

Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 426 eBook

Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 426

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TIME'S REVIEW OF CHARACTER.

Robespierre.

Some characters are a puzzle to history, and none is more so than that of Robespierre. According to popular belief, this personage was a blood-thirsty monster, a vulgar tyrant, who committed the most unheard-of enormities, with the basely selfish object of raising himself to supreme power—of becoming the Cromwell of the Revolution. Considering that Robespierre was for five years—1789 to 1794—a prime leader in the political movements in France; that for a length of time he was personally concerned in sending from forty to fifty heads to the scaffold per diem; and that the Reign of Terror ceased immediately on his overthrow—it is not surprising that his character is associated with all that is villainous and detestable. Nevertheless, as the obscurities of the great revolutionary drama clear up, a strange suspicion begins to be entertained, that the popular legend respecting Robespierre is in a considerable degree fallacious; nay, it is almost thought that this man was, in reality, a most kind-hearted, simple, unambitious, and well-disposed individual—a person who, to say the least of it, deeply deplored the horrors in which considerations of duty had unhappily involved him. To attempt an

unravelment of these contradictions, let us call up the phantom of this mysterious personage, and subject him to review.

To understand Robespierre, it is necessary to understand the French Revolution. The proximate cause of that terrible convulsion was, as is well known, an utter disorder in all the functions of the state, and more particularly in the finances, equivalent to national bankruptcy. That matters might have been substantially patched up by judicious statesmanship, no one doubts; but that a catastrophe, sooner or later, was unavoidable, seems to be equally certain. The mind of France was rotten; the principles of society were undermined.

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As regards religion, there was a universal scepticism, of which the best literature of the day was the exponent; but this unbelief was greatly strengthened by the scandalous abuses in the ecclesiastical system. It required no depth of genius to point out that the great principles of brotherly love, humility, equality, liberty, promulgated as part and parcel of the Christian dispensation eighteen centuries previously, had no practical efficacy so far as France was concerned. Instead of equality before God and the law, the humbler classes were feudal serfs, without any appeal from the cruel oppressions to which they were exposed. In the midst of gloom, Rousseau's vague declamations on the rights of man fell like a ray of light. A spark was communicated, which kindled a flame in the bosoms of the more thoughtful and enthusiastic. An astonishing impulse was almost at once given to investigation. The philosopher had his adherents all over France. Viewed as a species of prophet, he was, properly speaking, a madman, who in his ravings had glanced on the truth, but only glanced. Among men of sense, his ornate declamations concerning nature and reason would have excited little more attention than that which is usually given to poetic and speculative fancies.

Amidst an impulsive and lively people, unaccustomed to the practical consideration and treatment of abuses, there arose a cry to destroy, root up; to sweep away all preferences and privileges; to bring down the haughty, and raise the depressed; to let all men be free and equal, all men being brothers. Such is the origin of the three words—liberty, equality, and fraternity, which were caught up as the charter of social intercourse. It is for ever to be regretted that this explosion of sentiment was so utterly destructive in its character; for therein has it inflicted immense wrong on what is abstractedly true and beautiful. At first, as will be remembered, the revolutionists did not aim at establishing a republic, but that form of government necessarily grew out of their hallucinations. Without pausing to consider that a nation of emancipated serfs were unprepared to take on themselves the duties of an enlightened population, the plunge was unhesitatingly made.

At this comparatively distant day, even with all the aids of the recording press, we can form no adequate idea of the fervour with which this great social overthrow was set about and accomplished. The best minds in France were in a state of ecstasy, bordering on delirium. A vast future of human happiness seemed to dawn. Tyranny, force, fraud, all the bad passions, were to disappear under the beneficent approach of Reason. Among the enthusiasts who rushed into this marvellous frenzy, was Maximilian Robespierre. It is said by his biographers, that Robespierre was of English or Scotch origin: we have seen an account which traced him to a family in the north, of not a dissimilar name. His father, at all events, was an advocate at Arras, in French Flanders,

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and here Maximilian was born in 1759. Bred to the law, he was sent as a representative to the States-General in 1789, and from this moment he entered on his career, and Paris was his home. At his outset, he made no impression, and scarcely excited public notice. His manners were singularly reserved, and his habits austere. The man lived within himself. Brooding over the works of Rousseau, he indulged in the dream of renovating the moral world. Like Mohammed contriving the dogmas of a new religion, Robespierre spent days in solitude, pondering on his destiny. To many of the revolutionary leaders, the struggle going on was merely a political drama, with a Convention for the *denouement*. To Robespierre, it was a philosophical problem; all his thoughts aimed at the ideal—at the apotheosis of human nature.

Let us take a look at his personal appearance. Visionaries are usually slovens. They despise fashions, and imagine that dirtiness is an attribute of genius. To do the honourable member for Artois justice, he was above this affectation. Small and neat in person, he always appeared in public tastefully dressed, according to the fashion of the period—hair well combed back, frizzled, and powdered; copious frills at the breast and wrists; a stainless white waistcoat; light-blue coat, with metal buttons; the sash of a representative tied round his waist; light-coloured breeches, white stockings, and shoes with silver buckles. Such was his ordinary costume; and if we stick a rose in his button-hole, or place a nosegay in his hand, we shall have a tolerable idea of his whole equipment. It is said he sometimes appeared in top-boots, which is not improbable; for this kind of boot had become fashionable among the republicans, from a notion that as top-boots were worn by gentlemen in England, they were allied to constitutional government. Robespierre's features were sharp, and enlivened by bright and deeply-sunk blue eyes. There was usually a gravity and intense thoughtfulness in his countenance, which conveyed an idea of his being thoroughly in earnest. Yet, his address was not unpleasing. Unlike modern French politicians, his face was always smooth, with no vestige of beard or whiskers. Altogether, therefore, he may be said to have been a well-dressed, gentlemanly man, animated with proper self-respect, and having no wish to court vulgar applause by neglecting the decencies of polite society.

Before entering on his public career in Paris, Robespierre had probably formed his plans, in which, at least to outward appearance, there was an entire negation of self. A stern incorruptibility seemed the basis of his character; and it is quite true that no offers from the court, no overtures from associates, had power to tempt him. There was only one way by which he could sustain a high-souled independence, and that was the course adopted in like circumstances by Andrew Marvel—simple wants, rigorous economy, a disregard of fine company, an avoidance

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of expensive habits. Now, this is the curious thing in Robespierre's history. Perhaps there was a tinge of pride in his living a life of indigence; but in fairness it is entitled to be called an honest pride, when we consider that the means of profusion were within his reach. On his arrival in Paris, he procured a humble lodging in the Marais, a populous district in the north-eastern faubourgs; but it being represented to him some time afterwards, that, as a public man, it was unsafe to expose himself in a long walk daily to and from this obscure residence, he removed to a house in the Rue St Honore, now marked No. 396, opposite the Church of the Assumption. Here he found a lodging with M. Duplay, a respectable but humble cabinet-maker, who had become attached to the principles of the Revolution; and here he was joined by his brother, who played an inferior part in public affairs, and is known in history as 'the Younger Robespierre.' The selection of this dwelling seems to have fallen in with Robespierre's notions of economy; and it suited his limited patrimony, which consisted of some rents irregularly paid by a few small farmers of his property in Artois. These ill-paid rents, with his salary as a representative, are said to have supported three persons—himself, his brother, and his sister; and so straitened was he in circumstances, that he had to borrow occasionally from his landlord. Even with all his pinching, he did not make both ends meet. We have it on authority, that at his death he was owing L.160; a small debt to be incurred during a residence of five years in Paris, by a person who figured as a leader of parties; and the insignificance of this sum attests his remarkable self-denial.

Lamartine's account of the private life of Robespierre in the house of the Duplays is exceedingly fascinating, and we should suppose is founded on well-authorised facts. The house of Duplay, he says, 'was low, and in a court surrounded by sheds filled with timber and plants, and had almost a rustic appearance. It consisted of a parlour opening to the court, and communicating with a sitting-room that looked into a small garden. From the sitting-room a door led into a small study, in which was a piano. There was a winding-staircase to the first floor, where the master of the house lived, and thence to the apartment of Robespierre.'

Here, long acquaintance, a common table, and association for several years, 'converted the hospitality of Duplay into an attachment that became reciprocal. The family of his landlord became a second family to Robespierre, and while they adopted his opinions, they neither lost the simplicity of their manners nor neglected their religious observances. They consisted of a father, mother, a son yet a youth, and four daughters, the eldest of whom was twenty-five, and the youngest eighteen. Familiar with the father, filial with the mother, paternal with the son, tender and almost brotherly with the young girls,

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he inspired and felt in this small domestic circle all those sentiments that only an ardent soul inspires and feels by spreading abroad its sympathies. Love also attached his heart, where toil, poverty, and retirement had fixed his life. Eleonore Duplay, the eldest daughter of his host, inspired Robespierre with a more serious attachment than her sisters. The feeling, rather predilection than passion, was more reasonable on the part of Robespierre, more ardent and simple on the part of the young girl. This affection afforded him tenderness without torment, happiness without excitement: it was the love adapted for a man plunged all day in the agitation of public life—a repose of the heart after mental fatigue. He and Eleonore lived in the same house as a betrothed couple, not as lovers. Robespierre had demanded the young girl's hand from her parents, and they had promised it to him.

“The total want of fortune,” he said, “and the uncertainty of the morrow, prevented him from marrying her until the destiny of France was determined; but he only awaited the moment when the Revolution should be concluded, in order to retire from the turmoil and strife, marry her whom he loved, go to reside with her in Artois, on one of the farms he had saved among the possessions of his family, and there to mingle his obscure happiness in the common lot of his family.”

The vicissitudes of the fortune, influence, and popularity of Robespierre effected no change in his simple mode of living. The multitude came to implore favour or life at the door of his house, yet nothing found its way within. The private lodging of Robespierre consisted of a low chamber, constructed in the form of a garret, above some cart-sheds, with the window opening upon the roof. It afforded no other prospect than the interior of a small court, resembling a wood-store, where the sounds of the workmen's hammers and saws constantly resounded, and which was continually traversed by Madame Duplay and her daughters, who there performed all their household duties. This chamber was also separated from that of the landlord by a small room common to the family and himself. On the other side were two rooms, likewise attics, which were inhabited, one by the son of the master of the house, the other by Simon Duplay, Robespierre's secretary, and the nephew of his host.

The chamber of the deputy contained only a wooden bedstead, covered with blue damask ornamented with white flowers, a table, and four straw-bottomed chairs. This apartment served him at once for a study and dormitory. His papers, his reports, the manuscripts of his discourses, written by himself in a regular but laboured hand, and with many marks of erasure, were placed carefully on deal-shelves against the wall. A few chosen books were also ranged thereon. A volume of Jean Jacques Rousseau or of Racine was generally open upon his table, and attested his philosophical and literary predilections.

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With a mind continually on the stretch, and concerned less or more in all the great movements of the day, the features of this remarkable personage 'relaxed into absolute gaiety when in-doors, at table, or in the evening, around the wood-fire in the humble chamber of the cabinet-maker. His evenings were all passed with the family, in talking over the feelings of the day, the plans of the morrow, the conspiracies of the aristocrats, the dangers of the patriots, and the prospects of public felicity after the triumph of the Revolution. Sometimes Robespierre, who was anxious to cultivate the mind of his betrothed, read to the family aloud, and generally from the tragedies of Racine. He seldom went out in the evening; but two or three times a year he escorted Madame Duplay and her daughter to the theatre. On other days, Robespierre retired early to his chamber, lay down, and rose again at night to work. The innumerable discourses he had delivered in the two national assemblies, and to the Jacobins; the articles written for his journal while he had one; the still more numerous manuscripts of speeches which he had prepared, but never delivered; the studied style so remarkable; the indefatigable corrections marked with his pen upon the manuscripts—attest his watchings and his determination.

'His only relaxations were solitary walks in imitation of his model, Jean Jacques Rousseau. His sole companion in these perambulations was his great dog, which slept at his chamber-door, and always followed him when he went out. This colossal animal, well known in the district, was called Brout. Robespierre was much attached to him, and constantly played with him. Occasionally, on a Sunday, all the family left Paris with Robespierre; and the politician, once more the man, amused himself with the mother, the sisters, and the brother of Eleonore in the wood of Versailles or of Issy.' Strange contradiction! The man who is thus described as so amiable, so gentle, so satisfied with the humble pleasures of an obscure family circle, went forth daily on a self-imposed mission of turbulence and terror. Let us follow him to the scene of his avocations. Living in the Rue St Honore, he might be seen every morning on his way, by one of the narrow streets which led to the rooms of the National Assembly, or Convention, as the legislative body was called after the deposition of Louis XVI. The house so occupied, was situated on a spot now covered by the Rue Rivoli, opposite the gardens of the Tuileries. In connection with it, were several apartments used by committees; and there, by the leading members of the House, the actual business of the nation was for a long time conducted. It was by the part he played in one of these formidable committees, that of 'Public Safety'—more properly, public insecurity—that he becomes chargeable with his manifold crimes. For the commission of these atrocities, however, he held himself to be entirely excused; and how he could possibly entertain any such notion, remains for us to notice.

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The action of the Revolution was in the hands of three parties, into which the Convention was divided—namely, the Montagnards, the Girondists, and the Plaine. The last mentioned were a comparatively harmless set of persons, who acted as a neutral body, and leaned one way or the other according to their convictions, but whose votes it was important to obtain. Between the Montagnards and the Girondists there was no distinct difference of principle—both were keen republicans and levellers; but in carrying out their views, the Montagnards were the most violent and unscrupulous. The Girondists expected that, after a little preliminary harshness, the Republic would be established in a pacific manner; by the force, it may be called, of philosophic conviction spreading through society. They were thus the moderates; yet their moderation was unfortunately ill manifested. At the outset, they countenanced the disgraceful mobbings of the royal family; they gloried in the horrors of the 10th of August, and the humiliation of the king; and only began to express fears that things were going too far, when massacre became the order of the day, and the guillotine assumed the character of a national institution. They were finally borne down, as is well known, by the superior energy and audacity of their opponents; and all perished one way or other in the bloody struggle. Few pity them.

We need hardly recall the fact, that the discussions in the Convention were greatly influenced by tumultuary movements out of doors. At a short distance, were two political clubs, the Jacobins and the Cordeliers, and there everything was debated and determined on. Of these notorious clubs, the most uncompromising was the Jacobins; consequently, its principal members were to be found among the party of the Montagnards. During the hottest time of the Revolution, the three men most distinguished as Montagnards and Jacobins were Marat, Danton, and Robespierre. Mirabeau, the orator of the Revolution, had already disappeared, being so fortunate as to die naturally, before the practice of mutual guillotining was established. After him, Vergniaud, the leader of the Girondists, was perhaps the most effective speaker; and till his fall, he possessed a commanding influence in the Convention. Danton was likewise a speaker of vast power, and from his towering figure, he seemed like a giant among pigmies. Marat might be termed the representative of the kennel. He was a low demagogue, flaunting in rags, dirty, and venomous: he was always calling out for more blood, as if the grand desideratum was the annihilation of mankind. Among the extreme men, Robespierre, by his eloquence, his artifice, and his bold counsels, contrived to maintain his position. This was no easy matter, for it was necessary to remain firm and unfaltering in every emergency. He, like the others at the helm of affairs, was constantly impelled forward by the clubs, but more so by the incessant clamours of the mob. At the Hotel de

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Ville sat the Commune, a crew of blood-thirsty villains, headed by Hebert; and this miscreant, with his armed sections, accompanied by paid female furies, beset the Convention, and carried measures of severity by sheer intimidation. Let it further be remembered that, in 1793, France was kept in apprehension of invasion by the Allies under the Duke of Brunswick, and the army of emigrant noblesse under the command of Conde. The hovering of these forces on the frontiers, and their occasional successes, produced a constant alarm of counter-revolution, which was believed to be instigated by secret intriguers in the very heart of the Convention. It was alleged by Robespierre in his greatest orations, that the safety of the Republic depended on keeping up a wholesome state of terror; and that all who, in the slightest degree, leaned towards clemency, sanctioned the work of intriguers, and ought, accordingly, to be proscribed. By such harangues—in the main, miserable sophistry—he acquired prodigious popularity, and was in fact irresistible.

Thus was legalised the Reign of Terror, which, founded in false reasoning and insane fears, we must, nevertheless, look back upon as a thing, at least to a certain extent, reconcilable with a sense of duty; inasmuch as even while signing warrants for transferring hundreds of people to the Revolutionary Tribunal—which was equivalent to sending them to the scaffold—Robespierre imagined that he was acting throughout under a clear, an imperious necessity: only ridding society of the elements that disturbed its purity and tranquillity. Stupendous hallucination! And did this fanatic really feel no pang of conscience? That will afterwards engage our consideration. Frequently, he was called on to proscribe and execute his most intimate friends; but it does not appear that any personal consideration ever stayed his proceedings. First, he swept away Royalists and aristocrats; next, he sacrificed the Girondists; last, he came to his companion-Jacobins. Accusing Danton and his friends of a tendency to moderation, he had the dexterity to get them proscribed and beheaded. When Danton was seized, he could hardly credit his senses: he who had long felt himself sure of being one day dictator by public acclamation, and to have been deceived by that dreamer, Robespierre, was most humiliating. But Robespierre would not dare to put *him* to death! Grave miscalculation! He was immolated like the rest; the crowd looking on with indifference. Along with him perished Camille Desmoulins, a young man of letters, and a Jacobin, but convicted of advocating clemency. Robespierre was one of Camille's private and most valued friends; he had been his instructor in politics, and had become one of the trustees under his marriage-settlement. Robespierre visited at the house of his *protege*; chatted with the young and handsome Madame Desmoulins at her parties; and frequently dandled the little Horace Desmoulins

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on his knee, and let him play with his bunch of seals. Yet, because they were adherents of Danton, he sent husband and wife to the scaffold within a few weeks of each other! What eloquent and touching appeals were made to old recollections by the mother of Madame Desmoulins. Robespierre was reminded of little Horace, and of his duty as a family guardian. All would not do. His heart was marble; and so the wretched pair were guillotined. Camille's letter to his wife, the night before he was led to the scaffold, cannot be read without emotion. He died with a lock of her hair clasped convulsively in his hand.

Having thus cleared away to some extent all those who stood in the way of his views, Robespierre bethought himself of acting a new part in public affairs, calculated, as he thought, to dignify the Republic. Chaumette, a mean confederate of Hebert, and a mouthpiece of the rabble, had, by consent of the Convention, established Paganism, or the worship of Reason, as the national religion. Robespierre never gave his approval to this outrage, and took the earliest opportunity of restoring the worship of the Supreme. It is said, that of all the missions with which he believed himself to be charged, the highest, the holiest in his eyes, was the regeneration of the religious sentiment of the people: to unite heaven and earth by this bond of a faith which the Republic had broken, was for him the end, the consummation of the Revolution. In one of his paroxysms, he delivered an address to the Convention, which induced them to pass a law, acknowledging the existence of God, and ordaining a public festival to inaugurate the new religion. This fete took place on the 8th of June 1794. Robespierre headed the procession to the Champ de Mars; and he seemed on the occasion to have at length reached the grand realisation of all his hopes and desires. From this *coup de theatre* he returned home, magnified in the estimation of the people, but ruined in the eyes of the Convention. His conduct had been too much that of one whose next step was to the restoration of the throne, with himself as its occupant. By Fouche, Tallien, Collot-d'Herbois, and some others, he was now thwarted in all his schemes. His wish was to close the Reign of Terror and allow the new moral world to begin; for his late access of devotional feeling had, in reality, disposed him to adopt benign and clement measures. But to arrest carnage was now beyond his power; he had invoked a demon which would not be laid. Assailed by calumny, he made the Convention resound with his speeches; spoke of fresh proscriptions to put down intrigue; and spread universal alarm among the members. In spite of the most magniloquent orations, he saw that his power was nearly gone. Sick at heart, he began to absent himself from committees, which still continued to send to the scaffold numbers whose obscure rank should have saved them from suspicion or vengeance.

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At this juncture, Robespierre was earnestly entreated by one of his more resolute adherents, St Just, to play a bold game for the dictatorship, which he represented as the only means of saving the Republic from anarchy. Anonymous letters to the same effect also poured in upon him; and prognostics of his greatness, uttered by an obscure fortune-teller, were listened to by the great demagogue with something like superstitious respect. But for this personal elevation he was not prepared. Pacing up and down his apartment, and striking his forehead with his hand, he candidly acknowledged that he was not made for power; while the bare idea of doing anything to endanger the Republic amounted, in his mind, to a species of sacrilege. At this crisis in his fate, therefore, he temporised: he sought peace, if not consolation, in solitude. He took long walks in the woods, where he spent hours seated on the ground, or leaning against a tree, his face buried in his hands, or earnestly bent on the surrounding natural objects. What was the precise tenor of his meditations, it would be deeply interesting to know. Did the great promoter of the Revolution ponder on the failure of his aspirations after a state of human perfectibility? Was he torn by remorse on seeing rise up, in imagination, the thousands of innocent individuals whom, in vindication of a theory, he had consigned to an ignominious and violent death, yet whose removal had, politically speaking, proved altogether fruitless?

It is the more general belief, that in these solitary rambles Robespierre was preparing an oration, which, as he thought, should silence all his enemies, and restore him to parliamentary favour. A month was devoted to this rhetorical effort; and, unknown to him, during that interval all parties coalesced, and adopted the resolution to treat his oration when it came with contempt, and, at all hazards, to have him proscribed. The great day came, July 26 (8th Thermidor), 1794. His speech, which he read from a paper, was delivered in his best style—in vain. It was followed by yells and hootings; and, with dismay, he retired to the Jacobins, to deliver it over again—as if to seek support among a more subservient audience. Next day, on entering the Convention, he was openly accused by Tallien and Billaud-Varennes of aspiring to despotic power. A scene of tumult ensued, and, amid cries of *Down with the tyrant!* a writ for his committal to prison was drawn out. It must be considered a fine trait in the character of Robespierre the younger, that he begged to be included in the same decree of proscription with his brother. This wish was readily granted; and St Just, Couthon (who had lost the use of his legs, and was always carried about in an arm-chair), and Le Bas, were added to the number of the proscribed. Rescued, however, from the gendarmes by an insurrectionary force, headed by Henriot, Robespierre and his colleagues were conducted in triumph to the Hotel de Ville.

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Here, during the night, earnest consultations were held; and the adherents of Robespierre implored him in desperation, as the last chance of safety for them all, to address a rousing proclamation to the sections. At length, yielding unwillingly to these frantic appeals, he commenced writing the required address; and it was while subscribing his name to this seditious document, that the soldiers of the Convention burst in upon him, and he was shot through the jaw by one of the gendarmes. At the same moment, Le Bas shot himself through the heart. All were made prisoners, and carried off—the dead body of Le Bas not excepted.

* * * * *

While residing for a short time in Paris in 1849, we were one day conducted by a friend to a large house, with an air of faded grandeur, in the eastern faubourgs, which had belonged to an aged republican, recently deceased. He wished me to examine a literary curiosity, which was to be seen among other relics of the great Revolution. The curiosity in question was the proclamation, in the handwriting of Robespierre, to which he was in the act of inscribing his signature, when assaulted and made prisoner in the Hotel de Ville. It was a small piece of paper, contained in a glass-frame; and, at this distance of time, could not fail to excite an interest in visitors. The few lines of writing, commencing with the stirring words: '*Courage, mes compatriotes!*' ended with only a part of the subscription. The letters, *Robes*, were all that were appended, and were followed by a blur of the pen; while the lower part of the paper shewed certain discolorations, as if made by drops of blood. And so this was the last surviving token of the notorious Robespierre! It is somewhat curious, that no historian seems to be aware of its existence.

* * * * *

Stretched on a table in one of the anterooms of the Convention; his head leaning against a chair; his fractured jaw supported by a handkerchief passed round the top of his head; a glass with vinegar and a sponge at his side to moisten his feverish lips; speechless and almost motionless, yet conscious!—there lay Robespierre—the clerks, who, a few days ago, had cringed before him, now amusing themselves by pricking him with their penknives, and coarsely jesting over his fall. Great crowds, likewise, flocked to see him while in this undignified posture, and he was overwhelmed with the vilest expressions of hatred and abuse. The mental agony which he must have experienced during this humiliating exhibition, could scarcely fail to be increased on hearing himself made the object of unsparing and boisterous declamations from the adjoining tribune.

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At three o'clock in the afternoon (July 28), the prisoners were placed before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and at six, the whole were tied in carts, the dead body of Le Bas included, and conducted to execution. To this wretched band were added the whole family of the Duplays, with the exception of the mother; she having been strangled the previous night by female furies, who had broken into her house, and hung her to the iron rods of her bedstead. They were guiltless of any political crime; but their private connection with the principal object of proscription was considered to be sufficient for their condemnation. The circumstance of these individuals being involved in his fate, could not fail to aggravate the bitterness of Robespierre's reflections. As the dismal *cortege* wended its way along the Rue St Honore, he was loaded with imprecations by women whose husbands he had destroyed, and the shouts of children, whom he had deprived of parents, were the last sounds heard by him on earth. Yet he betrayed not the slightest emotion—perhaps he only pitied the ignorance of his persecutors. In the midst of the feelings of a misunderstood and martyred man, his head dropped into the basket!

These few facts and observations respecting the career of Robespierre, enable us to form a tolerably correct estimate of his character. The man was a bigot. A perfect Republic was his faith, his religion. To integrity, perseverance, and extraordinary self-denial under temptation, he united only a sanguine temperament and moderate abilities for the working-out of a mistaken principle. Honest and zealous in his purpose, his conduct was precisely analogous to that of all religious persecutors—sparing no pain or bloodshed to accomplish what he believed to be a good end. Let us grant that he was a monomaniac, the question remains as to his general accountability. If he is to be acquitted on the score of insanity, who is to be judged? Not so are we to exempt great criminals from punishment and obloquy. Robespierre knew thoroughly what he was about; and far as he was misled in his motives, he must be held responsible for his actions. Before entering on the desperate enterprise of demolishing all existing institutions, with the hope of reconstructing the social fabric, it was his duty to be assured that his aims were practicable, and that he was himself authorised to think and act for the whole of mankind, or specially commissioned to kill and terrify into his doctrines. Instead of this, there is nothing to shew that he had formed any distinct scheme of a government to take the place of that which he had aided in destroying. All we learn is, that there hovered in his mind's eye some vague Utopia, in which public affairs would go on very much of themselves, through the mere force of universal Benevolence, liberated from the bosom of Nature. For his folly and audacity in nourishing so wild a theory, and still more for the reckless butcheries by which he sought to bring it into operation, we must, on a review of his whole character, adhere to the popular belief on the subject. Acquitted, as he must necessarily be, of the charge of personal ambition, he was still a monster, only the more dangerous and detestable for justifying murder on the ground of principle.

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W.C.

INFANT SCHOOLS IN HUNGARY.

The Austrian government has for some years been exerting itself, in connection with the clergy, for the improvement and spread of education in all the provinces of the empire, being anxious to do all in their power to save the country from those excesses which are so often found in connection with ignorance. As an Englishman, living in friendly intercourse with members of the imperial family, and many persons high in the administration, I am happy to avow my thorough conviction, that such, pure and simple, is the object held in view in the establishment of schools throughout the empire, and above all, in that of the infant schools, which are now planted in every place where there exists a sufficiency of population. I have all along taken a deep interest in these little seminaries in the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary, and am highly sensible of the liberal and humane principles on which they are conducted.

Each contains from two to three hundred children, between one and a half and five years of age, all of them being the offspring of the humbler classes, and many of them orphans. All are instructed in the same room, but classed apart; that is, the girls occupy one half of the apartment, and the boys the other, leaving an avenue between them, which is occupied by the instructors. The boys are under the superintendence of a master, and the girls under that of a mistress. Both, however, teach or attend to the various necessities of either, as circumstances may require. Infants too young to learn, and those who are sent, either because they are orphans, or because the extreme poverty of the mother obliges her to do outwork, are amused with toys and pictures, all, however, of an instructive nature, and which the elder children delight to exhibit and explain to them in their own quaint little ways. I have frequently seen an infant, scarcely able to walk, brought in for the first time, and left on one of the benches of the school-room, surrounded by those already initiated. The alarm its new position occasioned to the little creature, at thus suddenly finding itself abandoned by the only person with whom it was familiar, in the midst of a multitude of unknown faces, can easily be imagined. A flood of tears was the first vent to its feelings, accompanied by a petulant endeavour to follow its parent or nurse. It was immediately, however, surrounded by a score of little comforters, who, full of the remembrance of past days, when their fears and their sadness were in like manner soothed and dissipated, would use a thousand little arts of consolation—one presenting a toy or picture, another repeating what has almost become a formula of kindly re-assurance, till smiles and sunshine would succeed to tears and clouds upon that little brow, and confidence and content to fear and mistrust. I have often seen the day thus pass with neophytes as a dream, only to be broken when the parent or nurse, returning to take them home, found them in the centre of a little joyous group, the gayest of the gay!

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One, after all, cannot wonder at this change, when he contrasts the scenery of the interior of an infant school with that of the generality of poor homes. The child, making, as it were, its first voyage in life, has here been introduced, not merely to a society conducted on principles of gentleness and kindness, but to a fairyland of marvels for the fascination of its intellectual faculties. From the ceiling to the *dado*—the wainscotted space at the base, for in Hungary this old arrangement is still maintained in its fullest form—the walls are covered with pictures of scripture scenes and objects in natural history; while the *dado* itself, terminating above in a shelf, exhibits busts, stuffed animals, and pots of flowers—the whole place, indeed, being a kind of museum, specially adapted for the enjoyment as well as instruction of the young. At first, filled with wonder and delight, the infant begins to study the meaning and character of these objects: after a short attendance, you find they can tell the names of many, and speak many things regarding them. One day, while attending a Bohemian infant school, which was dismissing, and as I was examining some of the birds upon the shelf, a little hand was insinuated into mine, as if to get it warmed—as is often done by children—when, looking down, I beheld a bright, intelligent face, apparently eager to make some communication. ‘Tuzok, tuzok!’ (‘Bustard, bustard!’) said a little voice. Encouraged by my smile, there was immediately added: ‘Ez tuzok, ez mazzar honban, tizza fetoel joenn;’ (‘That is a bustard from Hungary, from the river Teiss.’) Another little one, attracted by this observation, pointed to the elephant, and said in German: ‘Und der ist elephant: er kommt von weiten, von ausland—*von morgenland!*’ (‘And that is the elephant: it comes from far, from a foreign land—from the *morning-land!*’)—that is, the East!

The children learn the first rudiments of religion, duty and obedience to their parents and teachers, spelling, &c. After the expiration of the time allotted to them here, they are sent to the normal schools, where they are instructed in all the various branches of education which are necessary to fit them for any situation or profession for which their several talents seem to have destined them.

All parents of the lower classes are *compelled* by law to send their children to school at a certain age. If they are in easy circumstances, they contribute a small sum monthly towards the expenses of the establishment. Those who are unable to pay the full sum, pay the half or a part; others, again, such as a great portion of day-labourers with large families, and who cannot even supply their children with necessary food and clothing, pay *nothing*: it is merely necessary for these to be furnished with a certificate of their incapacity to pay for the education of their children, and the state takes the whole charge of their instruction on itself.

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We have already spoken of the deep interest we have taken in the progress of the infant schools. We visit them frequently, and attend all the examinations. On entering, it is scarcely possible to recognise in clean, orderly inmates, the dirty, ragged, quarrelling, scratching, screaming children of the back-streets, which, however, they were only a short time ago. All is changed: the miserable hut, the narrow street, and muddy lane, for a pretty room full of pleasant objects; the timid look and distrustful scowl, for sunny cheerfulness and open confidence. There is no unkind distinction among the lower classes in this country, and by this I mean the whole of the Austrian states. There being only two classes—the nobles and the commons—none of the commons despise each other, however poor or humble their situation may be. The barefooted orphan, kept and educated by charity or the state, is not an object of contempt or ridicule to the child of the prosperous artisan, who stands clothed in its little snow-white frock and pink ribbons beside its less fortunate companion. Neither is any distinction made on account of religion. The infant schools of the empire are for the children of all the poor—Catholic, Lutheran, evangelical, &c.; and the two belonging to Presburg, to which we here particularly allude, contain from sixty to seventy of the latter in every two hundred.

I was present at an examination of one of our Presburg seminaries in September last. A number of girls and boys, from three to five years of age, with a very few a little older, who had come in comparatively late, were subjected to the usual questioning in the various branches of their very elementary erudition. Some of the queries proved beyond the powers of the generality of the children; but this led to no expression of dejection or awkwardness. They evidently all endeavoured to do their very best. It was interesting to observe, that so far from pining to see a cleverer neighbour answer what they had failed in, they seemed to feel a triumph when, after a general difficulty, it was at length found that *some one* could give the right answer—shewing that they might have a feeling of emulation as to the honour of the school, but none as between one pupil and another. On several occasions, when some unusually intelligent little creature would come from a back-form, and solve a question which had bewildered those in front, there was a sensible expression of delight over the whole school.

In a far-off corner sat a little boy, poorly dressed, and of pallid countenance, but with a keen and intelligent eye, which had attracted my notice from the beginning. The more difficult the questions grew, his eye was fixed with the keener gaze on the face of the master. Several times I observed a puzzled child cast backwards to him a look, as expressing the assurance that *he* was able to solve all difficulties. At length, on a slight motion of the master's hand, the

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little brown boy was seen to dart from his obscure recess, and pass rapidly across the forms, while his companions eagerly made way for him, clapping their hands as in anticipation of some brilliant achievement. In an instant, the boy stood before the master, his dark eye full of anxious expression, but quite devoid of doubt or anxiety. All our attention was at once directed to the half-clothed, barefooted child, to whom the questions were now put, and by whom they were answered with a promptitude and precision most wonderful. And who, what was he, that little brown boy? Some did not care to ask, and others said: 'Who would have thought that that little beggar-boy would have been so smart!' But God has chosen the vile things (to man) of this earth to become a bright and shining light to the world. We asked who that little boy was, and the master smiled, shook his head, and said: 'Oh, I scarcely know myself: it is a little boy the police have sent us in lately from the streets. It is not above three weeks since he came, but he is a good and very clever child—very desirous to learn, and never forgets anything!'

I was affected by this trivial circumstance, reflecting how many little brown boys like this there must be in various countries called civilised, who, for want of a refuge where love and light are predominant, remain the outcasts of the streets, and become the prey of vice and ignorance.

THE LOSING GAME.

[The following story is by no means a piece of mere invention. The principal points were narrated to me by a very intelligent young North-Sea fisherman, who had frequently heard the legend from a grizzled old sailor on board the smack in which he was an apprentice. The veteran used to tell the story as having happened to himself; and he had told it so often, that he firmly believed it, and used to get into a passion when any of the crew dared to doubt or laugh. I have, of course, licked the rough outlines of the story or anecdote into something like shape; but the main incidents are repeated to this day by the sailors of the 'Barking Fleet,' as the squadron of handsome smacks are called, which, hailing from the town of Barking, in Essex, pursue the toilsome task, in all seasons, and almost in all weathers, of supplying the London market with North-Sea turbot, soles, and cod. The story is told in the first person, as Dick Hatch himself might have narrated it.]

Nigh forty years ago, mates, when I was as young and supple as the boy Bill, there—though I was older than him by some years—I was serving my apprenticeship to the trade aboard the sloop *Lively Nan*. There were not such big vessels in the trade then, mates, as now; but they were tight craft, and manned by light fellows; and they did their work as well as the primest clipper of the Barking Fleet. Well, the *Lively Nan* was about this quickest and most weatherly of the whole fleet; and she had

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a great name for making the quickest runs between the fishing-grounds and the river. But it wasn't owing so much to the qualities of the smack, as to the seamanship of the skipper. A prime sailor he was, surely. There wasn't another man sailed out of the River Thames who could handle a smack like Bob Goss. When he took the tiller, somehow the craft seemed to know it, and bobbed up half a point nearer to the wind; and when we were running free with the main-sheet eased off, and the foresail shivering, her wake would be as straight as her mast; only, he was a rare fellow for carrying on, was old Captain Goss! We would be staggering under a whole main-sail, when the other smacks had three reefs in theirs; and it was odds but we had one line of reef-points triced up, when our neighbours would be going at it under storm-trysail and storm-jib. He worked the *Lively Nan* hard, he did, did Captain Goss. Sweet, and wholesome, and easy as she was—for she would rise to any sea, like as comfortable as a duck—Old Goss all but drove her under. Dry jackets were scarce on board the *Lively Nan*. If there was as much wind stirring as would whirl round the rusty old vane on the topmast head, 'Carry on, carry on!' was always the captain's cry; and away we would bowl, half-a-dozen of the lee-streaks of the deck under water.

Well, mates, Old Goss was a prime sailor; but he was a strange sort of man. To see him in a passion, was something you wouldn't forget in a hurry; and you wouldn't have known him long without having the chance. Most of us can swear a bit now and then; but you ought to have heard Captain Goss! He used even to frighten the old salts, that had common oaths in their mouths from morning till night. He was worse than the worst madman in Bedlam when his blood was up; and even the strong, bold men of the crew used to cower before him like as the cabin-boy. And yet, mates, he was but a little, maimed man, and more than sixty years old. He had a regular monkey-face; I never saw one like it—brown, and all over puckers, and working and twitching, like the sea where the tide-currents meet. He had but one eye, and he wore a big black patch over the place where the other had been; but that one eye, mates, would screw into you like a gimlet. Well, Captain Goss was more than fifty when he came down to Barking, and bought the *Lively Nan*, and made a carrier^[1] of her; and nobody knew who he was, or where he came from. There was an old house at Barking then, and I have heard say that its ruins are there yet. The boys said that Guy Fawkes—him they burn every 5th of November—used to live there; and the story went that it was haunted, and that there was one room, the door of which always stood ajar, and nobody could either open or shut it. Well, mates, Old Captain Goss wasn't the sort of man to care much about Guy Fawkeses or goblins; so he hires a room in this old house—precious cheap he got it!—and when he was ashore,

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you could see a light in it all night; and if you went near, you might listen to Old Goss singing roaring songs about the brisk boys of the Spanish main, and yelling and huzzaing to himself, and drinking what he called his five-water grog. Five-water grog, mates—that was one of his jokes. It was rum made hot on the fire; and he could drink it scalding and never wink: and he would drink it till he got reg'lar wild. He was never right-down drunk, but just wild, like a savage beast! And then he would jump up, and make-believe he was fighting, and holler out to give it to the Spanish dogs, and that there were lots of doubloons below. I've gone myself with other youngsters, to listen at the door; and once when he was in the fit, yelling and singing, and laughing and swearing, all at once, I'm jiggered if he didn't out with a brace of old brass-mounted ship's pistols, and fire them right and left in the air, so that we cut and run a deal faster than we came. Of course the report soon got about that Captain Goss was an old pirate, or at the best an old bucaneer; and the Barking folks used to tell how many crews he had made walk the plank, and how there was blood-marks on his hands, which he used to try to cover with tar. But no one dared to say a word of this to him; and as he was a prime sailor, and even kind after his fashion, when he had taken first a reg'lar quantity of his five-water grog, he never wanted hands. At sea, he was often wild enough with liquor; but he no sooner put his hand on the tiller, than he seemed all right: and the *Lively Nan* walked through it like smoke. I'm jiggered, mates, if that old fellow couldn't sail a ship asleep or awake, drunk or sober, dead or alive.

Well, then, such was my old captain, Bobby Goss; and now I'll tell you what happened to him. One evening, in the autumn-time, and just when we were beginning to look out for the equinoctials, the *Lively Nan* was lying with her anchor a-peak—for we didn't mean to stay long—in Yarmouth Roads. There were three men on board, and one boy with myself; they called him Lawrence. I forget his other name, for I aint seen him for many a year. Well, the men had all turned in for'ards, and we two were left to wait for the captain, who had gone ashore; and after he came back, to take our spells at an anchor-watch till daylight, when we were to trip, and be off to the Dogger. The weather was near a dead calm, and warm for the time of year. The *Lively Nan* was lying with her gaff hoisted half-way and the peak settled down, so that we mightn't lose any time in setting the sail in the morning; and Lawrence and I were lying in the fo'castle, with our pipes in our mouths, watching the shore, to see if the captain was coming off, and seeing the sun go down over the sand-hills and the steeples and the wind-mills of Yarmouth. There weren't many vessels in the Roads; but the Yarmouth galleys, that go dodging about among the sands, were stretching

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in for the beach with the last puff of the evening breeze; and the herring-boats could be seen going off to their ground like specks out upon the sea. Then presently it got dark, and the town-lights of Yarmouth came sparkling out, the harbour-light the biggest, and away to the south'ard, the Lowstofft Light-house. But, after all, there aint much amusement in watching lights, and we both of us wanted to turn in; but till the captain came, there was no warm blankets for either. So we got wondering what Old Goss was doing at Yarmouth, and what was keeping him, and whether he'd come aboard drunk or sober, and whether he'd blow us up, and whether he'd rope's-end us, which was as likely as not, or perhaps more. Well, so hour after hour passed, and the night was so calm we could hear the chimes of the Yarmouth clocks, and the water going lap-lap against the sides of the *Lively Nan*, and the rudder going cheep-cheep as the sway of the sea stirred it. At last, says Lawrence: 'It's reg'lar dull here; let's go below.'

'What's the use?' says I: 'there's no light, and the hands are all fast asleep.'

'No,' says he; 'to the captain's cabin I mean. There's a lamp there; and we can hear the oars of the boat, and be on deck again, and no one the wiser.'

Well, mates, I had some curiosity to get a glimpse of the captain's cabin, where I very seldom went, and never stayed long: so down we went, lighted up the lamp, and looked about us. There wasn't much, however, to see. It was a black little hole, with a brass stove and lockers, and a couple of berths, larboard and starboard, and a small picture of a fore-and-aft rigged schooner, very low in the water, and looking a reg'lar clipper; and no name to her. Well, mates, all at once I caught sight of a pack of cards lying on a locker. 'Here's a bit o' fun,' says I; 'Lawry, let's have a game;' and he agreed. So down we sat, and began to play 'put.' A precious greasy old lot of cards they were; and so many dirt-spots on them, that it required a fellow with sharp eyes to make out the dirt from the Clubs and Spades. However, we got on somehow. When one was ready to play, he knocked the table with his knuckles, as a signal to the other; and for hours and hours we shuffled and dealt and knocked until it was late in the night, which I ought to have told you was Saturday night. At last, just as we ended a game, and when we were listening if a boat was coming, before beginning another, we heard the Yarmouth clocks ring twelve.

'Put up the cards,' says Lawrence; 'I'll not play more.'

'Why not?' says I.

'Because,' says he, and he stammered a little—'because it's Sunday.'

Well, mates, I had forgotten all my notions of that kind, and so I laughed at him. But it was no use.

'Them,' says he, 'that plays cards on a Sunday, runs a double chance of death on Monday.'

His mother had told him this, and so he refused out-and-out to go on. 'Well,' says I, 'I aint afraid, and I'd play if I had a partner.'

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Mates! the cards were lying in a pack, and the words were hardly out of my mouth, before they slipped down, and spread themselves out upon the table! Lawrence gave a loud screech, and jumped up. 'Oh!' says he, 'it's the Old Un with us in the cabin!' and up the companion he tumbled, and I at his heels; and rushed for'ard as hard as we could pelt, and cuddled under the foresail—which was lying on the deck—all trembling and shaking, and our teeth chattering.

'I told you what it would be,' says Lawrence.

'I'll never play cards again,' says I, 'on a Sunday!'

Just at that minute we heard oars, and then a hail: 'The *Lively Nan*, ahoy!' It was Old Goss's voice, and it was so thick, we knew he wasn't sober. So we slunk out, all trembling and clinging to each other. The lamp was burning up the cabin skylight, but we were afraid to look down. But if we didn't look, we could not help hearing; and sure enough there was the rap of knuckles on the table, as if Somebody was impatient that his partner didn't play. Well, we were more dead than alive when the captain came alongside in a shore-boat, and tumbled up the side, abusing the boatmen for the price he had to pay them. He had a lantern, and noticed the state we were in at once.

'Now, then,' says he, 'you couple of young swabs, what are ye standing grinning there for, like powder-monkeys in the aguer? What's come over you, ye twin pair of snivelling Molly Coddles?' We looked at each other, but we were afraid to speak. 'What is it?' he roared again, 'or I'll make your backs as hot as a roasted pig's!' And on this, Lawrence reg'larly blubbered out: 'The devil, sir; the devil is in the cabin playing at double dummy "put!"'

You should have heard Old Goss's laugh at this. They might have heard it ashore at Yarmouth. Just as it stopped, the sound of the knuckles came up through the skylight.

'Who's below?' says the captain.

'No one,' says I.

'But Davy Jones,' says Lawrence.

'Then,' says the captain, with an oath that was enough to split the mast, 'I'll play with him! It's not been the first time, and it mayn't be the last. Go for'ard, you beggars' brats, and don't disturb us;' and he went down the companion.

But we did not go for'ard. No; we stretched ourselves on the deck, and peeped down the skylight. We could only see faintly, but we did see the captain sitting, holding his hand of cards, and another hand opposite, all spread out, but no fingers holding it, and no man behind it. There was a rap on the table, and I am sure it was not the captain that struck it.



‘Very well,’ says he; ‘wait till I’ve thought. You’re so confounded sharp.’

Then he played, and there was a dark shadow on the table—we did not know what, but it made our hair stand on end.

‘Play fair, Old Un!’ says the captain. ‘There goes king of trumps. Ha! that’s what I thought! Of course, the devil’s own luck—it’s a proverb. Well, never say die. There!’ and he played again.

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But we could stand it no longer. We scrambled to our legs, and the next minute were down in fo'castle, rousing the men. They were sleepy enough, you may be bound; but we almost lugged them out of the hammocks. 'Turn out, turn out, shipmates, for God's-sake: the devil's aboard this ship, and he's playing cards with the captain in the cabin.' At first, mates, the hands thought we had gone mad; but we both of us told in a breath what we had seen; and so in a minute or two we all went aft, creeping like cats along the deck. But there was no need. We heard Old Goss's voice raging like a fury.

'You're a cheat, Old Un,' he was yelling out. 'You cheat all mankind: you've cheated me. Come, play; double or quits on the first turn-up. What's that? Nine of Spades! Seven of Spades! What! no trumps? I say, don't you mind the old craft under the line? That's her opposite you; so, play away.'

'Mates,' says an old salt—his name was Bartholomew Cook—'mates,' says he, 'this is a doomed ship, an I won't ship for another v'y'ge.'

'Nor I;' 'nor I,' says several, as we crept along.

'He's only mad with drink,' whispered the mate. 'It's all five-water grog.'

'Is it?' said Bartholomew. 'Look down there!'

The men crept to the skylight, and peeped; and so did I. What we saw, not a man forgot the longest day he lived. The captain was dealing the cards furiously; his face working and swelling; his hair bristling up; his good eye gleaming, and the patch off the other, the blind one, which was shining, too, as it were, like a rotten oyster in the dark.

'Play!' roars Goss at last; and then he paused, as if he was thinking of his next card. The table was rapped. He played; and then quick and furious the cards came down; the captain all the while raving, shouting, and foaming at the mouth.

'Against me—against me—against me! Avaunt! A man's no match for ye. Ye have all! Lost again! No; here—stop. On the next card, I stake myself—my ship—my'—

'Stop!' shouted old Bartholomew. He had been standing at the foot of the companion, and he burst into the cabin. 'Stop, Captain Goss, in the name of God!'

Goss turned round to him. His face was so like the Evil One's that we did not look for any other. Then a brass-mounted pistol—a shot—and rolling smoke: all passed in a minute. Then the captain flung a card upon the table, and with a yell like a wild beast, shouted out: 'Lost!' fell over the cards, extinguished the lamp; and we neither heard nor saw more, till there came a shuffling on the companion, and Bartholomew crawled out with his face all blackened by the powder, and the blood trickling from his cheek, where the ball had grazed it. We all went for'ard, mates, and had a long palaver, and resolved to go ashore at daybreak, and leave a doomed captain and a doomed ship. But we

didn't know our man. In the gray of the morning, we heard the handspike rattle on the hatch, and we tumbled up one after the other. The captain was there, looking much as usual, but only paler.

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'Man the windlass,' says he.

'We're going ashore, sir,' says Bartholomew firmly.

'How?' says the captain.

'In the boat,' says Bartholomew.

'Are you?' says Goss: 'look at her!' He had cut her adrift, and she was a mile off.

'And now,' says Goss, 'I was drunk last night, and frightened you—playing tricks with cards. Don't be fools; do your duty, and defy Davy Jones. If not'—And then he flung open his pea-coat, and we saw four of the brass-mounted pistols in his belt. But, mates, his one eye was worse than the four muzzles, and we slunk to our work, and obeyed him. The easterly breeze came fresh, and we were soon bowling away nor'ard. The captain stood long at the helm, and we gathered for'ard. 'We're lost!' said Bartholomew; 'we're lost men! We're bought and sold!'

'Bartholomew,' shouts the captain, 'come and take the helm!' He went aft, mates, like a lamb; and the captain walked for'ards, and looked at us, one after another; and the one eye cowed us. We were not like men; and he was our master. When he went below, we grouped together, and looked out to windward. It was getting black—black; the wind was coming off in gusts; and the *Lively Nan* began to dance to the seas that came rolling in from the eastward. 'The equinoctial!' we says one to another. In an hour more, mates, all the sky to windward was like a big sheet of lead; with white clouds, like feathers, driving athwart it—the clouds, as it were, whiter than the firmament. You know the meaning, mates, of a sky like that; and accordingly, by nightfall, we had it; and the *Lively Nan*, under close-reefed main-sail and storm-jib, was groaning, and plunging, and diving in the seas—the wind blowing, mates, as if it would have wrenched the mast out of the keelson. Many a gale have I been in, before and since, but that was the worst of all. Well, mates, we thought we were doomed, but we did our work, silent and steady; and we kept the smack under a press of canvas that none but such a boat could bear, to claw her off the lee-shore—off them fearsome sands that lie all along Lincolnshire. Captain Goss was as bold and cool as ever, and stood by the tiller-tackle, and steered the ship as no hand but his could do.

It was the gloaming of the night, mates, when the gale came down, heavier and heavier—a perfect blast, that tore up the very sea, and drove sheets of water into the air. We were a'most blinded, and clung to cleats and rigging—the sea tumbling over and over us; and the poor, old smack at length smashed down on her beam-ends. All at once, the mast went over the side; and as we righted and rose on the curl of a seaway, Bartholomew sung out, loud and shrill: 'Sail, ho!' We looked. Right to windward, mates, there was a sort of light opening in the clouds; something of the colour of the ring round the moon in dirty weather, and nigh as round; and in the middle of it was a smack,

driving right down on us, her bowsprit not a cable-length from our broadside. She looked wondrous like the *Lively Nan* herself, and some of us saw our own faces clustered for'ard, looking at ourselves over the bow!

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As this notion was passed from one to another, we cried out aloud, that our hour was come. Captain Goss was in the middle of us. 'Hold your baby screeches,' says he. 'You'll be none the worse; it's me and the smack she has to do with.' Even, as he spoke, she was on us. Some fell on their knees, and others clenched their fists and their teeth; but instead of the crash of meeting timber, we heard but a rustle, and the shadow of her sails flitted, as it were, across us; and as they passed, the wind was cold, cold, and struck us like frost; and the next minute the *Lively Nan* had sunk below our feet, and we found ourselves in the roaring sea, struggling among the wreck of the mast. The smack was gone, and the strange ship gone, and the gale blowing steady and strong. One by one, mates, we got astride of the mast, and lashed ourselves with odds and ends of broken rope; and then we began, as we rose and fell on the sea, to look about and muster how many we were. The crew, including the captain, was seven hands, but we were sure there were eight men sitting on the mast. It was too dark to see faces; but you could see the dark figures clinging to the spar.

'Answer to your names, mates,' says Bartholomew, who somehow took the lead. And so he called over the list till he came to the captain.

'Captain Goss?'

'Here,' says the captain's voice.

We now knew there was somebody behind him who was not one of the crew. It was too dark, however, to see distinctly, and Goss interrupted our view such as it was.

'Who is the man on the end of the mast, Captain Goss?' says Bartholomew.

'You might be old enough to guess that!' replied the captain, and his voice was husky-like, but quite clear; and it never trembled. 'Some men call him one thing, some another; and we of the sea call him Davy Jones.'

Mates, at that we clustered up together as well as we could, and fixing our eyes on what was passing at the other end of the mast, we hardly attended to the seas that broke over and over us. At last, we saw Captain Goss, by the light of the beds of bursting foam, fumbling for something in his breast.

'Is it a Bible you have there?' cried Bartholomew. The captain didn't answer, but pulled out the thing he was trying for; and we guessed somehow, for we could hardly see, that it was the greasy pack of cards.

'Double or quits!' he shouted, 'on all I've staked;' and in another instant there was one horrid, unearthly screech, like what we heard in the cabin before, and the mast, as it were, tipped the heel of it, the cross-trees rising many feet above the water. Whether or no it was the motion of the waves that had tossed it, no man can say; but when the

mast rolled again with the next sea, the heel came up empty: Captain Goss and his companion were gone!

'Thank God,' says Old Bartholomew, 'for Jonah is in the sea.' In less than half an hour, mates, we were tossed ashore, without a bruise or scratch. We walked the beach till daylight, and then we saw that the mast had disappeared. None ever saw more a timber or a rope's-end of the *Lively Nan*. She had been staked and won; but the greasy cards, mates, lay wet and dank upon the beach, and we left them to wither there among the sea-weed.

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FOOTNOTES:

[1] The smacks used to convey the fish from the trawlers to the Thames are called 'carriers.'

PARTNERSHIP IN COMMANDITE.

It is a general prejudice, that a subject like the law of partnership is a matter for the legal profession only, or, at most, for the consideration of capitalists embarked in partnership business. But it is, in truth, a subject of great interest to the public at large, and especially to that valuable portion of the community who possess ability and character, and have a little property—but not much—at stake in the soundness of our institutions. This class have, however, of late begun to shew a visible interest in the subject—an interest which, had it existed earlier, might have prevented any of the anomalies of which we complain from increasing to their present excess.

The political economists have ever admitted the great influence of combined capital: they have pointed to many valuable operations, such as gas-works, water-works, railways, &c. which can be performed by combined capital, but are beyond the capacity of individual capitalists. They have also admitted the efficacy of a division or combination of labour; whether it be that of the mechanic, or of some higher grade, such as the designer and projector. The views of the older school of political economists would be in entire concurrence with anything that would facilitate such combinations, where several men with skill or money take their parts; as, for instance, where one is the buyer of raw materials, another keeps the accounts, another draws patterns, and another acts as salesman. On the other hand, some novel speculators go so much farther, that they would revolutionise society, and, by force, compel it to be organised into co-operative sections. It infers no sympathy with these wild schemes of destruction, and artificial reconstruction, to desire that our law should give facility for co-operation and combination—nay, that it should give to it every encouragement consistent with other interests, and with civil liberty.

But our law, unfortunately, instead of doing thus, has set heavy impediments in the way of co-operation; we might speak more strongly, and say, that it has prepared pitfalls, in which any person guilty of having joined in a co-operative scheme, may at once find himself overwhelmed, as a punishment for his offence. Invest part of your savings in a company in which you have reliance; assist a young man, of whose capacity and honesty you think well, by investing money in his business; and some day you may find yourself ruined for having done so.

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Those readers who have turned any attention to this subject, will at once see that we refer to the law of unlimited responsibility in partnerships. Except when the company proceeds under an act of parliament, a charter, or patent, limiting the responsibility, every partner is responsible for the debts and obligations of the concern, to the last farthing he possesses. Very often, a young man of enterprise and ability, acting as manager, overseer, or in some other respectable capacity, receives a small share in the profits to encourage him to exertion: he has no control over the management: some leading man plunges, to serve himself, into dangerous speculations, and there is a bankruptcy. The young man has done nothing but good service all along to the partnership, and to its creditors, and all who have had dealings with it; yet, if he have saved a trifle, it is swept away with the effects of the real speculators. Take another case equally common: A young man commences business alone, or in company with others: they have intelligence, ability, and honesty, but little capital. A capitalist, who, perhaps, conducts some larger business of his own, might, ingrafting kindness on prudential considerations, be inclined to embark with them to a certain extent; but he finds, that instead of a prudential step, nothing could be more thoroughly imprudent. He will have to embark not only the small sum he destined for the purpose, but his whole fortune. Dealers who have transactions with the young partners, will know that a man of fortune is 'at their back,' as it is termed, and will give them credit and encouragement accordingly. Without being conscious of any dishonesty, the firm will be led to trade, not on the capital which their friend has advanced, but on the capital which he possesses. Of course, they do not intend that he should lose his fortune, any more than that they themselves should lose their business and pecuniary means. But these things happen against people's intentions and inclinations; and the friend who wished to aid them with a moderate and cautious advance, is ruined; while those who were giving reckless credit, and who encouraged dangerous speculations, are paid cent. per cent. It is the fear of such a consummation as this that generally makes the well-intending friend abstain from ultimately committing himself with those with whom he would have fain co-operated.

It is quite right that trading companies should not trade on false resources, and be able to laugh at their creditors by placing out of the reach of the law the funds with which they have speculated. Yet this can be done under the present system; and there is a class of men in the commercial world, banded together by peculiar ties and interests, who are said to accomplish it on a large and comprehensive scale. It is thus carried out: A penniless man starts in business, supplied with abundant capital by his friends: they may demand 6, 7, or 10 per cent.

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for the use of it; and if they manage, which they may, to avoid the residue of the law of usury, they are safe from the law of partnership. The new man, by his prompt payments and abundant command of capital, works himself into good credit. It is an understanding, that when he has been thus set afloat, the money advanced by his friends is to be gradually repaid. He is then left to swim or sink. If the former be his fate, it is well for all parties; if the latter, his friends will not be the sufferers: their capital is preserved, and they can play the same game over again, in some other place, with the hope of an equally happy result.

The same modifications of the law which would free partnership of its terrors would be only naturally accompanied with safeguards to protect the public against such schemes as these. In France, America, and many other countries, there is a system of partnership, with limited responsibility, known by the name of 'Partnership in *Commandite*.' Even with us, limited responsibility is by no means unknown. It is, however, granted capriciously and unsystematically, without those checks and regulations which, if there were a general system, would be adopted to make it safe and effective. 'I wish,' said Mr Duncan, a solicitor, when examined before the Select Committee on the Law of Partnership, 'to draw the attention of the committee first to this simple fact—that all the railway, gas, and water and dock companies, and all the telegraph companies, as a matter of course, have limited liability. It is impossible to trace why they have got it, but they have got it as a habit, and for any extent of capital they desire. Whether a project be to make a railway from one small place to another, or to provide gas to supply any town, great or small, all those companies, as a matter of course, come to the legislature and ask for, and obtain, limited liability. They are commercial companies, and one cannot trace the reason why they should have limited liability a bit more than any other company—but it is so.'

Here we have at least a precedent, which is of importance in a country like this, so truly conservative in the sense of adhering to anything that is fixed law or matter of traditional business routine. Now, in these concerns, where there is often so much wild speculation and mismanagement, no one is responsible beyond the subscribed stock; yet while we hear enough of the stockholders themselves losing their property, we seldom, scarcely ever, hear of the creditors who deal with them, in contracting for their works or otherwise, losing. The reason is, because the extent to which they can pay is known, and the people who deal with the company calculate accordingly. Unlimited liability existing in some indefinite parties, while it too often ruins these parties themselves, is a bait for that indefinite credit which produces their ruin, and sometimes leaves the careless creditor unpaid, even when he has taken the last farthing from the unfortunate partner.

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In the commandite partnerships, however, the restriction of liability does not apply to all the shareholders, as in the case of our great joint-stock companies. Full responsibility alights only on those partners who take it upon them, who have an interest in the profits measured by their responsibility, and who are known to the world to be so responsible. With regard to those whose responsibility is said to be limited, it would be more accurate to say, that they have no responsibility at all: there is a fixed sum which they have invested in the concern—they may lose it, but it is there already; and there is nothing for which they have, properly speaking, to be responsible. The method adopted in France may be described thus:—There is a private act or contract, in which are given the names of the partners, and the sums contributed by them. The names of the *gerants*, or those who, as ostensible conductors of the business, are to be responsible to the whole extent of their property, are then published. With regard to those who put in money without incurring farther responsibility, it is only necessary to publish the sums contributed by them: no farther information regarding them would be of any use, unless to their fellow-partners, who would perhaps like to know if the concern is patronised by men of sense, and they may satisfy themselves by looking at the deed of partnership. Now, there is perfect fairness in all this. The public know the persons who agree to take the full responsibility; they know also the amount of money put into their hands by other parties. In deciding whether they shall deal or not with this body, they are not perplexed by mysterious visions of possible rich unknowns who may be brought in for the company's obligations. We cannot see that such an arrangement is in the least unfair, and we are convinced that it would be productive of great good. The subscribers with limited responsibility, or *commanditaires*, as they are called, are not cut off from all control over the management of their funds: it is their own fault if they join a commandite company where they are not allowed to inspect the books, and check rashness or extravagance.

It seems to be frequently the case, that a set of able workmen, in the kind of artistic manufactures for which France is celebrated, become the *gerants* of such companies. This, we believe, is a form in which whatever element of good may happen to lie in the co-operative theories of a recent school of Socialists will be found. The commercial witnesses before the select committee, spoke of ribbons and other ornamental manufactures, which were only produced in perfection in establishments where the energies of the designers were roused by the possession of a share in the business, and in its management, as *gerants*. Coinciding with these practical witnesses, the theorists on political economy who were consulted on the occasion—such as Mr Babbage and Mr J.S. Mill—held that many inventions that might be patented and used, and many ingenious discoveries made by men of the operative class, were lost to the world by the defective state of the law. They would often get those who, richer than themselves, have reliance on their judgment, to aid them in carrying out their inventions or improvements, were it not for the law of unlimited responsibility.

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We can even anticipate, from anything that will facilitate fruitful investment by the working-classes, a still wider—we might say, a political effect. The chief defect in our otherwise sound social system, is the want of fusion between the class of employers and employed. As some other countries are subject to the more serious evil of being without a middle-class between the aristocracy and the common people, so we want a sub-grade, as it were, between the middle and the working classes. It is too much the practice to consider them as separated from each other by interests, tastes, and feelings. It is, on the contrary, the real truth that their interests are indissolubly united; but if there were a less broad line separating them from each other, this would be more apparent. The true way to fill up the gap happily for all parties, is not for the middle-class to descend, but the working-class to rise. Nothing could better accomplish this, than imparting to them facilities for entering into business on a small scale on their own account. The hopelessness with which the workman looks at the position of the employer, as that of a great capitalist, would then be turned into hope and endeavour.

It is often said, that the operative classes shew an unfortunate indisposition to advance onwards, and abandon their uniform routine of toil: the answer to this is—try them. They have adopted the means at their command in other countries. Mr Davis, an American gentleman, gave the select committee an animated view of the ambitious workmen of the New England states, where, he said, 'nobody is contented with his present condition—everybody is struggling for something better.' Now, to be discontented with one's condition, in the shape of folding the arms, and abusing the fate that has not sent chance prosperity, is a bad thing; but the discontent—if such it can be justly called—which incites a man to rise in the world by honest exertions, is in every way a good thing. Mr Davis said, he has been told that, in Lowell, some of the young women hold stock in the mills in which they work. Imagine a factory-girl holding stock in a mill!

We believe that unlimited responsibility was really founded on the old prejudices against usury or interest; and as these prejudices are fast disappearing, we may hope speedily to see this relic of their operation removed. Towards this end, let the operatives everywhere meet to consider this question, so important to their interests; and, as we believe they will generally see the propriety of furthering a law to establish commandite partnerships, let them petition the House of Commons accordingly. Whether the classes with capital will move in the matter, is doubtful; for they are not the parties to be chiefly benefited. The best way is not to trust to them on the subject; but for the working-classes to take the thing into their own hands, and spare no exertion to procure an act of parliament of the kind we speak of. We feel assured, that such an act would do more to inspire hope among artisans, and to put them in the way of fortune, than any other law that could be mentioned.

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RECENT FIRE-PANICS.

The panic created by a cry of fire in theatres, churches, and other public buildings, may be said to cause a considerably greater number of deaths than the flames themselves. Few persons, indeed, are burnt to death, means of escape from conflagration being usually found; whereas, the number suffocated and bruised to death by mere panic, is lamentably large. The following is the account of a most disastrous fire-panic, which we gather from a paper in an American Journal of Education.

In the city of New York there is a school, known as the 'Ninth Ward School-house,' Greenwich Avenue. The house is built of brick, and consists of several floors, access to which is obtained by a spiral staircase. The bottom of the staircase is paved with stone, and ten feet square in extent. Standing in the centre of this landing-place, we look up a circular well, as it may be called, round which the stair winds with its balustrade. The school is attended by boys and girls, in different departments, under their respective teachers. It was in this extensive establishment, numbering at the time 1233 boys and 600 girls, that the panic occurred, and it broke out in a singular and unexpected way.

One day last December, Miss Harrison, a teacher in the female department, who had been for some days indisposed, was suddenly, and while performing her duties in the school, seized with a paralysis of the tongue. The spectacle of their teacher in this distressing condition, naturally suggested to the children that she was faint, and required water. At all events, the word *water* was uttered. It was repeated. It became a cry; and the cry excited the idea of fire. A notion sprang up that the school was on fire. That was enough. The floor was in an uproar; and the noise so created in one department was communicated to the others. The whole school was seized with panic! Now commenced a rush towards the various doors. Out of each poured a flood of children, dashing wildly to the staircase. The torrent jammed up, and unable to find outlet by the stair, burst the balustrades, and down like a cataract poured the maddened throng into the central well, falling on the paved lobby beneath. The scene was appalling. 'Before the current could be arrested, the well was filled with the bodies of children to the depth of about eight feet. At this juncture, the alarm reached the Ninth Ward Station-house, the fire-bell was rung, and a detachment of the police hurried to the scene. Here a new difficulty presented itself. The afternoon session of the school having commenced, the main outer-doors, which open upon the foot of the stairs, had been closed. Against these the affrighted children were wedged in masses, and as the doors open inward, it was some time before relief could be given them. The police fortunately effected an entrance by a rear-door, but for which timely help, many more of the children would probably have been suffocated.

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'Much commendation is due to the teachers for their presence of mind. Miss M'Farland, one of the assistants in the primary department, finding the children of her department becoming alarmed, placed herself in the doorway, and exerted her utmost strength to arrest them as they endeavoured to rush from the room; and although several times thrown down and trampled upon, she still persisted in her efforts, until, finally, she was so much injured, as to be compelled to relinquish the post. So impetuous was the rush, however, that five of the teachers were forced over the balusters, and fell with the children into the well. The sterner discipline exercised over the boys' departments prevented them generally from joining in the rush. Only three of the pupils in the upper male department were among the killed. Some of the boys jumped out of the windows, and one of them had his neck broken by the fall. As soon as they gained admittance, the police took possession of the premises, and commenced handing out the children from their perilous position. Those that were on the top were but slightly injured; but as soon as these had been removed, the most heart-rending spectacle presented itself. Some among the policemen were fathers, whose own children were there. They worked manfully, and body after body was taken out: many of them lifeless at first, came to when they once more breathed the fresh air; but many were beyond aid, and death was too plainly marked upon their pallid features. Some were injured by the fall, and lay writhing in agony; some moaned; while others shrieked with pain; and others, again, when released, started off for home, apparently unconscious of the awful scene through which they had passed. The bodies of the dead and wounded were mostly taken to the Ninth Ward Station-house, which is near the school. In a few minutes, news of the accident spread through the neighbourhood, and mothers came rushing to the scene by scores. Occasionally, a mother would recognise the lifeless form of a child as it was lifted from the mass, and then the piercing cry of agony that would rend the air! One after another, the bodies of the dead were removed; and at length litters were provided, and the wounded were carried away also. Nearly one hundred families either mourned the loss of children, or watched anxiously over the forms of the wounded.'

The coroner's jury which sat on this case of wholesale destruction of life, decided that no blame could be imputed to any of the teachers in the school, and that the deaths were a result of accident. At the same time, they strongly condemned the construction of the stair, and the unfitness of the balustrades to withstand pressure. The whole case suggests the impolicy of giving spiral staircases to buildings of this class: in all such establishments, the stairs should be broad and square, with numerous landing-places.

Strangely enough, the sensation caused by the above catastrophe had not subsided, when another case of destruction of life occurred in New York from a similarly groundless fear of fire. This second disaster is noticed as follows in the newspapers:

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'Monday night (January 12), between the hours of nine and ten o'clock, a frightful calamity occurred at 140 Centre Street, in a rear building owned by the Commissioners of Emigration, for the reception of the newly-arrived emigrants. The building is five storeys high, and each floor appropriated for the emigrants—the upper rooms principally for the women, and the lower part for the men. In this place, six human lives were lost, and perhaps as many more may yet die from the injuries sustained. It seems that between nine and ten o'clock, the City Hall bell rang an alarm of fire in the fifth district, and some of the women on the upper floors called out "fire," which instantly created a panic of alarm on each floor among them, and a general rush was made for the stairway, which being very contracted, they fell one on the top of each other, creating an awful state of confusion. So terrified were some, that they broke out the second and third storey windows, and sprang out, falling with deadly violence in the yard below. The screams and cries of the affrighted women and children soon called the aid of the police; and Captain Brennen, aided by his efficient officers, rendered every assistance in his power, and succeeded, as quickly as possible, in extricating the injured as well as the dead from the scene of calamity. Six dead bodies were conveyed to the station-house, and eight persons were conveyed to the city hospital with broken arms and bodily injuries, some of whom are not expected to survive. Many others were injured, more or less, but not deemed sufficiently so to be sent to the hospital. Those killed are all children, except one, who is a young woman about twenty years of age. They were all suffocated by the number of persons crowded on them. The scene at the Sixth Ward Station-house presented a woful sight, the mothers of the deceased children bewailing over them in the most pitiful manner. At the time the alarm was given, there were about 480 emigrants in the building, the larger proportion women and children, who were up stairs; and in forcing their way down stairs, the balusters gave way, thus precipitating them down in a very similar manner to the unfortunate children at the Ninth Ward School-house. There was, it seems, no cause for the alarm of fire any more than the bells rang an alarm; which alarm did not refer to that district, but was misconstrued by the emigrants to be in their building. Alderman Barr was quickly on the spot, rendering every assistance in his power to alleviate the sufferings of the poor unfortunate emigrants.'

The details of these two calamities arising from sheer panic will not be useless, if they serve to shew the extreme danger and folly of giving way to a terror of fire in crowded buildings. Let us impress upon all the necessity for so disciplining their nerves, that on hearing a call of fire in a church, theatre, or other place of assemblage, they may act with calmness and common sense; those nearest the door going out,

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and the others quietly following. It is in the highest degree improbable—not to say impossible—that in such places fire, before its discovery, can gain such a height as to cut off, unaided by panic, the escape of a single man, woman, or child in the house. We should remember, that not merely on the first discovery of fire, but when the building is actually in flames, the firemen are at work within the walls; and that these men are protected by no immunity but that arising from their own courage and self-possession.

THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

February 1852.

Professor Faraday's lecture, with which, according to use and custom, the Friday evening course at the Royal Institution was opened, has been the most noteworthy topic of scientific gossip since my last. The subject, 'Lines of Magnetic Force,' is one not easily popularised, otherwise, I should like to give you an abstract of it. One requires to know so much beforehand, to comprehend the value and significance of such a lecture. The learned professor's experiments, by which he demonstrated his reasonings were, however, eminently interesting to the crowded auditory who had the good-fortune to listen to him. He promises to give us, before the close of the season, another, wherein he will make use of that telescope of the mind—speculation, and tell us much of what his ever-widening researches have led him to conclude concerning magnetism; a science on which he believes we are shortly to get large 'increments of knowledge.' Mr Wheatstone, too, having produced a paper resuming his stereoscopic investigations, had the honour of reading it before the Royal Society as their Bakerian Lecture, as I prognosticated a month or two since. Of course in this practical age the inquiry is put—Of what use is the stereoscope or pseudoscope? With respect to the former, it is said that artists will find it very serviceable in copying statuary groups; and a suggestion has already been made, to adapt it to the purposes of microscopic observation, as the objects examined will be seen much more accurately under the extraordinary relief produced by the stereoscope, than by the ordinary method. And it may interest astronomers to know, that Mr Wheatstone believes it possible, by means of the same instrument, to perfect our knowledge of the moon's surface and structure. For instance: he proposes to take a photographic image of the moon, at one of the periods of her libration, and a second one about fifteen months afterwards, at the next libration, which, as you know, would be in the opposite direction to the first. The two images being then viewed in a stereoscope, would appear as a solid sphere, in which condition we should doubtless get such an acquaintance with the surface of our satellite as can be obtained by no other means. The reason for taking the images with so long an interval between is, that although each one represents the same object,

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each must be taken at a different angle; and for an object so distant as the moon, the difference caused by the libration would, it is believed, be sufficient for the desired result. In the small pictures, however, the difference of angle is so slight, that to the unpractised observer they appear precisely alike; it is, nevertheless, essential to the effect that the variation, though minute, should exist. With respect to the pseudoscope—which makes the outside of a teacup appear as the inside, and the inside as the outside; which transforms convexity into concavity, and the reverse; and a sculptured face into a hollow mask; which makes the tree in your garden appear inside your room, and the branches farthest off come nearest to the eye; and which, when you look at your pictures, represents them as sunk into a deep recess in the wall,—with respect to this instrument, its practical uses have yet to be discovered. But as your celebrated countryman, Sir David Brewster, is working at the subject, as well as Mr Wheatstone, we shall not, so say the initiated, have to wait long for further results.

Besides these lectures, a course is being delivered at the Museum of Practical Geology, recently opened in Jermyn Street, by eminent professors, as you may judge from the fact of De la Beche, Forbes, and Playfair being among them. Some of the most promising of the pupils at the School of Design are allowed to attend these lectures gratis. At the same institution, an attempt is to be made to do what has long been done in Paris—namely, to admit working-people to the best scientific lectures free of cost. Now, therefore, is the time for the working-men of the metropolis to shew whether they wish for knowledge and enlightenment or not. They have only to present themselves at the Museum, pay a registration-fee of sixpence, conform to the rules, and so qualify themselves for the course of six lectures. It is a capital opportunity; and I, for one, hope that hundreds of the intelligent working-men of London will avail themselves of it. They, on their part, may find government education not unacceptable; and government, on the other hand, encouraged by a successful experiment, may feel inclined to extend its benefits. If a clear-headed lecturer on political economy could also be appointed, perhaps in time our industrial fellow-countrymen might come to understand that strikes are always a mistake, and the masters, that fair play is a jewel.

Notwithstanding the stir about invasion and amateur rifle-clubs, other matters do get talked about—as, for instance, the astronomer-royal's communication to the Society of Antiquaries on the place of Caesar's landing at his invasion of Britain. The learned functionary settles it to his own satisfaction by tide-calculations: he has also been holding an interesting correspondence with a lady on the geography of Suez, as bearing on the Exodus of Scripture. And this reminds me that Dr J. Wilson has written

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a paper, published in the proceedings of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, to decide a long debated question—the identification of the Hazor of Kedar, referred to in Jeremiah—'Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon shall smite,' &c. The doctor, after careful research and reasoning, believes the ruins known as Hadhar or Hatra, not far distant from Nineveh, to be the remains of the denounced city. Layard and Ainsworth have both visited and described the place, as many readers will remember. Those interested in the progress of research in Biblical countries, will be gratified to know that Dr Robinson has left the United States for another tour in the Holy Land. Now that Christians are more tolerated in Turkey than in some other countries nearer home, travelling in the East will perhaps be facilitated.

Talking of travel: the Legislative Council at Sydney have granted L.2000, to fit out an expedition to search for Leichardt; Captain Beatson, with his steamer, is about to start for Behring's Strait to look for Franklin; Lieutenant Pim has returned from St Petersburg—the emperor would not permit him to go to Siberia; and last, supplies of money and goods have been sent out to Drs Barth and Overweg, in Central Africa, to enable them to pursue their discoveries; and the British resident at Zanzibar has been instructed to assist them. We may thus hope, before long, to add to our knowledge both of the torrid and frigid zones.

To touch upon a home topic: we are told that government are rather afraid of their own bill for intermural interments passed last session, which may account for none of its provisions having yet been carried out. The project now is to supersede that bill by another, which is to extend the practice of cemetery interment. This looks like a want of faith in sanitary principles. On the other hand, the sale of the lazaretto at Marseilles, with a view to construct docks on its site, is a proof that the French government can do something in the way of sanitary reform. It is, in fact, quite time that the superstitious notions about infection, and the vexations of quarantine, should give place to sounder views and more rational methods. Meantime, as meteorologists say, we are coming to the cycle of hot summers, it behoves us more than ever to bury the dead far from towns. The Registrar-General tells us that, on the whole, we are improving, and it is not less an individual than a national duty to forward the improvement. According to the return just published for the quarter ending December last, the births in 1851 amounted to 616,251, the largest number ever registered, being an excess of 5 per cent. over former returns. The deaths were 385,933, leaving a surplus which increases the population of England and Wales to more than 18,000,000. In the same quarter, 59,200 emigrants, chiefly Irish, left the kingdom. With respect to marriages,

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which also exceed in number those of former years, the Registrar repeats what he has often said before, that marriages increase 'when the substantial earnings of the people are above the average; and the experience of a century, during which the prosperity of the country, though increasing, has been constantly fluctuating, shews that it is prudent to husband the resources of good times against future contingencies. Workmen, if they are wise, will not now squander their savings.' Are we to infer from this, that a bad time is coming?

I have at times given you some of our post-office statistics, let me now send you a few from America. The postmaster-general reports to Congress, that in the year ending last June there were within the United States 6170 mail-routes, comprising a length in the aggregate of 196,290 miles; of post-offices, 19,796; of mail-contractors, 5544. The distance travelled in the year over these routes was 53,272,252 miles, at a cost of 3,421,754 dollars, or rather more than six cents per mile per annum. On more than 35,000,000 of these miles the service is performed by coaches, and 'modes not specified;' the remainder by railway and steam-boat. There were six foreign mail-routes on which the annual transportation was estimated at 615,206 miles. The gross receipts of the post-office department for the year amounted to 6,786,493 dollars, being an increase of nearly a million over the preceding year. If, after this, we can only get Ocean Penny Postage, we will give the republican postmaster work to do that shall add some score of pages to his report.

You will perhaps remember my telling you, some time ago, of the discussion that had been going on in the United States respecting a prime meridian. Something has now come of it. The committee appointed by Congress to consider the subject, have recommended 'that the Greenwich zero of longitude should be preserved for the convenience of navigators; and that the meridian of the National Observatory—at Washington—should be adopted by the authority of Congress as its first meridian on the American continent, for defining accurately and permanently territorial limits, and for advancing the science of astronomy in America.' This decision, though it may disappoint those who consider it derogatory to the national honour to reckon from the meridian of Greenwich, is nevertheless the true one. In connection with it, the Americans intend to bring out a nautical almanac.

Another topic from the same quarter is, that Professor Erni of Yale College has been making an interesting series of experiments on fermentation—a process of which the original cause has never yet been satisfactorily explained, and is still a moot-point with chemists. They tell us it is one by which complex substances are decomposed into simpler forms, as some suppose, by chemical action; others, by development of fungi, different in different substances. Among the experiments, it was observed that the yeast of

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cane-sugar solution produced no fermentation whatever when poisoned with a small quantity of arsenious acid; with oil of turpentine, and creasote, similar negative results were obtained. The introduction of cream-of-tartar along with the arsenic neutralised its effect, but not so with the other two; and, singularly enough, the appearance of the liquor always shewed when the poisoning was complete; 'the nitrogenous layer on the cell-membrane seeming to have undergone a change similar to that produced by boiling.' Judging from the results, Professor Erni believes 'that alcoholic fermentation is caused by the development of fungi. He could never trace the process without observing at the very first evolution of carbonic acid, the formation of yeast-cells, although it is very difficult to decide certainly which precedes the other.' His own opinion is in favour of the commencement by the yeast-cells.

Another noteworthy subject, is Dr W.J. Burnett's paper to the American Association, 'On the Relation of the Distribution of Lice to the Different Faunas,' in which he endeavours to demonstrate, that the creation of animals was a multiplied operation, carried on in several localities, and that they do not derive from one original parent stock. Different animals have different parasites; but, as he shews, the same species of animal has the same parasite, wherever it may be found. According to Latreille, the *pediculus* found in the woolly heads of African negroes 'is sufficiently distinct from that of the Circassian to entitle it to the rank of a distinct species;' from which, and similar instances, the doctor concludes: 'Whatever may be urged in behalf of the hypothesis of the unity of the animal creation, based upon the alleged metamorphotic changes of types, it is my opinion that the relations of their parasites, and especially the lice which are distributed over nearly all of them, must be considered as fair and full an argument as can be advanced against such hypothesis, for it is taking up the very premises of the hypothesis in opposition.' Dr Burnett will perhaps find Sir Charles Lyell ready to break a lance with him on the point at issue.

Something interesting to workers in metal has been brought before the Franklin Institute at Philadelphia—it is a method of giving to iron the appearance of copper, contrived by Mr Pomeroy of Cincinnati, who thus describes it—rather laboriously, by the way:—

'Immerse the iron in dilute sulphuric acid, for the purpose of cleansing the surface of the article which is to be coated; and thus cleansed, submit the iron to a brisk heat to dry it; when dry, immerse the article in a mixture of clay and water, and again dry it so as to leave a thin coating of the clay on its surface: it is then to be immersed in a bath of melted copper, and the length of time requisite for the iron and copper to form a union, will depend on the thickness of the article under operation. The object of the clay is to protect the copper from

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oxidation during the process of alloying or coating, and to reduce it to the required thickness it is passed between rollers. The result of this annealing process will be a smooth surface, fully equal to the brightness of pure copper.' Let me add to this, as a finish to transatlantic matters, that a Mr Allan, at St Louis, having observed that in washing-machines only the linen on the outside of the heap was perfectly cleansed, has patented a new machine, which comprises a chamber or tub with a narrowed neck, in which a plunger is inserted; and this, 'with the clothes wrapped around it, passes through the narrowed neck of the chamber, and pressing forcibly on the water confined within, drives it violently through the body of the clothes, carrying the dirt with it.'

Science is not idle in France, notwithstanding the social perturbations: some of our engineers are talking about the trials of electro-magnetic locomotives recently made on one of the railways in that country, and are rather curious as to what may be the result. To travel without the whiz and roar of steam would be a consummation devoutly desired by thousands of travellers. And among the topics from the Academie, there is one important to the naval service—M. Normandy's apparatus for converting sea-water into fresh water. Briefly described, it is a series of disks, placed one above the other, communicating by concentric galleries, and placed in a vapour-bath at a pressure a little above that of the atmosphere. 'The sea-water,' says the inventor, 'circulating in the galleries heated by the surrounding vapour, gives off a certain quantity of vapour, which, mingling with the atmospheric air, introduced by a tube from the outside, finally condenses as perfectly aerated fresh water in a refrigerator, which is also in communication with the atmosphere. No other means of agitation or percolation is so efficacious or economical.' The apparatus, which is free from the defect of depositing salt while distillation is going on, is rather more than three feet in height, and eighteen inches diameter. It will yield two pints of water per minute, at an expenditure of about 2-1/4 lbs. of coal for each 45 lbs. of water.

Next, Monsieur Rochas proposes a method for preserving limestone monuments and sculptures for an indefinite period. This material, as is well known, is very liable to disintegrate, and the remedy is to silicify it. Specimens of limestone so prepared were exhibited to the Academie, but without any explanation of the process. We know that brick and stone have been coated with glass in a few instances, to insure their preservation; and that at Professor Owen's suggestion, some decomposing ivory ornaments, sent over by Mr Layard, were restored by boiling in gelatine; but M. Rochas aims at something still greater—nothing less than the silicifying of a number of crumbling limestone statues which have been lately discovered by a Frenchman who is exploring the temple of Serapis at Memphis. They will then be strong enough to bear removal.

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Naturalists may learn something from Monsieur Falcony, who states that a solution of sulphate of zinc is an effectual preservative of animals or animal substances, intended for anatomical examination—it may be used to inject veins, and the effects last a considerable time. Another consideration is, that it is harmless: dissecting-instruments left in the solution for twenty-four hours were not at all injured.

A WORD TO GENTEEL EMIGRANTS.

The tide of emigration is rushing so powerfully through the land, that not only labourers and artisans are swept away in its stream, but many of the gentry of the country are beginning to join in the movement, and wonder what they are to do with their young 'olive branches,' 'unless they emigrate to Australia, and found a new home and plant a new family there.' Many of the class have taken this step, and many more are lingering on the brink; and endless and anxious are the inquiries constantly made for the reports transmitted by those adventurous spirits who have led the way to new worlds of enterprise. For the working-classes, all has hitherto been favourable; but for the class above them—the professional man, and the small capitalist—the accounts are not, on the whole, encouraging. 'The labour-market is never overstocked; but,' says a correspondent of a later date, 'I pity the professional men, the doctors and lawyers, who come out, and the clerks, few of whom are wanted, and who find provisions and house-rent much dearer than at home, and to whom the privations they undergo must be great hardships. Men used to the everyday luxuries of a London life, delicate women bred up in habits of expense and idleness, have a severe ordeal to go through on their arrival in that land of work.' The change of climate, and the discomfort of their hastily-raised log-cabin, often entered upon when not half dried, frequently produce fevers, which, at home, would require a long succession of nursing, medical attendance, and afterwards change of air; but with only a *help*, absent whenever it pleases her, often with no medical advice within reach, a damp and cold house half furnished, an uncertain supply of even common necessities, and a total absence of all luxuries, it is really surprising that recovery takes place at all. Now, it unfortunately happens, that the previous education of all these emigrants has been directly adverse to that which would have been desirable for such an after-life. Young ladies and gentlemen are taught dependence as a duty of civilised life. Children are naturally independent and active, and would gladly use their activity in helping themselves. How proud is a child to be allowed to do any of the servant's work! and how awful the rebuke that follows the attempt; till at last, poor human nature is cramped, shackled, and gagged.

Hard, then, seems the destiny that removes these pampered children of European society from their luxurious necessities—the valet, the lady's-maid, and all the other appendages—and leaves them wholly to their own resources, with their self-inflicted ignorance, and their blundering attempts to remedy it.

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I have, therefore, to propose to all who intend to emigrate, that they should—before taking a step involving so great an outlay, and the breaking-up of their life here—submit themselves to an ordeal of six or twelve months, in order to ascertain whether, in truth, their bodies and minds are fitted for the situation they are entering upon. Let any gentleman who is thinking of settling in Canada or Australia, take a *labourer's* cottage in a distant county—a few pounds will supply one infinitely superior in comfort and healthfulness to the log-cabin of the bush that is to be his ultimate destination—let him take a little land and a bit of garden in a good farming county; engage one farm-servant (unless he has sons able to take his place), and a rough country-girl to do the coarse work of the house. The ladies of the family must, of course, perform all the rest: wash all the fine linen, iron, make the beds, sweep the rooms, superintend and assist in the cooking, the dairy, care of the poultry and the pigs; for, of course, such appendages must be indispensable in such an establishment. The gentlemen will work on the farm, cultivate the garden, and gain all the experience they can in manual trades, carpentering and cabinet-making; and thus by degrees the whole family will have their bodies and minds strengthened, and their habits formed for their new work; or they will discover, as many have done when too late to draw back, that the effort is beyond their powers—that the tastes and habits of social life are too closely entwined with their whole being, to leave them the power to withdraw from them at will.

This may seem a forbidding picture, but I can assure them it is very far superior in comfort to the realities they will find in the bush. It is true, that this retirement will effectually withdraw them from their magic circle of friends and luxuries; but let us for a moment compare the two steps, migration and emigration, and ask ourselves if the experiment above mentioned be not worth the trial. In the one, we give up, probably for life, our country, our friends, and generally a part of our family, with all the comforts of a state of law and civilisation; we enter upon a certain and constant life of labour, after a long, tedious voyage; and, if in mature age, bear about with us a never-ceasing yearning for home, which retains its place in our hearts with all the heightened colours with which memory invests it. In the other, we must, it is true, separate ourselves from our long list of acquaintances, and be absent from the dinner-party and the ball; but all our interest in social life will be kept up: we can see at least a weekly newspaper; and although we may have descended a few steps in the social scale, we shall not be obliged to make the acquaintance of convicted felons.

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Another view of this plan may be taken. Suppose ten, or twenty, or thirty persons of narrow means were to associate for the purpose of taking some large, old-fashioned house in the country—many such may be found—and agree upon a joint scheme of cheap living and independent labour, plain and economical dress, plain furniture, and a simple but wholesome table: would not this be better than all the risks and privations of expatriation? The Americans do not emigrate—they migrate; and there are spots in any of these three kingdoms, as wild, as solitary, and as healthful, as can be found in the regions of the Far West. But we do not, however, suggest migration as a substitute for genteel emigration—although we suspect it would in many cases prove so—but merely as a step towards it—a school of trial, or training, or both.

COLOURS IN LADIES' DRESS.

Incongruity may be frequently observed in the adoption of colours without reference to their accordance with the complexion or stature of the wearer. We continually see a light-blue bonnet and flowers surrounding a sallow countenance, or a pink opposed to one of a glowing red; a pale complexion associated with a canary or lemon yellow, or one of delicate red and white rendered almost colourless by the vicinity of deep red. Now, if the lady with the sallow complexion had worn a transparent white bonnet; or if the lady with the glowing red complexion had lowered it by means of a bonnet of a deeper red colour; if the pale lady had improved the cadaverous hue of her countenance by surrounding it with pale-green, which, by contrast, would have suffused it with a delicate pink hue; or had the face

'Whose red and white,
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on,'

been arrayed in a light-blue, or light-green, or in a transparent white bonnet, with blue or pink flowers on the inside—how different, and how much more agreeable, would have been the impression on the spectator! How frequently, again, do we see the dimensions of a tall and *embonpoint* figure magnified to almost Brobdignagian proportions by a white dress, or a small woman reduced to Lilliputian size by a black dress! Now, as the optical effect of white is to enlarge objects, and that of black to diminish them, if the large woman had been dressed in black, and the small woman in white, the apparent size of each would have approached the ordinary stature, and the former would not have appeared a giantess, or the latter a dwarf.—*Mrs Merrifield in Art-Journal.*

SITTING ON THE SHORE.

The tide has ebbed away;
No more wild surgings 'gainst the adamant rocks,



No swayings of the sea-weed false that mocks
The hues of gardens gay:
No laugh of little wavelets at their play;
No lucid pools reflecting heaven's broad brow—
Both storm and calm alike are ended now.

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The bare gray rocks sit lone;
The shifting sand lies spread so smooth and dry
That not a wave might ever have swept by
To vex it with loud moan;
Only some weedy fragments blackening thrown
To rot beneath the sky, tell what has been,
But Desolation's self is grown serene.

Afar the mountains rise,
And the broad estuary widens out,
All sunshine; wheeling round and round about
Seaward, a white bird flies;
A bird? Nay, seems it rather in these eyes
An angel; o'er Eternity's dim sea,
Beckoning—'Come thou where all we glad souls be.'

O life! O silent shore
Where we sit patient! O great Sea beyond,
To which we look with solemn hope and fond,
But sorrowful no more!—
Would we were disembodied souls, to soar,
And like white sea-birds wing the Infinite Deep!—
Till then, Thou, Just One, wilt our spirits keep.

THE PALO DE VACA, OR COW-TREE OF BRAZIL.

This is one of the most remarkable trees in the forests of Brazil. During several months in the year when no rain falls, and its branches are dead and dried up, if the trunk be tapped, a sweet and nutritious milk exudes. The flow is most abundant at sunrise. Then, the natives receive the milk into large vessels, which soon grows yellow and thickens on the surface. Some drink plentifully of it under the tree, others take it home to their children. One might imagine he saw a shepherd distributing the milk of his flock. It is used in tea and coffee in place of common milk. The cow-tree is one of the largest in the Brazilian forests, and is used in ship-building.

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