told me to tell you to have your wedding-dress ready against he came home,—he’s gone mate,—and here it is.” And I unrolled the neatest brown silk you ever saw, just fit for Lurindy, she’s so pale and genteel, and threw it into her lap. I’d stayed the other month to get enough to buy it.

The first thing Lurindy did, by way of thanks, was to burst into tears and declare she never could take it, that she never should marry now; and the more I urged her, the more she cried. But at last she said she’d accept it conditionally,—and the condition was, I should be married when she was.

“Well,” says I, “agreed, if you’ll provide the necessary article; because I can’t very well marry my shadow, and I don’t know any one else that would be fool enough to have such a little fright.”

At that Lurindy felt all the worse, and it took all the spirits I had to build up hers and mother’s. I suppose I was sorry to see they felt so bad, (and they hadn’t meant that I should,) because it gave the finishing stroke to my conviction; and after I was in bed, I grew sorrier still; and if I cried, ’t wasn’t on account of myself, but I saw how Lurindy ’d always feel self-accused, though she hadn’t ought to, whenever she looked at me, and how all her life she’d feel my scarred face like a weight on her happiness, and think I owed it to John, and how intolerable such an obligation, though it was only a fancied one, would be; and I saw, too, that it all came from my not going up-stairs that first time when Stephen knocked,—because if I had gone, I should have been there when the doctor came, and Lurindy ’d have gone to have taken care of John herself, and it would have been her face that was ruined instead of mine; and though it was a great deal better that it should be mine, still she’d have been easier in her mind;—and so thinking and worrying, I fell asleep.

Next day was baking-day, and Stephen was coming in the afternoon, and it was almost five o’clock when we got cleared up, and I went up-stairs to change my dress. I thought ’t wasn’t any use to trim myself out in bows and ruffles now, so I just put on my brown gingham and a white linen collar; but Lurindy came and tied a pink ribbon at my throat, and fixed my hair herself, and looked down and said,—

“Well, I don’t see but you’re about as pretty as ever you was.”

That almost finished me; but I contrived to laugh, and got down-stairs. Mother ’d run over to the village to get some yarn to knit up, for she ’d used all our own wool. It was getting dark, and I had just brought in another log, and hung the kettle on the crane. The log hadn’t taken fire yet, and there was only a light glimmer, from the coals, on the ceiling. I heard the back-door-latch click, and thought it was mother, and commenced humming in the middle of a tune, as if I’d been humming the rest and had just reached that part; but the figure standing there was a sight too tall for mother.



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“Oh, Stephen,” says I,—and my heart jumped in my throat, but I just swallowed it down, and thanked Heaven that the evening was so dark,—“is that you?”

“Yes,” says he, stepping forward, and putting out his hands, and making as if he would kiss me. Just for a minute I hung back, then I went and gave him my hand in a careless way.

“Yes,” says he; “and I can’t say that you seem so very glad to see me.”

“Oh, yes,” I answered, “I am glad. Did you drive over?”

“Well,” says he, “maybe you are; but I should call it a mighty cool reception, after almost a year’s absence. However, I suppose it’s the best manners not to show any cordiality; you’ve had a chance to learn more politeness down at Salem than we have up here in the country.”

I was a little struck up by Stephen’s running on so,—he was generally so quiet, and said so little, and then in such short sentences. But in a minute I reckoned he thought I was nervous, and was trying to put me at my ease,—and he knew of old that the best way to do that was to rouse my temper.

“I ha’n’t seen anybody at Salem better-mannered ’n mother and Lurindy,” said I.

“Come home for Thanksgiving?” asked Stephen, hanging up his coat.

I kept still a minute, for I couldn’t for the life of me see what I had to give thanks for. Then it came over me what a cheery, comfortable home this was, and how Stephen would always be my kind, warm-hearted friend, and how thankful I ought to be that my life had been spared, and that I was useful, that I’d made such good friends as I had down to Salem, and that I wasn’t soured against all mankind on account of my misfortune.

“Yes, Stephen,” says I, “I’ve come home for Thanksgiving; and I have a great deal to give thanks for.”

“So have I,” said he.

“Stephen,” says I, “I don’t exactly know, but I shouldn’t wonder if I’d had a change of heart.”

“Don’t know of anybody that needed it less,” says Stephen, warming his hands.

“However, if it makes you any more comfortable, I sha’n’t object; except the part of it that belongs to me,—I sha’n’t have that changed.”



The fire'd begun to brighten now, and the room was red and pleasant-looking; still I knew he couldn't see me plainly, and I waited a minute, and lingered round, pretending I was doing something, which I wasn't; I hated to break the old way of things; and then I took the tongs and blew a coal and lighted the dip and held it up, as if I was looking for something. Pretty soon I found it; it was a skein of linen thread I was going to wind for Lurindy. Then I got the swifts and came and sat down in front of the candle.

"There," says I, "the swifts is broken. What shall I do?"

"I'll hold the thread, if that's your trouble," says Stephen, and came and sat opposite to me while I wound.

I wondered whether he was looking at me, but I didn't durst look up,—and then I couldn't, if my life had depended upon it. At last we came to the end; then I managed to get a glance edgeways. He hadn't been looking at all, I don't believe, till that very moment, when he raised his eyes.



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“Are folks always so sober, when they’ve had a change of heart?” he asked, with his pleasant smile.

“They are, when they’ve had a change of face,” I was going to say; but just then mother came in with her bundle of yarn, and Lurindy came down, and there was such a deal of welcoming and talking, that I slipped round and laid the table and had the tea made before they thought of it. I’d about made up my mind now that Stephen would act as if nothing had happened, and pretend to like me just the same, because he was so tender-hearted and couldn’t bear to hurt my feelings nor anybody’s; and I’d made up my mind, too, that, as soon as he gave me a chance, I’d tell him I was set against marriage: leastwise, I wouldn’t have him, because I wouldn’t have any man marry me out of pity; and the more I cared for him, the more I couldn’t hamper an ugly face on him forever. So, you see, I had quite resolved, that, cost me what it would, I’d say ‘No,’ if Stephen asked me. Well, it’s a very good thing to make resolutions; but it’s a great deal better to break them, sometimes.

Having come to my conclusions, I grew as merry as any of them; and when mother put two spoons into Stephen’s cup, I told him he was going to have a present. And he said he guessed he knew what it was; and I said it must be a mitten, I’d heard that Martha Smith had taken to knitting lately; and he confounded Martha Smith. Mother and Lurindy were very busy talking about the yarn, and how Mr. Fisher wanted the next socks knit; and Stephen asked me what that dish was beside me. I said, it was lemon-pie, and the top-crust was made of kisses, and would he have some? And he said, he didn’t care for anybody’s kisses but mine, and he believed he wouldn’t. And I told him the receipt of this came from the Queen’s own kitchen. And he said, he didn’t know that the Queen of England was any better than the Queen of Hearts. Then I said, I supposed he remembered how the latter lady was served by the Knave of Hearts in ‘Mother Goose’? And he replied, that he wasn’t going to be Jack-at-a-pinch for anybody. And so on, till mother finished tea.

After tea, I sat up to the table and ended some barley-trimming that I’d just learned how to make; and as the little kernels came tumbling out from under my fingers, Stephen sat beside and watched them as if it was a field of barley, growing, reaped, and threshed under his eyes. By-and-by I finished it; and then, rummaging round in the table-drawer, I found the sock that I was knitting, waiting at the very stitch where I left it, ’most a year ago.

“Well, if that isn’t lucky!” said I. And I sat down on a stool by the fireside, determined to finish that sock that night; and no sooner had I set the needles to dancing, like those in the fairy-story, than open came the kitchen-door again, and in, out of the dark, stepped Aunt Mimy.

“Good-evenin’, Miss Ruggles!” says she. “Heow d’ ye du, Emerline? hope yer gwine ter stay ter hum a spell. Why, Stephen, ’s this you? Quite a family-party, I declare fur’t!



Wai, Miss Ruggles, I got kind o' tired settin' in the dark, an', ez I looked out an' see the dips blazin' in yer winder, thinks I, I'll jest run up an' see w'at's ter pay."



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"Why, there's only one dip," says Lurindy.

"Wal, that's better 'n none," answered Miss Mimy.

I had enough of the old Adam left in me to be riled at her way of begging as much as ever I was; but I saw that Stephen was amused; he hadn't ever happened to be round, when Aunt Mimy was at her tricks.

"No, Miss Ruggles," continued she, "I thank the Lord I ha'n't got a complainin' sperrit, an' hed jest ez lieves see by my neighbor's dip ez my own, an', mebbe ye 'll say, a sight lieveser."

And then Miss Mimy pulled out a stocking without beginning or end, and began to knit as fast as she could rattle, after she 'd fixed one needle in a chicken-bone, and pinned the chicken-bone to her side.

"Wal, Emerline," says she, "I s'pose ye've got so grand down ter the mills, thet, w'at 'ith yer looms an' machines an' tic-doloureux, ye won't hev nothin' ter say ter the old way uv knittin' socks."

"Does this look like it, Aunt Mimy?" says I, shaking my needles by way of answer. "I'm going to finish this pair to-night."

"Oh," says she, "you be, be you? Wal, ef I don't e'en a'most vum it's the same one! ef ye ha'n't been nigh abeout a hull year a-knittin' one pair uv socks!"

"How do you know they're the same pair?" asked I.

"By a mark I see you sot in 'em ter the top, ef ye want ter know, afore I thought it would be hangin' by the eyelids the rest uv yer days. Wal, I never 'xpected ye'd be much help ter yer mother; ye're tew fond uv hikin' reound the village."

"Indeed, Miss Mimy," said Lurindy, kind of indignant, "she's always been the greatest help to mother."

"I don't know how I should have made both ends meet this year, if it hadn't been for her wages," said mother.

Stephen was whittling Miss Mimy's portrait on the end of a stick, and laughing. I was provoked with mother and Lurindy for answering the thing, and was just going to speak up, when I caught Stephen's eye, and thought better of it. Pretty soon Aunt Mimy produced a bundle of herbs from her pocket, and laid them on the table.

"Oh, thank you, Aunt Jemimy," says mother. "Pennyroyal and catnip's always acceptable."



“Yes,” said Aunt Mimy. “An’ I’ll take my pay in some uv yer dried apples. Heow much does Fisher give fur socks, Miss Ruggles?” she asked, directly.

“Fifty cents and I find,—fifteen and he finds.”

“An’ ye take yer pay out uv the store? Varry reasonable. I wuz thinkin’ uv tryin’ my han’ myself,—business’s ruther dull, folks onkimmon well this fall. Heow many strings yer gwine ter give me fur the yarbs?”

Then mother went up garret to get the apples and spread the herbs to dry, and Lurindy wanted some different needles, and went after her. Stephen’d just heaped the fire, and the great blaze was tumbling up the chimney, and Miss Mimy lowered her head and looked over her great horn-bowed spectacles at me.



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“Wal, Emerline Ruggles,” says she, after a while, going back to her work, “you’ve lost all *your* pink cheeks!”

I suppose it took me rather sudden, for all at once a tear sprung and fell right down my work. I saw it glistening on the bright needles a minute, and then my eyes filmed so that I felt there was more coming, and I bent down to the fire and made believe count my narrowings. After all, Aunt Mimy was kind of privileged by everybody to say what she pleased. But Stephen didn’t do as every one did, always.

“Emmie’s beauty wasn’t all in her pink cheeks, Miss Mimy,” I heard him say, as I went into the back-entry to ask mother to bring down the mate of my sock.

“Wal, wherever it was, there’s precious little of it left!” said she, angry at being took up, which maybe she never was before in her life.

“You don’t agree with her friends,” said he, cutting in the stick the great mole on the side of her nose; “*they* all think she’s got more than ever she had.”

Mother tossed me down the mate, and I went back.

“Young folks,” said Aunt Mimy, after two or three minutes’ silence, “did ye ever hear tell o’ ’Miah Kemp?”

“Any connection of old Parson Kemp in the other parish?” asked Stephen.

“Yes,” said Aunt Mimy,—“his brother. Wal, w’en I wuz a young gal, livin’ ter hum,—my father wuz ez wealthy ez any farmer thereabouts, ye know,—I used ter keep company ’ith ’Miah Kemp. ’Miah wuz a stun-mason, the best there wuz in the deestrik, an’ the harnsomet boy there tew,—though I say it thet shouldn’t say it,—he hed close-curlin’ black hair, an’ an arm it done ye good ter lean on. Wal, one spring-night,—I mind it well,—we wuz walkin’ deown the lane together, an’ the wind wuz blowin’, the laylocks wuz in bloom, an’ all overhead the lane wuz rustlin’ ’ith the great purple plumes in the moonlight, an’ the air wuz sweeter ’ith their breath than any air I’ve ever taken sence, an’ ez we wuz walkin’, ’Miah wuz askin’ me fur ter fix eour weddin’-day. Wal, w’en he left me at the bars, I agreed we’d be merried the fifteenth day uv July comin’, an’ I walked hum; an’ I mind heow I wondered ef Eve wuz so happy in Paradise, or ef Paradise wuz half so beautiful ez thet scented lane. The nex’ mornin’, ez I wuz milkin’, the ceow tuk fright an’ begun ter cut up, an’ she cut up so thet I run an’ she arter me,—an’ the long an’ the short uv it wuz thet she tossed me, an’ w’en they got me up they foun’ I hedn’t but one eye. Wal, uv course, my looks wuz sp’iled,—fur I’d been ez pretty’z Emerline wuz,—you wuz pretty once, Emerline,—an’ I sent ’Miah Kemp word I’d hev no more ter du ’ith him nor any one else neow. ’Miah, he come ter see me; but I wuz detarmined, an’ I stuck ter my word. He did an’ said everything thet mortal man



could,—thet he loved me better'n ever, an' thet 't would be the death uv him, an' tuk on drefful. But w'en he'd got through, I giv'



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him the same answer, though betwixt ourselves it a'most broke my heart ter say it. I kep' a stiff upper-lip, an' he grew desp'rate, an' tuk all sorts uv dangerous jobs, blastin' rocks an' haulin' stuns. One night,—t wuz jest a year from the night I'd walked 'ith him in thet lane,—I wuz stan'in' by the door, an' all ter once I heerd a noise an' crash ez ef all the thunderbolts in the Almighty's hand hed fallen together, an' I run deown the lane an' met the men bringin' up sunthin' on an old door. They hed been blastin' Elder Payson's rock, half-way deown the new well, an' the mine hedn't worked, an' 'Miah'd gone deown ter see w'at wuz in it; an' jest ez he got up ag'in, off it went, an' here he wuz 'ith a great splinter in his chist,—ef the rest uv it wuz him. They couldn't kerry him no funder, an' sot him deown; an' there wuz all the trees a-wavin' overhead ag'in, an' all the sweet scents a-beatin' abeout the air, jest uz it wuz a year ago w'en he parted from me so strong an' whole an' harnsome; all the fleowers wuz a-blossomin', all the winds wuz blowin' an' this lump uv torn flesh an' broken bones wuz 'Miah. I laid deown on the grass beside him, an' put my lips close to hisn, an' I could feel the breath jest stirrin' between; an' the doctor came an' said 't warn't no use; an' they threw a blanket over us, an' there I laid till the sun rose an' sparkled in the dew an' the green leaves an' the purple bunches, an' the air came frolickin' fresh an' sweet abeout us; an' though I'd knowed it long, layin' there in the dark, neow I see fur sartain thet there warn't no breath on them stiff lips, an' the forehead was cold uz the stuns beneath us, an' the eyes wuz fixed an' glazed in thet las' look uv love an' tortur' an' reproach thet he giv' me. They say I went distracted; an' I *du* b'lieve I've be'n cracked ever sence."

Here Aunt Mimy, who had told her whole story without moving a muscle, commenced rocking violently back and forth.

"I don't often remember all this," says she, after a little, "but las' spring it all flushed over me; an' w'en I heerd heow Emerline'd be'n sick,—I hear a gre't many things ye do' no' nothin' abeout, children,—I thought I'd tell her, fust time I see her."

"What made you think of it last spring?" asked Stephen.

"The laylocks wuz in bloom," said Miss Mirny,—*"the laylocks wuz in bloom."*

Just then mother came down with the apples, and some dip-candles, and a basket of broken victuals; and Miss Mimy tied her cloak and said she believed she must be going. And Stephen went and got his hat and coat, and said,—

"Miss Mimy, wouldn't you like a little company to help you carry your bundles? Come, Emmie, get your shawl."

So I ran and put on my things, and Stephen and I went home with Aunt Mimy.

“Emmie,” says Stephen, as we were coming back, and he’d got hold of my hand in his, where I’d taken his arm, “what do you think of Aunt Mimy now?”



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“Oh,” says I, “I’m sorry I’ve ever been sharp with her.”

“I don’t know,” said Stephen. “‘Ta’n’t in human nature not to pity her; but then she brought her own trouble on herself, you see.”

“Yes,” said I.

“I don’t know how to blast rocks,” says Stephen, when we’d walked a little while without saying anything,—“but I suppose there is something as desperate that I can do.”

“Oh, you needn’t go to threatening me!” thinks I; and, true enough, he hadn’t any need to.

“Emmie,” says he, “if you say ‘No,’ when I ask you to have me, I sha’n’t ask you again.”

“Well?” says I, after a step or two, seeing he didn’t speak.

“Well?” says he.

“I can’t say ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ either, till you ask me,” said I.

He stopped under the starlight and looked in my eyes.

“Emmie,” says he, “did you ever doubt that I loved you?”

“Once I thought you did,” said I; “but it’s different now.”

“I *do* love you,” said he, “and you know it.”

“Me, Stephen?” said I,—“with my face like a speckled sparrow’s egg?”

“Yes, you,” said he; and he bent down and kissed me, and then we walked on.

By-and-by Stephen said, When would I come and be the life of his house and the light of his eyes? That was rather a speech for Stephen; and I said, I would go whenever he wanted me. And then we went home very comfortably, and Stephen told mother it was all right, and mother and Lurindy did what they’d got very much into the habit of doing,—cried; and I said, I should think I was going to be buried, instead of married; and Stephen took my knitting-work away, and said, as I had knit all our trouble and all our joy into that thing, he meant to keep it just as it was; and that was the end of my knitting sale-socks.

I suppose, now I’ve told you so far, you’d maybe like to know the rest. Well, Lurindy and John were married Thanksgiving morning; and just as they moved aside, Stephen and I stepped up and took John and Aunt Mimy rather by surprise by being married too.



“Wal,” says Aunt Mimy, “ef ever you hang eout another red flag, ’t won’t be because Lurindy’s nussin’ Stephen!”

I don’t suppose there’s a happier little woman in the State than me. I should like to see her, if there is. I go over home pretty often; and Aunt Mimy makes just as much of my baby—I’ve named him John—as mother does; and that’s enough to ruin any child that wasn’t a cherub born. And Miss Mimy always has a bottle of some new nostrum of her own stilling every time she sees any of us; we’ve got enough to swim a ship, on the top shelf of the pantry to-day, if it was all put together. As for Stephen, there he comes now through the huckleberry-pasture, with the baby on his arm; he seems to think there never was a baby before; and sometimes—Stephen’s such a homebody—I’m tempted to think that maybe I’ve married my own shadow, after all.



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However, I wouldn't have it other than it is. Lurindy, she lives at home the most of the time; and once in a while, when Stephen and mother and I and she are all together, and as gay as larks, and the baby is creeping round, swallowing pins and hooks and eyes as if they were blueberries, and the fire is burning, and the kettle singing, and the hearth swept clean, it seems as if heaven had actually come down, or we'd all gone up without waiting for our robes; it seems as if it was altogether too much happiness for one family. And I've made Stephen take a paper on purpose to watch the ship-news; for John sails captain of a fruiter to the Mediterranean, and, sure enough, its little gilt figure-head that goes dipping in the foam is nothing else than the Sister of Charity.

### SCUPPAUG.

The crowd was decidedly a heterogeneous one on the edge of which I stood at eight o'clock, A.M., one scorching July morning, under an awning at the end of a rickety pier, waiting for the excursion-steamer which was to convey us to the distant sand-banks over which the clear waters lap, away down below the green-sloped highlands of Neversink,—sea-shoal banks, from which silvery fishes were warning us off with their waving fins.

Now the crowd, being a heterogeneous one, as I have said, had the vulgar element pervading it to a dominant extent. It consisted mainly of such "common people," indeed, that no person of exquisite refinement would have thought of feeling his way through it, unless his hands were protected by what Aminadab Sleek calls "little goat-gloves." And yet there is another style of mitten, a large, unshapely, bloated knuckle-fender, stuffed with curled hair, that might be far more appropriate to the operation of shouldering in among such "muscular Christians" as the majority around, on the occasion to which I refer.

In the resorts to which habitual tipplers have recourse for consolation of the spirituous kind, a cheap variety is usually on hand to meet exigencies,—the exigency of a commercial crisis, for instance, when the last lonely dime of the drinker is painfully extracted from the pocket, to be replaced by seven inconsiderable cents. This abomination is termed "all sorts" by the publican and his indispensable sinner. It is the accumulation of the drainage of innumerable gone drinks,—fancy and otherwise. The exquisite in the "little goat-gloves" would not hob-nob with me in that execrable beverage; no more would I with him; and yet one of its components may be the aristocratic Champagne. In the social elements of a water-excursion-party may be found the "all sorts" of a particular kind of city-life,—the good of it and the bad of it, with a dash of something that is very low. But I am going to talk about the thing as I found it,—the rough side of the social mill-stone; and, seeing that I have suffered nothing by

contact with it, I suppose no harm will come to such as listen to the little I have got to say on the subject.



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A benevolent desire to launch far and wide the already well-spread reputation of the New York rowdy impels the present writer to declare his conviction, that, should Physiology offer a premium for the production of a perfect and unmitigated specimen of *polisson*, Experience would seek for it among the choice representatives of the class in question,—ay, and find it, too. Nor would the ardor of search be chilled by the suggestion of scarcity conveyed in the practical sarcasm of the sly old cynic, when he scorched human nature with a horn lantern by instituting a search with it on the sun-bright highways for an unauthenticated type of man. And yet the rowdy, like many another ugly and repulsive thing, may have his use. In the East Indies, it is customary to keep a live turtle in the wayside water-tanks which are so precious in that thirsty land, the movements of the animal, as well as the industry with which it devours all noxious particles which chance may have conveyed into the waters, serving to keep them in a condition of purity and health. The rowdy is the turtle in the tank,—so far, at least, as being an ugly beast to look at and a great promoter of commotion,—by which latter service he keeps the community alive to the presence of impure particles in the social element, if he does not assist in getting rid of them. An alligator in an aquarium might furnish a better comparison for him in other respects.

Of this class there are many branches; but the one with which I have to deal at present is to be studied to most advantage by visiting some pier of the great river-frontage of New York, to which excursion-boats rush emulously at appointed hours, crossing and jostling each other with proper respect for their individual rights as free commoners of the well-tilled waters. Here, as, with audacious disregard of the chance-medley of smashed guards and obliterated paddle-boxes, the great water-wagons graze wheels upon the ripple-paved turnpike of the river, the steamboat-runner, squalidly red from the effects of last night's carouse, and reeking sensibly of the alcoholic "morning call," may be recognized by the native manner in which he makes the pier peculiarly his own,—by the inflammatory character—which unremitting dissipation has imparted to the inhaling apparatus of his unclassical features,—by the filthy splendor of his linen, which a low-buttoning waistcoat, gorgeous and dirty likewise, unbosoms disadvantageously to the gaze of the beholder,—by the invariable "diamond" pin, of gift-book style, with which the juncture of the first-mentioned integument is effected, if not adorned,—and, above all, by the massive guards and guy-chains with which his watch is hitched on to the belaying arrangements of Chatham Street garments, the original texture and tint of which have long been superseded by predominant grease. Hand and elbow with the professional city-rowdy the steamboat-runner is ever to be found: at the cribs, where the second-rate men of the "fancy"



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hold their secret meetings; clinging about the doors of the Court of Sessions, where, as eavesdroppers,—for they are known to the door-keeper, and rejected from the friendship of that stern officer,—they strive, with ear at keyhole, to catch a word or two which may give them a clue to the probable fate of “Jim,” who is in the dock there, on his trial for homicide or some such light peccadillo; loitering round the dog-pit institutions, where the quadrupeds look so amazingly like men and the men like quadrupeds,—especially in that one where the eye of taste may be gratified by the supernatural symmetry of the stuffed bull-terriers in glass cases, the enormity of which specimens is accounted for by the gentlemanly proprietor, who tells us that “the man as stuffed 'em never stuffed anythink else afore, only howls.”

I suppose it must have been the tacit acknowledgment of some superiority by me inappreciable, that accorded to one individual of the small assemblage of roughs under notice a decidedly influential position among the congenial spirits hovering around. The superior blanchness of this person's linen would seem to indicate that his association with mere runners was but occasional and for commercial ends. Also might that conclusion have been deduced from the immaculacy of his cream-white Panama hat. That was a jaunty article, with upturned brim, the pride of which was discernible in the very simplicity with which it sat, unadulterated by band or trimmings, upon the closely cropped, mole-colored head of the wearer. Thirty dollars, at least, must have been its marketable value. Instead of being fitted with chain-tackle, the watch of this superior person maintained its connection with the open air by means of a broad watered ribbon plummeted straight down his leg with a seal hardly inferior in size to a deep-sea lead. This daring recurrence to first principles is much to be observed, of late, among the choice spirits of the so-called “sporting” fraternity of New York.

This man, as I supposed, and as I subsequently heard from my friend Locus, of the police, who came upon the pier, was not a runner now, but had risen from that respectable rank by large exercise of the virtues so intimately associated with it. In attributing an exalted position to him I was right. He was the keeper of a house of entertainment for emigrants in one of the down-town tributaries to Broadway, where tickets could also be had for California and most other parts of the world, at an advance of not more than one-third on the rates charged at the regular steamboat-offices. Considering the respectability of this person's occupation, I was surprised when Locus referred to him, familiarly, as “Flashy Joe,” adding that he was widely known, if not respected, and that he would, probably, be entitled some day to have his portrait placed in a gallery of which he, Locus, knew, but into which my aesthetic researches have not hitherto led me.



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There was another noticeable character in the rough part of the heterogeneous crowd. This man, while on a footing of the greatest intimacy with the runners, was far inferior to them in the matter of dress. Locus, in reply to my queries, informed me that he was a professional oyster-opener; but, judging from his appearance in general, I should have guessed that he was a professional oyster-catcher also,—a human dredge, employed chiefly at the bottom of the sea. A perfect Hercules in build, “Lobster Bob,” as Locus called him, made his appearance on the wharf with two enormous creels of oysters, one balanced on each hip, with the careless ease of unconscious strength. His costume consisted solely of a ragged blue cotton shirt and trousers, immense knobby cowskin boots white with age, and a mouldy drab felt hat. The button-less blue shirt flapped widely open from his brawny chest; and his shirt-sleeves, rolled up to the shoulder, gave full display to a pair of arms of a mould not usually to be found outside the prize-ring, and but seldom within the sanctuary of that magic circle. As if in compensation for the merely nominal allowance of costume tolerated by this crustacean professor, his chest and arms were entirely covered with a wild arabesque of tattoo-work, in blue and red. Many and original artists must have been employed in the embellishment of Robert’s tawny hide. The one to whose sense of the fitness of things was intrusted the illustration of his right arm had seized boldly upon the oval protuberance of the biceps, a few skilfully disposed dots and dashes upon which had converted it into a face which was no bad reproduction of Bob’s own. On the broad flexors of his sun-bronzed forearm there blazed a grand device which might have puzzled a whole college of heralds to interpret,—a combination of eagles and banners and shields, coruscating with stars and radiant with stripes. But more suggestive than any of these shams was the stern reality of a purple scar which ran round the back of his neck, from ear to ear. More than one man must have been hurt, when that scar was made.

Notwithstanding the bull-dog projection of this formidable giant’s lower jaw, there sometimes beamed on his face that good-natured expression often observable in men whose unusual muscular development places them on a footing of physical superiority to those with whom they shoulder along the road of life. When the runners “chaffed” him, nevertheless, it was in a mild way, and with manifest respect for his muscle,—a sentiment in no way diminished when he suddenly clutched one of the least cautious among them by the nape of the neck, and held him out at arm’s-length, for some seconds, over the drowny water that kept lazily licking at the green moss on the old stakes of the rickety pier.

Even unto the Prince of Darkness, saith proverbial philosophy, let us concede his due. If, then, a single ray of good illuminates at some happy moment the dark spirit of these roughs, let it be recorded with that bare, unfledged truth which is so much better a bird than uncandor with the finest of feathers upon him.



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Feeling his way into the circle with a stick, there came a poor blind man, of diminutive stature, squeezing beneath his left arm a suffocating accordion, which, every now and then, as he stumbled against the uneven planks of the wharf, gave a querulous squeak, doleful in its cadence as the feeble quavers evoked by Mr. William Davidge, comedian, from the asthmatic clarinet of Jem Bags, in the farce of the "Wandering Minstrel."

"Come, b'hoys!" cried Lobster Bob, "let's have a squeeze of music from Billy, afore the boat comes up"; and, plumping down one of his creels in the middle of the crowd, he lifted up the musician, and seated him upon the rough, cold oysters,—a throne fitter, certainly, for a follower of Neptune than a votary of Apollo. One of the roughs danced an ungraceful measure to the music of the accordion, mimicking, as he did so, the queer contortions into which the musician twisted his features in perfect harmony with his woful strains. All of them were gentle to the blind man, though, as if his darkness had brought to them a ray of light; and presently one of them takes off the musician's cap, drops into it a silver dime, and goes the rounds of the throng with many jocose appeals in favor of the owner, to whom he presently returns it in a condition of silver lining analogous to, but more substantial than that of the poet's cloud.

But now the poor music of the accordion was quite extinguished by the bellowing of the brazen horns of the "cotillon band" on the deck of our expected steamer, as she rounded to from the upper piers at which she had been taking in excursionists. This caused a stir in the crowd under the awning, many of whom were fathers of families taking their wives and children out for a rare holiday. The smallest babies had not been left at home, but were there in all their primary scarletude, set off by the whitest of lace-frilled caps trimmed with the bluest of ribbons. And now came the time for these small choristers to take up the "wondrous tale"; for the big horns had ceased to wrangle, and the crushing and rushing of the crowd woke up infancy to a sense of its wrongs and a consciousness of the necessity for action.

There were some nice-looking girls around, neatly dressed, too, though by no means in their Sunday-best; for *la petite New-Yorkaise* is aware of the mishaps to be encountered by those who venture far out to sea in ships. They had sweethearts with them, for the most part, or brothers, or cousins, mayhap: but they were sadly neglected by these protectors, as we stood under the awning on the pier; for the male mind was full of fishing, and the male hands were employed in making up tackle with a most unscientific kind of skill.



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And now the final rush came, as the steamer made fast alongside the outermost of the boats already lying at the pier, across the decks of which our heterogeneous crowd began to make its way with as little scrambling as possible, on account of the petticoat-hoops, which are capital monitors in a turmoil. Women swayed their babies like balancing-poles, as they tottered along the gangway-plank. Men tried to secure themselves from being brushed into eternity by the powerful sweep of skirts. My own personal reminiscence of this transit from the wharf to the gallant bark of our choice is melancholy and vague, being marked chiefly to memory by the complicated curse bestowed upon me by a hideous old Irish-woman, whose oranges I accidentally upset in the crowd, and by whom I was subsequently derided with buffo song and scurrilous dance as long as the steamer remained within hearing and sight.

Away we are steaming down the bay, at last, a motley party of men, women, and children of all sizes and sorts: husbands, wives, milliners and their lovers; young men who have brought no young women with them, because they have come for fishing and fishing only; and advanced fathers, who, making a virtue of having brought out wife and child for a holiday, now leave them a good deal to take care of themselves, and devote all their energies to being pleasant as remotely from them as circumstances will allow. Roughs, to the number of a dozen or so, mostly steamboat-runners and their congeners, are of the party, headed by Flashy Joe. Lobster Bob has set up his oyster-plank in a central situation. Venders of unfresh-looking refreshments have established themselves on board; and the bar-keeper, near the fore-castle, is preparing himself for the worst.

By-and-by I noticed a good-looking specimen of Young New York on board, and was introduced to him by a cigar. He was a handsome boy, with dark, oval face, and Arabian eyes. The silky black line that just marked the curve of his upper lip gave promise of a splendid moustache; his closely crisped black hair was but just visible below the rim of his jaunty straw hat, the band of which was a tasselled cord of crimson silk; while his lithe figure was suggested rather than displayed by the waving lines of his loose brown jacket with tapering *gigot* sleeves. His low-cut shirt-collar and narrow silken neck-tie were in the style called "English," as quite decidedly, also, were his cross-barred trousers of balloony build; nor, although thus flinging himself for diversion into the vortex of the lower crowd, had he foregone the luxury of tan-colored kid gloves and patent-leather shoes. He was a bright boy, and precocious as a lady-killer; for, already, before we had left far behind us the pleasant slopes of Bay Ridge, with its peeping villa-parapets of brown and white, and its umbrageous masses of chromatic green, he had evidently engaged the affections of an *espiègle* little straw-bonnet-maker, who did her hair something like his own, in a close-curved crop, and had her pretty little person safely shut up in a high-necked dress.



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That young lady had a suitor with her, who was clearly not a sweetheart, however, by a good deal, but merely a follower tolerated for the day, and on the score of convenience only. He was a tall, gaunt, pale young man, with long hands and feet, slouching shoulders and narrow chest, and a strange, indescribable nullity of expression dwelling upon his features. He did not appear to be encouraged much by little Straw-Goods, whose mind was probably occupied with prospective possibilities of being led out to the festive dance by Young New York. Altogether, he was an unsatisfactory-looking young man, his unfinished look reminding one of raw material, though it would have been hard to say for what.

But the band had now ceased mellowing out the favorite medley which begins with "Casta Diva" and runs over into the lovely cadences of "Gentle Annie"; and the abrupt transition from that mournful strain to a light cotillon air warned four hundred holiday-people that the festive dance was about to begin on the wide floor between the engine-room and the saloon. Cotillons are a leading pastime among the people; and as the water was pretty smooth down the bay, and a splendid breeze rushed aft between-decks, many laughing girls and well-dressed matronly women now made their appearance on the floor. Dancing without noise is a luxury as yet uncalled for. Dancers must have music, we know,—and what is music, but wild noise caught and trained? But these cotillons were unnecessarily boisterous, on account of the roughs, who, looked upon as outsiders by the better-behaved portion of the throng, got up a wild war-step of their own on the skirts of the legitimate dance, dishonestly appropriating to their coarse movements the music intended for it alone, as they stamped and shouted, and wheeled round with a ludicrous affectation of grace, in the space between the dancers and the bulkheads of the deck. One of these roughs, a drunken, young fellow of wiry build, whose hair, face, eyes, nose, ears, and hands were all of the color of tomato-catchup, might have made an excellent low comedian, had destiny led him upon the "boards." He had just been complaining to his companions that his hand had been refused for the dance by a girl at whom he pointed the red finger of wrath,—a pale, but very interesting seamstress, who was whirling about with a much decenter young man than the red one is ever likely to be. And then he nobly took his revenge by the clever, but unprincipled way in which he caricatured the rather remarkable dancing of the young man who was the object of his hate, and whose style of movement it would not be consistent with this writer's duty to deny was amenable to severity, and must, in any society, have subjected him who indulged in it to the scorn of the flouter and the contempt of all high-minded men.



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All through the dance, it was a thing to be remembered, how superior in deportment the women were to the men. Probably it was from a natural instinct for grace, and abhorrence of the ludicrous, that they merely skimmed through the figures, without any of the demonstrations displayed by their beaux. It was pleasant to look at the nice little straw-goods damsel with the boyish hair, and to mark the contrast between her kitten glidings and the premeditated atrocities of Raw Material, as he wove and unwove his ungainly legs before her, in a manner appalling to witness. She had only a common palm-leaf fan, I remarked,—worth, probably, about two cents. But Young New York, as he waited patiently for the deadly ocean-malady to fall upon Raw Material, who was unquestionably a subject for it, and was drinking, besides, drew tightly up his tan-colored gloves, and, twirling with finger and thumb the air just about where it must some day be displaced by the future tendrils of the coming moustache, affirmed upon oath his intention of presenting her with a fan more worthy of her well-kept little hand, ere kind Fortune could have time to drop another excursion-ticket into her work-basket.

Should the solemn question arise as to how I knew that one of these young women was in the straw-bonnet line, another a milliner, a third a dress-maker, and so forth, I will answer it by stating that the left forefinger of the seamstress, long since vulcanized into a little file, furnishes the infallible sign which indicates the class. To the practised eye, the varieties are known by many a token: by the smart little close-grained cereal bonnet which little Straw-Goods put away before she came into the dance; by the spicy creation of silk and ribbons which roosts demurely, like a cedar-bird, on the back hair of the pale girl, who is a milliner; by the superior manner in which the hoops are disguised in the structure surrounding that blonde young wife with the pink baby, who is a dressmaker. Let the lofty read studiously the signs that in the heavens are portentous of storm or of shine; I, who am of commoner clay, must content myself with deciphering those that are of earth.

But a “sea-change” was upon us. Last night there was a tornado of rain and thunder and wind, and the effects of the latter were now perceptible, as we began to rock through the ground-swell off Sandy Hook, and down past the twin light-houses on the high, sunny ridges of Neversink. The music ceased, the dancers deserted the ’tween-decks floor, and, as the rocking of the boat increased, there arose in the direction of the ladies’ cabin audible suggestions of woe.

And now the twin beacon-towers of Neversink were far, far behind, having taken a position with regard to us which may be described, in military phrase, as an *echelon* movement upon our flank, and we went surging through a fleet of little green fishing-boats, manned each by a single fisherman in a red shirt, whose two horny hands appeared to be a couple too few for the hauling in of the violet and silver *porgies*, with which the well of his little green craft was alive and flapping. In the middle of this fleet we rounded to, the anchor was let go, and we were hard and fast upon the Fishing-Banks.



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The first thing done, on these excursions, by those who come to fish,—which includes nearly all the men,—is to establish a claim somewhere along the railing of the steamer, by attaching to it a strong whip-cord fishing-line, with a leaden sinker and hook of moderate size,—the latter lashed on, in most instances, with a disregard for art which must be intensely disgusting to any man whose piscatorial memories are associated with the wily salmon and the epicurean trout. Triangular tin boxes are brought along by the fishermen to hold their bait, which consists of soft clams, liberally sprinkled with salt to keep them in a wholesome condition for the afternoon take. Attaching a line to any part of the rail or combings, or to any projecting point of the boat, establishes the *droit de peche* at that particular spot,—a right respected with such rigorous etiquette, that the owner may then go his way with confidence, to inspect the resources of the bar, or join the gay throng of dancers between-decks.

There must be something singularly fascinating in this curious pastime of fishing with a hand-line from the jumping-off places of a steamboat or pier. Doubtless it is from a defective sympathetic organization that the writer of these pages does not himself “seem to see it.” Nevertheless, I look upon the illusion with a respect almost bordering upon fear, although not quite in that spirit of veneration which moves illogical savages to fall down and worship the stranger lunatic whom chance has led to their odorous residences. Dwelling one summer on the New Jersey shore, I used to loiter, day after day, upon a deserted wharf, at the end of which was ever to be seen a broad-beamed fisherman, sitting upon an uncomfortably wooden chair, from which he dabbled perpetually with his whip-cord line in the shallow water that washed the slimy face-timbers of the wharf. There he sat, day after day, and all day, and, for aught I know, all through the summer-night, a big-timbered, sea-worthy man, reading contentedly a daily paper of local growth, and pulling up never a better bit of sea-luck than the puny, mean-spirited fishling called by unscientific persons the *burgall*. I would at any time have freely given ten cents for the privilege of overhauling old broad-beam’s carpet-bag, which he always placed before him on the string-piece, with a view, I suppose, of frustrating anything like a guerrilla plunder-movement upon his widely extended rear. Ay, there must be something strangely entrancing in dragging the shoal waters with a hand-line, for unsuspecting, easily duped members of the acanthopterygian tribe of fishes,—under which alarming denomination come, I believe, nearly all the finny fellows to be met with on these sand-banks, from the bluefish to the burgall. Only think how stuck up they would be above the lowly mollusks of the same waters, if they knew themselves as Acanthopterygii, and were aware that their great-grandfather was an Acanthopteryx before them, and so away back in the age of waters that once were over all! “Very ancient and fish-like” is their genealogy, to be sure!



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In the far-away days, when Neversink was, but the twin beacon-towers that now watch upon its heights were *not*,—when Sandy Hook was a hook only, and not a telegraph-station, from which the first glimpse of an inward-bound argosy is winked by lightning right in at the window of the down-town office where Mercator sits jingling the coins in his trousers' pockets,—in those days, the only excursion-boats that rocked upon the ground-swell over the pale, sandy reaches of the Fishing-Banks were the tiny barklets that shot out on calm days from the sweeping coves, with their tawny tarred-and-feathered crews: for of such grotesque result of the decorative art of Lynch doth ever remind me the noble Indian warrior in his plumes and paint. Unfitted, by the circumscribed character of their sea-craft, their tackle, and their skill, for pushing their enterprise out into the deeper water, where the shark might haply say to the horse-mackerel,—“Come, old horse, let you and me hook ourselves on, and take these foolish tawny fellows and their brown cockle-shell down into the under-tow,”—they supplied their primitive wants by enticing from the shallows the beautiful, sunny-scaled shoal-fish, well named by ichthyologists *Argyrops*, the “silver-eyed.” But the poor Indian, who knew no Greek,—poor old savage, lament for him with a scholarly *eheu!*—called this shiner of the sea, in his own barbarous lingo, *Scuppaug*. Can any master of Indian dialects tell us whether that word, too, means “him of the silver eye”? If it does, revoke, O student, your shrill *eheu* for the Greekless and untrousered savage of the canoe, suppress your feelings, and go steadily into rhabdomancy with several divining-rods, in search of the Pierian spring which must surely exist somewhere among the guttural districts of the Ojibbeway tongue.

And here there is diversion for philologist as well as fisherman; for while the latter is catching the fish, the former may seize on the fact, that in this word, *Scuppaug*, is to be found the origin of the two separate names by which *Argyrops*, the silver-eyed, is miscalled in local vernacular. True to the national proclivity for clipping names, the fishermen of Rhode Island appeal to him by the first syllable only of his Indian one,—for in the waters thereabout he is talked of by the familiar abbreviation, *Scup*. But to the excursionists and fishermen of New York he is known only as *Porgy*, or *Paugie*, a form as obviously derived from the last syllable of his Indian name as the emphatic “siree” of our greatest orators is from the modest monosyllable “sir.” *Porgy* seems to be the accepted form of the word; but letters of the old, unphonetic kind are poor guides to pronunciation. And a beautiful, clean-scaled fish is *Porgy*,—whose *g*, by-the-by, as I learned from a funny man in the heterogeneous crowd, is pronounced “hard, as in 'git eowt.” A lovely fish is he, as he comes



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dripping up the side of the vessel from his briny pastures. Silver is the pervading gleam of his oval form; but while he is yet wet and fresh, the silver is flushed with a chromatic radiance of gold, and violet, and pale metallic green, all blending and harmonizing like the mother-o'-pearl lustre in some rare sea-shell. The true value of this fish is not of a commercial kind, for he cannot be deemed particularly exquisite in a gastronomic sense; neither is he staple as a provision of food. His virtue lies in the inducement offered to him by the citizen of moderate means, who, for a trifling outlay, can secure for himself and family the invigorating influence of the salt sea-breezes, by having a run down outside the Hook any fine day in summer, with an object. The average weight of the porgy of these banks may be set down at about a pound.

Five minutes after we came to anchor, there must have been at least two hundred and fifty whip-cord lines stretching out into the three-fathom water from every available rail and fender of the old boat. Most of the men had brought their tackle with them, and their tin canisters of bait. To those who had not, the articles were ready at hand; for speculators had mingled in the crowd, one of whom affixed his "shingle" to a post between-decks, setting forth,—“Fishing-Lines and Hooks, with Sinkers and Bait,”—the latter consisting of clams in the shell, contained in a barrel big enough for the supply of the whole flotilla of green boats and red shirts, which still hung around us like swallows in the wake of an osprey. Two or three of our excursionists—men, perhaps, whose minds indulged in dear memories of a brook that babbles by a mill—had fishing-rods with them, and made great ado with scientific lunges and casts, producing much discord, indeed, by flicking away wildly outside their proper sea-limits. Most industrious among the hand-fishers I remarked a small, spare man, who, under the careful supervision of a buxom young wife in a “loud” tartan silk, baited no hook nor broke water with his lead until he had first folded and put carefully away between the handle and lid of the family prog-basket his tight little black frock-coat, and passed his small legs through the tough creases of a pair of stout blue “Denim” overalls. These, pulled up to his neck, and hitched on there with shoulder-straps, served for waistcoat and trousers and all, imparting to him the cool atmospheric effect so much admired in that curious picture of Gainsborough’s, known to connoisseurs as “The Blue Boy.” Then he fished the waters with a will; and it was but a scurvy remark of Flashy Joe, who said that “it was about an even chance whether he took porgy or porgy took *him*.” But it seems to me that this unskilled labor of fishing from a steamboat must be epidemic, if not contagious; for even Young New York, who in the early forenoon doubted visibly his discretion at having got himself into such an ugly scrape as an “excursion-spreed,” put off his delicate gloves, and set to hauling, hand over hand, as if for a bet.



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But I believe I have committed a breach of etiquette in giving precedence to Scuppaug over the skipper, a very large and thoroughly pickled old man, who now bustled deliberately about the decks, with as few clothes on his broad back and stern-post legs as were consistent with decorum and with the requirements of those by-laws of society which extend even to Sandy Hook and the rest of the Jerseys, as well as to the fishing-banks that shoal out from the same. Strictly speaking, this old man of our part of the sea was not the captain of the boat, but the pilot, who takes command of her when she abandons her proper line on the rivers, and ventures to that "far Cathay" of city-navigators indefinitely spoken of as "outside the Hook." The smooth-water captain of the steamer, who was nobody to talk of now, was a slim, pale young man, in a black dresscoat, tall, silky hat, and shoes of a material which has long years ago been patented, on account of its matchless ability to shine. This commander remained permanently within the "office," where he was probably very poorly by himself during all this "high old time." The stout old pilot was the real skipper; and now that the vessel had come to anchor, he turned from his lighter duties to the grave pastime of the day, and fished earnestly through a large hole in the paddlebox,—the porgies that came to his allurements arriving at their destination by a series of flapping manoeuvres from blade to blade of the wheel. For so burly a man, and one with such a chest for the stowage of sea-breezes and monsoons, the skipper was provided with a wonderfully small voice, suggesting, as he lectured upon sea-fishing to the novices who were getting into "snarls" with their tackle hard by where he sat, the circumstance of a tree-toad discoursing from the hollow of a brave old oak.

"If you want to ketch good fish," said he, sententiously, to Young New York, whose hook persisted in baiting itself with his thumb,— "if you want to ketch reel snorters, you must have a heavy line, heavy lead, and gimp tackle. Then take your own time, haul in, hand over hand, and no matter what the heft, you'll be sure to fetch him."

Young New York produced from his breast-pocket the blue enamelled case in which reposed his ivory tablets, and, seating himself upon the chain-box, wrote down with golden pencil the dictum of the sage.

Notwithstanding the storm of yesterday, from which the discontented foreboded a stampede of the fish to deeper waters, porgies to an extraordinary amount were soon heaped on the decks, at the feet of each fisherman, the more careful of whom put them into baskets or barrels. But in general they were thrown carelessly on the deck, with a string passed through their gills to keep them from straying out of their proper lots. When these bright fishes are lying the deck, it is curious to watch them flushing and gasping there, with that singular, dubious expression of mouth peculiar



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to fishes out of water, as if more struck by the absence of that element than by their novel position among the accessories of dry life. Now and then a blackfish was hauled in,—an event greeted with a loud cheer from all parts of the boat. When a very large one was announced, people came rushing from all quarters to see it; but the greatest tribute to largeness in a fish that I remember anywhere to have seen was the altered expression on the face of a baby some six months old, whose features settled permanently down into the collapse of imbecility, from the moment of the arrival on the upper deck of a blackfish two feet long.

By this time the scene on the forecastle was quite a picture of the Dutch school. Grouped everywhere among the fish and fishers were matronly women and unbonneted damsels, most of them with handkerchiefs tied upon their heads; for they had got over their sea-sickness, now, and were coming by twos and threes from the saloon, to breathe a little fresh air and look on at the sport. One pretty, Jewish-looking girl, wrapped in a red and white shawl, was sitting on the big anchor near the bows, and three or four others looked quite picturesque, as they reclined on the heavy coils of the great cable. More central to the picture than was at all advantageous to it sat our friend Raw Material, with his head jammed recklessly into the capstan, abandoning himself to his misery. For the inevitable malady had fallen upon him among the first; and as he sat there, helpless and without hope, upon one of those life-preserving stools that remind one, by their shape, of the “properties” of Saturn in the mythology of old, he looked like Languor on an hour-glass, timing the duration of Woe. All along the bulwarks on both sides of the boat, men and boys were crowding upon each other, casting out and hauling in their lines with unflagging spirit. Slim city-children, blistered wholesomely as to their legs, from knee to ankle, by the sun and the salt air, harnessed themselves to little heaps of fish, and were driven about the upper deck in various fashionable styles, including four-in-hand and tandem, by other slim city-children, whose lower extremities had been treated in the same beneficial manner by the same eminent physicians. The musicians had laid away their cornopeans and other cunningly twisted horns upon the broad disk of the big drum, in a dark alcove between-decks, and were fishing savagely in German and broken English, according to the nationality with which their affairs happened to get entangled. Even the colored *chef de cuisine*, a muscular mulatto, with a beard of a rash disposition, coming out on wrong parts of his face in little eruptive pustules of black wool, sported his lines out of the galley-airholes, and his porgies were simmering in the pan while their memories were yet green in the submarine parishes from which they came. Have these finny creatures their full revenge upon fishermankind, when a smack sinks foundered into the swallowing deep?



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Do the midnight revellers in the sea-caverns call out in broad Scuppaug to the attendant mermaid for a “half-dozen large-sized jolterheads on the half monkey-jacket?” To these queries I hope that Poetical Justice, if still living, will forward a reply at her earliest convenience. Porgy now began to pervade the air with an astringent perfume of the sea: none of your Fulton Market smells of stagnating fish, but a clean, wholesome, coralline odor, such as we may imagine supplied to the Peris “beneath the dark sea” by the scaly fellows in the toilet line down there, who are likely to keep it for sale in conch-shells,—quarts and pints. Porgy prevailed to that extent, in fact, that it came to be talked of, by-and-by, as a circulating medium; and a hard-fisted mechanic averred his intention of compensating his landlady for his board with porgy, for the week that was passing away.

For some time, luck appeared to favor the starboard side of the boat, at which the take was much greater than at the other. Hence, discontent began to crawl in at the port-gangways, and the fishermen on that side were gradually edging over to the other, to look for a chance of stealing in their lines clandestinely between the ranks. This led to an interchange of bad compliments, as well as to a very perceptible slanting of the deck, and the captain piped out to the hands to shift the chain-box. And by this action was resolved for me a riddle with regard to the properties and uses of a prematurely stout man of fabulous girth, who had been dimly revealed to me, once or twice in the course of the voyage, through some long vista of the 'tween-decks, but seemed always to melt into air,—or, more probably, oil,—upon any advance being made to a closer inspection. Now, as a couple of the deck-hands hauled and howled unsuccessfully at the unwieldy chain-box, this mysterious person suddenly appeared, as if spirited up, and, throwing himself stomach on to the loaded vehicle, shot across with it to the other side of the deck with wonderful velocity, retiring, then, with a gliding movement, so as to preserve the rectitude of the deck, which now seemed inclined to slope rather too much the other way. I will not undertake to say, for certain, that the stout man was paid for doing this; but, as his hands were small and remarkably white, indications that he toiled not with *them*, and as he made his appearance on deck only when movable ballast was wanted, I am bound to suppose that he secured a living by sitting heavily and throwing himself on for weight, in circumstances under which such actions command a standard value.



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Three hours having gone by since we came to anchor, the healthful toil of fishing in the salt sea produced its natural result,—a ravenous appetite for food and drink; and a common consent to partake of refreshments now began to develop itself. The wives had much to do with this, as they detailed themselves along the railings, influencing their husbands with hints about the hamper and flask. For most of the family-people had brought their provisions with them; and, in many cases, the basket was flanked by a stone jar which looked as if it might contain lager-beer,—as, in several instances, it did. Where there were many small children in a party, however, I noticed that the beverage obtained from the jar was milk,—real Orange County cow-produce, let us hope, and none of that sickly town-abomination, the vending of which ought to be made by our legislators a felony, at least. Ham-sandwiches, greatly enhanced in flavor by the circumstance of their outer surfaces being impressed with a reverse of yesterday's news, from the contact of the pieces of newspaper in which they were wrapped up, formed the staple of the feast. Large bowls of the various, seasonable berries were also in request; and all the shady places of the ship were soon occupied by families, who distributed themselves in independent groups, as people do in the sylvan localities dedicated to picnics. All were hungry and happy, all better in mind and body,—illustrating the wise providence of the instinct that whispers to the over-wrought artisan and bids him go sometimes forth on a summer's day to the woods and waters,—a move which the marine character of the subject impels me to speak of nautically, but reverently, as taking himself and family into the graving-dock of Nature, for the necessary repairs.

Some of the girls now stole slyly about among the lines, and popped the baits timidly into the blue water. The pale seamstress, who has quite a rose-flush on her cheek now, has hooked a good-sized porgy, and her screams in this terrible predicament have brought several smart young men to her rescue. Another girl, pretty and well-dressed,—in the glove-making line, as I guess from the family she is with, all of whom, from paterfamilias to baby, are begloved in a manner entirely irrespective of expense,—is kneeling pensively on the stern-benches of the upper deck, paying out the line with confidence in herself, but evidently hoping for masculine assistance in the process of hauling it in.

And where were our dear friends, the roughs, all this time? and how came it that they were so quiet? They have been asleep,—snoring off the effects of last night's diversions, and fortifying their constitutions against the influences to come. Ever since the music ceased playing, these fellows have been rolled away, singly or in heaps, in crooked corners, into which they seem to fit naturally. But now they began to rally, waking up and stretching themselves and yawning,—the last two actions



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appearing to be the leading operations of a rowdy's toilet; and, gathering round Lobster Bob, who has been steadily employed in opening oysters for all who have a midsummer faith in those mollusks, they commenced rapidly swallowing great quantities of the various kinds, which they seasoned to an alarming extent with coarse black pepper and brownish salt. The fierce thirst, which, with these men, is not a consequence, because it is a thing that was and is and ever will be, was brought vividly to their minds by this unnecessary adstimulation; and now the bar-keeper, whose lager-beer was wellnigh exhausted, from its connection with ham-sandwiches, had enough to do to furnish them with whiskey, of which stimulant there was but too large a supply on hand. The consequence of this was soon apparent in the ugly hilarity with which the rowdies entered upon the enjoyment of the afternoon. First, in spite of the remonstrances of the Teuton whose proper chattel it was, they seized upon the large drum, with which they made an astounding din in the public promenades of the vessel, abetted, I am sorry to say, by some who ought to have known better,—and did, probably, before the whiskey had curdled their wits. In this proceeding, as in all their movements, they were marshalled by Flashy Joe, whose comparatively spruce appearance, when he came on board in the morning, had been a good deal deteriorated by broken slumbers in places not remote from coals, and by the subsequent course of drinks. Quiet people were beginning to express some dissatisfaction with the noise made by these fellows, who, however, kept pretty much by themselves, as yet, and had got only to the musical stage of the proceedings, chorusing with unearthly yells a song contributed to the harmony of the afternoon by the first ruffian, the burden of which ran,—

“When this old hat was ny-oo, my boys,  
When this old hat was ny-oo-ooo!”

No voice in this chorus dwelt more decidedly by itself than the shrill one belonging to the small, spare man already spoken of as having a buxom young wife and blue cotton overalls. During his wife's adjournment to the ladies' cabin, this person, I am obliged to record, had become boisterously drunk,—a condition in which the contradictory elements that make up the characters of most men are generally developed to an instructive extent. In his first paroxysm, the fighting man within him was all aroused, as is generally the case with diminutive men, when under the influence of drink. Already he had tucked his sleeves up to fight a large German musician, who could have put him into the bell of his brass-horn and played him out, without much trouble. But the song pacified him; and, with a misty sense of his importance in a convivial point of view, on account of the manner in which he had acquitted himself in the chorus, he now essayed a higher flight, and treated the party to a new version of “The Pope,” oddly condensed into one verse, as follows:—



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“The Pope, he leads a happy life,  
He fears no married care nor strife,  
His wives are many as he will:  
I would the Sultan’s place, then, fill!”

At this moment the buxom young wife descended suddenly from the upper deck by the fore-castle-ladder, like Nemesis from a thunder-cloud, and, seizing upon the small warbler, to whom she administered a preliminary shake which must have sadly changed the current of his ideas, drove him ignominiously before her toward the stern of the vessel, rapping him occasionally about the ears with the hard end of her fan, to keep him on a straight course. Persons who traced the matter farther said that he was driven all the way to the upper deck, pushed with gentle violence into a state-room, the door locked upon him, and the key pocketed by the lady, who said triumphantly, as she walked away,—“That’s the Sultan’s place for *him*, I guess!” The moral to this little episode is but a horn-book one, and without any pretension to didactic force: That respectable citizens, like the small, spare man, would do well, on excursion-trips or elsewhere, to avoid whiskey and black-guards; and that wives might be saved a deal of trouble by keeping their eyes permanently on their husbands, when the latter are of uncertain ways.

This little domestic drama had hardly been played out, when a more serious one—almost a tragedy—was enacted on the fore-castle. It originated in the misconduct of the red man, who, seized with a desire to catch porgies, went a short way to work for tackle, by snatching away the line of a peaceable, but stout Frenchman, who was paralyzed for a moment by the novelty of the thing, but, immediately recovering himself, expressed his dissent by smashing an earthen-ware dish, containing a great mess of raw clams for bait, upon the head of the red man, as he stooped over the railing to fish. This led to a general fight, in which blood flowed freely, and the roughs were getting rather the upper-hand. Knives were drawn by some of the Germans and others in self-defence, and great consternation reigned in the afterpart of the boat and the neighborhood of the ladies’ cabin. Then the slim captain of the boat—the one in the black dress-coat—hurriedly whispered something to Lobster Bob, who rushed away aft, where the fight was now agglomerating, headed by the red man and Flashy Joe, both covered with blood, and looking like demons, as they wrestled and bit through the Crowd. Just as they hustled past a large chest intended for the stowage of life-preservers, Lobster Bob kicked the lid of it open with a bang, and, seizing up the red man, neck and crop, with his huge, tattooed hands, dropped him into it and shut down the lid, which was promptly sat upon by the large, stout, smiling man already favorably spoken of in these pages, who suddenly made his appearance from nowhere in particular. The picture of contentment, he sat there like one who knew how, caressing slowly his large knees with



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his short, plump hands, until the cries from the chest began to wax feeble, when he slowly arose, vanished, and I never saw him again. The red rowdy was then dragged, half-suffocated, from his imprisonment, and as much life as he ought ever to be intrusted with restored to him by the stout old skipper, who was at hand with a couple of buckets full of cold salt-water, with which he drenched him liberally, as he slunk away. A diversion thus effected, the disturbance was quelled. All was quiet in a short time, and the word was passed to heave the anchor and 'bout ship for home.

On the way back, we took a pleasant course inside the Hook, which brought the charming scenery of the Jersey shore and of Staten Island before us, as a pleasant drop-curtain on the melodrama just closed. The music again struck up, and dancing was resumed with fresh vigor,—the waltzing of all other couples being quite eclipsed by that of Young New York and little Straw-Goods, who had effectually got rid of her tipsy persecutor ever since the ground-swell, and was keeping rather in the background of late, with a sober-minded lady whom she called “aunty.” With the exception of the few who took to whiskey and bad company, all appeared contented, and the better for their sea-holiday. The very musicians played with greater spirit than they did before, owing, perhaps, to their remarkable success in the porgy-fishery. One of the horn-players, far too knowing to let his fish out of sight, has propped his music-book up against a pyramid of them, as upon a desk. The good-looking man who plays upon the double-bass is equally prudent with regard to his trophies, which he has hung up around the post on which is pinned the score to which he looks for directions when it becomes necessary to bind together with string-music the pensive interchanges of the sax-horn and bassoon.

And now, as our vessel neared the wharf from which we had started while the sun was yet in the east, I looked forward to see what signs of the times were astir on the forecastle. All had deserted it, and were tending aft, with their tackle, their fish, and their prog-baskets,—all, at least, except Raw Material, of whom we enjoyed now an uninterrupted view, as he sat in his old position, with his head jammed obstinately into the capstan. But how was this?—he was round at the opposite side of it now; and I puzzled myself for a moment, thinking whether this change of bearings could be accounted for by the fact of the boat being headed the other way.

But Young New York, who is far more nautical than I am, and has a big brother in one of the yacht-clubs, derided the idea, and said he must have gone round with the handspikes, when the anchor was hove.

And there he remained, as we went our way,—a modern Spartan slave in a kind of marine pillory,—conveying to the red-legged children of Gotham, as they toddled ashore, a useful lesson on the doubtful relations existing between whiskey and pleasure.



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### COBBLER KEEZAR'S VISION.

The beaver cut his timber  
With patient teeth that day,  
The minks were fish-wards, and the cows  
Surveyors of highway,—

When Keezar sat on the hillside  
Upon his cobbler's form,  
With a pan of coals on either hand  
To keep his waxed-ends warm.

And there, in the golden weather,  
He stitched and hammered and sung;  
In the brook he moistened his leather,  
In the pewter mug his tongue.

Well knew the tough old Teuton  
Who brewed the stoutest ale,  
And he paid the good-wife's reckoning  
In the coin of song and tale.

The songs they still are singing  
Who dress the hills of vine,  
The tales that haunt the Brocken  
And whisper down the Rhine.

Woodsy and wild and lonesome,  
The swift stream wound away,  
Through birches and scarlet maples  
Flashing in foam and spray,—

Down on the sharp-horned ledges  
Plunging in steep cascade,  
Tossing its white-maned waters  
Against the hemlock's shade.

Woodsy and wild and lonesome,  
East and west and north and south;  
Only the village of fishers  
Down at the river's mouth;

Only here and there a clearing  
With its farm-house rude and new,



And tree-stumps, swart as Indians,  
Where the scanty harvest grew.

No shout of home-bound reapers,  
No vintage-song he heard,  
And on the green no dancing feet  
The merry violin stirred.

“Why should folk be glum,” said Keezar,  
“When Nature herself is glad,  
And the painted woods are laughing  
At the faces so sour and sad?”

Small heed had the careless cobbler  
What sorrow of heart was theirs  
Who travailed in pain with the births of God,  
And planted a state with prayers,—

Hunting of witches and warlocks,  
Smiting the heathen horde,—  
One hand on the mason’s trowel,  
And one on the soldier’s sword!

But give him his ale and cider,  
Give him his pipe and song,  
Little he cared for church or state,  
Or the balance of right and wrong.

“Tis work, work, work,” he muttered,—  
“And for rest a snuffle of psalms!”  
He smote on his leathern apron  
With his brown and waxen palms.

“Oh for the purple harvests  
Of the days when I was young!  
For the merry grape-stained maidens,  
And the pleasant songs they sung!

“Oh for the breath of vineyards,  
Of apples and nuts and wine!  
For an oar to row and a breeze to blow  
Down the grand old river Rhine!”

A tear in his blue eye glistened  
And dropped on his beard so gray.  
“Old, old am I,” said Keezar,  
“And the Rhine flows far away!”



But a cunning man was the cobbler;  
He could call the birds from the trees,  
Charm the black snake out of the ledges,  
And bring back the swarming bees.



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All the virtues of herbs and metals,  
All the lore of the woods he knew,  
And the arts of the Old World mingled  
With the marvels of the New.

Well he knew the tricks of magic,  
And the lapstone on his knee  
Had the gift of the Mormon's goggles  
Or the stone of Doctor Dee.

For the mighty master Agrippa  
Wrought it with spell and rhyme  
From a fragment of mystic moonstone  
In the tower of Nettesheim.

To a cobbler Minnesinger  
The marvellous stone gave he,—  
And he gave it, in turn, to Keezar,  
Who brought it over the sea.

He held up that mystic lapstone,  
He held it up like a lens,  
And he counted the long years coming  
By twenties and by tens.

“One hundred years,” quoth Keezar,  
“And fifty have I told:  
Now open the new before me,  
And shut me out the old!”

Like a cloud of mist, the blackness  
Rolled from the magic stone,  
And a marvellous picture mingled  
The unknown and the known.

Still ran the stream to the river,  
And river and ocean joined;  
And there were the bluffs and the blue sea-line,  
And cold north hills behind.

But the mighty forest was broken  
By many a steepled town,  
By many a white-walled farm-house  
And many a garner brown.



Turning a score of mill-wheels,  
The stream no more ran free;  
White sails on the winding river,  
White sails on the far-off sea.

Below in the noisy village  
The flags were floating gay,  
And shone on a thousand faces  
The light of a holiday.

Swiftly the rival ploughmen  
Turned the brown earth from their shares;  
Here were the farmer's treasures,  
There were the craftsman's wares.

Golden the good-wife's butter,  
Ruby her currant-wine;  
Grand were the strutting turkeys,  
Fat were the beeves and swine.

Yellow and red were the apples,  
And the ripe pears russet-brown,  
And the peaches had stolen blushes  
From the girls who shook them down.

And with blooms of hill and wild-wood,  
That shame the toil of art,  
Mingled the gorgeous blossoms  
Of the garden's tropic heart.

"What is it I see?" said Keezar:  
"Am I here, or am I there?  
Is it a fete at Bingen?  
Do I look on Frankfort fair?"

"But where are the clowns and puppets,  
And imps with horns and tail?  
And where are the Rhenish flagons?  
And where is the foaming ale?"

"Strange things, I know, will happen,—  
Strange things the Lord permits;  
But that droughty folk should be jolly  
Puzzles my poor old wits.

"Here are smiling manly faces,  
And the maiden's step is gay;

Nor sad by thinking, nor mad by drinking,  
Nor mopes, nor fools are they.



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“Hero’s pleasure without regretting,  
And good without abuse,  
The holiday and the bridal  
Of beauty and of use.

“Here’s a priest and there is a Quaker,—  
Do the cat and the dog agree?  
Have they burned the stocks for oven-wood?  
Have they cut down the gallows-tree?

“Would the old folk know their children?  
Would they own the graceless town,  
With never a ranter to worry  
And never a witch to drown?”

Loud laughed the cobbler Keezar,  
Laughed like a school-boy gay;  
Tossing his arms above him,  
The lapstone rolled away.

It rolled down the rugged hill-side,  
It spun like a wheel bewitched,  
It plunged through the leaning willows,  
And into the river pitched.

There, in the deep, dark water,  
The magic stone lies still,  
Under the leaning willows  
In the shadow of the hill.

But oft the idle fisher  
Sits on the shadowy bank,  
And his dreams make marvellous pictures  
Where the wizard’s moonstone sank.

And still, in the summer twilights,  
When the river seems to run  
Out from the inner glory,  
Warm with the melted sun,

The weary mill-girl lingers  
Beside the charmed stream,  
And the sky and the golden water  
Shape and color her dream.



Fair wave the sunset gardens,  
The rosy signals fly;  
Her homestead beckons from the cloud,  
And love goes sailing by!

#### THE FIRST ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH.

“In the name of the Prophet:—Figs!”

“Eh, bien, Sare! wiz you Field and ze uzzers! Zey is ver’ good men, sans doute, an’ zey know how make ze money; mais—gros materialistes, I tell you, Sare! Vat zen? I sall sink I know, I! Oui, Monsieur, I, Cesar Prevost, who has ze honneur to stand before you,—I am ze original inventeur of ze Telegraphique Communication wiz Europe!”

It was about the period when, with the fast world of cities, De Sauty was beginning to become type of an “ism”; already the attention of excitement-hunters had travelled far from Trinity Bay, and Cyrus Field had yielded his harvest. Nevertheless, to me, who had just come to town from a quiet country seclusion into which news made its entry teredo-fashion only, the performances of the Agamemnon and Niagara were matters of fresh and vivid interest. So I purchased Mr. Briggs’s book, and went to Guy’s, to cut the leaves over a steak and a bottle of Edinburgh ale. It was while I was thus engaged that the little Frenchman had accosted me, calling my attention to his wares with such perfect courtesy, such airy grace, that I was forced to look at his baskets. And looking, I was induced to lay down my book and examine them more closely; for they were really pretty,—made of extremely white and delicate wood, showing an exquisite taste in their design, and being neatly and carefully finished. Then it was, that, having apparently noticed the title of my book, M. Cesar Prevost had used the language above quoted, and with such *empressement* of manner, that my attention was diverted from his wares to himself. I looked at him with some curiosity.



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He was a little old Frenchman, lean as a haunch of dried venison, and scarcely less dark in complexion,—though his color was nearer that of rappee snuff, and had not the rich blood-lined purple of venison. His face was wofully meagre, and seemed scored and overlaid with care-marks. Nevertheless, there was an energetic, nervous, almost humorsome mobility about his mouth; while his little beady black eyes, quick, warm, scintillant, had ten times the life one would have expected to find keeping company with his fifty years. In dress, he was very threadbare, and, sooth to say, not over-clean; yet he was jaunty, and moved with the air of a man much better clad. I was impressed with his appearance, and especially with his voice, which was vibrant, firm, and excellently intoned. It is my foible, perhaps, but I am always charmed with *bonhommie*, I class originality among the cardinal virtues, and I am as eager in the chase after eccentricity as a veteran fox-hunter is in pursuit of Reynard. M. Cesar promised a compensative proportion of all three qualities, could I only “draw him out”; and besides, he was not like Mr. Canning’s “Knife-Grinder,”—for, evidently, he *had* a story to tell.

Observing my scrutiny, he smiled; a singular, ironical smile it was, yet without a particle of bitterness or of cynicism.

“Eh, bien!” said he; “you stare, Monsieur! you sink me an excentrique. Vraiment! I am use to zat,—I am use to have persons smile reeseblement, to tap zere fronts, an’ spek of ze strait-jackets. Never fear,—I am toujours harmless! Mais, Monsieur, it is true, vat I tell you: I am ze origi\_nal\_inventeur of ze Atlantic Telegraph! You mus’ not comprehend me, Sare, to intend somesing vat persons call ze Telegraph,—such like ze Electric Telegraph of Monsieur Morse,—a vulgaire sing of ze vire and ze acid. Mon Dieu, non! far more perfect,—far more grand,—far more *original!* Ze acid may burn ze finger,—ze vire vill become rrusty,—ze isolation subject always to ze atmosphere. Ah, bah! Vat make you in zat event? As ze pure lustre of ze diamant of Golconde to ze distorted rays of a morsel of bottle-glass, so my grand invention to ze modes of ze telegraph in vogue at present!”

“Monsieur, you shall tell me about it,” said I, pointing to a seat on the other side of the table; “sit down there, and tell me about your invention, and in your native language,—that is, if you can spare the time to do so, and to drink a glass of Bordeaux with me.”

He accepted my invitation as a gentleman would, sipped his wine like a connoisseur, passed me a few compliments, such as any French gentleman might toss to you, if you had asked him to join you in a glass of wine in one of his city’s *cafes*, and then proceeded with his story. My translation gives but a faint echo of the impression made upon me by his life, vigor, and originality; but still I have striven to do him as little injustice as possible.



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“Monsieur, it is ten years since I accomplished, put in practice, and evoked practical results from this international communication, which your two peoples have failed to establish, in spite of all their money, their great ships, and the united wisdom of their *savans*. I am a Frenchman, Monsieur,—and, you know, France is the congenial soil of Science. In that country, where they laugh ever and *se jouent de tout*, Science is sacred;—the Academy has even *pas* of the army; honors there are higher prized than the very wreaths of glory. Among the votaries of Science in France, Cesar Prevost was the humblest,—*serviteur, Monsieur*. Nevertheless, though my place was only in the outermost porch of the temple, I was a faithful, devoted, self-sacrificing worshipper of the goddess; and therefore, because earnest fidelity has ever its crown of reward, it happened to me to make a grand discovery,—a discovery more momentous, it may be, than that of gunpowder or the telescope,—ten million hundred times more worth than the vaunted great achievement of M. le Professeur Morse. Not that its whole import came to me at once. No, Monsieur, it is full twenty years now since the first light of it glimmered upon Cesar Prevost’s mind, and he gave ten years of his life to it—ten faithful years—before it was perfect to his satisfaction. Ah, Monsieur, and ’tis more than one year now that I have been what you see me, in consequence of it. *Eh, bien!* I shall die so,—rightly,—but my discovery shall live forever.

“But pardon, Monsieur,—I see that you are impatient. You shall immediately hear all I have to say,—after I have, in a few words, given you a brief insight into the nature of my invention. Come, then!—Has it ever occurred to Monsieur to reflect upon that something which we call *Sympathy*? The philosophers, you know, and the physiologists, the followers of that *coquin*, Mesmer, and the *betes* Spiritualists, as they now dub themselves,—these have written, talked, and speculated much about it. I doubt not these fellows have aided Monsieur in perplexing his brain respecting the diverse, the world-wide ramifications of this physiological problem. The limits, indeed, of Sympathy have not been, cannot be, rightly set or defined; and there are those who embrace under such a capitulation half the dark mysteries that bother our heads when we think of Life’s under-current,—  
;instinct,—clairvoyance,—trance,—ecstasy,—all the dim and inner sensations of the Spirit, where it touches the Flesh as perceptibly, but as unseen and unanalyzed, as the kiss of the breeze at evening. *Sans doute*, Monsieur, ’tis very wonderful, all this,—and then, also, ’tis very convenient. Our ships must have a steersman, you know. And, *par exemple*, unless we call it sympathetic, that strange susceptibility which we see in many persons, detect in ourselves sometimes, what name have we to give it at all? Unless we



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call it sympathy, how shall we define those mysterious premonitions, shadowy warnings, solemn foretokens, that fall upon us now and then as the dew falls upon the grass-leaf, that make our blood to shiver and our flesh to quake, and will not by any means permit themselves to be passed by or nullified? 'T is a fact that is irrepressible; and, in persons with imagination of morbid tendency, this spontaneous sympathy takes a hold so strong as to present visibly the image about which there is concern,—and, behold! your veritable spectre is begotten! So, again, of your 'love at first sight,' *comme on dit*,—that inevitable attraction which one person exerts towards another, in spite, it may be, both of reason and judgment. If this be not child of sympathy, what parentage shall we assign it? And antipathy, Monsieur, the medal's reverse,—your *bete noire*, for instance,—expound me that! Why do you so shudder at sight of this or that innocent object? You cannot reason it away,—'t is always there; you cannot explain it, nor diagnose its symptoms,—'t is a part of you, governed by the same laws that govern your 'elective affinities' throughout. But note, Monsieur! You and I and man in general are not alone in this: the whole organic world—nay, some say the entire universe, inorganic as well as organic—is subject to these impalpable sympathetic forces. Is the hypothesis altogether fanciful of chemical election and rejection,—of the kiss and the kick of the magnet? Your Sensitive-Plant, your Dionea, your Rose of Jericho, your Orinoco-blossom that sets itself afloat in superb faith that the ever-moving waters will bring it to meet its mate and lover,—are not these instances of sympathy? And tell me by what means your eye conquers the furious dog that would bite you,—tell me how that dog is able to follow your traces, and to find the quail or the fox for you,—tell me how the cat chills the bird it would spring upon,—how the serpent fascinates its victim with a flash of its glittering eye. Our 'dumb beasts' yet have a language of their own, unguessed of us, yet perfectly intelligible to them,—how? We call this, Instinct. *Eh, bien, Monsieur!* what is Instinct, but Sympathy?

"Bah! it amounts to nothing, all this, if we only look at it in such relations. For centuries have *stupides* bothered their brains about such matters, seeking to account for them. As well devote one's time to puzzling over 'Aelia Laelia'! Mysteries were not meant to be put in the spelling-books, Monsieur. Ah, bah! a far different path did Cesar Prevost pursue! He studied these phenomena, not to *explain* them,—being too wise to dream of living *par amours* with such barren virgins as are Whence and Why (your Bacon was very shrewd, Monsieur). What cared I about *causes*? Let Descartes, and Polignac, and Reid, and Cudworth, *et id omne genus*, famish themselves in this desert; but ask it not of Cesar Prevost! He is always considerate



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to the impossible. He says this, always:—Here we have certain interesting phenomena; their causes are involved in mystery impenetrable; their esoteric nature is beyond the reach of any microscope;—what then? My Heaven! let us do what we *can* with them. Let us seek out their *relations*; let us investigate the laws regulating their interdependence,—if there be such laws; and *apres*, let us inquire if there be any *practical results* obtainable from such relations and laws.

“You follow me, Monsieur? *Eh, bien!* This was the system, and Cesar Prevost came speedily to *one* law,—a law so important, that, like Aaron’s serpent, it put all the rest out of sight forever, engrossing thereafter his whole attention. This law, which pervades the entire animal economy, and is of course important in proportion to its universality, is as follows:—*The sympathetic harmony between animals, other things being equal, is IN INVERSE PROPORTION to their rank in that scale of comparison in which man is taken as the maximum of perfection.* Consequently, man is most deficient in this instinctive something, which, for lack of a better term, I have ventured to style ‘sympathetic harmony,’ while the simplest organization has it most developed. This last, you perceive, Monsieur, is only inductively true;—when we get below a certain stage in the scale, we find the difficulties of observation increase in a larger ratio than the augmented sympathy, and so we are not compensated; ’t is, for instance, like the telescope, where, after you have reached a certain power, the deficiency of light overbalances the degree of multiplication. Knowing this, my first aim was to find out what animal would suit best,—what one that could be easily observed was most susceptible, most sympathetic. ’T was a long labor, Monsieur; I shall not tire you with the details. Enough that I found in the *snail* the instrument I needed,—and in the snail of the Rocky Mountains the most perfect of his kind. You smile, Monsieur. *Eh, bien!* ’t is not philosophic to laugh at the means by which one achieves something. Smile how you will, ’t is a fact that in the snail which is so common and grows to such an enormous size in the valleys and on the slopes of your great Cordilleras I found an animal combining a maximum of sympathetic harmony with the greatest facility of being observed, the best health and habits, and the utmost simplicity of *prononcee* manifestation. But, you ask, what seek I, then? My Heaven, Monsieur! there was the grand Idea,—the Idea upon which I build my pride,—the Idea that is *mine!* When it came to me, Monsieur, this Idea, a great calm filled all my soul, and I felt then the spirit of Kepler, when he said he could wait during centuries to be recognized, since the laws he had demonstrated were eternal and immutable as the Great God Himself! Yes, Monsieur! For in that crude, undeveloped Idea were already germinating the wonders of an achievement grander than any of Schwartz, or Guttenberg, or Galileo. Oh, this beautiful, grand simplicity of Science, which was able, from the snail itself, the very type and symbol and byword of torpidity and inaction, to evolve what was to conquer time and space,—to outrun the wildest imaginings of Puck himself!”



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—What a coltish fire of enthusiasm pranced in the worthy little Frenchman's veins, to be sure!

"*Eh, bien!* Now, distance made no matter; it was forever subdued. I could as soon send messages to the Sun itself as to my next-door neighbor! Smile on, Monsieur! Cesar Prevost shall not be piqued at your incredulity. He also was amazed, prostrated, when all the stupendous consequences of his discovery first flashed upon his mind; and it was very long before he could rid his mind of the notion that he was become victim to the phantasms of a ridiculous dream. *Eh, bien!* 't was very simple, once analyzed. Know one fact, and you have all. And this one fact, so simple, yet so grand, was just this:—*That a male and female snail, having been once, by contact, put in communication with one another, so as to become what magnetizers call en rapport the one with the other, continue ever after to sympathize, no matter what space may divide them.* 'T is in a nutshell, you perceive,—and giving me the entire principle of an unlimited telegraphic communication. All that was to do was to systematize it. Tedious work, you may conceive, Monsieur; yet I did not shrink from it, nor find it irksome, for my assured result was ever leading me onward. Ah, bah! what did I not dream then?—*Passons!*

"I was not rich, and so, to save the trouble and expense of importing my snails to Paris, —vast trouble and expense, of course, since my experiments were so numerous,—I came across the Atlantic, and fixed myself at a point near St. Louis, where I could study in peace and have the subjects of my experiments close at hand. I used to pay the trappers liberally to get my snails for me, instructing them how to gather and how to transport them; and to divert all suspicion from my real objects, I pretended to be a *gourmet*, who used the snails solely for gastronomic purposes,—whereby, Monsieur," said Cesar Prevost, with a humorous smile, "I was unfortunate enough to inspire the hearty *garçons* with a supreme contempt for me, and they used to say I 'vas not bettaire zan one blarsted Digger Injun! *Mon Dieu!* what martyrs the votaries of Science have been, always!

"*Eh, bien!* I shall not bother you with my experiments. In brief, let me give you only results, so as to be just comprehensible. Given my law, I had to find, *first*, the manner exactly in which snails manifest their sympathy, the one for the other,—*c'est a dire*, how Snail A tells you that something is happening to his comrade, Snail B. There was a constant law for this, hard to find, but I achieved it. *Second*, to make my telegraph perfect, and pat my system beyond the touch of accident, I had to discover how to *destroy* the *rapport* between Snails A and B. Unless I could do this, I could never be sure my instruments were perfectly isolated, so to speak. 'Twas a difficult task, Monsieur; for the snail is the most constant in its attachments of all the animal kingdom, and I have known them to die, time and again, because their mates had died,—



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“Pining away in a green and yaller melancholie,”

“as your grand poet has it, Monsieur. Still, I succeeded, and I am very proud to announce it;—’twas a great feat, indeed—no less than to *subvert an instinct!* Third, I found out the way to keep them perfectly isolated, so as to prevent any subvention of a higher influence from weakening or destroying the previous *rapport*. Fourth, what sort of influence brought to bear upon Snail B would be sympathetically indicated most palpably in Snail A. So, Monsieur, you may fancy I had my hands full.

“But I succeeded, after long labor. Then I spent much time in seeking to perfect an Alphabetical System, and also a Recording Apparatus, capable of exactly setting forth the *quality* of the sympathy manifested, as well as the *number* of the manifestations. When these things were all perfected, I should have a complete system of Telegraph, which no circumstances of time, distance, or atmosphere could impair, which would put on record its every step, and permit no opportunity for error or for accident.

“*Eh, bien!* Man proposes,—God disposes. Monsieur, when I began my experiments, when I devoted myself, my energies, and my life itself to developing and utilizing my discovery, my motives were purely, exclusively scientific. My sole aim was to win the position of an eminent *savant*, who, by conferring a signal benefit upon the race, should merit the common applause of mankind. But, as time wore on, as my labors began to be successful, as the grand possibilities of my achievement arrayed themselves before me, other dreams usurped my brain. I, the inventor of this thing, so glorious in its aspect, so incomputable in its results,—was I to permit myself to go without reward? Fame? Ah, bah! what bread would Fame butter? ’Twas a bubble, a name, an empty, profitless sound, this *coquin* of Fame! *’Proximus sum egomet mihi,*’ says Terence,—or, as your English proverb has it, ‘Charity begins at home.’ I bethought me of the usual fate of discoverers and inventors,—neglected, scoffed at, ill-used, left to starve. The blesser of the world with infinite riches must nibble his crust *au sixieme*. Why, then? Because, in their sublime eagerness to serve others, they forget to care for themselves. *Eh, bien!* One must still keep his powder dry, said your great Protector. This discovery was to double the effectiveness of men’s hands,—therefore, was grandly to enrich them. But could it not be also made a notable instrument for wealth in *one* man’s hands? Ah! brave thought! How, if, none the less resolved to give man eventually the benefit of my Idea, I should yet keep it in abeyance, till I had made my own sufficient profit out of it? It could be done;—surely, to use it well were less difficult than to have invented it. So dreams of wealth and luxury began to fill my brain. I would enrich myself till I had become a *power*,



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emphatically,—till all purchasable things were within my reach. Then I should likewise become a benefactor of the race; for my intentions were liberal, and intelligence sustained adequately can effect miracles. Then, when I had made myself veritably the Apostle of Riches, I would put the capstone to man's debt to me, by endowing him with knowledge in the uses of this great instrument whereby I had made myself so great. Ah, Monsieur, you see, Haroun Alraschid had set me on his throne for an hour by way of jest, and I imagined myself Caliph in Bagdad forever!

“Full of such purposes, and of the fiery impatience of yearning begotten of them, I hastened to bring my work to efficiency for use. I had worked in silence, alone, secretly; for I dreaded to have my discovery guessed, my aims anticipated and foreclosed upon. But, hasten how I would, the processes were too slow for my means,—and just when, like the alchemist, my crucible promised the grand projection, came the dreaded explosion. My money exhausted itself! I found myself, a stranger in a strange land, without a dollar. *Eh, bien, Monsieur!* 't is not in Cesar Prevost to despair. Ah, in those days, especially, had I a heart big with the strength of hope! To accomplish my ends, a partner was needed at best, money or no money; so now it was only necessary for me to find one who to the essential qualities of heart and brain conjoined a purse of sufficient size. Before long, I came across the very man. Monsieur, when I recall the past, I behold many instances where I erred and was foolish; but the single bitter reflection I have is, that my own ruin involved the ruin of John Meavy, my partner and good comrade. I remember what he was when I found him,—happy, prosperous, large-hearted,—in every sense a noble man. I ruined him! Ah, could I but—*Eh, bien!* 't is too late, now; he is dead; *requiescat!* I have the bliss to know he found no fault with the end. —*Passons!*”

“When I first knew John Meavy, he was a merchant, living with the quiet ease of a well-to-do bachelor. Though he had been brought up to trade, the stain of money was not upon him. Generous, charitable, liberal of thought, he was the gentlest enthusiast in other men's behalf that ever the sun shone on. It was the fact that he possessed fifty thousand dollars and was trustworthy that first drew rue towards him; but I had not known him long ere I gave him my ardent love, and thereafter thoughts of wealth were pleasant to me as much for his sake as for my own. John was a student, and a lover of Science, as well as a man of trade; and, in the first moments of our intercourse, I took care to let drop words that I knew would attract his curiosity and interest. Like all you Americans, John Meavy was a man of perfect faith in all that regarded 'Progress,' and especially did he believe in the infinite perfectibility of Science in the hands of an energetic people. This was the chord upon which I played, and the responsive



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note was easily evoked. He sought me out, came to me eagerly, and, by degrees, I divulged to him all my plans. He was ambitious to work for mankind, and I convinced him that I could give him the means to do so. My faith, Monsieur! that John Meavy had not one least morsel of selfishness in all his character! How far was he from dreaming of wealth for its own sake, and for the voluptuous surroundings with which my fancy enlarged upon it! No, indeed,—my invention to John Meavy was nothing; but, as a means to profit you and me and the rest of us, 't was a thing of the grandest import. So, at first, he would not have had us keep our secret for a day; but I—by a sophistry that is only sophistic when we add to the consideration man's impotent and easily perverted will—brought him into my plans, showing him what an instrument for good vast riches would be in his hands. And he was the more easily persuaded because of the very grand purity of his nature. *Sans doute*, he felt it to be altogether true, what I told him, that, in *his* hands, a hundred million dollars would be worth more to mankind at large than the whole French kingdom. *Mais, Monsieur*, you cannot own a hundred millions and be good. As well expect to find the same virtue in London that prevails in a quiet country-town. You cannot filter oceans, Monsieur, and the dead fish in them *will* cause a stink. But I did not know this till afterwards.

“So, having inoculated John, I bestowed upon him my confidence without reserve; for I knew he was one to appreciate such treatment, and would repay me in kind. ‘Here it all is, *mon ami*,’ said I; ‘this is my invention; these the means for reducing it to practice; money is all I need. If you will join me, and provide the funds required, we will enter into a partnership for ten years, enrich ourselves, and then give it to all the world.’

“Ten years! must the world wait so long?”

“The world has waited six thousand years for this century, *camarade*. We shall require so long to enrich ourselves. And then, remember,—the longer they are kept out of it, the more perfect will our invention be, and, consequently, the greater their profit from it. Science has suffered too much already by its seven-months’ children, my good friend. *Eh, bien!* What say you? Will you be my partner?”

“Yes, Cesar. ’T is a noble scheme, such as only a noble man could originate. But, Prevost, do not speak to me of an equal partnership. I must not pattern after my country’s way of overlooking the inventor. Let us go into business upon this basis:—Prevost one share, John Meavy one share, Invention one share.’

“Bah! John Meavy!” I cried. ‘If I have discovered something, so also have you, namely: a pocket deep enough, a heart honest enough, and a faith strong enough to make that something available;—I expected sooner to find the philosopher’s-stone than all these, good friend. No, John Meavy,—if you share with me, you share equally. Then I shall be sure that you are equally interested with myself; so we shall succeed.’



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“*Eh, bien!* We arranged it; and that very day, after I had pointed out to John the state of my experiments, my noble comrade took me with him to his place of business, put all his books open before me, explained exactly the condition of his affairs, and concluded by giving me a check for five thousand dollars. ‘There,’ said he, ‘take that, pay your debts, provide for yourself, and go on and reduce your invention to the practical working you speak about. Meantime, I will wind up my business in readiness to join you. Six months from now, the firm of Prevost and Meavy, established to-day, will begin business together.’

“*Mon pauvre* John Meavy!

“*Eh bien, Monsieur!*” resumed the little Frenchman, after a short pause,—“one cannot help one’s self, after it is too late. *Allons, donc!*—I had lately, thinking over the matter in the light of my intense desire to begin a career, and under the pressure of urgent poverty, given up the notion of bringing my invention to absolute perfection as a system of telegraphing. Instead of elaborating a complete alphabet, I proposed to carry into effect a substitute already perfected, one simple almost beyond belief, needing few preparations, involving trifling cost, and capable of being made immediately operative. Further experience has taught me that the very same means, aided by a little deeper generalization, and an arbitrary set of signals, would have given me an entire alphabet. But just now I had no time to extend my experiments, needing all my time to make sure and acquire skill in what was already achieved. I must insure against the chance of mistake; for when we were applying our invention to the acquisition of money, any error would necessarily be fatal.

“The six months went rapidly by, and before they were over I was all ready. But John said, ‘Wait!’ He saw no need of hurry; and his affairs were not quite settled. *Eh, bien!* I tranquillized my eager, impatient soul by gaining an insight into the art of book-keeping and the theory and practice of trade. At last the probationary period expired, and, prompt to the hour, my comrade announced his readiness to begin our business. The friends of John Meavy were reluctant to have him leave St. Louis. They did not know what enterprise he was about to join in; but they heard that I had some share in it, and they did not scruple to hint that I might be an adventurer, who would ‘diddle’ him out of his money. However, John only smiled, and told me all they said, in his frank way, as if it were some good joke. So, finally, we took leave of St. Louis, and came to New York, to organize the great house of Meavy & Prevost: John bearing his share in the concern, forty odd thousand dollars, with many letters to persons of eminence and influence; and I carefully seeing to *my* share,—a few scientific works, some valuable chemical apparatus, and two dozen jars full of Rocky Mountain snails! *Eh, bien, Monsieur!* my stock in trade was *magnifique*, in comparison with that with which my compatriot Girard commenced business.



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“By John's advice, we began our operations in a plain, quiet way, as exporters of breadstuffs. This we did, first, that the firm might make itself well enough known, and gain the confidence of the Bourse, so that the doors might be open to our subsequent operations; that I, secondly, might learn the business, and secure the proper recognition as John's partner. Meantime, John was making himself familiar with the way to practise my invention; and both of us, gaining daily assurance of our power by reason of the discovery, were also daily increasing in love and confidence for each other. Happy days, those, Monsieur! *Eh, bien!* had the invention only proved a fiction then!

“In another six months we had matured our plans, and, as our present business seemed lamentably slow in the light of my gigantic projects, I was eager enough to begin work in earnest. I had proved our telegraph thoroughly, and, ere I set out for London, to establish there a branch of the house of John Meavy & Co., I advised my good comrade to venture largely, so as to turn our capital over as often as possible, for there was no room for doubt or fear. But John did not guess how high I dreamed of rising in fortune; *he* had no ambition to rival the Rothschilds.

“Monsieur, let me explain to you now the system of work we had agreed upon, and each slightest detail of which was perfectly familiar to us from constant manipulation, so that mistake or mishap, from any conceivable cause, was utterly impossible.

“Our business, nominally the buying of breadstuffs for exportation, was really one of speculation upon the New York market *as affected* by the European markets,—a species of brokerage, which, ostensibly and in the eyes of the world attended by great risk, was really a thing of specifically safe and certain profits, thanks to the telegraphic system, the secret of which we alone possessed. In our tentative efforts, we fixed upon *flour* as the best-adapted subject for our experiments, being a commodity simple to deal with, and requiring fewer complications in our arrangements than anything else. But, in my own private mind, I had resolved, that, as soon as our capital had grown large enough, and our credit was become sufficiently extensive, we would change our business to that of buying and selling cotton, as a better speculative; or, perhaps, would enter upon that grand arena of sudden fortune and sudden ruin, the stock-market. For the present, however, flour suited us well enough. It is well known, that, at that time, much more than at present, the price of breadstuffs in New York was regulated by the price in Liverpool. But Monsieur is not a merchant, I think? *Eh, bien!*—then I must take care to make myself intelligible. You know, Monsieur, that, in the stock-market especially, and more or less in every other kind of speculation, the greater part of the transactions are *fictional*, to a certain extent. *Par exemple*: you buy or



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you sell so many barrels of flour, at such a price, *on time*, as it is called,—that is, you engage to receive, or to deliver, so many barrels, at the prices and in the times agreed upon, in the hope, that, before the period of your contract comes round, prices will have so varied as to enable you to buy, or sell, the quantity bargained for, upon terms that will give you a profit. In a word, you simply agree to *run the risk* of a change of prices such as to give you a profitable return. The operation is identical with that of betting that such a card will be turned, or that such a horse will win in a race, or such a candidate be elected President. On 'Change we are charitable enough to suppose each speculator possessed of *data* such as to make his venture seem reasonable to himself. This is the system, and, though very like gambling, it has the advantage of presenting to men of small means the chance of large profits, provided they are willing to run the risk; since, while with a capital of ten thousand dollars I could make an *actual* purchase of only two thousand barrels of flour at five dollars a barrel, the profit on which, at an advance of twenty-five cents per barrel, would be very small,—by risking *all* my money upon a single venture, and leaving myself a 'margin' of fifty cents to cover the greatest probable decline in price per barrel, I may purchase 'on time' all of twenty thousand barrels, the profit upon which, at the same rate, would be equal to fifty per cent of my entire capital. This is the legitimate system by which such rapid fortunes are made and lost upon 'Change. Now suppose, that, operating in this way, you are in possession of a secret means of intelligence, instantaneous, to be relied on, peculiar to yourself,—does not Monsieur perceive that it insures one a fortune incalculable, and to be made within the shortest time? If I to-day learn that to-morrow's steamer will bring news that cotton has advanced one cent a pound, of course I am justified in buying cotton to the utmost extent that my capital and credit will afford me means, being sure of selling it to-morrow at a higher price; and if I am continually in the receipt of similar information, I can turn my capital over fifty times in a year, and double it every time. There is actually *no limit* to the possible fortune of a man who is so favored, provided he conjoins prudence and boldness to his manner of transacting business. The supplying of such secret and unshared information to the firm of John Meavy & Co. was the end of my invention, Monsieur. I was to go to Liverpool, and act as signaller, while he was to stay in New York, receive the information, and buy or sell in accordance with it.



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“Our apparatus was very simple. At each terminus of our line, so to speak, we had a room, inaccessible save to ourselves. These rooms, darkened, and carefully kept at a fixed temperature, contained nothing, save, in one corner of each, a chronometer regulated with precision, and, in opposite corners, a set of boxes, containing each a snail. At the signalling end, at a fixed hour, which the chronometer gives with the greatest accuracy, and when I know that my partner, by agreement, will be present at the other end to receive intelligence, I go into my room, informed as to the condition of the Liverpool market, and prepared to transmit particulars of the same to him. Here are two boxes, divided into three compartments each, and a *male* snail in each compartment. If flour is down, offering a chance for profit in New York upon ‘time’ sales, I approach the box marked *minus*, the three snails of which are called *x*, *y*, and *z*. I take up a little tube,—such a one as is used by chemists to drop infinitesimal portions of any liquid; I dip this into a vial marked *No. 1*, containing a solution of salt in water,—there is a row of these vials, the solution in each being of a different strength,—and then, with the moistened tube, I touch snail *x*, or snail *y*, or snail *z*, or any two of them, or all three, once, twice, three times, or repeatedly, according to the news I wish to signal,—noting the effect of the poison, and recording the particulars in a book kept for the purpose,—recording them with a nicety of intelligent discrimination such as can be obtained only by long and practised observation. I send an abstract of this record by every mail to my partner, so as to verify our results and to detect immediately any derangement. At *his* end of our line the brave John Meavy waits before two similar boxes, in each compartment of which is a *female* snail. He is a skilled observer, and his quick eye beholds snails *a*, *b*, *c* exactly (through sympathy) *repeating* the effects I am producing in *x*, *y*, *z*,—though the distance between them is over three thousand miles! He knows the meaning of these slight effects, and, going upon ‘Change, buys or sells with a perfect assurance of profit.

“Such was my telegraph, in its rudest outline; but I had systematized it to a degree of far greater nicety. I provided entirely against man’s imperfect and defective powers of observation. These movements and squirmings, which in snails *x*, *y*, *z*, were the effect of a physical cause, (salt-water.) were, in snails *a*, *b*, *c*, the result of sympathy for *x*, *y*, *z*, as I have said,—a result constant, determinate, and always to be depended upon. That is the *law* of their *rapport*,—not a *theory*, but a *law*, established by long, exhaustive, and conclusive experimentation. The



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reason for it I cannot assign,—did not pretend to investigate; but the *fact* I had ascertained: *x, y, z*, so touched, squirm, contract, and expand their articulations, and exude from their pores a certain slimy sweat, of agony it may be,—anyhow, a slimy exudation comes from them, —and, *simultaneously*, and *just as much* in kind, degree, quality, everything, snails *a, b, c* repeat the process. Such is the law, constant as gravitation. Consequently, all that the *operator* has to concern himself about is, to understand that so many touches, with fluid of such intensity, to so many snails, and repeated so often, produce such and such an effect upon them, as, collectively considered, to convey, through *a, b, c*, a certain piece of information. Knowing this, skill in manipulation and accurate memory are all the qualities he requires to conjoin to such knowledge. But the *observer* has a much more delicate office to perform, and, until I invented my recording apparatus, the functions of this post could be discharged only roughly and imperfectly, so evanescent and complex the manifestations. But I discovered a *chemical* observer, employing tests that nothing could escape, nor anything deceive. The clock that indicates the hour for receipt of news puts in motion the filaments of certain delicate machinery connected with the boxes wherein are *a, b, c*. These snails are placed upon a gauze-like substance, which, though firm enough to support them undisturbed, permits both their natural excretions, and their exudations under excitement, to filter through readily. As soon as the hour comes, the machinery moves, and there begins to pass the *recording paper*, so to speak, which I invented,—a paper not meant to receive any vulgar mechanical impression, but one which, to the instructed eye, and by the aid of the microscope, sets forth in *plain language* the nature of the functional disturbance in each snail, its quality, its intensity, and its duration. I do not exaggerate, Monsieur. This paper, in a word, is chemically prepared, saturated in a substance that renders it perfectly sympathetic to whatever fluid exudes from the snail, and thus, and by means of its motion, it records the quantity and quality of the impression with unvarying accuracy. The observing hour over, the clock-work stops, the paper is examined, and the result recorded carefully. *Par exemple*: I touch snail *x*, once, twice, three times, with the weak solution, No. 1; John Meavy, receiving this fact, through the sympathetic report of snail *a*, the chemical paper, and the microscope, reads, as plainly as if it had been printed in pica type: '*Flour declined threepence.*' If the fluid used is stronger, the touches more numerous, and bestowed upon *y* and *z* also,—then the decline or advance is proportionately great. Is it not a grandly simple thing, this telegraph of mine, Monsieur?"



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—I was dazzled, perplexed,—so entirely new, strange, incredible was all this to me; but I expressed to the little Frenchman, in what terms I could command, my profound sense of his genius and originality.

“*Eh, bien!* I went to Europe,” resumed he, “and John Meavy, my brave comrade, stayed in New York, buying and selling flour, and turning over his capital with a rapidity of success that surprised everybody; while his modest demeanor, his chivalry of manner, and his noble generosity won the admission of all, that Prosperity chose well, when she elected John for her favorite.

“At the end of a year we were worth nearly half a million of dollars, and our credit was perfect. Then, however, John wrote for me to come home. He was engaged to be married, he said, wanted me to be present at the ceremony, and wished my aid in effecting some changes in our mode of business. I was not unwilling, for I also had some suggestions to make. I was tired of my place as operator; I yearned to quit my post of simple spectator, and to plunge head-foremost into the strife of money-getting. Apart from my irksome position, I felt myself more fit for John’s post than he was. As the capital we worked with increased, John waxed cautious, and, most illogically, announced himself afraid to venture, —as if his risk were not as great with ten thousand as with a million! This did not suit me. I felt myself capable of using money as mere counters, I divested it of all the terrors of magnitude, and thus I knew I could do as much in proportion with five million dollars as with five dollars. And the result, I was perfectly aware, would be to those achieved by John as the elephant in his normal strength compares with the elephant whose strength is to his size as the flea’s strength to *his* size. John could take the flea’s leap with five dollars, but was satisfied with the elephant’s leap with five million dollars.

“So I took the next steamer, reached New York safely, and was most cordially welcomed by my noble John Meavy, who seemed exuberant with the happiness in store for him. Before he would say a word about business, he insisted upon taking me to his betrothed’s, and introduced me to his lovely Cornelia. He had chosen well, Monsieur: his bride was worthy a throne; she was worthy John Meavy himself,—a woman refined, charming, entirely perfect. At John’s solicitation, I was his groomsman; I accompanied him upon his wedding-tour; and mine was the last hand he clasped, as he stood on the steamer’s deck, on his way to Europe to take my place at the head of the Liverpool house. How many kind words he lavished upon me! how many a good and kindly piece of advice he murmured in my ear at that farewell moment! Ah! I do not think John wished to go thither; he was ever a home-body; and I am sure his wife disliked it much. But they saw it was my desire, they seemed to regard me as the builder-up of their fortunes, and they yielded without a murmur. *Bete* that I was! Yet I was not selfish, Monsieur. Building up in dreams my fortune Babel-high, I built up also ever the fortune of John Meavy and his peerless wife to a point just as near the clouds. *Eh, bien!* it amounted to nothing in the end, all this; but—I was not selfish!



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“Our business was nominally the old one; but, in fact, in accordance with the new arrangements John and I had agreed upon, I was to begin cotton-speculation, and John was to keep me informed regarding the fluctuations of the Liverpool market in that staple. My first efforts, though successful of necessity, were small, I wished John to gain confidence in my mode of conducting the business, before I ventured upon more extensive operations.

“Meantime, John’s letters put me in continual fine spirits. He kept his telegraphic apparatus at home, and so was much with Cornelia. He and his wife, he said, were very happy; people could not love one another more than they did. He blessed me a thousand times, because my invention had taken him to New York, and so had enabled him to meet Cornelia. But—ah, these ‘buts,’ Monsieur!—if you will search long enough the brightest, the clearest blue sky, you will always find some little speck, some faint film of cloud,—’t is your ‘but,’ Monsieur!—John fancied his wife was not altogether so happy as it was possible for her to be. She did not like the cold, colorless Liverpool, nor the foggy people there. She pined a little, perhaps, for old home-associations, wrote John. Could I not think of some means to increase her content? I knew the human heart so well; I was such a genius, moreover. Ah, bah! Monsieur, ’t is the old song: I felt myself capable of sweeping the little cloud from the sky also, as I had done everything else,—I, this sublime genius! Monsieur, a moment look upon him, this genius, this triple blind fool! *Eh, bien!* I considered:—Cornelia, like all tender, susceptible people, owes much to *little things*. She will not have to remain there long; meantime, can I not revive in her mind the associations to which she is used, and so both make her happy and bless my good comrade, John Meavy? How, then? Once, during John’s wedding-trip, we had stopped one evening in a little country-town, and while we were there, talking pleasantly by the open window, a mocking-bird, caged before a house across the way, had struck up a perfect symphony of his rich and multitudinous song. Cornelia was delighted beyond measure, and seemed to yearn for the bird. John tried to buy it; but it was a pet; its owners were well-to-do, and would not sell: so Cornelia had to go away without it, and I fancied she was greatly chagrined, though, of course, she said nothing, and seemed soon to forget it. So now the notion came to me:—I will send Cornelia a mocking-bird. Its music will charm her,—its notes will recall a thousand sounds of home,—it will give her occupation, something to think about and to care for, until more important cares intervene,—and so it will help to banish this *triste* mood of *ennui*. *Eh, bien!* I soon had a very fine bird. Ah, Monsieur, I cannot tell you what a fine bird was that fellow,—*Don Juan* his name,—such an arch-rascal! such a merry eye he had! such a proud, Pompadour throat! such volumes



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of song! such splendid powers of mimicry! I kept him with me a week to test his gifts, and I began to envy Cornelia her treasure,—he was so tame, so bold, so intelligent. In that week, by whistling to him in my leisure hours, I taught him to perform almost perfectly that lively *aria* of Meyerbeer's, '*Folle e quei che l'oro aduna*,' and also to mimic beautifully the chirping of a cricket. Well, I sent *Don Juan* out, and received due information of his safe arrival. The medicine acted like a charm. Cornelia wrote me a grateful letter, full of enthusiastic praises of 'her pet, her darling, the dearest, sweetest, cutest little bird that ever anybody owned.' And I was more than rewarded by the heartfelt thanks of my noble John Meavy. *Diantre!* had I only wrung the thing's neck!

"*Eh, bien!* The period upon which I calculated for my grand speculative *coup* had nearly arrived. Owing to a variety of circumstances, the cotton-market had for some months been in a very perturbed condition; and I, who had closely scrutinized its aspects, felt sure that before long there would be some decided movement that would make itself felt to all the financial centres. This movement I resolved to profit by, in order to achieve riches at a single stroke. I had recommended John to increase his observations, and keep me carefully preadvised of every change. But I did not tell him how extensively I meant to operate, for I knew 't would make him anxious, and, moreover, I wished to dazzle him with a sudden magnificent achievement. Well, things slowly drew towards the point I desired. There was a certain war in embryo, I thought, the inevitable result of which would be to beat down the price of cotton to a minimum. Would the war come off? A steamer arrived with such news as made it certain that another fortnight would settle the question. How anxiously, how tremulously I watched my telegraph then,—noting down all the fluctuations so faithfully reported to me by John Meavy,—all my brain on fire with visions of unwonted, magnificent achievement! For two days the prices wavered and rippled to and fro, like the uncertain rippling of the waters at turning of the tide. Then, on the morning of the third day, the long-expected change was announced, and in a way that startled me, prepared though I was,—so violent was the decline. Down, down, down, down to the very lowest! reported my faithful snails. I did not need to consult the sympathetic paper, for the agonized writhings of the poor animals spoke plainly enough to the naked eye. I seized my hat, rushed to my office, and began my grand *coup*. *Eh, bien!* I shall not go into details. Suffice it to say, for three days I was in communication with cotton men all over the country; and, without becoming known abroad as the party at work, I sold 'on time' such a quantity of 'the staple' that my operations had the effect to put down the prices everywhere; and if John Meavy's report were correct, our profits



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during those three days would exceed three millions of dollars! Having now done all I could, and feeling completely worn out, I went home, for the first time since the news, flung myself upon a bed, and slept an unbroken sleep during twenty-four hours. After that, refreshed and gay, I went once more to the operating-room to see what further reports had arrived since I had received the decisive intelligence. Decisive, indeed! Monsieur, when I looked through the glass lids into the boxes, there lay my snails, stiff and dead! Not only my faithful ones, *a, b, c*, but likewise the *plus* ones, *d, e, f!* Yes, there they lay, *plus* and *minus*, each in his compartment, convulsed and distorted, as if their last agonies had been terrible to endure! Stiff and dead! *Mon Dieu, Monsieur!* and I had pledged the name and credit of the house of John Meavy and Co. to an extent from which there *could* be no recovery, if aught untoward had happened! *Eh, bien, Monsieur!* Cesar Prevost is fortunate in a very elastic temperament. Yet I did not dare think of John Meavy. However, if the thing was done, it was too late for remedy now. *Eh, bien!* I would wait. Meantime, I carefully examined to see if any cause was discoverable to have produced these deaths. None. 'T was irresistible, then, that the cause was at John's end. What? An accident,—perhaps, nervous, he had dosed them too heavily; but—I dared not think about it,—I would only—wait!

“*Eh, bien, Monsieur!* It would be seven days yet before I could get news. I waited,—waited calmly and composedly. *Mon Dieu!* they talk of heroism in leading a forlorn hope,—Cesar Prevost was a hero for those eight days. I do not think about them even now.

“On the third day came a steamer with news of uncertain import, but on the whole favorable. By the same advice a letter reached me from my old comrade, John Meavy: his affairs were prosperous, he and his wife very happy, and *Don Juan* more charming than ever.

“Monsieur, the fourth day came,—the fifth,—the sixth,—the seventh,—finding me still waiting. No one, to see me, could have guessed I had not slept for a week. *Eh, bien!* I will not dwell upon it!

“The morning of the eighth day came. I breakfasted, read my paper, smoked my cigar, and walked leisurely to my counting-room. I answered the letters. I sauntered round to bank, paid a note that had fallen due, got a check cashed, and, having counted the money and secured it in my pocket-book, I walked out and stood upon the bank-steps, talking with a business-friend, who inquired after John Meavy. 'T was a pleasant theme to converse about, this,—for *me!*

“A news-boy came running down Wall Street, with papers under his arm. 'Here you are!' he cried. 'Extray! Steamer just in! Latest news from Europe! All 'bout the new alliance! Consols firm,—cotton riz! Extray, Sir?'



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"I bought one, and the boy ran off as I paid him and snatched the paper from his hand.

"'You gave that rascal a gold dollar for a half-dime,' said my friend.

"'Did I?'

"A gold dollar! I wondered very quaintly what he would say, when, in a few days, he heard of the failure of John Meavy & Co. for three millions of dollars. A gold dollar!

"*Eh, bien, Monsieur!* I shall not dwell upon it. Enough,—we were ruined. I had played my grand *coup*, and lost. For myself, nothing. But—John Meavy! Oh, Monsieur, I could not think! I went to my office, and sat there all day, stupid, only twirling my watch-key, and repeating to myself,—'A gold dollar! a gold dollar!' The afternoon had nearly gone when one of my clerks roused me:—'A letter for you, Mr. Prevost; it came by the steamer to-day.'

"Monsieur," said the little Frenchman, producing a well-worn pocket-book, and taking out from it a tattered, yellow sheet, which he unfolded before me,—“Monsieur, you shall read that letter.”

It was this:—

“MY DEAR CESAR:—

“You must blame me and poor *Don Juan* for the suspension of your Telegraph. I write, myself, to tell you how careless I have been; for poor John is in such a state of agitation, and seems to fear such calamities, that I will not let him write;—though what evil can come of it, beyond the inconvenience, I cannot see, nor will he tell me. You must answer this immediately, so as to prove to John that nothing has gone wrong; and so give me a chance to scold this good husband of mine for his vain and womanish apprehensions. But let me tell you how it happened to the poor snails,—*Don Juan* is so tame, that I do not pretend to keep him shut up in his cage, but let him fly about our sitting-room, just as he pleases. The next room to this, you know, is the one where we kept the snails. I have been helping John with these for some time, and it is my custom, when he goes on 'Change, to look after the ugly creatures, and especially to open the boxes and give them air. Well, this morning,—you must not scold me, Cesar, for I have wept enough for my carelessness, and as I write am trembling all over like a leaf,—this morning, I went into the snail-room as usual, opened the boxes, noted how well all six looked, and then, going to the window, stood there for some minutes, looking out at the people across the way preparing for the illumination to-night, (for we are going to have peace at last, and every one is so rejoiced!) and forgetting entirely that I had left open both the door of this room and that of the sitting-room also, until I heard the flutter of *Don Juan's* wings behind me. I turned, and was horror-stricken to find him perched on the boxes, and pecking away at the poor snails, as if they were strawberries! I



screamed, and ran to drive him off, but I was too late,—for, just as I caught him, the greedy fellow picked up and swallowed the last one of the entire six! I felt almost like killing *him*, then; but I could not,—nor could *you* have done it, Cesar, had you but seen the arch defiance of his eye, as he fluttered out of my hands, flew back to his cage, and began to pour forth a whole world of melody!



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“My dear Cesar, I know my carelessness was most culpable, but it *cannot* be so bad as John fears. Oh, if anything should happen now, by my fault, when we are so prosperous and happy, I could never forgive myself! Do write to me as soon as possible, and relieve the anxiety of

“Affectionately yours, CORNELIA.”

The little Frenchman looked at me with a glance half sad, half comical, as I returned the letter to him.

“*Eh, bien, Monsieur!*” said he, shrugging his shoulders,—“you’ve heard my story. ’Twas fate,—what could one do?”

“But that is not all,—John Meavy,”—said I.

The little Frenchman looked very grave and sad.

“Monsieur, my brave *camarade*, John Meavy, had been brought up in a stern school. His ideas of credit and of mercantile honor were pitched very high indeed. He imagined himself disgraced forever, and—he did not survive it.”

“You do not mean”——

“I mean, Monsieur, that I lost the bravest and truest and most generous friend that ever man had, when John Meavy died. And that dose of Prussic Acid should properly have gone to me, whose fault it all was, instead of to him, so innocent. *Eh, bien, Monsieur!* his lot was the happiest, after all.”

“But Cornelia?” said I, after a pause.

The little Frenchman rose, with a quiet and graceful air, full of sadness, yet of courtesy; and I knew then that he was no longer my guest and entertainer, but once more the chapman with his wares.

“Monsieur, Cornelia is under my protection. You will comprehend *that*—after that—she has not escaped with impunity. Some little strings snapped in the harp. She is *touchee*, here,” said he, resting one finger lightly upon his forehead,—“but ’tis all for the best, *sans doute*. She is quiet, peaceable,—and she does not remember. She sits in my house, working, and the bird sings to her ever. ’Tis a gallant bird, Monsieur. And though I am poor, I can yet make some provision for her comfort. She has good taste, and is very industrious. These baskets are all of her make; when I have no other employ, I sell them about, and use the money for her. *Eh, bien!* ’tis a small price,—fifty cents; if Monsieur will purchase one, he will possess a basket really handsome, and will have contributed something to the comfort of one of the Good God’s *protegees*. *Mille*



*remerciements, Monsieur,*—for this purchase,—for your entertainment,—for your courtesy!

*“Bon jour, Monsieur!”*

\* \* \* \* \*

About half an hour after this, I had occasion to traverse one of the corridors of Barnan’s Hotel, when I saw a group of gentlemen, most of whom sported “Atlantic Cable Charms” on their watchchains, gathered about a person who had secured their rapt attention to some story he was narrating.

*“Eh, bien, Messieurs!”* I heard him say, in a peculiar naive broken English, “it would be yet seven days before I could get ze news,—and—I wait. Oui! calm\_lie\_, composed\_lie\_, with insouciance beyond guess, I wait”—



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"I wonder," said I to myself, as I passed on, "I wonder if M. Cesar Prevost's account of his remarkable invention of the First Atlantic Telegraph have not some subtle connection with his desire to find as speedy and remunerative a sale as possible for his pretty baskets!"

### LADY BYRON.

It is seldom that a woman becomes the world's talk but by some great merit or fault of her own, or some rare qualification so bestowed by Nature as to be incapable of being hidden. Great genius, rare beauty, a fitness for noble enterprise, the venturesome madness of passion, account for ninety-nine cases in the hundred of a woman becoming the subject of general conversation and interest. Lady Byron's was the hundredth case. There was a time when it is probable that she was spoken of every day in every house in England where the family could read; and for years the general anxiety to hear anything that could be told of her was almost as striking in Continental society and in the United States as in her own country. Yet she had neither genius, nor conspicuous beauty, nor "a mission," nor any quality of egotism which could induce her to brave the observation of the world for any personal aim. She had good abilities, well cultivated for the time when she was young; she was rather pretty, and her countenance was engaging from its expression of mingled thoughtfulness and brightness; she was as lady-like as became her birth and training; and her strength of character was so tempered with modesty and good taste that she was about the last woman that could have been supposed likely to become celebrated in any way, or, yet more, to be passionately disputed about and censured, in regard to her temper and manners: yet such was her lot. No breath of suspicion ever dimmed her good repute, in the ordinary sense of the expression: but to this day she is misapprehended, wherever her husband's genius is adored; and she is charged with precisely the faults which it was most impossible for her to commit. For the original notoriety she was not answerable; but for the protracted misapprehension of her character she was. She early decided that it was not necessary or desirable to call the world into council on her domestic affairs; her husband's doing it was no reason why she should; and for nearly forty years she preserved a silence, neither haughty nor sullen, but merely natural, on matters in which women usually consider silence appropriate. She never inquired what effect this silence had on public opinion in regard to her, nor countenanced the idea that public opinion bore any relation whatever to her private affairs and domestic conduct. Such independence and such reticence naturally quicken the interest and curiosity of survivors; and they also stimulate those who knew her as she was to explain her characteristics to as many as wish to understand them, after disputing about them for the lifetime of a whole generation.



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Anne Isabella Noel Milbanke (that was her maiden name) was an only child. Her father, Sir Ralph Milbanke, was the sixth baronet of that name. Her mother was a Noel, daughter of Viscount and Baron Wentworth, and remotely descended from royalty,—that is, from the youngest son of Edward I. After the death of Lady Milbanke's father and brother, the Barony of Wentworth was in abeyance between the daughter of Lady Milbanke and the son of her sister till 1856, when, by the death of that cousin, Lord Scarsdale, Lady Byron became possessed of the inheritance and title. During her childhood and youth, however, her parents were not wealthy; and it was understood that Miss Milbanke would have no fortune till the death of her parents, though her expectations were great. Though this want of immediate fortune did not prove true, the report of it was probably advantageous to the young girl, who was sought for other things than her fortune. When Lord Byron thought of proposing, the friend who had brought him to the point of submitting to marriage objected to Miss Milbanke on two grounds,—that she had no fortune, and that she was a learned lady. The gentleman was as wrong in his facts as mischievous in his advice to the poet to many. Miss Milbanke had fortune, and she was not a learned lady. Such men as the two who held a consultation on the points, whether a man entangled in intrigues and overwhelmed with debts should release himself by involving a trusting girl in his difficulties, and whether the girl should be Miss Milbanke or another, were not likely to distinguish between the cultivated ability of a sensible girl and the pedantry of a blue-stocking; and hence, because Miss Milbanke was neither ignorant nor silly, she was called a learned lady by Lord Byron's associates. He bore testimony, in due time, to her agreeable qualities as a companion,—her brightness, her genial nature, her quiet good sense; and we heard no more of her "learning" and "mathematics," till it suited her enemies to get up a theory of incompatibility of temper between her and her husband. The fact was, she was well-educated, as education was then, and had the acquirements which are common in every house among the educated classes of English society.

She was born in 1792, and passed her early years chiefly on her father's estates of Halnaby, near Darlington, Yorkshire, and Seaham, in Durham. She retained a happy recollection of her childhood and youth, if one may judge by her attachment to the old homes, when she had lost the power of attaching herself, in later life, to any permanent home. When an offer of service was made to her, some years since, by a person residing on the Northumberland coast, the service she asked was that a pebble might be sent her from the beach at Seaham, to be made into a brooch, and worn for love of the old place.



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Her father, as a Yorkshire baronet, spent his money freely. A good deal of it went in election-expenses, and the hospitality of the house was great. It was too orderly and sober and old-fashioned for Lord Byron's taste, and he quizzed it accordingly; but he admitted the kindness of it, and the amiability which made guests glad to go there and sorry to come away. His special records of Miss Milbanke's good-humor, spirit, and pleasantness indicate the source of subsequent misrepresentations of her. Till he saw it, he could not conceive that order and dutifulness could coexist with liveliness and great charms of mind and manners; and when the fact was out of sight, he went back to his old notion, that affectionate parents and dutiful daughters must be dull, prudish, and tiresome.

"Bell" was beloved as only daughters are, but so unspoiled as to be sought in marriage as eagerly as if she had been a merry member of a merry tribe. Lord Byron himself offered early, and was refused, like many other suitors. Her feelings were not the same, however, to him as to others. It is no wonder that a girl not out of her teens should be captivated by the young poet whom the world was beginning to worship for his genius as very few men are worshipped in their prime, and who could captivate young and old, man, woman, and child, when he chose to try. As yet, his habits of life and mind had not told upon his manners, conversation, and countenance as they did afterwards. The beauty of his face, the reserved and hesitating grace of his manner, and the pith and strength of such conversation as he was tempted into might well win the heart of a girl who was certainly far more fond of poetry than of mathematics. Yet she refused him. Perhaps she did not know him enough. Perhaps she did not know her own feelings at the moment. She afterwards found that she had always loved him. His renewed offers at the close of two years made her very happy. She was drawing near the end of her portion of life's happiness; and she seems to have had no suspicion of the baselessness of her natural and innocent bliss. It is probable that nobody about her knew, any more than herself, how and why Lord Byron offered to her a second time, till Moore published the facts in his "Life" of the poet. The thrill of disgust which ran through every good heart, on reading the story, made all sympathizers ask how she could bear to learn how she had been treated in the confidences of profligates. Perhaps she had known it long before, as her husband had repeatedly tried his powers of terrifying and depressing her; but, at all events, she could bear anything,—not only with courage and in silence, but with calmness and inexhaustible mercy. According to Moore's account, a friend of Byron's urged him to marry, as a remedy for the melancholy restlessness and disorder of his life; "and, after much discussion, he consented." The next proceedings were in character with this "consent."



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Byron named Miss Milbanke: the friend objected, on the grounds of her possession of learning and supposed want of fortune; and Byron actually commissioned his adviser to propose for him to the lady he did not prefer. She refused him; and then future proceedings were determined by his friend's admiration of the letter he had got ready for Miss Milbanke. It was such a pretty letter, it would be a pity not to send it. So it was sent.

If she could have known, as she hung over that letter, what eyes had read lines that should have been her own secret property, and as what kind of alternative the letter had been prepared, what a different life might hers have been! But she could not dream of being laid hold of as a speculation in that style, and she was happy,—as women are for once in their lives, and as she deserved to be. There was another alternative, besides that of two ladies to be weighed in the balance. Byron was longing to go abroad again, and he would have preferred that to marrying; but the importunity of his friends decided him for marriage. In a short time, and for a short time, Miss Milbanke's influence was too strong for his wayward nature and his pernicious friends to resist. His heart was touched, his mind was soothed, and he thought better of women, and perhaps of the whole human race, than he had ever done before. He wrote to Moore, who owned he had "never liked her," and who boded evil things from the marriage, that she was so good that he wished he was better,—that he had been quite mistaken in supposing her of "a very cold disposition." These gentlemen had heard of her being regarded as "a pattern lady in the North"; and they had made up an image of a prude and a blue in their own minds, which Byron presently set himself to work to pull down. He wrote against Moore's notion of her as "strait-laced," in a spirit of justice awakened by his new satisfactions and hopes: but there are in the narrative no signs of love on his part,—nothing more than an amiable complacency in the discovery of her attachment to him.

The engagement took place in September, 1814, and the marriage in the next January. Moore saw him in the interval, and had no remaining hope, from that time, that Byron could ever make or find happiness in married life. He was satisfied that love was, in Byron's case, only an imagination; and he pointed to a declaration of Byron's, that, when in the society of the woman he loved, even at the happiest period of his attachment, he found himself secretly longing to be alone. Secretly during the courtship, but not secretly after marriage.

"Tell me, Byron," said his wife, one day, not long after they were married, and he was moodily staring into the fire,— "am I in your way?"

"Damnably," was the answer.

It will be remembered by all readers that the reason he assigned for the good terms on which he remained with his half-sister, Mrs. Leigh, was that they seldom or never saw each other.



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When Moore saw him in London, he was in a troubled state of mind about his affairs. His embarrassments were so pressing that he meditated breaking off the match; but it was within a month of the wedding-day, and he said he had gone too far to retract.— How it was that Sir Ralph Milbanke did not make it his business to ascertain all the conditions of a union with a man of Byron's reputation it is difficult to imagine. Every movement of the idolized poet was watched, anecdotes of his life and ways were in all mouths; and a prudent father, if encouraging his addresses at all, should naturally have ascertained the chances of his daughter having an honorable and happy home. Sir Ralph probably thought so, when there were ten executions in the house in the first few months after the marriage. Those difficulties, however, did not affect the happiness of the marriage unfavorably. The wife was not the less of the heroic temperament for being "a pattern young lady." She was one whose spirit was sure to rise under pressure, and who was always most cheerful when trouble called forth her energies on behalf of others. Liberal with her own property, making light of privation, full of clear and practical resource in emergency, she won her husband's admiration in the midst of the difficulties into which he had plunged her. For a time he was not ashamed of that admiration; and his avowals of it are happily on record.

They were married on the second of January. The wedding-day was miserable. Byron awoke in one of his melancholy moods, and wandered alone in the grounds till called to be married. His wayward mind was full of all the associations that were least congenial with the day. His thoughts were full of Mary Chaworth, and of old scenes in his life, which he fancied he loved because he was now leaving them behind. He declared that his poem of "The Dream" was a true picture of his wedding-morning; and there are circumstances, not told in his "Life," which render this probable. After the ceremony and breakfast, the young couple left Seaham for Sir Ralph's seat at Halnaby. Towards dusk of that winter-day, the carriage drove up to the door, where the old butler stood ready to receive his young lady and her bridegroom. The moment the carriage-door was opened, the bridegroom jumped out and walked away. When his bride alighted, the old servant was aghast. She came up the steps with the listless gait of despair. Her face and movements expressed such utter horror and desolation, that the old butler longed to offer his arm to the lonely young creature, as an assurance of sympathy and protection. Various stories got abroad as to the cause of this horror, one probably as false as another; and, for his own part, Byron met them by a false story of Miss Milbanke's lady's-maid having been stuck in, bodkin-wise, between them. As Lady Byron certainly soon got over the shock, the probability is that she satisfied herself that he had been suffering under one of the dark moods to which he was subject, both constitutionally and as the poet of moods.



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It is scarcely possible at our time of day to make sufficient allowance for such a woman having entered upon such a marriage, in spite of the notoriety of the risks. Byron was then the idol of much more than the literary world. His poetry was known by heart by multitudes of men and women who read very little else; and one meets, at this day, elderly men, who live quite outside of the regions of literature, who believe that there never could have been such a poet before, and would say, if they dared, that there will never be such another again. He appeared at the moment when society was restless and miserable, and discontented with the Fates and the universe and all that it contained. The general sensibility had not for long found any expression in poetry. Literature seemed something quite apart from experience, and with which none but a particular class had any concern. At such a time, when Europe lay desolate under the ravage and incessant menace of the French Empire,—when England had an insane King, a profligate Regent, an atrocious Ministry, and a corrupt Parliament,—when the war drained the kingdom of its youth, and every class of its resources,—when there was chronic discontent in the manufacturing districts, and hunger among the rural population, with a perpetual extension of pauperism, swallowing up the working and even the middle classes,—when everybody was full of anxiety, dread, or a reactionary recklessness,—there suddenly appeared a new strain of poetry which seemed to express every man's mood. Every man took up the song. Byron's musical woe resounded through the land. People who had not known exactly what was the matter with them now found that life was what Byron said it was, and that they were sick of it. I can well remember the enthusiasm,—the better, perhaps, for never having shared it. At first I was too young, and afterwards I found too much of moods and too little of matter to create any lasting attachment to his poetry. But the music of it rang in all ears, and the rush of its popularity could not be resisted by any but downright churlish persons. I remember how ladies, in morning calls, recited passages of Byron to each other,—and how gentlemen, in water-parties, whispered his short poems to their next neighbor. If a man was seen walking with his head down and his lips moving, he was revolving Byron's last romance; and children who began, to keep albums wrote, in double lines on the first page, some stanza which caught them by its sound, if they were not up to its sense. On some pane in every inn-window there was a scrap of Byron; and in young ladies' portfolios there were portraits of the poet, recognizable, through all bad drawing and distortion, by the cast of the beautiful features and the Corsair style. Where a popularity like this sprang up, there must be sufficient reason for it to cause it to involve more or less all orders of minds; and the wisest and most experienced men, and the most thoroughly trained scholars, fell into



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the general admiration, and keenly enjoyed so melodious an expression of a general state of feeling, without asking too pertinaciously for higher views and deeper meanings. Old Quakers were troubled at detecting hidden copies and secret studies of Byron among young men and maidens who were to be preserved from all stimulants to the passions; and they were yet more troubled, when, looking to see what the charm was which so wrought upon the youth of their sect, they found themselves carried away by it, beyond all power to forget what they had read. The idolatry of the poet, which marked that time, was an inevitable consequence of the singular aptness of his utterance. His dress, manners, and likings were adopted, so far as they could be ascertained, by hundreds of thousands of youths who were at once sated with life and ambitious of fame, or at least of a reputation for fastidious discontent; young ladies declared that Byron was everything that was great and good; and even our best literature of criticism shows how respectful and admiring the hardest reviewers grew, after the poet had become the pet and the idol of all England. At such a time, how should "Bell" Milbanke resist the intoxication,—even before the poet addressed himself particularly to her? A great reader in the quietness of her home, where all her tastes were indulged,—a lover of poetry, and so genial and sympathizing as to be always sure to be filled with the spirit of her time,—how could she fail to idolize Byron as others did? And what must have been her exaltation, when he told her that the welfare of his whole life depended upon her! Between her exaltation, her love, her sympathy, and her admiration, she might well make allowance for his eccentricities first, and for worse afterwards. Thus, probably, it was that she got over the shock of that wedding-drive, and was again the bright, affectionate, trusting and winning woman whom he had described before and was to describe again to his skeptical friend Moore.

Before six weeks were over, he wrote to Moore (after some previous hankerings) that he should go abroad soon, "and alone, too." He did not go then. In April the death of Lord Wentworth occurred, causing Sir Ralph and Lady Milbanke to take the name of Noel, according to Lord Wentworth's will, and assuring the prospect of ultimate accession of wealth. Meantime, the new expenses of his married life, entered upon without any extrication from old debts, caused such embarrassment, that, after many other humiliations had been undergone, he offered his books for sale. As Lady Byron maintained a lifelong silence about the sufferings of her married life, little is known of that miserable year beyond what all the world saw: executions in the house; increasing gloom and recklessness in the husband; a bright patience and resoluteness in the wife; and an immense pity felt by the poet's adorers for his trials by a persecuting Fate. During the summer and autumn, his mention of his wife to his

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correspondents became less frequent and more formal. His tone about his approaching “papaship” tells nothing. He was not likely to show to such men any good or natural feelings on the occasion. In December, his daughter, Augusta Ada, was born; and early in January, he wrote to Moore so melancholy a “Heigho!” on occasion of his having been married a year, as to incite that critical observer to write him an inquiry about the state of his domestic spirits. The end was near, and the world was about to see its idol and his wife tested in moral action of a very stringent kind.

By means of the only publication ever made or authorized by Lady Byron on the subject of her domestic life, her vindication of her parents, contained in the Appendix of Moore’s “Life” of the poet, we know, that, during her confinement, Lord Byron’s nearest relatives were alarmed by tokens of eccentricity so marked, that they informed her, as soon as she was recovered, that they believed him insane. His confidential servant bore the same testimony; and she naturally believed it, when she resumed her place in the household, and saw how he was going on. On the sixth of January, the day after he wrote the “Heigho!” to Moore, he desired his wife, in writing, to go to her parents on the first day that it was possible for her to travel. Her physicians would not let her go earlier than the fifteenth; and on that day she went. She never saw her husband again.

She had, in agreement with his family, consulted Dr. Baillie on her husband’s behalf; and he, supposing the insanity to be real, advised, before seeing Lord Byron, that she should obey his wish about absenting herself, as an experiment,—and that, in the interval, she should converse only on light and cheerful topics. She observed these directions, and, in the spirit of them, wrote two letters, on the journey, which bore no marks of the trouble which existed between them. These letters were afterwards used, even circulated, to create a belief that Lady Byron had been suddenly persuaded to desert her husband, though he at least was well aware that the fact was not so. It soon appeared that he was not insane. Such was the decision of physicians, relatives, and presently of Lady Byron herself. While there was any room for supposing disease to be the cause of his conduct, she and her parents were anxious to use all tenderness with him, and devote themselves to his welfare; but when it became necessary to consider him sane, his wife declared that she could not return to him.

It is not necessary to dwell on the imputations Lord Byron spread abroad at the time, and his biographer afterwards, against the parents of his wife, and everybody belonging to them who could be supposed to have the slightest influence over Lady Byron’s views or feelings. Those allegations were publicly shown by her to be false, nearly thirty years ago. I refer to them now solely because they were the occasion of the only public disclosure Lady Byron ever voluntarily made on any part of the subject of her married life. It is needless to exhibit how different in this respect was the conduct of her husband and his friends.



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It became known by that statement, after some years, that, when Lady Noel went to London, to see what could and ought to be done, she obtained good legal opinions on the case, so far as she knew it. Those opinions declared Lady Byron fully justified in refusing to rejoin her husband. The parents, however, never knew the whole; and it was on yet more substantial grounds that Lady Byron formed her resolution. The facts were submitted, as the world has since known, as an A.B. case, to Dr. Lushington and Sir Samuel Romilly; and those able lawyers and good men peremptorily decided, that the wife, whoever she might be, must never see her husband again. When they learned whose case it was, they not only gave their full sanction to her refusal to return, but declared that they would never countenance in any way a change in that resolution. Dr. Lushington's statement to this effect appears in the Appendix to Moore's "Life," as a part of Lady Byron's vindication of her parents.

It was very hard on her to be compelled to speak at all. For six years she had kept silence utterly, bearing all imputations without reply. But when it was brought to her notice that her parents were charged with the gravest offences by her husband's biographer, after the death of both, and when no other near relative was in existence, she had no choice. She must exonerate them. The testimony was, as she said, "extorted" from her. The respect which had been felt for her during the first years of silence was not impaired by this disclosure; but it was by one which occurred a few years later. A statement on her domestic affairs was published, in her name, in a magazine of large circulation.[A] It did not really explain anything, while it seemed to break through a dignified reserve which had won a high degree of general esteem. It was believed that feminine weakness had prevailed at last; and her reputation suffered accordingly with many who had till then regarded her with favor and even reverence.

[Footnote A: *New Monthly Magazine*, 1836.]

This was the climax of the hardship of her case. She had no concern whatever with this act of publication. It was one of poor Campbell's disastrous pranks. He could not conceive how he could have done such a thing, and was desperately sorry; but there was little good in that. The mischief was done which could never be thoroughly repaired. She once more suffered in silence; for she was not weak enough to complain of irremediable evils. Nine years afterwards she wrote to a friend, who had been no less unjustifiably betrayed,—“I am grieved for you, as regards the actual position; but it will come right. I was myself made to *appear* responsible for a publication by Campbell, most unfairly, some years ago; so that, if I had not imagination enough to enter into your case, experience would have taught me to do so.”

Those who are old enough to remember the year 1816 will easily recall the fluctuations of opinion which took place as to the merits of the husband and the wife, whose separation was as interesting to ten thousand households as any family event of their own. Then, and for a few years after, was Lady Byron the world's talk,—innocently, most reluctantly, and unavoidably.

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At first, while her influence left its impression on his mind, Lord Byron did her some sort of justice,—fitful and partial, but very precious to her then, no doubt,—and almost as precious now to the friends who understood her. It was not till he was convinced that she would never return, not till he began to quail under the world's ill opinion, and especially, not till he felt secure that he might rely on his wife's fidelity and mercy, her silence and magnanimity, that he changed his tone to one of aspersion and contempt, and his mode of attack to that of charming, amusing, or inflaming the public with verses against her and her friends. We have his own testimony to her domestic merits in the interval between the parting and his lapse into a state of malignant feeling. In March, 1816, within two months after her leaving him, Byron wrote thus to Moore:—

“I must set you right in one point, however. The fault was *not*—no, nor even the misfortune—in my ‘choice’ (unless in choosing at all); for I do not believe—and I must say it, in the very dregs of all this bitter business—that there ever was a better, or even a brighter, a kinder, or a more amiable and agreeable being than Lady B. I never had, nor can have, any reproach to make her, while with me. Where there is blame, it belongs to myself; and, if I cannot redeem, I must bear it.”

To us, this is enough; and nothing that he wrote afterwards, in angry and spiteful moods, can have the slightest effect on our impression of her: but the case was otherwise at the time. Lord Byron's praise of her to Moore was not known till the “Life” appeared; whereas pieces like “The Chanty Ball,” coming out from time to time, made the world suppose that Lady Byron was one of those people, satirized in all literatures, who violate domestic duty, and make up for it by philanthropic effort and display. It is the prevalence of this impression to this day which makes it necessary to present the reality of the case after the lapse of many years. During Lady Byron's life, no one had a right to speak, if she chose to be silent; but the more modest and shrinking she was in regard to her own vindication, the stronger is the appeal to the fidelity of her friends to see that her reputation does not suffer through her magnanimity. We have guidance here in her own course in the case of her parents. Abhorrent as all publicity was to her, she felt and avowed the obligation to publish those facts of her life in which their reputation was concerned. The duty is far more easy, but not less imperative, to practise the same fidelity in regard to her, now that the truth can be told of her without shocking her modesty. We may hear some commonplaces about the feelings of the dead and the sensibilities of survivors, as always happens in such cases: but the sensibilities of survivors ought to relate, in the first place, to the fair fame of the dead; and the feelings of the dead, having been duly respected



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during life, merge after death into the general beauty of the self-sacrificing character which would not utter the word by which the adverse judgment of the world might have been reversed in a moment. While, at this day, she is regarded as the cause of her husband's sins, by her coldness, formality, and what not,—fidelity and love to her memory absolutely require, not fresh disclosures of a private character, but a new presentment of the evidence long ago given to the world by herself and by her husband's very partial biographer. This is what I have done, after thirty years more of life have proved the quality of her mind and heart.

As she loved early, she loved steadily and forever. It was through that love that her magnanimity was so transcendent. When Lord Byron was dying, he said to his confidential servant, Fletcher, "Go to Lady Byron,—you will see her, and say"—and here his voice faltered, and for nearly twenty minutes he muttered words which it was impossible to catch. The man was obliged to tell him that he had not understood a syllable. Byron's distress was great; but, as he said, it was too late. Fletcher, on his return to England, did "go to Lady Byron," and did see her: but she could only pace the room in uncontrollable agitation, striving to obtain voice to ask the questions which were surging in her heart. She could not speak, and he was obliged to leave her. To those with whom she conversed freely, and to whom she wrote familiarly, it was strangely interesting to hear, or to read, lines and phrases from Byron's poems dropped, like native speech, from her tongue or her pen. Those well-remembered lines or phrases seemed new, and were wonderfully moving, when coming from her to whom they must have been so much more than to any one else. How she surmounted such acts as the publication of "Fare thee well!" and certain others of his safe appeals to the public, no one could exactly understand. That she forgave them, and loved him to the end, is enough for us to know; for our interest is in the greatness of her heart, and not in the littleness of his.

Her life thenceforth was one of unremitting bounty to society, administered with as much skill and prudence as benevolence. As we have seen, her parents died a few years after her return to them for protection. She lived in retirement, changing her abode frequently, partly for the benefit of her child's education and the promotion of her benevolent schemes, and partly from a restlessness which was one of the few signs of injury received from the spoiling of associations with *home*. She felt a satisfaction which her friends rejoiced in, when her daughter married Lord King, at present the Earl of Lovelace, in 1835; and when grief upon grief followed in the appearance of mortal disease in her only child, her quiet patience stood her in good stead, as before. She even found strength to appropriate the blessings of the occasion, and took comfort, as did her dying daughter,

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in the intimate friendship which grew closer as the time of parting drew nigh. Lady Lovelace died in 1852; and for her few remaining years, Lady Byron was devoted to her grandchildren. But nearer calls never lessened her interest in remoter objects. Her mind was of the large and clear quality which could comprehend remote interests in their true proportions, and achieve each aim as perfectly as if it were the only one. Her agents used to say that it was impossible to mistake her directions; and thus her business was usually well done. There was no room, in her case, for the ordinary doubts, censures, and sneers about the misapplication of bounty. Her taste did not lie in the "Charity Ball" direction; her funds were not lavished in encouraging hypocrisy and improvidence among the idle and worthless; and the quality of her charity was, in fact, as admirable as its quantity. Her chief aim was the extension and improvement of popular education; but there was no kind of misery that she heard of that she did not palliate to the utmost, and no kind of solace that her quick imagination and sympathy could devise that she did not administer. In her methods, she united consideration and frankness with singular success. For one instance among a thousand:—A lady with whom she had had friendly relations some time before, and who became impoverished in a quiet way by hopeless sickness, preferred poverty, with an easy conscience, to a competency attended by some uncertainty about the perfect rectitude of the resource. Lady Byron wrote to an intermediate person exactly what she thought of the case. Whether the judgment of the sufferer was right or mistaken was nobody's business but her own: this was the first point. Next, a voluntary poverty could never be pitied by anybody: that was the second. But it was painful to others to think of the mortification to benevolent feelings which attends poverty; and there could be no objection to arresting that pain. Therefore she, Lady Byron, had lodged in a neighboring bank the sum of one hundred pounds, to be used for benevolent purposes; and in order to preclude all outside speculation, she had made the money payable to the order of the intermediate person, so that the sufferer's name need not appear at all. Five-and-thirty years of unremitting secret bounty like this must make up a great amount of human happiness: but this was only one of a wide variety of methods of doing good. It was the unconcealable magnitude of her beneficence, and its wise quality, which made her a second time the theme of English conversation in all honest households within the four seas. Years ago, it was said far and wide, that Lady Byron was doing more good than anybody else in England; and it was difficult to imagine how anybody could do more. Lord Byron spent every shilling that the law allowed him out of her property, while he lived, and left away from her every shilling that he could deprive her of by his will; yet she had eventually a large



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income at her command. In the management of it she showed the same wise consideration that marked all her practical decisions. She resolved to spend her whole income, seeing how much the world needed help at the moment. Her care was for the existing generation, rather than for a future one, which would have its own friends. She usually declined trammelling herself with annual subscriptions to charities, preferring to keep her freedom from year to year, and to achieve definite objects by liberal bounty, rather than to extend partial help over a large surface which she could not herself superintend.

It was her first industrial school that awakened the admiration of the public, which had never ceased to take an interest in her, while sorely misjudging her character. We hear much now—and everybody hears it with pleasure—of the spread of education in “common things.” But, long before Miss Coutts inherited her wealth, long before a name was found for such a method of training, Lady Byron had instituted the thing, and put it in the way of making its own name. She was living at Ealing, in Middlesex, in 1834; and there she opened one of the first industrial schools in England, if not the very first. She sent out a master to Switzerland, to be instructed in De Fellenburg’s method. She took on lease five acres of land, and spent several hundred pounds in rendering the buildings upon it fit for the purposes of the school. A liberal education was afforded to the children of artisans and laborers, during the half of the day when they were not employed in the field or garden. The allotments were rented by the boys, who raised and sold produce which afforded them a considerable yearly profit, if they were good workmen. Those who worked in the field earned wages,—their labor being paid by the hour, according to the capability of the young laborer. They kept their accounts of expenditure and receipts, and acquired good habits of business, while learning the occupation of their lives. Some mechanical trades were taught, as well as the arts of agriculture. Part of the wisdom of the management lay in making the pupils pay. Of one hundred pupils, half were boarders. They paid little more than half the expense of their maintenance; and the day-scholars paid three-pence per week. Of course, a large part of the expense was borne by Lady Byron, besides the payments she made for children who could not otherwise have entered the school. The establishment flourished steadily till 1852, when the owner of the land required it back for building-purposes. During the eighteen years that the Ealing schools were in action, they did a world of good in the way of incitement and example. The Poor-Law Commissioners pointed out their merits. Land-owners and other wealthy persons visited them, and went home and set up similar establishments. During those years, too, Lady Byron had herself been at work in various directions, to the same purpose.



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A more extensive industrial scheme was instituted on her Leicestershire property; and not far off, she opened a girls' school, and an infant school; and when a season of distress came, as such seasons are apt to befall the poor Leicestershire stocking-weavers, Lady Byron fed the children for months together, till they could resume their payments. These schools were opened in 1840. The next year, she built a school-house on her Warwickshire property; and five years later, she set up an iron school-house on another Leicestershire estate. By this time, her educational efforts were costing her several hundred pounds a year in the mere maintenance of existing establishments; but this is the smallest consideration in the case. She has sent out tribes of boys and girls into life fit to do their part there with skill and credit and comfort. Perhaps it is a still more important consideration, that scores of teachers and trainers have been led into their vocation, and duly prepared for it, by what they saw and learned in her schools. As for the best and the worst of the Ealing boys,—the best have, in a few cases, been received into the Battersea Training School, whence they could enter on their career as teachers to the greatest advantage; and the worst found their school a true reformatory, before reformatory schools were heard of. At Bristol she bought a house for a reformatory for girls; and there her friend, Miss Carpenter, faithfully and energetically carries out her own and Lady Byron's aims, which were one and the same.

There would be no end, if I were to catalogue the schemes of which these are a specimen. It is of more consequence to observe that her mind was never narrowed by her own acts, as the minds of benevolent people are so apt to be. To the last, her interest in great political movements, at home and abroad, was as vivid as ever. She watched every step won in philosophy, every discovery in science, every token of social change and progress, in every shape. Her mind was as liberal as her heart and hand, No diversity of opinion troubled her; she was respectful to every sort of individuality, and indulgent to all constitutional peculiarities. It must have puzzled those who kept up the notion of her being "strait-laced," to see how indulgent she was even to epicurean tendencies,—the remotest of all from her own.

But I must stop; for I do not wish my honest memorial to degenerate into panegyric.—Among her latest known acts were her gifts to the Sicilian cause, and her manifestations on behalf of the antislavery cause in the United States. Her kindness to William and Ellen Craft must be well known there; and it is also related in the newspapers that she bequeathed a legacy to a young American, to assist him under any disadvantages he might suffer as an abolitionist.

All these deeds were done under a heavy burden of ill-health. Before she had passed middle life, her lungs were believed to be irreparably injured by partial ossification. She was subject to attacks so serious, that each one for many years was expected to be the last. She arranged her affairs in correspondence with her liabilities; so that the same order would have been found, whether she died suddenly or after long warning.



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She was to receive one more accession of outward greatness before she departed. She became Baroness Wentworth in November, 1856. This is one of the facts of her history; but it is the least interesting to us, as probably to her. We care more to know that her last days were bright in honor, and cheered by the attachment of old friends, worthy to pay the duty she deserved. Above all, it is consoling to know that she who so long outlived her only child was blessed with the unremitting and tender care of her granddaughter. She died on the sixteenth of May, 1860.

The portrait of Lady Byron, as she was at the time of her marriage, is probably remembered by some of my readers. It is very engaging. Her countenance afterwards became much worn; but its expression of thoughtfulness and composure was very interesting. Her handwriting accorded well with the character of her mind. It was clear, elegant, and womanly. Her manners differed with circumstances. Her shrinking sensitiveness might embarrass one visitor, while another would be charmed with her easy, significant, and vivacious conversation. It depended much on whom she talked with. The abiding certainty was, that she had strength for the hardest of human trials, and the composure which belongs to strength. For the rest, it is enough to point to her deeds, and to the mourning of her friends round the chasm which her departure has made in their life, and in the society in which it is spent. All that could be done in the way of personal love and honor was done while she lived; it only remains now to see that her name and fame are permitted to shine forth at last in their proper light.

### **GETTING HOME AGAIN.**

It is a good thing, said an aged Chinese Travelling Philosopher, for every man, sooner or later, to get back again to his own tea-cup. And Ling Ching Ki Hi Fum (for that was the name of the profound old gentleman who said it) was right. Travel may be “the conversion of money into mind,”—and happy the man who has turned much coin into that precious commodity,—but it is a good thing, after being tossed about the world from the Battery to Africa,—that dry nurse of lions, as Horace calls her,—to anchor once more beside the old familiar tea-urn on the old familiar tea-table. This is the only “steamy column” worth hailing with a glad welcome after long absence from home, and fully entitled to be heartily applauded for its “bubbling and loud-hissing” propensities.

We are not a Marco Polo or a William de Rubruquis, and we have no wonders to tell of the Great Mogul or the Great Cham. We did not sail for Messrs. Pride, Pomp, Circumstance, and Company; consequently, we have no great exploits to recount. We have been wrecked at sea only once in our many voyages, and, so far as we know our own tastes, do not care to solicit aid again to be thrown into the same awkward situation. But for a time we have been

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“Placed far amid the melancholy main,”

and now we are among our own tea-cups. This is happiness enough for a cold winter's night. Mid-ocean, and mid tea-cups! Stupendous change, let us tell you, worthy friend, who never yet set sail where sharks and other strange sea-cattle bob their noses above the brine,—who never lived forty days in the bowels of a ship, unable to hold your head up to the captain's bluff “good morning” or the steward's cheery “good night.” Sir Philip Sidney discourses of a riding-master he encountered in Vienna, who spoke so eloquently of the noble animal he had to deal with, that he almost persuaded Sir Philip to wish himself a horse. We have known ancient mariners expatiate so lovingly on the frantic enjoyments of the deep sea, that very youthful listeners have for the time resolved to know no other existence. If the author of the “Arcadia” had been permitted to become a prancing steed, he might, after the first exhilarating canter, have lamented his equine state. How many a first voyage, begun in hilarious impatience, has caused a bitter repentance! The sea is an overrated element, and we have nothing to say in its favor. Because we are out of its uneasy lap to-night, we almost resemble in felicity Richter's *Walt*, who felt himself so happy, that he was transported to the third heaven, and held the other two in his hand, that he might give them away. To-morrow morning we shall not hear that swashing, scaring sound directly overhead on the wet deck, which has so often murdered our slumbers. Delectable the sensation that we don't care a rope's-end “how many knots” we are going, and that our ears are so far away from that eternal “Ay, ay, Sir!” “The whales,” says old Chapman, speaking of Neptune, “exulted under him, and knew their mighty king.” Let them exult, say we, and be blowed, and all due honor to their salt sovereign! but of their personal acquaintance we are not ambitious. We have met them now and then in the sixty thousand miles of their watery playing-places we have passed over, and they are not pretty to look at. Roll on, *et cetera, et cetera*,—and so will we, for the present, at least, as far out of *your* reach as possible.

Yes, wise denizen of the Celestial Empire, it is a good, nay, a great thing, to return even to so small a home-object as an old tea-cup. As we lift the bright brim to our so long absent lips, we repeat it. As we pour out our second, our third, and our fourth, we say it again. Ling Ching, you were right!

And now, as the rest of the household have all gone up bed-ward, and left us with their good-night tones,

“Like flowers' voices, if they could but speak,”



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we dip our pen into the cocked hat of the brave little bronze warrior who has fed us many a year with ink from the place where his brains ought to be. Pausing before we proceed to paper, we look around on our household gods. The coal bursts into crackling fits of merriment, as we thrust the poker between the iron ribs of the grate. It seems to say, in the jolliest possible manner of which it is capable, "Oh, go no more a-roaming, a-roaming, across the windy sea!" How odd it seems to be sitting here again, listening to the old clock out there in the entry! Often we seemed to hear it during the months that have flown away, when we knew that "our ancient" was standing sentinel for Time in another hemisphere. One night, dark and stormy on the Mediterranean, as we lay wakeful and watchful in the little steamer that was bearing us painfully through the noisy tempest towards Saint Peter's and the Colosseum, suddenly, above the tumult of the voyage, our household monitor began audibly and regularly, we thought, to mark the seconds. Then it must have been only fancy. Now it is something more, and we know that our mahogany friend is really wagging his brassy beard just outside the door. We remember now, as we lay listening that rough night at sea, how Milton's magic sounding line came to us beating a sad melody with the old clock's imagined tramp,—

"The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint."

Let the waves bark to-night far out on "the desolate, rainy seas,"—the old clock is all right in the entry!

Landed, and all safe at last! our much-abused, lock-broken, unhinged portmanteau unpacked and laid ignobly to rest under the household eaves! Stay a moment,—let us pitch our inky passport into the fire. How it writhes and grows black in the face! And now it will trouble its owner no more forever. It was a foolish, extravagant companion, and we are glad to be rid of it. One little blazing fragment lifts itself out of the flame, and we can trace on the smouldering relic the stamp of Austria. Go back again into the grate, and perish with the rest, dark blot!

"We look round our quiet apartment, and wonder if it be all true, this getting home again. We stir the fire once more to assure ourself that we are not somewhere else,—that the street outside our window is not known as Jermyn Street in the Haymarket,—or the Via Babuino near the Pincio,—or Princes Street, near the Monument. How do we determine that we are not dreaming, and that we shall not wake up to-morrow morning and find ourself on the Arno? Perhaps we are *not* really back again where there are no

"Eremites and friars,  
White, black, and gray, with all their trumpery."

Perhaps we are a flamingo, a banyan-tree, or a mandarin. But there stands the tea-cup, and our identity is sure!



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Here at last, then, for a live certainty! But how strange it all seems, resting safely in our easy slippers, to recall some of the far-off scenes so lately present to us! Yesterday was it, or a few weeks ago, that this “excellent canopy,” our modest roof, dwelt three thousand miles away to the westward of us? At this moment stowed away in a snuggerly called our own; and then—how brief a period it seems! what a small parenthesis in time—putting another man’s latch-key into another man’s door, night after night, in a London fog, and feeling for the unfamiliar aperture with all the sensation of an innocent housebreaker! Muffled here in the oldest of dressing-gowns, that never lifted its blessed arms ten rods from the spot where it was born; and only a few weeks ago lolling out of C.R.’s college-window at Oxford, counting the deer, as they nibbled the grass, and grouped themselves into beautiful pictures on the sward of ancient Magdalen!

As we look into the red fire in the grate, we think of the scarlet coats we saw not long ago in Stratford,—when E.F., kindest of men and merriest of hosts, took us to the “meet.” We gaze round the field again, and enjoy the enlivening scene. White-haired and tall, our kind-hearted friend walks his glossy mare up and down the turf. His stalwart sons, with sport imbrowned, proud of their sire, call our attention to the sparkle in the old man’s eye. We are mounted on a fiery little animal, and are half-frightened at the thought of what she may do with us when the chase is high. Confident that a roll is inevitable, and that, with a dislocated neck, enjoyment would be out of the question, we pull bridle, and carefully dismount, hoping not to attract attention. Whereat all our jolly English cousins beg to inquire, “What’s the row?” We whisper to the red-coated brave prancing near us, that “we have changed our mind, and will not follow the hunt to-day, —another time we shall be most happy,—just now we are not quite up to the mark,—next week we shall be all right again,” *etc.*, *etc.* One of the lithe hounds, who seems to have steel springs in his hind legs, looks contemptuously at the American stranger, and turns up his long nose like a moral insinuation. Off they fly! we watch the beautiful cavalcade bound over the brook and sweep away into the woodland passes. Then we saunter down by the Avon, and dream away the daylight in endless visions of long ago, when sweet Will and his merry comrades moved about these pleasant haunts. Returning to the hall, we find we have walked ten miles over the breezy country, and knew it not,—so pleasant is the fragrant turf that has been often pressed by the feet of Nature’s best-beloved high-priest! Round the mahogany tree that night we hear the hunters tell the glories of their sport,—how their horses, like Homer’s steeds,

“Devoured up the plain”;

and we can hear now, in imagination, the voices of the deep-mouthed hounds rising and swelling among the Warwick glens.



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Neither can we forget, as we sit here musing, whose green English carpet, down in Kent, we so lately rested on under the trees,—nor how we wandered off with the lord of that hospitable manor to an old castle hard by his grounds, and climbed with him to the turret-tops,—nor how we heard him repeople in fancy the aged ruin, as we leaned over the wall and looked into the desolate court-yard below. The world has given audience to this man, thought we, for many a year; but one who has never heard the sound of his laughing voice knows not half his wondrous power. When he reads his “Christmas Carol,” go far to hear him, judicious friend, if you happen to be in England, and let us all hope together that we shall have that keen gratification next year in America. To know him is to love and esteem him tenfold more than if you only read of him.

Let us bear in mind, too, how happily the hours went by with us so recently in the vine-embowered cottage of dear L.H., the beautiful old man with silver hair,—

“As hoary frost with spangles doth attire  
The mossy branches of an oak.”

The sound of the poet’s voice was like the musical fall of water in our ears, and every sentence he uttered then is still a melody. As we sit dreamily here, he speaks to us again of “life’s morning march, when his bosom was young,” and of his later years, when his struggles were many and keen, and only his pen was the lever which rolled poverty away from his door. We can hear him, as we pause over this leaf, as we heard the old clock that night at sea. He tells us of his cherished companions, now all gone,—of Shelley, and Keats, and Charles Lamb, whom he loved,—of Byron, and Coleridge, and the rest. As we sit at his little table, he hands us a manuscript, and says it is the “Endymion,” John Keats’s gift to himself. He reads to us from it some of his favorite lines, and the tones of his voice are very tender over his dead friend’s poem. As we pass out of his door that evening, the moon falls on his white locks, his thin hand rests for a moment on our shoulder, and we hear him say very kindly, “God bless you!”

In London, not long after this, we meet again the bard of “Rimini,” and his discourse is still sweet as any dulcimer. Another old man is with him, a poet also, whose songs are among the bravest in England’s Helicon. We observe how these two friends love each other, and as they stand apart in the anteroom, the eldest with his arm around his brother bard, we think it is a very pleasant sight, and not to be forgotten ever. And when, a few months later, we are among the Alpine hills, and word comes to us that L.H. is laid to rest in Kensal Green Churchyard, we are grateful to have looked upon his cheerful countenance, and to have heard him say, “God bless you!”



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We cry your mercy, gayest of cities, with your bright Bois de Boulogne, and your splendid *café's*! We do not much affect your shows, but we cannot dismiss forever the cheerful little room, cloud-environed almost, up to which we have so often toiled, after days of hard walking among the gaudy streets of the French capital. One pleasant scene, at least, rises unbidden, as we recall the past. It is a brisk, healthy morning, and we walk in the direction of the Tuileries. Bending our steps toward the Palace, (it is yet early, and few loiterers are abroad in the leafy avenues,) we observe a group of three persons, not at all distinguished in their appearance, having a roystering good time in the Imperial Garden. One of them is a little boy, with a chubby, laughing face, who shouts loudly to his father, a grave, thoughtful gentleman, who runs backwards, endeavoring to out-race his child. The mother, a fair-haired woman, with her bonnet half loose in the wind, strives to attract the boy's attention and win him to her side. They all run and leap in the merry morning-air, and, as we watch them more nearly, we know them to be the royal family out larking before Paris is astir. Play on, great Emperor, sweet lady, and careless boy-prince! You have hung up a picture in our gallery of memory, very pleasant to look at, this cold night in America. May you always be as happy as when you romped together in the garden!

The days that are fled still knock at the door and enter. We are walking on the banks of the Esk, toward a friendly dwelling in Lasswade,—*Mavis Bush* they call the pretty place at the foot of the hill. A slight figure, clad in black, waits for us at the garden-gate, and bids us welcome in accents so kindly, that we, too, feel the magic influence of his low, sweet voice,—an effect which Wordsworth described to us years before as eloquence set to music. The face of our host is very pale, and, when he puts his thin arm within ours, we feel how frail a body may contain a spirit of fire. We go into his modest abode and listen to his wonderful talk, wishing all the while that the hours were months, that we might linger there, spellbound, day and night, before the master of our English tongue. He proposes a ramble across the meadows to Roslin Chapel, and on the way he discourses of the fascinating drug so painfully associated with his name in literature,—of Christopher North, in whose companionship he delighted among the Lakes,—of Elia, whom he recalled as the most lovable man among his friends, and whom he has well described elsewhere as a Diogenes with the heart of a Saint John. In the dark evening he insists upon setting out with us on our return to Edinburgh. When it grows late, and the mists are heavy on the mountains, we stand together, clasping hands of farewell in the dim road, the cold Scotch hills looming up all about us. As the small figure of the English Opium-Eater glides away into the midnight distance, our eyes strain after him to catch one more glimpse. The Esk roars, and we hear his footsteps no longer.



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The scene changes, as the clock strikes in the entry. We are lingering in the piazza of the Winged Lion, and the bronze giants in their turret overlooking the square raise their hammers and beat the solemn march of Time. As we float away through the watery streets, old Shylock shuffles across the bridge,—black barges glide by us in the silent canals,—groups of unfamiliar faces lean from the balconies,—and we hear the plashing waters lap the crumbling walls of Venice, with its dead Doges and decaying palaces.

Again we stir the fire, and feel it is home all about us. But we like to sit here and think of that rosy evening, last summer, when we came walking into Interlachen, and beheld the ghost-like figure of the Jungfrau issuing out of her cloudy palace to welcome the stars,—of a cool, bright, autumnal morning on the western battlements overlooking Genoa, the blue Mediterranean below mirroring the silent fleet that lay so motionless on its bosom,—of a midnight visit to the Colosseum with a band of German students, who bore torches in and out of the time-worn arches, and sang their echoing songs to the full moon,—of days, how many and how magical! when we awoke every morning to say, “We are in Rome!”

But it grows late, and it is time now to give over these reflections. So we wind up our watch, and put out the candle.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **A DRY-GOODS JOBBER IN 1861.**

What is a dry-goods jobber? No wonder you ask. You have been hunting, perhaps, for our peripatetic postoffice, and have stumbled upon Milk Street and Devonshire Street and Franklin Street. You are almost ready to believe in the lamp of Aladdin, that could build palaces in a night. Looking up to the stately and costly structures which have usurped the place of once familiar dwellings, and learning that they are, for the most part, tenanted by dry-goods jobbers, you feel that for such huge results there must needs be an adequate cause, and so you ask, What is a dry-goods jobber?

It is more than a curious question. For parents desirous of finding their true sphere for promising and for unpromising sons, it is eminently a practical question. It is a question comprehensive of dollars and cents,—also of bones and sinews, of muscles, nerves, and brains, of headache, heartache, and the cyclopaedia of being, doing, and enduring. An adequate answer to such a question must needs ask your indulgence, for it cannot be condensed into a very few words.

A dry-goods jobber is a wholesale buyer and seller, for cash or for approved credit, of all manner of goods, wares, and materials, large and small, coarse and fine, foreign and domestic, which pertain to the clothing, convenience, and garnishing, by night and by day, of men, women, and children: from a button to a blanket; from a calico to a carpet;

from stockings to a head-dress; from an inside handkerchief to a waterproof; from a piece of tape to a thousand bales of shirtings; not forgetting linen, silk, or woollen fabrics, for drapery or upholstery, for bed or table, including hundreds of items which time would fail me to recite. All these the dry-goods jobber provides for his customer, the retailer, who in his turn will dispense them to the consumer.



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A really competent and successful dry-goods jobber, in the year of grace, one thousand, eight hundred and sixty-one, is a new creation. He is begotten of the times. Of him, as truly as of the poet, and with yet more emphasis, it must be said, He is born, not made. He is a poet, a philosopher, an artist, an engineer, a military commander, an advocate, an attorney, a financier, a steam-engine, a telegraph-operator, a servant-of-all-work, a Job, a Hercules, and a Bonaparte, rolled into one.

“Exaggeration!” do you say? Not at all.—You asked for information? You shall have it, to your heart’s content.

To a youth, for a time interrupted in his preparation for college, I said,—

Never mind; this falls in exactly with my well-considered plan. You shall go into a dry-goods store till your eyes recover strength; it will be the best year’s schooling of your life.

“How so?” was the dubious answer; “what can I learn there?”

Learn? Everything,—common sense included, which is generally excluded from the University curriculum: for example, time, place, quantity, and the worth of each. You shall learn length, breadth, and thickness; hard and soft; pieces and yards; dozens and the fractions thereof; order and confusion, cleanliness and dirt,—to love the one and hate the other; materials, colors, and shades of color; patience, manners, decency in general; system and method, and the relation these sustain to independence; in short, that there is a vast deal more out of books than in books; and, finally, that the man who knows only what is in books is generally a lump of conceit, and of about as much weight in the scales of actual life as the ashes of the Alexandrian library, or the worms in any parchments that may have survived that conflagration.

“Whew!” was his ejaculation; “I didn’t know there was so much.”

I dare say not. Most of your limited days have passed under the training of men who are in the like predicament,—whose notion of the chief end of man is, to convert lively boys into thick dictionaries,—and who honestly believe that the chief want of the age is your walking dictionary. Any other type of humanity, they tell us, “won’t pay.” Much they know of what will and what won’t pay! This comes of partial education,—of one-sided, of warped, and biased education. It puts one out of patience, this arrogance of the University, this presuming upon the ignorance of the million, this assertion of an indispensable necessity to make the boy of the nineteenth century a mere expert in some subdivision of one of the sciences. The obstinacy of an hereditary absolutism, which the world has outgrown, still lingers in our schools of learning. Let us admit the divine right of Science, admit the fitness of a limited number of our youth to become high-priests in her temple, but no divine right of fossil interpreters of Science to compel the entire generation to disembowel



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their sons and make of these living temples mere receptacles of Roman, Grecian, or Egyptian relics. We don't believe that "mummy is medicinal," the Arabian doctor Haly to the contrary notwithstanding. If it ever was, its day has gone by. Therefore let all sensible people pray for a Cromwell,—not to pull down University Science, but to set up the Commonwealth of Common Sense, to subordinate the former to the latter, and to proclaim an education for our own age and for its exigencies. Your dry-goods jobber stands in violent contrast to your University man in the matter of practical adaptation. His knowledge is no affair of dried specimens, but every particle of it a living knowledge, ready, at a moment's warning, for all or any of the demands of life.

You are perhaps thinking,—“Yes, that is supposable, because the lessons learned by the jobber are limited to the common affairs of daily life, are not prospective; because, belonging only to the passing day, they are easily surveyed on all sides, and their full use realized at once; in short, a mere matter of buying and selling goods: a very inferior thing, as compared with the dignified and scholarly labors of the student.”

How mistaken this estimate is will appear, as we advance to something like a comprehensive survey of the dry-goods jobber's sphere.

First, then, he is a buyer of all manner of goods, wares, and materials proper to his department in commerce. He is minutely informed in the history of raw materials. He knows the countries from which they come,—the adaptation of soils and climates to their raising,—the skill of the cultivators,—the shipping usages,—the effect of transportation by land and sea on raw materials, and on manufactured articles,—with all the mysteries of insurance allowances and usages, the debentures on exportation, and the duties on importation, in his own and in other lands. His forecast is taxed to the utmost, as to what may be the condition of his own market, six, twelve, or eighteen months from the time of ordering goods, both as to the quantity which may be in market, and as to the fashion, which is always changing,—and also as to the condition of his customers to pay for goods, which will often depend upon the fertility of the season. As respects home-purchases, he is compelled to learn, or to suffer for the want of knowing, that the difference between being a skilful, pleasant buyer and the opposite is a profit or loss of from five to seven and a half or ten per cent.,—or, in other words, the difference, oftentimes, between success and ruin, between comfort and discomfort, between being a welcome and a hated visitor, between being honored as an able merchant and contemned as a mean man or an unmitigated bore.



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Is your curiosity piqued to know wherein buyers thus contrasted may differ? They differ endlessly, like the faces you meet on the street. Thus, one man is born to an open, frank, friendly, and courteous manner; another is cold, reserved, and suspicious. One is prompt, hilarious, and provocative of every good feeling, whenever you chance to meet; the other is slow, morose, and fit to waken every dormant antipathy in your soul. An able buyer is, or becomes, observing to the last degree. He knows the slightest differences in quality and in style, and possesses an almost unerring taste,—knows the condition of the market,—knows every holder of the article he wants, and the lowest price of each. He knows the peculiarities of the seller,—his strong points and his weak points, his wisdom and his foibles, his very temperament, and how it is acted upon by his dinner or the want of it. He knows the estimate put upon his own note by that seller. He knows what his note will sell for in the street. He knows to a feather's weight the influence of each of these items upon the mind of the seller of whom he wishes to make a purchase. Talk about diplomacy!—there's not a man in any court in Europe who knows his position, his fulcrum, and his lever, and the use he can make of them, as this man knows. He can unravel any combination, penetrate any disguise, surmount any obstacle. Beyond all other men, he knows when to talk, and when to refrain from talking,—how to throw the burden of negotiation on the seller,—how to get the goods he wants at his own price, not at *his* asking, but on *the suggestion of the seller*, prompted by his own politely obvious unwillingness to have the seller part with his merchandise at any price not entirely acceptable to himself.

The incompetent man, on the other hand, is presuming, exacting, and unfeeling. He not only desires, but asserts the desire, in the very teeth of the seller, to have something which that seller has predetermined that he shall not have. He fights a losing game from the start. He will probably begin by depreciating the goods which he knows, or should know, that the seller has reason to hold in high esteem. He will be likely enough to compare them to some other goods which he knows to be inferior. He will thus arouse a feeling of dislike, if not of anger, where his interest should teach him to conciliate and soothe; and if he sometimes carry his point, his very victory is in effect a defeat, since it procures him an increased antipathy. This the judicious buyer never does. He repudiates, as a mere half-truth, and a relic of barbarism, the maxim, "There is no friendship in trade."

"But," you are asking, "do only those succeed who are born to these extraordinary endowments? And those who do succeed, are they, in fact, each and all of them, such wonderfully capable men as you have described?"



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If by success you mean mere money-making, it is not to be denied that some men do that by an instinct, little, if at all, superior to that of the dog who smells out a bone. There are exceptions to all rules; and there are chances in all games, even in games of skill. Lord Timothy Dexter, as he is facetiously called, shipped warming-pans to the West Indies, in defiance of all geographical objections to the venture, and made money by the shipment,—not because warming-pans were wanted there, but because the natives mistook and used them for molasses-ladles. It must be owned that a portion of the successful ones are *lucky*,—that a portion of them use the blunt weapon of an indomitable will, as an efficient substitute for the finer edge of that nice tact and good manners which they lack. Their very rudeness seems to commend them to the rude natures which confound refinement with trickery and assume that brutality must needs be honest.

But there are other things to be said of buying. The dry-goods jobber frequents the auction-room. If you have never seen a large sale of dry-goods at auction, you have missed one of the remarkable incidents of our day. You are not yet aware of how much an auctioneer and two or three hundred jobbers can do and endure in the short space of three hours. You must know that fifty or a hundred thousand dollars' worth of goods may easily change owners in that time. You are not to dream of the leisurely way of disposing of somebody's household-furniture or library, which characterizes the doings of one or two of our fellow-citizens who manage such matters within speaking distance of King's Chapel: but are rather to picture to yourself a congregation of three hundred of the promptest men in our Atlantic cities, with a sprinkling of Westerners quite as wide awake for bargains, each of them having marked his catalogue; an auctioneer who considers the sale of a hundred lots an hour his proper *role*, and who is able to see the lip, eye, or finger of the man whose note he covets, in spite of all sounds, signs, or opaque bodies. The man of unquiet nerves or of exacting lungs would do well to leave that arena to the hard-heads and cool-bloods who can pursue their aim and secure their interests: undisturbed either by the fractional rat-a-tat-tat of the auctioneer's "Twenty-seven af—naf—naf—naf,—who'll give me thirty?" or by the banter and comicalities which a humor-loving auctioneer will interject between these bird-notes, without changing his key, or arresting his sale a moment. If you would see the evidence of comprehensive and minute knowledge, of good taste, quick wit, sound judgment, and electrical decision, attend an auction-sale in New York some morning. There will be no lack of fun to season the solemnity of business, nor of the mixture of courtesy and selfishness usual in every gathering, whether for philanthropic, scientific, or commercial purposes. Many dry-goods jobbers will attend the sale with no intention of buying, but simply to note the prices obtained, and, having traced the goods to their owners, to get the same in better order and on better terms; the commission paid to the auctioneer being divided, or wholly conceded by the seller to the buyer, according to his estimate of the note.

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A dry-goods buyer will sometimes spend a month in New York, the first third or half of which he will devote to ascertaining what goods are in the market, and what are to arrive; also to learning the mood of the English, French, and Germans who hold the largest stocks. Sometimes these gentlemen will make an early trial of their goods at auction. Unsatisfactory results will rouse their phlegm or fire, and they declare they will not send another piece of goods to auction, come what may. For local or temporary reasons, buyers sometimes persist in holding back till the season is so far advanced that the foreign gentlemen become alarmed. Their credits in London, Paris, and Amsterdam are running out; they are anxious to make remittances; and then ensues one of those dry-goods panics so characteristic of New York and its mixed multitude; an avalanche of goods descends upon the auction-rooms, and prices drop ten, twenty, forty per cent., it may be, and the unlucky or short-sighted men who made early purchases are in desperate haste to run off their stocks before the market is irreparably broken down. Whether, therefore, to buy early or late, in large or in small quantities, at home or abroad,—are questions beset with difficulty. He who imports largely may land his goods in a bare market and reap a golden harvest, or in a market so glutted with goods that the large sums he counts out to pay the duties may be but a fraction of the loss he knows to be inevitable.

In addition to the problems belonging to time and place of purchasing, to quantities and prices, there is a host of other problems begotten of styles, of colors, of assortments, of texture and finish, of adaptation to one market or another. The profit on a case of goods is often sacrificed by the introduction or omission of one color or figure, the presence or absence of which makes the merchandise desirable or undesirable. Little less than omniscience will suffice to guard against the sometimes sudden, and often most unaccountable, freaks of fashion, whose fiat may doom a thing, in every respect admirably adapted to its intended use, to irretrievable condemnation and loss of value. And when you remember that the purchases of dry-goods must be made in very large quantities, from a month to six or even twelve months before the buyer can sell them, and that his sales are many times larger than his capital, and most of them on long credit, you have before you a combination of exigencies hardly to be paralleled elsewhere.

The crisis of 1857 brought a general collapse. Scores and scores of jobbers failed; very few dared to buy goods. Mills were compelled to run on short time, or to cease altogether. The country became bare of the common necessities of life. In process of time trade rallied. Manufacturing recommenced; orders for goods poured in; and for a twelve-month and more the manufacturer has had it all his own way. His goods are all sold ahead, months ahead of his ability to manufacture. He makes

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his own price, and chooses his customer. This operates not unkindly on the jobbers who are wealthy and independent; but for those who have but lately begun to mount the hill of difficulty, it offers one more impediment. For, to men who have a great many goods to sell, it is a matter of moment to secure the customers who can buy in large quantities, and whose notes will bring the money of banks or private capitalists as soon as offered. Against such buyers, men of limited means and of only average business-ability have but a poor chance. There will always be some articles of merchandise in the buying or selling of which they cannot compete.

When a financial crisis overtakes the community, we hear much and sharp censure of all *speculation*. Speculators, one and all, are forthwith consigned to an abyss of obloquy. The virtuous public outside of trade washes its hands of all participation in the iniquity. This same virtuous public knows very little of what it is talking about. What is speculation? Shall we say, in brief and in general, that it consists in running risks, in taking extra-hazardous risks, on the chance of making unusually large profits? Is it that men have abandoned the careful ways of the fathers, and do not confine themselves to small stores, small stocks, and cash transactions? And do you know who it is that has compelled this change? That same public who denounce speculation in one breath, and in the next clamor for goods at low prices, and force the jobber into large stores and large sales at small profits as the indispensable condition of his very existence.

Those who thus rail at speculation are generally quite unaware that their own inexorable demand for goods at low prices is one of the principal efficient causes of that of which they complain. They do not know that the capacious maw of the insatiable public is yearly filled with millions on millions of shirtings and sheetings, and other articles of prime necessity, without one farthing of profit to the jobber. The outside world reason from the assumption, that the jobber might, but will not, avoid taking considerable risks. They do not consider, for they do not know, how entirely all is changed from the days and circumstances in which a very small business would suffice to maintain the merchant. They do not consider, that, an immense amount of goods being of compulsion sold without profit, a yet other huge amount must be so sold as to compensate for this. Nor do they consider that the possibility of doing this is often contingent upon the buyer's carefully calculated probability of a rise in the article he is purchasing. Many a time is the jobber enabled and inclined to purchase largely only by the assurance that from the time of his purchase the price will be advanced.

The *selling* of dry-goods is another department in high art about which the ignorance of outsiders is ineffable. I was once asked, in the way of courtesy and good neighborhood, to call on a clergyman in our vicinity,—which I did. Desirous of doing his part in the matter of good fellowship and smooth conversation, he began thus:—



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“Well, now, Mr. Smith, you know all about business: I suppose, if I were to go into a store to buy goods, nineteen men out of twenty would cheat me, if they could; wouldn’t they?”

“No, Sir!” I answered, with a swelling of indignation at the injustice, a mingling of pity for the ignorance, and a foreboding of small benefit from the preaching of a minister of the gospel who knew so little of the world he lived in. “No, Sir; nineteen men in twenty would not cheat you, if they could; for the best of all reasons,—it would be dead against their own interest.”

Not a day passes but the question is asked by our youths who are being initiated in the routine of selling goods,—“Is this honest? Is that honest? Is it honest to mark your goods as costing more than they do cost? Is it honest to ask one man more than you ask another? Ought not the same price to be named to every buyer? Isn’t it cheating to get twenty-five per cent. profit? Can a man sell goods without lying? Are men compelled to lie and cheat a little in order to earn an honest living?” What is the reason that these questions will keep coming up? That they can no more be laid than Banquo’s ghost? Here are some of the reasons. First, and foremost, multitudes of young men, whose parents followed the plough, the loom, or the anvil, have taken it into their heads, that they will neither dig, hammer, nor ply the shuttle. To soil their hands with manual labor they cannot abide. The sphere of commerce looks to their longing eyes a better thing than lying down in green pastures, or than a peaceful life beside still waters, procured by laborious farming, or by any mechanical pursuit. Clean linen and stylish apparel are inseparably associated in their minds with an easy and elegant life, and so they pour into our cities, and the ranks of the merchants are filled, and over-filled, many times. Once, the merchant had only to procure an inviting stock, and his goods sold themselves. He did not go after customers; they came to him; and it was a matter of favor to them to supply their wants. Now, all that is changed. There are many more merchants than are needed; buyers are in request; and buyers whose credit is the best, to a very great extent, dictate the prices at which they will buy. The question is no longer, How large a profit can I get? but, How small a profit shall I accept? The competition for customers is so fierce that the seller hardly dares ask any profit, for fear his more anxious neighbor will undersell him. In order to attract customers, one thing after another has been made “a leading article,” a bait to be offered at cost or even less than cost,—that being oftentimes the condition on which alone the purchaser will make a beginning of buying.

“Jenkins,” cried an anxious seller, “you don’t buy anything of me, and I can sell you as cheap as any. Here’s a bale of sheetings now, at eight cents, will do you good.”

“How many have you got?”



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“Oh, plenty.”

“Well, how many?”

“Fifteen bales.”

“Well, I’ll take them.”

“Come in and buy something more.”

“No, nothing more to-day.”

There was a loss of seventy-five dollars, and he did not dare buy more.

It will be obvious that the selling a part of one’s goods at less than cost enhances the necessity of getting a profit on the rest. But how to do this, under the sharp scrutiny of a buyer who knows that his own success, not to say his very existence, depends upon his paying no profit possible to be avoided,—no profit, at all events, not certainly paid by some sharp neighbor who is competing with him for the same trade?

“But is there anything in all this,” you are asking, “to preclude the jobber’s telling the truth?” Nothing. “Anything to preclude strict honesty?” Nothing. “Why, then, do the questions you have quoted continually recur?”

I answer: In order to get his share of the best custom in his line, the dry-goods jobber has taken a store in the best position in town, at a rent of from three to fifty thousand dollars a year; has hired men and boys at all prices, from fifty dollars to five thousand,—and enough of these to result in an aggregate of from five to fifty thousand dollars a year for help, without which his business cannot be done. Add to this the usual average for store-expenses of every name, and for the family-expenses of two, five, or seven partners, and you find a dry-goods firm under the necessity of getting out of their year’s sales somewhere from fifteen to a hundred and fifty thousand dollars profit, before they shall have saved one cent to meet the losses of an unfavorable season.

Now, though there is nothing even in all these urgencies to justify a single lie or fraud, there is much to sharpen a man’s wits to secure the sale of his goods,—much to educate him in all manner of expedients to baffle the inquiries of customers who would be offended, if they could discover that he ever charged them the profit without which he could never meet his expenses. And the jobber’s problem is complicated by the folly, universally prevalent among buyers, of expecting some partiality or peculiarity of favor over their neighbors who are just as good as themselves. Every dry-goods jobber knows that his customer’s foolish hope and expectation often demand three absurdities of him: first, the assurance that he has the advantage over all other jobbers in a better stock of goods, better bought; secondly, that he has a peculiar friendship for himself; and thirdly, that, though of other men he must needs get a profit, in his special instance



he shall ask little or none; and that, such is his regard for him, it is a matter of no moment whether he live in Lowell or Louisiana, in New Bedford or Nebraska, or whether he pay New England bank-notes within thirty days, or wild-cat money and wild lands, which may be converted into cash, with more or less expense and loss, somewhere between nine months and nine-and-twenty years.



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And yet the uninitiated “can’t understand how an honest merchant can have two prices for the same goods.” An honest man has but one price for the same goods, and that is the cash price. All outside of that is barter,—goods for notes. His first inquiry is, What is the market-value of the note offered? True, he knows that many of the notes he takes cannot be sold at all; but he also knows that the notes he is willing to take will in the aggregate be guaranteed by a reservation of one, two, or three per cent., and that the note of the particular applicant for credit will tend to swell or to diminish the rate; and he cannot afford to exchange his goods for any note, except at a profit which will guaranty its payment when due,—which, in other words, will make the note equal in value to cash.

Now it is just because all business-contingencies cannot be worked into an unvarying form, as regular as the multiplication-table, and as plain to the apprehension of all men, that a vast amount of lying and of dishonesty is imputed, where it does not exist. Merchants are much like other men,—wise and unwise, far-sighted and short-sighted, selfish and unselfish, honest and dishonest. But that they are as a class more dishonest than other men is so far from being true, that I much doubt if we should overstrain the matter, if we should affirm that they are the most honest class of men in the community. There is much in their training which contributes directly, and most efficiently, to this result. Their very first lessons are in feet and inches, in pounds and ounces, in exact calculations, in accounts and balances. Carelessness, mistakes, inaccuracies, they are made to understand, are unpardonable sins. The boy who goes into a store learns, for the first time, that half a cent, a quarter of a cent, an eighth of a cent, may be a matter of the gravest import. He finds a thorough book-keeper absolutely refusing himself rest till he has detected an error of ten cents in a business of six months. And every day’s experience enforces the lesson. It is giving what is due, and claiming what is due, from year’s end to year’s end. Among merchants it is matter of common notoriety, that the prompt and exact adherence to orders insisted on by merchants, and prompt advice of receipt of business and of progress, cannot be expected from our worthy brethren at the bar. (The few honorable exceptions are respectfully informed that they are not referred to.) We do not expect them to weigh or measure the needless annoyance to which they often subject us, because they have never been, like ourselves, trained to the use of weights and measures; and therefore we are not willing to stigmatize them as dishonest, though they do, in fact, often steal our time and strength and patience, by withholding an answer to a business-letter.



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None but those who are in the business know the assiduous attention with which the dry-goods jobber follows up his customers. None but they know the urgent necessity of doing this. The jobber may have travelled a thousand miles to make his customer's acquaintance, and to prevail upon him to come to Boston to make his purchases; and some neighbor, who boards at the hotel he happens to make his resting-place, lights upon him, shows him attention, tempts him with bargains not to be refused, prevails upon him to make the bulk of his purchases of him, before his first acquaintance even hears of his arrival. To guard against disappointments such as this, the jobber sends his salesmen to live at hotels, haunts the hotels himself, studies the hotel-register far more assiduously than he can study his own comfort, or the comfort of his wife and children. Of one such jobber it was said, facetiously,—“He goes the round of all the hotels every morning with a lantern, to wake up his customers.” I had an errand one day at noon to such a devotee. Inquiring for him in the counting-room, I was told by his book-keeper to follow the stairs to the top of the store, and I should find him. I mounted flight after flight to the attic, and there I found, not only the man, but also one or two of his customers, surrounding a huge packing-case, upon which they had extemporized a dinner, cold turkey and tongue, and other edibles, taken standing, with plenty of fun for a dessert. The next time we happened to meet, I said,—“So you take not only time, but also customers, by the forelock!”

“Yes, to be sure,” was his answer; “let 'em go to their hotel to dinner in the middle of a bill, and somebody lights upon 'em, and carries 'em off to buy elsewhere; or they begin to remember that it is a long way home, feel homesick, slip off to New York as being so far on the way, and that's the last you see of 'em. No, we're bound to see 'em through, and no let-up till they've bought all they've got on their memorandum.”

We have not yet touched the question of credit. To whom shall the jobber sell his goods? It is the question of questions. Many a man who has bought well, who in other respects has sold well, who possessed all the characteristics which recommend a man to the confidence and to the good-will of his fellows, has made shipwreck of his fortunes because of his inability to meet this question. He sold his goods to men who never paid him. To say that in this the most successful jobbers are governed by an instinct, by an intuitive conviction which is superior to all rules of judgment, would be to allege what it would be difficult to prove. It would be less difficult to maintain that every competent merchant, however unconscious of the fact, has a standard of judgment by which he tries each applicant for credit. There are characteristics of men who can safely be credited, entirely familiar to his thoughts. He looks upon the man and instantly feels that he is or



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is not the man for him. He thinks his decision an instinct, or an intuition, because, through much practice, these mental operations have become so rapid as to defy analysis. Not being infallible, he sometimes mistakes; and when he so mistakes, he will be sure to say,—I made that loss because I relied too much upon this characteristic, or because I did not allow its proper weight to the absence of some other,—because I thought his shrewdness or his honesty, his enterprise or his economy, would save him: implying that he had observed some non-conformity to his standard, but had relied upon some excellency in excess to make up for it.

What are the perplexities which beset the question, To whom shall the jobber sell his goods? They are manifold; and some of them are peculiar to our country. Our territory is very extensive; our population very heterogeneous; the economy and close calculation which recommend a man in Massachusetts may discredit him in Louisiana. The very countenance is often a sure indication of character and of capacity, when it is one of a class and a region whose peculiarities we thoroughly understand; but coming to us from other classes and regions, we are often at fault,—more especially in these latter days, when all strong-mindedness is presumed to be foreshadowed in a stiff beard. Time was when something could be inferred from a lip, a mouth, a chin,—when character could be found in the contour and color of a cheek; but that time has passed. The time was, when, among a homogeneous people, a few time-honored characteristics were both relied on and insisted on: for example, good parentage, good moral character, a thorough training, and superior capacity, joined to industry, economy, sound judgment, and good manners. But Young America has learned to make light of some of these, and to dispense altogether with others of them.

Once the buyer was required to prove himself an honest, worthy, and capable man. If he wanted credit, he must humbly sue for it, and prove himself deserving of it; and no man thought of applying for it who was not prepared to furnish irrefragable evidence. Once, a reference to some respectable acquaintance would serve the purpose; and neighbors held themselves bound to tell all they knew. The increase of merchants, and fierce competition for customers, have changed this. Men now regard their knowledge of other men as a part of their capital or stock-in-trade. Their knowledge has been acquired at much cost of labor and money; and they hold themselves absolved from all obligation to give away what they have thus expensively acquired. Moreover, their confidence has sometimes been betrayed, and their free communications have been remorselessly used to their disadvantage. Alas, it cannot be denied that even dry-goods jobbers, with all their extraordinary endowments, are not quite perfect! for some of them will “state the thing that is not,” and others “convey” their neighbor’s property into their own coffers: men who prefer gain to godliness, and mistake much money for respectability.



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There are very few men, in certain sections of the country, who will absolutely refuse to give a letter of introduction to a neighbor on the simple ground of ill-desert. Men dread the ill-will of their neighbor, and particularly the ill-will of an unscrupulous neighbor; so, when such a neighbor asks a letter, they give it. I remember such a one bringing a dozen or more letters, some of which contained the highest commendation. The writer of one of these letters sent a private note, through the mail, warning one of the persons addressed against the bearer of his own commendatory letter. Those who had no warning sold, and lost. It would be difficult to find a man, however unworthy, who could not, from some quarter, obtain a very respectable letter of introduction. One of the greatest rogues that ever came to Boston brought letters from two of the foremost houses in New York to two firms second to none in Boston. Neither of these gentlemen was in fault in the matter; the train had been laid by some obliging cousin in a banking-house in London.

In making up our account of the difficulties with which a dry-goods jobber has to deal, in conducting a successful business, it must be distinctly stated, that on no man can he count for information which will, however remotely or slightly, compromise the interest of the one inquired of. Never, perhaps, was it so true as now, that "the seller has need of a hundred eyes." The competent jobber uses his eyes first of all upon the person of the man who desires to buy of him. He questions him about himself, with such directness or indirectness as instinct and experience dictate. He learns to discriminate between the sensitiveness of the high-toned honest man and the sensitiveness of the rogue. Many men of each class are inclined to resent and resist the catechism. Strange as it may seem, the very men who would inexorably refuse a credit to those who should decline to answer their inquiries are the men most inclined to resent any inquiry about themselves. While they demand the fullest and most particular information from their customers, they wonder that others will not take them on their own estimate of themselves.

The jobber next directs his attention to the buyer's knowledge of goods: of their quality, their style, their worth in market, and their fitness for his own market; all of which will come to light, as he offers to his notice the various articles he has for sale. He will improve the opportunity to draw him out in general conversation, so guiding it as to touch many points of importance, and yet not so as to betray a want of confidence. He sounds him as to his knowledge of other merchants at home and in the city; takes the names of his references,—of several, if he can get them; puts himself in communication with men who know him, both at his home and in the city. If he can harmonize the information derived from all these sources into a consistent and satisfactory whole, he will then do his utmost to secure his customer, both by selling him his goods at a profit so small that he need have little fear of any neighbor's underselling him, and also by granting every possible accommodation as to the time and manner of payment.



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A moderately thoughtful man will by this time begin to think the elements of toil and of perplexity already suggested sufficient for the time and strength of any man, and more than he would wish to undertake. But experience alone could teach him in how many ways indulged customers can and do manage to make the profit they pay so small, and the toil and vexation they occasion so great, that the jobber is often put upon weighing the question, Should I not be richer without them? Thus, for example, some of them will affect to doubt that the jobber wishes to sell to them, and propose, as a test, that he shall let them have some choice article at the cost, or at less than the cost, now on one pretext, and now on another,—intimating an indisposition to buy, if they cannot be indulged in that one thing. If they carry their point, that exceptional price is thenceforth claimed as the rule. Another day the concession will be asked on something else; and by extending this game so as to include a number of jobbers, these shrewd buyers will manage to lay in an assorted stock on which there will have been little or no profit to the sellers. To cap the climax of vexation, these persons will very probably come in, after not many days, and propose to cash their notes at double interest off. Only an official of the Inquisition could turn the thumb-screw so many times, and so remorselessly.

But we have yet to consider the collection of debts. The jobber who has not capital so ample as to buy only for cash is expected invariably to settle his purchases by giving his note, payable at bank on a fixed day. He pays it when due, or fails. Not so with his customers: multitudes of them shrink from giving a note payable at bank, and some altogether refuse to do so. They wish to buy on open account; or to give a note to be paid at maturity, if convenient,—otherwise not. The number of really prompt and punctual men, as compared with those who are otherwise, is very small. The number of those who never fail is smaller still. The collection-laws are completely alike, probably, in no two States. Some of them appear to have been constructed for the accommodation, not of honest creditors, but of dishonest debtors. In others, they are such as to put each jobber in fear of every other,—a first attachment taking all the property, if the debt be large enough, leaving little or nothing, usually, for those who have been willing to give the debtor such indulgence as might enable him to pay in full, were it granted by all his creditors.

No jobber can open his letters in the morning in the certainty of finding no tidings of a failure. No jobber, leaving his breakfast-table, can assure his wife and children, sick or well, that he will dine or sup with them; any one of a dozen railroad-trains may, for aught he knows, be sweeping him away to some remote point, to battle with the mischances of trade, the misfortunes of honest men, or the knavery of rogues



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and the meshes of the law. Once in the cars, he casts his eye around in uneasy expectation of finding some one or more of his neighbors bound on the same errand. While yet peering over the seats in front of him, he is unpleasantly startled by a slap on the shoulder, and, "Ah, John! bound East? What's in the wind? Any ducks in these days?" "Why,—yes,—no,—that is, I'm going down along,—little uncertain how far,—depends on circumstances." "So, so,—I see,—mum's the word." Well, neither is quite ready to trust the other,—neither quite ready to know the worst; so long as a blow is suspended, it may not fall; and so, with desperate exertions, they change the subject, converse on things indifferent,—or subside into more or less moody meditations upon their respective chances and prospects.

Any jobber who has seen service will tell you stories without number of these vexatious experiences, sometimes dashed with the comical in no common measure. He will tell you of how they arrived at the last town on the railroad, some six or seven of them; of how not a word had been lispied of their destination; of the stampede from the railroad-station to the tavern; of the spirited bids for horses and wagons; of the chop-fallen disappointment of the man for whom no vehicle remained; of his steeple-chase a-bareback; and of their various successes with writs and officers, in their rush for the store of the delinquent debtor. Of three such Jehus, the story goes, that, two of them having bought the monopoly of the inside of the only vehicle, and, in so doing, as they thought, having utterly precluded any chance for the third, their dauntless competitor instantly mounted with the driver, commenced negotiations for the horse, which speedily resulted in a purchase, and thereupon detached the horse from the vehicle, drove on, and effected a first attachment, which secured his debt.

The occurrence of "a bad year" compels many a jobber to abandon his store and home for one, two, or three months together, and visit his customers scattered all over the land, to make collections. Then it is that the power of persuasion, if possessed, is brought into efficient use; discrimination, too, is demanded; good judgment, and power of combination. For a debt that cannot be paid in money may possibly be paid partly in money, or in merchandise of some sort, and in part secured; and, among the securities offered, to choose those which will involve the least delay is generally no easy matter.

To those who, without experience, are commencing a jobbing-business, a capital of thirty, forty, or fifty thousand dollars seems an inexhaustible fund. Experience teaches that an incautious and unskilful man may easily bury even the largest of these sums in a single season. If not actually lost, it has in effect ceased to be capital, because it cannot be collected, and the notes he has taken are such as will not be discounted.



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Success in the jobbing-business makes such demand on talent and capacity as outsiders seldom dream of. Half-a-dozen Secretaries of State, with a Governor and a President thrown in, would not suffice to constitute a first-class jobbing-firm. The general or special incompetency of these distinguished functionaries in their several spheres may probably be covered by the capacity of their subordinates. The President of these United States—of late years, at all events—is not supposed to be in a position to know whether the will is or is not “a self-determining power.” But no jobbing-firm can thus cloak its deficiencies, or shirk its responsibilities. Goods must be bought, and sold, and paid for; and a master-spirit in each department, capable of penetrating to every particular, and of controlling every subordinate, cannot be dispensed with. He must know that every man to whom he delegates any portion of his work is competent and trustworthy. He must be able to feel that the thing which he deposes to each will be as surely and as faithfully done as though done by his own hand. No criticism is more common or more depreciatory than that “Such a one will not succeed, because he has surrounded himself with incompetent men.”

It is much to be regretted that it cannot be said, that no man can succeed in the jobbing-business who is not a model of courtesy. Unhappily, our community has not yet reached that elevation. But this may with truth be affirmed,—that many a man fails for the want of courtesy, and for the want of that good-will to his fellows from which all real courtesy springs. There is small chance for any man to succeed who does not command his own spirit. There is no chance whatever for an indolent man; and, in the long run, little or no chance for the dishonest man. The same must be said for the timid and for the rash man. Nor can we offer any encouragement to the intermittent man. From year’s end to year’s end, the dry-goods jobber finds himself necessitated to be studying his stock and his ledger. He knows, that, while men sleep, the enemy will be sowing tares. In his case, the flying moments are the enemy, and bad stock and bad debts are the tares. To weed out each of these is his unceasing care. And as both the one and the other are forever choking the streams of income which should supply the means of paying his own notes, his no less constant care is to provide such other conduits as shall insure him always a full basin at the bank. Nobody but a jobber can know the vexation of a jobber who cannot find money to cash his notes when they are beginning to be thrown into the market at a price a shade lower than his neighbor’s notes are sold at.

In conclusion, a few material facts should be stated.

As a general proposition, it is not to be denied, that those who are in haste to get rich will find in the dry-goods jobbing-business many temptations and snares into which one may easily fall. A young man who is not fortified by a faithful home-training, and by sound religious principle, will be likely enough to degenerate into a heartless money-maker.



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While the young man who has been well trained at home, who appreciates good manners, good morals, and good books, will derive immense advantage in acquiring that quick discernment, that intuitive apprehension of the rights and of the pleasure of others, and that nice tact, which characterize the highest style of merchants,—he who has not been thus prepared will be more than likely to mistake *brusquerie* for manliness, and brutality for the sublime of independence. As in a great house there are vessels unto honor and also unto dishonor, so in the purlieu of the dry-goods trade there are gentlemen who would honor and adorn any society, and also men whose manners would shame Hottentots,—whose language, innocent of all preference for Worcester or Webster, a terror to all decent ideas, like scarecrows in corn-fields, is dressed in the cast-off garments of the refuse of all classes.

Success in retailing does not necessarily qualify a man to succeed in the dry-goods jobbing-business. The game is played on a much larger scale; it includes other chances, and demands other qualifications, natural and acquired. Instances are not wanting of men who, in the smaller towns, had made to themselves a name and acquired an honorable independence, sinking both capital and courage in their endeavors to manage the business of a city-jobber.

It should be well remembered, that, while it is not indispensable to success in the jobbing-business that each partner should be an expert in every department of the business, in buying, selling, collecting, paying, and book-keeping, it is absolutely necessary that each should be such in his own department,—and that the firm, as a unit, should include a completely competent man for each and every one of these departments. The lack of the qualities which are indispensable to any one of these may, and probably will, prove an abyss deep enough to engulf the largest commercial ship afloat.

Finally, to avoid disappointment, the man who would embark in the dry-goods trade should make up his mind to meet every variety of experience known to mortals, and to be daunted by nothing. He will assuredly find fair winds and head winds, clear skies and cloudy skies, head seas and cross seas as well as stern seas. A wind that justifies studding-sails may change, without premonition, to a gale that will make ribbons of top-sails and of storm-sails. The best crew afloat cannot preclude all casualties, or exclude sleepless nights and cold sweats now and then; but a quick eye, a cool head, a prompt hand, and indomitable perseverance will overcome almost all things.

### THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

The wet trees hang above the walks  
Purple with damps and earthish stains,  
And strewn by moody, absent rains  
With rose-leaves from the wild-grown stalks.



Unmown, in heavy, tangled swaths,  
The ripe June-grass is wanton blown;  
Snails slime the untrodden threshold-stone,  
Along the sills hang drowsy moths.



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Down the blank visage of the wall,  
Where many a wavering trace appears  
Like a forgotten trace of tears,  
From swollen caves the slow drops crawl.

Where everything was wide before,  
The curious wind, that comes and goes,  
Finds all the latticed windows close,  
Secret and close the bolted door.

And with the shrewd and curious wind,  
That in the arched doorway cries,  
And at the bolted portal tries,  
And harks and listens at the blind,—

Forever lurks my thought about,  
And in the ghostly middle-night  
Finds all the hidden windows bright,  
And sees the guests go in and out,—

And lingers till the pallid dawn,  
And feels the mystery deeper there  
In silent, gust-swept chambers, bare,  
With all the midnight revel gone;

But wanders through the lonesome rooms,  
Where harsh the astonished cricket calls,  
And, from the hollows of the walls  
Vanishing, stare unshapen glooms;

And lingers yet, and cannot come  
Out of the drear and desolate place,  
So full of ruin's solemn grace,  
And haunted with the ghost of home.

### THE PROFESSOR'S STORY.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE NEWS REACHES THE DUDLEY MANSION.

Early the next morning Abel Stebbins made his appearance at Dudley Venner's, and requested to see the maaen o' the haouse abaout somethin' o' consequence. Mr. Venner sent word that the messenger should wait below, and presently appeared in the



study, where Abel was making himself at home, as is the wont of the republican citizen, when he hides the purple of empire beneath the apron of domestic service.

“Good mornin’, Squire!” said Abel, as Mr. Venner entered. “My name’s Stebbins, ‘n’ I’m stoppin’ f’r a spell ‘ith ol’ Doctor Kittredge.”

“Well, Stebbins,” said Mr. Dudley Venner, “have you brought any special message from the Doctor?”

“Y’ ha’n’t heerd nothin’ abaout it, Squire, d’ ye mean t’ say?” said Abel,—beginning to suspect that he was the first to bring the news of last evening’s events.

“About—what?” asked Mr. Venner, with some interest.

“Dew tell, naow! Waal, that beats all! Why, that ’ere Portagee relation o’ yourn ‘z been tryin’ t’ ketch a fellah ‘n a slippernoose, ‘n’ got ketched himself,—that’s all. Y’ ha’n’t heerd noth’n’ abaout it?”

“Sit down,” said Mr. Dudley Venner, calmly, “and tell me all you have to say.”

So Abel sat down and gave him an account of the events of the last evening. It was a strange and terrible surprise to Dudley Venner to find that his nephew, who had been an inmate of his house and the companion of his daughter, was to all intents and purposes guilty of the gravest of crimes. But the first shock was no sooner over than he began to think what effect the news would have on Elsie. He imagined that there was a kind of friendly feeling between them, and he feared some crisis would be provoked in his daughter’s mental condition by the discovery. He would wait, however, until she came from her chamber, before disturbing her with the evil tidings.



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Abel did not forget his message with reference to the equipments of the dead mustang.

"The' was some things on the hoss, Squire, that the man he ketched said he didn' care no gre't abaout; but perhaps you'd like to have 'em fetched to the mansion-haouse. Ef y' *didn'* care abaout 'em, though, I shouldn' min' keepin' on 'em; they might come handy some time or 'nother: they say, holt on t' anything for ten year 'n' there'll be some kin' o' use for't."

"Keep everything," said Dudley Venner. "I don't want to see anything belonging to that young man."

So Abel nodded to Mr. Venner, and left the study to find some of the men about the stable to tell and talk over with them the events of the last evening. He presently came upon Elbridge, chief of the equine department, and driver of the family-coach.

"Good mornin', Abe," said Elbridge. "What's fetched y' daown here so all-fired airly?"

"You're a darned pooty lot daown here, you be!" Abel answered. "Better keep your Portagees t' home nex' time, ketchin' folks 'ith slippernooses raoun' their necks, 'n' kerryin' knives 'n their boots!"

"What 'r' you jawin' abaout?" Elbridge said, looking up to see if he was in earnest, and what he meant.

"Jawin' abaout? You'll find aout 'z soon 'z y' go into that 'ere stable o' yourn! Y' won't curry that 'ere long-tailed black hoss no more; 'n' y' won't set y'r eyes on the fellah that rid him, ag'in, in a hurry!"

Elbridge walked straight to the stable, without saying a word, found the door unlocked, and went in.

"Th' critter's gone, sure enough!" he said. "Glad on't! The darndest, kickin'est, bitin'est beast th't ever I see, 'r ever wan' t' see ag'in! Good reddance! Don' wan' no snappin'-turkles in my stable! Whar's the man gone th't brought the critter?"

"Whar he's gone? Guess y' better go 'n aask my ol' man; he kerried him off laaes' night; 'n' when he comes back, mebbe he'll tell ye whar he's gone tew!"

By this time Elbridge had found out that Abel was in earnest, and had something to tell. He looked at the litter in the mustang's stall, then at the crib.

"Ha'n't eat b't haaelf his feed. Ha'n't been daown on his straw. Must ha' been took aout somewhere abaout ten 'r 'leven o'clock. I know that 'ere critter's ways. The fellah's had him aout nights afore; b't I never thought nothin' o' no mischief. He's a kin' o' haaelf Injin. What is 't the chap's been a-doin' on? Tell 's all abaout it."



Abel sat down on a meal-chest, picked up a straw and put it into his mouth. Elbridge sat down at the other end, pulled out his jackknife, opened the penknife-blade, and began sticking it into the lid of the meal-chest. The Doctor's man had a story to tell, and he meant to get all the enjoyment out of it. So he told it with every luxury of circumstance. Mr. Venner's man heard it all with open mouth. No listener in the gardens of Stamboul could have found more rapture in a tale heard amidst the perfume of roses and the voices of birds and tinkling of fountains than Elbridge in following Abel's narrative, as they sat there in the aromatic ammoniacal atmosphere of the stable, the grinding of the horses' jaws keeping evenly on through it all, with now and then the interruption of a stamping hoof, and at intervals a ringing crow from the barnyard.



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Elbridge stopped a minute to think, after Abel had finished.

“Who’s took care o’ them things that was on the hoss?” he said, gravely.

“Waael, Langden, he seemed to kin’ o’ think I’d ought to have ’em,—’n’ the Squire, he didn’ seem to have no ’bjection; ’n’ so,—waael, I cal’late I sh’ll jes’ holt on to ’em myself; they a’n’t good f’r much, but they’re cur’ous t’ keep t’ look at.”

Mr. Venner’s man did not appear much gratified by this arrangement, especially as he had a shrewd suspicion that some of the ornaments of the bridle were of precious metal, having made occasional examinations of them with the edge of a file. But he did not see exactly what to do about it, except to get them from Abel in the way of bargain.

“Waael, no,—they *a’n’t* good for much ‘xcep’ to look at. ‘F y’ ever rid on that seddle once, y’ wouldn’ try it ag’in, very spry,—not ‘f y’ c’d haaelp y’rsaelf. I tried it,—darned ‘f I sot daown f’r th’ nex’ week,—eat all my victuals stan’in’. I sh’d like t’ hev them things wal enough to heng up ’n the stable; ‘f y’ want t’ trade some day, fetch ’em along daown.”

Abel rather expected that Elbridge would have laid claim to the saddle and bridle on the strength of some promise or other presumptive title, and thought himself lucky to get off with only promising that he would think abaout tradin’.

When Elbridge returned to the house, he found the family in a state of great excitement. Mr. Venner had told Old Sophy, and she had informed the other servants. Everybody knew what had happened, excepting Elsie. Her father had charged them all to say nothing about it to her; he would tell her, when she came down.

He heard her step at last,—a light, gliding step,—so light that her coming was often unheard, except by those who perceived the faint rustle that went with it. She was paler than common this morning, as she came into her father’s study.

After a few words of salutation, he said, quietly,—

“Elsie, my dear, your cousin Richard has left us.”

She grew still paler, as she asked,—

*“Is he dead?”*

Dudley Venner started to see the expression with which Elsie put this question.

“He is living,—but dead to us from this day forward,” said her father.



He proceeded to tell her, in a general way, the story he had just heard from Abel. There could be no doubting it;—he remembered him as the Doctor's man; and as Abel had seen all with his own eyes,—as Dick's chamber, when unlocked with a spare key, was found empty, and his bed had not been slept in, he accepted the whole account as true.



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When he told of Dick's attempt on the young schoolmaster, ("You know Mr. Langdon very well, Elsie,—a perfectly inoffensive young man, as I understand,") Elsie turned her face away and slid along by the wall to the window which looked out on the little grass-plot with the white stone standing in it. Her father could not see her face, but he knew by her movements that her dangerous mood was on her. When she heard the sequel of the story, the discomfiture and capture of Dick, she turned round for an instant, with a look of contempt and of something like triumph upon her face. Her father saw that her cousin had become odious to her. He knew well, by every change of her countenance, by her movements, by every varying curve of her graceful figure, the transitions from passion to repose, from fierce excitement to the dull languor which often succeeded her threatening paroxysms.

She remained looking out at the window. A group of white fan-tailed pigeons had lighted on the green plot before it and clustered about one of their companions who lay on his back, fluttering in a strange way, with outspread wings and twitching feet. Elsie uttered a faint cry; these were her special favorites, and often fed from her hand. She threw open the long window, sprang out, caught up the white fan-tail, and held it to her bosom. The bird stretched himself out, and then lay still, with open eyes, lifeless. She looked at him a moment, and, sliding in through the open window and through the study, sought her own apartment, where she locked herself in, and began to sob and moan like those that weep. But the gracious solace of tears seemed to be denied her, and her grief, like her anger, was a dull ache, longing, like that, to finish itself with a fierce paroxysm, but wanting its natural outlet.

This seemingly trifling incident of the death of her favorite appeared to change all the current of her thought. Whether it were the sight of the dying bird, or the thought that her own agency might have been concerned in it, or some deeper grief, which took this occasion to declare itself,—some dark remorse or hopeless longing,—whatever it might be, there was an unwonted tumult in her soul. To whom should she go in her vague misery? Only to Him who knows all His creatures' sorrows, and listens to the faintest human cry. She knelt, as she had been taught to kneel from her childhood, and tried to pray. But her thoughts refused to flow in the language of supplication. She could not plead for herself as other women plead in their hours of anguish. She rose like one who should stoop to drink, and find dust in the place of water. Partly from restlessness, partly from an attraction she hardly avowed to herself, she followed her usual habit and strolled listlessly along to the school.

\* \* \* \* \*



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Of course everybody at the Institute was full of the terrible adventure of the preceding evening. Mr. Bernard felt poorly enough; but he had made it a point to show himself the next morning, as if nothing had happened. Helen Darley knew nothing of it all until she had risen, when the gossipy matron of the establishment made her acquainted with all its details, embellished with such additional ornamental appendages as it had caught up in transmission from lip to lip. She did not love to betray her sensibilities, but she was pale and tremulous and very nearly tearful when Mr. Bernard entered the sitting-room, showing on his features traces of the violent shock he had received and the heavy slumber from which he had risen with throbbing brows. What the poor girl's impulse was, on seeing him, we need not inquire too curiously. If he had been her own brother, she would have kissed him and cried on his neck; but something held her back. There is no galvanism in kiss-your-brother; it is copper against copper: but alien bloods develop strange currents, when they flow close to each other, with only the films that cover lip and cheek between them. Mr. Bernard, as some of us may remember, violated the proprieties and laid himself open to reproach by his enterprise with a bouncing village-girl, to whose rosy cheek an honest smack was not probably an absolute novelty. He made it all up by his discretion and good behavior now. He saw by Helen's moist eye and trembling lip that her woman's heart was off its guard, and he knew, by the infallible instinct of sex, that he should be forgiven, if he thanked her for her sisterly sympathies in the most natural way,—expressive, and at the same time economical of breath and utterance. He would not give a false look to their friendship by any such demonstration. Helen was a little older than he was, but the aureole of young womanhood had not yet begun to fade from around her. She was surrounded by that enchanted atmosphere into which the girl walks with dreamy eyes, and out of which the woman passes with a story written on her forehead. Some people think very little of these refinements; they have not studied magnetism, and the law of the square of the distance.

So Mr. Bernard thanked Helen for her interest without the aid of the twenty-seventh letter of the alphabet,—the love labial,—the limping consonant which it takes two to speak plain. Indeed, he scarcely let her say a word, at first; for he saw that it was hard for her to conceal her emotion. No wonder; he had come within a hair's-breadth of losing his life, and he had been a very kind friend and a very dear companion to her.

There were some curious spiritual experiences connected with his last evening's adventure, which were working very strongly in his mind. It was borne in upon him irresistibly that he had been *dead* since he had seen Helen,—as dead as the son of the Widow of Nain before the bier was touched and he sat up and began to speak. There was an interval between two conscious moments which appeared to him like a temporary annihilation, and the thoughts it suggested were worrying him with strange perplexities.



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He remembered seeing the dark figure on horseback rise in the saddle and something leap from its hand. He remembered the thrill he felt as the coil settled on his shoulders, and the sudden impulse which led him to fire as he did. With the report of the pistol all became blank, until he found himself in a strange, bewildered state, groping about for the weapon, which he had a vague consciousness of having dropped. But, according to Abel's account, there must have been an interval of some minutes between these recollections, and he could not help asking, Where was the mind, the soul, the thinking principle, all this time?

A man is stunned by a blow with a stick on the head. He becomes unconscious. Another man gets a harder blow on the head from a bigger stick, and it kills him. Does he become unconscious, too? If so, *when does he come to his consciousness?* The man who has had a slight or moderate blow comes to himself when the immediate shock passes off and the organs begin to work again, or when a bit of the skull is pried up, if that happens to be broken. Suppose the blow is hard enough to spoil the brain and stop the play of the organs, what happens then?

A British captain was struck by a cannon-ball on the head, just as he was giving an order, at the Battle of the Nile. Fifteen months afterwards he was trephined at Greenwich Hospital, having been insensible all that time. Immediately after the operation his consciousness returned, and he at once began carrying out the order he was giving when the shot struck him. Suppose he had never been trephined, when would his intelligence have returned? When his breath ceased and his heart stopped beating?

When Mr. Bernard said to Helen, "I have been dead since I saw you," it startled her not a little; for his expression was that of perfect good faith, and she feared that his mind was disordered. When he explained, not as has been done just now, at length, but in a hurried, imperfect way, the meaning of his strange assertion, and the fearful Sadduceeisms which it had suggested to his mind, she looked troubled at first, and then thoughtful. She did not feel able to answer all the difficulties he raised, but she met them with that faith which is the strength as well as the weakness of women,—which makes them weak in the hands of man, but strong in the presence of the Unseen.

"It is a strange experience," she said; "but I once had something like it. I fainted, and lost some five or ten minutes out of my life, as much as if I had been dead. But when I came to myself, I was the same person every way, in my recollections and character. So I suppose that loss of consciousness is not death. And if I was born out of unconsciousness into infancy with many *family*-traits of mind and body, I can believe, from my own reason, even without help from Revelation, that I shall be born again out of the unconsciousness of death with my *individual* traits of mind and body. If death is, as it should seem to be, a loss of consciousness, that does not shake my faith; for I have been put into a body once already to fit me for living here, and I hope to be in some way

fitted after this life to enjoy a better one. But it is all trust in God and in his Word. These are enough for me; I hope they are for you.”



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Helen was a minister's daughter, and familiar from her childhood with this class of questions, especially with all the doubts and perplexities which are sure to assail every thinking child bred in any inorganic or not thoroughly vitalized faith,—as is too often the case with the children of professional theologians. The kind of discipline they are subjected to is like that of the Flat-Head Indian papposes. At five or ten or fifteen years old they put their hands up to their foreheads and ask, What are they strapping down my brains in this way for? So they tear off the sacred bandages of the great Flat-Head tribe, and there follows a mighty rush of blood to the long-compressed region. This accounts, in the most lucid manner, for those sudden freaks with which certain children of this class astonish their worthy parents at the period of life when they are growing fast, and, the frontal pressure beginning to be felt as something intolerable, they tear off the holy compresses.

The hour for school came, and they went to the great hall for study. It would not have occurred to Mr. Silas Peckham to ask his assistant whether he felt well enough to attend to his duties; and Mr. Bernard chose to be at his post. A little headache and confusion were all that remained of his symptoms.

Later, in the course of the forenoon, Elsie Venner came and took her place. The girls all stared at her,—naturally enough; for it was hardly to have been expected that she would show herself, after such an event in the household to which she belonged. Her expression was somewhat peculiar, and, of course, was attributed to the shock her feelings had undergone on hearing of the crime attempted by her cousin and daily companion. When she was looking on her book, or on any indifferent object, her countenance betrayed some inward disturbance, which knitted her dark brows, and seemed to throw a deeper shadow over her features. But, from time to time, she would lift her eyes toward Mr. Bernard, and let them rest upon him, without a thought, seemingly, that she herself was the subject of observation or remark. Then they seemed to lose their cold glitter, and soften into a strange, dreamy tenderness. The deep instincts of womanhood were striving to grope their way to the surface of her being through all the alien influences which overlaid them. She could be secret and cunning in working out any of her dangerous impulses, but she did not know how to mask the unwonted feeling which fixed her eyes and her thoughts upon the only person who had ever reached the spring of her hidden sympathies.

The girls all looked at Elsie, whenever they could steal a glance unperceived, and many of them were struck with this singular expression her features wore. They had long whispered it around among each other that she had a liking for the master; but there were too many of them of whom something like this could be said, to make it very remarkable. Now, however, when so many little hearts were fluttering



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at the thought of the peril through which the handsome young master had so recently passed, they were more alive than ever to the supposed relation between him and the dark school-girl. Some had supposed there was a mutual attachment between them; there was a story that they were secretly betrothed, in accordance with the rumor which had been current in the village. At any rate, some conflict was going on in that still, remote, clouded soul, and all the girls who looked upon her face were impressed and awed as they had never been before by the shadows that passed over it.

One of these girls was more strongly arrested by Elsie's look than the others. This was a delicate, pallid creature, with a high forehead, and wide-open pupils, which looked as if they could take in all the shapes that flit in what, to common eyes, is darkness,—a girl said to be *clairvoyant* under certain influences. In the *recess*, as it was called, or interval of suspended studies in the middle of the forenoon, this girl carried her autograph-book,—for she had one of those indispensable appendages of the boarding-school miss of every degree,—and asked Elsie to write her name in it. She had an irresistible feeling, that, sooner or later, and perhaps very soon, there would attach an unusual interest to this autograph. Elsie took the pen and wrote, in her sharp Italian hand,

*Elsie Venner, Infelix.*

It was a remembrance, doubtless, of the forlorn queen of the “Aeneid”; but its coming to her thought in this way confirmed the sensitive school-girl in her fears for Elsie, and she let fall a tear upon the page before she closed it.

Of course, the keen and practised observation of Helen Darley could not fail to notice the change of Elsie's manner and expression. She had long seen that she was attracted to the young master, and had thought, as the old Doctor did, that any impression which acted upon her affections might be the means of awakening a new life in her singularly isolated nature. Now, however, the concentration of the poor girl's thoughts upon the one object which had had power to reach her deeper sensibilities was so painfully revealed in her features, that Helen began to fear once more, lest Mr. Bernard, in escaping the treacherous violence of an assassin, had been left to the equally dangerous consequences of a violent, engrossing passion in the breast of a young creature whose love it would be ruin to admit and might be deadly to reject. She knew her own heart too well to fear that any jealousy might mingle with her new apprehensions. It was understood between Bernard and Helen that they were too good friends to tamper with the silences and edging proximities of love-making. She knew, too, the simply human, not masculine, interest which Mr. Bernard took in Elsie; he had been frank with Helen, and more than satisfied her that with all the pity and sympathy which overflowed his soul, when he thought of the stricken girl, there mingled not one drop of such love as a youth may feel for a maiden.



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It may help the reader to gain some understanding of the anomalous nature of Elsie Venner, if we look with Helen into Mr. Bernard's opinions and feelings with reference to her, as they had shaped themselves in his consciousness at the period of which we are speaking.

At first he had been impressed by her wild beauty, and the contrast of all her looks and ways with those of the girls around her. Presently a sense of some ill-defined personal element, which half attracted and half repelled those who looked upon her, and especially those on whom she looked, began to make itself obvious to him, as he soon found it was painfully sensible to his more susceptible companion, the lady-teacher. It was not merely in the cold light of her diamond eyes, but in all her movements, in her graceful postures as she sat, in her costume, and, he sometimes thought, even in her speech, that this obscure and exceptional character betrayed itself. When Helen had said, that, if they were living in times when human beings were subject to possession, she should have thought there was something not human about Elsie, it struck an unsuspected vein of thought in his own mind, which he hated to put in words, but which was continually trying to articulate itself among the dumb thoughts which lie under the perpetual stream of mental whispers.

Mr. Bernard's professional training had made him slow to accept marvellous stories and many forms of superstition. Yet, as a man of science, he well knew that just on the verge of the demonstrable facts of physics and physiology there is a nebulous borderland which what is called "common sense" perhaps does wisely not to enter, but which uncommon sense, or the fine apprehension of privileged intelligences, may cautiously explore, and in so doing find itself behind the scenes which make up for the gazing world the show which is called Nature.

It was with something of this finer perception, perhaps with some degree of imaginative exaltation, that he set himself to solving the problem of Elsie's influence to attract and repel those around her. His letter already submitted to the reader hints in what direction his thoughts were disposed to turn. Here was a magnificent organization, superb in vigorous womanhood, with a beauty such as never comes but after generations of culture; yet through all this rich nature there ran some alien current of influence, sinuous and dark, as when a clouded streak seams the white marble of a perfect statue.

It would be needless to repeat the particular suggestions which had come into his mind, as they must probably have come into those of the reader who has noted the singularities of Elsie's tastes and personal traits. The images which certain poets had dreamed of seemed to have become a reality before his own eyes. Then came that unexplained adventure of *The Mountain*,—almost like a dream in recollection, yet assuredly real in some of its main incidents,—with



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all that it revealed or hinted. This girl did not fear to visit the dreaded region, where danger lurked in every nook and beneath every tuft of leaves. Did the tenants of the fatal ledge recognize some mysterious affinity which made them tributary to the cold glitter of her diamond eyes? Was she from her birth one of those frightful children, such as he had read about, and the Professor had told him of, who form unnatural friendships with cold, writhing ophidians? There was no need of so unwelcome a thought as this; she had drawn him away from the dark opening in the rock at the moment when he seemed to be threatened by one of its malignant denizens; that was all he could be sure of; the counter-fascination might have been a dream, a fancy, a coincidence. All wonderful things soon grow doubtful in our own minds, as do even common events, if great interests prove suddenly to attach to their truth or falsehood.

—I, who am telling of these occurrences, saw a friend in the great city, on the morning of a most memorable disaster, hours after the time when the train which carried its victims to their doom had left. I talked with him, and was for some minutes, at least, in his company. When I reached home, I found that the story had gone before that he was among the lost, and I alone could contradict it to his weeping friends and relatives. I did contradict it; but, alas! I began soon to doubt myself, penetrated by the contagion of their solicitude; my recollection began to question itself; the order of events became dislocated; and when I heard that he had reached home in safety, the relief was almost as great to me as to those who had expected to see their own brother's face no more.

Mr. Bernard was disposed, then, not to accept the thought of any odious personal relationship of the kind which had suggested itself to him when he wrote the letter referred to. That the girl had something of the feral nature, her wild, lawless rambles in forbidden and blasted regions of The Mountain at all hours, her familiarity with the lonely haunts where any other human foot was so rarely seen, proved clearly enough. But the more he thought of all her strange instincts and modes of being, the more he became convinced that whatever alien impulse swayed her will and modulated or diverted or displaced her affections came from some impression that reached far back into the past, before the days when the faithful Old Sophy had rocked her in the cradle. He believed that she had brought her ruling tendency, whatever it was, into the world with her.

When the school was over and the girls had all gone, Helen lingered in the school-room to speak with Mr. Bernard.

“Did you remark Elsie's ways this forenoon?” she said.

“No, not particularly; I have not noticed anything as sharply as I commonly do; my head has been a little queer, and I have been thinking over what we were talking about, and

how near I came to solving the great problem which every day makes clear to such multitudes of people. What about Elsie?"



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“Bernard, her liking for you is growing into a passion. I have studied girls for a long while, and I know the difference between their passing fancies and their real emotions. I told you, you remember, that Rosa would have to leave us; we barely missed a scene, I think, if not a whole tragedy, by her going at the right moment. But Elsie is infinitely more dangerous to herself and others. Women’s love is fierce enough, if it once gets the mastery of them, always; but this poor girl does not know what to do with a passion.”

Mr. Bernard had never told Helen the story of the flower in his Virgil, or that other adventure which he would have felt awkwardly to refer to; but it had been perfectly understood between them that Elsie showed in her own singular way a well-marked partiality for the young master.

“Why don’t they take her away from the school, if she is in such a strange, excitable state?” said Mr. Bernard.

“I believe they are afraid of her,” Helen answered. “It is just one of those cases that are ten thousand thousand times worse than insanity. I don’t think, from what I hear, that her father has ever given up hoping that she will outgrow her peculiarities. Oh, these peculiar children for whom parents go on hoping every morning and despairing every night! If I could tell you half that mothers have told me, you would feel that the worst of all diseases of the moral sense and the will are those which all the Bedlams turn away from their doors as not being the subjects of insanity!”

“Do you think her father has treated her judiciously?” said Mr. Bernard.

“I think,” said Helen, with a little hesitation, which Mr. Bernard did not happen to notice, —“I think he has been very kind and indulgent, and I do not know that he could have treated her otherwise with a better chance of success.”

“He must of course be fond of her,” Mr. Bernard said; “there is nothing else in the world for him to love.”

Helen dropped a book she held in her hand, and, stooping to pick it up, the blood rushed into her cheeks.

“It is getting late,” she said; “you must not stay any longer in this close school-room. Pray, go and get a little fresh air before dinner-time.”

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### A SOUL IN DISTRESS.

The events told in the last two chapters had taken place toward the close of the week. On Saturday evening the Reverend Chauncy Fairweather received a note which was



left at his door by an unknown person who departed without saying a word. Its words were these:—

“One who is in distress of mind requests the prayers of this congregation that God would be pleased to look in mercy upon the soul that he has afflicted.”



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There was nothing to show from whom the note came, or the sex or age or special source of spiritual discomfort or anxiety of the writer. The handwriting was delicate and might well be a woman's. The clergyman was not aware of any particular affliction among his parishioners which was likely to be made the subject of a request of this kind. Surely neither of the Venners would advertise the attempted crime of their relative in this way. But who else was there? The more he thought about it, the more it puzzled him; and as he did not like to pray in the dark, without knowing for whom he was praying, he could think of nothing better than to step into old Doctor Kittredge's and see what he had to say about it.

The old Doctor was sitting alone in his study when the Reverend Mr. Fairweather was ushered in. He received his visitor very pleasantly, expecting, as a matter of course, that he would begin with some new grievance, dyspeptic, neuralgic, bronchitic, or other. The minister, however, began with questioning the old Doctor about the sequel of the other night's adventure; for he was already getting a little Jesuitical, and kept back the object of his visit until it should come up as if accidentally in the course of conversation.

"It was a pretty bold thing to go off alone with that reprobate, as you did," said the minister.

"I don't know what there was bold about it," the Doctor answered. "All he wanted was to get away. He was not quite a reprobate, you see; he didn't like the thought of disgracing his family or facing his uncle. I think he was ashamed to see his cousin, too, after what he had done."

"Did he talk with you on the way?"

"Not much. For half an hour or so he didn't speak a word. Then he asked where I was driving him. I told him, and he seemed to be surprised into a sort of grateful feeling. Bad enough, no doubt,—but might be worse. Has some humanity left in him yet. Let him go. God can judge him,—I can't."

"You are too charitable, Doctor," the minister said. "I condemn him just as if he had carried out his project, which, they say, was to make it appear as if the schoolmaster had committed suicide. That's what people think the rope found by him was for. He has saved his neck,—but his soul is a lost one, I am afraid, beyond question."

"I can't judge men's souls," the Doctor said. "I can judge their acts, and hold them responsible for those,—but I don't know much about their souls. If you or I had found our soul in a half-breed body, and been turned loose to run among the Indians, we might have been playing just such tricks as this fellow has been trying. What if you or I had inherited all the tendencies that were born with his cousin Elsie?"

“Oh, that reminds me,”—the minister said, in a sudden way,—“I have received a note, which I am requested to read from the pulpit to-morrow. I wish you would just have the kindness to look at it and see where you think it came from.”



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The Doctor examined it carefully. It was a woman's or girl's note, he thought. Might come from one of the school-girls who was anxious about her spiritual condition. Handwriting was disguised; looked a little like Elsie Venner's, but not characteristic enough to make it certain. It would be a new thing, if she had asked public prayers for herself, and a very favorable indication of a change in her singular moral nature. It was just possible Elsie might have sent that note. Nobody could foretell her actions. It would be well to see the girl and find out whether any unusual impression had been produced on her mind by the recent occurrence or by any other cause.

The Reverend Mr. Fairweather folded the note and put it into his pocket.

"I have been a good deal exercised in mind lately, myself," he said.

The old Doctor looked at him through his spectacles, and said, in his usual professional tone,—

"Put out your tongue."

The minister obeyed him in that feeble way common with persons of weak character,—for people differ as much in their mode of performing this trifling act as Gideon's soldiers in their way of drinking at the brook. The Doctor took his hand and placed a finger mechanically on his wrist.

"It is more spiritual, I think, than bodily," said the Reverend Mr. Fairweather.

"Is your appetite as good as usual?" the Doctor asked.

"Pretty good," the minister answered; "but my sleep, my sleep, Doctor,—I am greatly troubled at night with lying awake and thinking of my future,—I am not at ease in mind."

He looked round at all the doors, to be sure they were shut, and moved his chair up close to the Doctor's.

"You do not know the mental trials I have been going through for the last few months."

"I think I do," the old Doctor said. "You want to get out of the new church into the old one, don't you?"

The minister blushed deeply; he thought he had been going on in a very quiet way, and that nobody suspected his secret. As the old Doctor was his counsellor in sickness, and almost everybody's confidant in trouble, he had intended to impart cautiously to him some hints of the change of sentiments through which he had been passing. He was too late with his information, it appeared; and there was nothing to be done but to throw himself on the Doctor's good sense and kindness, which everybody knew, and get what



hints he could from him as to the practical course he should pursue. He began, after an awkward pause,—

“You would not have me stay in a communion which I feel to be alien to the true church, would you?”



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“Have you stay, my friend?” said the Doctor, with a pleasant, friendly look,—“have you stay? Not a month, nor a week, nor a day, if I could help it. You have got into the wrong pulpit, and I have known it from the first. The sooner you go where you belong, the better. And I’m very glad you don’t mean to stop half-way. Don’t you know you’ve always come to me when you’ve been dyspeptic or sick anyhow, and wanted to put yourself wholly into my hands, so that I might order you like a child just what to do and what to take? That’s exactly what you want in religion. I don’t blame you for it. You never liked to take the responsibility of your own body; I don’t see why you should want to have the charge of your own soul. But I’m glad you’re going to the Old Mother of all. You wouldn’t have been contented short of that.”

The Reverend Mr. Fairweather breathed with more freedom. The Doctor saw into his soul through those awful spectacles of his,—into it and beyond it, as one sees through a thin fog. But it was with a real human kindness, after all. He felt like a child before a strong man; but the strong man looked on him with a father’s indulgence. Many and many a time, when he had come desponding and bemoaning himself on account of some contemptible bodily infirmity, the old Doctor had looked at him through his spectacles, listened patiently while he told his ailments, and then, in his large parental way, given him a few words of wholesome advice, and cheered him up so that he went off with a light heart, thinking that the heaven he was so much afraid of was not so very near, after all. It was the same thing now. He felt, as feeble natures always do in the presence of strong ones, overmastered, circumscribed, shut in, humbled; but yet it seemed as if the old Doctor did not despise him any more for what he considered weakness of mind than he used to despise him when he complained of his nerves or his digestion.

Men who see *into* their neighbors are very apt to be contemptuous; but men who see *through* them find something lying behind every human soul which it is not for them to sit in judgment on, or to attempt to sneer out of the order of God’s manifold universe.

Little as the Doctor had said out of which comfort could be extracted, his genial manner had something grateful in it. A film of gratitude came over the poor man’s cloudy, uncertain eye, and a look of tremulous relief and satisfaction played about his weak mouth. He was gravitating to the majority, where he hoped to find “rest”; but he was dreadfully sensitive to the opinions of the minority he was on the point of leaving.

The old Doctor saw plainly enough what was going on in his mind.



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“I sha’n’t quarrel with you,” he said,—“you know that very well; but you mustn’t quarrel with me, if I talk honestly with you; it isn’t everybody that will take the trouble. You flatter yourself that you will make a good many enemies by leaving your old communion. Not so many as you think. This is the way the common sort of people will talk:—’You have got your ticket to the feast of life, as much as any other man that ever lived. Protestantism says,—’Help yourself; here’s a clean plate, and a knife and fork of your own, and plenty of fresh dishes to choose from.’ The Old Mother says,—’Give me your ticket, my dear, and I’ll feed you with my gold spoon off these beautiful old wooden trenchers. Such nice bits as those good old gentlemen have left for you!’ There is no quarrelling with a man who prefers broken victuals.’ That’s what the rougher sort will say; and then, where one scolds, ten will laugh. But, mind you, I don’t either scold or laugh. I don’t feel sure that you could very well have helped doing what you will soon do. You know you were never easy without some medicine to take when you felt ill in body. I’m afraid I’ve given you trashy stuff sometimes, just to keep you quiet. Now, let me tell you, there is just the same difference in spiritual patients that there is in bodily ones. One set believes in wholesome ways of living, and another must have a great list of specifics for all the soul’s complaints. You belong with the last, and got accidentally shuffled in with the others.”

The minister smiled faintly, but did not reply. Of course, he considered that way of talking as the result of the Doctor’s professional training. It would not have been worth while to take offence at his plain speech, if he had been so disposed; for he might wish to consult him the next day as to “what he should take” for his dyspepsia or his neuralgia.

He left the Doctor with a hollow feeling at the bottom of his soul, as if a good piece of his manhood had been scooped out of him. His hollow aching did not explain itself in words, but it grumbled and worried down among the unshaped thoughts which lie beneath them. He knew that he had been trying to reason himself out of his birthright of reason. He knew that the inspiration which gave him understanding was losing its throne in his intelligence, and the almighty Majority-Vote was proclaiming itself in its stead. He knew that the great primal truths, which each successive revelation only confirmed, were fast becoming hidden beneath the mechanical forms of thought, which, as with all new converts, engrossed so large a share of his attention. The “peace,” the “rest,” which he had purchased, were dearly bought to one who had been trained to the arms of thought, and whose noble privilege it might have been to live in perpetual warfare for the advancing truth which the next generation will claim as the legacy of the present.

The Reverend Mr. Fairweather was getting careless about his sermons. He must wait the fitting moment to declare himself; and in the mean time he was preaching to heretics. It did not matter much what he preached, under such circumstances. He pulled out two old yellow sermons from a heap of such, and began looking over that for

the forenoon. Naturally enough, he fell asleep over it, and, sleeping, he began to dream.

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He dreamed that he was under the high arches of an old cathedral amidst a throng of worshippers. The light streamed in through vast windows, dark with the purple robes of royal saints, or blazing with yellow glories around the heads of earthly martyrs and heavenly messengers. The billows of the great organ roared among the clustered columns, as the sea breaks amidst the basaltic pillars which crowd the great cavern of the Hebrides. The voice of the alternate choirs of singing boys swung back and forward, as the silver censer swung in the hands of the white-robed children. The sweet cloud of incense rose in soft, fleecy mists, full of penetrating suggestions of the East and its perfumed altars. The knees of twenty generations had worn the pavement; their feet had hollowed the steps; their shoulders had smoothed the columns. Dead bishops and abbots lay under the marble of the floor in their crumbled vestments; dead warriors, in their rusted armor, were stretched beneath their sculptured effigies. And all at once all the buried multitudes who had ever worshipped there came thronging in through the aisles. They choked every space, they swarmed into all the chapels, they hung in clusters over the parapets of the galleries, they clung to the images in every niche, and still the vast throng kept flowing and flowing in, until the living were lost in the rush of the returning dead who had reclaimed their own. Then, as his dream became more fantastic, the huge cathedral itself seemed to change into the wreck of some mighty antediluvian vertebrate; its flying-buttresses arched round like ribs, its piers shaped themselves into limbs, and the sound of the organ-blast changed to the wind whistling through its thousand-jointed skeleton.

And presently the sound lulled, and softened and softened, until it was as the murmur of a distant swarm of bees. A procession of monks wound along through an old street, chanting, as they walked, In his dream he glided in among them and bore his part in the burden of their song. He entered with the long train under a low arch, and presently he was kneeling in a narrow cell before an image of the Blessed Maiden holding the Divine Child in her arms, and his lips seemed to whisper,—

*Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis!*

He turned to the crucifix, and, prostrating himself before the spare, agonizing shape of the Holy Sufferer, fell into a long passion of tears and broken prayers. He rose and flung himself, worn-out, upon his hard pallet, and, seeming to slumber, dreamed again within his dream. Once more in the vast cathedral, with throngs of the living choking its aisles, amidst jubilant peals from the cavernous depths of the great organ, and choral melodies ringing from the fluty throats of the singing boys. A day of great rejoicings,—for a prelate was to be consecrated, and the bones of the mighty skeleton-minster were shaking with anthems, as if there were life of its own within its buttressed ribs. He looked down at his feet; the folds of the sacred robe were flowing about them: he put his hand to his head; it was crowned with the holy mitre. A long sigh, as of perfect content in the consummation of all his earthly hopes, breathed through the dreamer's lips, and shaped itself, as it escaped, into the blissful murmur—



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*Ego sum Episcopus!*

One grinning gargoyle looked in from beneath the roof through an opening in a stained window. It was the face of a mocking fiend, such as the old builders loved to place under the eaves to spout the rain through their open mouths. It looked at him, as he sat in his mitred chair, with its hideous grin growing broader and broader, until it laughed out aloud,— such a hard, stony, mocking laugh, that he awoke out of his second dream through his first into his common consciousness, and shivered, as he turned to the two yellow sermons which he was to pick over and weed of the little thought they might contain, for the next day's service.

The Reverend Chauncy Fairweather was too much taken up with his own bodily and spiritual condition to be deeply mindful of others. He carried the note requesting the prayers of the congregation in his pocket all day; and the soul in distress, which a single tender petition might have soothed, and perhaps have saved from despair or fatal error, found no voice in the temple to plead for it before the Throne of Mercy!

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE GREAT LAKES.

If, as is believed by many statisticians, the census of 1860 should show that the centre of population and power in these United States is steadily advancing westward, and that by the year 1880 it will be at some point on the Great Lakes, then, certainly, the history and resources of those inland seas cannot fail to be interesting to the general reader.

It happens that the Indian traditions of this region possess more of the coherence of history than those of other parts of the country; and, as preserved by Schoolcraft and embalmed in the poetry of Longfellow, they show well enough by the side of the early traditions of other primitive peoples. The conquest of the Lake-shore region by Sange-man and his Ojibwas may be as trustworthy a tale as the exploits of Romulus and Remus; and when we emerge into the light of European record, we find the Jesuit missionaries preaching the gospel at St. Ignace and the Sault St. Mary almost as early as the so-called Cavaliers were planting tobacco at Jamestown, or the Pilgrims smiting the heathen at Plymouth.

The first white persons who penetrated into the Upper Lake region were two young fur-traders who left Montreal for that purpose in 1654, and remained two years among the Indian tribes on those shores. We are not informed of the details of this journey; but it appears that they returned with information relative to Lake Superior, and perhaps Lake Michigan and Green Bay; for in 1659 the fur-traders are known to have extended their traffic to that bay. The first settlement of Wisconsin may be dated in 1665, when Claude

Allouez established a mission at La Pointe on Lake Superior. This was before Philadelphia was founded by William Penn.



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The first account we have of a voyage on Lake Michigan was by Nicholas Perrot, who, accompanied by some Pottawattomies, passed from Green Bay to Chicago, in 1670. Two years afterwards the same voyage was undertaken by Allouez and Dablon. They stopped at the mouth of the Milwaukie River, then occupied by Kickapoo Indians. In 1673, Fathers Marquette and Joliet went from Green Bay to the Neenah or Fox River, and, descending the Wisconsin, discovered the Mississippi on the 17th of June.

In 1679, La Salle made his voyage up the Lakes in the Griffin, the first vessel built above the Falls of Niagara. This vessel, the pioneer of the great fleet which now whitens those waters, was about sixty tons burden, and carried five guns and thirty-four men. La Salle loaded her at Green Bay with a cargo of furs and skins, and she sailed on the 18th of September for Niagara, where she never arrived, nor was any news of her ever received. The Griffin, with her cargo, was valued at sixty thousand livres. Thus the want of harbors on Lake Michigan began to be felt nearly two hundred years ago; and the fate of the Griffin was only a precursor of many similar calamities since.

About 1760 was the end of what may be called the religious epoch in the history of the Northwest, when the dominion passed from French to English hands, and the military period commenced. This lasted about fifty years, during which time the combatants were French, English, Indians, and Americans. Much blood was shed in desultory warfare. Detroit, Mackinac, and other posts were taken and retaken; in fact, there never was peace in that land till after the naval victory of Perry in 1813, when the command of the Lakes passed to the Americans.

Our military and naval expeditions in the Northwest were, however, remarkably unfortunate in that war. For want of a naval force on the Lakes,—a necessity which had been pointed out to the Government by William Hull, then Governor of the Northwest Territory, before the declaration of war,—the posts of Chicago, Mackinac, and Detroit were taken by the British and their Indian allies in 1812, and kept by them till the next year, when the energy and perseverance of Perry and his Rhode-Islanders created a fleet upon Lake Erie, and swept the British vessels from that quarter.

In 1814, an American squadron of six brigs and schooners sailed from Lake Erie to retake the post of Mackinac. Colonel Croghan commanded the troops, which were landed under cover of the guns of the squadron. They were attacked in the woods on the back of the island by the British and Indians. Major Holmes, who led the Americans, was killed, and his men retreated in confusion to the ships, which took them on board and sailed away. The attack having failed, Captain Sinclair, who commanded the squadron, returned to Lake Erie with the brigs Niagara and Saint Lawrence and the schooners Caledonia and Ariel, leaving the Scorpion and Tigress to operate against the enemy



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on Lake Huron. The British schooner Nancy, being at Nattawasaga, under the protection of a block-house mounting two twenty-four pounders, the American schooners proceeded to attack her, and, after a short action, destroyed the vessel and the block-house, the British escaping in their boats. Soon, after, the American schooners returned to the neighborhood of St. Joseph, where they were seen by some Indians, who reported at Mackinac that they were about five leagues apart. An expedition was directly fitted out to capture them; and Major Dickson, commander of the post, and Lieutenant Worsley, who had retreated from the block-house above-mentioned, started with one hundred men in four boats.

On the third of September, at six o'clock, P.M., they found the Tigress at anchor, and came within one hundred yards unobserved, when a smart fire of grape and musketry was opened upon them. They advanced, and, two boats hoarding her on each side, she was carried, after a short contest, in which the British lost seven men, killed and wounded, and the Americans, out of a crew of twenty-eight, had three killed and two wounded. The prisoners having been sent to Mackinac, the Tigress was got under way the next day, still keeping the American colors flying, and proceeded in search of the Scorpion. On the fifth, they came in sight of her, and, as those on board knew nothing of what had happened to the Tigress, were suffered to approach within two miles. At daylight the next morning, the Tigress was again got under way, and running alongside her late consort, the British carried her by boarding, after a short scuffle, in which four of the Scorpion's crew were killed and wounded, and one of the British wounded. The schooners were fine new vessels, of one hundred tons burden each, and had on board large quantities of arms and ammunition.

This account of the earliest naval action on the Upper Lakes is taken from a British source; for, as may well be imagined, it has never found its way into any American Naval History or Fourth of July Oration.

It appears as if the American Government, during the War of 1812, either from ignorance of the value of the Northwest, or, as some think, from a fear lest it might, if conquered, become free territory, were very inefficient in their efforts in that direction. As, however, the same imbecility was displayed in other quarters, for example, at Washington, where they allowed the capital to be taken by a handful of British troops, and as the Yankee who was in the fight said, "They didn't seem to take no interest," we must acquit the administration of Mr. Madison of anything worse than going to war without adequate preparation.



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After the War of 1812 was over, the Northwestern Territory was held by our Government by a kind of military occupation for some twenty years, when, the Indian title having been extinguished, white settlers began to occupy Northern Illinois and Wisconsin. The Sacs and Foxes, having repented of their surrender of this fair country, reentered it in 1832, but after a short contest were expelled and driven westward, and the working period commenced. Large cities have sprung up on the Lake shores, and the broad expanse of Lake Michigan is now whitened by a thousand sails; and even the rocky cliffs of Superior echo the whistle of the propeller, instead of the scream of the bald eagle.

Perhaps the ship-owners of the Atlantic cities are hardly aware of the growth of this Lake commerce within the last twenty years, and that it is now nearly equal in amount to the whole foreign trade of the country. Before entering on the statistics of this trade, however, we will give a brief description of the Lakes themselves.[A]

[Footnote A: We are indebted for our facts and details to Lapham's *Wisconsin*, Foster and Whitney's *Report*, Agassiz's *Lake Superior*, and works of similar character.]

Lake Superior, the largest expanse of fresh water on the globe, is 355 miles in length, 160 in breadth, with a depth of 900 feet. It contains 32,000 square miles of surface, which is elevated 627 feet above the surface of the ocean, while portions of its bed are several hundred feet below it. Its coast is 1500 miles in extent, with irregular, rocky shores, bold headlands, and deep bays. It contains numerous islands, one of which, Isle Royale, has an area of 230 square miles. The shores of this lake are rock-bound, sometimes rising into lofty cliffs and pinnacles, twelve or thirteen hundred feet high. Where the igneous rocks prevail, the coast is finely indented; where the sandstones abound, it is gently curved. Lake Superior occupies an immense depression, for the most part excavated out of the soft and yielding sandstone. Its configuration on the east and north has been determined by an irregular belt of granite, which forms a rim, effectually resisting the further action of its waters. The temperature of the water in summer is about 40 deg.

Lake Huron connects with Superior by the St. Mary's River, and is 260 miles long and 160 broad; its circumference is 1100 miles, its area 20,400. Georgian Bay, 170 miles long and 70 broad, forms the northeast portion, and lies within British jurisdiction. Saginaw, a deep and wide-mouthed bay, is the principal indentation on the western coast. The rim of this lake is composed mostly of detrital rocks, which are rarely exposed. In the northern portion of the lake, the trap-rocks on the Canada side intersect the coast. The waters are as deep as those of Superior, and possess great transparency. They rarely attain a higher temperature than 50 deg., and, like those of Superior, have the deep-blue tint of the ocean. The northern coast of Lake Huron abounds in clusters of islands; Captain Bayfield is said to have landed on 10,000 of them, and to have estimated their number at 30,000.



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Lake Michigan, called by the early voyagers Lac des Illinois, is next in size to Superior, being 320 miles in length and 100 in breadth, with a circumference, including Green Bay, of 1300 miles. It contains 22,000 miles of surface, with a depth of 900 feet in the deeper parts, though near the shore it grows gradually shoal. The rocks which compose its rim are of a sedimentary nature, and afford few indentations for harbors. The shores are low, and lined in many places with immense sand-banks. Green Bay, or Bale des Puans of the Jesuits, on the west coast, is 100 miles long and 20 broad. Great and Little Traverse Bays occur on the eastern coast, and Great and Little Bays des Noquets on the northern. One cluster of islands is found at the outlet of the main lake, and another at that of Green Bay. Lake Michigan is the only one of the Great Lakes which lies wholly within American jurisdiction.

Lake Erie is 240 miles in length, 60 in breadth, and contains an area of 9,600 square miles. It lies 565 feet above the sea-level, and is the shallowest of all the Lakes, being only 84 feet in mean depth. Its waters, in consequence, have the green color of the sea in shallow bays and harbors. It is connected with Lake Huron by the St. Clair River and Lake, a shallow expanse of water, twenty miles wide, and by Detroit River.

Lake Ontario is 180 miles in length and 55 in breadth, containing 6,300 square miles. It is connected with Lake Erie by the Niagara River, and also by the Welland Canal, which admits the passage of vessels of large burden. This lake lies at a lower level than the others, being only 230 feet above the sea. It is, however, about 500 feet in depth.

The whole area of these lakes is over 90,000 miles, and the area of land drained by them, 335,515 miles.

The presence of this great body of water modifies the range of the thermometer, lessening the intensity of the cold in winter and of the heat in summer, and gives a temperature more uniform on the Lake coasts than is found in a corresponding latitude on the Mississippi.

The difference between the temperature of the air and that of the Lakes gives rise to a variety of optical illusions, known as *mirage*. Mountains are seen with inverted cones; headlands project from the shore where none exist; islands clothed with verdure, or girt with cliffs, rise up from the bosom of the lake, remain awhile, and disappear. Hardly a day passes, during the summer, without a more or less striking exhibition of this kind. The same phenomena of rapidly varying refraction may often be witnessed at sunset, when the sun, sinking into the lake, undergoes a most striking series of changes. At one moment it is drawn out into a pear-like shape; the next it takes an elliptical form; and just as it disappears, the upper part of its disk becomes elongated into a ribbon of light, which seems to float for a moment upon the surface of the water.



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Thunder-storms of great violence are not unusual, and sudden gusts of wind spring up on the Lakes, and those who navigate them pass sometimes instantaneously from a current of air blowing briskly in one direction into one blowing with equal force from the opposite quarter. The lower sails of a vessel are sometimes becalmed, while a smart breeze fills the upper.

The storms which agitate the Lakes, though less violent than the typhoons of the Indian Ocean or the hurricanes of the Atlantic, are still very dangerous to mariners; and, owing to the want of sea-room, and the scarcity of good harbors, shipwrecks are but too common, and frequently attended with much loss of life. A short, ugly sea gets up very quickly after the wind begins to blow hard, and subsides with equal celerity when the wind goes down.

The fluctuations in the level of the waters of these lakes have attracted much attention among scientific observers; and as early as 1670, Father Dablon, in his "Relations," says,—“As to the tides, it is difficult to lay down any correct rule. At one time we have found the motion of the waters to be regular, and at others extremely fluctuating. We have noticed, however, that at full moon and new moon the tides change once a day for eight or ten days, while during the remainder of the time there is hardly any change perceptible.... Three things are remarkable: 1st. That the currents set almost constantly in one direction, namely, towards the Lake of the Illinois, [Michigan,] which does not prevent their ordinary rise and fall; 2d. That they almost invariably set *against* the wind,—sometimes with as much force as the tides at Quebec,—and we have seen ice moving against the wind as fast as boats under full sail; 3d. That among these currents we have discovered the emission of a quantity of water which seems to spring up from the bottom.”

Father Dablon is of opinion that the waters of Lake Superior enter into the Straits by a subterranean passage. This theory, he says, is necessary to explain two things, namely: 1st. Without such a passage, it is impossible to say what becomes of the waters of Lake Superior. This vast lake has but one visible outlet, namely, the River of St. Mary; while it receives the waters of a large number of rivers, some of which are of greater dimensions than the St. Mary. What, then, becomes of the surplus water? 2d. The difficulty of explaining whence come the waters of Huron and Michigan. Very few rivers flow into these lakes, and their volume of water is such as to fortify the belief that it must be supplied through the subterranean river entering the Straits.

A large number of facts have been collected by Messrs. Foster and Whitney on the subject of these oscillations of the Lake level; and, in fact, these phenomena have been for a long time familiar to the residents on the Lake shores. They are generally attributed by scientific men to atmospheric disturbances, which, by increasing or diminishing the atmospheric pressure, produce a corresponding rise or fall in the water-level. These are the sudden and irregular fluctuations.



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The gradual fluctuations are probably caused by the variable amount of rain which falls in the vast area of country drained by the Lakes. Thus, at Fort Brady, where the mean of five years' observations is 29.68 inches, the extremes are 36.92 and 22.44.

An idea has been long prevalent among the old residents, derived from the Indians, that there is a variation of the Lake surface which extends over a period of fourteen years, —that is, the Lakes rise for seven years, and fall for seven years. The records kept by accurate observers at various points on the Lakes for the last ten years do not seem to confirm this theory; but it has been well established by the recent observations of Colonel Graham, at both ends of Lake Michigan, that there is a semi-diurnal lunar tide on that lake of at least one third of a foot.

The evaporation from this great water-surface must be immense. It has been estimated at 11,800,000,000,000 cubic feet per annum; and in this way alone can we account for the difference between the volume of water which enters the Lakes and that which leaves them at the Falls of Niagara. Immense as is the quantity of water which pours over the Falls, it is small in comparison with the floods which combine to make up the Upper Lakes.

In the year 1832, about the close of the Black Hawk War, the tonnage of the Lakes was only 7,000 tons. In 1845 it had increased to 132,000 tons, and in 1858 it was 404,301 tons. Or, if we take Chicago, the chief city of the Lakes, we find that her imports and exports were,—

Imports. Exports. In 1836, \$ 325,203 \$ 1,000 " 1851, 24,410,400 5,395,471 " 1859, estimated 60,000,000 24,280,890

In the year 1858, there were on the Lakes,—

American vessels, 1,194. Tonnage, 399,443  
Canadian " 321. " 59,580

Value of American tonnage on the  
Lakes, \$16,000,000

Value of Lake commerce, import  
and exports, \$600,000,000

Number of seamen employed, 13,000

Taking the island of Mackinac as the geographical centre of this navigation, we find the distances as follows:—

Miles. From Mackinac to head of Lake Superior 550 " " " Chicago 350 " " " East end of Georgian Bay 300 " " " Buffalo 700 " " " Gulf of St. Lawrence 1,600



Or ninety thousand miles of lakes and rivers, extending half across the continent.

The following table shows the amount of tonnage belonging to different cities in 1857:

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Tons.		Tons.	
New York,	1,377,424	Charleston,	56,430
Boston,	447,966	Detroit,	57,707
Bath,	189,932	New Bedford,	152,799
Baltimore,	191,618	New Orleans,	173,167
Providence,	15,152	Cleveland,	63,361
Philadelphia,	211,380	Chicago,	67,316
Buffalo,	100,226	Milwaukie,	22,339

This shows that Chicago had in 1857, being then twenty-five years old, a larger tonnage than Charleston, the capital of the Palmetto Kingdom; and Milwaukie, still younger than Chicago, owned a larger amount of tonnage than the old and wealthy city of Providence.

In 1857, the export of grain from the Lake ports was sixty-five million bushels; in 1860, it was estimated at one hundred millions.

The coal-trade of Cleveland, in 1858, was 129,000 tons. A large amount was also shipped from Erie.

In 1858, the salt-trade of the Lakes amounted to more than six hundred thousand barrels, most of which was shipped from the port of Oswego on Lake Ontario.

The lumber received at Chicago in 1858 amounted to: Boards, 273,000,000 feet; shingles, 254,000,000; lath, 45,000,000: worth \$2,442,500.

The present navigable outlets to this great commerce are three in number. First, the Erie Canal, from Buffalo to Albany, which, in its enlarged form, takes probably two-thirds of the productions of the Lake regions. Second, the River St. Lawrence, which, by means of the Welland Canal, secures a good share of the trade. Third, the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which conveys large quantities of lumber, salt, and other heavy goods to the Illinois River and the Mississippi. Of course, more or less produce is taken to the seaboard by the railroads; but, even if they could compete in price with water-carriage, it is evident that they are incapable of moving the surplus grain of the Northwest, as it now is. Another great navigable outlet to the Lakes is needed, so that vessels of the largest class may sail from the elevators of Chicago to the Liverpool docks without breaking bulk; and in reference to this, a survey has recently been made by Thomas C. Clarke, under the direction of the Canadian Government, for a ship-navigation between Montreal and Lake Huron, by way of the Ottawa River, Lake Nipissing, and French River. The Report shows that the cost of the work for vessels of one thousand tons burden would be twelve million dollars,—and that it would cut off a distance nearly equal to the whole length of Lakes Erie and Ontario, thus saving from three hundred and fifty



to four hundred miles of navigation. In view of the fact that the navigation of St. Clair and Erie is the most troublesome and dangerous part of the voyage, this plan certainly deserves attention.

It is easy to see what a prolific nursery of seamen this Lake commerce must be, and how valuable a resource in a war with any great naval power. It is a resource which was wholly wanting to us in the War of 1812, when Commodore Perry had to bring his sailors from the seaboard with great difficulty and expense. In any future war with England, supposing such an unhappy event to take place, our great numerical superiority upon the Lakes in both vessels and sailors would not only insure our supremacy there, but also afford a large surplus of men for our ocean marine.



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But it may be said that these men are only fresh-water sailors, after all, and are not to be relied upon for ocean-navigation. We know there used to be a notion prevailing, that neither Lake vessels nor Lake men would do for salt water; but in 1856, the schooner Dean Richmond took a cargo of wheat from Chicago to Liverpool, beating a large fleet of ocean craft from Quebec across the Atlantic, and otherwise behaving so well as to cause the sale of the vessel in England. This voyage encouraged others to try the experiment, and in 1859 from thirty to forty Lake vessels loaded for ocean ports.

That this trade will be very much increased there is no doubt, since it affords occupation for the Lake marine in the winter, when the Lake ports are closed by ice.

On the western shore of Lake Michigan there are large settlements of Norwegians and Swedes, many of whom follow the Lakes as fishermen and sailors. Descendants of the old Northern sea-kings, they are as hardy and adventurous here as in their Scandinavian homes, and run their vessels earlier and later in the season than other men are willing to do.

Science might have anticipated, however, that vessels built for fresh-water navigation, and loaded at Lake ports, would have an advantage on the ocean over those loaded on salt water. As is the density of the water of any sea, so is the displacement, or the sinking of the vessel therein. Therefore a vessel can carry a larger cargo in salt water than she can in fresh; and so, a Lake craft, loading at Chicago as deep as she can swim, will find herself, when she reaches the ocean, much more buoyant and lively. So, also, as the more sail a vessel carries, the deeper she penetrates the water, it follows, that, the more dense the water, the more sail she can carry.

In proof of these statements, the "Merchants' Magazine" tells us, that English vessels bound up the Black Sea take smaller cargoes than those going to the Mediterranean, because, the former being much less salt than the latter, vessels are less buoyant thereon, and can carry less. This difference in buoyancy will probably be enough to offset the higher seas and rougher weather of the Atlantic.

Thus it appears that this great basin extends through so many degrees of latitude that its lakes and streams connect with the mineral regions and pine forests of the North, the wheat- and corn-lands and cattle-ranges of the Middle States, and the cotton-and sugar-plantations of the South.

The pine forests of Maine, it is well known, have been for some time failing, under the great demand upon them; and the only resource will soon be in those of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan, from which many cargoes have been already sent to the Atlantic ports. The amount of lumber made in these pineries in 1860 is estimated at twelve hundred million feet, worth between eight and nine millions of dollars. Most of this goes to the country west of the Lakes,—to Chicago, to St. Louis, and even down the river to New Orleans. Since railroads have penetrated the great prairies and made



them habitable, the demand for pine lumber has greatly increased both for building and fencing; and it has been estimated, that, if every quarter-section of land in Iowa and Illinois were surrounded with a "three-board" fence, it would consume every foot of pine-timber in Michigan.

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As to the copper and iron mines of Lake Superior, many dabblers in fancy stocks are but too well acquainted with them, and many burned fingers testify against those investments of capital. Still, the amount of mineral is immense, and the quality of the purest; and these mines will no doubt pay well, if worked with skill and capital.

Since 1845, one hundred and sixteen copper-mining companies have been organized in Michigan, under the general law of the State; and the amount of capital invested in them is estimated at six millions of dollars. Most of this is lost. On the other hand, the "Cliff" and "Minnesota" mines have returned over two millions of dollars in dividends. The latter is said to have paid, in 1858, a dividend of \$300,000 on a paid-up capital of \$66,000. Mining is a lottery, and this brilliant prize cannot conceal the fact that blanks fall to the lot of by far the more numerous part of the ticket-holders.

The opening of the Sault Canal has very much aided in developing the resources of the Upper Peninsula. In 1845, the Lake Superior fleet consisted of three schooners. In 1860, one hundred vessels passed through the canal, loaded with supplies for the mining country, and returned with cargoes of copper and iron ore and fish. The copper is smelted in Detroit, Cleveland, and Boston. In 1859, 3,000 tons were landed in Detroit, producing from 60 to 70 per cent of ingot copper, being among the purest ores in the world.

The iron ore of this region is also of extraordinary purity; and for all purposes where great strength and tenacity are required, it is unrivalled, as the following table, showing the relative strength, per square inch, as compared with other kinds of iron, will prove:

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Best Swedish .....	58.184
English cable.....	59.105
Essex Co., N.Y.....	59.962
Lancaster, Pa.....	58.661
Common English ....	30.000
Best Russia .....	76.069
Lake Superior .....	89.582

With such iron to be had of American manufacture, why should we use a rotten English article for car-wheels and boiler-plates, and so sacrifice the lives of thousands every year? Because, by an unwise legislation, the foreign article is made a little cheaper to the American consumer.

There are ten large forges in operation in Michigan, with a capital of over two millions of dollars; and the shipments of ore from Marquette in 1859 were over 75,000 tons. The



country back of Marquette is full of mountains of iron ore, yielding 60 or 70 per cent, of pure metal, sufficient to supply the world for ages.

Traces have been found, through the whole of this copper-region, of a rude species of mining practised here long before it became known to the whites. The existing races of Indians had not even a tradition by whom it was done; and the excavations were unknown to them, until pointed out by the white man. Messrs. Foster and Whitney, in their survey of the copper-lands, found a pine-stump ten feet in circumference,

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which must have grown, flourished, and died since the mound of earth upon which it stood was thrown out. Mr. Knapp discovered, in 1848, a deserted mine or excavation, in which, under eighteen feet of rubbish, he found a mass of native copper weighing over six tons, resting on billets of oak supported by sleepers of the same material. The ancient miners had evidently raised the mass about five feet, and then abandoned it. Around it, among the accumulation of rubbish, were found a large number of stone hammers, and some copper chisels, but no utensils of iron. In some instances, explorers have been led to select valuable mining-sites by the abundance of these stone hammers found about the ground. Traces of tumuli have also been found in these regions, which would seem to indicate some connection between these ancient miners and the mound-builders of the Mississippi Valley,—especially as in those western mounds copper rings have frequently been found.

The economical value of the Lake fisheries is considerable. The total catch of white-fish, trout, and pickerel, the only kinds which are packed, to any extent, was estimated for 1859 at 110,000 barrels, worth about \$880,000. These find a market through the States of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois; besides a large quantity which are consumed in a fresh state, in the Lake cities and towns.

The White-Fish, (*Coregonus Albus*,) which is the most valuable of all, somewhat resembles the shad in appearance and taste. It is taken in seines and other nets,—never with the hook. The white-fish of Lake Superior are larger, fatter, and of finer flavor than any others. In this lake they have sometimes been taken weighing fifteen pounds. At the Sault they are taken in the rapids with dip-nets, by the Chippewas who live in that vicinity, and are of very fine flavor; those of Detroit River and the Straits of Mackinac are also very good; but when you go south, into Lake Erie or Michigan, the quality of the fish deteriorates. Few travellers ever taste a white-fish in perfection. As eaten upon hotel-tables at Buffalo or Chicago, it is a poor and tasteless fish. But, as found at the old French boarding-houses at Mackinac or the Sault, or, better still, cooked fresh from the icy waters on the rocky shores of Superior, it is, to our thinking, the best fish that swims,—better than the true salmon or brook-trout. The famous fish once so plenty in Otsego Lake, but now nearly extinct, was a *Coregonus*, and first cousin to this one of the Great Lakes.

So Sebago Lake, near Portland, some fifty years ago, boasted of a delicious red-fleshed trout, of large size, which has in these latter times, from netting or some other improper fishing, nearly or quite disappeared from those waters, leaving upon the palates of old anglers the remembrance of a flavor higher and richer than anything now remaining.



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The Lake Trout, or Mackinac Salmon, is the largest of the family of *Salmonidae*, growing, it is said, sometimes to the weight of one hundred pounds. From twenty to thirty pounds is not uncommon, which is much larger than the average of *Salmo Salar*, the true salmon. Truth compels us to add, however, that our salmon of the Lakes is inferior to his kinsman of the salt water; though, as in the case of the white-fish, he has been slandered by ignorant people, such as newspaper letter-writers, and the like. When taken from the clear, cold waters of Lake Huron or the Straits, and boiled as nearly alive as humanity will permit, *Salmo Namaycush* is nearly equal to the true salmon; but after two or three days in ice, "how stale, flat, and unprofitable!"

The Muskelunge (*Esox Estor*) is peculiar to this basin, and is the largest of the pickerels, weighing from ten to eighty pounds. It is a very handsome and game fish, and is the king, or tyrant, of the water, devouring without mercy everything smaller than itself; though its favorite food is the white-fish, which, perhaps, accounts for the superior flavor of this huge pike, which is one of the very best of fresh-water fishes.

Another excellent fish for the table is the Pike-Perch, (*Lucio-Perca*) or Glass-Eyed Pike, from his large, brilliant eyes. In Ohio, it is called the salmon, and by the Canadians the pickerel, while, with singular perversity, they persist in calling our pickerel a pike. It is a very firm, well-flavored fish, weighing from two to ten pounds, and is found in all the Great Lakes.

Professor Agassiz was the first to describe a large and valuable species of pike, which he found in Lake Superior,—the Northern Pike (*Esox Boreus*). This is the most common species of pike in the St. Lawrence basin, though usually confounded with the common pickerel (*Esox Reticulatus*). It grows to the size of fifteen or twenty pounds, and is a better table-fish than *Esox Reticulatus*. It may be distinguished by the rows of spots sides, of a lighter color than the ground upon which they are arranged. It differs from the Muskelunge in having the lower jaw full of teeth; whereas in the Muskelunge the anterior half of the lower jaw is toothless.

All the streams which empty into Lake Superior, those of the north shore of Lake Huron, the west shore of Lake Michigan as far as Lake Winnebago, and all the streams of Lake Ontario, contain the Speckled Trout (*Salmo Fontinalis*); while they are not found in the streams on the southern coasts of Lake Michigan, or (so far as we know) in the streams of Lake Erie. What can determine this limitation of the range of the species? It cannot be latitude, since trout are found in Pennsylvania and Virginia. It is not longitude, since they occur in the head-waters of the Iowa rivers. So Professor Agassiz found that Lake Superior contained species which were not to be found in the other lakes, and that the other lakes, again, contained species which did not occur in Lake Superior. He says, in his work on Lake Superior,



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“It is the great question of the unity or plurality of creations; it is not less the question of the origin of animals from single pairs or in large numbers; and, strange to say, a thorough examination of the fishes of Lake Superior, compared with those of the adjacent waters, is likely to throw more light upon such questions, than all traditions, however ancient, however near in point of time to the epoch of Creation itself.”

In Lake Superior is likewise found that remarkable salmon, the Siscowet,—which is so fat and luscious as to be uneatable in a fresh state, and requires to be salted to render it fit for food. It commands a much higher price by the barrel than the lake-trout or white-fish, and is rarely to be met with out of the Lake cities.

In this basin is also found the Gar-Pike, (*Lepidosteus*,) a singular animal, which is the only living representative of the fishes that existed in the early ages of the earth's history,—and which, by its formidable array of teeth, its impenetrable armor, and its swiftness and voracity, gives us some idea of the terrible creatures which peopled the waters of that period.

We have thus hastily sketched the character and indicated the resources of that great Northwest, which, little more than fifty years ago a wilderness, is now a cluster of republics holding more than the balance of power in the Union. Idle speculatists, terrified by the violence of South Carolina, and believing that on her withdrawal the sky is to fall, are already predicting the dismemberment of East and West. But we think the chance of it is growing less, year by year. The two are now bound indissolubly together by lines of railroad, which, during a part of the year, are the most convenient outlet of the West toward the sea. Those States, just as they are arriving at a controlling influence in the affairs of a great and powerful nation, are hardly likely to seclude themselves from the rest of the world in what would, from its position, be at best an insignificant republic.

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## **E PLURIBUS UNUM.**

We do not believe that any government—no, not the Rump Parliament on its last legs—ever showed such pitiful inadequacy as our own during the past two months. Helpless beyond measure in all the duties of practical statesmanship, its members or their dependants have given proof of remarkable energy in the single department of peculation; and there, not content with the slow methods of the old-fashioned defaulter, who helped himself only to what there was, they have contrived to steal what there was going to be, and have peculated in advance by a kind of official post-obit. So thoroughly has the credit of the most solvent nation in the world been shaken, that an administration which still talks of paying a hundred millions for Cuba is unable to raise a loan of five millions for the current expenses of Government. Nor is this the worst; the

moral bankruptcy at Washington is more complete and disastrous than the financial, and for the first time in our history the Executive is suspected of complicity in a treasonable plot against the very life of the nation.



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Our material prosperity for nearly half a century has been so unparalleled, that the minds of men have become gradually more and more absorbed in matters of personal concern; and our institutions have practically worked so well and so easily, that we have learned to trust in our luck, and to take the permanence of our government for granted. The country has been divided on questions of temporary policy, and the people have been drilled to a wonderful discipline in the manoeuvres of party-tactics; but no crisis has arisen to force upon them a consideration of the fundamental principles of our system, or to arouse in them a sense of national unity, and make them feel that patriotism was anything more than a pleasing sentiment,—half Fourth of July and half Eighth of January,—a feeble reminiscence, rather than a living fact with a direct bearing on the national well-being. We have had long experience of that unmemorable felicity which consists in having no history, so far as history is made up of battles, revolutions, and changes of dynasty; but the present generation has never been called upon to learn that deepest lesson of politics which is taught by a common danger, throwing the people back on their national instincts, and superseding party-leaders, the peddlers of chicane, with men adequate to great occasions and dealers in destiny. Such a crisis is now upon us; and if the virtue of the people make up for the imbecility of the Executive, as we have little doubt that it will, if the public spirit of the whole country be awakened in time by the common peril, the present trial will leave the nation stronger than ever, and more alive to its privileges and the duties they imply. We shall have learned what is meant by a government of laws, and that allegiance to the sober will of the majority, concentrated in established forms and distributed by legitimate channels, is all that renders democracy possible, is its only conservative principle, the only thing that has made and can keep us a powerful nation instead of a brawling mob.

The theory, that the best government is that which governs least, seems to have been accepted literally by Mr. Buchanan, without considering the qualifications to which all general propositions are subject. His course of conduct has shown up its absurdity, in cases where prompt action is required, as effectually as Buckingham turned into ridicule the famous verse,—

“My wound is great, because it is so small,”  
by instantly adding,—

“Then it were greater, were it none at all.”

Mr. Buchanan seems to have thought, that, if to govern little was to govern well, then to do nothing was the perfection of policy. But there is a vast difference between letting well alone and allowing bad to become worse by a want of firmness at the outset. If Mr. Buchanan, instead of admitting the right of secession, had declared it to be, as it plainly is, rebellion, he would not only have received the unanimous support of the Free States, but would have given confidence to the loyal, reclaimed the wavering, and disconcerted the plotters of treason in the South.



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Either we have no government at all, or else the very word implies the right, and therefore the duty, in the governing power, of protecting itself from destruction and its property from pillage. But for Mr. Buchanan's acquiescence, the doctrine of the right of secession would never for a moment have bewildered the popular mind. It is simply mob-law under a plausible name. Such a claim might have been fairly enough urged under the old Confederation; though even then it would have been summarily dealt with, in the case of a Tory colony, if the necessity had arisen. But the very fact that we have a National Constitution, and legal methods for testing, preventing, or punishing any infringement of its provisions, demonstrates the absurdity of any such assumption of right now. When the States surrendered their power to make war, did they make the single exception of the United States, and reserve the privilege of declaring war against them at any moment? If we are a congeries of mediaeval Italian republics, why should the General Government have expended immense sums in fortifying points whose strategic position is of continental rather than local consequence? Florida, after having cost us nobody knows how many millions of dollars and thousands of lives to render the holding of slaves possible to her, coolly proposes to withdraw herself from the Union and take with her one of the keys of the Mexican Gulf, on the plea that her slave-property is rendered insecure by the Union. Louisiana, which we bought and paid for to secure the mouth of the Mississippi, claims the right to make her soil French or Spanish, and to cork up the river again, whenever the whim may take her. The United States are not a German Confederation, but a unitary and indivisible nation, with a national life to protect, a national power to maintain, and national rights to defend against any and every assailant, at all hazards. Our national existence is all that gives value to American citizenship. Without the respect which nothing but our consolidated character could inspire, we might as well be citizens of the toy-republic of San Marino, for all the protection it would afford us. If our claim to a national existence was worth a seven-years' war to establish, it is worth maintaining at any cost; and it is daily becoming more apparent, that the people, so soon as they find that secession means anything serious, will not allow themselves to be juggled out of their rights, as members of one of the great powers of the earth, by a mere quibble of Constitutional interpretation.

We have been so much accustomed to the Buncombe style of oratory, to hearing men offer the pledge of their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor on the most trivial occasions, that we are apt to allow a great latitude in such matters, and only smile to think how small an advance any intelligent pawn-broker would be likely to make on securities of this description. The sporadic eloquence that breaks out over the country



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on the eve of election, and becomes a chronic disease in the two houses of Congress, has so accustomed us to dissociate words and things, and to look upon strong language as an evidence of weak purpose, that we attach no meaning whatever to declamation. Our Southern brethren have been especially given to these orgies of loquacity, and have so often solemnly assured us of their own courage, and of the warlike propensities, power, wealth, and general superiority of that part of the universe which is so happy as to be represented by them, that, whatever other useful impression they have made, they insure our never forgetting the proverb about the woman who talks of her virtue. South Carolina, in particular, if she has hitherto failed in the application of her enterprise to manufacturing purposes of a more practical kind, has always been able to match every yard of printed cotton from the North with a yard of printed fustian, the product of her own domestic industry. We have thought no harm of this, so long as no Act of Congress required the reading of the "Congressional Globe." We submitted to the general dispensation of long-windedness and short-meaningness as to any other providential visitation, endeavoring only to hold fast our faith in the divine government of the world in the midst of so much that was past understanding. But we lost sight of the metaphysical truth, that, though men may fail to convince others by a never so incessant repetition of sonorous nonsense, they nevertheless gradually persuade themselves, and impregnate their own minds and characters with a belief in fallacies that have been uncontradicted only because not worth contradiction. Thus our Southern politicians, by dint of continued reiteration, have persuaded themselves to accept their own flimsy assumptions for valid statistics, and at last actually believe themselves to be the enlightened gentlemen, and the people of the Free States the peddlers and sneaks they have so long been in the habit of fancying. They have argued themselves into a kind of vague faith that the wealth and power of the Republic are south of Mason and Dixon's line; and the Northern people have been slow in arriving at the conclusion that treasonable talk would lead to treasonable action, because they could not conceive that anybody should be so foolish as to think of rearing an independent frame of government on so visionary a basis. Moreover, the so often recurring necessity, incident to our system, of obtaining a favorable verdict from the people, has fostered in our public men the talents and habits of jury-lawyers at the expense of statesmanlike qualities; and the people have been so long wonted to look upon the utterances of popular leaders as intended for immediate effect and having no reference to principles, that there is scarcely a prominent man in the country so independent in position and so clear of any suspicion of personal or party motives, that they can put entire faith in what he says, and accept him either as the leader or the exponent of their thoughts and wishes. They have hardly been able to judge with certainty from the debates in Congress whether secession were a real danger, or only one of those political feints of which they have had such frequent experience.



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Events have been gradually convincing them that the peril was actual and near. They begin to see how unwise, if nothing worse, has been the weak policy of the Executive in allowing men to play at Revolution till they learn to think the coarse reality as easy and pretty as the vaudeville they have been acting. They are fast coming to the conclusion that the list of grievances put forward by the secessionists is a sham and a pretence, the veil of a long-matured plot against republican institutions. And it is time the traitors of the South should know that the Free States are becoming every day more united in sentiment and more earnest in resolve, and that, so soon as they are thoroughly satisfied that secession is something more than empty bluster, a public spirit will be aroused that will be content with no half-measures, and which no Executive, however unwilling, can resist.

The country is weary of being cheated with plays upon words. The United States are a nation, and not a mass-meeting; theirs is a government, and not a caucus,—a government that was meant to be capable, and is capable, of something more than the helpless *please don't* of a village constable; they have executive and administrative officers that are not mere puppet-figures to go through the motions of an objectless activity, but arms and hands that become supple to do the will of the people so soon as that will becomes conscious and defines its purpose. It is time that we turned up our definitions in some more trustworthy dictionary than that of avowed disunionists and their more dangerous because more timid and cunning accomplices. Rebellion smells no sweeter because it is called Secession, nor does Order lose its divine precedence in human affairs because a knave may nickname it Coercion. Secession means chaos, and Coercion the exercise of legitimate authority. You cannot dignify the one nor degrade the other by any verbal charlatanism. The best testimony to the virtue of coercion is the fact that no wrongdoer ever thought well of it. The thief in jail, the mob-leader in the hands of the police, and the murderer on the drop will be unanimous in favor of this new heresy of the unconstitutionality of Constitutions, with its Newgate Calendar of confessors, martyrs, and saints. Falstaff's famous regiment would have volunteered to a man for its propagation or its defence. Henceforth let every unsuccessful litigant have the right to pronounce the verdict of a jury sectional, and to quash all proceedings and retain the property in controversy by seceding from the courtroom. Let the planting of hemp be made penal, because it squints toward coercion. Why, the first great Secessionist would doubtless have preferred to divide Heaven peaceably, would have been willing to send Commissioners, must have thought Michael's proceedings injudicious, and could probably even now demonstrate the illegality of hell-fire to any five-year-old imp of average education and intelligence. What a



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fine world we should have, if we could only come quietly together in convention, and declare by unanimous resolution, or even by a two-thirds' vote, that edge-tools should hereafter cut everybody's fingers but his that played with them,—that, when two men ride on one horse, the hindmost shall always sit in front,—and that, when a man tries to thrust his partner out of bed and gets kicked out himself, he shall be deemed to have established his title to an equitable division, and the bed shall be thenceforth his as of right, without detriment to the other's privilege in the floor!

If secession be a right, then the moment of its exercise is wholly optional with those possessing it. Suppose, on the eve of a war with England, Michigan should vote herself out of the Union and declare herself annexed to Canada, what kind of a reception would her Commissioners be likely to meet in Washington, and what scruples should we feel about coercion? Or, to take a case precisely parallel to that of South Carolina,—suppose that Utah, after getting herself admitted to the Union, should resume her sovereignty, as it is pleasantly called, and block our path to the Pacific, under the pretence that she did not consider her institutions safe while the other States entertained such unscriptural prejudices against her special weakness in the patriarchal line. Is the only result of our admitting a Territory on Monday to be the giving it a right to steal itself and go out again on Tuesday? Or do only the original thirteen States possess this precious privilege of suicide? We shall need something like a Fugitive Slave Law for runaway republics, and must get a provision inserted in our treaties with foreign powers, that they shall help us catch any delinquent who may take refuge with them, as South Carolina has been trying to do with England and France. It does not matter to the argument, except so far as the good taste of the proceeding is concerned, at what particular time a State may make her territory foreign, thus opening one gate of our national defences and offering a bridge to invasion. The danger of the thing is in her making her territory foreign under any circumstances; and it is a danger which the Government must prevent, if only for self-preservation. Within the limits of the Constitution two sovereignties cannot coexist; and yet what practical odds does it make, if a State becomes sovereign by simply declaring herself so? The legitimate consequence of secession is, not that a State becomes sovereign, but that, so far as the General Government is concerned, she has outlawed herself, nullified her own existence as a State, and become an aggregate of riotous men who resist the execution of the laws.



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We are told that coercion will be civil war; and so is a mob civil war, till it is put down. In the present case, the only coercion called for is the protection of the public property and the collection of the federal revenues. If it be necessary to send troops to do this, they will not be sectional, as it is the fashion nowadays to call people who insist on their own rights and the maintenance of the laws, but federal troops, representing the will and power of the whole Confederacy. A danger is always great so long as we are afraid of it; and mischief like that now gathering head in South Carolina may soon become a danger, if not swiftly dealt with. Mr. Buchanan seems altogether too wholesale a disciple of the *laissez-faire* doctrine, and has allowed activity in mischief the same immunity from interference which is true policy only in regard to enterprise wisely and profitably directed. He has been naturally reluctant to employ force, but has overlooked the difference between indecision and moderation, forgetting the lesson of all experience, that firmness in the beginning saves the need of force in the end, and that forcible measures applied too late may be made to seem violent ones, and thus excite a mistaken sympathy with the sufferers by their own misdoing. The feeling of the country has been unmistakably expressed in regard to Major Anderson, and that not merely because he showed prudence and courage, but because he was the first man holding a position of trust who did his duty to the nation. Public sentiment unmistakably demands, that, in the case of Anarchy vs. America, the cause of the defendant shall not be suffered to go by default. The proceedings in South Carolina, parodying the sublime initiative of our own Revolution with a Declaration of Independence that hangs the franchise of human nature on the kink of a hair, and substitutes for the visionary right of all men to the pursuit of happiness the more practical privilege of some men to pursue their own negro,—these proceedings would be merely ludicrous, were it not for the danger that the men engaged in them may so far commit themselves as to find the inconsistency of a return to prudence too galling, and to prefer the safety of their pride to that of their country.

It cannot be too distinctly stated or too often repeated, that the discontent of South Carolina is not one to be allayed by any concessions which the Free States can make with dignity or even safety. It is something more radical and of longer standing than distrust of the motives or probable policy of the Republican Party. It is neither more nor less than a disbelief in the very principles on which our government is founded. So long as they practically retained the government of the country, and could use its power and patronage to their own advantage, the plotters were willing to wait; but the moment they lost that control, by the breaking up of the Democratic Party, and saw that their chance of ever regaining it was hopeless, they

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declared openly the principles on which they have all along been secretly acting. Denying the constitutionality of special protection to any other species of property or branch of industry, and in 1832 threatening to break up the Union unless their theory of the Constitution in this respect were admitted, they went into the late Presidential contest with a claim for extraordinary protection to a certain kind of property already the only one endowed with special privileges and immunities. Defeated overwhelmingly before the people, they now question the right of the majority to govern, except on their terms, and threaten violence in the hope of extorting from the fears of the Free; States what they failed to obtain from their conscience and settled convictions of duty. Their quarrel is not with the Republican Party, but with the theory of Democracy.

The South Carolina politicians have hitherto shown themselves adroit managers, shrewd in detecting and profiting by the weaknesses of men; but their experience has not been of a kind to give them practical wisdom in that vastly more important part of government which depends for success on common sense and business-habits. The members of the South Carolina Convention have probably less knowledge of political economy than any single average Northern merchant whose success depends on an intimate knowledge of the laws of trade and the world-wide contingencies of profit and loss. Such a man would tell them, as the result of invariable experience, that the prosperity of no community was so precarious as that of one whose very existence was dependent on a single agricultural product. What divinity hedges cotton, that competition may not touch it,—that some disease, like that of the potato and the vine, may not bring it to beggary in a single year, and cure the overweening conceit of prosperity with the sharp medicine of Ireland and Madeira? But these South Carolina economists are better at vapping than at calculation. They will find to their cost that the figure's of statistics have little mercy for the figures of speech, which are so powerful in raising enthusiasm and so helpless in raising money. The eating of one's own words, as they must do, sooner or later, is neither agreeable nor nutritious; but it is better to do it before there is nothing else left to eat. The secessionists are strong in declamation, but they are weak in the multiplication-table and the ledger. They have no notion of any sort of logical connection between treason and taxes. It is all very fine signing Declarations of Independence, and one may thus become a kind of panic-price hero for a week or two, even rising to the effigial martyrdom of the illustrated press; but these gentlemen seem to have forgotten, that, if their precious document should lead to anything serious, they have been signing promises to pay for the State of South Carolina to an enormous amount. It is probably far short of the truth to say that the taxes of an autonomous palmetto republic



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would be three times what they are now. To speak of nothing else, there must be a military force kept constantly on foot; and the ministers of King Cotton will find that the charge made by a standing army on the finances of the new empire is likely to be far more serious and damaging than can be compensated by the glory of a great many such "spirited charges" as that by which Colonel Pettigrew and his gallant rifles took Fort Pinckney, with its garrison of one engineer officer and its armament of no guns. Soldiers are the most costly of all toys or tools. The outgo for the army of the Pope, never amounting to ten thousand effective men, in the cheapest country in the world, has been half a million of dollars a month. Under the present system, it needs no argument to show that the Non-slaveholding States, with a free population considerably more than double that of the Slave-holding States, and with much more generally distributed wealth and opportunities of spending, pay far more than the proportion predicable on mere preponderance in numbers of the expenses of a government supported mainly by a tariff on importations. And it is not the burden of this difference merely that the new Cotton Republic must assume. They will need as large, probably a larger, army and navy than that of the present Union; as numerous a diplomatic establishment; a postal system whose large yearly deficit they must bear themselves; and they must assume the main charges of the Indian Bureau. If they adopt free trade, they will alienate the Border Slave-States, and even Louisiana; if a system of customs, they have cut themselves off from the chief consumers of foreign goods. One of the calculations of the Southern conspirators is to render the Free States tributary to their new republic, by adopting free trade and smuggling their imported goods across the border. But this is all moonshine; for, even if smuggling could not be prevented as easily as it now is from the British Provinces, how long would it be before the North would adapt its tariff to the new order of things? And thus thrown back upon direct taxation, how many years would it take to open the eyes of the poorer classes of Secessia to the hardship of their position and its causes? Their ignorance has been trifled with by men who cover treasonable designs with a pretence of local patriotism. Neither they nor their misleaders have any true conception of the people of the Free States, of those "white slaves" who in Massachusetts alone have a deposit in the Savings Banks whose yearly interest would pay seven times over the four hundred thousand dollars which South Carolina cannot raise.



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But even if we leave other practical difficulties out of sight, what chance of stability is there for a confederacy whose very foundation is the principle that any member of it may withdraw at the first discontent? If they could contrive to establish a free-trade treaty with their chief customer, England, would she consent to gratify Louisiana with an exception in favor of sugar? Some of the leaders of the secession movement have already become aware of this difficulty, and accordingly propose the abolition of all State lines,—the first step toward a military despotism; for, if our present system have one advantage greater than another, it is the neutralization of numberless individual ambitions by adequate opportunities of provincial distinction. Even now the merits of the Napoleonic system are put forward by some of the theorists of Alabama and Mississippi, who doubtless have as good a stomach to be emperors as ever Bottom had to a bottle of hay, when his head was temporarily transformed to the likeness of theirs, —and who, were they subjects of the government that looks so nice across the Atlantic, would, ere this, have been on their way to Cayenne, a spot where such red-peppery temperaments would find themselves at home.

The absurdities with which the telegraphic column of the newspapers has been daily crowded, since the vagaries of South Carolina finally settled down into unmistakable insanity, would give us but a poor opinion of the general intelligence of the country, did we not know that they were due to the necessities of "Our Own Correspondent." At one time, it is Fort Sumter that is to be bombarded with floating batteries mounted on rafts behind a rampart of cotton-bales; at another, it is Mr. Barrett, Mayor of Washington, announcing his intention that the President-elect shall be inaugurated, or Mr. Buchanan declaring that he shall cheerfully assent to it. Indeed! and who gave them any choice in the matter? Yesterday, it was General Scott who would not abandon the flag which he had illustrated with the devotion of a lifetime; to-day, it is General Harney or Commodore Kearney who has concluded to be true to the country whose livery he has worn and whose bread he has eaten for half a century; to-morrow, it will be Ensign Stebbins who has been magnanimous enough not to throw up his commission. What are we to make of the extraordinary confusion of ideas which such things indicate? In what other country would it be considered creditable to an officer that he merely did not turn traitor at the first opportunity? There can be no doubt of the honor both of the army and navy, and of their loyalty to their country. They will do their duty, if we do ours in saving them a country to which they can be loyal.



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We have been so long habituated to a kind of local independence in the management of our affairs, and the Central Government has fortunately had so little occasion for making itself felt at home and in the domestic concerns of the States, that the idea of its relation to us as a power, except for protection from without, has gradually become vague and alien to our ordinary habits of thought. We have so long heard the principle admitted, and seen it acted on with advantage to the general weal, that the people are sovereign in their own affairs, that we must recover our presence of mind before we see the fallacy of the assumption, that the people, or a bare majority of them, in a single State, can exercise their right of sovereignty as against the will of the nation legitimately expressed. When such a contingency arises, it is for a moment difficult to get rid of our habitual associations, and to feel that we are not a mere partnership, dissolvable whether by mutual consent or on the demand of one or more of its members, but a nation, which can never abdicate its right, and can never surrender it while virtue enough is left in the people to make it worth retaining. It would seem to be the will of God that from time to time the manhood of nations, like that of individuals, should be tried by great dangers or by great opportunities. If the manhood be there, it makes the great opportunity out of the great danger; if it be not there, then the great danger out of the great opportunity. The occasion is offered us now of trying whether a conscious nationality and a timely concentration of the popular will for its maintenance be possible in a democracy, or whether it is only despotisms that are capable of the sudden and selfish energy of protecting themselves from destruction.

The Republican Party has thus far borne itself with firmness and moderation, and the great body of the Democratic Party in the Free States is gradually being forced into an alliance with it. Let us not be misled by any sophisms about conciliation and compromise. Discontented citizens may be conciliated and compromised with, but never open rebels with arms in their hands. If there be any concessions which justice may demand on the one hand and honor make on the other, let us try if we can adjust them with the Border Slave-States; but a government has already signed its own death-warrant, when it consents to make terms with law-breakers. First reestablish the supremacy of order, and then it will be time to discuss terms; but do not call it a compromise, when you give up your purse with a pistol at your head. This is no time for sentimentalisms about the empty chair at the national hearth; all the chairs would be empty soon enough, if one of the children is to amuse itself with setting the house on fire, whenever it can find a match. Since the election of Mr. Lincoln, not one of the arguments has lost its force, not a cipher of the statistics has been proved mistaken, on which the judgment of the people was



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made up. Nobody proposes, or has proposed, to interfere with any existing rights of property; the majority have not assumed to decide upon any question of the righteousness or policy of certain social arrangements existing in any part of the Confederacy; they have not undertaken to constitute themselves the conscience of their neighbors; they have simply endeavored to do their duty to their own posterity, and to protect them from a system which, as ample experience has shown, and that of our present difficulty were enough to show, fosters a sense of irresponsibility to all obligation in the governing class, and in the governed an ignorance and a prejudice which may be misled at any moment to the peril of the whole country.

But the present question is one altogether transcending all limits of party and all theories of party-policy. It is a question of national existence; it is a question whether Americans shall govern America, or whether a disappointed clique shall nullify all government now, and render a stable government difficult hereafter; it is a question, not whether we shall have civil war under certain contingencies, but whether we shall prevent it under any. It is idle, and worse than idle, to talk about Central Republics that can never be formed. We want neither Central Republics nor Northern Republics, but our own Republic and that of our fathers, destined one day to gather the whole continent under a flag that shall be the most august in the world. Having once known what it was to be members of a grand and peaceful constellation, we shall not believe, without further proof, that the laws of our gravitation are to be abolished, and we flung forth into chaos, a hurlyburly of jostling and splintering stars, whenever Robert Toombs or Robert Rhett, or any other Bob of the secession kite, may give a flirt of self-importance. The first and greatest benefit of government is that it keeps the peace, that it insures every man his right, and not only that, but the permanence of it. In order to this, its first requisite is stability; and this once firmly settled, the greater the extent of conterminous territory that can be subjected to one system and one language and inspired by one patriotism, the better. That there should be some diversity of interests is perhaps an advantage, since the necessity of legislating equitably for all gives legislation its needful safeguards of caution and largeness of view. A single empire embracing the whole world, and controlling, without extinguishing, local organizations and nationalities, has been not only the dream of conquerors, but the ideal of speculative philanthropists. Our own dominion is of such extent and power, that it may, so far as this continent is concerned, be looked upon as something like an approach to the realization of such an ideal. But for slavery, it might have succeeded in realizing it; and in spite of slavery, it may. One language, one law, one citizenship over thousands of miles, and a government on the whole

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so good that we seem to have forgotten what government means,—these are things not to be spoken of with levity, privileges not to be surrendered without a struggle. And yet while Germany and Italy, taught by the bloody and bitter and servile experience of centuries, are striving toward unity as the blessing above all others desirable, we are to allow a Union, that for almost eighty years has been the source and the safeguard of incalculable advantages, to be shattered by the caprice of a rabble that has outrun the intention of its leaders, while we are making up our minds what coercion means! Ask the first constable, and he will tell you that it is the force necessary for executing the laws. To avoid the danger of what men who have seized upon forts, arsenals, and other property of the United States, and continue to hold them by military force, may choose to call civil war, we are allowing a state of things to gather head which will make real civil war the occupation of the whole country for years to come, and establish it as a permanent institution. There is no such antipathy between the North and the South as men ambitious of a consideration in the new republic, which their talents and character have failed to secure them in the old, would fain call into existence by asserting that it exists. The misunderstanding and dislike between them is not so great as they were within living memory between England and Scotland, as they are now between England and Ireland. There is no difference of race, language, or religion. Yet, after a dissatisfaction of near a century, and two rebellions, there is no part of the British dominion more loyal than Scotland, no British subjects who would be more loath to part with the substantial advantages of their imperial connection than the Scotch; and even in Ireland, after a longer and more deadly feud, there is no sane man who would consent to see his country irrevocably cut off from power and consideration to obtain an independence which would be nothing but Donnybrook Fair multiplied by every city, town, and village in the island. The same considerations of policy and advantage which render the union of Scotland and Ireland with England a necessity apply with even more force to the several States of our Union. To let one, or two, or half a dozen of them break away in a freak of anger or unjust suspicion, or, still worse, from mistaken notions of sectional advantage, would be to fail in our duty to ourselves and our country, would be a fatal blindness to the lessons which immemorial history has been tracing on the earth's surface, either with the beneficent furrow of the plough, or, when that was unheeded, the fruitless gash of the cannon-ball.



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When we speak of coercion, we do not mean violence, but only the assertion of constituted and acknowledged authority. Even if seceding States could be conquered back again, they would not be worth the conquest. We ask only for the assertion of a principle which shall give the friends of order in the discontented quarters a hope to rally round, and the assurance of the support they have a right to expect. There is probably a majority, and certainly a powerful minority, in the seceding States, who are loyal to the Union; and these should have that support which the prestige of the General Government can alone give them. It is not to the North or to the Republican Party that the malcontents are called on to submit, but to the laws, and to the benign intentions of the Constitution, as they were understood by its framers. What the country wants is a permanent settlement; and it has learned, by repeated trial, that compromise is not a cement, but a wedge. The Government did not hesitate to protect the doubtful right of property of a Virginian in Anthony Burns by the exercise of coercion, and the loyalty of Massachusetts was such that her own militia could be used to enforce an obligation abhorrent, and, as there is reason to believe, made purposely abhorrent, to her dearest convictions and most venerable traditions; and yet the same Government tampers with armed treason, and lets *I dare not* wait upon *I would*, when it is a question of protecting the acknowledged property of the Union, and of sustaining, nay, preserving even, a gallant officer whose only fault is that he has been too true to his flag. While we write, the newspapers bring us the correspondence between Mr. Buchanan and the South Carolina "Commissioners," and surely never did a government stoop so low as ours has done, not only in consenting to receive these ambassadors from Nowhere, but in suggesting that a soldier deserves court-martial who has done all he could to maintain himself in a forlorn hope, with rebellion in his front and treachery in his rear. Our Revolutionary heroes had old-fashioned notions about rebels, suitable to the straightforward times in which they lived,—times when blood was as freely shed to secure our national existence as milk-and-water is now to destroy it. Mr. Buchanan might have profited by the example of men who knew nothing of the modern arts of Constitutional interpretation, but saw clearly the distinction between right and wrong. When a party of the Shays rebels came to the house of General Pomeroy, in Northampton, and asked if he could accommodate them,—the old soldier, seeing the green sprigs in their hats, the badges of their treason, shouted to his son, "Fetch me my hanger, and I'll *accommodate* the scoundrels!" General Jackson, we suspect, would have accommodated rebel commissioners in the same peremptory style.

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While our government, like Giles in the old rhyme, is wondering whether it is a government or not, emissaries of treason are cunningly working upon the fears and passions of the Border States, whose true interests are infinitely more on the side of the Union than of Slavery. They are luring the ambitious with visionary promises of Southern grandeur and prosperity, and deceiving the ignorant into the belief that the principles and practice of the Free States were truly represented by John Brown. All this might have been prevented, had Mr. Buchanan in his Message thought of the interests of his country instead of those of his party. It is not too late to check and neutralize it now. A decisively national and patriotic policy is all that can prevent excited men from involving themselves so deeply that they will find "returning as tedious as go o'er," and be more afraid of cowardice than of consequences.

Slavery is no longer the matter in debate, and we must beware of being led off upon that side-issue. The matter now in hand is the reestablishment of order, the reaffirmation of national unity, and the settling once for all whether there can be such a thing as a government without the right to use its power in self-defence. The Republican Party has done all it could lawfully do in limiting slavery once more to the States in which it exists, and in relieving the Free States from forced complicity with an odious system. They can be patient, as Providence is often patient, till natural causes work that conviction which conscience has been unable to effect. They believe that the violent abolition of slavery, which would be sure to follow sooner or later the disruption of our Confederacy, would not compensate for the evil that would be entailed upon both races by the abolition of our nationality and the bloody confusion that would follow it. More than this, they believe that there can be no permanent settlement except in the definite establishment of the principle, that this government, like all others, rests upon the everlasting foundations of just Authority,—that that authority, once delegated by the people, becomes a common stock of Power to be wielded for the common protection, and from which no minority or majority of partners can withdraw its contribution under any conditions,—that this Power is what makes us a nation, and implies a corresponding duty of submission, or, if that be refused, then a necessary right of self-vindication. We are citizens, when we make laws; we become subjects, when we attempt to break them after they are made. Lynch-law may be better than no law in new and half-organized communities, but we cannot tolerate its application in the affairs of government. The necessity of suppressing rebellion by force may be a terrible one, but its consequences, whatever they may be, do not weigh a feather in comparison with those that would follow from admitting the principle that there is no social compact binding on any body of men too numerous to be arrested by a United States Marshal.



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As we are writing these sentences, the news comes to us that South Carolina has taken the initiative, and chosen the arbitrament of war. She has done it because her position was desperate, and because she hoped thereby to unite the Cotton States by a complicity in blood, as they are already committed by a unanimity in bravado. Major Anderson deserves more than ever the thanks of his country for his wise forbearance. The foxes in Charleston, who have already lost their tails in the trap of Secession, wished to throw upon him the responsibility of that second blow which begins a quarrel, and the silence of his guns has balked them. Nothing would have pleased them so much as to have one of his thirty-two-pound shot give a taste of real war to the boys who are playing soldier at Morris's Island. But he has shown the discretion of a brave man. South Carolina will soon learn how much she has undervalued the people of the Free States. Because they prefer law to bowie-knives and revolvers, she has too lightly reckoned on their caution and timidity. She will find, that, though slow to kindle, they are as slow to yield, and that they are willing to risk their lives for the defence of law, though not for the breach of it. They are beginning to question the value of a peace that is forced on them at the point of the bayonet, and is to be obtained only by an abandonment of rights and duties.

When we speak of the courage and power of the Free States, we do not wish to be understood as descending to the vulgar level of meeting brag with brag. We speak of them only as among the elements to be gravely considered by the fanatics who may render it necessary for those who value the continued existence of this Confederacy as it deserves to be valued to kindle a back-fire, and to use the desperate means which God has put into their hands to be employed in the last extremity of free institutions. And when we use the term Coercion, nothing is farther from our thoughts than the carrying of blood and fire among those whom we still consider our brethren of South Carolina. These civilized communities of ours have interests too serious to be risked on a childish wager of courage,—a quality that can always be bought cheaper than day-labor on a railway-embankment. We wish to see the Government strong enough for the maintenance of law, and for the protection, if need be, of the unfortunate Governor Pickens from the anarchy he has allowed himself to be made a tool of for evoking. Let the power of the Union be used for any other purpose than that of shutting and barring the door against the return of misguided men to their allegiance. At the same time we think legitimate and responsible force prudently exerted safer than the submission, without a struggle, to unlawful and irresponsible violence.



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Peace is the greatest of blessings, when it is won and kept by manhood and wisdom; but it is a blessing that will not long be the housemate of cowardice. It is God alone who is powerful enough to let His authority slumber; it is only His laws that are strong enough to protect and avenge themselves. Every human government is bound to make its laws so far resemble His, that they shall be uniform, certain, and unquestionable in their operation; and this it can do only by a timely show of power, and by an appeal to that authority which is of divine right, inasmuch as its office is to maintain that order which is the single attribute of the Infinite Reason that we can clearly apprehend and of which we have hourly example.

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### REVIEWS AND LITERARY NOTICES.

Personal History of Lord Bacon, From Unpublished Papers. By WILLIAM HEPWORTH DIXON, of the Inner Temple. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 12mo. pp. 424.

The life of Bacon, as it has been ordinarily written, presents contrasts so strange, that thoughtful readers have been compelled either to doubt the accuracy of the narrative, or to admit that in his case Nature departed from her usual processes, and embodied antithesis in a man. The character suggested by the events of his life has long been in direct opposition to the character impressed on his writings; and Macaulay, who gave to the popular opinion its most emphatic and sparkling expression, increased this difference by exaggerating the opposite elements of the human epigram, and ended in manufacturing the most brilliant monstrosity that ever bore the name of a person. Lord Campbell followed with a biography having all the appearance of conscientious research and judicial impartiality, but which was really nothing more than a weak translation of Macaulay's vivid sentences into such English "as it had pleased God to endow him withal." Bacon, to all inquiring men, still remained outside of the statements of both; and after the lapse of nearly two centuries, the slight biographical sketch by his chaplain, Dr. Rawleigh, conveyed a juster idea of the man than all the biographies by which it had been succeeded, but not superseded.

Mr. Dixon's "Personal History of Lord Bacon" is the first attempt to vindicate his fame by original research into unpublished documents. It is a mortifying reflection to all who speak the English tongue, that this task should have been deferred so long. There has been no lack of such research in regard to insignificant individuals who have been accidentally connected with events which come within the cognizance of English historians; but the greatest Englishman among all English politicians and statesmen since the Norman Conquest has heretofore been honored with no biographer who considered him worthy the labor which has been lavished on inferior men. The readers of Macaulay's four volumes of English



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history have often expressed their amazement at his minute knowledge of the political mediocrities of the time of James II. and William III. He spared neither time nor labor in collecting and investigating facts regarding comparatively unknown persons who happened to be connected with his subject; but in his judgment of a man who, considered simply as a statesman, was infinitely greater than Halifax or Dauby, he depends altogether on hearsay, and gives that hearsay the worst possible appearance. In his article on Bacon, he not merely evinces no original research, but he so combines the loose statements he takes for granted, that, in his presentation of them, they make out a stronger case against Bacon than is warranted by their fair interpretation. Indeed, leaving out the facts which Macaulay suppresses or is ignorant of, and taking into account only those which he includes, his judgment of Bacon is still erroneous. Long before we read Mr. Dixon's book, we had reversed Macaulay's opinion merely by scrutinizing, and restoring to their natural relations, Macaulay's facts.

But Mr. Dixon's volume, while in style and matter it is one of the most interesting and entertaining books of the season, is especially valuable for the new light it sheds on the subject by the introduction of original materials. These materials, to be sure, were within the reach of any person who desired to write an impartial biography; but Mr. Dixon no less deserves honor for withstanding the prejudice that Bacon's moral character was unquestionably settled as base, and for daring to investigate anew the testimony on which the judgment was founded. And there can be no doubt that he has dispelled the horrible chimera, that the same man can be thoroughly malignant or mean in his moral nature and thoroughly beneficent or exalted in his intellectual nature. While we do not doubt that depravity and intelligence can make an unholy alliance, we do doubt that the intelligence thus prompted can exhibit, to an eye that discerns spirits, all the vital signs of benevolence. If, in the logic of character, Iago or Jerry Sneak be in the premises, it is impossible to find Bacon in the conclusion.

The value of Mr. Dixon's book consists in its introduction of new facts to illustrate every questionable incident in Bacon's career. It is asserted, for instance, that Bacon, as a member of Parliament, was impelled solely by interested motives, and opposed the government merely to force the government to recognize his claims to office. Mr. Dixon brings forward facts to prove that his opposition is to be justified on high grounds of statesmanship; that he was both a patriot and a reformer; that great constituencies were emulous to make him their representative; that in wit, in learning, in reason, in moderation, in wisdom, in the power of managing and directing men's minds and passions, he was the first man in the House of Commons; that the germs of great improvements are



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to be found in his speeches; that, when he was overborne by the almost absolute power of the Court, his apparent sycophancy was merely the wariness of a wise statesman; that Queen Elizabeth eventually acknowledged his services to the country, and, far from neglecting him, repeatedly extended to him most substantial marks of her favor. This portion of Mr. Dixon's volume, founded on state-papers, will surprise both the defamers and the eulogists of Bacon. It contains facts of which both Macaulay and Basil Montagu were ignorant.

Of Bacon's relations with Essex we never had but one opinion. All the testimony brought forward to convict Bacon of treachery to Essex seemed to us inconclusive. The facts, as stated by Macaulay and Lord Campbell, do not sustain their harsh judgment. A parallel may be found in the present political condition of our own country. Let us suppose Senator Toombs so fortunate as to have had a wise counsellor, who for ten years had borne to him the same relation which Bacon bore to Essex. Let us suppose that it was understood between them that both were in favor of the Union and the Constitution, and that nothing was to be done to forward the triumph of their party which was not strictly legal. Then let us suppose that Mr. Toombs, from the impulses of caprice and passion, had secretly established relations with desperate disunionists, and had thus put in jeopardy not only the interests, but the lives, of those who were equally his friends and the friends of the Constitution. Let us further suppose that he had suddenly placed himself at the head of an armed force to overturn the United States government at Washington, while he was still a Senator from Georgia, sworn to support the Constitution of the United States, and that his cheated friend and counsellor had just left the President of the United States, after a long conference, in which he had attempted to show, to an incredulous listener, that Senator Toombs was a devoted friend to the Union, though dissatisfied with some of the members of the Administration. This is a very faint illustration of the political relations between Essex and Bacon, admitting the generally received facts on which Bacon is execrated as false to his friend. Mr. Dixon adduces new facts which completely justify Bacon's conduct. If Bacon, like Essex, had been ruled by his passions, he would have been a far fiercer denouncer of Essex's treason. He had every reason to be enraged. He was a wise man duped by a foolish one. He was in danger of being implicated in a treason which he abhorred, through the perfidy of a man who was generally considered as his friend and patron, and who was supposed to act from his advice. As Bacon doubtless knew what we now for the first time know, every candid reader must be surprised at the moderation of his course. Essex would not have hesitated to shoot or stab Bacon, had Bacon behaved to him as he had behaved to Bacon. But we pardon, it seems, the most hateful and horrible selfishness which springs from the passions; our moral condemnation is reserved for that faint form of selfishness which may be suspected to have its source in the intellect.

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In regard to the other charges against Bacon, we think that Mr. Dixon has brought forward evidence which must materially modify the current opinions of Bacon's personal character. He has proved that Bacon, as a practical statesman, was in advance of his age, rather than behind it. He has proved that his philosophy penetrated his politics, and that he gave wise advice, and recommended large, liberal, and humane measures to a generation which could not appreciate them. He has proved that he did everything that a man in his situation could do for the cause of truth and justice which did not necessitate his retirement from public life. The abuses by which he may have profited he not only did not defend, but tried to reform. Among the statesmen of his day he appears not only intellectually superior, but conventionally respectable,—a fact which would seem to be established by the bare statement, that he died wretchedly poor, while most of them died enormously rich.

But Mr. Dixon, in his advocacy of Bacon, overlooks the circumstance, that no man could hold high office under James I., without complying with abuses calculated to damage his reputation with posterity. We have no doubt that Bacon's compliance was connected with considerations which Mr. Dixon entirely ignores. Far from discriminating between Bacon the philosopher and Bacon the politician, we have always thought that they were intimately connected. Bacon's Method, the thing on which, as a philosopher, he especially prided himself, was defective. It left out that power by which all discoveries have since his time been made, namely, scientific genius. Its successful working depended on an immense collection of facts, which no individual, and no society of individuals, could possibly make. He himself was never weary of asserting that the Method could never produce its beneficent effects, unless it were assisted by the revenues of a nation. Of the course which physical science really followed he had no prevision. Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Gilbert, he never appreciated. He was an intellectual autocrat, who had matured his own scheme of interpreting Nature, and thought, that, if it were systematically carried out, the inmost secrets of Nature could he mastered. His desire to be Lord Chancellor of England was subsidiary to his larger desire to be Lord Chancellor of Nature herself. He hoped, by managing James and Buckingham, to flatter them into aiding, by the revenues of the State, his grand philosophical scheme. Combine the facts which Mr. Dixon has disinterred with the facts which every thoughtful reader of Bacon's philosophical works already knows, and the vindication of Bacon as a man is complete.



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We are inclined to think that he failed in both of the objects of his highest ambition. His philosophic Method is demonstrably a failure; his attempt to convert James and Buckingham to his views resulted in his own unjust disgrace with contemporaries and posterity. The truth is, that, cool, serene, comprehensive, and unimpassioned as he appears, he was from his youth actuated by a fanaticism which seems less intense than the fanaticism of a man like Cromwell only because it was infinitely more broad. Had he succeeded in the design he proposed to himself, his intellectual domination would not be confined to England, or the kingdoms of the civilized world, but would be commensurate with the whole domain of Nature and man.

We are so grateful to Mr. Dixon for what he has done, that we are not disposed to quarrel with him for what he has left undone. He has added such a mass of incontrovertible facts to the materials which must enter into the future biography of Bacon, that his book cannot fail to exact cordial praise from the most captious critics. Bacon, in his aspirations and purposes, was a very much greater man than he appears in Mr. Dixon's biography; but still to Mr. Dixon belongs the credit of rescuing his personal reputation from undeserved ignominy. If we add to this his vivid pictures of the persons and events of the Elizabethan age, and his bright, sharp, and brief way of flashing his convictions and discoveries on the mind of the reader, we indicate merits which will make his volume generally and justly popular. The letters of Lady Ann Bacon, the mother of the philosopher and statesman—letters for which we are indebted to Mr. Dixon's exhaustive research—would alone be sufficient to justify the publication of his interesting book.

*Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle, Minister of Inveresk. With Memorials of the Men and Events of his Time.* Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 12mo. pp. 480.

Who was he? and what was he like?—Sir Walter Scott answered these interrogatories more than thirty years ago, in this wise. He says, in his "Review of the Life and Works of John Home,"—"Dr. Carlyle was, for a long period, clergyman of Musselburgh; his character was as excellent as his conversation was amusing and instructive; his person and countenance, even at a very advanced age, were so lofty and commanding, as to strike every artist with his resemblance to the Jupiter Tonans of the Pantheon."

Sixty years ago, this old Scottish clergyman sat down, one January day, in Musselburgh, and began to write his "Autobiography." He had lived seventy-nine years among scenes of great interest, and had known men of remarkable genius. He wrote and died. The manuscript he left has been often read and enjoyed by clever men and women, who in their turn have gone to the churchyard to sleep with the venerable old man the story of whose life they had perused. Sir Walter himself once caught a glimpse of the time-stained sheets. All are now dead who could by any chance be pained by the publication of facts in which their relatives look part long years ago. So the world has now another volume to add to the store of biography, and the future historian will have another treasury of facts from which to illumine his pages.



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Himself the son of a clergyman, Alexander Carlyle had a good school-drilling in Prestonpans, where he was born. One of the stories of his childhood is very amusing, inasmuch as it pictures a dozen old women listening to young Alexander, aged six, who reads the Song of Solomon to them in a graveyard, he all the while perched on a tombstone. My Lord Grange was the principal man in Prestonpans parish; and Master Carlyle, with his excellent father, had great reverence for the patron who had been the cause of the family's transplantation from Annandale. My Lady was a very lively person, daughter of the man who shot President Lockhart in the dark because he had infuriated him in an arbitration case in the court. This great family attracted the boyish wonder of young Carlyle, and some of the gossiping stories that he heard in his father's house made his juvenile ears tingle. Poor Lady Grange! Quarrelling with her husband one day, on his return from London, where pretty Fanny Lindsay, who kept a coffee-house in the Haymarket, had bewitched him, she never knew peace again. Her temper, never very soothing or placable, got entire possession of her life, and she rained stormy gusts of passion on her guilty lord. He trembled and endured, till he found a razor concealed under his wife's pillow, and then he determined to remove his violent helpmeet to a safe seclusion. By main force, with the aid of accomplices, he seized the lady in his house in Edinburgh, and bore her through Stirling to the Highlands. Thence she was taken to St. Kilda's desolate island, far off in the Western Ocean, and there kept for the remainder of her days, scantily furnished with only the coarsest fare. Her condition was most wretched to the last. In those days, licentiousness and religious enthusiasm were not incompatible associates, and Lord Grange frequently spent his evenings with the Minister of Prestonpans, praying, and settling high points of Calvinism with the old pastor. Good Mrs. Carlyle used to complain that they did not part without wine, and that late hours were consequent upon the claret they liberally imbibed after their pious discussions.

Dr. Doddridge's famous Colonel Gardiner came to reside in Minister Carlyle's parish, and told the story of his remarkable conversion, with his own lips, to the clergyman. The hook which turned him from his wicked career was Gurnall's "Christian Armor," a volume placed many years before, by a mother's hand, in his trunk, and until then neglected. Young Carlyle hoard Gardiner tell the story of his change of life several times to different sets of people, and he thought Doddridge had marred the tale by introducing the incident of a blaze of light, which the Colonel himself never spoke of having seen, when he related his conversion.

When Alexander was eleven years old, he took a little journey with his father and another clergyman by the name of Jardine; and the two pious, elderly gentlemen, having a great turn for fun and buffoonery, made sport wherever they went. Turning their wigs hind-part foremost, and making faces, they delighted in diverting the children they encountered on the way.



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Of many of the incidents of the Porteous Mob young Carlyle was a witness. He was in the Tolbooth Church, at Edinburgh, when Robertson, a condemned smuggler, who was brought in to listen to the discourse and prayers before execution, made his escape. The congregation were coming into church while all the bells were ringing, when the criminal, watching his opportunity, sprang suddenly over a pew, and was next heard of in Holland. When, a few weeks afterwards, Wilson, another smuggler, was executed, Carlyle, with some of his school-fellows, was in a window on the north side of the Grass-Market, and heard Porteous order his guard to fire on the people. A young lad, who had been killed by a slug entering his head, was brought into the house where the boys were on that occasion.

In the summer of 1737, young Carlyle might have been seen during the evening hours walking anxiously about the Prestonpans fields. That season he had lost one of his fellow-pupils and dearest friends, and they had often agreed together that whichever might die first should appear there to the other, and reveal the secrets beyond the barrier. And so the survivor paced the meadows, hoping to meet his old companion, who never appeared. In November of that year he was at college, and his acquaintance with Robertson, afterwards the eminent historian, then began. John Home, celebrated at a later period as the author of "Douglas," also became an intimate friend. He now decided to choose a profession, and had wellnigh concluded an agreement with two surgeons to study theirs, when he became disgusted with the meanness of the doctors, who had bought for dissection the body of a child of a poor tailor for six shillings, the price asked being six shillings and sixpence, from which they made the needy man abate the sixpence. Turning from the niggardly surgeons, he enrolled his name as a student of divinity, and was frequently in Edinburgh attending the lectures at Divinity Hall. Wonderfully cheap was the living in those days, when, at the Edinburgh ordinaries, a good dinner could be had for fourpence, small beer included. John Witherspoon, years after a member of the American Congress, then a frank, generous young fellow, was a companion of Carlyle at this period, and they often went fishing together in the streams near Gifford Hall.

The city of Glasgow, whither young Carlyle had gone to pursue his studies, was at this time far inferior in point of commerce to what it afterwards became. The tobacco-trade with the American colonies and the traffic in sugar and rum with the West Indies were the chief branches of business. Carlyle did not find the merchants of those days interesting or learned people, though they held a weekly club, where they discussed the nature and principle of trade, and invited Alexander to join it. But he found life in Glasgow very dull, and was constantly complaining that there was neither a teacher of French nor of music in the



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town. There was but one concert during the two winters he spent there. Post-chaises and hackney-coaches were unknown, their places being supplied by three or four old sedan-chairs, which did a brisk business in carrying midwives about in the night, and old ladies to church and the dancing-assemblies. The principal merchants began their business early in the morning, and took dinner about noon with their families at home. Afterwards they resorted to the coffee-house, to read the newspapers and enjoy a bowl of punch. Until an arch fellow from Dublin came to be master of the chief coffee-house, nine o'clock was the hour for these worthy mercantile gentlemen to be at home in the evening. The seductive Irish stranger began his wiles by placing a few nice cold relishing things on the table, and so gradually led the way to hot suppers and midnight symposia. Towards the end of his college-session, Carlyle was introduced to a club which gave him great satisfaction. The principal member was Robert Simson, the celebrated mathematician. Simson was a great humorist, and was particularly averse to the company of ladies. Matthew Stewart, afterwards Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh, was a constant attendant at this club.

On the breaking out of the Rebellion of 1745, the young divinity-student, having returned to Edinburgh, joined the Volunteers, and entered warmly into all the bustle and business of those exciting days. In the Battle of Prestonpans he took part, and was active to the end. When Prince Charles Edward issued a proclamation of pardon to the Volunteers, Carlyle went down to the Abbey Court to see him. The Prince mounted his horse, while the young man stood by, and rode away to the east side of Arthur's Seat. Charles was at that time a good-looking gentleman, of about five feet ten inches, with dark red hair and black eyes.

One Monday morning in October, a hundred and fifteen years ago, young Carlyle set out for Rotterdam, on his way to Leyden, to join the British students there. Among them he found Charles Townshend and John Wilkes, names afterwards famous in English politics. With Wilkes he became intimate, and many a spirited talk they had together in their daily rambles.

But we cannot dwell upon the incidents of Carlyle's student-life on the Continent. Soon after his return to Scotland he made acquaintance with Smollett, whose lively, agreeable manners rendered him universally popular. Thomson, the author of "The Seasons," and Armstrong the poet, were also at this time among his friends. In 1746 he preached his first sermon before the Presbytery of Haddington, and got "universal approbation," especially from one young lady, to whom he had been long attached. Robertson the historian and Home the dramatist were now among his neighbors, and no doubt used their influence in getting the young clergyman a living. He finally settled at Inveresk, where his life was a very pleasant round of cares and duties. Hume, Adam Smith, Blair,

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Smollett, and Robertson now figure largely in his personal record, so that he had no lack of genial companions. Adam Smith he describes as “a very absent man in society, moving his lips, talking to himself, and smiling, in the midst of large companies.” Robertson was a very different person, and held all the conversation-threads in his own fingers, forgetting, alas! sometimes, that he had not been present in many a scene which he described as an eye-witness.

Carlyle went some distance on the way toward London with Home, when he carried his tragedy of “Douglas” for examination to the critics. Six other clergymen, accompanied the precious manuscript on that expedition, and the fun was prodigious. Garrick read the play and pronounced it totally unfit for the stage! “Douglas” was afterwards brought out in Edinburgh with unbounded success. David Hume ran about crying it up as the first performance he world had seen for half a century.

Carlyle’s visit to Shenstone is very graphically described in the “Autobiography.” The poet was then “a large, heavy, fat man, dressed in white clothes and silver lace.” One night in Edinburgh, Dr. Robertson gave a small supper-party to “the celebrated Dr. Franklin,” and Carlyle met him that evening at table. They came together afterwards several times.

But we must refer our readers to the book itself, our limits not allowing more space for a glance at one of the most entertaining works in modern biography.

*The Laws of Race, as connected with Slavery.* By the Author of “The Law of the Territories,” “Rustic Rhymes,” etc. Philadelphia: W.P. Hazard. 1860. 8vo. pp. 70.

There is no lack of talk and writing among us on political topics; but there is great lack of independent and able thought concerning them. The disputes and the manoeuvres of parties interfere with the study and recognition of the active principles which silently mould the national character and history. The double-faced platforms of conventions, the loose manifestoes of itinerant candidates for the Presidency, the rhetorical misrepresentations of “campaign documents,” form the staple of our political literature.

The writer of the pamphlet before us is one of the few men who not only think for themselves, nut whose thoughts deserve attention. His essay on “The Law of the Territories” was distinguished not more by its sound reasoning than by the candor of its statements and the calmness of its tone and temper. If his later essay, on “The Laws of Race, as connected with Slavery,” be on the whole less satisfactory, this is to be attributed, not to any want in it of the same qualities of thought and style as were displayed in his earlier work, but to the greater complexify and difficulty of the subject itself. The question of Race, so far as it affects actual national conditions, is one of the

deepest and most intricate which can be presented to the student of politics. It is impossible to investigate it

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without meeting with difficulties which in the present state of knowledge cannot be solved, or without opening paths of speculation which no human foresight can trace to their end. This is, indeed, no reason for not attempting its discussion; and Mr. Fisher, in treating it in its relation to Slavery, has done good work, and has brought forward important, though much neglected considerations. He endeavors to place the whole subject of the relations of the white and the black races in this country on philosophic grounds, and to deduce the principles which must govern them from the teachings of ethnological science, or, in other words, from natural laws which human device can neither abrogate nor alter.

From these teachings he derives the three following conclusions.

“The white race must of necessity, by reason of its superiority, govern the negro, wherever the two live together.

“The two races can never amalgamate, and form a new species of man, but must remain forever distinct,—though mulattoes and other grades always exist, because constantly renewed.

“Each race has a tendency to occupy exclusively that portion of the country suited to its nature.”

If true, these conclusions are of the utmost importance. They are higher laws, which “must rule our politics and our destiny, either by the Constitution or over it, either with the Union or without it; and no wit or force of man is strong enough to resist them.” It is to the exposition of the results which follow from these conclusions, assuming them to be true, that the larger part of the present essay is devoted.

That these propositions express, or at least point the way to essential truths, we are fully persuaded. But we are not ready to accept all the inferences which the author draws from them, or to admit that they afford sufficient basis for some of his minor assumptions.

Arguing from his first conclusion, the author draws the inference that “slavery is the necessary result” of the nature of the black and of the white man. “The negro is by nature indolent and improvident.” “He is also ignorant.” “He requires restraint and guidance”; “otherwise he would sink into helpless, hopeless vice, idleness, and misery.” But in these words, and in others to the same purport, Mr. Fisher assumes that the nature of the black is incapable of such improvement as to make what he calls the necessary condition of servitude needless in the interest of either race. We are surprised that so good a reasoner should speak of the ignorance of the black as a natural disqualification for independence, and the more so, because, in another



passage, Mr. Fisher says, with truth, "We darken his mind with ignorance." That some form of subjection of the negro may be necessary for a time that extends far into the future is a point we will not dispute; but that slavery, as that word is generally understood, is the necessary result of his nature



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and of our nature we believe to be utterly untrue. The whole history of American slavery, far from exhibiting the negro as incapable of improvement, shows him making a slow and irregular advance in the development of intellectual and moral qualities, under circumstances singularly unfavorable. It is the plea of the advocates of the slave-trade, that the black is civilized by contact with the white. The plea is not without truth. It is the universal testimony of slave-owners, and the common observation of travellers, that the city and house slaves, that is, those who are brought into most constant and close relations with the whites, show higher mental development than those who are confined to the fields. The experiment of education, continued for more than one generation, has never been tried. The black is in many of his endowments inferior to the white; but until he and his children and his children's children have shown an incapacity to be raised by a suitable training, honestly given, to an intellectual and moral condition that shall fit them for self-dependence, we have no right to assert that slavery is a necessary condition, if in the meaning of necessary we include the idea of permanence. It is not needful to present here other objections to this sweeping assertion. They are old, well-known, and unanswerable.

But leaving this and other points on which we find ourselves at issue with Mr. Fisher, we come to what we regard as the most important part of his pamphlet,—the results which he shows to follow from the law, that “each race has a tendency to occupy exclusively that portion of the country suited to its nature.” In the States that lie on the Gulf of Mexico the negro “has found a congenial climate and obtained a permanent foothold.” “The negro multiplies there; the white man dwindles and decays.” We should be glad to quote at length the striking pages in which Mr. Fisher shows the prospect of the ultimate and not distant ascendancy of the black race in this new Africa. The considerations he presents are of vital consequence to the South, of consequence only less than vital to the North. But by the side of “New-Africa” are States and Territories in which the black race has little or no foothold. Free, civilized, and prosperous communities are brought face to face, as it were, with the mixed and degenerating populations of the Slave country. In the Free States the white race is increasing in numbers and advancing in prosperity with unexampled rapidity. In the Slave States the black race is growing in far greater proportion than the white, the most important elements of prosperity are becoming exhausted, and the forces of civilization are incompetent to hold their own against the ever-increasing weight of barbarism. Shall this new Africa push its boundaries beyond their present limits? Shall more territory be yielded to the already wide-spread African, race? It is not the question, whether the unoccupied spaces of

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the South and West shall be settled by Northern white emigrants with their natural property, or by Southern white emigrants with their legal property,—and there an end; but it is the question, whether New England or New Africa shall extend her limits,—whether the country shall be occupied a century hence by a civilized or by a barbarous race. Every rood of ground yielded to the pretensions of the masters of slaves is so much of the heirloom of freedom and of civilization lost without hope of recovery. Slavery is transient.

As an institution, such as it has developed itself in our Southern States, it has already, given tokens of decay. But the qualities of race are so slowly affected by change as to admit of being called constant and permanent. The predominant influence of the blacks in the Cotton States is already (even putting aside the results of slavery) exhibiting itself in the lowering of the whites. These States are becoming uninhabitable for the whites, —not by reason of climate, or of slavery as an institution, but by reason of the operation of the inevitable increase of the slaves. They must have the land, and the stronger race will be driven out by the weaker, on account of the preponderance of their numbers and the *vis inertice* of their natures. There is no room in the United States, or in any of their unsettled territory, for the expansion of this transatlantic Africa. Where the black race is now settled it will stay, but it must be confined within its present limits.

We do not look upon the simple secession of the Slave States, or of any one of them, as dangerous, so far as the extension of slavery is concerned,—rather, on the contrary, as likely to end the great debate by securing all unoccupied territory to the North, to freedom, and to the white races. It is only, if an attempt should be made, for the sake of what is miscalled peace, and for the sake of the Union, to conciliate the misguided and unfortunate people of the South by compromise or concession, that we fear the consequences.

The responsibility under which we are to act is not for our own moral convictions alone, but also for the happiness of all future times. There is no room for concession, no space for compromise, in the settlement of the question of the prevalence of the black or of the white race on this continent,—in other words, the prevalence of liberty and Christianity and all their attendant blessings, or that of ignorance and barbarism with their train. “We will decide this question,” says Mr. Fisher, whose words were written before the necessity for decision was so distinctly presented as at present, “we will decide it, if we can, as a united people; but if we cannot, if cotton and slavery and the negro have already weakened our Southern brethren by their spells and enchantments, so that the South cannot decide according to the traditions and impulses of our race, then we of the North will still decide it, as by right we may,—by right of reason, of race, and of law.”



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*The Conduct of Life.* By R.W. EMERSON Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 16mo. pp. 288.

It is a singular fact, that Mr. Emerson is the most steadily attractive lecturer in America. Into that somewhat cold-waterish region adventurers of the sensation kind come down now and then with a splash, to become disregarded King Logs before the next season. But Mr. Emerson always draws. A lecturer now for something like a quarter of a century, one of the pioneers of the lecturing system, the charm of his voice, his manner, and his matter has never lost its power over his earlier hearers, and continually winds new ones in its enchanting meshes. What they do not fully understand they take on trust, and listen, saying to themselves, as the old poet of Sir Philip Sidney,—

“A sweet, attractive, kind of grace,  
A full assurance given by looks,  
Continual comfort in a face,  
The lineaments of gospel books.”

We call it a singular fact, because we Yankees are thought to be fond of the spread-eagle style, and nothing can be more remote from that than his. We are reckoned a practical folk, who would rather hear about a new air-tight stove than about Plato; yet our favorite teacher’s practicality is not in the least of the Poor Richard variety. If he have any Buncombe constituency, it is that unrealized commonwealth of philosophers which Plotinus proposed to establish; and if he were to make an almanac, his directions to farmers would be something like this:—“OCTOBER: *Indian Summer*; now is the time to get in your early Vedas.” What, then, is his secret? Is it not that he out-Yankees us all? that his range includes us all? that he is equally at home with the potato-disease and original sin, with pegging shoes and the Over-soul? that, as we try all trades, so has he tried all cultures? and above all, that his mysticism gives us a counterpoise to our super-practicality?

There is no man living to whom, as a writer, so many of us feel and thankfully acknowledge so great an indebtedness for ennobling impulses,—none whom so many cannot abide. What does he mean? ask these last. Where is his system? What is the use of it all? What the deuse have we to do with Brahma? Well, we do not propose to write an essay on Emerson at the fag-end of a February “Atlantic,” with Secession longing for somebody to hold it, and Chaos come again in the South Carolina teapot. We will only say that we have found grandeur and consolation in a starlit night without caring to ask what it meant, save grandeur and consolation; we have liked Montaigne, as some ten generations before us have done, without thinking him so systematic as some more eminently tedious (or shall we say tediously eminent?) authors; we have thought roses as good in their way as cabbages, though the latter would have made a better show in the witness-box, if cross-examined as to their usefulness; and as for Brahma, why, he can take care of himself, and won’t bite us at any rate.



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The bother with Mr. Emerson is, that, though he writes in prose, he is essentially a poet. If you undertake to paraphrase what he says, and to reduce it to words of one syllable for infant minds, you will make as sad work of it as the good monk with his analysis of Homer in the "Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum." We look upon him as one of the few men of genius whom our age has produced, and there needs no better proof of it than his masculine faculty of fecundating other minds. Search for his eloquence in his books and you will perchance miss it, but meanwhile you will find that it has kindled all your thoughts. For choice and pith of language he belongs to a better age than ours, and might rub shoulders with Fuller and Browne,—though he does use that abominable word, *reliable*. His eye for a fine, telling phrase that will carry true is like that of a backwoodsman for a rifle; and he will dredge you up a choice word from the ooze of Cotton Mather himself. A diction at once so rich and so homely as his we know not where to match in these days of writing by the page; it is like homespun cloth-of-gold. The many cannot miss his meaning, and only the few can find it. It is the open secret of all true genius. What does he mean, quotha? He means inspiring hints, a divining-rod to your deeper nature, "plain living and high thinking." We meant only to welcome this book, and not to review it. Doubtless we might pick our quarrel with it here and there; but all that our readers care to know is, that it contains essays on Fate, Power, Wealth, Culture, Behavior, Worship, Considerations by the Way, Beauty, and Illusions. They need no invitation to Emerson. "Would you know," says Goethe, "the ripest cherries? Ask the boys and the blackbirds." He does not advise you to inquire of the crows.

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