

Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 421 eBook

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THE WOLF-GATHERING.

One winter evening some years ago, I sat with a small circle of friends round the fire, in the house of a Polish gentleman, whom his acquaintances agreed in calling Mr Charles, as the most pronounceable of his names. He had fought in all his country's battles of the unsuccessful revolution of 1831; and being one of the many who sought life and liberty in the British dominions, on the failure of that last national effort, he had, with a spirit worthy of an exiled patriot, made the best of his unchosen fortunes, and worked his way up, through a thousand difficulties and privations, to a respectable standing in the mercantile profession. At the period mentioned, Mr Charles had become almost naturalised in one of our great commercial towns, was a member of a British church, and the head of a British household; but when the conversation happened to turn on sporting matters round his own fireside, he related in perfect seriousness the following wild and legend-like story of his early life in Poland:—

The year before the rising, I went from my native place in Samogitia (Szamait), to spend Christmas at the house of my uncle, situated in the wooded country of Upper Lithuania. He was a nobleman who boasted his descent from one of the oldest houses in Poland, and still held the estate which his ancestors had defended for themselves through many a Tartar invasion—as much land as a hunting-train could course over in a summer's day. But ample as his domain appeared, my uncle was by no means rich upon it. The greater portion had been forest-land for ages; elsewhere it was occupied by poor peasants and their fields; and in the centre he lived, after the fashion of his forefathers, in a huge timber-house with antiquated fortifications, where he exercised liberal hospitality, especially at Christmas times. My uncle was a widower, but he had three sons—Armand, Henrique, and Constantine—brave, handsome young men, who kept close intimacy and right merry companionship with their nearest neighbours, a family named Lorenski. Their property bordered on my uncle's land, and there was not a family of their station within leagues; but independently of that circumstance, the household must have had attractions for my cousins, for it consisted of the young Count Emerich, his sister Constanza, and two orphan cousins, Marcella and Eustachia, who had been brought up with them from childhood.

The count's parents had died in his early youth, leaving him not only his own guardian, but that of his sister and cousins; and the young people had grown up safely and happily together in that forest-land. The cousins were like most of our Polish girls in the provinces, dark-eyed and comely, gay and fearless, and ready alike for the dance or the chase; but Count Emerich and his sister had the praise of the whole province for their noble carriage, their wise and virtuous lives, and the great affection that was between them.

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Both had strange courage, and were said to fear neither ghost nor goblin—which, I must remark, was not a common case in Lithuania. Constanza was the oldest by two years, and by far the most discreet and calm of temper, by which it was believed she rather ruled the household, though her brother had a high and fiery spirit. But they were never known to disagree, and, though still young, neither seemed to think of marrying. Fortunately, it was not so with all their neighbours. My stay at my uncle's house had not been long when I found out that Armand was as good as engaged to Marcella, and Henrique to Eustachia, while Constantine, the youngest and handsomest of the three brothers, paid vain though deferential court to Constanza.

The rising was not then publicly talked of, though known to be in full preparation throughout the country. All the young and brave hearts among us were pledged to it, and my cousins did not hesitate to tell me in confidence that Count Emerich and his sister were its chief promoters in that district. They had a devoted assistant in Father Cassimer. He had been their mother's confessor, and lived in the house for five-and-thirty years, saying mass regularly in the parish church, a pine-built edifice on the edge of the forest. Father Cassimer's hair was like snow; but he was still erect, strong, and active. He said the church could not spare him, and he would live to a hundred. In some respects, the man did deserve a century, being a good Pole and a worthy priest, notwithstanding one weakness which beset him, for Father Cassimer took special delight in hunting. It was said that once, when robed for mass, a wild boar chanced to stray past; whereon the good priest mounted his horse, which was usually fastened to the church-door, and started after the game in full canonicals. That was in his youth; but Father Cassimer never denied the tale, and the peasants who remembered it had no less confidence in his prayers, for they knew he loved his country, and looked after the sick and poor. The priest was my cousin's instructor in wood-craft, and the boon-companion of my uncle; but scarcely had I got well acquainted with him and the Lorenskis, when two Christmas visitors arrived at their house.

They were a brother and sister, Russian nobles, known as Count Theodore and Countess Juana. Their native place was St Petersburg, but they had spent years in travelling over Europe; and though nobody knew the extent of their estates, it was supposed to be great, for they spared no expense, and always kept the best society. Latterly they had been somehow attracted to Poland, and became so popular among our country nobles, that they were invited from house to house, making new friends wherever they went, for Russians though they were, they wished well to our country, and, among their intimates, spoke of liberty and justice with singular eloquence. Considering this, their popularity was no wonder. A handsomer

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or more accomplished pair I never saw. Both were tall, fair, and graceful, with hair of a light golden shade—the sister’s descending almost to her feet when unbraided, and the brother’s clustering in rich curls about the brow. They knew the dances of all nations, could play anything that was ever invented, whether game or instrument, and talked in every tongue of Europe, from Romaic to Swedish. Both could ride like Arabs. Count Theodore was a splendid shot, his sister was matchless in singing, and neither was ever tired of fun or frolic. They seemed of the Lorenskis’ years, but had seen more of the world; and though scarcely so dignified, most people preferred the frank familiarity and lively converse of the travelled Russians.

The Lorenskis themselves could not but applaud that general preference. They and the travellers had become fast friends almost on their first acquaintance, which took place in the previous winter; and Count Theodore and his sister had performed a long wintry journey from St Petersburg, to celebrate the Christmas-time with them. Peasants and servants rejoiced at their coming, for they were known to be liberal. The old priest said it had never been his luck to see anything decent out of Russia before, and my uncle’s entire household were delighted, with the exception of Constantine. By and by, I guessed the cause of his half-concealed displeasure. The brother of each pair took wonderfully to the sister of the other. Count Theodore talked of buying an estate in Lithuania; and the young cousins predicted, that though Emerich and Constanza might be near neighbours, they would not live all their days free and single. After the Russians’ arrival, there was nothing but sport among us. We had dances and concerts, plays, and all manner of games; but the deep snow of our Polish winter had not hardened to the usual strong ice, over marsh, river, and forest-land. It continued falling day after day, shutting all our amusements within doors, and preventing, to our general regret, the wonted wolf-hunt, always kept up in Lithuania from the middle of December till Christmas-eve.

It was a custom, time immemorial, in the province, and followed as much for the amusement it afforded the young people, as for the destruction of the deadly prowler. The mode of conducting it was this: Every two or three families who chanced to be intimate when the ice was sufficiently strong and smooth for sledge-travelling, sent forth a party of young hunters, with their sisters and sweethearts, in a sledge covered at the one end, which was also well cushioned and gaily painted; the ladies in their best winter-dresses took possession of it, while the hunters occupied the exposed part, with guns, shot-pouches, and hunting-knives, in complete readiness. Beside the driver, who was generally an old experienced hand, there was placed a young hog, or a leg of pork, occasionally roasted to make the odour more inviting, and packed up with

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cords and straw in a pretty tight parcel, which was fastened to the sledge by a long rope twisted to almost iron hardness. Away they drove at full speed; and when fairly in the forest, the pork was thrown down, and allowed to drag after the sledge, the smell of it bringing wolves from every quarter, while the hunters fired at them as they advanced. I have seen a score of skins collected in this manner, not to speak of the fun, the excitement, and the opportunities for exhibiting one's marksmanship and courage where one would most wish to have them seen.

The peasants said it was never lucky when Christmas came without a wolf-hunt: but that year it was like to be so; for, as I have said, the snow kept falling at intervals, with days of fog and thaw between, till the night before the vigil. In my youth, the Lithuanians kept Christmas after the fashion of old northern times. It began with great devotion, and ended in greater feasting. The eve was considered particularly sacred: many traditional ceremonies and strange beliefs hung about it, and the more pious held that no one should engage in any profane occupation, or think of going to sleep after sunset. When it came, our disappointment concerning the wolf-hunt lay heavy on many a mind as well as mine; but a strong frost had set in before daybreak, and at the early nightfall a finer prospect for sledging could not be desired—over the broad plain, and far between the forest pines; the ice stretched away as smooth and bright as a mirror. The moon was full, and the stars were out by thousands: you could have read large print by the cold, clear light, as my cousins and I stood at my uncle's door, fervently wishing it had been any other evening. Suddenly, our ears caught the sound of bells and laughing voices, and in a few minutes up drove the Lorenski sledge in its gayest trappings, with Constanza, the Russian countess, and the young cousins, all looking blithe, and rosy in the frosty air, while Emerich and Theodore sat in true hunter's trim, and Father Cassimer himself in charge of the reins, with the well-covered pork beside him. They had two noble horses of the best Tatar blood, unequalled in the province, as we knew, for speed and strength; and Emerich's cheerful voice first saluted us with: 'Ho! friends, it is seven hours yet till midnight: won't you come with us?—it is a shame to let Christmas in without a wolf-skin!'

That was enough for us: we flew in for our equipments. My uncle was not at first willing that we should go; but the merry company now at his door, the unequivocal countenance which Father Cassimer gave to the proceeding, and the high spirits of the young Russians, who were, as usual, wild for the sport, made him think that, after all, there was no harm in the young people taking an hour or two in the woods before mass, which on Christmas-eve begins always at midnight. Our hunting-gear was donned in a trice; and with my uncle's most trusty man, Metski, to assist in driving, away we went at full speed to the forest.

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Father Cassimer was an experienced general in expeditions of the kind; he knew the turns of the woods where the wolves scented best; and when we had got fairly among the tall oaks, down went his pork. For some time it dragged on without a single wolf appearing, though the odour came strong and savoury through cords and straw.

'If I were a wolf myself, I would come for that,' said old Metski. The priest quickened his speed, vowing he would not say mass without a skin that night; and we got deeper into the wilderness of oak and pine. Like most of our Lithuanian forests, it had no underwood. There was ample space for our sledge among the great trees, and the moonlight fell in a flood of brightness upon their huge white trunks, and through the frost-covered branches. We could see the long icicles gleaming like pendants of diamond for miles through the wide woods, but never a wolf. The priest began to look disappointed; Metski sympathised with him, for he relished a hunt almost as well as his reverence; but all the rest, with the help of the Russians, amused themselves with *making game*. I have said they were in great spirits, particularly Count Theodore; indeed he was generally the gayer of the pair—his sister being evidently the more prudent—and in this respect they resembled the Lorenskis. Many a jest, however, on the non-appearance of the wolves went round our sledge, of which I remember nothing now except that we all laughed till the old wood rang.

'Be quiet, good children,' said the priest, turning in his seat of command: 'you make noise enough to frighten all the wolves in creation.'

'They won't come to-night, father; they are preparing for mass,' cried Count Theodore. 'Juana, if the old Finn were here now, wouldn't he be useful?'

'Perhaps he might,' said the countess, with a forced laugh; but she cast a look of strange warning and reproof on her brother.

'What Finn?' said the priest, catching the count's words.

'Oh, he is talking of an old nursery-tale we had in St Petersburg,' hastily interposed the lady, though I thought her face had no memory of the nursery in it.

'About the Finns I'll warrant,' said Father Cassimer. 'They are a strange people. My brother the merchant told me that he knew one of them at Abo who said he had a charm for the wolves; but somebody informed against him for smuggling, and the Russian government sent him to the lead-mines in Siberia. By Saint Sigismund, there's the first of them!'

As the priest spoke, a large wolf appeared, and half the guns in the sledge were raised. 'Not yet, not yet,' said our experienced commander, artfully turning away as another and another came in sight. 'There are more coming,' and he gradually slackened our pace; but far off through the moonlit woods and the frozen night we could hear a strange

murmur, which grew and swelled on all sides to a chorus of mingled howlings, and the wolves came on by troops.

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'Fire now, friends!' cried Father Cassimer. 'We are like to have skins enough for Christmas;' and bang went all our barrels. I saw five fall; but, contrary to expectation, the wolves did not retire—they stood for an instant snarling at us. The distant howlings continued and came nearer; and then from every glade and alley, down the frozen streams, and through the wide openings of the forest, came by scores and hundreds such a multitude of wolves as we could not have believed to exist in all Lithuania.

'Hand me my gun, and take the reins, Metski,' cried Father Cassimer. 'Drive for your life!' he added in an under tone; but every one in the sledge heard him. Heaven knows how many we killed; but it seemed of no use. Our pork was swallowed, straw and all. The creatures were pressing upon us on every side, as if trying to surround the sledge; and it was fearful to see the leaps that some gray old fellows among them would take at Metski and the horses. Our driver did his part like a man, making a thousand winds and turns through the woods; but still the wolves pursued us. Fortunately, the firing kept them off, and, thanks to our noble horses, they were never able to get ahead of us; but as far as we could see behind us in the moonlight, came the howling packs, as if rising from the ground of the forest. We had seen nothing like it, and all did their best in firing, especially Count Theodore; but his shots had little effect, for his hand shook, and I know not if any but myself saw the looks of terrified intelligence which he exchanged with his sister. Still, she and the Lady Constanza kept up their courage, though the young cousins were as white as snow, and our ammunition was fast decreasing.

'Yonder is a light,' said Constanza at last, as the poor horses became unmanageable from fright and weariness. 'It is from the cottage of old Wenzel, the woodman.'

'If we could reach that,' said Father Cassimer, 'and leave the horses to their fate: it is our only chance.'

No one contradicted the priest's arrangement, for his last words were felt to be true—though a pang passed over Constanza's face at the thought of leaving our brave and faithful horses to the wolves: but louder rose the howls behind us, as Metski urged on with all his might, and far above all went the shout of Father Cassimer (he had the best lungs in that province): 'Ho, Wenzel! open the door to us for God's sake!'

We heard the old man reply, sent one well-aimed volley in among the wolves, and as they recoiled, man and woman leaped from the sledge—for our Polish girls are active—and rushed into the cottage, when old Wenzel instantly double-barred the door. It was woful to hear the cry of pain and terror from our poor horses as we deserted them; the next instant the wolves were upon them. We saw them from the window, as thick as ever flies stuck on sugar. How we fired upon them, and with what good-will old Wenzel helped us, praying all the time to every saint

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in the calendar, you may imagine! But still their numbers were increasing; and as a pause came in the fearful din, we plainly heard through the still air the boom of our own great bell, ringing for the midnight mass. At that sound, Father Cassimer's countenance fell for the first time. He knew the bellman was a poor half-witted fellow, who would not be sensible of his absence; and then he turned to have another shot at the wolves.

Shots were by this time getting scarce among us. There was not a man had a charge left but old Wenzel, who had supplied us as long as he could; but at length, loading his own gun with his last charge, he laid it quietly in the corner, saying one didn't know what use might be for it, and he never liked an empty gun.

Wenzel was the son of a small innkeeper at Grodno, but after his father's decease, which occurred when he was a child, his mother had married a Russian trader, who, when she died, carried the boy to Moscow. There Wenzel bade fair to be brought up a Russian; but when a stepmother came home, which took place while he was still a youth, he had returned to his native country, built himself a hut in the woods of Lithuania, and lived a lonely hunter till the time of my story, when he was still a robust, though gray-haired man. Some said his Muscovite parents had not been to his liking; some that he had found cause to shoot a master to whom they apprenticed him at Moscow; but be that as it might, Wenzel hated the Russians with all his heart, and never scrupled to say that the gun which had served him so long would serve the country too if it ever came to a rising. So much for Wenzel's story, by way of explaining what followed; but as I stood beside him that night at the hut's single crevice of a window, I could have given Poland itself for ammunition enough to do service on the wolves. They had now left nothing but the bones of our horses, which they had dragged round and round the cottage, with a din of howlings that almost drowned our voices within. Then they seized on the bodies of their own slain companions, which were devoured to the very skins; and still the gathering was going on. We could see them coming in troops through the open glades of the forest, as if aware that some human prey was in reserve. The hut was strongly built of great pine-logs, but it was fearful to hear them tearing at the door and scratching up the foundations. The bravest among us got terrified at these sounds. Metski loudly avowed his belief that the wolves were sent upon us as a punishment for hunting on Christmas-eve, and fell instantly to his prayers. Wenzel flung a blazing brand among them from the window, but they did not seem to care for fire; and three of them were so near leaping in, that he drove to the log-shutter and gave up that method of defence. None of the party appeared so far overcome with terror as Count Theodore: his spirit and prudence both seemed to forsake him. When the wolves began to scratch, he threw himself

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almost on his face in the corner, and kept moaning and praying in Russian, of which none of us understood a syllable but old Wenzel. Emerich and I would have spoken to him, but the woodman stopped us with a strange sign. Count Theodore had taken the relic of some saint from a pocket-book which he carried in his breast, and was, in Russian fashion as I think, confessing his sins over it; while his sister sat silent and motionless by the fire, with livid face and clasped hands. It was burning low, but I saw the woodman's face darken. He stepped to the corner and took down his gun, as I believed, to take the last shot at the wolves; but Count Theodore was in his way. He levelled it for an instant at the prostrate man, and before I could speak or interpose, the report, followed by a faint shrill shriek from the Russian, rang through the hut. We rushed to him, but the count was dead. A bullet had gone right through the heart.

'My gun has shot the count, and the wolves will leave us now,' said Wenzel coolly. 'I heard him say in his prayers that a Finn, now in the Siberian mines, had vowed to send them on him and his company wherever he went.'

As the woodman spoke, he handed to Count Emerich, with a hoarse whisper, a bloody pocket-book, taken from the dead body, and turning to Juana, said something loud and threatening to her in the Russian tongue; at which the lady only bowed her head, seeming of all in the hut to be the least surprised or concerned at the death of her brother. As for us, the complicated horrors of the night had left us stunned and stupefied till the rapid diminution of the wolfish din, the sounds of shots and voices, and the glare of flambeaux lighting up the forest, brought most of us to the window. The wolves were scouring away in all directions, there was a grayness in the eastern sky, for Christmas-day was breaking; and from all sides the count and my uncle's tenantry, with skates and sledges, guns and torches, were pouring to the rescue as we shouted to them from the cottage.

They had searched for us almost since midnight, fearing that something terrible had detained Father Cassimer and his company from mass. There were wonderfully few wolves shot in the retreat, and we all went home to Count Emerich's house, but not in triumph, for with us went the body of the Russian, of which old Wenzel was one of the bearers. The unanimous determination we expressed to bring him to justice as a murderer, was silenced when Emerich shewed us in confidence a letter from the Russian minister, and a paper with all our names in a list of the disaffected in Upper Lithuania, which he had found in Theodore's pocket-book. After that, we all affirmed that Wenzel's gun had gone off by accident; and on the same good Christmas-day, Count Emerich, with a body of his retainers, escorted the Lady Juana to a convent at the other end of the province, the superior of which was his aunt. There she became a true Catholic, professed, and, as I was told, turned to

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a great saint. There is a wooden cross with his name, and a Latin inscription on it, marking Count Theodore's grave, by our old church on the edge of the forest. No one ever inquired after him, and the company of that terrible night are far scattered. My uncle and his sons all died for the poor country. The young cousins are married to German doctors in Berlin. Constanza and her brother are still single, for aught I know, but they have been exiles in America these fifteen years. Father Cassimer went with them, after being colonel of a regiment which saw hard service on the banks of the Vistula; and it may be that he is still saying mass or hunting occasionally in the Far West.

The last time I saw Wenzel and Metski was in the trenches at Minsk, where they had a tough debate regarding our adventure in the forest: the woodman insisting it was the Finn's spell that brought the wolves in such unheard-of numbers, and the peasant maintaining that it was a judgment on our desecration of Christmas-eve. For my own part, I think the long storm and a great scarcity of food had something to do with it, for tales of the kind were never wanting in our province. The wolf-gathering, however, saved us a journey to Siberia: thanks to old Wenzel. And sometimes yet, when any strange noise breaks in upon my sleep even here in England, I dream of being in his wild hut in the forest and listening to the wolfish voices at the door.

THE DROLLERIES OF FALSE POLITICAL ECONOMY.

Plans for paying the national debt.

It is not customary to associate the ludicrous with financial operations—with budgets, schemes of taxation, and national debts. In general, they are considered to assume a formidable aspect; and when that is not the case, their details are looked on as dry and uninteresting—they are universally voted a 'bore.' Yet we engage to shew, that there have been some financial projects which at the present day we can pronounce essentially ludicrous. And they are not the mere projects of enthusiasts and theoretic dreamers. They were put in practice on a large scale; they involved the disposal of millions of money; and they were in operation at so late a period, that the present generation paid heavy taxes for the purpose of carrying them out—taxes paid for nothing better than the success of a practical hoax.

The round hundreds of millions in which our national debt is set forth seem to have often confused the brains of our most practical arithmeticians and financiers. They seem to have felt as if these did not represent real money, but something ideal; or perhaps we might say, they have treated them like certain results of the operation of figures which might be neutralised by others, as the equivalents on the two sides of an equation exhaust each other. We never hear of a man trying to pay his own personal

debts otherwise than with money, but we have had hundreds of projects for paying the national debt without money, and generally through some curious and ingenious arithmetical process. We might perhaps amuse our readers by an account of some of these, for to their absurdity there are no bounds; but we adhere in the meantime to our engagement, to shew that on this subject even the practical projects of statesmen of our own day have been ridiculous.

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We shall suppose that some one has occasion for L.100, which he finds a friend obliging enough to lend him. On receiving it, he requests the loan of other L.10; and being asked for what purpose, he answers, that with that L.10 he will pay up the original L.100. This is a rather startling proposal; but when he is asked how he is to manage this practical paradox, he says: 'Oh, I shall put out the L.10 to interest, and in the course of time it will increase until it pays off the L.100.' The lender is perhaps a little staggered at first by the audacious plausibility of the proposal, but it requires but a few seconds to enable him to say: 'Why, yes, you may lend out the L.10 at interest; but in the meantime, as you have borrowed it, interest runs against you upon it; so what better are you?' The lender, so far from concurring with the sanguine hopes about the fructification of the L.10, will only regret his having intrusted the larger sum to a person whose notions of money are so loose and preposterous.

Yet the proposal would only have carried into private pecuniary matters the principle of the sinking-fund, so long deemed a blessing, and a source of future prosperity to the country. A sinking-fund is an expression generally applied to any sum of money reserved out of expenditure to pay debt, or meet any contingency. Now, observe that our remarks are not directed against it in this simple form. A surplus of revenue obtained by moderate taxation, saved through frugal expenditure, and applied to the reduction of the national debt, is always a good thing. But the sinking-fund to which we chiefly refer was a system of borrowing money to pay debt. It might be said that the identical money which was borrowed was not the same which was used for paying the debt; but it came to the same thing if the sinking-fund was kept up while the nation was borrowing. Thus, taking the case of the private borrower as we have already put it, if he took L.10 of his own money and put it out at interest, that it might increase and pay off his loan, and if, by so doing, he found it necessary to borrow L.110, instead of merely L.100, it was virtually the same as if he applied L.10 of the borrowed money for his sinking-fund. Thus for the year 1808, the state required L.12,200,000 in loan above what the taxes produced. But in the same year L.1,200,000 were applied to the sinking-fund; consequently, it was necessary to borrow so much more, and therefore the whole loan of that year amounted to L.13,400,000. The loan was increased exactly in the way in which our friend added the L.10 to the L.100. It was borrowing money to pay loans.

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The application of millions in this manner by our statesmen, was in a great measure owing to the enthusiastic speculations of Dr Richard Price, a benevolent, ingenious, and laborious man, who, unfortunately for the public, possessed the power of giving his wild speculations a tangible and practical appearance. He was, to use a common expression, 'carried off his feet' by arithmetical calculations. He believed compound interest to be omnipotent. He made a calculation of what a penny could have come to if laid out at compound interest from the birth of Christ to the nineteenth century, and found it would make—we forget precisely how many globes of gold the size of this earth. He did not say, however, where the proper investments were to be made; how the money was to be procured; and, most serious of all, he overlooked that where one party received such an accumulating amount of money, some other party must pay it, and to pay it must make it. In fact, the doctor looked on the increase of money by compound interest as a mere arithmetical process. The world, however, finds it to be a process of working, and the making of money by toil, parsimony, and anxiety.

When any one seizes on such a theme he is sure to be carried to extremities with it. It was one of Price's favourite theories, that the time when interest was highest was the best time for borrowing money, because the borrowed sinking-fund would then bring the highest interest. One is astonished in times like these, when people think taxes and national debt so serious, at the easy carelessness with which the doctor treats the disease, and his sure remedy. He says in his celebrated work on Annuities (i. 277): 'It is an observation that deserves particular attention here, that in this plan it will be of less importance to a state what interest it is obliged to give for money; *for the higher the interest, the sooner will such a sum pay off the principal*. Thus, L.100,000,000 borrowed at 8 per cent., and bearing an annual interest of L.8,000,000, would be paid off by a fund producing annually L.100,000 in fifty-six years; that is, in thirty-eight years less time than if the same money had been borrowed at 4 per cent. Hence it follows that reductions of interest would in this plan be no great advantage to a state. They would indeed lighten its present burdens; but this advantage would be in some measure balanced by the addition which would be made to its future burdens, in consequence of the longer time during which it would be necessary to bear them.'

'Certain it is, therefore,' says the doctor, in a general survey of his arithmetical salvation of the country, 'that if our affairs are to be relieved, it must be by a fund increasing itself in the manner I have explained. The smallest fund of this kind is indeed omnipotent, if it is allowed time to operate.' And again: 'It might be easily shewn that the faithful application from the beginning of the year 1700, of only L.200,000

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annually, would long before 1790, notwithstanding the reductions of interest, have paid off above L.100,000,000 of the public debts. The nation might therefore some years ago have been eased of a great part of the taxes with which it is loaded. The most important relief might have been given to its trade and manufactures; and it might now have been in better circumstances than at the beginning of last war: its credit firm; respected by foreign nations, and dreaded by its enemies.'

That such a tone should be assumed by an enthusiastic speculator is not wonderful. The payment of the national debt has been one of the staple dreams of enthusiasts. It would be difficult to believe the wild nonsense that has been written on it; and Hogarth, in his dreadful picture of a madhouse, appropriately represents one of his principal figures hard at work on it. But the remarkable thing—and what shews the perilous nature of such speculations—is, that these theories were worked out by chancellors of the exchequer, and adopted by parliament. There was a faint sinking-fund so early as 1716; but Walpole one day swept it up and spent it, having probably just discovered that it was a fallacy. It was in the days of the younger Pitt, however, that it came out in full bloom. After it had been for several years in operation, a retired and absent-minded mathematical student, Robert Hamilton, shewed its falsity in a book printed in 1813. The exposure was conclusive, and no one since that time has ventured to support a sinking-fund.

As already stated, it is a very good thing to save something out of the revenue and pay off part of the debt. But no good is done by keeping it to accumulate at interest, because the debt it would pay off is just accumulating against it. Apply this to private transactions. You are in debt L.110. You have L.10, and the question is: Are you to pay it at once, and reduce your debt to L.100, or are you to keep it accumulating at interest? It is much the same which you do, only the latter is the more troublesome mode. If you pay it at once, you will just have so much less interest to hand over to your creditor. If you put it out at interest, you will have to pay over to him what you receive for it, in addition to the interest of the L.100. There is an incidental purpose for which it has been deemed right that the government should, however, have a fund at its disposal—that is for buying into the funds when they fall very low, and thus accomplishing two services—the one the paying a portion of the debt at a cheap rate, the other stopping the depreciation of the funds. This is in itself we doubt not a very just practical object, but we believe the sums that can be applied to it are very small in comparison with the reserves which formed the old sinking-fund.

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But another and a very different argument has been adduced, not certainly for the re-establishment and support of a sinking-fund, since its fallacy has been exposed, but against the policy of having exposed it. It is said that the belief in the potency of a sinking-fund for clearing off the debt inspired public confidence in the stability of the funds, and that it was wrong to shake this confidence even by the promulgation of truth. It has often been supposed, indeed, that the statesmen who mainly carried out the system were in secret conscious of its fallacy, but were content to carry it out so long as they saw that it inspired confidence in the public. It is in allusion to this that we have spoken of the sinking-fund as a great hoax. We cannot sanction the morality of governments acting on conscious fallacies; and in this instance the natural confidence in the funds rather enlarged than decreased when the fallacy was exposed and the system abandoned.

Keeping in view Dr Price's views of the potentiality of compound interest, we now give a brief account of a singular attempt made in France to put them in practice, and by their omnipotence pay our national debt and that of other nations too, out of a small private fortune. In the year 1794, a will was registered in France by one Fortune Ricard, disposing of a sum of 500 livres, a little more than L.20 sterling. Fortune stated that this sum was the result of a present of twenty-four livres which he had received when he was a boy, and had kept accumulating at compound interest to a period of advanced age. By his will he left it in the hands of trustees, making arrangements for a perpetual succession, as the purposes of the trust were not to be all accomplished for a period of several centuries. The money was to be divided into five portions, each of 100 livres, and so to be put out at compound interest.

The first portion was to be withdrawn at the end of a century: it would then amount to 13,000 livres, or about L.550. It is scarcely worth while mentioning the purposes to which this trifle was to be applied, but for the credit of M. Ricard it may be mentioned that they were all unexceptionable. In two centuries the second sum would be released, amounting to 1,700,000 livres. At the end of the third century, the third instalment was to be released, when it would consist of 226,000,000 livres. The destination of these magnificent sums was also unexceptionable—it was for national education, the erecting of public libraries, and the like. The instalment to be released at the end of the fourth century would amount to about 30,000,000,000 livres: it was to be employed partly in the building of 100 towns, each containing 150,000 inhabitants, in the most agreeable parts of France. 'In a short time,' says the benevolent founder, 'there will result from hence an addition of 15,000,000 of inhabitants to the kingdom, and its consumption will be doubled—for which service I hope the economists will think themselves obliged to me.' Malthus had not then published his principles of population.

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We must draw breath as we approach the destination of the fifth and last instalment. It was to amount to four millions of millions of livres—about a hundred and seventy thousand millions of pounds. We take for granted that Fortune's calculations are correct, and have certainly not taken the trouble of verifying them. Among other truly benevolent and cosmopolitan destinations of this very handsome sum, it may be sufficient to mention these:—

'Six thousand millions shall be appropriated towards paying the national debt of France, upon condition that the kings, our good lords and masters, shall be entreated to order the comptrollers-general of the finances to undergo in future an examination in arithmetic before they enter on the duties of their office.

'Twelve thousand millions shall likewise be employed in paying the public debts of England. It may be seen that I reckon that both these national debts will be doubled in this period—not that I have any doubt of the talents of certain ministers to increase them much more, but their operations in this way are opposed by an infinity of circumstances, which lead me to presume that these debts cannot be more than doubled. Besides, if they amount to a few thousands of millions more, I declare that it is my intention that they should be entirely paid off, and that a project so laudable should not remain unexecuted for a trifle more or less.'

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M. Ricard, it will be observed, must have drawn his will while royalty was in the ascendant; it was registered during the Reign of Terror, and one would be curious to know how many weeks, instead of centuries, his 500 livres remained sacred. Money in the most steadily-governed states—in our own, for instance—is subject to continual casualties. The most acute men of business cannot command perfectly certain investments for their own money—they are often miserably deceived, and suffer heavy losses. M. Ricard, however, supposed that a set of irresponsible trustees would for centuries always discover perfectly sure investments, and act with consummate watchfulness and honesty. If it were possible to leave behind one money with the qualification of always being securely invested, while the rest of the property in the world remained insecure, it would gradually suck all the wealth of the world into its vortex. But it would require supernatural agency to make it thus absolutely secure.

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[Footnote 1: See the will at length in the appendix to Lord Lauderdale's *Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth*.]

SIR FRANCIS HEAD'S 'FAGGOT.'

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'A faggot of French Sticks' is the whimsical title of a work just presented to the public, by the author of *Bubbles from the Brunnen of Nassau*; the said work being as respectable

a specimen of bookmaking as has ever come under our notice. The object of the writer appears to have been to fill so much paper, by saying something about all he saw or heard of in a visit to Paris, no matter how insignificant the circumstances; and by this ingenious means, he has actually contrived to make up two goodly-sized volumes for the literary market.

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The author of this strange melange, however, is not without a dash of merit; he possesses a terrier-like power of poking about into holes and corners, and dragging to light a variety of facts which might escape the attention of less vigilant tourists. For example, he is not satisfied with the mere sight or employment of omnibuses, street-porters, *chiffonniers*, and other agents of the public service, but must know all about them—how the omnibus horses live, and how many miles they run per diem; what variety of occupations the porters resort to for a livelihood; and what are the substances, and their value, that the *chiffonniers* scrape every morning from the kennel. Sir Francis is great on pig slaughter-houses, furnished lodgings, and police-officers. He tells you every particular of his lodging: how he ascended the stair; what landing-places there were; what price he was to pay; how the servant brought him too few pieces of butter to breakfast, and what he said in ordering more; how one day he perceived a bad smell in his sitting-room, and shifted to a higher part of the building, where the bad smell did not come; how he finally paid his account, and how the *concierge* bade him good-by. All important information this. An equally true and particular narrative is given of Sir Francis's object in visiting Paris, which was to consult an oculist on the subject of his eyes. In going to the oculist's, we are informed how he left his lodgings at a quarter before seven o'clock; how he crossed the Place Vendome, and saw a sentinel pacing at the foot of Napoleon's Column; how he observed that the sentinel had the misfortune to have a hole in his greatcoat, which affords an opportunity too good to be lost for quoting that little-known verse of Burns's —'If there's a hole in a' your coats,' &c.; how he then, being done with looking at the sentinel, goes on his way, crosses the Boulevard des Italiens, and enters the Rue de la Chaussee d'Antin; how he looks about him till he sees No. 50, and, having spoken a word to the door-keeper, goes up stairs. Then, he informs his readers that he rang the doctor's bell; and how, the door being opened by a boy in livery, he was shewn into a drawing-room. Here, he tells us, he sat down in company with a number of other patients, waiting their turn to be called by the doctor. Vastly amusing all this, but nothing to what follows:—'For a considerable time we all sat in mute silence, and, indeed, in our respective attitudes, almost motionless, save that every now and then a gentleman, and sometimes a lady, would arise, slowly walk diagonally across the carpet to a corner close to the window, press with his or her hand the top of a little mahogany machine that looked like an umbrella-stand, look down into it, and then very slowly, at a sort of funereal pace, walk back. All this I bore with great fortitude for some time: at last, overpowered by curiosity, I arose, walked slowly and diagonally across the carpet, pushed the thing in the corner exactly as I had seen everybody else push it, looked just as they did, downwards, where, close to the floor, I beheld open, in obedience to the push I had given from the top, the lid of a spitting-box, from which I very slowly, and without attracting the smallest observation, walked back to my chair.' Wonderful power of description this!

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Having had the honour of receiving an invitation to dinner at the Elysee, Sir Francis of course goes at the appointed hour, seven o'clock. The following is his account of the affair. After passing through the entrance-hall, 'I slowly walked through two or three handsome rooms *en suite*, full of interesting pictures, into a drawing-room, in which I found assembled, in about equal proportions, about fifty very well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, the latter being principally officers, whose countenances, not less clearly than the decorations on their breasts, announced them to be persons of distinction. The long sofas and chairs, as if they had only just come out—or rather, as if they had just come up from the country to come out—had arranged themselves so very formally, and altogether behaved so very awkwardly, that it was almost impossible for the company assembled to appear as much at their ease as, from their position, education, and manners, they really were; and accordingly, biassed by the furniture, they kept moving, and bowing, and courtesying, and *sotto-voce* talking, until they got into a parallelogram, in the centre of which stood, distinguished by a broad ribbon, and by a mild, thoughtful, benevolent countenance, Prince Louis Napoleon, whose gentle and gentleman-like bearing to every person who approached him entitled him to that monarchical homage in which the majority evidently delighted, but which it was alike his policy as well as his inclination—at all events to appear—to suppress; and accordingly the parallelogram, which, generally speaking, was at the point of congelation, sometimes and of its own accord froze into the formality of a court, and then all of a sudden appeared to recollect that the Prince was the President, and that the whole party had assembled to enjoy *liberte*, *fraternite*, and *egalite*. As I was observing the various phases that one after another presented themselves to view, the principal officer of the household came up to me, and in a quiet and appropriate tone of voice, requested me to do two things; one of which appeared to me to be rather easy, and the other—or rather to do both—extremely difficult. By an inclination of his forehead he pointed to two ladies of rank, whose names he mentioned to me, but with whom I was perfectly unacquainted, seated on the sofas at different points of the parallelogram. 'When dinner is announced you will be so good,' he said, 'as to offer your arm to ——' (the one) 'and to seat yourself next to ——' (the other.) Of course I silently bowed assent; but while the officer who had spoken to me was giving similar instructions to other gentlemen, I own I felt a little nervous, lest, during the polite scramble in which I was about to engage, like the dog in the fable, grasping at the shadow of the second lady, I might lose the substance of the first, or *vice versa*. However, when the doors were thrown open, I very quickly, with a profound reverence, obtained my prize, and at once

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confiding to her—for had I deliberated I should have been lost—the remainder of the pleasing duty it had been predestined I was to have the honour to perform, we glided through couples darting in various directions for similar objects, until, finding ourselves in a formal procession sufficiently near to the lady in question, we proceeded, at a funereal pace, towards our doom, which proved to be a most delightful one. Seated in obedience to the orders I had received, we found ourselves exactly opposite “le Prince,” who had, of course, on his right and left, the two ladies of highest rank. The table was very richly ornamented, and it was quite delightful to observe at a glance what probably in mathematics, or even in philosophy, it might have been rather troublesome to explain—namely, the extraordinary difference which existed between forty or fifty ladies and gentlemen standing in a parallelogram in a drawing-room, and the very same number and the very same faces, rectilinearly seated in the very same form in a dining-room. It was the difference between sterility and fertility, between health and sickness, between joy and sorrow, between winter and summer; in fact, between countenances frozen into Lapland formality and glowing with tropical animation and delight. Everybody’s mouth had apparently something kind to say to its neighbour’s eyes; and the only alloy was that, as each person had two neighbours, his lips, under a sort of *embarras des richesses*, occasionally found it rather difficult to express all that was polite and pleasing to both.’ Dinner being over, all returned to the drawing-room in the same formal order. Each gentleman bowed ceremoniously to the lady he had conducted, she withdrew her arm, ‘and the sofas were again to be seen fringed by rows of satin shoes; while the carpet, in all other directions, was subjected to the pressure of boots, that often remained for a short time motionless as before. A general buzz of conversation, however, soon enlivened the room; and the President, gladly availing himself of it, mingled familiarly with the crowd.’

In the course of his rambles through Paris, Sir Francis visits various *casernes* or military barracks, and military schools. He also makes sundry investigations into the functions and *materiel* of the French army, and finally, in company with Louis Napoleon, goes to a review. The sum of these proceedings is, that he is much struck with the progress made by the French in strategy and military manoeuvres, especially in their musket-ball firing, against which, he says, we have no chance. Everybody knows that our author is an alarmist, ever sighing over our want of national defences, and dreaming of invasion and rapine. At the same time, his details on military affairs are worth the notice of those to whom the business of military education is intrusted.

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Sir Francis is very much pleased with the Parisian street *commissionaires* or porters, and wonders that no such luxury is general in London. One day he invites the nearest commissionaire to visit his lodging, and tell him his whole story, which the man gladly did. Setting off at a great rate, he said:—'Sir, I black boots; I saw wood; I take it up into the apartments; I carry portmanteaus and luggage, and whatever offers itself; I carry letters and parcels; I rub the floors of apartments and stairs; I wash the floors and the dining-rooms; I change furniture from one house to another with a handbarrow—carried by two men with leathern straps; I draw a cart with portmanteaus, wood, or furniture; I beat carpets, take them up out of the apartments, and carry them to the barrier outside Paris (yes, sir); I bring them back to the persons to whom they belong; I lay them down. I know how to arrange a room; I make the beds; I colour the inlaid floors of the apartments; I watch a sick person through the night and day (a shrug) for so much a day (a shrug), and for the night also (a shrug); I agree as to the price with those persons who employ me, for five francs the night, eight francs for the twenty-four hours, when they do not feed me; besides, I watch the dead in the apartment during the twenty-four hours that they remain exposed; in short (three shrugs), I do whatever is offered to me. I receive commercial notes for whoever will charge me with the commission, and who will give me the note to enable me to receive it; I bring back the money to the person who has intrusted me with the note, and the person pays me for my commission; I pawn at the Mont de Piete whatever the public is willing to intrust to me—jewels (a shrug), chains, watches, gold or silver; I pawn silver spoons and forks, for eating; I pawn clocks, linen; they take everything in pawn (a shrug) at the Mont de Piete—furniture, pianos, mattresses, candelabras, lustres: in short, they take in pawn everything of value; and I bring back the money and the pawnbroker's ticket to the person who has intrusted me with the commission, and at the same time that person pays me for my commission. Afterwards, I redeem pawned articles from the Mont de Piete for all those persons who choose to honour me with their commissions, provided that the person puts his signature on the back of the paper which the Mont de Piete delivered to him on the day when he pawned the aforesaid articles. I act as commissioner throughout all the departments of France, and also (shrug) in foreign countries, according to the price agreed on, and at a reasonable price; I travel on the railways (shrug), in the diligence (shrug); I go as quick as I can, and I come back as quick as I can; I rub down a horse—I can! I feed him; wash the carriage; drive the carriage; arrange the cellar; rinse out the bottles; bottle the wine; pile up the bottles after they are corked and stamped; lower the hogsheads of wine into the cellar with a

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thick rope, with the help of a comrade, and the price is two francs for each hogshead. In my own country, I am a labourer, and do everything relating to the cultivation of the ground. I root up the trees; I saw them into several lengths; I split the wood; pile it up to dry; then load it on mules, and carry it to the house to be burned; afterwards I mow the hay and corn; carry the corn into the barn (shrug), and the hay also; thrash the corn, and put it away into the granary; from whence they take it out by little and little to have it ground and to make bread. I prune the vines.' Here the commissionaire gives an account of the whole process of wine-making, in which he is an adept; and then goes on to explain how he is employed as a spy on families and others, all in the way of business. He ends with saying that trade is dull, and blames the revolution of 1848 for ruining his employment—for why? 'Everybody is afraid of the future. Everybody is economical; everybody is hiding, hoarding, or saving his money, because he knows that affairs cannot continue as they are, that sooner or later there will be another revolution.' Such a country! The revolution thus anticipated has taken place. By relieving the Parisians from the fears of a social upbreak—a universal sack of property—for that was preying on their minds—the grand *coup* of Louis Napoleon will doubtless set money afloat, and restore occupation to the humbler classes—the real sufferers by revolutions.

The curious thing about all the revolutions and coups that have ever taken place in France is, that they never give the slightest particle of real liberty to the people; and, what is equally surprising, the people do not know what liberty is. It is a thing they talk about, and paint over doorways, but further they go not. When, in 1848, a mob was suffered to assume supreme authority, it might have been anticipated that the very first thing they would do would be to turn the whole police system about its business and destroy its records. No such thing. The triumphant insurrectionists, complaining of tyranny, were as tyrannical as anybody; they retained the obnoxious system of passports, and kept up the usual routine of police administration, spies and all. The truth appears to be, that the French cannot comprehend the idea of social organisation without a minute machinery of management and interference. Society in England, where people may speak and do pretty much what they like, go here and go there without leave asked, and set up any business anywhere as suits their fancy—is anarchy, a chaos, according to French notions. Sir Francis inclines to the belief that a system of government interference and regulation, as in France, is an advantage, because it protects society against some gross abuses—such as the indiscriminate sale of medicines, want of sanitary arrangements, the open spectacle of vice, and so forth. True this, in some respects, and we could wish for a little

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more vigour in certain departments of our social policy; but in this, as in many things, we have to make a choice of evils. Better, we think, allow abuses to be corrected by the comparatively sluggish action of public opinion, than accustom a people to have everything done for them, every action regulated by laws and prefects of police. The account given by Sir Francis of the manner in which the authority of the police bears on common workmen, is only a version of what every traveller speaks of with execration. Although we ourselves alluded to the subject on a former occasion, we may recapitulate a few points from the volume before us: 'Every workman or labouring boy is obliged, all over France, to provide himself with a book termed *un livret*, indorsed in Paris by a commissaire of police, and in other towns by the mayor or his assistants, containing his description, name, age, birthplace, profession, and the name of the master by whom he is employed. In fact, no person, under a heavy fine, can employ a workman unless he produce a livret of the above description, bearing an acquittal of his engagements with his last master. Every workman, after inscribing in his livret the day and terms of his engagement with a new master, is obliged to leave it in the hands of his said master, who is required, under a penalty, to restore it to him on the fulfilment of his engagement. Any workman, although he may produce a regular passport, found travelling without his book, is considered as "vagabond," and as such may be arrested and punished with from three to six months' imprisonment, and after that subjected to the surveillance of the *haute-police* for at least five and not exceeding ten years. No new livret can be indorsed until its owner produces the old one filled up. In case of a workman losing his livret, he may, on the presentation of his passport, obtain provisional permission to work, but without authority to move to any other place until he can satisfy the officer of police that he is free from all engagements to his last master. Every workman coming to Paris with a passport is required, within three days of his arrival, to appear at the prefecture of police with his livret, in order that it may be indorsed. In like manner, any labourer leaving Paris with a passport must obtain the *vise* of the police to his livret, which, in fact, contains an abstract history of his industrial life. As a description of the political department of the police of Paris would involve details, the ramifications of which would almost be endless, I will only briefly state, that from the masters of every furnished hotel and lodging-house—who are required to insert in a register, indorsed by a commissaire de police, the name, surname, profession, and usual domicile of every person who sleeps in their house for a single night—and from innumerable other sources, information is readily obtained concerning every person, and especially every stranger, residing

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in the metropolis. For instance, at the entrance of each lodging, and of almost every private house, there sits a being termed a *concierge*, who knows the hour at which each inmate enters and goes out; who calls on him; how many letters he receives; by their post-marks, where they come from; what parcels are left for him; what they appear to contain, &c. &c. &c. Again, at the corner of every principal street, there is located, wearing the badge of the police, a commissionaire, acquainted with all that outwardly goes on within the radius of his Argus-eyed observations. From these people, from the drivers of fiacres, from the sellers of vegetables, from fruiterers, and lastly, from the masters of wine-shops, who either from people sober, tipsy, or drunk, are in the habit of hearing an infinity of garrulous details, the police are enabled to track the conduct of almost any one, and, if necessary, to follow up their suspicions by their own agents in disguises which, practically speaking, render them invisible.' Sir Francis mentions that he was considered of sufficient importance to be under surveillance. "'You are," said very gravely to me a gentleman in Paris of high station, on whom I had had occasion to call, "a person of some consideration. Your object here is not understood, and you are therefore under the surveillance of the police." I asked him what that meant. "Wherever you go," he replied, "you are followed by an agent of police. When one is tired, he hands you over to another. Whatever you do, is known to them; and at this moment there is one waiting in the street until you leave me."

We need say no more. The people who, under all phases of government—despotism, constitutional monarchy, and universal-suffrage republic—coolly tolerate, nay, they admire and vindicate, this atrocious system of personal restraint and espionage, are totally unfit for the enjoyment of civil liberty. In conclusion, we can hardly recommend the book before us, further than to say, that its gossip, though often prosy to the verge of twaddle, is also sometimes droll and amusing from its graphic minuteness.

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[Footnote 2: *A Faggot of French Sticks*, 2 vols. London: Murray. 1852.]

IVORY AND ITS APPLICATIONS.

The Chinese, from time immemorial, have been celebrated for their excellence in the fabrication of ornamental articles in ivory; and, strange to say, up to our own time, their productions are still unrivalled. European artists have never succeeded in cutting ivory after the manner of these people, nor, to all appearance, is it likely they ever will. Nothing can be more exquisitely beautiful than the delicate lacework of a Chinese fan, or the elaborate carving of their miniature junks, chess-pieces, and concentric balls: their models of temples, pagodas, and other pieces of architecture are likewise skilfully

constructed; and yet three thousand years ago such monuments of art were executed with the very same grace and fidelity!

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Ivory was known to the Egyptians as an article both of use and ornament. They manufactured it into combs, rings, and a variety of similar things. The processions on the walls of their palaces and tombs would seem to indicate the fact of its having been obtained from India, and also from Ethiopia or Central Africa. There is every reason to believe also that the harder and more accessible ivory of the hippopotamus was extensively used by them. Colonel Hamilton Smith has seen a specimen of what appeared to be a sword-handle of ancient Egyptian workmanship, which has been recognised by dentists as belonging to this class of ivory.

Ivory was extensively used by the Jews. It is frequently spoken of in Scripture as being obtained from Tarshish—an indiscriminate term for various places in the lands of the Gentiles, but probably referring in this case to some part of India or Eastern Africa. Wardrobes were made of ivory, or at least inlaid with it; the splendid throne of Solomon was formed of this material, overlaid with gold; Ahab built an ivory palace: and beds or couches of the same material were common among the wealthy Israelites. The Phoenicians of Tyre—those merchant-princes of antiquity—were so profuse of this valuable article of their luxurious commerce as to provide ivory benches for the rowers of their galleys. Assyria—whose records and history are only now beginning to be unfolded—possessed magnificent articles of ivory. Mr Layard, in his excavations at Nineveh, found 'in the rubbish near the bottom of a chamber, several ivory ornaments upon which were traces of gilding: among them was the figure of a man in long robes, carrying in one hand the Egyptian *crux ansata*—part of a crouching sphinx—and flowers designed with great taste and elegance.'

The Greeks—who were acquainted with it at least as early as the time of Homer—gradually introduced ivory as a material for sculpture. In certain forms of combination with gold, it gave origin to the art of *chryselephantine* sculpture, so called from the Greek primitives, gold and ivory. This art, which was perhaps more luxurious than tasteful, was introduced about six hundred years before the Christian era; and it was much admired for its singular beauty. It was not, however, till the days of Phidias that it attained to its full splendour. Two of the masterpieces of this sculptor—the colossal statues of Minerva in the Parthenon at Athens and the Olympian Jove in his temple—were formed of gold and ivory. The Minerva was forty feet high, and the Olympian Jupiter was one of the wonders of the world. In the latter of these, the exposed parts of the figure were of ivory, and the drapery of gold. It was seated on a throne elaborately formed of gold, ivory, and cedar-wood; it was adorned with precious stones; and in his hand the god sustained an emblematic figure of Victory, made of the same costly materials.

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The Romans used ivory as a symbol of power; but they applied it practically to an infinite variety of purposes. Their kings and magistrates sat on ivory thrones of rich and elaborate construction—an idea received from the Etruscans. The curule chairs of ivory and gold that belonged to the office of consul, together with the sceptres and other articles of similar description, were all of Etruscan origin. The *libri elephantis* were tablets of ivory, on which were registered the transactions of the senate and magistrates; the births, marriages, and deaths of the people; their rank, class, and occupation, with other things pertaining to the census. The Romans also applied this material to the manufacture of musical instruments, combs, couches, harnesses of horses, sword-hilts, girdles. They were acquainted with the arts of dyeing and incrusting ivory, and they also possessed some splendid specimens of chryselephantine statuary. Ancient writers, indeed, mention no fewer than one hundred statues of gold and ivory; but they furnish us with no particulars of the mode of executing these colossal monuments of art in a substance which could only be obtained in small pieces. A head, smaller than the usual size, a statue about eight inches in height, and a bas-relief, are the only specimens that exist in the present day.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the taste for ivory ornament became almost extinct. There were some periods, however, in the early part of mediaeval history when this material was not forgotten: when the caliphs of the East formed of it some of the beautiful ornaments of their palaces; when the Arabian alchemists subjected it to the crucible, and so produced the pigment ivory black; when a Danish knight killed an elephant in the holy wars, and established an order of knighthood which still exists; when Charlemagne, the emperor of the West, had ivory ornaments of rare and curious carving.[3] It is, however, at a period subsequent to the return of the crusaders that we must date the commencement of a general revival of the taste in Europe. It would be interesting to trace the steps by which ivory regained its place in the arts and commerce of nations; but on this point we must not linger. From the low countries it spread to the far North. Its relations with art and beauty soon became widely recognised; the growing luxury of the Roman pontificate encouraged its applications; and towards the end of the fifteenth century it was extensively employed as an article of ornament and decoration in every country and court of Europe. The Portuguese were the first to revive a traffic with Africa which had been dormant for upwards of 1000 years. It was originally confined to the immense stores of ivory which the natives had accumulated for the purposes of their superstition; but these soon became exhausted, and the inexorable demands of European commerce once more prompted the destruction of the mighty and docile inhabitant of the wilderness. Elephant-hunting became a trade; and a terrible havoc was commenced, which has been unremittingly pursued down to the present time.

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The term ivory, originally derived from a Greek word signifying heavy, is indiscriminately applied to the following varieties of osseous matter:—

1. *The tusks and teeth of the elephant.*—Naturalists recognise two species of elephants—the Asiatic (*Elephas Indicus*) and the African (*Elephas Africanus*.) The former of these species is indigenous to the whole of Southern India and the Eastern Archipelago; but the largest and most valuable Indian elephant is that of Ceylon. The second species is found throughout the whole of Africa; and on the banks of the great rivers and lakes of the unexplored regions of the interior, hordes of the finest African elephants are supposed to wander in security. It was until very recently believed that the Asiatic elephant yielded the largest teeth, and those imported from Pegu, Cochin-China, and Ceylon, sometimes weighed 150 lbs. Specimens, however, have been obtained from the interior of Africa of much greater weight and dimensions. Mr Gordon Cumming has in his collection a pair of teeth taken from an old bull elephant in the vicinity of the equator, of which the larger of the two measures 10 feet 9 inches long, and weighs 173 lbs.; and Mr Cawood, who resided thirty years at the Cape, has another pair in his possession measuring 8-1/2 feet each, and weighing together 330 lbs.

Besides these contemporary races of elephants, the market is extensively supplied by the fossil ivory derived from the tusks of the great mammoth or fossil elephant of the geologist. The remains of this gigantic animal are abundantly distributed over the whole extent of the globe. They exist in large masses in the northern hemisphere, deeply embedded in the alluvial deposits of the tertiary period. Humboldt discovered specimens on some of the most elevated ridges of the Andes; and similar remains have been found in Africa. In the frozen regions of the far North, surrounded by successive layers of everlasting ice, the fossil ivory exists in a state of perfect preservation, and it constitutes indeed an important article of commerce in the north of Europe.

2. *The teeth of the hippopotamus, or river-horse.*—These, under the inappropriate term of 'sea-horse teeth,' supply the most suitable ivory for the dentist. In addition to twenty grinders, the animal has twelve front teeth, the outer on each side of the jaw being the largest and most prized. This ivory is much harder, closer in the grain, and more valuable than that of the elephant. It is remarkable, moreover, for the extreme hardness of its enamel, which is quite incapable of being cut, and will strike fire with a steel instrument. The large teeth of the hippopotamus weigh on the average 6 lbs., and the small ones about 1 lb. each. Their value ranges from 6s. to 40s. per lb.

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3. *The teeth of the walrus, or sea-cow.*—These are nearly straight, and measure from 2 feet to 2-1/2 feet in length. The exterior portion of the tooth possesses a much finer grain and texture than its core, which in appearance and properties bears a close resemblance to ordinary bone. Of a yellowish cream-colour and mottled, this ivory is much less valuable than the teeth of the hippopotamus. It is seldom applied in our day to other than dental purposes; but its antiquity is interesting. The Scandinavian relics of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with which our museums are so profusely enriched, are for the most part formed of the teeth of the walrus. The elegant spiral horn of the narwhal or sea-unicorn also produces ivory of a superior quality. It is not to any great extent applied to useful purposes, but is more frequently preserved in museums and collections as a beautiful natural curiosity.

The tusks and teeth of the elephant—the latter, for the sake of distinction, are termed grinders—are formed after the ordinary manner of the teeth of animals. The organism which converts the earthy constituents of the blood into cellular tissue and membrane, contributes in the same way to form the teeth by the successive deposition of layer upon layer of the soft vascular pulp. The marks of these depositions, or laminae, are clearly distinguishable in the longitudinal striae of the section of a tooth. Mr Corse Scott states that the Indian elephant has only ten or twelve laminae in the tooth, while that of the great mammoth has twenty-four, besides having a much more regularly disposed enamel. The tooth is hollow about half-way up, but a very small tubular cavity is visible throughout its entire length. This, sometimes called the nerve, is in reality the apex of successive formations in the process of growth. The grinders are seldom used in the arts. They are of a different texture, the laminae more loosely combined, and possessing a tendency to separate, which renders them unfit for nearly all useful purposes. Ivory has the same chemical constitution as ordinary teeth—that is, cartilage united to such earthy ingredients as the phosphate of lime.

But it is very remarkable that the fossil ivory of the mammoth, and specimens of the historic period of Pompeii or Egypt, contain sometimes as much as 10 per cent. more of fluoride of calcium than the ivory of the present day. We apprehend, however, that this property—first investigated by Dr George Wilson—may be derived from long-continued contact with earth, since fluoride of calcium is the chief ingredient in the enamel or exterior portion of the tooth. Ancient ivory, having thus gained in its inorganic bases, becomes deficient in the gelatinous constituents necessary to its preservation. We recently had a singularly beautiful application of the knowledge of this principle in the case of the ivory specimens sent from Nineveh by Mr Layard. On their arrival in England, it was discovered that they were rapidly crumbling to pieces. Professor Owen recommended that the articles should be boiled in a solution of albumen, which was done accordingly, and the ivory rendered as firm and solid as when it was first entombed.

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We may allude here to a very singular physical property which is possessed by the elephant's tusk. Specimens have frequently been obtained which were found to contain musket-bullets in their centre, surrounded with a species of osseous pulp differing from the ordinary character and constitution of ivory. There was frequently no corresponding orifice on the surface of the tusk; and hence Blumenbach, and other naturalists, were led to form some very inaccurate notions regarding this circumstance. Mr Rodgers of Sheffield some years ago forwarded a variety of such specimens to the Edinburgh College Museum, and these were very closely examined by Professor Goodsir, who, in a communication to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, demonstrated that this arose simply from a property of isolating foreign substances common to all osseous organised bodies: the ball having been enclosed by the tusk in its pulpy secretion, and corrosive action thereby prevented, the process of growth continued without interruption.

Ivory is a solid, white, translucent substance, distinguishable from bone by its beautiful texture of semi-transparent rhomboidal network. The finest ivory is much more transparent than paper of the same thickness. A thin transverse section placed under the microscope exhibits a series of curvilinear lines diverging from the centre and interlacing each other with great regularity and beauty, closely resembling in appearance the engine-turning of a watch. It possesses a specific gravity varying from 1.888 in the tooth of the walrus, to 2.843 in that of the elephant. Its mean gravity is therefore about two and a half times greater than water. The best, finest, and most valuable ivory is that obtained from the African elephant. When recently cut, it exhibits something of a yellowish transparent tint, which is due to the oil it contains, but this gradually changes to a beautiful and permanent white. It is not easily stained or destroyed by exposure to the atmosphere, and on that account is used in the arts for all the higher purposes, and especially for carved ornaments—such as chess-pieces, crucifixes, and articles of *virtu*. Indian ivory, on the contrary, when first cut, is perfectly white, but it becomes yellow and discoloured with age and exposure. A good illustration of this circumstance is presented by the dingy-coloured keys of an old pianoforte.

This popular definition of good and inferior ivory is however, in point of fact, somewhat incorrect, since ivory obtained from the coast of Africa is often much inferior to that obtained from the Indian Archipelago. The best rule for determining the quality is probably that of its vicinity to the equator. The ivory brought from within the 10th degrees of north and south latitude is incomparably the finest in the market; it is at the same time the most transparent, which of itself is a valuable characteristic. Our Indian ivory for some years back, instead of being shipped

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by way of the Cape for England, has, in order to save time, been sent by the Red Sea to Suez, and thence conveyed, generally on the backs of camels, across the Desert to Alexandria, where it is again shipped on board the Oriental steam-packets for Southampton, and conveyed by railway to London. By this expeditious mode of transit, however, the value of the ivory is frequently much deteriorated. The damage it sustains in being so often loaded and unloaded; and the intense heat of a tropical sun to which it is openly exposed in crossing the Isthmus—render the tusks unsound at the core, numerous cracks and fissures appear over the surface, the points are frequently broken off, and on the whole its market-price is considerably depreciated.

There is no means of accurately determining the intrinsic value of our importation of ivory—the price is so variable. In 1827, upwards of 3000 cwt.; in 1842, upwards of 5000 cwt.; and in 1850, about 8000 cwt. was imported, of which about four-fifths was entered for home consumption. In point of quantity or bulk it is not calculated to attract attention, nor does the commercial transaction excite much notice. A quiet advertisement in the front page of the *Economist*, a few letters from London, Birmingham, and Sheffield to City brokers—for the ivory-trade is confined to a very small number of houses—and a cargo of African or Indian ivory, amounting perhaps to L.50,000 sterling, is quickly and easily disposed of. The supply at this moment is unequal to the demand, and the price is steadily advancing.

Small teeth weighing from 4 to 20 lbs. are worth from L.10 to L.16 per cwt.; and the price of the enormous tusks we have referred to, which are far beyond the limits of the above scale, is probably equal to L.50 per cwt. or upwards. African is worth about 25 per cent. more than Indian ivory of corresponding size and quality.

To attempt even to catalogue the extremely diversified uses to which ivory is applied would of itself be no easy task. There is not perhaps in the whole commercial list an article possessed of wider relations. It is extensively consumed in the manufacture of handles to knives and forks, and cutlery of every description; combs of all kinds; brushes of every form and use; billiard-balls, chess-men, dice, dice-boxes; bracelets, necklaces, rings, brooches; slabs for miniature portraits, pocket-tablets, card-cases; paper-knives, shoeing-horns, large spoons and forks for salad; ornamental work-boxes, jewel-caskets, small inlaid tables; furniture for doors and cabinets; pianoforte and organ keys; stethoscopes, lancet-cases, and surgical instruments; microscopes, lorgnettes, and philosophical instruments; thermometer scales, hydrometer scales, and mathematical instruments; snuff-boxes, cigar-cases, pipe-tubes; fans, flowers, fancy boxes; crucifixes, crosiers, and symbols of faith; idols, gods, and symbols of superstition; vases, urns, sarcophagi, and emblems of the dead; temples,

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pagodas; thrones, emblems of mythology; and, in short, there is hardly a purpose in the useful and ornamental arts to which ivory is, or has not been in some way extensively employed. At present, the ivory carvings of Dieppe are the finest in Europe; but the genius of the present age is utilitarian, and so are its applications of ivory. If we desire high art in the fabrication of this material, we must go back a few centuries, or be satisfied with the beautiful productions of China or Hindostan. We could scarcely give a more apt illustration of this truth than by pointing to the scat of honour set apart for Prince Albert in the closing scene of the Great Exhibition. Elevated on the crimson platform, and standing forth as an appropriate emblem of the artistic genius of the mighty collection, was observed the magnificent ivory throne presented to her Majesty by the Rajah of Travancore!

From the great value of the material, the economical cutting of it up is of the last importance. Nothing is lost. The smallest fragments are of some value, have certain uses, and bear a corresponding price. Ivory dust, which is produced in large quantities, is a most valuable gelatine, and as such extensively employed by straw-hat makers. The greatest consumption of ivory is undoubtedly in connection with the cutlery trade. For these purposes alone about 200 tons are annually used in Sheffield and Birmingham, and the ivory in nearly every instance is from India. The mode of manufacturing knife-handles is very simple and expeditious:—The teeth are first cut into slabs of the requisite thickness—then to the proper cross dimensions, by means of circular saws of different shapes. They are afterwards drilled with great accuracy by a machine; rivetted to the blade; and finally smoothed and polished. We believe that this branch of industry alone gives employment to about 500 persons in Sheffield. Combs are seldom made of any ivory but Indian, and their mode of manufacture we had recently occasion to describe.[4] A large amount of ivory is consumed in the backs of hairbrushes; and this branch of the trade has recently undergone considerable improvements. The old method of making a tooth-brush, for example, was to lace the bristles through the ivory, and then to glue, or otherwise fasten, an outside slab to the brush for the purpose of concealing the holes and wire-thread. This mode of manufacture has been improved on by a method of working the hair into the solid ivory; and brushes of this description are now the best in the market. Their chief excellence consists in their preserving their original white colour to the last, which is a great desideratum. Billiard-balls constitute another considerable item of ivory consumption. They cost from 6s. to 12s. each; and the nicety of our ornamental turning produces balls not only of the most perfect spherical form, but accurately corresponding in size and weight even to a single grain.

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The ivory miniature tablets so much in use, and which are so invaluable to the artist from the exquisitely delicate texture of the material, are now produced by means of a very beautiful and highly interesting chemical process. Phosphoric acid of the usual specific gravity renders ivory soft and nearly plastic. The plates are cut from the circumference of the tusk, somewhat after the manner of paring a cucumber, and then softened by means of the acid. When washed with water, pressed, and dried, the ivory regains its former consistency, and even its microscopic structure is not affected by the process. Plates thirty inches square have been formed in this way, and a great reduction in price has thus been effected. Painting on ivory, we may add, was practised among the ancients.

Mr M'Culloch and other statistical writers predict the speedy extinction of the elephant, from the enormous consumption of its teeth; and curious calculations of the number of these animals annually extirpated to supply the English market alone are now getting somewhat popular. For example: 'in 1827 the customs-duty on ivory (20s. per cwt.—since reduced to 1s.) amounted to L.3257. The average weight of the elephant's tusk is 60 lbs.; and therefore 3040 elephants have been killed to supply this quantity of ivory.' But these calculations are in many respects quite fallacious. In the first place, the average weight of our imported tusks is *not* 60 lbs.: we have the authority of one of the first ivory-merchants in London for stating that 20 lbs. will be a much closer approximation. This at once involves a threefold ratio of destruction. In place of 3040, we should have the terrible slaughter of 9120 elephants for one year's consumption of ivory in England! This, however, is not the case. In these calculations the immense masses of fossil ivory we have alluded to are obviously overlooked, and the equally immense quantities of broken teeth which are disinterred from the deserts of Arabia, or the jungles of Central Africa. The truth is, we have good reason to know, that a very large proportion of the commercial supply of Europe is sustained from the almost inexhaustible store of these descriptions of ivory.

Nevertheless, it is indisputable that the insatiable demands of modern commerce will inevitably lead to the ultimate extermination of this noble animal. His venerable career is ignominiously brought to an end merely for the sake of the two teeth he carries in his mouth; which are very likely destined to be cut into rings to assist the infant Anglo-Saxons in cutting *their* teeth, or partly made into jelly to satisfy the tastes and appetites of a London alderman. We cannot reasonably hope for a new suspension of the traffic: indeed we can only look for its extension. The luxurious tastes of man are inimical to the existence of the elephant. From time immemorial, the war of extermination has existed. His rightful domain—in the plain or the wilderness,

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or amid the wild herbage of his native savannas—is at all points ruthlessly invaded. But the result is inevitable—it will come to an end; and some future generation of naturalists—those of them at least who are curious in Palaeontology—will regard the remains of our contemporary races of elephants with the same kind of astonishment with which we investigate the pre-historic evidences of the gigantic tapir or the mammoth.

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[Footnote 3: In the sacristy of the cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle is still preserved, among other relics of this great prince, an immense ivory hunting-horn; and ‘Charlemagne’s chess-men,’ which still exist, form part of the collection of works of art at Cologne.]

[Footnote 4: See an article on the Aberdeen Combworks, No. 396.]

BLIGHTED FLOWERS.

The facts of the following brief narrative, which are very few and of but melancholy interest, became known to me in the precise order in which they are laid before the reader. They were forced upon my observation rather than sought out by me; and they present, to my mind at least, a touching picture of the bitter conflict industrious poverty is sometimes called upon to wage with ‘the thousand natural shocks which flesh is heir to.’

It must be now eight or nine years since, in traversing a certain street, which runs for nearly half a mile in a direct line southward, I first encountered Ellen——. She was then a fair young girl of seventeen, rather above the middle size, and with a queen-like air and gait which made her appear taller than she really was. Her countenance, pale but healthy, and of a perfectly regular and classic mould, was charming to look upon from its undefinable expression of loveliness and sweet temper. Her tiny feet tripped noiselessly along the pavement, and a glance from her black eye sometimes met mine like a ray of light, as, punctually at twenty minutes to nine, we passed each other near—— House, each of us on our way to the theatre of our daily operations. She was an embroideress, as I soon discovered from a small stretching-frame, containing some unfinished work, which she occasionally carried in her hand. She set me a worthy example of punctuality, and I could any day have told the time to a minute without looking at my watch, by marking the spot where we passed each other. I learned to look for her regularly, and before I knew her name, had given her that of ‘Minerva,’ in acknowledgment of her efficiency as a mentor.

A year after the commencement of our acquaintance, which never ripened into speech, happening to set out from home one morning a quarter of an hour before my usual time,

I made the pleasing discovery that my juvenile Minerva had a younger sister, if possible still more beautiful than herself. The pair were taking an affectionate leave of each other at the crossing of the New Road, and the silver accents of

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the younger as, kissing her sister, she laughed out, 'Good-by, Ellen,' gave me the first information of the real name of my pretty mentor. The little Mary—for so was the younger called, who could not be more than eleven years of age—was a slender, frolicsome sylph, with a skin of the purest carnation, and a face like that of Sir Joshua's seraph in the National Gallery, but with larger orbs and longer lashes shading them. As she danced and leaped before me on her way home again, I could not but admire the natural ease and grace of every motion, nor fail to comprehend and sympathise with the anxious looks of the sisters' only parent, their widowed mother, who stood watching the return of the younger darling at the door of a very humble two-storey dwelling, in the vicinity of the New River Head.

Nearly two years passed away, during which, with the exception of Sundays and holidays, every recurring morning brought me the grateful though momentary vision of one or both of the charming sisters. Then came an additional pleasure—I met them both together every day. The younger had commenced practising the same delicate and ingenious craft of embroidery, and the two pursued their industry in company under the same employer. It was amusing to mark the demure assumption of womanhood darkening the brows of the aerial little sprite, as, with all the new-born consequence of responsibility, she walked soberly by her sister's side, frame in hand, and occasionally revealed to passers-by a brief glimpse of her many-coloured handiwork. They were the very picture of beauty and happiness, and happy beyond question must their innocent lives have been for many pleasant months. But soon the shadows of care began to steal over their hitherto joyous faces, and traces of anxiety, perhaps of tears, to be too plainly visible on their paling cheeks. All at once I missed them in my morning's walk, and for several days—it might be weeks—saw nothing of them. I was at length startled from my forgetfulness of their very existence by the sudden apparition of both one Monday morning clad in the deepest mourning. I saw the truth at once: the mother, who, I had remarked, was prematurely old and feeble, was gone, and the two orphan children were left to battle it with the world. My conjecture was the truth, as a neighbour of whom I made some inquiries on the subject was not slow to inform me. 'Ah, sir,' said the good woman, 'poor Mrs D—— have had a hard time of it, and she born an' bred a gentlewoman.'

I asked her if the daughters were provided for.

'Indeed, sir,' continued my informant, 'I'm afeard not. 'Twas the most unfortnatest thing in the world, sir, poor Mr D——'s dying jest as a' did. You see, sir, he war a soldier, a fightin' out in Indy, and his poor wife lef at home wi' them two blossoms o' gals. He warn't what you call a common soldier, sir, but some kind o' officer like; an' in some great battle fought seven year agone

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he done fine service I've heerd, and promotion was send out to 'un, but didn't get there till the poor man was dead of his wounds. The news of he's death cut up his poor wife complete, and she han't been herself since. I've know'd she wasn't long for here ever since it come. Wust of all, it seems that because the poor man was dead the very day the promotion reached 'un, a' didn't die a captain after all, and so the poor widder didn't get no pension. How they've a' managed to live is more than I can tell. The oldest gal is very clever, they say; but Lor' bless 'ee! 'taint much to s'port three as is to be got out o' broiderin'.'

Thus enlightened on the subject of their private history, it was with very different feelings I afterwards regarded these unfortunate children. Bereft of both parents, and cast upon a world with the ways of which they were utterly unacquainted, and in which they might be doomed to the most painful struggles even to procure a bare subsistence, one treasure was yet left them—it was the treasure of each other's love. So far as the depth of this feeling could be estimated from the looks and actions of both, it was all in all to each. But the sacred bond that bound them was destined to be rudely rent asunder. The cold winds of autumn began to visit too roughly the fair pale face of the younger girl, and the unmistakable indications of consumption made their appearance: the harassing cough, the hectic cheek, the deep-settled pain in the side, the failing breath. Against these dread forerunners it was vain long to contend; and the poor child had to remain at home in her solitary sick-chamber, while the loving sister toiled harder than ever to provide, if possible, the means of comfort and restoration to health. All the world knows the ending of such a hopeless strife as this. It is sometimes the will of Heaven that the path of virtue, like that of glory, leads but to the grave. So it was in the present instance: the blossom of this fair young life withered away, and the grass-fringed lips of the child's early tomb closed over the lifeless relics ere spring had dawned upon the year.

Sorrow had graven legible traces upon the brow of my hapless mentor when I saw her again. How different now was the vision that greeted my daily sight from that of former years! The want that admits not of idle wailing compelled her still to pursue her daily course of labour, and she pursued it with the same constancy and punctuality as she had ever done. But the exquisitely chiselled face, the majestic gait, the elastic step—the beauty and glory of youth, unshaken because unassaulted by death and sorrow—where were they? Alas! all the bewitching charms of her former being had gone down into the grave of her mother and sister; and she, their support and idol, seemed no more now than she really was—a wayworn, solitary, and isolated straggler for daily bread.

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Were this a fiction that I am writing, it would be an easy matter to deal out a measure of poetical justice, and to recompense poor Ellen for all her industry, self-denial, and suffering in the arms of a husband, who should possess as many and great virtues as herself, and an ample fortune to boot. I wish with all my heart that it were a fiction, and that Providence had never furnished me with such a seeming anomaly to add to the list of my desultory chronicles. But I am telling a true story of a life. Ellen found no mate. No mate, did I say? Yes, one: the same grim yokefellow whose delight it is 'to gather roses in the spring' paid ghastly court to her faded charms, and won her—who shall say an unwilling bride? I could see his gradual but deadly advances in my daily walks: the same indications that gave warning of the sister's fate admonished me that she also was on her way to the tomb, and that the place that had known her would soon know her no more. She grew day by day more feeble; and one morning I found her seated on the step of a door, unable to proceed. After that she disappeared from my view; and though I never saw her again at the old spot, I have seldom passed that spot since, though for many years following the same route, without recognising again in my mind's eye the graceful form and angel aspect of Ellen D——.

'And is this the end of your mournful history?' some querulous reader demands. Not quite. There is a soul of good in things evil. Compassion dwells with the depths of misery; and in the valley of the shadow of death dove-eyed Charity walks with shining wings.... It was nearly two months after I had lost sight of poor Ellen, that during one of my dinner-hour perambulations about town, I looked in almost accidentally upon my old friend and chum, Jack W——. Jack keeps a perfumer's shop not a hundred miles from Gray's Inn, where, ensconced up to his eyes in delicate odours, he passes his leisure hours—the hours when commerce flags, and people have more pressing affairs to attend to than the delectation of their nostrils—in the enthusiastic study of art and *virtu*. His shop is hardly more crammed with bottles and attar, soap, scents, and all the *etceteras* of the toilet, than the rest of his house with prints, pictures, carvings, and curiosities of every sort. Jack and I went to school together, and sowed our slender crop of wild oats together; and, indeed, in some sort have been together ever since. We both have our own collections of rarities, such as they are, and each criticises the other's new purchases. On the present occasion there was a new Van Somebody's old painting awaiting my judgment; and no sooner did my shadow darken his door, than starting from his lair, and bidding the boy ring the bell should he be wanted, he hustled me up stairs, calling by the way to his housekeeper, Mrs Jones—Jack is a bachelor—to bring up coffee for two. I was prepared to pronounce my dictum on his newly-acquired treasure, and was going to bounce unceremoniously into the old lumber-room over the lobby to regale my sight with the delightful confusion of his unarranged accumulations, when he pulled me forcibly back by the coat-tail. 'Not there,' said Jack; 'you can't go there. Go into my snuggery.'

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‘And why not there?’ said I; jealous of some new purchase which I was not to see.

‘Because there’s somebody ill there—it is a bedroom now: a poor girl; she wanted a place to die in, poor thing, and I put her in there.’

‘Who is she?—a relative?’

‘No; I never saw her till Monday last. Sit down, I’ll tell you how it was. Set down the coffee, Mrs Jones, and just look in upon the patient, will you? Sugar and cream? You know my weakness for the dead wall in Lincoln’s Inn Fields.’ (Jack never refuses a beggar backed by that wall, for the love of Ben Jonson, who, he devoutly believes, had a hand in building it.) ‘Well, I met with her there on Monday last. She asked for nothing, but held out her hand, and as she did so the tears streamed from her eyes on the pavement. The poor creature, it was plain enough, was then dying; and I told her so. She said she knew it, but had no place to die in but the parish workhouse, and hoped that I would not send her there. What’s the use of talking? I brought her here, and put her to sleep on the sofa while Jones cleared out the lumber-room and got up a bed. I sent for Dr H—— to look at her; he gave her a week or ten days at the farthest: I don’t think she’ll last so long. The curate of St—— comes every day to see her, and I like to talk to her myself sometimes. Well, Mrs Jones, how goes she on?’

‘She’s asleep,’ said the housekeeper. ‘Would you like to look at her, gentlemen?’

We entered the room together. It was as if some unaccountable presentiment had forewarned me: there, upon a snow-white sheet, and pillowed by my friend’s favourite eider-down squab, lay the wasted form of Ellen D——. She slept soundly and breathed loudly; and Dr H——, who entered while we stood at the bedside, informed us that in all probability she would awake only to die, or if to sleep again, then to wake no more. The latter was the true prophecy. She awoke an hour or two after my departure, and passed away that same night in a quiet slumber without a pang.

I never learned by what chain of circumstances she was driven to seek alms in the public streets. I might have done so perhaps by inquiry, but to what purpose? She died in peace, with friendly hands and friendly hearts near her, and Jack buried her in his own grave in Highgate Cemetery, at his own expense; and declares he is none the worse for it. I am of his opinion.

NOTES FROM AUSTRALIA.

Letters from working-men have been published in great numbers by the home-press, but a voice from the tradesman has seldom been heard; or, if heard, has not been attended to. I trust in some measure to supply the deficiency to those middle-class townsfolk who seek to emigrate to Australia.

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1st, I can only reconcile the different accounts furnished by emigrants—believing people to write as they think at the time—by remembering that some have come from quiet rural places, and others from populous towns. The first will consider Geelong—its beautiful bay, ships, and steamers, as a hustling, improving, and increasing town, laid out for a future provincial capital; the last will regard it as a dull, detached series of villages, which will some day be a large town. A modification of these causes, allowing for age, temperament, circumstances, and station in life, will explain any ordinary discrepancy in the accounts from this country.

2d, The various accounts of the climate must in a measure be traced to the same causes. People used to out-door labour in Britain find the winter so mild, that everything is lauded to the skies; those used to nice, roomy, convenient houses at home, finding themselves so very differently situated, condemn climate, prospects, and everything. Both may convey a false impression. The cold or heat by the thermometer is no test of sensation; days, however warm, are exceedingly agreeable, except the hot-wind days, which are absolutely indescribable, yet I have seen some men work out all day in the worst of them. They cause great relaxation in the system, and produce dysentery, especially among children. Compared with other *hot* countries, this appears to be the most agreeable.

3d, Employment.—This is readily to be obtained by working mechanics of all kinds in the towns; remembering that a very small sprinkling of workmen for finer work—such as cornice-mouldings, fine freestone work, cabinetwork, &c.—will be able to find employment for a long time to come, because, till a new generation spring up, who can live upon the accumulations of their sires, money will not be diverted to any great extent from business in land, buildings, or merchandise. A considerable number of labourers will find employment about the towns, at the stores, on the wharfs, &c. at about 24s. weekly. Country work on the sheep-stations—as shepherds, drivers of bullock-drays, sheep-washing and shearing, cooking for the men, &c.—is remunerated by about L.25 and food. These live far off in the solitary plains, almost apart from men, and come to town once, twice, or thrice a year, as their distance and employment may determine. The Sabbath has little of the religious character for them, and they know little of the progress of mankind. Agriculture also employs men at about the same rate. There is no probability of wages falling, for a long time to come, with any stream of emigration likely to come out hither; for if the country cannot grow more wool, a greater attention to its quality would employ more men; and agriculture will absorb a vast population as soon as the land-question has been fairly overhauled, and settled on a foundation that will allow a small capitalist to obtain, at a fair price, a suitable farm: besides, everything necessary to civilisation has yet to be done—roads, bridges, quarries, wells, and a long *etcetera* that one can scarcely catalogue.

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4th, Capitalists of L.1000 and upwards can make, apart from wool-growing, twenty per cent. on their money without being in trade, chiefly by buying at the government land-sales, and subdividing the section into small allotments, or by building houses, shops, &c. The average of rental returns the capital in four years. But this can only be done if emigration continues—and emigration with a sprinkling of holders of L.50 to L.200. If this stops, there can be few purchasers. Should a fixed price be put upon government land, there might be a difference in the way in which capital could be turned to profit; but L.1000 and upwards can find so many favourable investments in a new colony, that a living could be secured without much trouble or anxiety.

5th, Population.—By the census just completed, there are 78,000 inhabitants in Victoria (Port-Philip); County of Bourke, 44,000—including Melbourne, the capital, 20,000; County of Grant, 12,000—including Geelong, its capital, 8000. Warnambool, Belfast, and Portland, along the coast, only number hundreds, and Kilmore, forty miles inland, nearly 2000: there are also various villages—on paper—so called, numbering ten to fifty houses each. From this it will be seen that more than half of the entire population is within twenty miles of Melbourne, a third of the residue within fifteen miles of Geelong, and the remainder scattered, including the 1200 squatting-stations, over a very extensive country. These towns are not, in my opinion, a natural growth, but have been forced into their present magnitude from the difficulties in obtaining land at a price to make up for the utter want of every convenience, a want arising from the total absence of any effort on the part of the government hitherto to make even one great trunk-road through the colony. Facilities for internal communication would cause towns to increase naturally. Now, people arrive with glowing ideas of the beauty and fertility of the country, and finding everything difficult of access there, betake themselves to shopkeeping, forcing up rents to an exorbitant sum, and losing their little capital. I think my opinion borne out by the fact, that the country population of Grant County was 1959 in 1846, and 4469 in 1851; Geelong in 1846 had 1911, and in 1851, 8000—the town population more than quadrupling itself in the last five years, the county increasing only 2510. Melbourne and Bourke County are nearly in the same position.

There are seven or eight merchants in Geelong who import goods of all kinds, twenty-two drapery establishments in a respectable way, besides numbers of small ones on the outskirts; other trades are proportionately overdone. Melbourne is, I am credibly informed, equally crowded. These facts shew that there is no opening for people in business. A great imposition is practised by stating the increase of a town at so much per cent., or having doubled or trebled itself in so short a time, the fact being that even its present condition may be that only of a village. Interested parties too often talk their places into notice; and if people do not deal in 'notions,' they all have some allotment that will just suit you, which they don't care to keep any longer.

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An argument from the amount of imports is made use of unfairly. The United States are set down at 30s. per head, Australia about L.7 per head. This latter, they say, is the country to encourage, to emigrate to—see how prosperous it is! being blind, apparently, to the fact, that Australia, having nothing as yet but the raw material, tallow and wool, it must barter all it has for what it wants—a proof to me as much of necessity as of prosperity. Many more persons cannot engage profitably in the wool and tallow trade; the field is therefore narrow for general purposes of emigrants, and easily liable to be overstocked, unless the government take prompt measures to open out the abundant internal resources of minerals, &c. and give easier and cheaper possession of land: then, though the imports might not be much more, the prosperity would be much greater. America I believe to be in this latter position, presenting a more varied field for the operations of the small capitalist, though her imports may be inconsiderable per head.

I ought to state, that a great many of the reported cases of success are, from misapprehension of the real circumstances of the parties, either quite false, or calculated to mislead. Doubtless many successful hits will be made by purchasers of mineral land, and so are successful hits made at the gaming-table. Successful men, besides, are well known, while the unsuccessful have slunk away and are forgotten. Few fortunes have been made by simple shopkeeping.

I ought not to conclude without referring to farming, although not practically acquainted with it; indeed, the accounts from farmers differ as much as the size and shape of their farms: but it appears to me that, from one or other of the following causes, farming has not hitherto paid well:—A large farm has been purchased, leaving too little cash to spare for the erection of houses, fences, and cultivation; or leaving it burdened with a mortgage at heavy interest; or a short lease—of three years—has been taken, and the money sunk on the improvements; or the cultivation has been of such a wretched description as failed to raise a remunerative crop. There never appears to have been a want of sufficient market for any field-produce. L.1000 judiciously invested on a farm, I believe, would pay.

I trust it will be seen that my object in writing the foregoing has been to guard against the pictures of climate and scenery, good or bad, that are constantly written; to shew that plenty of employment at a remunerative wage is to be had, but only of the heavy and laborious kind; that there is a wide field for capitalists; but that shopkeepers and townspeople, unused to out-door labour, have a poor chance, owing to the smallness of the population and the competition which already exists.

GROUND-LIZARD OF JAMAICA.

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One feature with which a stranger cannot fail to be struck on his arrival in the island, and which is essentially tropical, is the abundance of the lizards that everywhere meet his eye. As soon as ever he sets foot on the beach, the rustlings among the dry leaves, and the dartings hither and thither among the spiny bushes that fringe the shore, arrest his attention; and he sees on every hand the beautifully coloured and meek-faced ground-lizard (*Ameiva dorsalis*), scratching like a bird among the sand, or peering at him from beneath the shadow of a great leaf, or creeping stealthily along with its chin and belly upon the earth, or shooting over the turf with such a rapidity that it seems to fly rather than run. By the road-sides, and in the open pastures, and in the provision-grounds of the negroes, still he sees this elegant and agile lizard; and his prejudices against the reptile races must be inveterate indeed if he can behold its gentle countenance, and timid but bright eyes, its chaste but beautiful hues, its graceful form and action, and its bird-like motions, with any other feeling than admiration.

As he walks along the roads and lanes that divide the properties, he will perceive at every turn the smooth and trim little figure of the wood-slaves (*Mabouya agilis*) basking on the loose stones of the dry walls; their glossy, fish-like scales glistening in the sun with metallic brilliancy. They lie as still as if asleep; but on the intruder's approach, they are ready in a moment to dart into the crevices of the stones and disappear until the danger is past.

If he looks into the outbuildings of the estates, the mill-house, or the boiling-house, or the cattle-sheds, a singular croaking sound above his head causes him to look up; and then he sees clinging to the rafters, or crawling sluggishly along with the back downward, three or four lizards, of form, colour, and action very diverse from those he has seen before. It is the *gecko* or croaking lizard (*Thecodactylus loevis*), a nocturnal animal in its chief activity, but always to be seen in these places or in hollow trees even by day. Its appearance is repulsive, I allow, but its reputation for venom is libellous and groundless.

The stranger walks into the dwelling-house: lizards, lizards, still meet his eye. The little anoles (*A. iodurus*, *A. opalinus*, &c.) are chasing each other in and out between the jalousies, now stopping to protrude from the throat a broad disk of brilliant colour, crimson or orange, like the petal of a flower, then withdrawing it, and again displaying it in coquettish play. Then one leaps a yard or two through the air, and alights on the back of his playfellow; and both struggle and twist about in unimaginable contortions. Another is running up and down on the plastered wall, catching the ants as they roam in black lines over its whited surface; and another leaps from the top of some piece of furniture upon the back of the visitor's

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chair, and scampers nimbly along the collar of his coat. It jumps on the table—can it be the same? An instant ago it was of the most beautiful golden green, except the base of the tail, which was of a soft, light, purple hue; now, as if changed by an enchanter's wand, it is of a sordid, sooty brown all over, and becomes momentarily darker and darker, or mottled with dark and pale patches of a most unpleasing aspect. Presently, however, the mental emotion, what, ever it was—anger, or fear, or dislike—has passed away, and the lovely green hue sparkles in the glancing sunlight as before.

He lifts the window-sash; and instantly there run out on the sill two or three minute lizards of a new kind, allied to the gecko, the common palette-tip (*Sphoeriodactylus argus*.) It is scarcely more than two inches long, more nimble than fleet in its movement, and not very attractive.

In the woods he would meet with other kinds. On the trunks of the trees he might frequently see the Venus (*Dactyloa Edwardsii*), as it is provincially called; a lizard much like the anoles of the houses, of a rich grass-green colour, with orange throat-disk, but much larger and fiercer; or, in the eastern parts of the island, the great iguana (*Cyclura lophoma*), with its dorsal crest like the teeth of a saw running down all its back, might be seen lying out on the branches of the trees, or playing bo-peep from a hole in the trunk; or, in the swamps and morasses of Westmoreland, the yellow galliwasp (*Celestus occiduus*), so much dreaded and abhorred, yet without reason, might be observed sitting idly in the mouth of its burrow, or feeding on the wild fruits and marshy plants that constitute its food.—Gosse's *Naturalist's Sojourn*.

A SCENE IN NEW ENGLAND.

I leave Boston sometimes in the evening by rail, get thirty miles off, then strike away into byways, ramble for an hour or two, and get back to the rail. I was out yesterday, and nothing can equal the colour of the foliage: if it was painted, it would look like fancy. In the course of my stroll, I came upon a lake entirely surrounded with forest, and containing, as I was informed, about four square miles of water, studded with islands varying in size from one to twenty acres. I would describe a point of view which enchanted me. I was on one side of the lake, where it is about half a mile in width: about half-way across, for the foreground of my picture, is a small island, about two acres, covered with trees, looking as if they grew out of the lake, with a central one of at least eighty feet high, and of the purest orange colour. The opposite shore is of a crescent shape, with the forest rising like an amphitheatre behind, glowing with every imaginable colour, from the intense crimson to the pale pink, and looking exactly like an enormous flower-garden stretching away to the distance, and the colour so strongly reflected

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in the water, that it is difficult to tell the reality from the reflection. At home in England, I would have gone far to see such scenes; but they are here at every turn. I enclose you some leaves, but the purity of the colour is gone after a few hours. I am sure many valuable additions might be made to the European stock of flowers: there are thousands of species—some extremely beautiful; but how they are propagated, or whether they could be transplanted, I cannot tell, being no horticulturist. Among the millions here, one plant would be much admired with you. It grows wild about three feet high, with long, curiously-formed leaves, and surmounted by bunches of bright scarlet blossoms, exactly like the geranium. In the course of my stroll, I came upon a genuine shanty of a new settler, full of fine children. The husband away at work—a little patch cleared for Indian corn and a few vegetables, the sturdy trees enclosing all. Truly the pair have their work before them, but they have likewise hope and comfort. I chatted a little while with the wife, a genuine specimen of the Anglo-Saxon race—clean, industrious, and hopeful: left home to avoid being starved, and sat down here, in rude comfort, with her ruddy children growing up about her—to be a joy and a support, instead of the drag and vexation they would have proved at home.—*Private Letter from an English Artist settled at Boston.*

WOMEN.

Christianity freed woman, because it opened to her the long-closed world of spiritual knowledge. Sublime and speculative theories, hitherto confined to the few, became, when once they were quickened by faith, things for which thousands were eager to die. Simple women meditated in their homes on questions which had long troubled philosophers in the groves of academies. They knew this well; and felt that from her who had sat at the feet of the Master, listening to the divine teaching, down to the poorest slave who heard the tidings of spiritual liberty, they had all become daughters of a great and immortal faith. Of that faith women were the earliest adherents, disciples, and martyrs. Women followed Jesus, entertained the wandering apostles, worshipped in the catacombs, or died in the arena. The *Acts of the Apostles* bear record to the charity of Dorcas and the hospitality of Lydia; and tradition has preserved the memory of Praxedes and Pudentiana, daughters of a Roman senator, in whose house the earliest Christian meetings were held in Rome.—*Women of Christianity, by Julia Kavanagh.*

‘WHARE’ER THERE’S A WILL THERE IS ALWAYS A WAY.’

Langsyne, when I first gaed to schule, I was glaiket,
In books and in learning nae pleasure had I;
And when for my fauts wi’ the taws I was paiket,
‘I canna do better,’ was aye my reply.
‘Deed Rab,’ quo my mither, ‘for daffn’ and playin’

There 's nocht ye can manage by nicht or by day;
But this let me tell ye, and mind what I'm sayin'—
Whare'er there's a will there is always a way.

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'Just look at our preacher, when but a bit callan,
The ills o' could poortith he aft had to dree,
But to better his lot the poor chiel aye was willin'—
At schule and at wark ever eident was he:
Sage books he wad read, and their truths he wad cherish,
And earnestly sprauchle up learning's steep brae;
And noo he's Mess John o' his ain native parish—
Sae whare there's a will there is always a way.

'And man, if ye saw how his manse is bedocket!
Ilk room's like a palace, it's plenished sae fine;
And then wi' the best in the land he's respecket,
And aft wi' My Lord is invited to dine.
O Rab, then, be active; frae him tak' example;
His case speaks mair powerfu' than ocht I can say;
And soon ye will find that your talents are ample;
For whare there's a will there is always a way.

'What though we are cotters?—the poorest may flourish,
And wha wadna rise wi' the glorious few?
Industry works wonders—its spirit aye nourish—
It isna the drone gathers hinney, I trew.
Then onward, my laddie! ye canna regret it;
What wrecks and what tears have been caused by delay!
If noble your wish is, press on, ye will get it!
For whare there's a will there is always a way.'

Thus spak my auld mither: ilk word seemed a sermon,
But just rather warldly, as ane micht alloo;
But, haith, it inspired me, and made me determine
To haud to the *lair* and keep *progress* in view.
Sae I tried ilka project instruction to gather:
When herdin' the sheep for our laird, Ringan Gray,
The Bible and Bunyan, I read 'mang the heather—
Aye whare there's a will there is always a way.

But my father he dee'd, and to help my auld mither
I noo had to struggle wi' hardship and care;
And aften I thocht I wad stick a'thegither,
But something within me said: 'Never despair!
At last I grew bein, for I toiled late and early,
Syne to College I gaed, and was made a D.D.
And noo I'm Mess John in the Kirk o' Glenfairly—
Sae whare there's a will there is always a way.



The manse—but I shouldna wi' vanity crack o't—
Is as cozie a beil as a body could see;
Hauf-hid 'mang auld trees, wi' braw parks at the back o't,
Whare lambs, 'mang the gowans, are sporting wi' glee.
I've got a bit wife too, a rich winsome lady—
In short, I hae a' that a mortal could hae:
Sae onward, ye youths! as my auld mither said aye—
Whare'er there's a will there is always a way.

A. M'KAY.

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