

# Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 431 eBook

## Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 431

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# Page 1

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## IMPERFECT RESPECTABILITIES.

Everybody must have had some trouble in his time with imperfect respectabilities. Nice, well-dressed, well-housed, civil, agreeable people are they. No fault to find with them but that there is some little flaw in their history, for which the very good (rigid) don't visit them. The degree to which one is incommoded with imperfect respectabilities, depends of course a good deal upon the extent of his good-nature, or his dislike of coming to strong measures in social life. Some have an inherent complaisance which makes them all but unfit for any such operation as cutting, or even for the less violent one of cooling off. Some take mild views of human infirmity, and shrink from visiting it too roughly. They would rather that the sinners did not cross them; but, since the contrary is the fact, what can they do but be civil?

One great source of perplexity in the case, is the excessive urbanity of the imperfect respectabilities themselves. They come up to you on the street with such sunny faces, and have so many kind inquiries to make, and so many pleasant things to say, that, for the life of you, you cannot stiffen up as you ought to do. Some haunting recollection of a bad affair of cards, or some awkward circumstances attending an insolvency, will come across your mind, and make you wish the fellow in the next street; but, unluckily, there he is, cheerful, even funny, talking of all sorts of respectable things, such as the



state of the money-market, and what Sir George said to him the other day about the reviving prospects of Protection; and what avails your secret writhing? He holds you by the glittering eye. You listen, you make jocular observations in reply; the cards and the insolvency vanish from your thoughts; you at length shake hands, and part in a transport of good-humoured old acquaintanceship, and not till you have got a hundred yards away, do you cool down sufficiently to remember that you have made a fool of yourself by patronising an imperfect respectability.



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It is, after all, *not* a harsh and censorious world. Let the imperfect respectabilities bear witness. If rigid justice held rule below, or men were really persecutors of each other, there would be no life for that class. In point of fact, they not only live, but sometimes do tolerably well in the world. They only could do so by virtue of a certain mutual tolerance which pervades society. It is a nice matter, however, to say what degree of imperfect respectability will be endured. Some things, we all know, cannot be forgiven upon earth; and in such cases there is no resource but in obscurity. But there is also a large class of offences, the consequences of which may be overcome. Perhaps the facts do not come fully out into general notice. Perhaps there may be some little thing to say in exculpation. If the offender can, after a short space, continue to make his usual personal appearances, he is safe, because the great bulk of his old friends would rather continue to recognise him, than come to a positive rupture—an event always felt as inconvenient. Of course, they will be too well-bred to allude before him to any unpleasant fact in his history. He will never recall it to their minds. By being thus thrown out of all common reference, it will become obscured to a wonderful degree, insomuch that many will at length think of it only as a kind of domestic myth, to which no importance is to be attached. Thus Time is continually bringing in his bills of indemnity in favour of these unconfessing culprits. Were the world as harsh as is said, we should rather be having *post-facto* acts to punish them, supposing that existing statutes were insufficient.

One of the most curious points in the physiology of an imperfect respectability, is the fact of his almost always having something remarkably agreeable and attractive about him. Going down a peg in reputation seems somehow to have a specific effect upon the temper. From a bear it will convert a man into a perfect lamb. He becomes obliging to the last degree, has a kind word for everybody, and is never so happy as when he is allowed to render you some disagreeable piece of service. Scott, who knew everything, knew this, and hence it was that he made Glossin so very polite to the ostler at Kippletringan. When a stranger comes to settle in a country place, the imperfect respectability is sure to be amongst the first to call and offer his services. He likes a new family, and thinks it a duty to be ready to do the honours of the place. He is also, to a remarkable degree, a family man. None is seen so often going about with wife and daughters. In fact, he is exemplary in this respect. Few pews, moreover, so regularly filled as his. When a subscription is got up, it is a positive pleasure to him to subscribe; ten times more to be allowed to come upon the committee, and join other two in going about with a paper. The effect of all this is, that the imperfect respectable is often a highly popular character. Everybody likes him, and wishes him at the devil.



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When the case is so strong that disappearance is imperatively necessary, then of course disappear he must. Every now and then, some one of our old friends is thus dropping through the trap-doors of the social stage, to be seen and heard of no more. In travelling, one is apt to come upon some old-remembered face, which he had been accustomed to in such different circumstances that he has a difficulty in recognising it. It may be in some village obscurity of our own country, some German watering-place, or some American wilderness. There it is, however, the once familiar face; and you cannot pass it unheeded. You soon discover that you have lighted upon an imperfect respectability in exile. He is delighted to see you, seems in the highest spirits, and insists on your coming home to see Mrs —, and dine or spend the night. He has never been better off anywhere. All goes well with him. It was worth his while to come here, if only for the education of his family. As he rattles on, speaking of everything but the one thing you chiefly think of, you cannot help being touched in spirit. You feel that there may be things you can respect more, but many you respect that you cannot love so much.

While the imperfect respectability bears up so well before his old acquaintance, who can tell what may be the reflections that visit his breast in moments of retirement? Let us not be too ready to set him down as indifferent to the consequences of the sin which once so unfortunately beset him. Let us not too easily assume that he has not felt the loss of place and reputation, because he laughs and chats somewhat more than he used to do. I follow my poor old friend to his home, and there see him in his solitary hours brooding over the great forfeit he has made, and bitterly taxing himself with errors which he would be right loath to confess to the world. He knows what men think and say of him behind his back, notwithstanding that not a symptom of the consciousness escapes him. And let us hope that, in many cases, the contrite confession which is withheld from men is yielded where it is more fitly due.

## TALES OF THE COAST-GUARD.

*The last revel.*

When I was quite a lad, a servant lived with us of the name of Anne Stacey. She had been in the service of William Cobbett, the political writer, who resided for some years at Botley, a village a few miles distant from Itchen. Anne might be about two or three and twenty years of age when she came to us; and a very notable, industrious servant she was, and remarked, moreover, as possessing a strong religious bias. Her features, everybody agreed, were comely and intelligent. But that advantage in the matrimonial market was more than neutralised by her unfortunate figure, which, owing, as we understood, to a fall in her childhood, was hopelessly deformed, though still strongly set and muscular. Albeit,



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a sum of money—about fifty pounds—scraped together by thrifty self-denial during a dozen years of servitude, amply compensated in the eyes of several idle and needy young fellows for the unlovely outline of her person; and Anne, with an infatuation too common with persons of her class and condition, and in spite of repeated warning, and the secret misgivings, one would suppose, of her own mind, married the best-looking, but most worthless and dissipated of them all. This man, Henry Ransome by name, was, I have been informed, constantly intoxicated during the first three months of wedlock, and then the ill-assorted couple disappeared from the neighbourhood of Itchen, and took up their abode in one of the hamlets of the New Forest. Many years afterwards, when I joined the Preventive Service, I frequently heard mention of his name as that of a man singularly skilful in defrauding the revenue, as well as in avoiding the penalties which surround that dangerous vocation. One day, he was pointed out to me when standing by the Cross-House near the Ferry, in company with a comparatively youthful desperado, whose real name was John Wyatt, though generally known amongst the smuggling fraternity and other personal intimates, by the *sobriquet* of Black Jack—on account, I suppose, of his dark, heavy-browed, scowling figure-head, one of the most repulsive, I think, I have ever seen. Anne's husband, Henry Ransome, seemed, so far as very brief observation enabled me to judge, quite a different person from his much younger, as well as much bigger and brawnier associate. I did not doubt that, before excessive indulgence had wasted his now pallid features, and sapped the vigour of his thin and shaking frame, he had been a smart, good-looking chap enough; and there was, it struck me, spite of his reputation as 'a knowing one,' considerably more of the dupe than the knave, of the fool than the villain, in the dreary, downcast, skulking expression that flitted over his features as his eye caught mine intently regarding him. I noticed also that he had a dry, hard cough, and I set down in my own mind as certain that he would, ere many months passed away, be consigned, like scores of his fellows, to a brandy-hastened grave. He indicated my presence—proximity, rather—to Wyatt, by a nudge on the elbow, whereupon that respectable personage swung sharply round, and returned my scrutinising gaze by one of insolent defiance and bravado, which he contrived to render still more emphatic by thrusting his tongue into his cheek. This done, he gathered up a coil of rope from one of the seats of the Cross-House, and said: 'Come, Harry, let's be off. That gentleman seems to want to take our pictures—on account that our mugs are such handsome ones, no doubt; and if it was a mildish afternoon, I shouldn't mind having mine done; but as the weather's rather nippy like, we'd better be toddling, I think.' They then swaggered off, and crossed the Ferry.



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Two or three weeks afterwards, I again met with them, under the following circumstances:—I landed from the *Rose* at Lymington, for the purpose of going by coach to Lyndhurst, a considerable village in the New Forest, from which an ex-chancellor derives his title. I had appointed to meet a confidential agent there at the Fox and Hounds Inn, a third-rate tavern, situate at the foot of the hill upon which the place is built; and as the evening promised to be clear and fine, though cold, I anticipated a bracing, cross-country walk afterwards in the direction of Hythe, in the neighbourhood whereof dwelt a person—neither a seaman nor a smuggler—whose favour I was just then very diligently cultivating. It was the month of November; and on being set down at the door of the inn somewhere about six o'clock in the evening, I quietly entered and took a seat in the smoking-room unrecognised, as I thought, by any one—for I was not in uniform. My man had not arrived; and after waiting a few minutes, I stepped out to inquire at the bar if such a person had been there. To my great surprise, a young woman—girl would be a better word, for she could not be more than seventeen, or at the utmost eighteen years old—whom I had noticed on the outside of the coach, was just asking if one Dr Lee was expected. This was precisely the individual who was to meet me, and I looked with some curiosity at the inquirer. She was a coarsely, but neatly attired person, of a pretty figure, interesting, but dejected cast of features, and with large, dark, sorrowing eyes. Thoughtfulness and care were not less marked in the humble, subdued tone in which she spoke. 'Could I sit down anywhere till he comes?' she timidly asked, after hearing the bar-woman's reply. The servant civilly invited her to take a seat by the bar-fire, and I returned, without saying anything, to the smoking-room, rang the bell, and ordered a glass of brandy and water, and some biscuits. I had been seated a very short time only, when the quick, consequential step, and sharp, cracked voice of Dr Lee sounded along the passage; and after a momentary pause at the bar, his round, smirking, good-humoured, knavish face looked in at the parlour-door, where, seeing me alone, he winked with uncommon expression, and said aloud: 'A prime fire in the smoking-room, I see; I shall treat myself to a whiff there presently.' This said, the shining face vanished, in order, I doubted not, that its owner might confer with the young girl who had been inquiring for him. This Lee, I must observe, had no legal right to the prefix of doctor tacked to his name. He was merely a peripatetic quack-salver and vender of infallible medicines, who, having wielded the pestle in an apothecary's shop for some years during his youth, had acquired a little skill in the use of drugs, and could open a vein or draw a tooth with considerable dexterity. He had a large, but not, I think, very remunerative practice amongst the poaching, deer-stealing, smuggling

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community of those parts, to whom it was of vital importance that the hurts received in their desperate pursuits should be tended by some one not inclined to babble of the number, circumstances, or whereabouts of his patients. This essential condition Lee, hypocrite and knave as he was, strictly fulfilled; and no inducement could, I think, have prevailed upon him to betray the hiding-place of a wounded or suffering client. In other respects, he permitted himself a more profitable freedom of action, thereto compelled, he was wont apologetically to remark, by the wretchedly poor remuneration obtained by his medical practice. If, however, specie was scarce amongst his clients, spirits, as his rubicund, carbuncled face flamingly testified, were very plentiful. There was a receipt in full painted there for a prodigious amount of drugs and chemicals, so that, on the whole, he could have had no great reason to complain.

He soon reappeared, and took a chair by the fire, which, after civilly saluting me, he stirred almost fiercely, eyeing as he did so the blazing coals with a half-abstracted and sullen, cowed, disquieted look altogether unusual with him. At least wherever I had before seen him, he had been as loquacious and boastful as a Gascon.

'What is the matter, doctor?' I said. 'You appear strangely down upon your luck all at once.'

'Hush—hush! Speak lower, sir, pray. The fact is, I have just heard that a fellow is lurking about here—You have not, I hope, asked for me of any one?'

'I have not; but what if I had?'

'Why, you see, sir, that suspicion—calumny, Shakspeare says, could not be escaped, even if one were pure as snow—and more especially, therefore, when one is not quite so—so—Ahem!—you understand?'

'Very well, indeed. You would say, that when one is *not* actually immaculate—calumny, suspicion takes an earlier and firmer hold.'

'Just so; exactly—and, in fact—ha!'—

The door was suddenly thrown open, and the doctor fairly leaped to his feet with ill-disguised alarm. It was only the bar-maid, to ask if he had rung. He had not done so, and as it was perfectly understood that I paid for all on these occasions, that fact alone was abundantly conclusive as to the disordered state of his intellect. He now ordered brandy and water, a pipe, and a screw of tobacco. These ministrants to a mind disturbed somewhat calmed the doctor's excitement, and his cunning gray eyes soon brightly twinkled again through a haze of curling smoke.

'Did you notice,' he resumed, 'a female sitting in the bar? She knows you.'



'A young, intelligent-looking girl. Yes. Who is she?'

'Young!' replied Lee, evasively, I thought. 'Well, it's true she *is* young in years, but not in experience—in suffering, poor girl, as I can bear witness.'

'There are, indeed, but faint indications of the mirth and lightness of youth or childhood in those timid, apprehensive eyes of hers.'



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'She never had a childhood. Girls of her condition seldom have. Her father's booked for the next world, and by an early stage too, unless he mends his manners, and that I hardly see how he's to do. The girl's been to Lymington to see after a place. Can't have it. Her father's character is against her. Unfortunate; for she's a good girl.'

'I am sorry for her. But come, to business. How about the matter you wot of?'

'Here are all the particulars,' answered Lee, with an easy transition from a sentimental to a common-sense, business-like tone, and at the same time unscrewing the lid of a tortoise-shell tobacco-box, and taking a folded paper from it. 'I keep these matters generally here; for if I were to drop such an article—just now, especially—I might as well be hung out to dry at once.'

I glanced over the paper. 'Place, date, hour correct, and thoroughly to be depended upon you say, eh?'

'Correct as Cocker, I'll answer for it. It would be a spicy run for them, if there were no man-traps in the way.'

I placed the paper in my waistcoat-pocket, and then handed the doctor his preliminary fee. The touch of gold had not its usual electrical effect upon him. His nervous fit was coming on again. 'I wish,' he puffed out—'I wish I was safe out of this part of the country, or else that a certain person I know was transported; then indeed'—

'And who may that certain person be, doctor?' demanded a grim-looking rascal, as he softly opened the door. 'Not me, I hope?'

I instantly recognised the fellow, and so did the doctor, who had again bounded from his chair, and was shaking all over as if with ague, whilst his very carbuncles became pallid with affright. 'You—u—u,' he stammered—'You—u—u, Wyatt: God forbid!'

Wyatt was, I saw, muddled with liquor. This was lucky for poor Lee. 'Well, never mind if it was me, old brick,' rejoined the fellow; 'or at least you have been a brick, though I'm misdoubting you'll die a pantile after all. But here's luck; all's one for that.' He held a pewter-pot in one hand, and a pipe in the other, and as he drank, his somewhat confused but baleful look continued levelled savagely along the pewter at the terrified doctor. There was, I saw, mischief in the man.

'I'd drink yours,' continued the reckless scamp, as he paused for breath, drew the back of his pipe-hand across his mouth, and stared as steadily as he could in my face—'I'd drink your health, if I only knew your name.'

'You'll hear it plainly enough, my fine fellow, when you're in the dock one of these days, just before the judge sends you to the hulks, or, which is perhaps the likelier, to the gallows. And this scamp, too,' I added, with a gesture towards Lee, whom I hardly



dared venture to look at, 'who has been pitching me such a pretty rigmarole, is, I see, a fellow-rogue to yourself. This house appears to be little better than a thieves' rendezvous, upon my word.'



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'Wyatt regarded me with a deadly scowl as he answered: 'Ay, ay, you're a brave cock, Master Warneford, upon your own dunghill. It may be my turn some day. Here, doctor, a word with you outside.' They both left the room, and I rang the bell, discharged the score, and was just going when Lee returned. He was still pale and shaky, though considerably recovered from the panic-terror excited by the sudden entrance of Wyatt.

'Thank Heaven, he's gone!' said the doctor; 'and less sour and suspicious than I feared him to be. But tell me, sir, do you intend walking from here to Hythe?'

'I so purpose. Why do you ask?'

'Because the young girl you saw in the bar went off ten minutes ago by the same road. She was too late for a farmer's cart which she expected to return by. Wyatt, too, is off in the same direction.'

'She will have company then.'

'Evil company, I fear. Her father and he have lately quarrelled; and her, I know, he bears a grudge against, for refusing, as the talk goes, to have anything to say to him.'

'Very well; don't alarm yourself. I shall soon overtake them, and you may depend the big drunken bully shall neither insult nor molest her. Good-night.'

It was a lonely walk for a girl to take on a winter evening, although the weather was brilliantly light and clear, and it was not yet much past seven o'clock. Except, perchance, a deer-keeper, or a deer-stealer, it was not likely she would meet a human being for two or three miles together, and farm and other houses near the track were very sparsely scattered here and there. I walked swiftly on, and soon came within sight of Wyatt; but so eagerly was his attention directed ahead, that he did not observe me till we were close abreast of each other.

'You here!' he exclaimed, fairly gnashing his teeth with rage. 'I only wish'—

'That you had one or two friends within hail, eh? Well, it's better for your own health that you have not, depend upon it. I have four barrels with me, and each of them, as you well know, carries a life, one of which should be yours, as sure as that black head is on your shoulders.'

He answered only by a snarl and a malediction, and we proceeded on pretty nearly together. He appeared to be much soberer than before: perhaps the keen air had cooled him somewhat, or he might have been shamming it a little at the inn to hoodwink the doctor. Five or six minutes brought us to a sharp turn of the road, where we caught sight of the young woman, who was not more than thirty or forty yards ahead. Presently, the sound of footsteps appeared to strike her ear, for she looked quickly round, and an expression of alarm escaped her. I was in the shadow of the road, so



that, in the first instance, she saw only Wyatt. Another moment, and her terrified glance rested upon me.

'Lieutenant Warneford!' she exclaimed.

'Ay, my good girl, that is my name. You appear frightened—not at me, I hope?'



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'O no, not at you,' she hastily answered, the colour vividly returning to her pale cheeks.

'This good-looking person is, I daresay, a sweetheart of yours; so I'll just keep astern out of ear-shot. My road lies past your dwelling.'

The girl appeared to understand me, and, reassured, walked on, Wyatt lopping sullenly along beside her. I did not choose to have a fellow of his stamp, and in his present mood, walking behind *me*.

Nothing was said that I heard for about a mile and a half, when Wyatt, with a snarling 'good-night' to the girl, turned off by a path on the left, and was quickly out of sight.

'I am not very far from home now, sir,' said the young woman hesitatingly. She thought, perhaps, that I might leave her, now Wyatt had disappeared.

'Pray go on, then,' I said; 'I will see you safe there, though somewhat pressed for time.'

We walked side by side, and after awhile she said in a low tone, and with still downcast eyes: 'My mother lived servant in your family once, sir.'

'The deuce! Your name is Ransome, then, I suspect.'

'Yes, sir—Mary Ransome.' A sad sigh accompanied these words. I pitied the poor girl from my heart, but having nothing very consolatory to suggest, I held my peace.

'There is mother!' she cried in an almost joyful tone. She pointed to a woman standing in the open doorway of a mean dwelling at no great distance, in apparently anxious expectation. Mary Ransome hastened forwards, and whispered a few sentences to her mother, who fondly embraced her.

'I am very grateful to you, sir, for seeing Mary safely home. You do not, I daresay, remember me?'

'You are greatly changed, I perceive, and not by years alone.'

'Ah, sir!' Tears started to the eyes of both mother and daughter. 'Would you,' added the woman, 'step in a moment. Perhaps a few words from you might have effect.' She looked, whilst thus speaking, at her weak, consumptive-looking husband, who was seated by the fireplace with a large green baize-covered Bible open before him on a round table. There is no sermon so impressive as that which gleams from an apparently yawning and inevitable grave; and none, too, more quickly forgotten, if by any resource of art, and reinvigoration of nature, the tombward progress be arrested, and life pulsate joyously again. I was about to make some remark upon the suicidal folly of persisting in a course which almost necessarily led to misery and ruin, when the but partially-closed doorway was darkened by the burly figure of Wyatt.



'A very nice company, by jingo!' growled the ruffian; 'you only want the doctor to be quite complete. But hark ye, Ransome,' he continued, addressing the sick man, who cowered beneath his scowling gaze like a beaten hound—'mind and keep a still tongue in that calf's head of yourn, or else prepare yourself to—to take—to take—what follows. You know me as well as I do you. Good-night.'



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With this caution, the fellow disappeared; and after a few words, which the unfortunate family were too frightened to listen to, or scarcely to hear, I also went my way.

The information received from Dr Lee relative to the contemplated run near Hurst Castle proved strictly accurate. The surprise of the smugglers was in consequence complete, and the goods, the value of which was considerable, were easily secured. There occurred also several of the ordinary casualties that attend such encounters—casualties which always excited in my mind a strong feeling of regret, that the revenue of the country could not be assured by other and less hazardous expedients. No life was, however, lost, and we made no prisoners. To my great surprise I caught, at the beginning of the affray, a glimpse of the bottle-green coat, drab knee-cords, with gaiter continuations, of the doctor. They, however, very quickly vanished; and till about a week afterwards, I concluded that their owner had escaped in a whole skin. I was mistaken.

I had passed the evening at the house whither my steps were directed when I escorted Mary Ransome home, and it was growing late, when the servant-maid announced that a young woman, seemingly in great trouble, after inquiring if Lieutenant Warneford was there, had requested to see him immediately, and was waiting below for that purpose. It was, I found, Mary Ransome, in a state of great flurry and excitement. She brought a hastily-scribbled note from Dr Lee, to the effect that Wyatt, from motives of suspicion, had insisted that both he and Ransome should be present at the attempt near Hurst Castle; that the doctor, in his hurry to get out of harm's way, had attempted a leap which, owing to his haste, awkwardness, and the frosty atmosphere and ground, had resulted in a compound fracture of his right leg; that he had been borne off in a state of insensibility; on recovering from which he found himself in Wyatt's power, who, by rifling his pockets, had found some memoranda that left no doubt of Lee's treason towards the smuggling fraternity. The bearer of the note would, he said, further explain, as he could not risk delaying sending it for another moment—only he begged to say his life depended upon me.

'Life!' I exclaimed, addressing the pale, quaking girl; 'nonsense! Such gentry as Wyatt are not certainly particular to a shade or two, but they rarely go that length.'

'They will make away with father as well as Dr Lee,' she shudderingly replied: 'I am sure of it. Wyatt is mad with rage.' She trembled so violently, as hardly to be able to stand, and I made her sit down.

'You cannot mean that the scoundrel contemplates murder?'

'Yes—yes! believe me, sir, he does. You know the *Fair Rosamond*, now lying off Marchwood?' she continued, growing every instant paler and paler.

'The trader to St Michael's for oranges and other fruits?'



'That is but a blind, sir. She belongs to the same company as the boats you captured at Hurst Castle. She will complete landing her cargo early to-morrow morning, and drop down the river with the ebb-tide just about dawn.'



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'The deuce they will! The cunning rascals. But go on. What would you further say?'

'Wyatt insists that both the doctor and my father shall sail in her. They will be carried on board, and—and when at sea—you know—you understand'—

'Be drowned, you fear. That is possible, certainly; but I cannot think they would have more to fear than a good keel-hauling. Still, the matter must be looked to, more especially as Lee's predicament is owing to the information he has given the king's officers. Where are they confined?'

She described the place, which I remembered very well, having searched it not more than a fortnight previously. I then assured her that I would get her father as well as Lee out of the smugglers' hands by force, if necessary; upon hearing which the poor girl's agitation came to a climax, and she went off into strong hysterics. There was no time to be lost, so committing her to the care of the servant, I took leave of my friends, and made the best of my way to Hythe, hard off which a boat, I knew, awaited me; revolving, as I sped along, the best mode of procedure. I hailed the boat, and instructed one of the men—Dick Redhead, he was generally called, from his fiery poll—a sharp, clever fellow was Dick—to proceed immediately to the house I had left, and accompany the young woman to the spot indicated, and remain in ambush, with both eyes wide open, about the place till I arrived. The *Rose* was fortunately off Southampton Quay; we soon reached her, shifted to a larger boat, and I and a stout crew were on our way, in very little time, to have a word with that deceitful *Fair Rosamond*, which we could still see lying quietly at anchor a couple of miles up the river. We were quickly alongside, but, to our great surprise, found no one on board. There was, however, a considerable quantity of contraband spirits in the hold; and this not only confirmed the girl's story, but constituted the *Fair Rosamond* a lawful prize. I left four men in her, with strict orders to lie close and not shew themselves, and with the rest hastened on shore, and pushed on to the doctor's rescue. The night was dark and stormy, which was so far the better for our purpose; but when we reached the place, no Dick Redhead could be seen! This was queer, and prowling stealthily round the building, we found that it was securely barred, sheltered, and fastened up, although by the light through the chinks, and a confused hum, it seemed, of merry voices, there was a considerable number of guests within. Still, Master Dick did not shew, and I was thoroughly at a loss how to act. It would not certainly have been difficult to force an entrance, but I doubted that I should be justified in doing so; besides, if they were such desperadoes as Mary Ransome intimated, such a measure must be attended with loss of life—a risk not to be incurred except when all less hazardous expedients had failed, and then only for a sufficient and well-defined purpose. I was thus cogitating, when there suddenly burst forth, overpowering the howling of the wind and the pattering of the rain, a rattling and familiar chorus, sung by at least a dozen rough voices; and I had not a doubt that the crew of the *Fair Rosamond* were assisting at a farewell revel previous to sailing, as that Hope, which tells so many flattering tales, assured them they would, at dawn.



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Such merriment did not certainly sound like the ferocious exultations of intending assassins; still, I was very anxious to make ten or a dozen amongst them; and continuing to cast about for the means of doing so, our attention was at length fixed upon a strange object, not unlike a thirty-six pounder red-hot round shot, not in the least cooled by the rain, projecting inquiringly from a small aperture, which answered for a window, halfway up the sloping roof. It proved to be Master Dick's fiery head, but he made us out before we did him. 'Is that Bill Simpson?' queried Dick, very anxiously. The seaman addressed, as soon as he could shove in a word edgewise with the chorus and the numerous wind-instruments of the *Forest*, answered that 'it was Bill Simpson; and who the blazes was that up there?' To which the answer was, that 'it was Dick, and that he should be obliged, if Bill had a rope with him, he would shy up one end of it.' Of course we had a rope: an end was shied up, made fast, and down tumbled Master Dick Redhead without his hat, which, in his hurry, it appeared, he had left behind in the banqueting-room. His explanation was brief and explicit. He had accompanied the young woman to the present building, as I ordered; and being a good deal wrought upon by her grief and lamentations, had suggested that it might be possible to get Dr Lee and her father to a place of safety without delay, proverbially dangerous. This seemed feasible; inasmuch as the fellow left in charge by Wyatt was found to be dead-drunk, chiefly owing, I comprehended, to some powerful ingredients infused in his liquor by Dr Lee. All was going on swimmingly, when, just as Dick had got the doctor on his back, an alarm was given that the crew of the *Fair Rosamond* were close at hand, and Dick had but just time to climb with great difficulty into the crazy loft overhead, when a dozen brawny fellows entered the place, and forthwith proceeded to make merry.

A brief council was now held, and it was unanimously deemed advisable that we should all climb up to Dick's hiding-place by means of the rope, and thence contrive to drop down upon the convivial gentlemen below, in as convenient a manner as possible, and when least expected. We soon scaled the loft, but after-proceedings were not so easy. The loft was a make-shift, temporary one, consisting of loose planks resting upon the cross rafters of the roof, and at a considerable height from the floor upon which the smugglers were carousing. It would, no doubt, have been easy enough to have slid down by a rope; but this would place the first three or four men, if no more, at the mercy of the contrabandists, who, I could see through the wide chinks, were all armed, and not so drunk but that they thoroughly knew what they were about. It behoved us to be cool, and consider well the best course to pursue. Whilst doing so, I had leisure to contemplate the scene below. Wyatt was not there; but around a table, lighted by two dip-candles



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stuck in the necks of black bottles, and provided with abundance of liquor, tobacco, tin pannikins, and clay-pipes, sat twelve or thirteen ill-favoured fellows, any one of whom a prudent man would, I am very sure, have rather trusted with a shilling than a sovereign. The unfortunate doctor, pale and sepulchral as the death he evidently dreaded to be near at hand, was sitting propped up in a rude arm-chair; and Ransome, worse, I thought, than when I had seen him a few weeks previously, was reclining on a chest, in front of which stood his wife and daughter in a condition of feverish excitement. There at first appeared, from the temper of the roisterers, to be no cause for any very grave apprehension; but the aspect of affairs soon changed, and I eagerly availed myself of a suggestion of Dick Redhead's, and gave directions that preparation for its execution should be instantly and silently commenced. The thought had struck Dick when perched up there alone, and naturally looking about for all available means of defence, should he be discovered. Let me restate my position and responsibilities. It was my duty to rescue Lee, the agent of the Customs, from the dangerous predicament in which he was placed; and the question was, how to effect this without loss of life. It would, no doubt, have been easy enough to have turned up one or two of the loose planks, and have shot half the smugglers before they could have made their escape. This, however, was out of the question, and hence the adoption of Dick's proposal. It was this: in the loft where we lay, for stand upright we could not, there was, amongst several empty ones, one full cask, containing illicit spirits of some kind, and measuring, perhaps, between forty and fifty gallons. It was wood-hooped, and could be easily unheaded by the men's knives, and at a given signal, be soused right upon the heads of the party beneath, creating a consternation, confusion, and dismay, during which we might all descend, and end the business, I hoped, without bloodshed.

This was our plan, and we had need to be quick about it, for, as I have said, the state of affairs below had suddenly changed, and much for the worse. A whistle was heard without; the front entrance was hastily unbarred, and in strode Wyatt, Black Jack, and well did he on this occasion vindicate the justice of his popular designation. Everybody was in a moment silent, and most of those who could stood up. 'What's this infernal row going on for?' he fiercely growled. 'Do you want to get the sharks upon us again?' There was no answer, and one of the men handed him a pannikin of liquor, which he drank greedily. 'Lee,' he savagely exclaimed, as he put down the vessel, 'you set out with us in half an hour at latest.'

'Mercy, mercy!' gasped the nerveless, feeble wretch: 'mercy!'

'Oh, ay, we'll give you plenty of that, and some to spare. You, too, Ransome, prepare yourself, as well as your dainty daughter here'—He stopped suddenly, not, it seemed, checked by the frenzied outcries of the females, but by a renewed and piercing whistle on the outside. In the meantime, our fellows were getting on famously with the hoops of

the huge spirit-cask. 'Why, that is Richards' whistle,' he exclaimed. 'What the furies can this mean? Unbar the door!'



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This was instantly done, and a man, a sailor by his dress, rushed in. 'The *Fair Rosamond* is captured, and the preventive men are in possession of her.'

My 'Quick! quick!' to the men, though uttered too loud, from the suddenness of the surprise, was happily lost in the rageful outburst of Wyatt. 'Hellfire!' he roared out. 'But you lie; it cannot be.'

'It is true,' rejoined the man. 'I and Clarke went on shore about an hour ago in the punt, just to get a nip of brandy this cold night, as you won't let us break bulk on board. When we returned, Tom went up the side first, was nabbed, and I had hardly time, upon hearing him sing out, to shove off and escape myself.'

We were now ready, and two of the planks just over Wyatt's head were carefully turned over. He seemed for a moment paralysed—for a moment only. Suddenly he sprang towards Mary Ransome, grasped her hair with one hand, and in the other held a cocked pistol: 'You,' he shouted—'you, accursed minx, have done this. You went out two hours ago'—

I lifted my hand. 'Hurra! Take that, you cowardly lubber!' roared Dick Redhead; and down went the avalanche of liquid, knocking not only the pistol out of Wyatt's hand, but himself clean off his legs, and nearly drowning Mary Ransome, her mother, and half-a-dozen others. A rope had been made fast to one of the rafters, down which we all quietly slid before the astonished smugglers could comprehend what had happened. Resistance was then out of the question, and they did not attempt it. I took Wyatt and one or two others into custody, for having contraband spirits in their possession; and the others were permitted to make themselves scarce as quickly as might be—a licence they promptly availed themselves of.

I have but a few words to add. Henry Ransome died, I heard, not long afterwards, of pulmonary consumption, brought on by the abuse of alcoholic liquors, and his wife and daughter ultimately got into respectable service. Mary Ransome married in due time, and with better discretion than her mother, for she does, or did, keep one of the branch post-offices in Bermondsey. Dr Lee disappeared from the neighbourhood the instant the state of his leg enabled him to do so, and I have never seen him since. John Wyatt, *alias* Black Jack, was transported for life, under the *alias* of John Martin, for a highway robbery near Fareham, in the year 1827. Lately I saw him on board the convict hulk at Portsmouth.

### AIR-TRAVELLING.

It may be generally known, that for some time extraordinary efforts have been making to discover a method by which locomotion through the air may be rendered as certain and practicable as locomotion by sea or land. In this desperate enterprise, of bringing the



principle of aerostation into regular use, certain individuals in Paris have taken the lead. Our belief, like that of others, is, that plans of this kind will fail, as they have hitherto done; at the same time, we think it would be improper to dogmatise on the subject, and will only say, that if travelling by balloon becomes one of the established things of the day, so much the better.



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With these feelings, we have thought it consistent with our duty as journalists, not to refuse publicity to an account of what was till lately doing in Paris to forward practical aerostation—we say, lately; for we are told by our correspondent, that the operations towards perfecting the invention have been stopped by orders of the French government, from an opinion that, if air-travelling were introduced, it would be injurious to the custom-house, and denationalise the country. This resolution of the French government is to be regretted, not less on the score of science, than from the ruin it has inflicted on the modest means of the ingenious operator. With these preliminary explanations, we offer the following paper, just as handed to us by a respectable party conversant with the details to which he refers.

'The chief difficulty in aero-locomotion, is that of steering; because the atmosphere seems to present no substantial fulcrum which can be pushed against. But that this difficulty is not altogether insurmountable, is evident from the single fact, that birds really do steer their way through the air. This fact suggests, that a fulcrum is not necessarily a palpable substance: it may be pliant or movable. For instance, if we fasten the string of a kite to a ball, this ball, which represents the fulcrum, being set in motion by the kite, becomes a movable fulcrum: a child also, holding the string in his hand, runs from right to left without impeding the motion of the kite, of which motion he is the movable fulcrum. Absolute stability, therefore, is not a necessary condition of a fulcrum; it is sufficient that there be, between the resistant force and the motive force, a difference of intensity in favour of the former. Thus, in water, the fulcrum, being liquid, is necessarily pliant and movable; yet it is quite possible, as every child knows, to obtain in this element purchase sufficient to steer the largest ships.

'In the air, which is a gas, the fulcrum being gaseous, must also be movable; but although the air, being the most elastic body with which we are acquainted, is therefore the least apt to furnish a fulcrum, yet, as compressed air is capable of bursting the strongest metallic receptacles, splitting the solid rock, and rending the bosom of the earth, it would seem that we have only to act upon the air through pressure, in order to obtain the requisite purchase from which to steer.

'Foremost among those who are thus endeavouring to render the balloon manageable, is M. Petin of Paris, who has devoted fifteen years to the study of this subject, the last three years to lecturing upon it in the principal towns of France, and who has unfortunately expended the whole of his resources in constructing an air-ship intended to demonstrate, on a small scale, the possibility of steering according to the system which he has elucidated. We say on a small scale; for though the dimensions of the curious construction in question, intended to carry two hundred passengers, will appear large to those of our readers whose ideas of ballooning have never gone beyond the ordinary ascensions so much in vogue at the present day, they are yet of almost microscopic minuteness when compared with the developments of which M. Petin and his friends conceive his plans to be susceptible!



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'The body of this novel vessel consists of two covered decks, or galleries, connected by a series of narrow bridges, thrown across the open space between them, on a level with their floor; thus forming the body of the vessel, which looks not unlike a couple of Noah's Arks, placed parallel to each other, and connected by means of the aforesaid bridges. Suspended across the upper part of this open space, is a row of sixteen movable wings, placed one behind the other, and attached, by means of pivots, to the upper edge of the inner walls of the galleries; these wings are of oiled sail-cloth, set into oblong iron frames, and are worked by machinery. They may be opened or closed, inclined to or from each other, at any angle, upwards or downwards. At each end of the vessel, near the stem and the stern, is a pair of screws, similar to the propellers of a steam-ship, and worked by a couple of small steam-engines of three horse-power each, one being placed just above and behind each pair of screws. Lastly, attached to masts projecting horizontally from each end of the ship, are a couple of triangular or lateen sails; smaller sails are also attached to the under part of the balloons, which, enclosed in net-work of strong cord, are fastened to the roof of the galleries, directly over the wings, beneath which, again, are the bridges from which the crew are to work the ship.

'These skeleton galleries, which, with the exception of the floors, and the walls and roof of their central portion, are constructed of lattice-work, faced with thin bands of iron, in order to render the whole as light as possible, are 162 feet in length, 8 feet in height by 4 feet in width in their central portion, but taper off to 18 inches in height and width at their extremities. This mode of building gives an oval form to the framework of the vessel. The central portion of the galleries, which is at the same time the highest and the widest, embraces a length of 66 feet, and is appropriated to the passengers. The boilers are placed here also, one in each gallery; the steam being conveyed to the engines by pipes.

'The total length of the ship, including that of the two projecting masts, is 198 feet; and its total weight, including that of the machinery, and a crew of eight men, is 14,000 pounds. The balloons are 66 feet in diameter, and will contain 15,000 cubic yards of gas. Their ascensional force is 20,000 pounds. The wings are 6 feet in length by 15 in width. The screws are made of pitched canvas, rimmed with iron; they are 6 feet in length.

'The eight central wings, disposed in the form of an upright roof—*parachute*—or of an inverted roof—*paramont*—are intended, by pressing on the air above in ascending, and on the air below in descending, to furnish the necessary point of resistance, or fulcrum, from which to steer. The other eight wings, four at each end of the central group, are intended, by being opened or shut, to act as a counterpoise; thus producing



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a rupture of equilibrium around the central fulcrum, and thereby changing the upward movement of the balloons into an oblique forward movement. In other words, the ship being raised into the air—to the stratum immediately above the region of storms—and maintained there by the ascensional force of the balloons, and being forced onward by the screws, the four anterior wings are to be opened, the four posterior ones remaining closed. The forepart of the ship being now relieved from the downward pressure of the air, caused by the upward movement of the balloons, this pressure still acting on the posterior wings, its equilibrium is destroyed; the forepart rises, the hindpart dips, thus changing the direction of the ship's course, by converting its vertical into an oblique movement, which is to carry it onward upon a plane inclined slightly upward.

'This operation is to be followed by its converse. The four posterior wings are to be opened, and the four anterior ones closed; the vessel now dips in the opposite direction, and moves forward on a plane inclined slightly downward; and so on. Thus, by alternately opening and shutting the two sets of lateral wings, M. Petin proposes to make his ship sail forward on a series of inclined planes, upwards and downwards. He takes care to assure us, however, that the requisite degree of inclination will be so slight as to be imperceptible to his passengers; and instances, in corroboration of this opinion, the beds of rivers, where a very slight degree of inclination suffices to produce a rapid current.

'In order to determine perpendicular movement, the central wings—which, according to M. Petin, when placed in an oblique position, will constitute the fulcrum—are to be brought into an upright position, thus offering no resistance to the air; the two pairs of screws are then made to turn in opposite directions with great velocity, forcing powerful convergent currents of air upon the two sets of lateral wings, maintained in oblique and opposite positions. The force of these currents, being decomposed by the resistance of the wings, is thus changed into a perpendicular pressure, acting upwards or downwards according to the position of the wings; by means of which the aeronaut hopes to be enabled to ascend or descend without losing either gas or ballast.

'This decomposition of the force of the currents produced by the screws, is analogous to that effected by the sails of a ship sailing across the wind; where, the sails being inclined at an angle of 45 degrees to the course of the wind, the ship is impelled onwards in a direction at right angles to that of the wind: the only difference in the two cases being this—namely, that in the sails of the ship, the axis of inclination, represented by the mast, is *vertical*, creating *horizontal* movement; while, in the wings of the air-ship, the axis of inclination—the pivot on which they turn—is *horizontal*, creating *vertical* movement. Were there

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but one pair of screws, acting upon one set of inclined wings, a slight retrograde horizontal movement would be produced in addition to the vertical movement, as the current of blast from the screw would react upon the screw itself with a force greater than that with which it would impinge upon the wings, where a part of the blast will inevitably be wasted. But there being two pairs of screws, acting in opposite directions, they will neutralise each other's horizontal movement, while combining in the production of vertical movement. So, at least, reasons our inventor; but however ingenious this expedient, its efficiency may well be doubted, when we remember the immense amount of resistance, offered by the surface of the balloons, which would have to be overcome.

'To obtain lateral movement, the action of one pair of screws is suspended, leaving the other pair in motion: the ship, according to the calculation of M. Petin, will immediately describe a curve, and turn.

'Such is the air-ship constructed by M. Petin; but, unhappily for the demonstration of his views, the French government, either from fear of accident, or from some other motive, has interdicted its ascension; and the vessel which, three months ago, was ready—crew, captain, and machinery—to attempt its advertised flight round the walls of Paris, is still reposing, in inglorious idleness, upon its stocks in the Chantier Marbeuf (Champs Elysees), to the woful disappointment of its enthusiastic inventor, who, however, consoles himself with the hope of coming over to London for the purpose of testing his invention, as soon as the return of fine weather shall render it prudent to make the trial journey. In justice to M. Petin, we would observe, that the sole point which he hopes to prove with this vessel is, *the possibility of obtaining a fulcrum in the air*, justly considering that if the question of *steering* were affirmatively settled, the necessary means, pecuniary and other, would soon be forthcoming to enable him to improve upon, or to change the original construction, and to build the mammoth vessels, containing closed apartments, warmed and fitted up with every provision for comfort, in which he hopes to transport several thousands of passengers at a time, and at a speed which it almost takes away one's breath to think of.

'For, urges M. Petin, if we could once succeed in getting a fulcrum in the air in spite of its elasticity, this very elasticity would then enable us, with suitable motive-power, to move with a degree of rapidity far transcending the possibilities of locomotion in any other element. In fact, it would seem, according to M. Petin's computations, that we might breakfast in London, lunch in Constantinople, dine in China, dance the evening out in Havannah, and get home to bed at an hour not much later than that at which the votaries of fashion usually betake themselves to their slumbers.

'The reasoning by which our inventor arrives at the seemingly paradoxical conclusion, that the air is destined to be the high-road *par excellence*, and to serve as the medium

of transportation for the heaviest loads, is certainly very ingenious; of its conclusiveness, we must leave our readers to judge for themselves.



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'Progression from the simple to the composite, says M. Petin, is the universal law. In the works of nature, the action of this law is everywhere visible; and man, in his works, follows the path thus consecrated by the footsteps of the Creator. Thus we find, he continues, that the point multiplied by itself produces the line; the line, in like manner, produces the plane; and the plane, the cube; an ascending series, which he conceives to have its exact analogy in that furnished by the earth, the water, and the air, considered as *media* of locomotion. In other words, the point, or primary germ of extension, corresponds, according to the theory of M. Petin, with the fulcrum, or primary condition of locomotion; the line, first and simplest form of extension, corresponds with locomotion on the surface of the earth, where, owing to topographic inequalities, and other obstacles, locomotion can take place only in its first and simplest mode—namely, in a linear direction; the plane, produced by the movement of the line, and constituting a higher term of superficial development, corresponds with locomotion upon the water, whose unencumbered surface, which can be traversed in every direction, presents a locomotive medium, the facilities of which, compared with those offered by the surface of the earth, increase in the ratio of the difference of extension between the line and the plane.

'The cube, product of the plane multiplied by itself, corresponds with locomotion in the air, where the aeronaut, being surrounded on every side by fulcra furnished by the various strata of the atmosphere, moves at will in every direction; pressing on the higher strata in ascending, on the lower in descending, on the lateral in turning to the right or to the left, and thus commanding a sphere of locomotion whose extent and facilities, compared with those afforded by the water, are as the cube to the plane.

'Aerial navigation being thus, according to his theory, the highest form of locomotion, M. Petin considers himself as justified in assuming, *a priori*, that this mode of transportation will offer facilities superior to those of every other in point of safety, speed, power, and cheapness; but on condition of its being carried into effect upon a scale commensurate with the vastness of its field and the importance of its results.

'To convince ourselves that such is really the intention of Providence, and that balloons are destined to transport the heaviest loads, we have only, continues M. Petin, to examine the law which presides over the development of spheric bodies; the surface of a sphere being represented by the square of the radius, while its *contenance*, or containing power, is represented by the cube of the radius. In other words, if we increase the diameter of a sphere three times, although we increase its surface only nine times, we increase its containing power twenty-seven times. Therefore, by constructing balloons on a very large



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scale, as the extent of surface, and consequent resistance of the air, increases in an immensely smaller proportion than the containing power, we may obtain an almost fabulous amount of ascensional force. For instance: a balloon of one hundred yards in diameter would suffice to raise only ten millions of pounds; but ten such balloons ranged one behind the other, or, better still, a cigar-shaped balloon, which would be equivalent to these ten balloons united in one (an arrangement which, as the law of development is similar for spheric and for cylindric bodies, would greatly diminish the resistance of the air, without occasioning any loss of containing power), would suffice to raise one hundred millions of pounds; and allowing some four or five millions of pounds for the weight of the vessel and its machinery, which, for a ship of this size—supposing it were possible to make its various parts hold together—should be, M. Petin computes, of twelve hundred horse-power, we should still have at command a surplus ascensional force of upwards of ninety millions of pounds; a force sufficient to sustain a body of fifty thousand men!

'In the construction of these enormous balloons, M. Petin proposes to substitute, in place of the silken bag hitherto used to contain the gas, a rigid envelope of a cylindro-conical form, composed of a series of metallic tubes, laid one above the other, and supplied with gas—obtainable to any amount and almost instantaneously—from the decomposition of water by a powerful electric battery; and with these resources at command, M. Petin conceives that balloons might be constructed on a scale even larger than that just given!

'In fact, this assumption of the possibility of obtaining command of an unlimited ascensional force has suggested, to certain enthusiastic partisans of M. Petin's theory and plans, a long perspective of astounding visions, from which sober-minded Englishmen would, in all probability, turn away with derision. These enthusiasts have evidently adopted the language of Archimedes, and are ready to exclaim: "Give us a *fulcrum*, and," with hydrogen gas as our lever, "we will move the world!"

'For ourselves, we have already stated the facts from which we derive our conviction that the conquest of the air, if achieved, is to be brought about through the agency of new and powerful mechanical combinations, rather than by means of the balloon; and though, as before remarked, the experiments of M. Petin and others may probably not be without useful results, we dismiss these brilliant phantasmagoria with the charitable reflection, that the extravagance of overweening hopefulness is, at least in an age which has witnessed the advent of steam and electricity, more natural and more pardonable than the scepticism of confirmed despondency; and that "he who shoots at the stars," though missing his aim, will at all events shoot higher than he who aims at the mud beneath his feet.



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'Meantime, the science of meteorology—a subject intimately connected with that of aero-locomotion—though yet in its infancy, already furnishes many indications of great importance, as establishing a very strong presumption in favour of the existence of permanent atmospheric currents, blowing continuously in various directions at different degrees of elevation.

'We know that air, when rarefied by heat, becomes lighter and rises, cold air immediately rushing in to supply its place; and it is evident, therefore, that if two neighbouring regions of the atmosphere are unequally heated, this inequality of temperature will give rise to two currents of air—a warm one, in the upper region of the atmosphere, blowing from the warmer to the colder region; and a cold one, near the surface of the earth, blowing from the colder to the warmer region. It can, therefore, hardly be matter of doubt, that great permanent currents, caused by the unequal heating of the equatorial and polar regions, do exist in the higher strata of the atmosphere—an inference which is supported not only by the occurrence of the trade-winds and the monsoon, but by a variety of other facts and observations.

'Thus, for instance, it is found that in the region of the trade-winds, cinders from the craters of volcanoes, and other objects, are carried through the higher regions of the air in a direction exactly opposite to that in which the trade-wind itself is blowing below; and in this way cinders from the Cosiguina, in Guatemala, frequently fall in the streets of Kingston (Jamaica), lying to the north-east of Guatemala. Similar facts have been observed at the Peak of Teneriffe, in the Straits of Magellan, and elsewhere.

'The importance of this subject with regard to aero-locomotion can hardly be overrated; for these currents, when clearly ascertained and correctly mapped out, would constitute so many great natural routes, where the aeronaut would be borne onward in the required direction with immense velocity, and without danger of encountering squalls or counter-currents.

'But here, fearful of exhausting the patience of our readers, we bring our somewhat lengthened disquisitions to a close, and take our leave for the present of the tempting, though debatable ground of the CUBIC HIGHWAY.'

### **A MEMOIR FOR THE MILLION.**

On the meeting-line between a moorland and lowland district of Perthshire, stands an old baronial seat, dignified with the name of castle, to which, no doubt, it was entitled long after the date of its erection, in the fifteenth century, although no longer boasting of either the strength or magnificence which such a name implies. Its position, however, is picturesque—standing on the bank of a romantic and finely-wooded Highland glen, and commanding a view on one side of a mountain-range, and on the other of a cultivated country, with its towns and villages in the distance. The mansion



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is flanked on one side by a court-yard and 'louping-on-stane;' and on the other, by a velvety bowling-green, stretching along to an antique garden of cut yews and hollies overhanging the glen. It boasts, of course, its haunted chamber, and traditional stories of love and murder; but we have not now to do with life or death above stairs, though many a tale might be founded on truths 'stranger than fiction.' Our present purpose is with the neighbourhood of the kitchen. There, too, we find some relics of olden times; a fireplace which would legalise the Scottish invitation, to 'come in to the fire,' inasmuch as within the chimney-arch was the seat of honour and comfort, where a dozen cronies could sit beside the embers, while an ox might roast in front. From that cozy neuk did the old fiddler play in the evening, when the spinning-wheels were put away, and the maids, generally tenants' daughters, had their dance with the stragglers from the stables and cottages. Near the kitchen was a much colder and more dismal place, that went by the name of 'the Pit'—a half-subterranean recess, several steps lower than the kitchen, into which scarcely a ray of light penetrated through the small 'bole' that was drilled in the massive walls for a window. The cheerless aspect of the place seemed to confirm the tradition, that it had sometimes served of yore as a place of involuntary restraint. Its present occupant, however, the son of a day-labourer, found no fault with the accommodation it afforded him. He was a young boy, who cleaned shoes, scoured knives, and received with great deference the commands of Daniel Don, the butler. This boy was called John Dickson. The Pit was his domicile, as well as his work-room, and he made it also a 'study;' for having earned a rushlight by running messages, or doing extra work for his neighbours, he might be found at night, as long as the light would last, poring over a book. In this way he had, unknown to others, while still a mere boy, read through that vast quarry of erudition, Henry's 'Commentary on the Bible.'

Old James, the gardener, was a tolerable scholar, and a well-informed man, and took great pleasure in encouraging young students; so, on discovering John Dickson's taste for books, he lent him an old Latin grammar, recommending him to commit it to memory. This John did with praiseworthy diligence, although, being written in a language he did not understand, he could make but little use of his acquisition. Old James, however, may be forgiven for having set John to study after the orthodox fashion of Ruddiman, for he had never been out of his own glen, and in those days new ideas were long in penetrating to the country districts.

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When John Dickson was promoted to assist in waiting at table, an incident occurred, which no doubt had some influence on his dreams, if not on his fortunes. A stranger, in regimentals, was at dinner one day, and being prepossessed by the lad's pleasing manners and expression of face, he turned to him, and clapping him on the shoulder, said: 'I was once in your present station, my boy, and if you are steady, and behave well, you may one day rise to be in mine.' The speaker was Dr Miller, a physician in the army. John, however, had few dreams and little ambition. He was not what is commonly called a genius; but he possessed sterling qualities of head and heart, perseveringly cultivated his natural abilities, and invariably conducted himself with the greatest propriety. It was no wonder, then, that he became a general favourite in the family; and that, when he carried the game-bag for the gentlemen, they purposely made long detours, and met him again at an appointed spot, in order to give him an hour at his book; for John always had a book in his pocket for a spare moment. Once, indeed, this custom occasioned some annoyance to his master, whom he had accompanied to a shooting-hut in the moors, nicknamed 'Grouse Hall,' where the unfortunate laird was detained by an intolerable fit of gout; a circumstance not apt to engender patience and resignation, especially when, from the other side of the cloth partition which divided the single apartment of the hut, he heard bursts of laughter pealing forth in succession—for John Dickson had managed to carry off a copy of Don Quixote to the moors.

When the younger sons of the family were sent to college in Edinburgh, John was chosen to accompany them. Let us now see how he conducted himself in this new and trying field; for trying it is. Country lads, in coming to a large town, meet with many temptations, and by these, hundreds of them fall. They cannot resist petty attractions to amusement and mispending of time. They enjoy themselves while they should work. They take to fun, instead of to labour. Well; to which did our hero attach himself? To regular, hard work, to be sure. He had the good sense to see, that here was his chance of getting on in the world. While other lads were amusing themselves at the theatre, or kicking their heels about the street, or hanging about the auction-rooms in front of the college, John Dickson stuck hard to his books. He also availed himself of other advantages connected with his situation. The tutor of the family in which he was employed was John Barclay, afterwards the celebrated anatomist, whose valuable museum was bequeathed to the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, on condition that they would build a hall, and form a more extended collection, which has been fulfilled. At this time, Dr Barclay had commenced his private lectures on anatomy, which soon became popular; and John made himself so useful in the arrangement of the classroom, that the doctor was induced to encourage



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him to attend the lectures, and assist in preparing the demonstrations. Thus Dickson spent many winters, at once attendant and pupil, returning to the country in summer in his old capacity. By degrees, he completed his medical education, obtaining gratis-tickets from the professors—a favour sometimes extended to deserving students, and of which he was well worthy. Dr Barclay once gave a good lesson to those who apply for such gratuitous favours for others. He was asked by a certain bookseller to give a perpetual gratis-ticket for his class to a student then standing in the shop, who could ill afford to pay the four-guinea fee. 'Most certainly,' said the doctor; 'I can never refuse in such a case. By the by, Mr —, I want a few books; will you look them out for me now?' and the doctor enumerated several standard medical works, which were produced with great alacrity. He then selected four guineas' worth from among them, and handed them over to the astonished student, along with a lecture-ticket, saying: 'Of course, Mr — intended giving you the same value in books which I do in this ticket!' The bookseller, although a notoriously parsimonious character, had not a word to say. Dr Barclay took great pride in collecting a library, and invented the following device as a mark for his books: His initials were engraved in the centre of an oval, at the top was the sun, with the motto—'I weary not;' below, was a mountain, with 'I am firm;' and surrounding all, 'Excel if you can.'

These graphic mottos became the guiding-stars of John Dickson's career: he wearied not, nor wavered in whatever pursuit he engaged; and it was to this indomitable industry that he owed his success in life. His perseverance was displayed even in his amusements; he was fond of music, but had not a sufficiently correct ear to play the violin well, yet he would not abandon it, but scraped away year after year, in hopes of ultimate success, although in this instance without attaining his object. In more important pursuits, his industry was amply rewarded; and having taken his degree, we must now call the heretofore denizen of the Pit, Dr Dickson, and record, that the students of the university, on his leaving Edinburgh, presented him with a testimonial, to signify their appreciation of his valuable demonstrations in the class of Practical Anatomy. Some of his preparations may still be seen in the Museum of the College of Surgeons.

An appointment as assistant-surgeon in the navy was now procured for him; medical officers being then in greater request than they are in these piping times of peace. With affectionate regret, and not unmanly tears, he left the home that had sheltered him for so many and such important years of his life, and towards which he ever evinced the warmest attachment. His gratitude was not long in shewing itself practically. In a few years, he returned from abroad; and on landing in Britain, heard that the son of his former benefactor,



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with whom he had been on the most intimate terms, was desirous of leaving the army, and entering into partnership with some medical man in England, for which a considerable sum of money was necessary. Dr Dickson knew full well that there might be some difficulty in advancing the required amount to the youngest of a family of fourteen; so he addressed a beautiful and touching letter to him—saying, 'that he had already, out of the savings of his pay and prize-money, bought an annuity for his old mother, and had no one else to provide for. To you,' continued he, 'who always shared your jelly-pieces with me, when we were boys, I owe a debt of gratitude, and to your family, one which I can never repay. I trust you will not now refuse to share my earnings, but frankly accept of L.800, to assist you in settling in life.' This noble offer was, from motives as noble, declined, as well as the same sum, which Dickson now pressed upon his friend, as a *loan*; but an affectionate correspondence was kept up between them until Dr Dickson's death, more than thirty years afterwards.

In 1814, Dr Dickson visited Scotland, and was received as a beloved and honoured guest at the table where, long ago, he had waited as a servant, and where had sat the stranger gentleman in regimentals, who clapped him on the shoulder, and spoke to him words of encouragement which perhaps had sunk deeper into his mind than he was conscious of himself. His native politeness had always been remarkable, and now his general information and agreeable manners made his society a true acquisition. After a few months' visit, he left Scotland never to return. Again he went abroad, and finally settled at Tripoli, the African port on the Mediterranean, under the Turkish dominion. Here the sultan's viceroy, the pacha, soon appointed Dr Dickson to be his chief physician—a post which he held for thirty years under various successive pachas, although the rival claimants for vice-regal authority sometimes fought so fiercely, that the English residents were glad to seek shelter in Malta, until it was decided who should reign. Still, Dr Dickson never lost his office, which has now descended to his son; an extraordinary instance of permanent favour under so arbitrary a government. Dr Dickson had married a Scottish lady, and being now settled in every way, his life, so far as we know, affords no farther incidents necessary to record. It was a career, however, of continued usefulness and benevolence, and, surrounded by a promising family, who revered their father, we believe he enjoyed as much happiness as usually falls to the lot of humanity.

One only drawback there was to the favour in which he stood with the pacha: the doctor was obliged, when attending the high ladies of the court, to drink in their presence one-half of every drug he prescribed—a custom it might not be amiss to introduce into England, although not with the view, as in Tripoli, of guarding against poison! Dr Dickson also acted as consul for Portugal, although for many years he received no salary: at last, on paying a flying visit to London, two years before his death, he was recommended to go home by Lisbon to seek redress. He found,

however, that amid the clash of political factions, justice was difficult to be found, and so he gave up both the search and the post.



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The estimation in which Dr Dickson was held at Tripoli, both by the English residents and native population, cannot be better described than by quoting entire a paragraph from a London newspaper, which inserted a notice of his death in the year 1847: 'Letters from Tripoli, just received, announce the death, on the 27th February, after only four days' illness, of Dr John Dickson, a half-pay surgeon of the British navy, who had been upwards of thirty years a resident at Tripoli, and where, such was the extent of his gratuitous attendance on the indigent, that the mournful event cannot but be looked upon as a great public calamity; and happening as it did, at the very instant the first gun announced the anniversary of the birth of the Prophet, not a few of the Mohammedans regarded the event with a superstitious awe. On the 1st of March, the remains of the lamented deceased were interred in the Protestant cemetery, which is distant about two miles from the town, escorted by a military guard of honour, sent by order of his Excellency the Pacha, and followed not only by every foreign consul, but by all the European residents of every class, and by several thousands of Jews and Mohammedans; and so anxious were many whom he had attended professionally to pay this last tribute of respect to his memory, that they actually rose from their beds of sickness and joined the mournful procession. Whilst it passed along the crowded streets, the shrieks and cries of the natives bewailing his death were audible, issuing from the miserable hovels which he had been wont to enter, to prescribe for suffering humanity.'

After this, it is needless to add anything in the way of exhortation. The little history here given is full of encouragement. It is that of a man who raised himself from humble life, not, it is true, to any dazzling eminence, but to a respectable and respected position in society; and this not by means of rare talent, but simply by industry, perseverance, and general propriety of conduct. The interest of the piece, we believe, would have been much lessened, had we, through false delicacy, withheld the real name of the individual. It is happily not the fashion in our day for self-educated and self-raised men to blush for their origin; and we are quite sure that every word of this narrative will be read both with pride and pleasure by the flourishing and widely-scattered family of Dr John Dickson.

### **A DAY AT THE BATHS OF LUCCA.**

The baths of Lucca, ever since the opening of the continent, have been graced annually by the presence of from four to five hundred English, who shew their good taste in selecting this miniature Switzerland for their residence during the summer months. It is, in truth, a lovely valley, with its thickly-wooded hills, and shady lanes, and murmuring river; while the irregularity of the villages, or clusters of houses where travellers are generally lodged, give variety and interest to the landscape.

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The first of these groups of buildings is the Ponte a Serraglio. Here are the principal hotels; the post-office; the English reading-room and club; the Casino; a few small shops dignified by such names as 'Magazine of Novelties,' and 'The Real Bazaar;' and a cafe; where congregate all the idlers of the community.

About a mile further on, attainable by a pretty road, winding at the foot of a mountain bordered by acacia trees, and overhanging the river Serchio, is situated the Villa—another range of tenements, the inhabitants of which arrogate to themselves greater staidness of demeanour than their brethren at the Ponte, thinking, perhaps, that the vicinity of the English chapel—a handsome structure, in the style of an ancient Venetian palace—may vindicate this assumption of decorum. There is but one hotel at the Villa—calm, dignified, and frigid; the remainder of a long rambling street of which the place is composed, consists entirely of lodging-houses, having gardens attached to each, where little children may be seen playing at the doors, and English nurse-maids pursuing their laborious avocations. This preponderance of small children at the Villa, is as much its characteristic distinction, as whatever relates to gaiety, or novelty, or scandal, may be considered the peculiar attribute of the Ponte.

A distinct race inhabit the Bagni alla Villa—a group of houses inaccessible to carriages, rising on a hill behind the palace belonging to the ex-duke of Lucca. A fourth division of dwellings is the Bagni Caldi, the highest point of all, the occupants whereof have to descend as if from an eyrie, to gain any of the other localities. They are a set of whom little seems to be known—quaint and unsocial personages, venturing out at dusk like bats and owls, and looking grimly on all but their immediate neighbours: the gentlemen, mostly gouty, or otherwise disabled; the fairer sex, isolated and ancient, with a marked predilection for close straw-bonnets, large brown parasols, and blue veils.

Thus much for the first outline of the place and its frequenters. We must now take a glance at their pursuits and enjoyments.

The general tenor of a day at the baths is easily described. Till about five in the afternoon but few people venture out, although early in the morning it is said that some, more active than the rest, sally forth on their mountain rambles; but this deponent vouches not for their number or degree, never himself having had ocular demonstration of their movements. During the heat of the day, the greater part remain at home, excepting, indeed, the population of the Ponte, who, exulting in all the advantages their position unites, circulate from the post-office to the cafe, from the cafe to the club, and condole with such of the hapless denizens of the Villa and Bagni Caldi as a thirst for news and devouring ennui have driven to brave a hot summer walk to their more favoured region.



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There is always, even at noon, a buzz of animation in the little piazza of the Ponte—always a knot of worthies in loose brown holland coats and straw-hats, talking over every passing occurrence. The banker's office, too, is situated here, and that is a lounge in itself—a sort of private committee-room for the discussing of any fresh piece of gossip, ere it is submitted for dissection to the public at large. The English banker has now become an important feature in all continental circles. The unsophisticated beings who, perchance, imagine his duties simply limited to cashing travellers' bills, and discounting circular-notes, have now an opportunity of learning over how wide a field of action his arduous avocations must be spread. The English banker should be imperturbably good-tempered, active, and obliging; allowing no difficulties to dismay, no ungraciousness to offend him. His clients' happiness, interest, comfort, and amusement are his engrossing thought; and if, after experiencing an infinity of trouble, rudeness, and vexation, his only return should be the half-percentage on a L.50 draft, he is expected to smile, be contented, and with undaunted resolution, pursue the same train of kindness and civility towards the next new-comer. The banker's wife has also her line of tactics to pursue. She must call on all the influential families who bring letters of recommendation to her husband; listen with interest to all the detailed miseries of travelling with young children; and be sympathisingly anxious about little hopeful's eyeteeth. She must be an adept at writing notes, and be possessed of an immense store of local information to supply the incessant inquiries with which she is assailed. She must also give tea-parties and dances, get partners for all the disengaged young ladies, and stand up herself, if necessary, to complete the quadrille. Finally, she must be above feeling any affront or mortification, and learn to consider herself in the light in which she is commonly regarded—a sort of machine pertaining to the bank: just as much a part of the establishment, in fact, as the iron money-chest which stands in the office, and created solely for the advantage and convenience of her travelling country-people.

When the continental banker happens to have no wife, in his own person must be united the attributes I have described; and with a beaming face, and frank shake of the hand, must he advance from his desk to greet every visitor who breaks in upon his hours of business. Let us take a peep, for instance, one July morning, into the bank.

Two or three old *habitués* are reading the newspapers; before them is a table on which are army and navy lists; notices of the arrivals and departures of the French and Peninsular Steam-Navigation Company's packets from Leghorn; itineraries of the baths; cards of professors of various languages, &c. The banker is writing. Enter a lady; a boy, with turn-down collar and very red ears; a little girl in a nice hat; a Swiss *bonne*; and a baby, with a blue sash and feather.



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*Banker. (Advancing cordially.)* Ah, Mrs Worryemwell, how do you do? (*Pats the boy on the head.*) And how are you, my fine fellow? (*Gives the baby an amicable poke in the ribs, whereat it laughs and crows uproariously.*) Take a seat on the sofa, will you, Mrs Worryemwell; and now, tell me, when did you leave Florence?

*Mrs Worryemwell.* The day before yesterday. We should have been here sooner, but we missed the train for Lucca, because one of the trunks was left behind at the Pisa station, and I would not move till it was found.

*Banker. (Anxiously.)* But you recovered it, I trust?

*Mrs W.* Yes; but we are in sad trouble now: a canister of arrow-root must have remained on the Lucca Railway, and baby will get ill without it. We had a good many small packages, and this one was overlooked in the confusion; but—

*Banker. (Promptly.)* I'll write to the clerk in charge at the station about it at once.

*Mrs W.* Oh! thank you. I was going to ask you to do so. A brown, japanned canister, fastened down with some strong twine.

*Banker.* Very good, very good. How do you like your house at the Villa? I gave orders that the beds should be aired, and charcoal and oil provided before your arrival, just as you directed.

*Mrs W.* Thank you; pretty well; but, as usual with all Italians, the owners are most disobliging. I wanted a cot put in for baby, but they say they have none, and that it was not stipulated for in the agreement. Now, surely (*impressively*), surely a person of your experience would never take a house for a lady and young children without such an indispensable thing as a cot?

*Banker.* You did not mention it in your letter, my good lady, and having four other friends' lodgings to fix that same day, it has, I fear, escaped me. (*Good-humouredly.*) But we'll try and arrange matters. I'll come down and talk to the Padrone di Casa—

*Mrs W. (Taking a memorandum out of her reticule.)* Let me see. Ah, yes! butter, milk, eggs. Could you favour me with the exact prices of all these necessaries? for I am certain the people of the house have cheated in what they have procured for us.

*Banker.* Certainly. One of my clerks shall procure you every information.

*Mrs W.* Ah, yes! and if you will come this afternoon to the Villa, you can also insist on their white-washing my English servant's room. It overlooks the garden, and a scorpion was found on the window this morning. Now, white-washing the walls is the only safeguard; it would really annoy me if he were stung.



*Banker.* I will see about that too. Ahem! I must write at once about the arrow-root, or the post will have left. Can I supply you with any money?

*Mrs W.* You are very kind. I must think—(*putting her hand to her head*)—a few more things I wished to ask. Do you remember them, Freddy dear?



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*Boy. (Huskily, and blushing.)* Club, church, pony.

*Mrs W.* Very right, love. What is the subscription to the club and reading-room?

*Banker.* Three napoleons for the season.

*Mrs W.* Will you enter my name? They give parties there sometimes, I believe. Ah, then the church! how much is that?

*Banker.* Three sittings for you and your two children will not amount to quite so much as the club.

*Mrs W.* Of course not. But even so it is a bad system. The church ought not to be made a medium of traffic—paying for church-seats always gives me a headache. I think, do you know, two sittings will be sufficient; yes, put me down for two. I will take Freddy in the morning, and his sister in the afternoon. That is all, I believe.

*Boy. (In an agitated manner, whispers)* Pony!

*Mrs W.* Ah, true, dear! Can you recommend me where to hire a pony for my boy?

*Banker.* To be sure I can. *(Giving a card.)* Here are the address and terms of a man who lets them out either by the day or month. Ahem!—would you like the money in gold or dollars?

*Mrs W.* I am much obliged. On one other subject perhaps you could assist me. There really seems no one worth knowing here at present, except a family who always reside at the baths, and often receive, and have written a book, and are quite celebrated. I should like—

*Banker. (Hurriedly.)* Really, that I fear I cannot manage for you. The arrow-root—

*Mrs W. (Rising.)* Oh, very well. It is late, I am afraid. I need not trouble you to-day for money, I believe. I brought sufficient from Florence for the present; we will wait till the exchange is more favourable.

*Banker. (Heartily.)* No matter; you can have it whenever you please. I shall come this afternoon and put all in order for you.

*Mrs W.* Thank you. Good-morning. *(Shakes hands, and exit.)*

In this manner, and through similar interruptions, much of the banker's time is taken up, till near three o'clock, which is the general dinner-hour at the baths. Many people are supplied with this renovating meal from the Europa Hotel at the Ponte, which is presided over by one of the most honest, obliging, indefatigable, and enterprising landlords in



existence. Not only has he the direction of three hotels at the Ponte, two of them offshoots from the parent Europa, but he undertakes the herculean task of daily sending forth thirty-six dinners to different families; the whole requiring a combination of artistic resource and fertility of intellect that fully justifies his right to the appellation bestowed on him by the ex-duke—that of ‘the Napoleon of inn-keepers.’ These repasts are conveyed in large tin boxes, containing warm embers, on which are placed the various dishes of which the dinner is composed; and they are carried to their destinations on the heads of divers active, nimble-footed *marmitons*. As the hour of three approaches, numbers of these emissaries are seen gliding swiftly along the roads; and I never yet encountered one without comparing him to the slave who appeared at the bidding of the Genius of the Lamp, and bore a sumptuous banquet to the presence of Aladin.



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After thus recruiting the inward man, the whole population of the baths seem suddenly to kindle into activity; and soon after five every one is astir. Some ride, some drive, some walk. You see every variety of conveyance, from the last London-built carriage, and livery servants, to an unpretending one-horse *timonella*; and in the same manner amongst the equestrians, the most ill-favoured little pony, its rider equipped in a straw-bonnet, with a shawl pinned across the saddle, will unblushingly thrust itself into companionship with a handsome English horse, whose owner is graced by the most unexceptionable habit and other appliances. Even the very donkeys walk along with dignified resolution, as if determined to ruffle it with the best, and not yield an inch of their prerogative. In fact, they evidently know their own value, and remember that not one of the hills around—not the giant tree on the heights of Lugliano, nor the tempting strawberry-gardens on the mountain of Benabbio—could be attained without their help. A few veteran ponies, it is true, now claim equal sureness of foot, but the popular feeling still leans towards the long-eared auxiliaries, who always lead the way on such excursions, displaying an accuracy of judgment which would not discredit their far-famed relations in the frightful passes of the Andes.

Thus the evening wears on; gradually the children and babies disappear from the scene; then follow the invalids, who had ventured out to sun themselves in the genial afternoon; and soon parties of riders are seen returning, their laughter and cheerful voices sounding pleasantly on the ear, leading one to fancy there may be some happy people after all! It is amusing, too, to watch some of those on foot, who stop in their homeward way, and peer wistfully over a range of green palisades, that border the road in the vicinity of the Villa, and through a screen of spreading foliage, catch tempting glimpses of a winding path and veranda-like portico, where there are birds, and flowers, and vases, and which leads the way to a perfect Tusculum within. This dwelling is an object of interest to all the visitors at the baths; and if, like the banker's client, they have been unsuccessful in their overtures to procure access to its circle, they sometimes, nevertheless, hover curiously in the neighbourhood, and are disposed to be indignant at not having an 'open sesame' to its doors.

But as night begins to close, even these dissatisfied pedestrians must hasten their steps, for it is near tea-time, and almost every one at the baths has some one else to spend the evening with him. There is always a vast demolition of cold chickens, and cakes, and preserves, and then a little music, and a little conversation, and an immense deal of gossip. The general complaint is, that the place is rather dull; and, indeed, it must be owned, that formerly there were more facilities for spending a gay season than at present.



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Some years ago, when the ex-duke came with his little court, weekly balls were given at his residence, as well as at the Casino. But all these scenes of pleasure have now passed away. The Grand-duke of Tuscany, the present possessor of Lucca, has at this moment weightier cares to occupy his attention than the summer amusements of a watering-place; the Casino, so long the opprobrium of the baths, is now closed—it is to be hoped for ever; and the English Club, or Cercle de Reunion, though at present in every respect flourishing, has had too much experience of the ungracious office of giving evening parties, to be inclined to resume the attempt.

The diversions of Lucca during the last summer were judicially limited to rides and quiet tea-parties, and it may be said, that before eleven o'clock every social reunion breaks up. About ten o'clock, in fact, the shawling processes commence; and servants are seen escorting home their *padroni*, holding lanterns carefully near the ground, to guard against the contingency of their stepping on the toads, which disport themselves in all the lanes at night, and are of the size of respectable tortoises.

Then gradually the lights in every window disappear, fewer and fewer voices are borne upon the breeze, and ere the midnight bell has tolled, all is darkness and repose.

### **TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF A SAILOR'S LIFE AT SEA.**

One of the visions of youth is, that the life of a sailor is all fun, frolic, and happiness. Can there be anything more delightful, they think, than sailing about on the wide ocean, visiting far-distant regions of the earth, and seeing the strange manners of different countries? Little are they aware of the constant toil to which the poor mariner is exposed—the perils he encounters, the thankless life he is generally doomed to lead. He is, in fact, compelled to endure pretty much the lot of a slave; for, as is well known, government on shipboard is a species of despotism, often a cruel tyranny. Remonstrance in nearly every circumstance is in vain—it is mutiny. No matter how roughly orders are issued; they must be implicitly obeyed. 'D'ye murmur? Hold your tongue, you rascal, or I'll put you in irons!' Such is not a particularly uncommon form of address to the sailor, who so far forgets his position as to even hint a difference of opinion. Possibly, it is quite right, for the sake of discipline, and the safety of all concerned, that severity should be employed. We merely note the circumstance.

In the very best conducted ships, however, there must necessarily be toils and trials of temper. The most tormenting thing in a sailor's profession, is the want of that regular alternation of work through the day, and repose through the night, which is enjoyed by ordinary mortals. This is a matter on which so little is known, that we are induced to expatiate upon it. Dear landsmen! would you like to know how idly and jovially a foremast Jack gets through his twenty-four hours at sea? Listen; and when we have 'said our say,' envy poor Jack his romantic calling, and begrudge him his L.2, 10s. or L.3 per month, as much as you can find in your hearts.



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We are in the chief mate's watch (the larboard), and come on deck for the middle watch—that is, at 12 P.M.—having had our spell below of four hours during the first night-watch (8 P.M. to 12 P.M.) It is a cold, dark, squally night, with frequent heavy showers of rain—in fact, what seamen emphatically call 'dirty' weather, and our pea-jackets and sou'-westers are necessary enough. Hardly have we got on deck, ere the mate, who is a bit of a 'driver,' begins to order this brace to be pulled, that yard to be squared, this sheet to be belayed, that sail to be clewed up, and t'other set. The wind howls, the rain beats, the ship staggers, the salt spray flies over us from time to time. During the space of three bells, we have our hands pretty full, and then the mate bawls: 'For'ard there! In with jib; lay out, men!' The vessel is buried to her bight-heads every plunge she takes, and sometimes the solid sea pours over her bowsprit as far as the but-end of the flying jib-boom. But to hear is of course to obey; and while some of our messmates spring to the downhaul of the jib, and rattle it down the stay, we and another man get out along the bowsprit, and with our feet resting on the slippery, knotted footrope to windward, we clutch hold of the jib, which is hanging down and lashing over to leeward. Pitch, pitch—splash, dash, go the bows; at one moment we are tossed high in the air, and the next we sink so low that the water reaches up to our knees as the ship settles down again, only to rise for a plunge heavier than before. We have just got the jib half-stowed, 'after a fashion,' when our messmate sings out: 'Hold hard, Jack!' and we cling for dear life. The next instant, a wave rolls a fathom high over our head, and we emerge, spluttering and gasping from a genuine cold salt-water bath, such as the hydropathists have no idea of. Before our nice little job is completed, we get two or three more comfortable duckings, and finally crawl on board half-drowned, and thankful that we were not altogether washed away, as many better fellows have been, at that same blessed task of jib-furling on a stormy night.

We have just given ourselves a good shake, like a Newfoundland dog, when four bells (2 A.M.) strike, and the man at the wheel is of course relieved, his time being up. It happens to be our turn, or 'trick,' at the wheel, and we must at once take to it, all dripping and exhausted as we are. The ship steers wildly, and we have continually to ease her when she pitches; yet, do what we can, the grumbling mate has many a complimentary word for us, flatteringly intimating his opinion, that we 'know no more about steering than our grandmother; but *he'll* work our old iron up to some tune, before he's done with us!' Ere our trick is out, our arms feel as stiff as iron bars, from the violent and unremitting strain on their muscles. The mate has steaming hot coffee brought him; but there's not a drop for poor Jack, if it would save his life. Oh, how we long to hear eight bells strike! At length they *do* strike, and the watch below are bid to 'tumble up, Beauties, and have a look at the lovely scenery!' We are then relieved at the wheel, and go below with our watch, hoping to enjoy four hours of blessed oblivion.



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We swing ourself into our hammock (or berth, as it may happen), and are fast asleep in a minute. But we have not been an hour in the Land of Nod, ere three heavy blows from a handspike are struck on the forecastle hatch, which is then slid back, and a hoarse voice bawls: 'All ha-and a-ho-oy! tumble up to reef tops'ls!' Out we bundle, and grope for our clothes (the forecastle being as dark as a dog's mouth), get them on somehow, and hurry-scurry on deck. We find the weather and sea altered much for the worse, and the Old Man (captain) himself on the quarter-deck, giving orders to the mates, who are tearing about, bawling and swearing like demons; while the 'idlers'—that is to say, the carpenter, steward, cook, and boys, who keep no regular watch—have all been roused up, to bear a hand, and 'pull their pound.' Halliards are let go, reef-tackles hauled chock-a-block, and we lay aloft helter-skelter, best man up first, and bend over the yard, till the weather-earing is secured; and then comes the welcome cry: 'Haul to leeward!' It is done, and then we all 'knot-away' with the reef-points. The reef having been taken (or two, perchance), we shin down again to mast-head the topsails, and get all in sailing trim. A grog is now served out, and we go below, to sleep out the rest of our four hours, one of which we have been deprived of by this reefing job. Sometimes it happens, however, that we lose three, or all four, when there is absolute necessity for all hands on deck.

Here, we pause a moment, to say a word on the serving of grog—a composition of rum and water. The use of this stuff is of old date in the navy, and would seem to be considered essential to navigation. In what are called temperance ships, no grog is served, neither after reefing topsails, nor at any other time; but what is very shameful, in many instances no substitute is allowed. If sailors might have coffee instead of rum, they would thankfully accept the substitute, for coffee is incomparably a better stimulant. The invigoration from rum is only momentary, and afterwards is perhaps rather pernicious; but the wholesome effect of coffee is felt for an hour. So they very excusably observe, 'Better grog than nothing!'

To resume the tenor of our narrative: at eight bells (8 A.M.) we are summoned on duty again, and find that the squall has passed over, and that it is now a fine sunshiny morning, with all available sail set, and only a heavy swell of the sea to tell what the night has been. We now get our breakfast (half an hour allowed for that), and the other watch, which has been eight hours up to our four, gets a forenoon watch below (8 A.M. to 12 A.M.) Alterations of sails and rigging, and no end of small jobs, keep us hard at work till eight bells (noon) once more strike, and we then get our luxurious dinner of a pound and a half of salt junk, with biscuits. But junk is capital stuff for sheathing material, when it *is* good: unfortunately, however, it too frequently is 'old horse;' and whatever its quality happens to be, all the nice juicy pieces are invariably picked out for the cabin table. Anything will do for poor Jack. His biscuits, too, are sometimes quite alive with weevils, especially on a long voyage in hot latitudes.



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After dinner, all hands are on deck, and kept there till dark. In very large merchantmen, and all warships, this rule is departed from, and the watch is not so torturing—so true is it that the servants in small establishments, whether on sea or land, are always the worst treated. However, we suppose that the hands are on deck. The breeze has now almost died away, and the sea runs in long, low, slow swells; the ship gently rocking, and the sails occasionally collapsing with a crash against the creaking masts. Surely, thinks the landsman, there is now nothing for Jack to do but turn his quid, crack his joke, smoke his pipe, or overhaul his chest, and put the things to rights in the forecabin, after the 'hurrah's nest' created by the squall in the past night? Ah, friend, it is very evident that *you* don't 'know the ropes!' When on deck, a sailor is never idle in the day-time; even if rain is pouring, something is found for him to do; and in fine weather, like the day we are describing, there is a superabundance of work. The carpenter has his bench out—for 'a ship is like a lady's watch, always out of repair;' the steward is polishing the brass-work of the quarter-deck; the cook is scouring his pots and pans; the sailmaker is stitching away in the waist; and the crew are, one and all, engaged in picking oakum, spinning yarns (not such yarns as those amiable gentlemen, the naval novelists, talk so much about, but rope-yarns, by the aid of spinning-winchies), plaiting sinnet, preparing chafing-gear, bousing slack rigging taut, painting boats and bulwarks, scraping yards and masts, fitting new running-rigging, overhauling the spare sails, and fifty other things—doing, in fact, everything but idling. And, mind, no conversation is allowed among the men—not a word more than necessary for the performance of their several duties. If they chat at all when on deck, it is 'on the sly,' and out of sight and hearing of the vigilant officers, who have eyes like the lynx, and ears as sharp as needles.

At 4 P.M. commences the dog-watch—that is, the ordinary watch of four hours divided into two watches of half that length; and the use of them is to shift the rotation of the night-watches. About 6 P.M. we get supper, and all hands are on deck till eight bells (8 P.M.), when the starboard-watch go below, and we, the larboard-watch, have the first night-watch—just as they had it last night, and will the next after. There is very probably plenty of work to do in shifting and trimming sails and rigging till eight bells again strike (12 P.M.), and then we summon the other watch with: 'Starboardings, ahoy!' and go below in turn; and so ends our day.

We have given a fair enough specimen of the twenty-four hours of a sailor's life at sea; but of course he sometimes has an easier, and sometimes a much harder life of it—depending on the kind of ship, the nature of the voyage, the state of the weather, and the character of the captain. Some sea-captains are excellent, kind-hearted men, and make the unavoidably hard duties of their crew as easy as it is possible; but others—and very many we fear—are terrible salt-water tyrants. A captain is the absolute master of all on board—his government, as we have said, is a despotism; and this ever-present sense of his will being law while afloat, too often hardens and brutalises an originally kind heart.



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Landsmen! do you now envy and begrudge a living to the poor blue-jackets, who risk limb and life to carry on your commerce with the uttermost ends of the earth, and who man the wooden walls that alone render Britain the invincible mistress of the world? Ladies! dear, tender-hearted ladies! do *you* feel indifferent to the hard lot of the gallant fellows who sail the trackless ocean to supply you with silks and diamonds, with sugar and tea, and every conceivable luxury of dress and food? Be kind, we implore you, to Poor Jack, wherever you meet him, for he would shed the last drop of blood in his veins to defend you! Make every Christian allowance for his follies and his sins when ashore. Do all you can—and we think you might do much if you would—to ameliorate his physical condition, and you will improve his moral one at the same time. For ourselves, we can only say that we ever shall own Poor Jack as a messmate and a brother, and while we have a shot in the locker, he shall freely share it, God help him!

### **INFLUENCE OF EXAMPLE.**

In a certain village in Switzerland, some years ago, there were heavy complaints among all who possessed trees, that no fruit was safe; that the children plundered it perpetually before it came to maturity; and not only that, but that the green saplings had no security against them. Another serious complaint was the barbarity of the children towards all living creatures in their power. The clergyman, teacher, and elders, often laid their heads together, to find some remedy for this inhuman spirit, by which every child in the place was more or less affected. They could not conceive why such a spirit should prevail so specially in *this* village; but they could find neither cause nor remedy: all exhortations, all punishments, were in vain. The clergyman of the village was changed; and the new minister was a great friend to schools. His first walk was to the school-house. The vice of the scholars had been made known to him, and the failure of all preventive measures hitherto applied. But, determining within himself to watch the whole course of proceedings in school, he soon perceived that the teacher had a habit, and had acquired a singular dexterity in it, of knocking down and killing flies with his cane, to the end of which he had fastened a piece of leather. The windows were all on one side, and being exposed to the morning sun of summer, they were continually full of flies. The teacher's path lay along them, in front of his scholars; and while talking to the latter, he struck down the flies as they shewed themselves at the window. This manoeuvre amused the children infinitely more than his instruction did, and they followed his example. They were incessantly on the watch for flies that buzzed through the room, caught them in their hands, and shewed as great dexterity in this kind of chase as their teacher in his. But their amusement did not end here: they had learned to play with their captives, treat them with detestable cruelty, and seemed to find a wicked delight in observing the shivering of their victims.



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On observing these curious and far from pleasing peculiarities of the school, the intelligent and humane clergyman easily accounted for the spirit of destructiveness among the children; and his first step was to induce the teacher to take his leather from the end of the cane; and next, to turn the desks so that the boys sat with their backs to the windows, and the teacher's path lay on the other side of the room. Then the minister went frequently into the school, and examined so severely, that both teacher and pupils had more to do than to give their attention to the flies. As this was not yet entirely satisfactory in its results, the minister took advantage of the hot summer weather, to have instruction given only in the afternoon, when the school was not so full of flies, and thus he gradually banished the insects from the thoughts of teacher and children. But he knew that it was of little avail solely to pull the weeds out of the young mind. He obtained an unoccupied piece of land fit for planting, and, not far from the school, laid out a school-garden. This pleased the teacher, and the children willingly took part in the task, for they had soon learned to like their new minister, who came and worked amongst them. The garden was surrounded by a hedge planted with trees and shrubs, and each child had a tree or shrub given him to take care of. A nursery was soon laid out, and provision made for plenty of larger gardens and orchards in the village. And, behold! the spirit of destructiveness among the children soon passed away; and every man's fruit and garden became safe, the youths even begging of their parents that trees might be planted in the fields for them to take care of. The new spirit was communicated from children to parents, till it spread throughout the entire village; every family had its pretty little garden; an emulation in cultivating flowers sprang into existence; idle and bad habits disappeared; and gradually the whole place was a scene of moral as well as of physical beauty.

This incident, the truth of which can be vouched for, has been communicated to us by a lady of rank, who happens to have lately become acquainted with the circumstances, and has thought that their publicity may be advantageous. We have no doubt of the fact, that the practice of amateur gardening is never associated with evil, but is always a token of advanced tastes and correct habits. Let every one, therefore, within his sphere, do what he can to promote this most desirable pursuit. We would further say, let every school, so far as it can conveniently be done, have its garden, not only for purposes of amusement, but as an important engine of education.

## FACTS AS TO OYSTER-EATING.



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The consumption of oysters in London is enormous. During the season of 1848-49, 130,000 bushels of oysters were sold in our metropolis. A million and a half of these shell-fish are consumed during each season in Edinburgh, being at the rate of more than 7300 a day. Fifty-two millions were taken from the French channel banks during the course of the year 1828; and now the number annually dredged is probably considerably greater, since the facilities of transport by rail greatly increase the inland consumption of these as of other marine luxuries. French naturalists report, that before an oyster is qualified to appear in Paris, he must undergo a course of education in discretion; for the artificial oyster-beds on the French coast, where the animals are stored to be carried away as required, are constructed between tide-marks; and their denizens, accustomed to pass the greater part of the twenty-four hours beneath the water, open their valves and gape when so situated, but close them firmly when they are exposed by the recession of the tide. Habituated to these alternations of immersion and exposure, the practice of opening and closing their valves at regular intervals becomes natural to them, and would be persisted in to their certain destruction, on their arrival in Paris, were they not ingeniously trained so as to avert the evil. Each batch of oysters intended to make the journey to the capital, is subjected to a preliminary exercise in keeping the shell closed at other hours than when the tide is out; until at length the shell-fish have learned by experience that it is necessary to do so whenever they are uncovered by sea-water. Thus they are enabled to enter the metropolis of France as polished oysters ought to do, not gaping like astounded rustics. A London oyster-man can tell the ages of his flock to a nicety. They are in perfection when from five to seven years old. The age of an oyster is not to be found out by looking into its mouth; it bears its years upon its back. Everybody who has handled an oyster-shell must have observed that it seemed as if composed of successive layers or plates overlapping each other. These are technically termed 'shoots,' and each of them marks a year's growth; so that, by counting them, we can determine at a glance the year when the creature came into the world. Up to the epoch of its maturity, the shoots are regular and successive; but after that time they become irregular, and are piled one over the other, so that the shell becomes more and more thickened and bulky. Judging from the great thickness to which some oyster-shells have attained, this mollusc is capable, if left to its natural changes and unmolested, of attaining a patriarchal longevity. Among fossil oysters, specimens are found occasionally of enormous thickness; and the amount of time that has passed between the deposition of the bed of rock in which such an example occurs, and that which overlies it, might be calculated from careful observation of the shape



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and number of layers of calcareous matter composing an extinct oyster-shell. In some ancient formations, stratum above stratum of extinguished oysters may be seen, each bed consisting of full-grown and aged individuals. Happy broods these pre-Adamite congregations must have been, born in an epoch when epicures were as yet unthought of, when neither Sweeting nor Lynn had come into existence, and when there were no workers in iron to fabricate oyster-knives! Geology, and all its wonders, makes known to us scarcely one more mysterious or inexplicable than the creation of oysters long before oyster-eaters and the formation of oyster-banks—ages before dredgers! What a lamentable heap of good nourishment must have been wasted during the primeval epochs! When we meditate upon this awful fact, can we be surprised that bishops will not believe in it, and, rather than assent to the possibility of so much good living having been created to no purpose, hold faith with Mattioli and Fallopio, who maintained fossils to be the fermentations of a *materia pinguis*; or Mercati, who saw in them stones bewitched by stars; or Olivi, who described them as the ‘sports of nature;’ or Dr Plot, who derived them from a latent plastic virtue?—*Westminster Review*, Jan. 1852.

### THE OASES OF LIBYA.

Nought wholly waste or wretched will appear  
Through all the world of Nature or of mind;  
Hope’s tender beamings soften Sorrow’s tear,  
The homeless outcast happy hours will find:  
To polar snows the Aurora-fires are given,  
The voice of friendship cheers the groping blind;  
The dreary night hath stars to deck the heaven;  
One law prevails beneficently kind:  
E’en not all darkness is the silent tomb,  
Faith points to bowers of bliss beyond the gloom.

So, Libya, in thy wide and fiery waste,  
Gladdening the traveller, plots of verdure lie,  
As if, when demons thence all life had chased,  
They dropped in beauty from the pitying sky.  
How weary pilgrims, dragging o’er the plain,  
When first green Siwah’s valleys they espy,[1]  
Cast off their faintness! swiftly on they strain,  
Drinking sweet odours, as the breeze floats by:  
They see the greenery of the swelling hills,  
They hear, they hear the gush of bubbling rills!

Oh! beautiful that soul-enchanting scene!  
The fresh leaves twinkling, and the wild-birds singing;



The rocks so mossy, and the grass so green,  
From tree to tree the vine's young tendrils swinging:  
Fruits of all hue—pomegranate, plum, and peach,  
Tempting the eye, and thoughts luxurious bringing;  
Flowers of all breath that each stray hand may reach,  
The glittering bee among them blithely winging:  
While skies more clear, more blue seem to glow,  
To match the bright and fairy scene below.



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NICHOLAS MICHELL.

### FOOTNOTES:

[1] Siwah, the Ammonia of the ancients, the most fertile of the Oases of Libya, presenting a succession of undulating hills and green meadows, watered by many springs, and producing every description of fruit-bearing trees.

### EVIL-SPEAKING.

The Rev. Mr Stewart advised three questions to be put to ourselves before speaking evil of any man: First, is it true? Second, is it kind? Third, is it necessary?—*Poynder's Literary Extracts*.

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