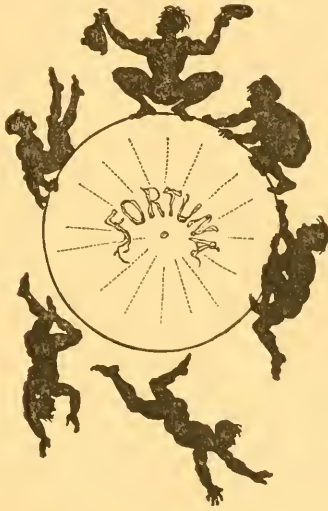


TRAVELS OF AN
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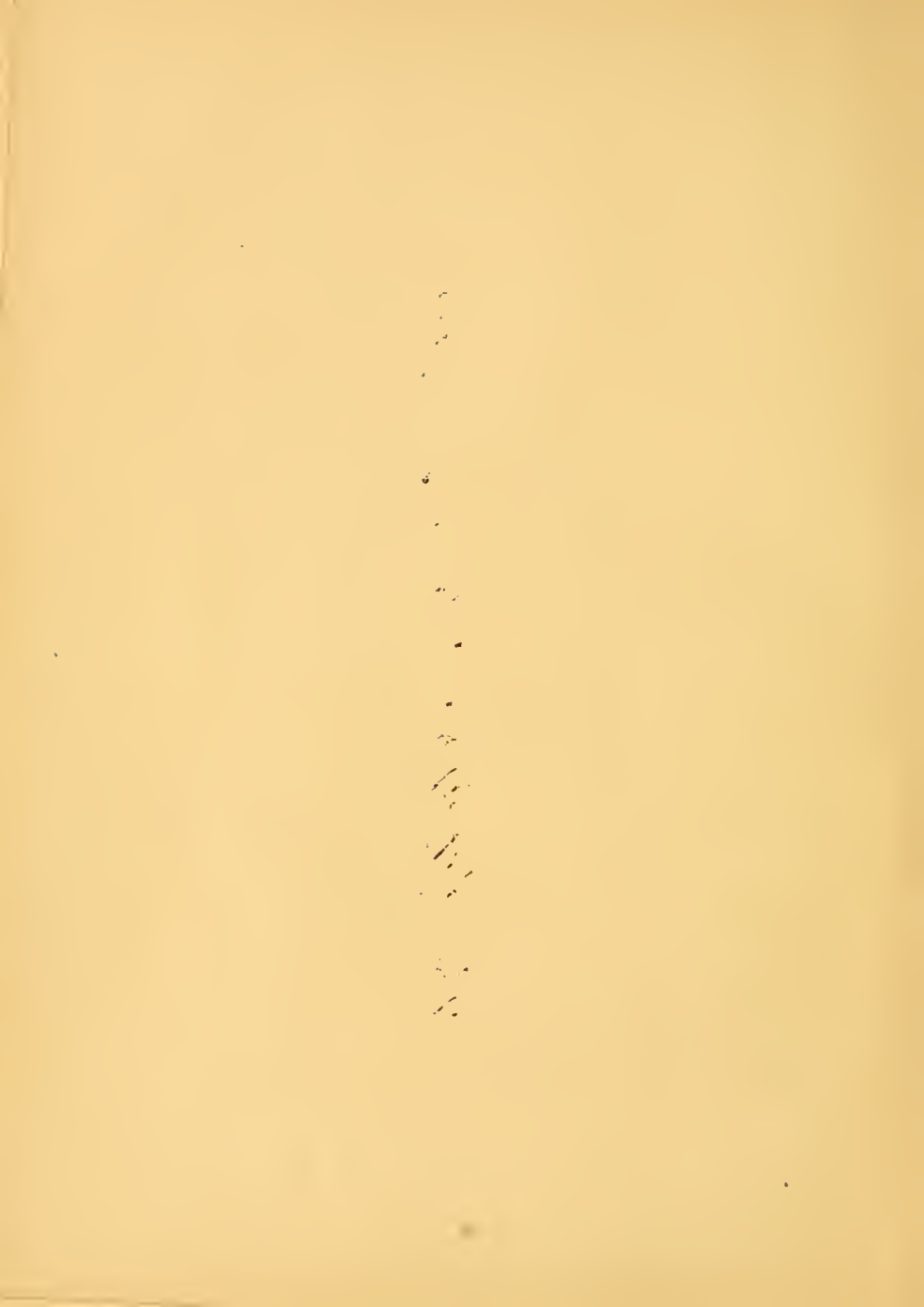


Fugenia M. Johnson

TRAVELS OF



AN AMERICAN OWL.



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TRAVELS
OF AN
AMERICAN OWL.

A Satire.

BY
VIRGINIA W. JOHNSON.

*With Sixteen Silhouette Illustrations by Augustus Hopkin,
Engraved by Jasper Green.*



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Dedicated

TO

COLONEL GEORGE E. CHURCH,

THE FRIEND WHOSE BRILLIANT AND VIVID DESCRIPTIONS
OF TRAVEL ARE REplete WITH
VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS.





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The Owl Family; Family Discussions.



TRAVELS OF AN AMERICAN OWL.

CHAPTER I.

THE OWL FAMILY.



HIS was only a barn-yard or screech owl, as his family are sometimes termed, yet this fact made no manner of difference to him, since the lower his origin the more glory in scaling dazzling heights of prosperity by means of his own ability.

His feathers were of a rusty red color, and his waistcoat was, by nature, dingy. He was not at all handsome, certainly; but then beauty is only skin-deep, after all.

Small and slight of stature, he still had an extremely old and sagacious expression of countenance, with a certain jaded aspect also, which was suggestive of one already weary of the follies of this world, in which he could learn nothing *new* under the sun, having already exhausted the pleasures of one planet at so early an age.

This was a trick of expression that the young owl especially prided himself upon.

His eye did not kindle or his cheek glow with boyish enthusiasm over field-sports, although he occasionally joined in the national ball-game with considerable spirit, because the spice of danger was so tempting, and the probability so great that he should be borne from the field with a broken leg or shattered ribs.

Tib was a connoisseur of tobacco and old Bourbon, nor was his knowledge of cards less thorough; the young birds who were his companions at a classical fountain of learning having always displayed much more ardor in such pursuits than imbibing either Greek or Latin; and yet it was not, by any means, unusual for them to require being sent home for recreation, owing to impaired eyesight from burning the midnight oil.

Tib was not an ordinary sort of owl; he was ambitious, and before he had tasted the first field-mouse of this life he had formed the resolution of travelling abroad, and studying the world for himself.

This resolution was not so much a desire that had expanded with his growing nature, as because the *other fellows* considered it the proper thing to do, and every young bird knows the terrible weight of the *fellows'* verdict.

The parent owls, being slow old coaches, were somewhat surprised at their son Tib. (That was his name, and he was

christened after the manner of owls, by having three feathers plucked from the crown of his head and laid cross-wise on a branch, while his parents shrieked the chosen title together in chorus. This simple ceremony was easily performed, and entirely without expense, as the father owl justly observed.)

They talked over the future one fine, dark night in the family nest, and one of Tib's uncles was invited to attend the council, as he had been blown up, once, on a Mississippi steamboat, which had gained him great respect in the owl community; not because explosions were unusual occurrences on the mighty river, (which is literally paved with the dead,) but because of the thrilling description given by Tib's uncle of his particular adventure, and the marvellous number of passengers he saved by his own astonishing bravery.

"The young 'un wants to travel," remarked Tib's father, who was not elegant, for reasons that we shall presently learn. "I say, why not live as we have always been contented to live?"

"How can you talk in that way when all young owls travel to improve their manners?" said Tib's mamma, reproachfully. "If we had to work hard, all the more reason for his climbing a peg above us."

"It costs a great deal of money to travel, brother," said the uncle, cautiously.

"Who cares for the money?" cried the young owl, scornfully.

"Most probably you do not," was the uncle's dry response.

"I can't be anything without it, and with it I can be everything," said the young owl, with that peculiarly hard, sage look of his, which has already been mentioned.

"True," assented the mother, ruffling her soft plumage proudly, while she glanced triumphantly at the doubtful uncle, with an expression that plainly said:

"You don't find such an old head on young shoulders very often."

"I wish to be as wise as an owl can possibly be," said Tib, eagerly.

"We are wise enough already," replied the uncle.

"When I found myself in such peril on the Mississippi River, on the occasion when I was blown up, I bitterly repented my folly in courting danger among strange scenes, instead of remaining quietly at home. We can live in one spot, enjoying the reputation our race has already gained for wisdom. If it was best you should travel, you would have been born a skylark, or a stormy petrel."

"For that matter, you are not so very safe at home. You have only to take your chance of being demolished on the Hurry Boats any day, or of getting run over in the crowded roads: failing that, the Airy Railroad is still left, as an almost sure means of destruction. If you had been to college, you

would know more. What an old muff you must be!" added Tib, with that entire absence of respect for the opinions of older people which is peculiarly characteristic of Young America, and forms a painful contrast with the filial reverence of other nations.

The uncle blinked in a dignified manner and made no reply.

"Come, come," said the father owl, interfering hastily, for he was the soul of good nature; "you need n't twit us old folks on our larning, just because we had n't the chances you've got. We had to pick up a bit here and there as we went along, and if we don't know much about your French and dead-language botherations, we can follow the rise of stocks pretty cute—eh, Tib?" and the parent bird chuckled mysteriously.

The truth and satisfaction of this statement Tib was quite willing to acknowledge.

The owl father relished comfort, and certainly he had earned it in his old age, by a thrifty, industrious youth. The owl mother was fond of fine feathers, with which to decorate her children, if she could not enjoy them herself.

Poor owl mother, not to be allowed the privilege of flaunting in the sunshine among the gayest peacocks of the fashion!

Papa Owl was inflexible—his common sense was of the sternest quality, and all the more obstinately did he with-

stand the persuasive, feminine influence, because the family had once tasted the golden apples, only to have them leave the bitterest flavor of disappointment on the palate.

The owls had the good fortune to live under a liberal form of government, and upon a seemingly broad level of equality, and yet in the community of which they formed a part there were such nice dividing lines sometimes drawn as to be only apparent to those who thus hedged themselves about from contact with the vulgar outside world.

Papa Owl enjoyed a certain degree of fame: he catered to the public appetite by furnishing the daintiest, plumpest mice for the market, which he carefully cultivated in the country, where the unfortunate little animals were fed in parks and pens while awaiting their doom, and his purse grew heavy as years succeeded years, and the demand for fattened mice increased.

His name was a by-word; no banquet could be considered complete without his speciality, for no civilized owl caught his own game.

Papa Owl was shrewd, but he also was honest, and paid his debts promptly. His early education had been defective, yet he had gleaned a good share of practical information from experience in the world's ways.

He had wealth and generosity, but here rose the barrier that checked further progress in the ascending scale.

Papa Owl regarded the geese in silent awe and admira-

tion, without ever dreaming of the remotest possibility of association with them. Wherefore? The geese were a stately family, and carried themselves with becoming pride in society. No one ventured to doubt their claims to superiority; they had enjoyed birth and wealth for several generations—since the days of their ancestor, a worthy burgher goose; whose claims to fame had no deeper foundation than Papa Owl's would have some years hence—the depth of his pockets.

But then, *what* a difference?

Here was Papa Owl displayed in the height and breadth of his vulgarity in the noonday light of the present, while the goose ancestor was shrouded in the twilight shadows of the past.

The raven race, the turkey connection, the pigeon household were quite above the owls, too, for some obscure reason, unless indeed it was that they possessed more audacity, and had resolutely pushed their way to their present elevated position.

“If we were *only* geese!” sighed Madam Owl, wistfully.

“Nonsense!” rejoined Papa Owl, stoutly. “An owl is as good as a goose any day.”

“If we could only make the world of our own opinion,” sighed Madam Owl again.

Then it was that the owl father yielded to temptation and

fell. Why not persuade this world, whose opinion is of such vast importance to us, that an owl *is* as good as a goose? This question dazzled and blinded the worthy bird for a long time; it was the soft, seductive voice of the tempter perpetually whispering in his ear, to which he attentively listened. The result was that the owls covered their plain old nest with leaves and boughs, (which is equivalent to locking the door;) and, to the astonishment of their neighbors, flew away to a more fashionable locality.

The new nest was decorated with all manner of finery, so that the glitter and sparkle of such fresh appointments made the inmates blink at the unaccustomed splendor.

Papa Owl had no confidence in his own taste, so he employed a robin upholsterer, of great reputation, and cheerfully paid the bills afterward.

When the nest was completely appointed, three disagreeable facts forced themselves upon the notice of the owls. Their appearance in a new locality had not occasioned the excitement and curiosity they had anticipated; in a word, no bird extended a friendly claw to them. Second, their old neighbors came, once, to gaze about in blank dismay at the gorgeous magnificence of these fashionable dominions, then shyly withdrew, and never repeated the visit. Worst of all, Papa Owl was thoroughly and miserably uncomfortable. He was afraid to move about at his ease for fear he should injure something, and he felt positively sure that the robin uphol-

sterer held him in contempt. Silence reigned in the new nest where these poor birds dwelt disconsolate.

In vain did the father bird conceal his own and Madam Owl's rusty feathers in glittering, borrowed plumage, hoping to attract attention. All the notice vouchsafed was a languid inquiry among the geese:

"Who is he?"

"Oh, the field-mouse owl, you know. Lots of money and all that," replied a legal bluejay, who had earned a place in the confidence of the geese, even, by means of his quick wit and accurate knowledge of everybody's secrets.

"It is really shameful! The property should never have been sold to such a low bird," cackled the geese, wrathfully, and mindful of their right to cackle because of that terrible goose ancestor.

The pigeons and turkeys were more moderate in their wrath, as they could not be expected to have the refined perception of the insult done them which was displayed by the geese.

"We may take up the owl *parvum*, after a while, especially if he has a good wine-cellar, and entertains well," said the turkey faction.

The owl father had not the patience to await the delightful moment when such favor should be shown him. His pride and resentment were also aroused.

He missed the sociable companions of his former life

and their warm cordiality, for he never saw them now, they having been frightened away by the one splendid glimpse they had obtained of his stylish establishment. He was frozen with his own grandeur, and perpetually fretted by the indifference of the surrounding birds to his own existence.

“Well?” inquired Madam Owl, aware that matters were rapidly reaching a crisis with her liege lord, while he hopped about on one leg in a state of great excitement. “What is it?”

“I will tell you what it is, ma'am,” he replied, with a look of firm determination. “I've made a fool of myself, and I'm going back to the old nest on the east side of the river, as sure as I am alive, to pass my days in comfort and peace where I belong.”

“If you will only wait until the children are old enough to get into fashionable schools, they could then associate with our grand neighbors,” urged the ambitious mother bird.

(At this period, Tib and his little brothers and sisters, tender baby owls, were quite indifferent to the future that they were to carve for themselves.)

“Let 'em manage it their own way,” growled this unnatural parent. “They may come back here, if they choose; I never shall!” and the old fellow began to pack up, with so many explosive oaths and expletives over his defeat and folly, that, for the first time, his servants, the well-trained

little wrens, came to the conclusion that, if he was not already a gentleman he might soon become one.

Once re-established in the old nest, Papa Owl was in high good-humor with himself and the whole world. He made no further attempts at finery in his own person, but he indulged his family to the full of their bent in every luxury and frivolity.

It would not be just to the failings of bird nature or human nature to state that the mother owl was satisfied with affairs; however, she concentrated the scattered sparks of ambition within her breast into one steady flame, with the determined purpose that the young owlets should not be worsted in the battle as she had been.

In the land where these owls reside it requires no more than two generations to rise to the summit of fortune's wheel—the first, to acquire wealth, and the second, to spend it with such elegant rapidity that a third is usually forced to commence the humble drudgery again of counting shillings and pence.

It must be acknowledged that Papa Owl was far too choleric to manage the matter of his elevation in society very successfully; and he therefore fell back the more heavily, without the satisfaction to Madam Owl's feelings of a gradual and graceful retreat.

The hearty, honest old fellow was for marching straight into the enemy's country without artifice and with a liberal

display of gold. The hostile ranks required, instead, considerable skill and patience in managing them—a gradual unobtrusive sapping and mining of their prejudices, accompanied by a magnificent flourish of display before their eyes constantly, when they would have undoubtedly yielded, which the paternal owl had neither inclination nor finesse to accomplish.

He acknowledged his defeat with frankness, struck his colors publicly, and withdrew his forces, feeling a soothing assurance that in the old familiar haunts his neighbors would not fly over his head, skip nimbly around him, or stare him out of countenance at all times; and he was satisfied with this conviction alone.

He had made a mistake in not standing his ground, and Madam Owl keenly appreciated the failure. This error could not be remedied in her day, except to smooth the path of the young ones to higher spheres.

Thus it was that our hero, Tib, enjoyed so many advantages in the days of his youth, and early acquired that freedom of manner and confidence of speech which had led him to call his uncle disrespectfully “an old muff.”

“I am going home to alter my will,” said the uncle, rising with great dignity, and fixing his round eyes, that glowed like balls of pale-green fire, scornfully upon the unlucky Tib. “I do not call myself a bird of fashion, thank heaven, and I think my wealth had better go to found a school

where young people shall learn to respect their elders;" and with this terrible personality shot at his nephew the uncle owl stalked solemnly away, for he was as hard to turn as a Scotchman.

Papa Owl was now left entirely to the mercy of his wife and son; the last prop of caution having been removed in the departure of his brother.

Taking advantage of a yielding mood, and the helpless condition of the governor, Tib proceeded to lay down the law as to how he intended to travel.

"We will sink the shop for the time, sir; and if the thing is to be done at all, it must be done well, you know," said the son, in a tone of cheerful patronage.

"What do you mean by sinking the shop?" interposed the old owl, rather alarmed. "Do you mean to put us all under water with the expense of your travels abroad?"

"No, no; certainly not," replied Tib, soothingly. "Only, if one is to make an impression, one must do the princely sort of business with foreigners."

Tib, having delivered this opinion, strutted before his parents pompously, pluming himself with eager delight at the prospect of creating a sensation.

Madam Owl gazed at him admiringly, these sentiments finding a responsive sympathy in her own breast; yet at that moment Tib was far more vulgar in his arrogance and

ostentation than Papa Owl, with his blunt simplicity, had ever shown himself in his whole life.

"You will soon get all of that knocked out of you," observed the old bird, sagely. "You need only to travel a very few miles, indeed, my son, to find that you were never heard of before, and never will be again most likely; and, also, that nobody feels much interest in your movements away from the family nest. We each occupy a very small spot in a very big world, and beyond our own especial nook we are not known."

The young owl smiled blandly, as if his father was a very good sort of owl, in his way, but had wandered a trifle beyond his depth; so he turned the conversation very adroitly, as he fancied, by inquiring: "Is the market pretty brisk now, sir?" Papa Owl frowned while replying:

"I would rather see you taking my place in the mouse-interest than larking off on your travels. There's a heap for young brains to do up at the farms, that I shall never have done, in the way of different kinds of diet for the animals; trying them under glass in winter; noting how they thrive when allowed to take a walk with their keepers; and if the scientific hawk's method of packing the meat for market is really an improvement. However, mother must have her own way, I suppose."

The aspiring Tib considered this a favorable moment to crush all icy restraints and boldly state his plans.

“I shall have my own craft, of course, and I shall like it to be of a particularly natty build; then I can cruise about at my leisure.”

Papa Owl stared in a bewildered way at this startling proposition, and even Madam Owl was unprepared for so much style.

“Why not go, like other birds, by means of your own wings, or a public conveyance?”

“Use my own wings?” repeated Tib, indignantly.

“Rich birds never use their own wings now-a-days, papa,” said the Miss Owls, in disgust.

“I may as well give up my journey, if those are your plans for me—and I am only to travel like any ordinary beggar,” added Tib, with an aspect of heroic resignation to the commands of a niggardly parent.

“Tib can’t live but once, and why not allow the poor child to have his little pleasures,” urged Madam Owl, as if existence could not furnish sufficient enjoyment for her son.

Papa Owl hated to be worried and nagged over trifles; perhaps, in his inmost soul, he cherished a desire to send Tib over the seas in as great state and glory as either a young turkey or gander could boast.

Tib left the matter in the hands of the feminine owls, and the natural result was, that, after twenty-four hours of calm, persistent pecking on all sides, Papa Owl capitulated on these inglorious terms:

“Tib may go to the Old World, or the devil, if he chooses. (I dare say he will get there soon enough, with plenty of wild nabobs to help him!) He may take his own boat and play the prince to his heart's content, and he will only be *my son* when all is done—he can't get away from that fact, however he may try to smother it. Don't worry me any more! Hang it all! Who ever heard of such a rumpus over a young scamp's doings before?”

Still, the old bird was defeated, and nobody noticed his grumblings.

Certainly Tib did not, but hastened joyfully to build his vessel and prepare for the voyage.



CREST OF THE OWL FAMILY.



The Yacht.



CHAPTER II.

TIB'S YACHT.

BEHOLD our enterprising young owl, on a tranquil, balmy summer morning, when the waters of the harbor reflected the azure blue of the sky, flecked with crisp, sparkling ripples of sunshine in dazzling crests, here and there, embarking.

His manner had a nonchalant ease that was most impressive, although the shores were thronged with admiring groups to watch his departure.

"That's a tidy craft," said a brisk little sporting snipe, cocking his head on one side, and expectorating freely.

"Guess the governor had to come down heavy with the tin for it, though," returned a young duck, enviously.

Tib was in an ecstasy of delighted vanity at the evident sensation his boat created. The yacht was made of cork, with an India-rubber bottom, which naturally gave it the lightness of a life-preserver, and it would invariably pop up to the surface again, after any amount of depression.

It was shaped like an albatross with outspread wings. The deck of polished ivory was so slippery that only the firmest "sea legs" could maintain an upright position upon it. The slender, tapering masts were made of fragrant cedar-wood, while the different suits of sails varied from rich silk, fringed with silver, for heavy gales, to the finest cambric for a fair wind, and the most delicate gauze to gather in its transparent folds the light zephyrs of a cloudless calm, which might otherwise be lost. The bulwarks were silver filigree-work, with a delicately carved rail, and the anchor was fashioned of the same precious metal, handsomely wrought.

The figure-head was a silver statue of Liberty, with jewel-studded cap and zone, resting upon a half-furled banner.

The whole shark and sword-fish population of the ocean were so charmed with the lovely goddess, when she gracefully dipped her silver face into the advancing billow, in obedience to the undulating motions of the vessel, that, on several occasions, they attempted to wrench her from her place, and bear her away to some remote, coral-decked shrine, to worship after their own fancy. These attempts were fortunately frustrated, and the monsters only succeeded in crushing her jewels in their sharp teeth.

"Long may she wave!" growled the sharks, plunging into mysterious submarine depths once more, and leav-

ing Liberty to guide the destiny of the American traveller.

Upon the summit of the mast perched a silver owl, in honor of Tib's race. The sea-birds circled about it occasionally, the fluttering little petrel giving it a casual and inquiring peck, in passing like a storm-wraith over the waste of waters; yet the silver owl maintained a steady gravity of demeanor, staring straight ahead, with green, emerald eyes. The bird on the mast bore such an exact resemblance to Papa Owl, that his family expressed the most flattering pleasure in the expensive image.

The interior of the yacht was furnished with the utmost magnificence. If silver ornaments sufficed for the exterior, pure gold alone would answer for the cabins. Accordingly the saloon was framed in gold mirrors, of such brilliancy that Tib turned giddy when he beheld his form reflected at every angle, and yielded to a violent attack of sea-sickness, produced solely by the dazzling effect of beholding so many pictures of himself, seen obliquely, then of exaggerated size, then standing on his head upon the ceiling, and slanting in every direction at the corners, like a shower of owls descending in golden fragments and glimpses.

There were the softest possible nests and lounging-places of luxurious feathers, spread invitingly for repose; there were pipes and cigar-cases, of every imaginable pattern, upon the table; the wine-closet was amply stored with frail bubbles of

tinted glass and whole regiments of bottles; and the larder was equally well supplied with smoked, potted, and pickled mice, Tib having displayed more interest in preparing these meats for a sea-voyage than he had ever before evinced in his father's business.

To complete everything, the movable articles of furniture had their legs tied to the floor, by means of small gold chains, to prevent them from running away or dancing about in rough weather.

Madam Owl considered that her son Tib had developed wonderful talents in the adornment of his boat.

Papa Owl was of the opinion that owl junior had displayed even more talent in spending money. However, the great work was accomplished, the yacht built, and all the town stood gazing at it. There was some balm to wounded prudence and caution in that.

To make the town gape and stare requires a sacrifice of capital.

Papa Owl, standing in portly dignity on the wharf, was gratified; Madam Owl shed gentle tears of exultation over Tib; the young lady owls reminded him, in eager whispers, of the pretty things he had promised to bring them when he returned home.

To add to the pleasant excitement of the occasion, who should come strolling along, with his eye-glasses carefully poised to critically examine everything, but the gander

father, the present living head of the great goose family. He actually paused, with a gracious nod of recognition, to address Papa Owl, and that without an introduction; although, to be sure, the latter had lived for a twelvemonth in the fashionable nest, years ago, near him.

"Your son has a very nice little boat there," said the goose father.

"Yes," assented the owl father, very much flurried by the honor done him; and then he could not think of another word to say for the life of him.

Tib interposed, with the most enchanting grace and assurance:

"It would afford me pleasure to take you down the bay, and test the sailing ability of my vessel;" and the young owl bowed respectfully to the great gander.

"As to that, I am a wretched sailor, so you really must excuse me," replied the latter, languidly, and in rather a frosty tone of patronage; yet he passed on, in company with his brother-in-law, a sable raven, rather admiring Tib's courage in daring to extend an invitation of any sort to *him*—the goose father.

"How these owls do make money, to be sure!" he observed to the raven, with a sigh.

"Shrewd birds enough; but that young one will bring them to the ground, if he keeps on after such a promising commencement," croaked the raven.

“Oh, I am not sure that he will,” said the goose father, who felt half disposed to cast a favorable eye on Tib, for some inexplicable reason, now that he was going abroad in the handsomest of yachts.

The graceful little vessel spread its gauze sails like snowy wings, the delicate prow cleaved aside the glancing waves in successive foam-crests, and a majestic bird actually seemed to bound over the waters, buoyant with life and freedom; yet, it was so fragile in structure, so totally unfit to brave the ocean's sterner moods, that the eager spectators on the shores could not but devoutly pray that stately icebergs, with lofty crags of glittering peaks, might not crush the tiny craft, or the storm-king make it the toy of his furious wrath.

Tib watched the familiar shores of home fade from sight, watched the sun sink behind gorgeous draperies of crimson and purple, paving the sea with a rosy splendor.

A pure star of light flashed and paled on the distant horizon, and the last faint perfumed breeze of land, the mingled breath of fruit-blossoms, blended with the keen, life-giving atmosphere of the sea.

Tib wondered if a young owl had ever poised his pinions for so bold a flight before as he intended to take—had ever been fired with so noble a determination of astonishing the world.



The Royal Falcon.



CHAPTER III.

THE ROYAL FALCON.

TIB'S yacht had breasted many a billow, and scudded swiftly before many a gale, when a distant rim of land appeared on the horizon, and announced his approach to the shores of another continent.

At last!

It is unnecessary to add, that the young owl leaned against the silver bulwark, poising his glass to gaze at those distant cliffs, a foreign breeze fanning his brow for the first time, with emotions impossible to describe; vain-glory was predominant, however, when he considered the splendor of his "stunning" craft.

All travellers have experienced the stifling effect of these varied emotions, and have described them much better than either Tib or his faithful historian can possibly hope to do.

Suffice it, that the young owl fixed his gaze on those glittering needle-peaks of chalky cliff, which had hurled back the Atlantic's spray-clouds in wintry tempests, and

received the gentle caresses of rippling summer-waves for so many years. Like the terrible sentinels of a watch-tower, they had crushed in their fangs one of the Spanish Armada, and still held the ghastly skeleton in a chasm—a grim relic of the deed, as a warning, perhaps, that invading foes would always jar thus against solid, impenetrable rock.

From the lofty cliffs that faced the ocean sloped hill and dale, clothed in velvet turf, fringed with rounded masses of foliage, threaded by silvery streams. Sometimes a stately castle crowned the hillside, with smooth lawns, merging into parks of ancient trees, and sweeping in graceful curves to the water-brink; sometimes a town rose, terrace above terrace, on the crag, with the bathing-machines wheeled out into the sea for the benefit of timid bathers, and invalids in little carriages, anxiously watching the movements of the erratic donkeys that dragged them about; sometimes a ravine opened a charming vista, with a fisherman's hut perched on the ledge above the tide at the entrance, other trim cottages beyond half screened by the tender drapery of clustering vines, a time-stained church-tower, a square Saxon mansion framing the distance, where ghosts might haunt picture-gallery and corridor, whose human forms had touched the antique furniture of the ladies' morning-room, and trodden upon the Italian marble pavement of the entrance-hall.

Over this miniature island-paradise rested a calm, peace-

ful atmosphere, and the sun's rays touched spire and roof and garden with a mellowing, softening tint.

Tib noticed that his old friend, the sun, did not shine here with the transparent brilliancy that made the very air elastic at home, yet more sombre hues seemed harmonious in this spot.

"It is very pretty," soliloquized the American traveller, as his yacht dropped anchor in a fine, spacious harbor. "Everything seems to be kept in wonderfully nice trim, too. We might take a lesson in that line, by-the-bye; but, bless me! it's not as large as a good-sized pocket-handkerchief. Why should it not be nice? They have nothing to do here except to run about trimming and clipping and polishing so many square miles. If they had a Great West to settle and make something of, now, they would have a different song to whistle and a livelier tune. You bet, old fogies!"

From the place of anchorage, where the frail vessel nestled once more beneath the shadow of land for protection, Tib beheld two bustling, thriving towns, rising on opposite shores of the river, and many varieties of sea-craft besides his own, ranging from stately steamships, outward bound for distant tropical lands, to the tiniest pleasure-boat.

The hills rose boldly to a considerable elevation, and the eye lingered upon a wide range of landscape, farm-houses,

cottages, and tide-mills, luxuriant groves, coppices, and plantations, rich meadows, villas, and churches.

Tib's arrival was welcomed with an interest that he never could have hoped to inspire as a private bird, without ivory decks and gold-plated cabins.

The young owl cared nothing for posterity. He frankly admitted that, in his opinion, it was very poor business, indeed, living for future generations, who would not care a—never mind what—for you, when all was done.

He decided to live in the present, and he was also stimulated with a noble desire to render himself conspicuous, even if it was only attained at great expense.

"Have you seen the American owl's yacht?" was buzzed about this fairy isle, nay, even received a paragraph of notice in newspapers, whose opinion, favorable or otherwise, made all the world tremble, and at last reached the august ears of royalty.

Tib was pronounced to be "no end of a plucky fellow, you know, to cross the ocean in that cockle-shell affair;" and although his pretensions were sneered at, his costume and accent openly derided, his nationality considered a lamentable disgrace to him, still he could not be robbed of this one cordial compliment of pluck, and with that he would fain rest content.

Thus it happened that the news spread (Tib was certainly creating a sensation) until, at last, the falcon graciously inti-

mated that it would afford him pleasure to climb the side of this transatlantic vessel with his royal claws, and stand upon the ivory deck with his royal feet.

“Think of that, will you!” cried Tib, flinging his cap high in the air, with an irrepressible outburst of enthusiasm, when these tidings were brought to him. “I was presumptuous to invite the goose father on board, and now a royal falcon will come without an invitation! A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country and among his own people.”

(Faithful historian, reprovingly: “Don’t be irreverent, Tib, whatever else you are, and quote Scripture in the wrong place.”)

The American owl watched his noble guests leave the shore, with an assumption of calmness which he was very far from feeling; and he was obliged, at the last moment, to resort to the fiery stimulant of a “brandy smash,” to screw up his courage and nerve him for the encounter.

All the previous day, Tib and his menials had been dashing wildly up and down, around and about, in search of suitable delicacies to tempt the princely appetite, and the luncheon-table in the cabin received a last anxious glance from our hero, before he finally ascended the companion-way to welcome his distinguished visitors.

He went through the dread ordeal somehow, with fluttering pulse and changing color, all his natural audacity

deserting him when most needed. But for the brandy smash, Tib would have inevitably swooned.

The falcon was a handsome young bird, ruddy, and fresh, and strong, with all the physical perfection of youth in his country.

In many traits it would have been perilous for poor, humble Tib to imitate his falconship: the same vices which were half shrouded by the dazzling halo of greatness in the latter, would have been only coarse sins in Tib, stripped of rank.

The owl would have done well to imitate the falcon in one habit.

At that early hour, no "brandy smash" corroded his vitals or weakened his nerves; he did not dart into convenient bar-rooms, to toss off a whiskey-straight or a cocktail, at any time, but first strengthened his stomach with substantial food, after which he could have drank Tib under the table, unmoved, and remain as fresh as a lark afterward.

(Faithful historian again: "My dear Tib, if you *must* and *will* drink, why not do it elegantly, and also in a way that will preserve you the best in this present existence, which you are determined to enjoy so much? You scorn economy in any form, and you would rather pay the highest possible price for any luxury than not—for fear some shopman, even, should do you the wrong of imagining that you weigh your gold. Why not take your wine with your

dinner, like a gentleman, abandon the vulgar habit of frequenting bar-rooms for raw liquors, and allow your misused internal arrangements to convalesce?")

The falcon was accompanied by a haughty golden pheasant, who wore a ducal coronet, (when he felt like it,) and a bluff mastiff, in magnificent military uniform, who did the guardian-dragon business with young mad-caps.

The falcon treated Tib with an easy familiarity that was intoxicatingly delightful to a common bird's feelings, and he found himself confiding in the falcon, also, especially after the cork had popped out of the third champagne-bottle's slender neck.

Once, the falcon actually winked his left eye, and whispered to Tib that the mastiff, who was soberly discussing lobster salad at that moment, was an "old guy," and perhaps the reckless young bird was actuated by some deep motive of ambition in making the remark, which would surely be treasured up in Tib's note-book verbatim, and handed down to remote posterity in the New World.

What would you have? A younger son cannot do much except to go a-visiting in his mamma's provincial possessions, and the falcon may have taken a melancholy pleasure in thus distinguishing himself before a stranger; a pleasure that shed a ray of sunlight across the gloomy darkness of a bird's lot, whose misfortune it was, not to have been born

at an earlier date, and reaped the benefit of the homely adage: "First come, first served."

The party politely admired all the appointments of the natty craft; the mastiff, in particular, growling his approval occasionally, as he moved about, quite unconscious of the sarcasm which would always be associated with his name in the land of the West.

When the moon rose that night, resting a glittering shield on the surface of the sea, and tinting each advancing wave with a silvery crest, Tib received the impetus of an astounding idea.

He was lounging pensively against the mast, with his hands in his pockets, and a cigar in his mouth, imbibing something of the serene quiet of the evening, and reflecting upon the startling events of the day.

"I wonder what the falcon was made of?" thought the owl. "I should like to have pinched his finger, to see if it was real flesh and blood. His boot must have been rather larger than mine, I guess. Wonder what he does with himself all day? Suppose his first cigar made him feel queer and sick, just like a common mortal."

Suddenly a brilliant comet hissed through the air, and darted straight into his brain, scattering fiery sparks before his eyes. Tib held his head firmly upon his shoulders, at first, to prevent it from flying off with the magnitude of the idea.

Heavens! Why had it not occurred to him before? He would present his boat, as a pretty toy, to the jolly young falcon. That would be doing matters in a stylish way, and at the same time he could be elevated above the common herd to notoriety.

Papa Owl and his family were seated at the breakfast table one fresh, bright morning, and the old gentleman had scarcely unfolded the newspaper, when a leading article caught his eye: he paused, stared, gave a suppressed snort of inarticulate rage, and sank back in his chair with every appearance of apoplexy.

Of course, the owl daughters fled to his side, in a flutter of apprehension, and eager curiosity.

In due time, the paper was handed to the trembling Madam Owl behind the coffee-pot.

"It's about Tib; he's got into print at last," said the youngest Miss Owl, airily.

"How you frightened me. What has the dear boy done?" questioned the mother bird, with irritating placidity.

"Done? Why he has made a confounded ass of himself. That's all!"

Said one genteel owl daughter to the other, behind her napkin:

"Pa is dreadfully coarse, when he gets into a rage."

Madam Owl gave a feeble gasp of dismay, when she

read that Tib had parted with his horribly expensive boat in that fashion.

Everybody was astonished. The goose father was known to express surprise in common with the general public.

Perhaps the most astonished bird of all was the recipient of the gift, the princely falcon, himself; and if the haughty golden-pheasant companion had never worn a well-bred sneer before, one certainly marked his classical and aristocratic features now.

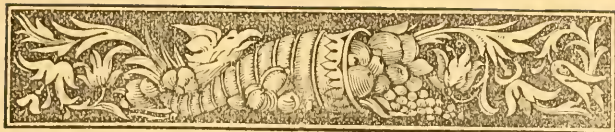
From this date, Papa Owl was observed to fall off in his looks. He made gloomy remarks relative to the poor-house, which he seemed to regard as the ultimate residence of himself and family; his appetite failed; in a word, he suddenly underwent that sharply contrasted transition, from comfortable, plump middle age, to careworn, pinched decrepitude, so often noticed.

Alas! poor father bird, were the tinsel and fine feathers only false jewels after all?





The Great Fair.



CHAPTER IV.

TIB AT THE GREAT FAIR.

ONE sultry, summer day, when the sun poured down such fierce heat that the pavements scorched the feet, a young owl might have been seen wending his way through the delightful City of Amusement, where the gendarmes, the police authorities, the powers that direct all the smooth machinery of motion, could and did regulate everything except the heat of the sun.

The god of day laughed them to scorn, baking those he saw fit to bake, leering impudently into the sacred retreat of royalty, slanting dazzling rays against the gray surface of churches, whose cool, dim recesses alone afforded the shelter of a soothing twilight.

The young owl was no other than our friend Tib, and he was attended by an obsequious, chattering monkey guide, who was the torment of the traveller's days, and the bane of his existence.

The by-ways and hedges of traffic into which the monkey adroitly led monsieur—the jewelry shops, the silk

magazines, the picture-dealers' dens, where he found himself unexpectedly, and then innocently dropped Tib into the clutches of insinuating clerks and persuasive shop-women!

The Miss Owls may have fervently blessed his memory, but Tib, at times, bitterly regretted the day when he presented himself at the hotel, with many bows, looking so meek, so deferential, and polite; yet withal, the monkey was so intensely national and amusingly cheerful as he adapted his ready tact to any emergency, that the young owl would fain rest content with the necessity of his presence.

"Live anywhere else but in our cherished City of Amusement!" the monkey would say, with a comical shrug of dismay. "Ah, mon dieu! zis is ze spot for ze rich monsieur, and for le pauvre diable zere is no other."

On the present occasion, Tib was drifting along like the common throng, which was, to a certain extent, unpleasant, but he consoled himself with the reflection that it would be impracticable for him to *sail* through the Great Fair, even if he still owned his yacht.

Tib did not seem to feel very much confidence in his own individual attractiveness, independent of surrounding glitter.

Every bird and beast from the very ends of the earth, that could raise the wind, had come flocking to the Great Fair.

As the American owl reached, for the first time, a fine quay facing a stately bridge, he found himself in a throng of brisk, vivacious old squirrel dames, in wonderful head-gear, gazing about with twinkling black eyes; shaggy goats from the mountains; venerable woodpeckers, in blouse, sabots, and striped caps; swarthy gull fishermen, from the stormy coast; dark-featured Breton rats—all gazing eagerly in the same direction.

At the foot of the bridge a triumphal arch, formed of floating banners, marked an entrance to the vast Champ, where erewhile, battalions swept over the plain, in ranks of glittering armor and flowing plumes, to the inspiring pulse of martial strains, and where industry now pitched her little tents, and displayed her little booths of pretty gimcracks to an enlightened world.

How wistfully and eagerly the thronging thousands viewed this archway of fluttering banners, pausing doubtfully a moment on the brink of the unseen, to wonder if the show would be worth all the trouble and expense of fabulous-priced lodgings; of panting over so many weary miles of dusty space; of being plundered, plucked, and browbeaten in unknown tongues.

Well might they pause to balance the scale—the poor, travelling thousands!—and think, with a sigh, of the “ingle neuk” at home, which they had rashly deserted, to

join the mad ranks of those in pursuit of novelty and pleasure.

Still drifting onward, Tib stood within the precincts of the Great Fair at last.

The young owl paused, and stared mutely around him, the attendant monkey paused behind him, and rubbed his paws together, in a noiseless manner, awaiting the result.

What was it like? It was everything — and yet nothing. Could Tib fold up a rainbow and put it in his pocket to carry home to the owl sisters? Could he imprison a flashing sunray or a moonbeam in his portmanteau, that would not melt into imperceptible ether before the severe scrutiny of custom-house officials? No more could he describe the first feeling produced within him by the general aspect of the Great Fair.

He had a vague conviction that all the riches, the wonders, the relics of the whole universe were heaped together in this confined space, and that it would take him a thousand years to sift them into distinct, separate atoms.

He knew that he was heedlessly ignoring the dust of past ages, which would still be held sacred, even after the owl race were no more. Terrible thought!

He had a bewildered idea, that, at one moment, he was in large saloons flooded with light, where successive ranges of chandeliers, fringed with crystal drops, urns, slender vases of enamel, in imitation of precious stones, goblets,

and jars, dazzled and sparkled in every hue, from the cool green of malachite and emerald to the gorgeous crimson of rubies, the softened tints of turquoise and mother-of-pearl.

Then he was conscious that the monkey dragged him into a perplexing labyrinth of machinery, where he lost himself among polished wheels, shafts, bobbins, cylinders, cranks, and finally emerged, not a bit the wiser for it all.

Tib was absolutely sure that the monkey guide intended a refined sarcasm, when he conducted him, after extricating him from the machinery wilderness, to a region of toys, as better adapted to his understanding.

The puppets were more to his taste, he confessed.

These toys were none of your clumsy bags of cotton, in print frocks and pinafores, with flat noses and wooden heads: they were fashionable toys — toys of the period! and into their tiny faces was pinched and lined an expression of inimitable *ennui*, which did great credit to the artist. Born with a gold spoon in their mouths, they lounged in exquisite boudoirs, surrounded with rosewood furniture, mirrors, chandeliers, and consoles, kept their carriage and saddle-horse, and wondered how other toys existed without watches and grand pianos. They tried on new dresses and gloves, played with dogs the size of baby mice, and when they travelled, wrapped themselves in railway rugs, and carried huge trunks for their charming wardrobes.

All very dainty and natty — even droll, to grown-people;

but somehow, Tib wondered if the extraordinary precocity of his age might not be, in some small measure, attributable to the artificial perfection of such toys, and their influence on the sharp wits of little nestlings.

"Monsieur like dis?" said the monkey, still with that indefinable mockery of which Tib was conscious. "Perhaps he will be so good as to look here."

A perfect miniature history of the great vulture's military achievements in tiny wax statuettes wrought with patient skill: zouaves, charging with wild enthusiasm, gesticulating trumpeters; chasseurs in fine relief; a stately drum-major; fierce, lithe spahi, bronzed by the parching desert heat, in gaudy Oriental costume; a placid *invalidé* seated in the sun; a stiff gendarme scowling suspiciously over a passport; a sturdy little mule, climbing a steep path with a mountain howitzer on his back.

Then Tib strolled onward, to get entangled among more machinery, more steamboats, more locomotives, more complicated looms, and whizzing sewing-machines, until he finally sought his hotel, crushed with the appalling confusion of all he had seen, and the fearful responsibility he had assumed in attempting to "do" the Great Fair.

All the city was out of doors, seated at little tables, sipping wine and nibbling ices, dancing along the streets in merry groups, fluttering through brilliantly illuminated gardens—music in the air, gayety everywhere—nothing but

butterflies skimming lightly on the surface of existence, and extracting the honey of amusement from everything.

For three mortal days, Tib submitted to being dragged about by the persistent monkey, his ear perpetually irritated with sounds of broken English, his eyes wearied with endless sight-seeing.

The fourth morning the American owl felt his national independence rising within him.

It was sheer cowardice for him to have employed the monkey's services at all. He could speak the language very well, but he felt a trifle shy about trying his powers of speech; he was very young, this was his first plunge into the outside world, and he had a morbid dread of making himself ridiculous before this butterfly nation, whose sense of the ludicrous is so keen, despite an external suavity of manner.

A Teuton tortoise would devour his sausage composedly if all the fish of the sea and the fowls of the air were staring at him in goggle-eyed astonishment, quite unconscious or indifferent to their existence.

A Saxon partridge would plant his umbrella in the most crowded portion of any thoroughfare in Christendom, and gaze straight up into the heavens, if he felt so disposed, unmindful of the smirks and grimaces induced by his eccentric attitude, and at length bring his glance back to earth, with haughty disregard of *opinion*.

Tib envied these admirable traits from the depths of his soul, but he could not successfully imitate them at first, he was so new, so painfully fresh and new.

However, having dreamed of the monkey all night, in the most unpleasant manner—as grinning suddenly in his face, shrieking in his ears, sitting on his chest, then hurling glass, ancient pottery, and whole picture-galleries at his head—Tib nerved himself to the duty of sternly dismissing him.

The monkey fought desperately, clutching at any straw of argument, doubling around unexpected corners with artful suggestions, for he deeply regretted the calamity of losing the plucking of the rich young bird; yet Tib displayed some of Papa Owl's firmness on this occasion, and his guiding star departed in dudgeon.

Now Tib felt a delightful sense of freedom; he might flirt with the *coryphées* of the opera, he might gamble recklessly, drink unlimited champagne, climb to the summit of some church-tower, get tapped on the head and flung into the river, to reappear in the ghastly morgue—and it was nobody's business.

Again, he turned his steps toward the gayly draped arch, and beheld, in one direction, the East, with her mosques, minarets, and temples, and in the other, the West, with her energetic life of thriving industry.

Reclining among her cushions of satin and velvet, in a

fragrant atmosphere of aromatic odors, her turban starred with clustering diamonds, her draperies of the richest fabrics, her tunic wrought with the gold and silver threads of lost arts and forgotten tongues, the mystic symbols of vanished races, in the first faint dawn of the past, and sown broadcast, with untarnished gems of rare crafts, the East rested in the languor of repose after a work accomplished.

Earnest and erect, upon her cloud-throne of snowy vapor, fair and beautiful in the noonday of the present, instinct with courage, nerved to a splendid vitality, the West eagerly scanned the horizon of the future.

Tib began to enjoy the scene before him immensely — once rid of that odious monkey.

“I shall see the fun, now,” quoth the owl. “Catch me keeping all that rubbish of useful manufactures ticketed and labelled in my brain. I guess we will have a bit of Arabian Nights, if we know ourselves.”

Here was a small Egyptian building, in elaborate arabesque, containing saloons of costly curiosities, the courtyard shaded by palm-trees, fountains tossing their silver spray into the sunny atmosphere, which was supposed to represent the residence of the ibis ruler, in his distant home, on the banks of the sacred Nile.

Here was a caravanserai, and in the covered galleries Eastern merchants sat gravely awaiting customers for their

wares—gay stuffs, Damascus weapons, brilliant carpets, and gilded vials of attar of rose from the Levant.

Tib beheld again, with the vivid imagination of childhood, the narrow streets lined with rows of little shops brimming over with fabulous wealth, the veiled figures, the laden camels, caparisoned mules, and hurrying groups of obedient slaves. With reverence did he regard these merchant birds—a reverence somewhat dissipated by overhearing one Asiatic mutter in his beard, glibly, to his neighbor:

“Par dieu! Que je suis ennuyé!”

Here was the stable for dromedaries, and the ungainly animals, deprived of the harmonious association of boundless desert sands, looked sadly out of place, and fretted at their captivity, instead of favorably illustrating the patient camel character.

Tib roamed among the precious rolls of papyrus in the obelisk, colossal statues, sphinxes, and tapped, irreverently, dark-complexioned mummies with his cane.

“I should think you old fellows might be contented to pass away,” he said; and the mummies seemed to stare back in stony wrath.

The temples and their antiquities possessed few attractions. If one could taste the ripe, juicy fruit of the present, wherefore turn aside to masticate such dry thistles and brambles as mummies and mysterious hieroglyphics?

That was Tib's philosophy.

Beyond rose the graceful Tunisian kiosque, the plaster walls of which were carved to the extreme delicacy of lace-work, with such keen, delicate implements as only skilful Eastern fingers could wield, in minute fretwork and intricate pattern. How light and fragile it appeared! How unlike the square, massive structures of northern climates!

In striking contrast to such finished elegance of design, Tib found a rude Slavonian sloboda. The timber houses for the gaunt hound peasantry were hewn solely with the axe, the space between the logs filled with tow, a staircase leading up outside to the isba, a wooden balcony ornamented the front, and the cornices were carved. These rural mansions were thoroughly complete, transplanted as they seemed from some bleak, dreary hillside of the Arctic circle, even to the luxury of the huge terra-cotta stove.

Native hounds, wearing vests of violet flannel, Astrachan caps, high boots, and baggy velveteen knickerbockers, wrapped themselves in sheepskin coverings, and went to bed on top of the stoves, to give visitors an idea of northern comfort.

"Je-ru-sa-lem! That beats all!" ejaculated somebody at Tib's elbow.

There stood a fat pig, and, skipping nimbly about him, Tib's former monkey guide. There was a gleam of triumph in the monkey's eye, which plainly expressed:

"I have lost an owl and captured a pig."

The pig seemed to take it for granted that Tib would understand his remark, although he treated every one with the same generous confidence, as he trudged about slowly and ponderously. The pig's very presence suggested money; he represented heavy capital, and he had a peculiar habit of abstractedly jingling loose coins together in his pocket, that heightened the impression.

In five minutes he had ascertained that Tib was indeed Papa Owl's son; in five more he had confided to Tib that he was travelling abroad to console himself for having just been left a widower. The chuckling, wheezy old fellow wiped his eyes apologetically, then glanced about with an expression of sly, whimsical defiance.

"I don't believe I shall marry again." (He was only about seventy years of age.) "I don't know how I shall feel in the spring, though."

In the meanwhile the hound peasant, who had retired to repose upon the fireless stove for the seventh time that day, arose, much refreshed with his imaginary slumbers, and resumed his former occupation of gazing into vacancy with a stolid aspect, which was remarkably successful, considering that he had been born and reared beneath the shadow of Nôtre Dame.

"Do you mean to say that any human lives in that air concern?" asked the pig, shaking his head incredulously,

and pointing to a beehive-shaped yourta of sewed rushes, with an aperture in the top to admit light and emit smoke.

As if to answer for themselves, out popped a brisk Cossack ermine and a real Tartar sable. *They* lived there, and were glad of a chance, in the howling wilderness of the desolate steppes.

Tib felt that it would be a good thing to have cultivated the pig's acquaintance when he returned home, and accordingly he politely assumed the responsibility of graciously escorting the millionaire through the Great Fair.

No small task, as it proved!

It was astonishing the amount of mischief the pig managed to get into, considering that the nimble monkey had him in tow, and Tib guarded the flank.

If he was left innocently staring at a fascinating array of lace, when Tib turned to rejoin him he had floundered through the ranks of a royal party, and was explaining eagerly to a handsome golden eagle, in a loud tone of voice, how in *his* country they had no time to make those things, (meaning laces, of course,) but the wimmin liked to buy them, all the same. "Bless you, yes! Break the bank, if you let them loose at a lace counter."

The golden eagle was out on his good behavior; the eyes of the world were upon him; therefore, he smiled placidly upon the pig, who had none of the sinister aspect of an assassin. His attendants were struck dumb with aston-

ishment and horror. "Donner und blitz!" From whence came this pig? To what race could he belong? In what remote corner of the earth's surface had he received his education, to thus address a reigning sovereign with such familiarity, not precisely impudent, and assuredly not *servile*?

Tib and the monkey guide exchanged a look of dismay, and dashed to the rescue, just as the pig, deceived by the golden eagle's polished urbanity, was about to offer his card and invite him to call at the Grand Hotel.

"Proud to make your acquaintance, sir," began the millionaire pompously, when Tib clutched him by the arm and bore him away, while the monkey covered the retreat with a profusion of deprecating bows.

"Pardon! Mille pardons, monseigneur Americain!" with a finishing shrug that left nothing more to be said.

"Eh? What the devil is that monkey trying to do, now?" growled the pig, suspiciously, struggling to release himself from Tib's custody. "Why don't he crawl on his hands and knees, and beg everybody to tramp on him!"

"My dear sir," whispered Tib, frantically, "you have been addressing a real, live emperor from the Danube—the golden eagle."

The pig exhibited signs of faintness—he leaned against his young friend for support.

"Oh, Lord! I didn't know him from Adam," he finally gasped.

But it really did no manner of good. The pig seemed doomed to distinguish himself, and the poor old gentleman would have enjoyed the novelty of his surroundings, if those two anxious guardians of his conduct had only let him alone in peace.

At one moment, he was gesticulating to a grave, Persian crane, with a long beard and lamb's-wool kalpac on his head; and, as the crane could not understand a word he said, he replied to a long remark, with suspicion and reserve, that "he did not wish to buy anything," and that "he expected to return home next week." To which the pig responded, pertinently, "We can beat the whole crowd of ye in agricultural machinery," and waddled on, with a nod of gentle defiance.

Next, he attacked a group of Japanese weasels, wearing straw platters on their heads, and heavily embroidered robes, who spent their time twirling little gilt fans, and blinking at the strangers with their clever, almond-shaped eyes, cracking their own jokes, no doubt, and having their own fun at the expense of their neighbors. Tib was choking with laughter, behind the pig's back, but the poor monkey was kept in a cold perspiration of terror, at the erratic proceedings of his new charge.

To have the pig exchange the time of day with imper- turbable Turkish storks in fezzes, a princely Hindoo crocodile artistically swathed in rainbow-tinted shawls, prancing

lancers with tight waists and charming moustaches, silent, spectral cloister-flowers dimly visible through veils, was of trifling importance.

When he insisted on chasing the Egyptian ibis, seen in the distance, and looking as much like a European bird as he could make himself appear, matters assumed a more serious aspect. The monkey desperately stood in the pig's pathway, declaring that monsieur could only be permitted to so disgrace himself by stepping over his prostrate body, and Tib slid judiciously away to a safe distance, and became absorbingly interested in majolica tiles.

"But he's a shrewd business bird — a good farmer, I tell you," panted the pig, impatiently. "I want to ask him why he don't plant —"

Tib dived around the corner in pursuit of the art of American joinery, and when he cautiously returned the pig had been vanquished by the firmness of his guide.

The Teuton dragoon-bird, with his lofty crest, embodying precise military discipline, and attended by his prime-minister, the Bismarck brown fox, were both eagerly scanned by the curious traveller, yet he was able to restrain his emotions.

When the majestic white bear of the North appeared in the distance, the pig indignantly flung all restraints to the winds, with glowing enthusiasm.

"Do you s'pose I won't tell the bear how much we think

of him at home? Get out with your etiquette stuff! Isn't the American eagle as grand as any of your plaguy royal birds mincing around here, I should like to know?"

Away charged the pig, and the monkey folded his paws in mute despair.

Tib again withdrew to a safe distance, for fear of being identified with any of his countryman's blunders.

Half an hour later he found the pig, his countenance empurpled with wrath, his cravat twisted awry, muttering dreadfully naughty words under his breath.

"The fools wouldn't let me get near the imperial bear," he explained. "Held me off by main force, flourishing their swords—never had a sword stuck at me before in my life. What did the durned critters think I was going to do?"

"Shoot him, perhaps," suggested Tib.

"Shoo! Never thought of that," said the pig, brightening at this solution of the mystery.

"Suppose we should try the restaurants, as long as these people will not understand our motives," said Tib.

The pig brightened still more—became radiant at the prospect of gratifying his palate with different styles of cookery.

So they proceeded to make a tour of the *cafés* in search of such rare delicacies as they could furnish. And now, the astonishing capacity of the pig gradually developed.

He strangled himself with that Eastern luxury, coffee prepared in an Eastern way, pounded, and drank in a thick, pasty consistency.

"If my cook sent up the coffee for breakfast *all grounds* like that, I'd pack her out of the house before night!" coughed the pig.

Then he derided continental oysters, as having a flavor of copper pennies.

"Call ours insipid — miss the penny taste, I suppose."

He dipped into delicious soups, exquisitely flavored viands, crisp, dainty salads, marvellous *pâtes*, miracles of art in truffles and mushrooms, and a mild, benignant smile dawned over his fat countenance. Tib watched him with great anxiety as he trotted bravely and cheerfully from one *café* to another, where he tasted macaroni and olive oil, hot, cold, and nearly *au naturel*; still onward, to sip fragrant tea, served in tumblers with sliced lemons, by obliging young Selavonian hounds in gay-colored caftans and sashes; then skimming lightly through a course of bird-nest, shark-fin, and sea-slug business; then leaving, reluctantly, plump ortolans dressed with savory chestnuts, and complaining of loss of appetite; then sipping more tea from egg-shell cups, and gazing regretfully at an Oriental pilau which he really could not accommodate; then sipping more coffee with a *petit verre de cognac*; then taking refuge in liquids after solids became an impossibility, and testing an alarm-

ing variety of wines, even to the insidious absinthe, which would have inevitably upset him had he not possessed the steadiest old head in the world.

A more beaming, bland pig than the monkey led homeward that evening was never seen. He did not explode; he was not cut off in his career of usefulness by apoplexy, and upon retiring to rest he slept the sleep of the just.

Was it solely due to ungenerous suspicion that he seemed to present a greater expanse of surface next morning than he had done the previous day?

Tib had not well despatched the pig millionaire, when he was pursued by an anxious and careworn jackdaw, with the inquiry had "he received newspapers by the last American mail?"

The jackdaw was in the leather line of trade, and wished to see if that article had risen in the market. The jackdaw had many reasons for desiring a rise in leather—chief of which was his lady, the Baltimore oriole.

Tib was introduced to the jackdaw party of tourists.

The Baltimore oriole was a most gorgeous bird. She was plump, and pretty, and fair, with a charming voice, which had melted the heart and opened wide the purse-strings of her rusty, old jackdaw husband even.

She wore the finest feathers, sweeping magnificently behind her; she surveyed works of art through her eyeglass, and made cautiously clipped criticisms upon them,

based on every carefully perused authority under heaven, rather than her own opinion. She basked in the atmosphere of the tranquil South; she saw the sparkling sea, and a universe of blooming vineyards; she roamed among ancient ruins rising in the majesty of decay, but she was not at all happy: she was not even amused. Why? The jackdaw was an habitual grumbler. At home, she sent him enormous bills for finery, and openly defied his indignation by requesting him to help himself.

Abroad, this poor, old jackdaw, who had, for years, opposed the grand tour stoutly, although he had eventually yielded under a treatment of severe nagging, glowed savagely at beautiful landscapes and perplexing couriers; muttered at the delays of custom-houses, yawned drearily at the restraints of the *table d'hôte*, and was perpetually stumbling into some awkward predicament, to the confusion of the Baltimore oriole. He missed his morning paper; he missed the excitements of the gold board; fain would he have jogged up the street with the friend of his bosom (another rough, shaggy old boy after his own heart) to the club, and forget that nightmare of his existence — Europe.

One cause of nervous apprehension to the oriole was the jackdaw's conduct; another was the success of the parrots.

The two parrot *protégés* were very trim, very pretty, and had the glossiest feathers. They were complete echoes of

their chaperone, but as the mincing affectations of the oriole were very seldom worthy of repetition, even such pretty young-lady birds could not make them other than shallow nothings. The oriole was a famous match-maker, and very popular with mother birds accordingly. She had brought the parrots abroad for the express purpose of polishing them off brilliantly. What if her dear Carrie, with her nice, genteel manners, should win a title? What if, for little Minnie, kind heaven was ripening such golden matrimonial fruit as a banker, or a rich manufacturer.

At the time when Tib was introduced to the oriole, several of her airy castles had fallen to the ground. Then "our own people abroad" — good game. Noble birds had indeed hovered admiringly about the parrot damsels, and murmured the softest music of flattery into the fascinated oriole's ear — so unlike the jackdaw's harsh, commonplace gabble; but they were shrewd, it would seem, about Mademoiselle Carrie's *dot*.

Madame Oriole must fall back upon our countrymen in earnest, or all was lost, and woe betide the guileless parrots if they did not gain the victory, reach the goal, in the fleeting days of their youth.

With what scorn and derision would they be received by pert chits of younger sisters at home! With what chilling contempt would the bland oriole return them to discouraged parents as unsalable merchandise!

Small wonder that these *protégées* strained every nerve to hop forward as they were bid, and that their smiles, which should have bubbled forth from a sparkling fountain of careless mirth if ever in their lives, were forced and unnatural, knowing the doom of failure. Poor young parrots! Well-educated, good girls, with comfortable homes—no dark phantom of want or crime encompassing the horizon of their youth; yet ready to marry any octogenarian on the brink of repulsive old age, provided he have wealth—any disgraceful young rake of fashion; any dull, unsympathetic foggy of middle age—his satanic majesty himself, with hoofs visible at a glance, to-morrow, rather than be returned by Madame Oriole as a poor investment, with an ominous shake of the head.

Another sting of mortified vanity rankled in the oriole's bosom. She received no attention whatever, in the great crowded world where she was now launched, beyond a polite bow or a scarcely perceptible shrug. This was very unpleasant, altogether unpleasant. Here was the Baltimore oriole, who lived in a very big house, which was crammed with every costly article of ornament possible, in spite of the jackdaw's naturally penurious disposition. Her liveries were dashy: foaming Arab steeds pranced at her beck and call; she occupied a prominent pew in church; she was considered a positive authority in music and art, by awe-

struck minor satellites, yet here she was jostled in a crowd, that did not know who *she* was, much less care.

This same jostling with the world is beneficial, even to the most liberal minds: it does us all infinite good once in a way, when our conceit and self-importance are expanding in the delightful atmosphere of being the big mortal of some little place, to have them sharply clipped by a wholesome friction with external humanity, which has thrived hitherto in ignorance of our name or existence.

What if the universe had jogged along very comfortably had we not existed at all?

This sort of conviction did the oriole no manner of good. She was simply enraged at fate. What revenge should she take? Why, lavish the jackdaw's income, and dip into his capital on the richest velvets and satins, the costliest laces of exquisite design, the rarest gems that should glitter in diadems on her smooth brow, flash in necklaces about her snowy throat, twine in bracelets of prismatic lights around her plump wrists, twinkle upon her fat fingers—all to astonish her friends when she returned to that tiny nook of hers in creation.

How the oriole could spend money, to be sure!

The ancient jackdaw was reduced to the verge of lunacy when he beheld the pyramid of trunks increase daily, and thought of the bills.

The sweet prattle of the parrots grew monotonous in

Tib's ears, after the first pleasant sensation of hearing his own language in a foreign land was over. The precocious youth saw clearly that the parrots were flung at his head at every turn, and became wary in his movements, for the fellows in college had assured him such would be the case. The instincts of vanity, strengthened by the fellows' advice, made Tib a very wise young bird indeed — in his own estimation.

He bade the oriole party a hasty adieu, to the intense mortification of the feminine element, and glided gracefully out of the acquaintance.

“He is nothing but a puppy!” commented the parrots, when they crimped their hair at night; and then they closed their bright eyes in slumber with the devout hope that another day would bring them better game than the timid Tib.

As for the Baltimore oriole, she frequented the shops and *modistes* with more ardor than ever, and, as a natural consequence, the jackdaw crawled along the sunny boulevards with the pre-occupied expression of one too busily engaged in staring ruin out of countenance to notice passing emperors, and other great potentates of the earth.

The hours glided on, and one pleasant week merged into another, while Tib strolled around in the charming City of Amusement, fascinated with that sparkling effervescence which, if “quelque chose de léger, de fumeux et d'insais-

issable comme la mousse qui couronne un verre de vin de Champagne," is none the less enchanting to the sober, practical foreign nature.

So it came to pass at last, that there was a grand flourish of trumpets, and the mighty vulture appeared, accompanied by his lovely consort the bird-of-paradise, in exquisite silky plumage, smiles illuminating her pensive face, grace and dignity evinced by every motion.

They passed beneath an awning of green cashmere powdered with gold bees, and supported by iron pilasters bearing escutcheons with the Gallic arms.

Then the vulture graciously distributed bits of silver and gold, attached to ribbons, to a host of hungry competitors, gazing down from his perch on the summit of fortune's wheel, with crafty, half-closed eyes, upon the struggling crowd to which he had once belonged.

The East swept back her temples, palaces, and pagodas to her own realm; the West resumed the burden of Titanic labors half-completed; the South replaced her paintings in the dim, shrouded recesses of churches, her round-limbed statuary in the shelter of cypress avenues, and beneath the shadow of venerable pine-trees; the North strode back to defy the hurling snow-clouds of her frozen home.

Industry struck her tents and vanished, and the Great Fair became an event of the past—lived only in changing kaleidoscope-hues in the memory.



CHAPTER V.

HOW THE PIG AND CROW ENJOYED THEMSELVES.

TIB was invited to join a gay company of young mates one evening, in visiting a charming place of amusement—a spacious garden with gravel paths winding among the shrubbery, smooth lawns of grass, sheltered bowers in which to discuss ices, and a pavilion made brilliant with sparkling globes of gas-light even to the summit of the dome—where the throng was engulfed in a whirling vortex of dancing.

The first sight that met Tib's astonished eyes was the pig millionaire, seated at a small table in company with a crow gentleman, engaged in wrangling with a perplexed waiter. Tib knew very well the strata of society in which he was mingling, and, with all the pride of extreme youth, he enjoyed treading the volcano's brink—like a bird of the world, *au fait* with everything. He was very much surprised to find the pig here, though—the good, highly respectable pig.



How the Pig and Crow Enjoyed Themselves.

As it happened, the pig and the crow knew no more of their surroundings than babes unborn. The monkey having departed to rest from his labors for the night, the two old fellows became infected with the glitter and sparkle of the scene from their hotel windows, and descended to the street to enjoy it. The pig felt a certain triumph in thus acting independent of the monkey; on this occasion he would not be worried by a galling surveillance, and the crow blindly followed wherever he led the way.

The two strangers paused before the brilliant shop-windows, hesitated at the entrance-doors of theatres, and finally followed a crowd of butterflies, in the most natural way possible, through the gateway of this enchanted garden paradise, to see "what was going on." Ignorant as he was of the language that buzzed and hummed on all sides with extraordinary rapidity of utterance, the pig at once understood the significance of tables, and nimble waiters whisking about in answer to energetic summons.

"I never take anything at this hour; we don't consider it healthy," said the crow, who had devoured pounds of the richest cake and gallons of preserves in his day.

"Tut, tut!" replied the pig, reassuringly. "I like the eating here. But *do* you believe in the frog part?"

"Oh! yes, no doubt of it," said the crow, shaking his head solemnly.

The pig put on his spectacles, and studied the bill of

fare with great attention, although he could not read a word of it.

"I don't want none of your ice-cream trash," he said, finally, and pointed at random to the list.

The butterfly waiter stared a moment, nodded resignedly, and departed, to swiftly return with *soupe maigre*. The pig looked slightly disconcerted, while the crow sipped his portion, remarking:

"Well, well! De-ar me! What a strange people, to eat soup at bedtime!"

"Look here, waiter; bring us some chicken salad, or pickled oysters, instead of this stuff," said the pig, coaxingly.

"Mais, monsieur, vous-trouvez tout sur la carte."

"I don't understand a word of that," said the pig, petulantly; "let's try again on the bill."

This time the waiter expostulated, but finally reappeared with some olives and a glass of *toothpicks*.

There never was such a supper ordered in the garden as that of the pig. To say that the butterfly waiter had the patience of Job, would be paying him a trifling compliment. Sometimes he was bidden to bring half a dozen dishes, as widely dissimilar as possible, simply because they ranged along together; sometimes the pig skipped wildly from page to page; and all the while he was in vain pursuit of a flavor of which he had become extremely fond in this enlightened region — mushrooms.

“Why can't I make the fool understand?” he exclaimed, in extreme vexation, after he had become exhausted with a pantomime performance for the benefit of the *garçon*—in which he had gathered mushrooms, prepared them for cooking, and tasted them approvingly, all in dumb show, but could not, for the life of him, think of any way to make himself personally resemble a fungus.

“If it was a fowl, now, I could cackle, or a cat, mew, or a pig, squeal,” he remarked, wittily.

There stood the *garçon* in pitying silence.

At length a brilliant idea occurred to the crow: he took an envelope from his pocket, and drew on the back of it one gigantic mushroom with elaborate care.

An expression of relief overspread the waiter's countenance, a bright light of conviction pierced the dark clouds of previous doubt; he glanced twice at the crow's drawing, nodded his head, and skurried away.

The pig leaned back in his chair luxuriously, now that his labors were really over.

The waiter was absent a long, long time, and eventually approached with an umbrella, which he opened, and triumphantly pointed out the resemblance between that useful article and the crow's sketch from nature. The waiter was never surprised at the extraordinary antics of foreigners, and he now sagely concluded that the crow and the pig, having tasted of everything his restaurant afforded, desired

to return home under the shelter of an umbrella, for some reason best known to themselves.

Tib arrived on the scene at this juncture, and remedied the mistake.

The young owl looked gravely and reproachfully at the pig: then he ventured on a mild remonstrance.

“My dear Mr. Pig, this is really no place for you.”

Instead of being at all startled by this announcement, the old gentleman at once assumed a defensive attitude. Was he never to do as he pleased? Was he not old enough to take care of himself? Besides, why was the garden a better place for Tib than himself? He puffed and fumed with childish wrath; and Tib dared not say more, so that the only impression conveyed to the good old pig's mind was that the owl considered him too old to join in any of the gayeties of life.

“My friend, Mr. Crow.”

The crow said he was very happy to make Tib's acquaintance, and then, with the most confidential eagerness, proceeded to tell him where he was born, together with the most minute details of his career.

“Made myself, you know,” said the crow, briskly, and certainly with laudable pride. “Own half the place, now, and town named after me — Crowville. Property is rising fast our way; perhaps you couldn't do better than to take a few lots.”

The crow talked like the perpetual rattle of machinery, fixing his large, hollow eyes upon his listener the while, or rolling them abstractedly over the landscape. He was sallow, rusty, and wornout, with furrowed, careworn brow, gray hair, narrow chest, and stooping gait.

The crow represented broken-down old age; and opposite to him sat a fair, pink, fresh-looking Teuton, in the prime of life, who was five years his senior if he was an hour.

The crow had work to do in his day and generation, and he did it well, with increasing activity of brain, having to span great distances and grasp great results in a wilderness, while Herr Kraft dozed his life away comfortably, lulled to repose by the music in gardens, amidst pipes and lager, in a completed state of civilization, which called forth few of his energies.

The crow was the beginning, the Teuton the end.

However, in the busy atmosphere of the thriving town which the crow called home, with its smart banks, trim churches, gay shops, and eternal buzzing hum of manufactories, he had fretted his nerves to so keen an edge that perpetual headache haunted his waking moments, while dyspepsia was the nightmare of his dreams. Change of scene was prescribed, or the chief luminary of Crowville would be extinguished. How did he avail himself of the occasion to recruit a weary, over-tasked frame?—amidst the pleas-

ant variety of foreign cities, tranquillized by the solemn stillness of lofty cathedrals, absorbing the peaceful charm of Continental life?

Simply by rushing over the country like a March hare, exhorting people who could not understand him, or he them, to establish a new machine.

"I have never slept two nights in the same place since I've been over here," said this bird of perpetual motion, hopping restlessly on one leg—"except in Fogdom, of course. I like Fogdom; I've left the girls there now."

"You have daughters, then?" inquired Tib, with some curiosity.

"Yes, good little girls they are, if I do say it; spent lots of money on their education," replied the crow parent; but he cast no speculative eye on the hopeful Tib, for he thought only of the machine.

The girls might marry when and how they pleased, and Papa Crow was ready to "set up" in business any young man upon whom they should centre their affections, if necessary.

"The shameful ignorance of these people beats all!" continued the crow, indignantly. "I thought of taking a house in Alum Square, and sending for my wife. The girls like to study the Abbey and the Tower, above all things; I haven't had time yet. Well, an agent hunted me up one—good house enough, furnished, and owned by an old

lady. Everything was arranged as to rent, and bargain concluded, when the old lady inquired what the family consisted of, and was told three American ladies—no small children. She raised her hands in holy horror at her narrow escape from destruction, and declared her house could not be occupied by American women—they would ruin her carpets, for they all chewed tobacco: it was a universal habit in the States. My wife, one of the best housekeepers in Connecticut, and neat as a pin, not fit to occupy a trumpery, common house in Fogdom! I don't often swear"—the crow, in his explosive wrath was evidently perilously near it—"but, bless my soul! I'm tempted to do it now."

Never had the pig and the crow been so bewildered by flashing lights, brilliant music, and whirling crowds. The lightest of butterflies fluttered and pirouetted about them in giddy circles, and the two old boys beamed upon them serenely, nodding their heads in time to the music, and lending their amiable approval to the scene. Oh, fie! you naughty old boys, if the people at home could have seen you!

To be sure, the butterflies *did* dance with unusual vivacity; but that was due to frantic enthusiasm of the national character, in war and revelry alike.

"Pretty creatures, ain't they?" said the pig, as a group

of lady-butterflies circled near, with their velvet wings spangled and decked with every rainbow-tint. "If my dancing days were not over, I'd just step out with them, they seem so sociable and friendly in their manners. The figgers are queer, though — never saw 'em before."

Tib smirked with such superiority as the young feel for the ignorance of the old, in these later days.

The two travellers enjoyed their evening immensely, and returned to their hotel in quite an exhilarated, not to say hilarious mood; yet two better creatures could not be found this side of paradise. How hurriedly would the crow father have gathered his two little sparrow daughters beneath the shelter of his guardian wing, at the presence of evil! With what dignity and scorn would the venerable pig have turned his broad back upon the butterflies, in all their gaudy glitter, had he known their worthlessness!





The Goose_Lady.



CHAPTER VI.

THE GOOSE LADY.

THE streets were narrow and dark, and the venerable houses rose to such a lofty height with sloping roofs and carved gables, that they seemed to topple toward each other in the familiar acquaintance of centuries.

An old town, rich in architecture and quaint sculpture, richer still in tradition, romance, and heroism, which repose in shadowy nooks, or reveal their history hewn in the massive rock of church and palace, with no modern boulevard disturbing its sacred antiquity—left stranded in the dreamy revery of its own memories beyond the range of the vast railway network elsewhere spanning the land.

Why did Tib come there? Not actuated by emotions of reverence, but to gaze at relics with the wondering curiosity of a new nation—the youngest child of the nineteenth century meeting the influences of the remote Middle Ages. Tib came to fulfil the roving career of a tourist. Fate, as

traced in a pack of cards or the prophetic sediment of a tea-cup, would have taught him that he was rapidly drifting toward his destiny.

The gloom of a magnificent edifice received him. Thousands of stone pillars, exquisitely carved, lifted the roof into space; forests of beams, firm and symmetrical, held it there, as they had done for four hundred long years; altars in the stern simplicity of an earlier age than the gilded epoch of Louis le Grand loomed here and there in the obscurity of the place; and the saints in their shrines were small and delicate in detail.

Through the gorgeous purple and crimson tints of the windows, spared, because of their matchless beauty, even by the rude force of brutal mobs, floated the golden sunshine, threading the dim perspective of shadowy aisles, slanting across the avenues of stately pillars, vanishing in the immense distance of the arches and roof.

The atmosphere, perfumed with the fragrance of incense-clouds, seemed vocal with the rippling echoes of choral harmonies and the murmured prayers of the multitudes that had trod these pavements and knelt before these altars — the steel-clad crusader, the crafty king, the scheming minister, now mingling with the dust.

There were other visitors in the cathedral besides our young owl traveller.

In the group, Tib particularly noticed a pretty goose lady

with blonde hair, (who looked fairer than any saint standing in the halo of radiance from the painted window,) swinging a little bag in her hand.

He would scarcely have guessed her nationality if she had not remarked to a companion, in clear, silvery tones :

“Is n't it lovely, dear? Don't you wish that you were a Roman Catholic bird, and then you might say your prayers here?”

This remark made a profound impression upon Tib; not that it had much sense, but it seemed to him, coming from the source it did, worthy of consideration.

An hour later he emerged from a subterranean crypt which he had been exploring with great zeal; and found the little bag lying on the pavement, a few yards beyond the spot where he had first seen the group of strangers.

He pounced upon it eagerly. He would gracefully restore it to the goose lady, and manage to make the otherwise useless bit of embroidered leather serve as an introduction. What famous luck! He must run the town over to find the strangers, which could easily be done in so small a place.

He began the chase, and the farther he went the more perplexed he became, the more difficult it proved to pursue any one in these steep, winding streets, that twisted to the right and left in a corkscrew fashion, until Tib was hopelessly lost.

The other party might be examining the panels of an oratory while he was stumbling through the ancient portals of renowned hotels in pursuit, without obtaining a glimpse of them. Had they departed by railway again? Had they driven out into the country? Had they sunk through the earth, or swallowed fern-seed and vanished in the invisible?

Tib ran miles in search of the goose lady: he hopped through the long passages above the aisles of the cathedrals; he risked his neck on the roof; he crossed giddy stone bridges suspended in mid-air; climbed perilous stairways to the buttresses—all in the hope of seeing the flutter of feminine drapery in the distance.

Vexed and disappointed, he finally paused before a richly ornamented building, blossoming with a luxuriant prodigality of carved design, entered the massive gateway, and stood in the spacious court of the ferret's palace.

The ferret was the merchant prince of his day. He covered the sea with his ships; he sent messengers of commerce far and wide over the world; he risked vast speculations, and, with that shrewd ferret brain of his own, held all the threads of his various undertakings untangled; he even found leisure to regulate the public mint, and be intrusted with foreign missions of importance.

Royalty smiled upon him and favored him with the most

flattering attentions; wealth flowed into his coffers in one boundless tide of prosperity.

No wonder the good ferret felt complacent, and said to himself:

“I am a worthy merchant, and no disgrace to the ferret race, who have always been accounted honest folk. A nation has need of my services—the King Charles spaniel appreciates me. I may rank with the merchant princes of Holland and Venice. I will build a house that shall teach succeeding generations what manner of ferret I was.”

So he built his house, and behold Tib, an American owl, from across the seas, gazing at it, and reading the history of the builder’s career in every nook and angle of the walls, after the lapse of centuries.

The foundations, then, must have been laid with feelings of tranquil security, the central court being flanked on one side by the housekeeping department, indicated by curiously carved figures of busy scullions and cooks, with the ferret himself placed above them all, as if to encourage their industry from his perch; while, on the other side, the building expanded into spacious drawing-rooms and saloons, where the ferret played the great lord on occasions.

The merchant was remarkably fond of having his picture taken: over the kitchen door he was content to stand—a plain image, holding a hammer, as the symbol of industry; but in the reception-rooms he must appear

mounted on his mule with heavy trappings, and still again in the chapel, where he said his prayers when he had time, as an adoring angel in a droll yellow wig, and broad, flapping wings.

Observe how soon suspicion and care clouded the ferret horizon, long before the storm burst upon his devoted head.

The rear of the mansion had solid towers and turrets; like a fortress it frowned over the moat and level meadows beyond. In the very top of one of these strong towers the ferret had his office — his den. Here he whispered secrets he dared not utter elsewhere, and the walls were wrought with many of his fears — royal jealousy of his power and wealth ranking chief.

Above the office the cautious ferret had a vaulted strong-room, secured with iron door and heavy lock, which still turns after four hundred years of use — secured still further by a secret passage through which he could glide and drop his money-bags, if a band of rude soldiers, the burglars then in fashion, who used fist and cudgel to obtain filthy lucre when their purses were light, were forcing the door. No safes and banks in those days.

Leaving the glitter of the saloons, the bustle of the court, he retreated to the tower and stood at bay. His glance rested gloomily upon the roof and chimneys, which were ornamented with miniature fortresses and stone frills;

the galleries and balustrades lined with gilded cockle-shells and monks, the shield of another merchant family allied to his own, *fleur-de-lys* and bales of wool, the image of his negro holding a coffer, an angel bearing aloft his coat-of-arms.

Then his thoughts crossed the space of country to the blue sea, where every breeze was wafting along his vessels, freighted with merchandise from the bazaars of the East. He was in deadly peril: he was *rich*, and the royal spaniel was his debtor—kings had a dreadful habit of paying their debts by making way with the creditor. The weak, cruel sovereign had been more pressing in his attentions than ever, since the heroic kestrel and the ferret, by their united efforts, had saved his crown.

The ferret merchant-prince, with his sturdy patriotism and gold, the inspired kestrel, grasping the banner of victory, kindling in her army a noble enthusiasm, serving her appointed purpose amidst the torture of the flames, then winging her flight upward to the heavens—these two stemmed the torrent, turned back the tide of invasion, when the silken royal favorites shrank in fear.

Behold the grateful King Charles spaniel, when the danger was safely past, training his guns and opening fire upon the ferret.

“You have coined bad money, you greedy ferret,” growled the little dog-master. “You have sold arms to the infidels,

too, we are told. You have committed other grave crimes, which we, in our clemency, will not particularize. Suffice it that you march to prison, and we confiscate this pretty house for our own purposes."

These were the tidings brought to the poor ferret, standing at bay in his tower. Disgrace and ruin were to crown his labors.

The spaniel had barked his orders, and must not be disobeyed; so the ferret was confined in a dungeon, from which he eventually escaped, wandered far away, became the captain of an expedition against the heathen, and perished in his warrior's armor—a glorious end for a Christian knight.

Thus ended the career of one who fell a victim to the deceitfulness of riches, was wickedly wronged and oppressed, whose memory haunts this palace of his rearing, where his quaint, sharp, ferret visage beams at every turn with a friendly greeting.

Tib was preoccupied; he could discover no trace of the goose lady in his wanderings.

When the twilight deepened, he ventured to open the bag, hoping to obtain some clue of an address. It contained a filmy veil, a package of *bonbons*, a filagree box of lip-salve, a pocket-mirror, the photograph of a gentleman, and a velvet-bound diary.

Tib turned the leaves of the little book hastily, in search

of a name, but all he found was on the first dozen pages, gushing enthusiasm over scenery, and vague hints about joining uncle soon — then, many blanks — then, mysterious allusions to what “P. said about Q., and what H. thought of the absurd conduct of T.”

Suddenly Tib became absorbingly interested. The goose lady was not only pretty, and young, and fascinating; she was evidently an historian. Her diary contained the faithful biography of

SEIGNEUR RABBIT.

Many centuries ago, a worthy rabbit nobleman lived at court. He possessed courage, devotion, and intelligence; these traits won him the regard of majesty, and he was appointed chamberlain.

Courts had none of the polish in those days that adorn them now; they were rough affairs at the best, and the king — protect us! — was a shaggy, wild-tempered wolf, who went glaring and growling around, seeking whom he might devour, if in an ill humor, and whom he might exalt, if in a good one.

The rabbit enjoyed the sunshine of wolfish favor in his placid way, never dreaming that all the cunning foxes, of which the court was composed, were snarling enviously over his prosperity. How industriously they bored and burrowed to undermine the excellent chamberlain, and

how provokingly he managed to slip out his poor little paws just when they fancied them firmly bound!

Then more burrowing, until a conspiracy ripened, the wolf's mind was artfully poisoned, and the rabbit was blown high in the air. His fur was singed, his nerves were sadly shaken, yet he escaped with his head, which was fortunate, for the wolf now swore he would do himself the great pleasure of slaying Seigneur Rabbit, the traitor, if he caught a glimpse of him; and as his majesty had already extinguished the light of some nephews that happened to interfere with his views, he was considered to be as good as his word, and not likely to stick at trifles.

The rabbit was at his *château* when the bombshell exploded, and he would have felt the electric shock of wolfish displeasure rumbling through the length and breadth of the land—so terrible was the wolfish frown—had not a trusty cat friend at court sent him a hawk's feather, which induced him to imitate the bird's swift flight by crossing the Rhine and other broad streams, as fast as his feet would carry him, instead of exposing his throat to the royal knife, or his brains to the royal battle-axe.

Across these boundaries the rabbit gazed back wistfully, hoping that time would soften the wrath of his sovereign.

The wolf-king longed to kill him; and his best plan, in turn, was to hew away at the barbarian wild boars that inhabited the Thuringian forests. So the poor little rabbit

carved a path through these infidels for ten long years, and then he wearied of the butchery, and wanted to go home, despite a ferocious wolf master, and the scheming court foxes, whose sharp noses, and sharper brains, had wrought enough mischief already.

Now learn what a wise rabbit this was, and what excellent precautions he took to keep his head still upon his shoulders. The wolf-king's temper was uncertain, fighting the Thuringian boars might soften him, having languished in dreary exile might move his compassion, and yet the prudent Seigneur Rabbit trotted all the way to the sacred city to beseech of the Holy Father such letters as would disarm the ferocious master of evil intent toward the bearer thereof.

Alas! even if a single fold of paper from the Holy Father had more power than a battering-ram, in those days, best not trust too confidently in it, rabbit.

Back he trotted, this guileless chamberlain, who was good as gold, reaching the wolf-king's city on Good Friday, at a moment when the latter was kneeling at the great altar, celebrating mass before a veiled crucifix.

The rabbit threw himself on his knees, presenting his credentials, and humbly begged pardon. The wolf replied pleasantly by slicing off the petitioner's head. Crimson with blood, the head rolled down the steps of the altar. That was the end of Seigneur Rabbit, but for his race it

served as a famous beginning. He was amply revenged, for even while the wolf thrust his sword back into the scabbard, an icy chill of terror benumbed him; the royal knees shook, the royal gaze sought the ground.

A rabbit less in the world was of no account, certainly, but a rabbit bearing messages from the Holy Father was a terribly different matter. Now arose a threatening murmur in the very church where he stood, severe glances flashed beneath cowls, and offended clerical dignity boldly said:

“You are guilty of sacrilege. Beware of bulls from the sacred city.”

The letters, too, contained proof of the defunct rabbit's entire innocence and loyalty, when the wolf-king took a leisure moment to read them. Best to read letters first, and cut off heads afterward, as a general rule. What to do?

“Send an envoy to the Holy Father for absolution at once,” said the spiritual advisers, and the wolf meekly obeyed.

It would have done the rabbit's soul good to have seen his wolfish majesty slinking down like a whipped hound before spiritual displeasure. Away sped a messenger on the wings of the wind—what a world of trouble this little Seigneur Rabbit made, to be sure!—and arrived at the pontiff's bedside just as he was yielding to a more powerful ruler than himself—death.

It must have been soothing to the mighty potentate's feelings, now that death was getting the better of him, and the sceptre falling from his benumbed fingers, to grasp a last fleeting phantom of earthly authority.

"Clotaire can expect to receive pardon only when he has given the highest possible satisfaction to the heirs of—"

"Enough," interposed death, silencing speech unceremoniously.

The wolf-king pondered over this riddle, and finally solved it according to the ambitions of the sixth century, by elevating the rabbit's family to royalty. On a huge parchment decorated with seals and flourishes, it was written that the seigniory of Ivetot was a *kingdom*, and the seigneurs *kings* for all time, owing allegiance to nobody, ruling their subjects after their own fancy. The rabbit descendants thus became rulers of the drollest little kingdom. Their miniature court consisted of one bishop, one dean, and four canons—all parish *curés*; a senate and privy council—all notaries; ladies of the bedchamber—tenants' daughters; body guard—gardeners; master of the horse—the groom; a herald—the footman; a keeper of the forests—the bailiff.

The rabbit king could bring a mighty army of one hundred soldiers into the field, and bid them shoot at the whole world, even using the wolf-king as a target. The good little

kings never made war with their neighbors, however; they were the most sensible rulers in history, with an amount of sagacity seldom found beneath a kingly crown. When a rabbit ascended the throne, he put the seals and royal purse in his own pocket; he minded his own business; he had no court intrigues, nor troubled his head about glittering aspirations; he lived in the old *château* with his tenants about him; he ate good dinners and drank rich wine; jogged out on fat little donkeys, escorted by fat little dogs; jogged home again to pull a comfortable nightcap over his ears in slumber; until he slept the last, peaceful sleep in the quiet cemetery, and another rabbit reigned in his stead.

Pity that these jolly little rulers of a small domain were not still in existence, to claim the respect of the universe.

It happened that the last of their line became demoralized, felt the influence of royal fashions even in his rustic *château*, and appeared at the larger court as *prince*—the dastardly rabbit! A great revolution swept away the kingdom of Ivetot, and stripped him of rank also.

Well might the race carry themselves with dignity verging on arrogance. Had they not been kings for thirteen centuries, and was not their great rabbit ancestor slain by the grim wolf on the steps of the altar? Better still, had they not done their duty in their little way, like the sober,

faithful rabbits they were, which consisted of eating, drinking, sleeping, and riding out on the fat donkeys, to praise the thriving babies and smile on the rosy maidens?

All honor to the shades of the departed miniature kingdom!

Tib placed the bag tenderly among the cravats and razor-cases of his portmanteau, shielding it from the public gaze with the folds of his best waistcoat. Then he strolled forth to smoke his cigar in a romantic mood, and reflect upon the probabilities of the goose lady's affections being disengaged.

The moonlight shone full and bright upon the quiet town, the gable-ended houses outlined sharply against the sky, with the upper stories throwing such deep shadows by their projection, that the narrow streets were obscured in darkness, where the shrouded doorways of ancient dwellings held the secrets of by-gone days in silence and gloom. In solemn, tranquil beauty stood the cathedral, bathed in the silvery radiance which sparkled on the brimming waters of the fountain in the market-place, and rested in the calm, sad halo of imaginative memories upon the towers and ramparts of the ferret's palace, draped with ghostly banners, crowned with ghostly garlands.

Among these stately monuments rambled our insignifi-

cant little Tib, bothering his head about the goose lady's affairs, spinning gossamer threads of reverie about her— lighting a second cigar, with many savage puffs of smoke, as a jealous pang suggested the individual of the photograph.

“By Jove! I will find her yet,” said the owl energetically, piqued by his ill success of the day, and attaching importance to the pursuit simply because it was difficult.





The Railway Carriage.



CHAPTER VII.

A RAILWAY CARRIAGE.

WHEN Tib took his seat in the first-class carriage from the City of Amusement to the sea, he found it was already nearly full, and he began to study his neighbors with the vivid interest one is apt to feel under such circumstances, before the freshness of novelty has been effaced. Opposite to him was seated a venerable blackbird, of sombre, not to say dismal aspect, who occasionally heaved deep sighs without any visible cause, unless they were occasioned by the dreariness of his own thoughts. Beside the blackbird was a magpie in spectacles, who was not as young as she once had been, and of a sallow complexion, yet she repaired the ravages of time by a jaunty youthfulness of apparel that was truly commendable. She wore a small hat perched on her head, which was further adorned with quantities of curls, braids, and puffs of false hair; her boots were natty, and her dress neat. Altogether she was a very sprightly magpie in appearance, and the ele-

gance of her deportment was exceptionable, while it suggested the school-room.

It was impossible for the magpie to forget, in general conversation, that she was not standing majestically upon a platform, with dozens of bright eyes fixed upon her, and many young ears drinking in the words of wisdom which fell from her lips. She was a school-marm from the Doughnut Coast: she had earned the requisite means herself to visit Europe, and her scholars would never hear the last of the trip to the end of time — if she did not *marry* during her travels, which (*entre nous*) she fully intended doing, although she firmly declared that she was not in any hurry to change her free state, that marriage was a fearful risk, that, when one looked into such unhappy families, one might well hesitate about taking the fatal step, *et cetera*.

Having wrapped herself about in this pleasant illusion, and fancying that she had thrown moonshine in every one's eyes likewise, she proceeded to peer keenly through her spectacles for the coming man.

The magpie was the blackbird's daughter, and the worthy blackbird — a minister of the old Puritan stamp — had been sent abroad by a generous parish. He was not a placid Christian, winning souls by a hopeful cheerfulness and gentleness of manner; he was dark, stern, and severe, and hurled the curses of Old Testament prophecies at guilty sinners, crushing them to the earth. The blackbird, carry-

ing a chilling grave-yard atmosphere about him constantly, lived in the clearest noonday of duty within himself, yet only oblique rays fell upon his flock, and he none the less belonged to a past dispensation.

Moreover, a generation was rising that knew him not, and a rank fungi growth of Adventists, Spiritualists, and other strange sects were springing up under his very nose—the reaction.

The blackbird was not wholly pleased with what he saw about him in foreign lands and among stranger people. His ideas were disturbed. He liked to believe that his obscure home on the Doughnut Coast was the exact centre of the universe, from which radiated all the civilization and refinement enjoyed by the outside world. It pleased him to believe that, and did nobody any harm. He pitied persons who did not agree with him in political matters as fools, and he scorned those whose religious proclivities leaned to other forms of worship. There was very little humility about the blackbird, considering his vocation; and he drew comparisons between every beautiful city he entered, and that same home of his, which were eminently satisfactory to himself;—yet he was sadly jostled and shaken about in his system of ideas. He had no doubt that he was correct in everything, of course; still he felt that the task would be greater than he could undertake, to set so many whole nations right—therefore he sighed.

Beyond the magpie was a lonely figure, which formed a very striking contrast to the dressy school-mistress. It was a melancholy raven lady, robed in rusty black, with a long crape veil. While the magpie's costume was stylish as possible, the raven's seemed to be purposely faded and shabby — in different ways they both sought to attract the public eye.

The raven's face was pale, her eyes were pale, her hair was pale: she presented a singularly washed-out and dilapidated appearance, which was increased by the various rents and holes in the fingers of her gloves. She held in her hand a volume of poetry, and her pale eyes were occasionally turned upon her companions with a fixed, expressionless stare, as if they were so many blank stone walls.

Beside Tib was a third bird, of far more attractive appearance than either of the others. The hawk lady was glossy and handsome, with bright, piercing eyes, and sharp beak. She had avoided the extreme shabbiness of apparel peculiar to the melancholy raven, and her silks, her flounces, her vivid-tinted wrappings were worn with a careless ease which contrasted with the anxious nicety of the magpie's costume.

Tib was not gifted with extraordinary penetration, but he divined, at once, that these birds were his own countrywomen, and he rather dreaded the idea of having the hawk pounce upon him, armed with her sharp talons of argument. He knew, before they opened their lips, that the magpie

would address the blackbird as "pa," (pronounced par,) and that any amusing suggestion would make her "larf;" he also divined that the raven would address her parent as "paw" instead, and that the hawk, if she was not too well educated, might lapse into the grating "I seen" of her meridian.

However, the young owl made no advance toward their acquaintance, but waited in secret amusement until the fountains of speech should thaw; the magpie, and the venerable blackbird especially, seemed restless under the restraints of silence.

Tib negligently and skilfully inserted his eye-glass into one eye, and stared admiringly at the lovely dove opposite, who flashed a soft electric glance back. The dove was a charming Viennese actress, winningly persuasive in look and gesture, with rounded outlines, and delicious dimples clothed in down. The dove presented only a downy surface to the world, although she may have possessed an equal amount of feminine shrewdness with the magpie or the hawk, and she was attended by two devoted slaves to her genius, or her pretty self:—a fat, paunchy little count of a dormouse, who gazed sentimentally at the dove until he dozed, and a savage mole, with terrible military whiskers, and the finest velvet coat on his back. The dove drained the purses of these animals without remorse, and in return she was always good-humored, coquettish, and graceful, and

was always assuming the most ravishing attitudes, withal a trifle theatrical. If any one person enjoyed herself, it was the dove lady.

She prattled stinging sarcasms with the guileless innocence of a child; and how her two attendant old boys did relish the *sauce piquante*; her laughter was like the musical chime of silver bells; and occasionally she trilled gushing little melodies as pure and sweet as those which swell from a canary's throat.

At one moment she would perch a bewildering velvet cap, all embroidery and glittering fringe, upon her blonde hair, and nestle back among her luxurious mantles to repose, while the dormouse gloated slowly over her long eyelashes; then she would open her bright eyes merrily, and command the mole to unlock a case containing exquisite liqueur-glasses, richly gilded, then a second, which revealed case-bottles of crimson and yellow tinted cordials, then a third, of candied fruits and crystallized *bonbons*, and still a fourth, of dainty confectionery, all of which the dove proceeded to enjoy at her leisure.

The blackbird sighed more profoundly than usual, at this evidence of extravagance and depravity, and murmured something about "the Maine liquor law not being as effective in these parts as it should be."

Tib knew that the exasperating loveliness of the Vienna

dove would "draw out the other women," as he elegantly expressed it, "if anything would," and he was right.

The magpie, the hawk, and even the raven gazed at the unconscious dove with the most severely virtuous disapprobation. Simultaneously they each took from their satchels three small leather books, unclasped them, and proceeded to make notes.

That of the raven was darkly mysterious:

"I have seen one of them, at last! Describe satanic beauty of face—artful seductiveness of manner toward men—fair shrine of ruin and desolation, etc. (Good heading for chapter thirty-nine.)"

The hawk wrote:

"Rather faster than our New York women of that class. I confess myself surprised at her audacity, although one does not expect ever to be surprised after a daily promenade on our Broadway for seven years. I shall make her the subject of my next article for the 'Daily Moon.'"

The magpie's entry read thus:

"It pains me to state that I am breathing the same atmosphere with one of the most infamous specimens of the *demi-monde*. I trust that I shall not feel my purity of conduct contaminated. 'The rain descends upon the just and the unjust.'"

"How did you know her name so soon, Sophrony?"

whispered the blackbird, peering over her shoulder. "*Demi-monde, demirande* — humph! French, I suppose."

"Any person would know *her* name, par," replied the magpie, primly; and the blackbird subsided, much impressed with his daughter's talents.

The dove fulfilled her destiny in life quite as honorably as her merciless critics; she was married, and her jogging old hare husband sat quietly smoking his pipe in the sun, contented that she should earn any amount of thalers on the stage, and receive the admiration to which her place in the dramatic profession entitled her. The hare was not of a jealous disposition, nor had he any cause for jealousy in the conduct of his dove.

A bond of sympathy was thus established between the travellers; they looked unutterable things at each other, and slowly elevated their eyebrows.

"Is it possible that we are both daughters of the West, and speak the same dear tongue?" inquired the magpie of the hawk.

"So it seems," replied the hawk, rather dryly.

Here let us remark that the hawk had enjoyed a great variety of callings, considering her years. She had been, and was still, a newspaper correspondent, and magazine contributor of racy quality; she was a member of several literary societies; she was a fluent lecturer; and she was prepared to stand by woman's rights, or die. With all

these *prononcé* traits, the hawk had no nonsense about her; she was fond of dress, and saw no reason why she need make a fright of herself; she had a sharp, pouncing manner, terrifying to masculine foes if you choose, but she was not affected or illiberal. If she did not dive into the fathomless depths of a subject, she darted at it from so many ingeniously different positions of argument, with bewildering, incessant peckings, that she could hardly be termed shallow, if she did skim chiefly from the brilliant surface of things.

"You come from the Doughnut Coast, I presume?" observed the hawk, with a sharp, comprehensive glance at the blackbird.

"Yes," assented the magpie, complacently; then, in the same breath, "but you?"

"Cosmopolite," said the hawk, shrugging her shoulders. "The raven lady lives in the Palmetto regions, does she not?"

"I belong to the lost cause!" said the raven, with tragic solemnity.

The raven's tone of voice was very soft, and sweet, and indolent; the hawk's had a clear, metallic ring, like a bell, not unpleasant, but penetrating; while the magpie's was nasal and harsh. The latter had nibbled at every dry root, and dipped into every science in the category, yet she had

never trained and refined her voice from a peculiar, sharp shrillness, piercing, and most disagreeable.

The raven had not always been a literary bird; her genius had developed somewhat late in her career, and the seclusion of plantation life would never have ripened the fruit. All at once the raven stalked out of obscurity, a full-fledged authoress, with her first book under her arm—the life and career of some brave general—with which she belabored and worried the world at large, until a very good sale of it was effected.

The raven drew vague and shadowy pictures of her former greatness; told thrilling tales of midnight raids, in which her tobacco and cotton were consumed; of hairbreadth escapes from brutal soldiers; of great cities devoured by flames; and all these recitals no one had any reason to doubt, because they knew nothing to the contrary. The raven had emerged from obscurity, and what that twilight might have been, remained unsolved.

The Viennese dove, in the meanwhile, read from a magnificent book clasped with gold; sipped more cordials from the mole's travelling cases, and nibbled more *bombons*; the routine of these amusements never seemed to grow wearisome to her.

Suddenly the raven burst into a flood of tears, to the consternation of every one. She sobbed frantically in a

paroxysm of grief, and made no effort to conceal her emotion, or check the drowning flood of woe.

The fat little dormouse count opened his eyes wide, gave several short grunts of alarm, and muttered in the depths of his waistcoat:

“Der teufel! what ails the woman?”

The dove, with an expression of honest sympathy, offered the weeping raven a glass of wine, which the latter tossed off hastily, then resumed her sobs, to make up for lost time.

The mole twisted his grizzled moustache cynically, and grunted in the depths of *his* waistcoat:

“These Americans!”

“What is the matter with you?” asked the magpie, craning her neck sufficiently to bring her spectacles to bear upon the raven.

The magpie belonged to a family whose intense curiosity verged on insanity.

“My feelings overcome me when I think of Stuart — the chevalier of romance — the brave officer — the paladin of modern times!” gushed the raven, spasmodically.

“Perhaps the lady requires more air,” said Tib, speaking for the first time.

The hawk’s bright glance swept over him in an instant, measuring him from head to foot.

“You weep over the death of a Southern general. Was

he a relative, may I inquire?" she asked, in her pitiless, metallic tones.

"He belongs to us all, madam," returned the raven, with dignity; then she dried her eyes, and looked quite cheerful.

The raven was one of those ladies who cry easily, and enjoy that mild dissipation to an extraordinary extent.

"Played-out rubbish!" muttered the hawk, who occasionally talked slang.

The hawk was not heartless in making this observation, and there were graves on many a battle-field where she shed tears for the *blue*, while the raven wailed over the *gray*; but on the present occasion she fancied that she saw quite through the raven's motive, and despised her accordingly, with such hearty scorn as one woman feels at times for another.

As for the blackbird, when he learned the cause of the raven's grief, his countenance assumed an expression of pity, blended with contempt.

"Poor creature! Is it possible, that she exalts a rebel into a hero?" he murmured. "Her education must have been defective: but then she had lived under the Democratic vote, and that accounts for ignorance everywhere."

The raven did not hear this remark, or the vials of her wrath would have deluged the complacent blackbird with withering invective and acrimonious retort.

The local prejudices of the lady birds were becoming manifest, the first bond of union stimulated by a mutual feeling of horror over the Viennese dove having evaporated.

The magpie, entrenched behind that fearful educational bulwark, with solid bastions of dictionaries, draw-bridges of mathematics, lofty turrets of metaphysics, and parapets of dead languages, felt sorry for every unfortunate mortal not born on the Doughnut Coast, and fed on oratorios from early infancy.

The hawk flattered herself that she occupied an intermediate position between the two extremes represented by the raven and the magpie—that a more direct intercourse with external elements brought her nearer to her beau ideal—a woman of the world—and she took infinite delight in mimicking the peculiarities of both.

Commend us to the raven, however, with her battered banners of a lost cause, for a calm superiority of disdain toward the codfish atmosphere of the magpie's life, (the single word codfish being a delicious sarcasm, which the raven and her mates always considered totally unanswerable at all times,) and a languid patronage of the hawk's gay metropolis. The raven believed that she represented the only high birth and breeding a continent could boast. Alas, poor continent! To be sure, she had always been compelled to send in a northerly direction for her boots and her gloves, her new *coiffure* from the hairdresser, and her

jewelry trumpery, besides having devoured with avidity such new fashions as filtered from that source to the remote swamp where her family had resided something less than a thousand years!

It is a very good thing for a family to live in one spot for a thousand years, certainly — if they do not get restless during that period of time; but it is not well to boast too much about it, especially if the boundary fences are dilapidated, the doors swinging precariously on one hinge, and the cotton harvest return spent long before the bolls ripen.

The raven gazed at the hawk in a pale manner, and remarked, in a tone of pleasant reverie:

“I was so much gratified at the politeness with which I was received when I came North. I had always heard our chivalry speak in terms of indignation of the brutal lack of deference to the sex in your cities. When I lost my way in the street, I was directed aright at once, to my surprise. There are so many of us among you since the war, though, that we have had some influence already, I suppose.”

The raven made this pretty little speech without any particularly spiteful intent; she did not wish the hawk to suppose that she was dazzled by the unaccustomed variety of a large city — that was all.

The hawk lived after having this shot aimed at her, but for the first time in her life she was struck dumb.

Thus these separate atoms floated in their individuality,

as totally unlike and uncongenial as distinct spheres. As well have spoken different tongues, and inhabited different quarters of the globe from each other? No, the pressure of external forces would unite them into a firm whole, links of steel to band a great nation.

In the meanwhile the magpie, the hawk, and the raven, thrown together for the time by mere chance, jogged on, sight-seeing, pricking each other with sharp thorns, and imbued with mutual, cordial detestation.

So the train glided smoothly onward without fear of accident, and even the blackbird's usually disapproving eye rested gratefully upon the wide turnpikes, the trim hedges, the stiff poplars forming boundaries, the miles and miles of sunny lawns in this beautiful landscape, where there were no unsightly objects to offend the taste.

"We have so much yet to learn," sighed Tib—comparing the scene before him in his mental vision with an occasional handsome house, surrounded by yawning abysses of vacant lots, shanties, and pig-pens, in his native land—"so much to do! But there are plenty of workers."





CHAPTER VIII.

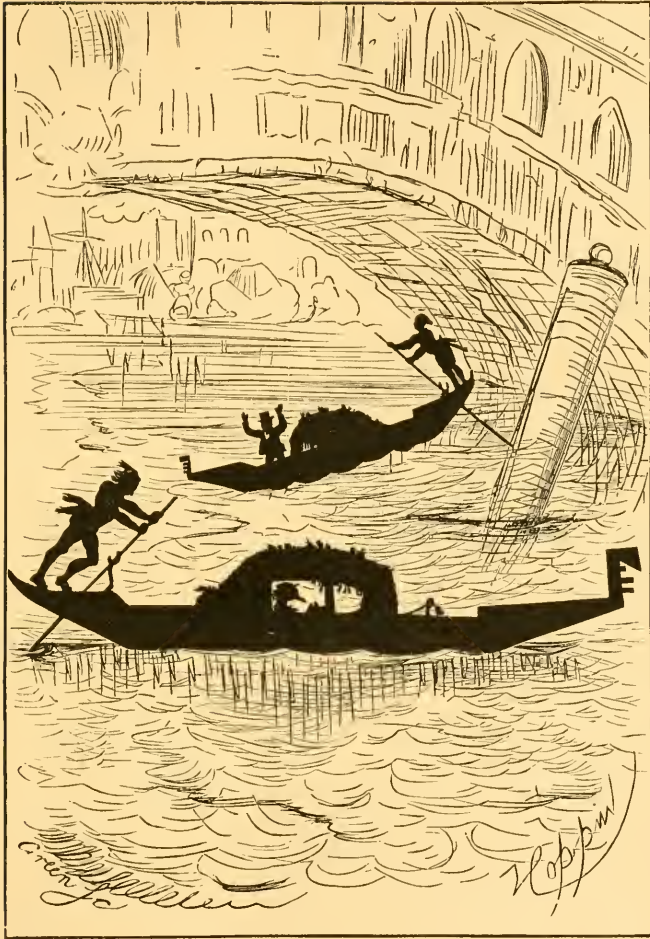
ADVENTURES OF OWL JUNIOR IN THE CITY OF SILENCE.

IB did not keep a diary, nor did he intend to edit a journal, which should ever publicly inform the world that he arose one morning at nine o'clock and the next at six — what he ate for breakfast — his opinions of the cook — with a slight sprinkling of scenery, and the state of his health at uncertain intervals.

He was of the opinion that only poor birds and beasts wrote books of travel, to defray expenses.

For a month he had searched in vain to obtain trace of the goose lady, with a zeal that did him great credit, as developing the trait of concentrative purpose. At night-fall he grew moody and disconsolate with disappointment; the next morning he started with refreshed ardor in the chase.

To say that he scoured the streets of the butterfly capital, staring every lady-bird out of countenance, in hopes of finding the right one; that he searched hotel registers with a



Owl Junior in the City of Silence.

diligence Papa Owl would gladly have seen directed toward his own balance-sheets; that he haunted churches with pious demeanor—would not be telling half of the noble efforts he made to restore a small embroidered bag to its owner. Finally he applied to certain sober, polite moths, that moved about noiselessly, and knew the affairs of every stranger a great deal better than they did themselves. The moths speedily informed him of the previous residence of the goose lady—(had they not counted every hair in her head several times?)—and that she had now departed due south.

Tib was a changed bird; the bag had fretted him into a sentimental mood toward the owner, which was only increased by the obstacles in his path of fruitless search and delay.

Guided by such slight threads as the color of her hair, the fashion of her raiment, which she might possibly have changed since she stood in the cathedral—only this did not occur to the masculine mind—he at length approached the City of Silence.

Can any pen describe it in the twilight of its voiceless, shadowy repose?

Pictured at sunrise with the first tender flush of dawn tingeing the carved portals of churches, the calm features of statues in airy niches against the azure sky; the pellucid waves that gently lave the marble steps of palaces, the

floating tide of barges laden with fruit-offerings of the fresh, exhilarating morning. Pictured at noonday in the cruel, garish mockery of burning light, deprived of the softening veil of distance, time-stained and crumbling—a queen in the worn state-ropes of vanished glory. Pictured in the crimson radiance of sunset, gathering the wealth of day's decline, and flashing it back in gorgeous effulgence from sparkling cupola and tower, across the sea's wide tract of liquid gold and amethyst; and sleeping on the waters, stately and proud in the purifying moonlight—a city of moulded snow, with lace-wrought spire and pinnacle.

Whose transcendent loveliness has been so often described but never exhausted; whose island bells have rung through many a poem in sweet chimes; whose Oriental edifice of precious marbles has spanned many a picture, with curiously carved pillar and ancient mosaic; whose bronze horses have pranced into so many volumes already.

Of course, Tib mingled with the throng of peacocks who inhabit this city, when they emerged for the night to stroll about the pavement in groups, to lounge in their casinos, sipping strong coffee and ices, to float idly on the canals in an atmosphere of music and perfumes. These birds made no manner of use of their legs.

Unlike any one else, the peacock, languid, nerveless, and indolent, without Southern vivacity or Northern energy, drowsing through the day in the chilly depths of their vast

palaces; sullen, if they have the excuse of crushing oppression; apathetic, if left free; stately and dignified, as becomes peacocks whose ancestors could find no worthy bride for their wedding-ring except the beautiful sea, and who wrested from their neighbors the richest Eastern spoils, and throve upon them. Perhaps, the modern peacocks reap the harvest of deserted warehouse and vacant pier, but certainly those same ancestors drank their fill of the sparkling waters of prosperity, fought their enemies right royally, enjoyed their ill-gotten gains immensely, wore long red cloaks and dismal masks, and pinched and screwed each other at home, in torture-chamber and dungeon, when there was no foreign diversion. Where the plebeian peacocks cluster about strollers and mountebanks in the centre of the square, while their betters seek more refined amusements in brilliantly illuminated casinos; where foreign birds murmur their own strange tongues, and wear the turbans, the tunics, and caftans of each distinct nationality, these same ancestors held the most magnificent tournaments and festivals, receiving sovereigns in state assemblage, with the whole vast square converted into a saloon by means of a transparent canopy studded with stars, and spread with the softest carpets of the East.

What an eye for color the peacocks had, and how they luxuriated in velvet robes, satin and brocade embroidered with silver, silken doublets, vivid-tinted plumes and glit-

tering jewels! How they delight still to twine themselves in slender gold chains, linked together with the skill of their cunning craftsmen! Of course Tib entered the inevitable boat, and dived into a box like a hearse, which he had always heard was a very romantic thing to do, and sped away under the guidance of a rusty but cheerful peacock. Music breathed softly from passing boats, where lovely peacock ladies reclined, coquettishly screened by lace draperies; colored globes of light gleamed and twinkled everywhere, wreathing the darkness of massive, sombre walks like gems.

"Time and patience," murmured Tib, lolling back at his ease, when suddenly he became electrified, and stared, not only open-eyed, but open-mouthed, before him.

A boat glided gracefully near, and framed in the glow of flashing lamps sat the goose lady, a saucy smile deepening all her pretty dimples, her golden hair rippling into bewildering tendrils that entangled Tib and the like of him in the sunny meshes, her glance resting indifferently on the spot occupied by the young owl. Who can describe his emotions?

He remained stricken dumb until she had passed like the fleeting vision of a dream, the changing hue of a cloud—then shouted at his peacock, seized the astonished bird by the leg, gesticulated violently, imploring him to follow in moving terms but an unknown language.

Although the boatman could not understand the words of this touching appeal, he at once divined their import. Had his training been useless? Was not pursuit and flight, mysterious skimmings through these watery streets, the first lesson of his youth?

The goose lady shot ahead. Tib darted after, turning corners with amazing swiftness, now gliding beneath heavily sculptured balconies and bridges, now emerging into the tranquil space of a silent canal, then drifting, by an abrupt transition, into a thronged thoroughfare, all life and motion.

Lead on, goose lady, and punish the owl gentleman for his coldness to the pretty parrots, an indifference that might also fall to your share, in spite of your charming dimples, if he feared you were trying to *catch him*, instead of leading him such a tantalizing will-o'-the-wisp dance over creation.

The winding passages, the sheltered alleys, the concealed doorways beneath archways, were all skilfully threaded; but when they entered the floating stream of other crafts, Tib's heart failed him—each boat was so exactly alike. Imprecations on that peacock ruler, who condemned the gilded prows, the glittering awnings, the gorgeous curtains to dress in mourning for all time!

The boatman was equal to the emergency: he said

something reassuring to Tib, and kept his eyes steadily on the goose lady's movements.

Behold! she stepped out of the boat and entered a palace. Tib tumbled out likewise with such precipitation that he missed the step, and plunged headlong to the bottom of the canal. Ugh! how the City of Silence tasted, all the slime and mud of centuries condensed into one mouthful of water.

The boatman calmly fished him out, dripping and wretched—carried him back to his hotel—waited until the deluded youth had made a fresh *toilette* and armed himself with the bag—returned to the palace, where he moored his bark, and looked up into the sky, and hummed a plaintive ditty. He was quite accustomed to this sort of thing.

Tib boldly pushed his way into the presence of the flamingo family.

It is unnecessary to add, that the father bird stood upon the hearth-rug before an imaginary fire, and that the mother bird, assisted by her daughters, was worshipping a young pheasant of quiet aspect in one corner, who languidly permitted himself to be adored.

Tib was about to apologize for the intrusion, when the flamingo papa advanced with gracious cordiality and welcomed him.

“Glad to meet you. We expected you at an earlier hour. The Baron of Intellect and Mrs. Flamingo.”

The young pheasant nodded slightly, and suppressed a yawn, which increased the previous respect of the party for his superiority, and their anxiety to amuse him.

“I knew your father very well when I was across the water, in the interest — of — ahem! — trade.”

“Papa!” interrupted the mother bird, reproachfully. (The idea of mentioning *trade* before the Baron of Intellect, who had never heard of such a thing in his life!)

To conceal his embarrassment at this reminder, the flamingo papa again warmed himself from force of habit. At least the pleasure of retaliating on the American owl was left, so he proceeded triumphantly.

“Affairs have changed very much since I was in your country, for the worse. You are getting into a sad mess with your taxation and corrupt office-holders. Why do you attempt to hold such an immense territory, by force of arms, when it must inevitably fall to pieces? Yes, yes, sooner or later. You have the example of all republics. History repeats itself. You enjoy an inflated prosperity. What has become of your shipping interest?”

“You have sunk it for a time,” snapped Tib.

The flamingo chuckled and rubbed his hands together, gleefully.

“The strongest proof of our strict neutrality consists in our suiting neither party.”

“Oh, yes, we liked your transactions immensely, and

some time we hope to imitate them," said Tib, smiling sweetly — he wished to find the goose lady.

The flamingo papa regarded him solemnly. In his native land there is a line drawn, and any bird born north of it was never known to take a joke or even understand one — the flamingo race had been reared in a northerly direction. He was not sure whether Tib was making game of him or not, but the Baron of Intellect knew, and there was a sly twinkle of fun in his eye.

"How dreadful to think of your lady birds lecturing and voting!" shuddered Madam Flamingo. "I am told the mothers allow an entire and injudicious freedom to the daughters everywhere;" and she glanced proudly at the obedient flamingo daughters, dressed in sky-blue, who looked and thought just as she had looked, and her mother's mother before her.

"Perhaps they are equal to taking care of themselves," drawled the Baron of Intellect.

"Precisely — self-assured and independent," assented Madam, gravely. "They live on pie and ice-water, which accounts for their lack of color."

"True, they seldom eat anything else," said Tib; and then he fervently thanked heaven for a diet which, if indigestible and calculated to make his sisters self-assured and independent, prevented their faces from assuming the generous wealth of color that spread impartially from ear to

ear in the flamingo fair ones, and which would deepen by-and-by to the hot, distressing purple of their mother's countenance.

Tib was crushed by the heavy masculine broadsides, riddled by the feminine small-shot, and he was puzzled at his reception. Where was the goose lady, after all? At this moment a third daughter entered—whose golden head had misled the boatman—followed by a young owl, who was the expected guest.

How the flamingoes drew into their shells! How frigidly they received Tib's apology! With what dignified reserve did they inform him that they knew no goose lady, and stonily glared at the poor little bag! How humiliated and overpowered was he with their displeasure, when he bowed himself out, and sought the delinquent boatman once more, leaving the flamingo parents with the firm impression that he had fallen madly in love with one of their daughters, and had impetuously stormed their privacy solely on that account.

The Baron of Intellect tapped him on the arm :

“I know her.”

“The goose lady? oh!”

“Yes, gold hair, splendid eyes, and all that,” replied the young pheasant, promising to guide Tib aright, and displaying a boyish frankness of manner, that formed a delightful contrast with the pompous formality of his late

companions. No flapping of wings and strutting about on the part of the pheasant. No boasting of the Intellect race, or tracing them back to the flood: simplicity of language, plentifully spiced with slang, and the weight of presence impressed rather than expressed. To be sure he felt very nice — very nice indeed — and he could not imagine any calamity equal to not having been borne to the Intellect title and estates. So the flamingoes went their way, arrogant, proud, and lacking the delicate tact of their neighbors, the butterfly nation, rasping a wound already deep, not a type of any class, but just flamingoes in themselves, wrapped in an armor of prickly thorns, against which Tib had sharply stung himself, with this result: the next time he encountered some well-bred, well-educated bird of the flamingo land, he would begin to bluster and boast in a spread-eagle fashion — and make a fool of himself.

The Baron of Intellect was wonderfully at home with the goose-lady subject. "Have to stand your chance of obtaining any notice, with so many admirers already," was his warning to Tib, as they traversed sparkling vistas of changing scenes, roamed through corridors, until they heard a sweet voice trilling some delicious melody, that floated through the open casements down the tranquil canal, and was echoed from distant corners and angles by the boatmen — these peacocks having a quick ear for harmony.

"Her voice," said the pheasant, springing up a broad

stairway with the familiarity of previous acquaintance, and seeming a trifle surprised at Tib's evident stupefaction.

There she stood, in a stately apartment, embellished with every rare device of exquisite art, with listening groups hanging fascinated on every flute-like trill and warble of her voice—a great singer, and not the goose lady at all. Oh, dear, another wrong secret!

Hope revived within twenty-four hours in an unexpected way. In the City of Silence there is a palace, entered through a grand court, with cloisters, state apartments, spacious stairways ornamented with bas-reliefs, the peacock history traced in all the glory of huge paintings on the walls of innumerable halls, where it pleased dread tribunals to sink fellow-peacocks in dungeons deep, under the waters which wash the foundations, or stifle them in broiling dens beneath the roof—in the name of Justice. A marble arch of majestic design unites the highest portion of the prisons with the secret galleries of the palace—aptly named *ponte dei sospiri*—and toward this fatal point Tib discovered a lady solemnly marching, as if striving to realize the criminal's agonies when spanning the abyss leading to mysterious doom.

Tib felt sure it was the goose lady. Instead, the magpie beamed upon him, and the youth lost his temper.

“I thought it was—somebody else.”

The magpie fitted an arrow and twanged her bow:

"He is very young."

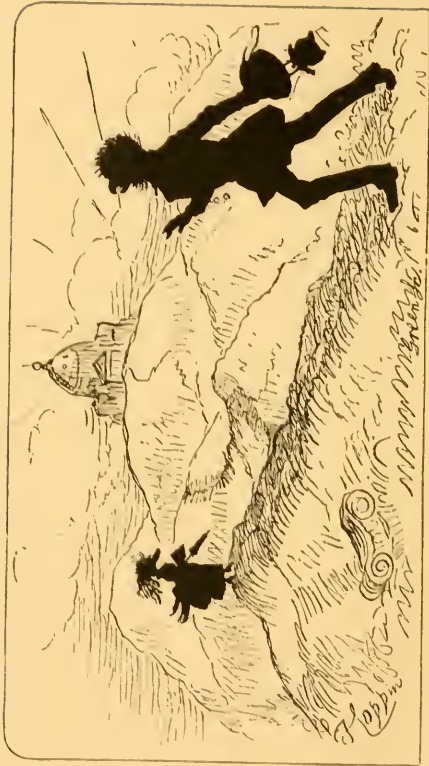
Tib winced as he hastened away. O magpie, would you not willingly be thrust through with the arrows of sarcasm, even as a cushion is lacerated with pins, or St. Sebastian was, to recover that lost boon—youth?

In due course of time it happened that Mademoiselle Will-o'-the-wisp smiled innocently from the window of a train that whirled over the long viaduct, through miles of pools and marshes, out of sight, leaving the despairing owl mutely gazing into space.

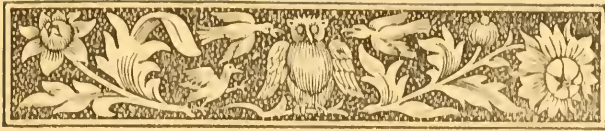
Too late, as usual.

Tib, the infatuated, left the City of Silence with a hazy remembrance of its stately beauty. The glittering vanes, the Oriental cupolas, mosaics, and gilding, faded. Palaces on which the luxury of architecture had been lavished, churches, treasuring fabulous wealth, rich in paintings and statuary, columns of Egyptian porphyry, altars of jasper, agate, and alabaster, existed no longer, except in Tib's memory.





Tib in Rome; Finds the Goose Lady.



CHAPTER IX.

TIB AMONG THE CARDINAL BIRDS.

TILL intent upon what had become the main object of existence, now Tib journeyed to the canary-bird capital. Amidst the enchanting gayety of the charming city he was very near forgetting his firm resolve to find the goose lady or die in the attempt: such is the instability of youth.

No sombre peacocks here, gliding about majestically to slow music, but merry, light-hearted canaries, fluttering on downy wings from pleasure to pleasure in one long summer of sunshine, changing with lightning rapidity of mood from grave to gay, from black storm-gusts of rage to winning, seductive caresses, from the deepest gulf of sudden despair and gloom to a no less sudden elation of enthusiasm — frenzies of ecstasy. Tib was bewildered and dazzled by the varying hues of such a life. Best of all, he liked the careless round of amusement that linked the year together in an endless succession of ball and *fête*.

Memory jogged him gently. In a scene of matchless beauty, domed by a sky of intense blue above, a towering mountain smoking his pipe leisurely, in slender stems of idle vapor, with vineyards and casinos clinging to his robes near by, the sunshine pouring in a golden flood over the white walls of villas, filtering through dusky avenues of pine, groves of citron and myrtle, and resting on the waves below, leaping, cresting, sparkling with a sheen of dazzling splendor the azure waters of the bay, a familiar object disturbed Tib's vision, and that at a moment when the inspiration of the day, the warm, perfumed breeze rustling among cypress-leaves and orange-trees powdered with snowy blossoms, the musical splash of fountains had lent to the owl's fancy such an exhilaration, that he was about to write poetry. Why not? He rhymes well with sea, while anybody should be able to put mountain and fountain together with telling effect. It was Mr. Crow and his two little sparrow daughters.

The sparrows would have liked to enjoy themselves in the by-ways and hedges of travel, rather than in the broad thoroughfares. They were much better informed with regard to the towns they should visit than Papa Crow was, who mentally summed up, "City of Sausages, the *Sans-Souci* capital—wonder if I can make the machine go in those places?"

The little sparrow daughters carried little guide-books in their pockets, and made little maps on cards, with lines

traced zigzag across them to note where their little feet should take them. They asked advice of everybody, and read a great many books about jaunting abroad: the result was, they became afraid of their lives, such tremendous bugbears loomed before them at every turn. At home they trotted about in security, even speeding through the darkness of night in sleeping-car traps without molestation; but once abroad, the wildest terrors beset them.

Papa Crow deposited them in some safe, quiet hotel of Fogdom, and dashed off on one of his wild flights in pursuit of gain, leaving them to mope within doors, as they had been told it was highly improper for them to go out.

The little sparrows sighed regretfully. They were shut up in a cage in the great Babylon which they had longed to see. Oh, dear! could they not go to church at least? The highly respectable landlord shook his head solemnly at the frightful risk they would incur of insult — and then departed to ridicule their simplicity and doubt.

Weary of fluttering against the prison-bars, with the world so tempting beyond, one of them, driven to desperation, declared that she *would* go to the haberdasher's around the corner and buy a hair-brush, come what might of such recklessness. She paid dearly for the act of bravery. Once in the street, her heart beat quick, and she glanced around fearfully in every direction. The haberdasher's shop was reached in safety, the purchase made, but when she came

out, a dreadful, bold young pig, in a "loud" waistcoat, glittering with a lavish display of pinchbeck watch-chain, who was perfumed with coarse tobacco and gin, winked one eye at her in a shocking manner, and nudged her playfully with one elbow.

"Shall hi carry your parcel, my dear?"

The sparrow dropped her hair-brush and fled: so it seems very probable, indeed, that the unscrupulous young pig *did* carry the parcel after all.

They made little proper speeches in timid French, and even the guides displayed a compassionate tenderness toward them which seemed to emanate from a greater depth than the usual varnished exterior of those hardened villains.

Thus the sparrows pattered through Europe in the wake of the eccentric crow parent, lurking shyly in corners, and always screening themselves from general observation behind a sheltering wall or friendly pillar, if possible, to chirp their own little opinion without being stared at.

Tib felt more than half disposed to fall in love with one or both of them — they were so dainty and nice — and would have done so, had not his eyes been dazzled by the fascinating goose lady. Could he have looked into the two sparrow hearts, he would have found mirrored the image of a pale, theological student robin, who had overtaxed his health, burning the midnight oil, poor dear! and would enter the pulpit with less of throat and lungs than is usually

the case; and a brisk young martin, hopping up the ranks from errand-boy to clerkship and book-keeping under Papa Crow's approving eye.

When he greeted Tib, the crow seemed sunk in profound thought. He had just been examining a table with a dove on the branch in the centre, and the artist had spent twenty-five years of his life matching the shadings in bits of stone for the soft exquisite plumage. Papa Crow did not understand such nonsense. Give him the requisite capital, and he would have planted ten thrifty villages in that space of time.

Tib confided his troubles to the sparrows, who actually knew the goose lady.

"Her name is Tilly - Lilly," they explained. "She belongs to the great goose family in the City of the Future," (Tib's home.) "Her uncle, the western crane, is foreign minister, you know."

A daughter of the goose family? Fancy that! In spite of his conceit and assurance, Tib felt rather faint for a moment, so powerful are the influences of childhood in later life. However, he brightened visibly. He would lay patient siege to Miss Tilly - Lilly, and marry into the goose family.

In furtherance of this project he beheld a spirited encounter one day. It occurred at the doorway to the cardinal birds' dominions—a very dirty entrance, with narrow

alleys of dark wretched houses, devoid of beauty. The raven lady's worldly effects were being rudely shaken and tumbled over by inquisitive and officious menials, who found it necessary to preserve the public peace and security of the government by peering into the folds of her dresses, mouchoir cases, the crowns of her bonnets, the toes of her boots, and even lifting the lids of powder boxes, (a dismal shriek from the owner.)

Aha! What have we here? Not a manuscript volume of sedition or heresy, intended to explode in our midst and blow us up to paradise, before we receive absolution for our past sins? Oh, no!

How they pounced upon it and scowled at the harmless pages, holding them upside-down or sideways, gingerly, as if they feared the very words would nip and bite them. The raven turned pale and burst into tears. Her pallor did but confirm her guilt, and she might weep until she dissolved, for aught they cared.

Alas! poor raven, well might she wail and change color. This was her latest manuscript of seven hundred and fifty pages, being her first impressions and emotions on approaching the shores of the Old World. The labor had been severe and caused her many a headache, for she had plucked a flowery thought from this writer, and appropriated an obscure page from that, with great care, mould-

ing the whole together with such skill that no one could detect the "cribbing" process.

Moved by a divine compassion, the pig millionaire waddled gallantly to the rescue.

The raven beamed a mild and watery radiance of gratitude upon him, which diffused a gentle warmth of sympathy through his being. Next to the delights of eating, the pig enjoyed ladies' society.

Among the cardinal birds the goose lady at last resolved into a reality.

Tib introduced himself to the crane diplomatist. The latter was gracious, and altogether very much pleased with himself for having attained his present exalted position, which he was firmly persuaded was due to his having made a speech of two hours' length in his native town once, of such brilliancy that it must have overspread the land. The crane's exultation was clouded by one doubt, however: several of his predecessors had been recalled before they had time to unpack their trunks, somebody at home having altered his mind by the next steamer. These suggestions were naturally unpleasant to him.

Tib was presented to the crane's wife — a prairie-hen — and her family, in which the goose lady had her place.

Oh, but she was pretty, and coquettish, and fascinating! How she caressed her *dear* little bag, and peeped into the precious diary to see if it was still intact! How merrily

she laughed at the recital of Tib's woes, narrated with considerable eloquence by that artful young scamp, and thought in her inmost soul, where vanity slumbered, that it was a nice and romantic affair, and would do to tell the girls at home.

How many times did she whisper the important question to her mirror, "Is that stupid thing falling in love with me?"

She was a thorough goose, too, in every feather, when she asked poor Tib as to the extent of his intimacy with the turkeys and the pigeon families, with a slightly perceptible curl of the lip. The owl became her slave.

Tilly-Lilly did not object to that. She flirted with him at dinner-parties, where the prairie-hen presided, placid, plump, and helpless, with the finger of silence closing her lips, because she could not speak the language of her guests; she wrote him notes on perfumed, slippery paper, inviting him to join in the rambles of the prairie-chicks; then she turned her back capriciously upon him, and had smiles only for a handsome cardinal bird, who owned a big palace, and was only too glad to rent portions of it, getting gain thereby. Nevertheless, his title was a long one, his eyes were divine, and poor Tilly-Lilly's butterfly pinions were sadly entangled in the web of so much glory and beauty.

Was there ever such a favorable spot for the growth of

tender passions as the cardinal bird's city? To lose identity in a vast temple, whose roof towered to such a height that it seemed a moonless night, the tessellated pavement gleaming in the shrouded twilight of a remote distance, where clustering wreaths of silver lamps crowned a tomb, then emerging into the full splendor of gilding, marbles, and pictures aglow with the sunshine of painted windows; airy, magnificent, gigantic in its grandeur. To ramble through miles of stately galleries, lost in wonder and enchantment, as chamber opened beyond chamber, and hall within hall, stored with a wealth of priceless relics and gems of luxurious art, yet seeking fresh beauties in the bloom of the living quite as often as in portraits of faded tints or the snowy repose of statuary.

To watch the moonlight tingeing the tawny, silent river, lurking among the crumbling parapets and balconies of once proud mansions, glittering over an angel that seemed to hover toward heaven from the summit of a frowning castle, resting calmly on the dismantled majesty of a spacious arena, where shadowy tyrants again assumed the purple, and sat upon their throne surrounded by lictors, vestals, and senators, with the surging thousands below. What difference to the moon if her light tinged the savage beauty of tigers and lions creeping stealthily toward their victims, or glowed, serene, liquid, and silvery, in later days, on an embrasure draped in the wild growth of clinging

vines, where the owl gentleman and goose lady chirped their little nothings? To gaze from sloping heights upon desolate plains below, where once a splendid tumult of mighty pomp reigned, roads and causeways still firm as adamant, level spaces for martial games, legions going forth to conquer the world, then sweeping back in one glittering tide the wealth of their victories, chained in fetters of gold, cars and chariots, ambassadors bearing from the East gorgeous tributes of trembling princes, slaves leading wild beasts with vengeful eyes for the fierce arena struggle, captive monarchs humbled in the dust, though decked with the barbaric display of past authority, where silence and desolation now reign, the barren hills clothed in ilex and crowned with lonely towers, framed by a rugged chain of mountains in the distance, and stretching to shining reaches of sea in the opposite direction.

While Tib fluttered about the shrine of his divinity, the pig millionaire, under the gentle guidance of the raven, was slowly puffing and paddling among tombs and ruins, listening respectfully to her voluble descriptions, for the raven was a walking guide-book.

Although past the age of imaginative romance, the pig was not proof against his companion's attractive qualities, and the result was, that the woe-worn authoress landed a very big fish high and dry on the shore of matrimony.

Prosperity agreed with the pale, dilapidated raven; she

grew quite pretty, with a faint bloom in her cheeks, as a dazzling perspective opened before her of unlimited satins and velvet — of publishing the great work (rescued from the clutches of the cardinal bird's officials) on cream-laid paper, with much gilding of cover, according to the dictates of her own fancy.

The pig suitor regarded literary labor with wondering awe and admiration, especially as he never strayed beyond the margin of his daily newspaper, himself.

To woo and win the lovely Tilly-Lilly was no easy matter, the handsome cardinal bird interfered so mischievously with Tib's interest. Put yourself in his place, impartial reader, at a crisis in his fate.

The night, balmy and fragrant, with the soft wind sweeping from the ruins of marble baths, and rustling the pine-trees of gardens, where the flowers exhaled delicious perfumes.

Young owl approached the residence of the adored, carrying a bijou casket, which he had ransacked the town to obtain, and paid a pretty penny for into the bargain, to propitiate my lady.

Voices on the balcony startled his ear.

“The tiresome creature! Why could he not take a fancy to you, dear: aunt thinks it time you were comfortably settled.”

Tib's heart alone would tell him that the sweet voice of Tilly - Lilly makes the sage remark.

"There is hope enough left, I should think," replies the prairie-hen cousin, with natural acerbity of tone under the circumstances, she not being a full-fledged saint.

"If you dress becomingly, I am sure it can be arranged; I will give you my owl suitor."

"Much obliged. Perhaps, dearest, you had better take him yourself, instead of flying at higher game," stings the cousin.

Tilly-Lilly tosses her fair head proudly.

"Am I not his equal, then? Have I not been delicately reared and well educated, and are not my fingers as daintily unstained by labor as the noblest princess in this land?" She begins and ends with something very like a sob.

"That is all very well, if we could only make these haughty birds believe it," returns the practical prairie-chicken. "If you owned half of a continent you might make it go. I wonder what the result would be if a huge rolling-machine passed over Europe, crushing every grade of society to an exact level? I think you had better take Mr. Owl."

"I won't! I hate him."

Exit Tib, still retaining his costly casket, a sadder and a wiser bird.

“So that is the way Miss Tilly-Lilly plays her little game, and spins her little webs out of gossamer-threads of gratified vanity! Let her take some other subject to make a fool of, then.”

Great dignity on the part of owl junior, but a sharp twinge of pain beneath his waistcoat in the region of the heart, at variance with the apparent firmness of his demeanor.





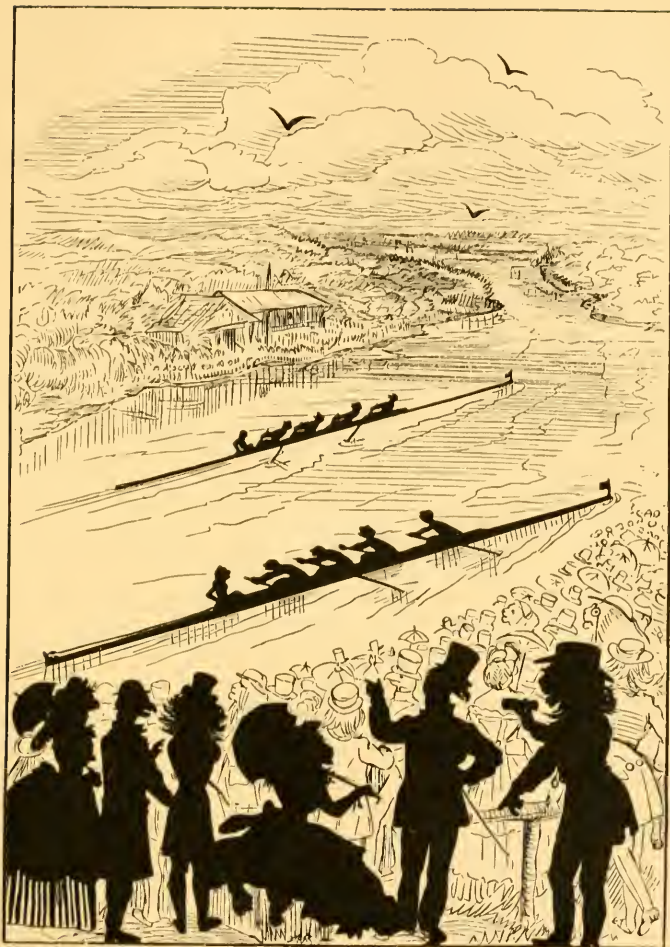
CHAPTER X.

BOAT-RACE BETWEEN FROGS AND TOADS.

THIS is the way it happened. The frogs and the toads had the same blood in their veins—a very good, rich current, too, by-the-by—and as a natural consequence, similarity of traits collided.

The toads having a superabundance of energy, and a laudable ambition to imprint Excelsior upon the banners of the school where they were learning their alphabet, causing it to shine above all other schools in the radiance of their light, determined to lift the dingy, venerable edifice to a proud eminence of glory by the muscular strength of their own arms alone—a labor worthy of youthful enthusiasm.

“Is there anything we cannot do, if we try?” they queried, with self-esteem, not unmingled with rashness, and hurled the gauntlet of defiance straight in the teeth of those absolute perfectionists in aquatic sports, the frogs.



The Boat Race.

The frogs nibbled at the gauntlet, and eventually swallowed it, but not until the process of digestion had been comfortably insured, the earliest maxim of infancy, and the foundation of their nationality consisting in keeping cool.

“Fight us on our own ground?” asked the frogs, slowly.

“Certainly, if you prefer it,” returned the toads, with a lofty disdain for such minute particulars.

“Try our method, and boats?” again queried the frog antagonists.

“No, bring our own boat,” proudly replied the toads.

“Very good; as you please.”

The frogs gave a guttural croak of delight, soft, low, and confident in tone — then went home to dinner.

The toads huzzaed, and plunged into their craft, spinning up and down stream with such tremendous velocity as a preparatory practice, that they were soon black in the face, and had to be put to bed by sympathizing chums. Of course it is understood, that this conversation took place with the rivals at different extremities of a very good speaking-tube, some thousands of miles in length, which meanders through the dominions of Neptune without so much as asking by your leave of watery majesty.

One fine day the toads, cheered by the smiles and tears of friends, stepped ashore on hostile soil.

The porter-frogs, who carried their baggage, were hostile, and made bets on them in small coin; the fog was hostile,

and chilled them through; if they took a promenade, all eyes were fixed upon them with the same hostility; and if they practised in the river for the great contest, plebeian frog-boatmen, as familiar with the stream as the insects that skimmed the surface, criticized their style.

All this was hard on the toads, and at times benumbed them; it also aroused a courage, which, if it had been equalled by their physical strength, would have carried them like comets to the goal of victory. As it was, they had the satisfaction of making a breeze of excitement ripple over the calm surface of monotony—a breeze that increased to a stiff gale in the toad dominions, where their “backers” ran wildly about, casting money to the winds, and even reached the butterfly capital, making the inhabitants elevate their eyebrows and give little shrugs of gentle astonishment.

The river glided past castle and town through the spanning arches of stone bridges, mellowed by age to silvery tints, in a sparkling tide, loitered in tranquil pools beneath the shadow of cool, secluded banks, wound here and there in serpentine grace among the trees, expanded into a broad swift current of rushing waters that parted in slender strands to embrace some leafy island, then entwined again as it slid into the grove-fringed distance.

The atmosphere was fresh and fragrant from garden and field, where the sun had sought the flowers to scatter their

perfumes on the balmy air. Bright-colored figures were massed together upon the shore; eager forms clung to the bank like a growth of nodding grass, swaying and rustling as they watched the contest; a dark motley crowd surged over the meadows, swarming from the slums and alleys of a great city. Everybody was there, of course, because it was the proper thing to do. The flamingoes puffed out their gaudy plumage vain-gloriously; Messrs. Harmony & Discord, of banking fame, looked on abstractedly, while their thoughts reverted to consols; Sir Somebody Something, whose fortune had still flavor of tobacco about it, bet amiably with a cotton lord, who, strange to say, favored the toads because of a lingering tenderness for the *lost cause*, he having heard that one of their number was of rebellious ancestry.

The crane minister was there in rather a worse frame of mind, for he had received marching-orders when he least expected them.

A young owl gentleman addressed him with feigned cordiality, and inquired indifferently if his niece Tilly-Lilly was now the Princess Bobiolanciotti.

"Oh, dear, no! nothing of the sort," the crane replied. "Gone home some time ago. I report soon to Scrubbington myself."

Behold in this nonchalant, easy youth, our dear hero Tib, improved by some two years more of intercourse with en-

lightened races. A Teuton among the Teutons, a canary-bird among the canaries, a butterfly of surprising vivacity among the butterflies, assuming the chameleon-colors easily, and divesting himself of them with curious rapidity, but never a golden pheasant, a flamingo, or an aquatic frog — oil and water are dissimilar fluids.

Tib cared nothing about Tilly-Lilly — that sentiment was dead long ago; and yet it afforded him a savage joy — the mean-spirited bird! — to know that she was not the Princess Bobiolanciotti.

Tib was accompanied by his bosom-friend, a Gallic butterfly, whose name was long enough to — stretch across the channel at all events, for here he was, gazing at the scene with a droll, philosophic indifference. The butterfly was sadly puzzled to know why the frogs and the toads struggled and wearied themselves in that fashion. Did the chief glory of existence consist, then, in having muscles like cords, sinewy palms, and toughened, sun-bronzed faces? Was there not sufficient pleasure in sipping daintily the sparkling surface-bubbles, with an occasional spice of hazard, or danger, or adventure?

Parbleu! why need these young giants make blacksmiths of themselves, amidst so much uproar and deep-lunged shouting?

Besides, the butterfly was sulky, and a sulky butterfly is a funny sight. He had a cause of grievance which made

him cast an evil eye on his unconscious surroundings. The previous evening he had accompanied Tib to a temple of music, to hear a charming nightingale sing, and the guardians of the shrine had objected to his personal appearance — they taking the privilege of being fastidious in such matters. *His* appearance, fresh from the City of Amusement!

The stolid guardians did not care where he came from, so long as etiquette prescribed that his coat-tails should be of a different shape. The butterfly fumed with wrath.

“Do they not visit my country in their ugly tweed shooting-jackets? Are my theatres or churches sacred from their abominable pepper-and-salt undress? Yet I must change my attire to please their eye, before I can hear the nightingale — piff, paff, poum!”

In vain did Tib soothe his anger by lending him a suitable costume; the very amiability with which the owl performed this friendly service only irritated his sensitive vanity still more, simply because he keenly detected a lurking complacency on Tib's part at not having been ignominiously banished likewise.

The latter's glory was short-lived, however. When they returned, the stolid guardian cast a withering glance at Tib's hat. Well, what was the matter with that? The stolid guardian superciliously objected to the color, and for the enlightenment of Tib, informed him that it should be

black, whereas it was white. In the meanwhile the nightingale was pouring forth her soul in song, and they were losing the delicious strains. Tib tossed his hat impatiently at the keeper, receiving a ticket in exchange, while the butterfly—smirking a sarcastic deference at the guardian—inquired if their boots pleased his fancy, and if their cravats were of his favorite color, to which the guardian responded, after a grave deliberation, that they would do. So Tib entered the temple hatless, and plunged into the obscurity of a box hastily, which small circumstance had partially restored the serenity of his friend.

At the race the American eagle loomed in the distance, chatting, and betting heavily, throwing the contents of every pocket into the scale already weighted by a plethoric purse, while the lion—looking mild and amiable, with smooth mane—rested his nose innocently upon his folded paws: a tropical sea never smiled more placidly in a calm than did this formidable beast.

The eagle was unconcerned, and gay. The groups about him were surprised and sorry not to see him whittle the traditional stick, or thrust his claws in his pockets, in a bar-room attitude; but instead he had two attendant crows, in the uniform of major-generals, one to light his cigar, and the other to hold his pocket-handkerchief and field-glass for him.

A sound rolled along the shores, gathering in volume as

it came — the murmur of many voices — as two dark objects appeared on the stream, side by side, their course marked by a track of foam.

The frogs had magnificent breadth of chest, their arms were tanned and corded up to the elbow, their oars entered the water smoothly and evenly, with exactly measured stroke. They were perfectly at home in the sport to which they had been drilled thoroughly in the best possible school of training, against each other, and they were provokingly at their ease on a stream of which they knew every angle and turn.

Not so the toads. They had given up their own method of rowing, yet scorned to wholly accept the frog system, and so made a compromise in managing their own boat, adopting a medium course, which was fatal to their success. Besides these disadvantages, the toads, under the full pressure of emulation, had overtaxed their slender frames, training their weary nerves to the verge of cracking them. Muscles and sinews cannot be converted into iron and steel in a few weeks of development.

The eagle thought:

“I had rather break in a gold panic than give in here; but the odds are heavy.”

The lion yawned leisurely, and stretched himself. The frog lads could take care of their luck, yet he cocked one ear attentively to the shouting throng, and thought that

he should feel a trifle queer if the eagle flapped triumphant wings in his face after all. No fear of that. The slow, methodical frogs swept on grandly, their heads and bodies swaying to the work as one. The nervous, plucky toads, exhausted and anxious, pulled wonderfully fast, but out of form, and much distressed.

“Go it, toads!”

“Well pulled, frogs!”

“Hurrah!”

“Now is your turn to pick her up!”

The electric spark of excitement flashed from group to group of sympathizing spectators. Some frogs hopped along the bank, keeping pace with the boats, shouting, croaking, and gasping every breath out of their bodies. Others crowded favorable points, reserving their wind for a suitable moment to arrive, when they would burst into a simultaneous uproar.

Away shot the frogs, cleaving the water in long, sturdy, elastic bounds, and away followed the toads, game to the last, lashing the troubled current furiously, with the last effort of their spent vitality.

Boom! A sharp report, a puff of smoke, and the race was over.

The winning frogs shook hands, striving to conceal the flush of success beneath a mask of cool indifference, and then aroused the toads' venom by hinting broadly that the

contest was mere child's play to *them*—a boast as ungenerous as it was unnecessary, since the victory was their own.

The eagle—fiercely loyal to the toad champions, and very much out of pocket with the task of backing them—nevertheless took the affair calmly and courageously, philosophizing thus :

“Matters might, and would have been worse, if any one else had undertaken the championship. The gallant toads shall have a dinner-party when they return home, to encourage them a bit. Perhaps it might have been just as well for them never to have attempted it, though.”

Then the eagle made the lion a low bow, and flew away. As he did so, he confided to the winds this profane exclamation :

“Darn it all ! I wish they had not got beat.”

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CHAPTER XI.

THE BIRD-OF-PARADISE OPENS A NEW CANAL.

 HE bird-of-paradise crossed the threshold from day to night. Her presence was a radiant vision, for she embodied the sunlight of a new era that rolled in a golden billow of progress over darkened lands.

The ibis had invited her to make him a visit, very politely — a shrewd head that of the ibis — and the stork, his master, although slow and stupid enough, could be both suspicious and jealous.

Bismillah! What did the ibis mean with his grand manners? Was he anything but an upper-servant — a steward to do his bidding?

A servant living on his own estate, however, that he had improved of late by means of a new ditch through which ships could glide and speed away to the distant Indus.

The stork sulked, and then determined to make a first impression. “Should be very happy to receive the bird-of-paradise if she came his way.” Afterward he would thrash



Bird-of-Paradise Opens a Canal.

the ibis for his impudence, when the whole pageant was over. There was some consolation in that.

The fair guest bowed her crested head, curved her stately neck, and assented.

So a golden horn received her in the small end and discharged her from the larger one, (which is better than the reverse,) into a crowded city of close-packed buildings that rose from the water-edge in a compact mass of narrow streets, tall houses expanding into domes and tapering spires at frequent intervals, and spreading in blooming gardens over the sloping hills of the background.

Lodge the bird-of-paradise daintily, O stork ruler!

Drape the vestibules of her temporary nest in the richest hangings; deck the saloons with sumptuous appointments of gilded wood wrought in flowers of white and blue, exquisite porcelain vases mounted on glittering pedestals, clocks and candelabra of massive silver, crystal chandeliers sparkling with prismatic tints in the softened gleam of wax tapers; shroud her boudoir in Oriental silk of red and white; strew it with luxurious gray and gold cushions, spread a velvet wealth of carpet beneath the feet, freight the carved and inlaid tables with goblets all gem-studded, glasses traced with gold, cups encrusted in pearls, vials of perfumes distilled from subtle poisons in the earlier days of magic art; veil the windows in delicate screens of lace and fringe, where the lovely bird may watch the sunlight glitter

over kiosk, cupola, and sea, or turn to the flashing mirrors in perfecting those matchless toilettes which astonish the loose-robed phantoms of stork ladies.

Have a care, stork ruler! Progress is a very good thing, but what if it teaches your slave-wives to pout and storm in the captivity of their magnificent cages that they may not do as the bird-of-paradise does.

Invite her to drive with you, not in the huge gilded chariot, drawn by horses caparisoned with gorgeous trappings, or the clumsy wooden vehicles dragged by oxen of your grandfather's day, but in a natty, graceful, modern carriage, with Gallic butterfly-outriders in the richly embroidered vests and dashy jackets of your liveries.

How do the stork subjects like that? Does it not disturb their prejudice to behold you seated beside the bird-of-paradise, who wears an airy trifle of gauze and flowers perched on her head, and smiles calmly under the gaze of the faithful, instead of concealing her charms in a towel, as you wend your way through a valley beneath the fragrant shade of cool trees, refreshed by a brook of fresh pure water, to a distant amphitheatre among the hills, where the tents of stork soldiers slope up a mountain-side?

Lead her to your picturesque kiosk, gorgeous in arabesque design of rose and gold, with darker draperies and gold fringes, at the head of the valley, that she may behold your army emerge from their tents to curvet, wheel, and

prance in the plains below, obedient to the strains of brilliant music, their weapons flashing, and the earth echoing to the tread of horses, the heavy rumble of ordnance, as each pass in review, while the Phosphorus leaps and dazzles like the frosted armor of a snake beyond, the varying scintillations of its surface contrasting strangely with the sombre hue of the sea of Darkness in the far-off distance.

Tempt her epicurean taste with a magnificent array of costly viands, and then present her with the dinner-service afterward, to show that you do not mind such trifles. Conceal the dirt and dinginess of your famous city with banners, and flags, and gaudy tapestries, robe it in a holiday attire which will render its subsequent neglect only the more repulsive, then waft your guest in slender, sharp-prowed boat from the shore, with lights gleaming by thousands on every palace, a chain of vivid fire linking together the range of hills from the brink of the waves to their summits, lanterns wreathing the distant military encampment, twinkling rays of brilliancy outlining the masts and yards of stately vessels, many-tinted bubbles swaying with the graceful motion of tiny cockle-shell crafts on the shadowy waters, and over all the fiery crimson radiance of rushing star-clouds, the glowing disks of intense splendor that flood the scene with noonday brightness as the train of vesels — a line of flame — sweep onward.

A famous theatre for scenic effect — only the stork subjects' money burns up like tinder on such occasions.

Next the bird-of-paradise made a call on the pelican, who erected in her honor a passage of white columns, entwined and roofed with evergreens at the landing, and grouped pavilions lined with shrubs and flowers here and there.

Being new to the business of reigning, and accustomed to gayer society than their venerable kingdom afforded, the pelicans were delighted to receive the bird-of-paradise, when she glided into their midst fresh from the atmosphere of the present, while they, in the prime of their youth still, could only dream of the past.

How delicately the visitor brushed them with the velvet surface of her consummate tact and winning beauty, warming the hearts of the brave with judicious praise, touching skilfully such fine chords that would produce harmony among the throng of scarlet skullcaps and national embroidered jackets — no jarring discords came from the pressure of her light fingers.

Then farewell when night had fallen, the snowy grandeur of famous ruins, dismantled and crumbling, lofty columns and carved porches transfigured, glorified in the pale-blue fire of illumination. From majestic, roofless temples, in ghostly beauty, statues crowned with the storms of eventful centuries looked mutely, calmly down upon the world below, of town, vineyard, and tranquil sea.

Oh! shades of the immortal pelican race, have you come to this, and does the splendor of your history only glow into life for a moment in the transient flash of Bengal lights and rockets?

The ibis, jealous in turn of the stork master's hospitality, rushed wildly about, building a railroad, decorating palaces, renovating steamships, arranging *fêtes*, and emptying his coffers lavishly, determined to eclipse all previous receptions.

Did not the remembrance of the evening on the Phosphorus fade before more novel spectacles, when the courteous ibis led the bird-of-paradise forth into the thoroughfare of his ancient city, with a brilliant cavalcade of birds on foot, running before to clear the way, their torches flaming in long lines of fire, and dainty carriages followed, where sat the fairest flowers of ibis beauty, shrouded in silk and tissue, guarded by stern household dragons in gorgeous uniforms?

At one moment the modern seemed wholly to have driven back the ancient. The bird-of-paradise heard the familiar music of her own tongue on every side; beheld large hotels, squares, and mansions, with Western waiter birds skimming about restaurants, or superb footmen lounging in doorways, which might have held their place in one of her own provincial towns without incongruity; butterflies pirouetted on the stage of a handsome theatre;

the more enlightened ibis subjects patted their kid gloves in a gentle ripple of applause, at the sweet tone of some favorite singer.

The next moment her carriage turned a corner, and the scene had grown older by a thousand years. The winding streets, destitute of pavements, were roofed with rainbow-tinted shawls, from which depended chandeliers all ablaze with thousands of tapers, while tinted globes of light wreathed and clustered from space to space, of inconceivable number and variety, shedding their rays down on latticed windows, and a multitude of red or white turbaned heads, swaying and surging like the waves of a troubled sea, guards shrieking their piercing cries, timid forms drawn up against the walls to gaze at the stranger, radiant in satin, jewels, and lace, as she passed.

The lamps, tapers, glass pendants, sparkling crystal fringes of the whole world seemed to stud the roof that canopied these narrow by-ways, extending in bright vistas above a mass of gesticulating motion, where bronze skins contrasted with the yellow and silver of flowing robes, the blue and green and purple of sashes or mantles, blending to a gorgeous harmony in the distance.

Bazaars yielded their costliest treasures, sacred temples revealed their twilight-screened mysteries for the first time to unbelieving eyes; the river offered the tribute of its sweetest incense in the cup of a lotus-blossom. The bird-

of-paradise held the magic key, and the frowning gateways of proud superstition flew open, displaying the precious though tarnished coronet of antiquity. In the meanwhile the beaver stood on a fine pier surveying his completed labor. Had a beaver ever greater cause for satisfaction? To discover one's appointed task in this world, and then do it, in spite of obstacles, is to have fulfilled destiny.

Years before, the beaver had spanned the same scene with one comprehensive, keen glance, and said firmly:

“I will do it.”

He saw a low strip of sand projecting into the sea, without any of the natural resources of a fertile region to furnish supplies for the maintenance of towns, a dry, arid waste of desert spreading in yellow billows into the distance, and an atmosphere of stifling heat. An unpromising prospect enough, but this brave-hearted beaver did not quail, even though the undertaking before him was already scarred with the failures of previous attempts.

The ibis nation had weighed the importance of the work in the earliest twilight of creation, one or two of their rulers having slain thousands of subjects in the enterprise, only to have a successor destroy the route to starve out a rebellious province. Vulcan I. had an eye to its advantages, and would have slashed a trench through from sea to sea with his sword, such was his impetousity, had his attention not been diverted to other matters. Having spied

out the land the beaver made a low bow to the ibis, who was shrewd enough to perceive that it was for his advantage to have this industrious animal laboring for him, and promised to aid him by every means in his power.

The stork master must next be requested to give sublime permission. A reluctant half-consent was the growling response; the ibis was too ambitious.

The beaver climbed nimbly over the first obstacle of stork hostility, and proceeded to build a port for the ships that must bring machinery and food.

"The water is too shallow for a barge to float," grumbled the assistants.

"Build breakwaters on either side of the harbor to deepen the enclosure," replied the beaver.

"Heavy machinery and provisions must be landed before that can be accomplished," again grumbled the assistants.

"Make an island at the limit where ships can approach, erect cranes, and transship the imports into lighters which can convey them to the beach," replied the undaunted beaver.

"To bring stone for the breakwaters from a distance will not only be a great expense, but occasion delay," grumbled the assistants a third time.

"Make our own stone, of sand mingled with lime, and moulded into blocks, which this good sun will bake for us to the firmness of granite," said the beaver.

So they dug, and bored, and burrowed perseveringly,

aided by giant machinery that hewed its way along with arms of iron and sinews of steel, while the ibis subjects, guided by *mind*, swarmed everywhere like busy insects, until the beaver's track became visible in the sand. The earth permitted him to furrow her broad countenance with his little drills and pigmy wounds, but opposition met him at every turn. Every impediment was thrust in his way, yet only one foe could effectually check his progress — death. Enemies hurled arrows and javelins of ridicule at him (secretly uneasy at his success), and friends thrust him with needle-pricks of doubt and disappointment. Instead of "I hope you may succeed," or "Persevere in the effort at all hazards," it was a ready, premature, "You cannot do it."

"J'ai pour principe de commencer par avoir la confiance," he said, calmly.

Sometimes a lion placed a rock in his path; the lion was entirely averse to any modern improvements in which he had no paw. Sometimes a scientific bear threatened to crush him under an avalanche of argument. The beaver either scrambled over the first rock, or glided adroitly around it, and arose with elastic ease from the pressure of scientific brick-bats.

Unconquerable and uncrushable! The traits becoming more apparent daily, the stork clapped his beak angrily and crashed down the largest rock of all. The beaver

measured the formidable barrier with his eye, wellnigh despairing, for he could not climb it.

This was the rock: "Drive away the infidels and withdraw your laborers. Am I to have my servants greater than myself?"

The ibis had to eat humble pie and obey. The brains of any other than ibis workmen would fry in such a sun. The beaver turned to his protector, Vulcan III., and that great bird smiled reassuringly; laid a gentle claw on the stork's arm, asking, in the most friendly way possible, had he not *better*, in reason, remove the rock. The stork was obtuse, yet he was able to see his duty very plainly after that, and the beaver dug on his way rejoicing.

With no less success did he conquer nature and make the dreary waste of sand bloom like the rose, by means of frequent watercourses to moisten the parched soil.

He stood on the pier surveying his completed labor, for which he had toiled so many years.

A broad artificial river flowed along, linking together a chain of lakes, and where the desert had so recently held undisputed sway, fish skimmed past merrily on exploring expeditions, ships floated, and small native boats with clumsy sails loitered from shore to shore. Myriads of donkeys and camels had toiled patiently under heavy burdens, with ibis workers in blue robes and red caps, digging, resting in soft holes of the banks, saying their pray-

ers—like good birds—bowing their heads devoutly, wholly unmindful of the bustle about them to accomplish this end.

Two hundred and eighty monsters, equal in strength to thousands of horses, had devoured fire, then breathed forth flame and steam-clouds, excavating, dredging, polishing into symmetry for the blue waves to follow step by step in their wake.

A prosperous town of the beaver's own rearing had grown out of the desolate waste, boasting handsome villas, a public square shaded by numerous trees, a broad boulevard, gardens draped in luxuriant vines with the purple bloom of pendent grape-clusters visible among the leaves; and the golden tints of oranges mingling with every variety of tropical plant. The receding waves of barbaric natives still fringed the palace, in ragged turbans and brass-bound face-coverings, their shrill cries mingling with the more refined influences of music and modern *salons*.

How the trumpet of praise rang out in pealing notes through space, exalting the beaver to the skies!

How sure everybody was that the enterprise *must* succeed, except the lion, who still liked to think that the soil would crumble in, or something dreadful happen.

The loyal beaver's dream of glory was realized when the bird-of-paradise appeared to crown his success with the appropriation of her presence.

Progress again! Behold the fanatic host gathered in a

vast multitude, whose forefathers had raised the crescent triumphantly aloft and always trampled on the cross, listening patiently to the smooth calm voice of the cardinal bird blessing the new river solemnly, congratulating the world on its success, praising the enlightened ibis for aiding the magnificent work, praised the beaver for his exertions, praised the bird-of-paradise for her presence there, even delicately commending the tolerance of the listening throng in these later times. The ibis tribes expressed approval, instead of rising in a mighty sea of wrath to crush the holy preacher, and frantic howling birds among them, who tortured their emaciated frames in agonies and frenzies of religious fervor, thought that affairs were changed indeed.

The bird-of-paradise led the triumphal procession through the watery gateway, followed by boats of the golden eagle, the dragon bird, the northern bear, all bristling with guns and dressed in their best, and sailed from sea to sea.

The labor was done, and nations eyed each other askance, wondering how they could make money out of it.

While they were thus pondering, the golden eagle sent peddler birds skurrying away to the far east with samples of his wares, to inform them glibly that their orders would receive prompt attention, and the prices be most reasonable if left at the mouth of the Danube.

“The early bird catches the worm,” and the eagle was abroad at dawn to prepare for the tide of wealth when it

flowed from remote sources. The American owl was present, of course. Although not an invited guest of the great ibis, he steamed along the canal with the best. Tib mingled with the current of Oriental life with tremendous ardor—and very soon wearied of it. He clung to the pyramidal backs of dromedaries; he wore green spectacles and a fanciful band of linen wound about his hat, with streaming ends fluttering behind, and jolted over rough roads on prancing donkeys, that perseveringly butted against every obstacle they met, often exasperating stately camels into craning forward long necks to give the rider a playful or vengeful nip.

He was dragged to the summit of some famous tombs by shrieking, clamorous ibis savages of brazen mien, who extorted money from him at every step, and threatened to pitch him over the brink if he refused to grant their modest requests.

He sipped perfumed snow and liquid sweetmeats until he experienced a curious twist in his internal arrangements, which was not without a degree of glory, after all, as it enabled him ever after to revert to the time “when he had the cholera in Fairo,” with the same pride that many other birds experience in attributing any malady during the rest of their natural lives, to the “malaria-fever” of the Cardinal-Bird City, a sure proof that they have been there.

The bird-of-paradise flew westward, her pinions glittering

with rich gifts, her mission accomplished. The ibis rested from his labors, exhausted and prostrated by unusual exertion, yet soothed by the consoling reflection that he had "outdone" the stork.

The vulcan added another jewel to the diadem of his reign, in the completion of one of the great wonders of the age, fostered to maturity by his powerful patronage.





The Return; Marries the Goose Lady.



CHAPTER XII.

THE OWL RETURNS HOME OVER THE TERRIFIC RAILROAD.

THE owl had been everywhere, and seen many rare spectacles, when, at the expiration of several years, he turned his face westward once more. He returned home solely because there was nothing more for him to learn — he had become as wise as an owl can be.

He had entered the granite portals of grand solitudes, where long narrow valleys, clothed in emerald green, spread away in far-reaching vistas, between stately mountains, pine girt and hoary, their sides fissured and terraced with the tempests of countless winters, their peaks veiled in soft masses of clouds. The morning mists melted in transparent rifts before the sun's first rays, in the pure atmosphere of such high latitudes; the rosy flush tinging columns of basalt, granite, and sandstone, smooth rounded boulders, steep precipices descending into shadowy chasms, depth below depth of impenetrable gloom; or lighting

rugged, beetling crag and cliff, where slender threads of cascade leaped from rock to rock, flowing in a crystal stream through sheltered gorges and glens of this stern wilderness. He had lingered in villages perched on hill-sides, embowered in a luxuriant wealth of verdure, olive-trees heavy with the burden of rich brown fruit, corn waving in every nook, tulips and jasmine mingling the sweet perfumes of snowy blossoms, cork-trees twisted into fantastic forms, with delicate fern fronds draping the large trunks, and mistletoe festooning the branches contrasted with stiff aloes.

Convents crowned the undulating hills, girdled by meadows blooming with flowers of every hue, and orchards bearing golden, crimson, and purple fruits, all interlaced with vines drooping beneath the weight of delicious clusters.

To the peaceful stillness of such sylvan retreats, where the shepherd dozed away existence in the shade, contented in the possession of a morsel of bread, a bunch of grapes, a cigarette, a flask of Montilla, and a guitar, did the American owl turn his steps, *blasé* from the elegant dissipations of cities, watching the graceful evolutions, the light airy motion, the ease in alternate windings or giddy maze of fair native birds dancing in the evening twilight to the tinkle of simple strains beneath the spreading trees of their homes.

He had tried to break his neck after the most approved methods in Skitzerland, by clinging to icy pinnacle, slipping on the brink of yawning gulfs, where a false step would inevitably hurl him down to a marble death amidst the dazzling magnificence, the halls of emerald and transparent blue of the frost-realm; braving the crashing avalanche-torrents of awful solitudes wrapped in mantles of eternal snow. Everywhere he found the Saxon tourist venturing where he dared not go, mocking danger, laughing in the face of the King of Terrors, trusting to his own strong limbs, reveling in treading the brink of perpetual peril, and shooting into infinite space sometimes. These would no longer throng the land if a road was smoothed, a path straightened. Better to manufacture artificial glaciers and erect barriers of picturesque effect, than to make the way so easy that these singular strangers would not need to clamber, and scamper, and toil, yielding in return for the pleasure, much gold.

He had endeavored to drive Papa Owl to the verge of bankruptcy, amidst the glittering temptations of fashionable baths to which birds flocked from every quarter of the globe — birds of dilapidated fortunes striving to mend them by the revolution of a spinning ball; birds with such monotonously heavy money-bags that they relished the variety of reverses, not to sip the mineral waters, or to ramble in beautiful parks of stately trees, but to hasten like

blind devotees to a handsome building lavishly decorated in gilded saloon and corridors — the great Curse-all — where birds - of - prey hovered, alert and keen, where young faces grew old, and smooth features became pinched with haggard anxiety, all eyes fixed absorbingly on the fascinations of the *tapis vert*, as the pitiless balance poised fortune for one, ruin for another.

Over these racks of torture presided calm, business-like, horrible spiders, who had spread their cunning webs and decked them with tawdry glints of color and bits of glass to entrap the unwary, then gloated over their victims, knowing that the last drop of life's blood would surely flow into their coffers.

He had visited those remote provinces where the weak, effeminate potentates sit in their card - house palaces of polished chunam, painted in curious designs of fruits and animals, and carved teak-wood verandas, amused with the childish baubles of a shadowy authority which permits them to indulge in cruel caprices toward their subjects, of dragging them at the heels of elephants, for petty offences; to chain tigers with embroidered collars — feebly envious of beasts that can hold their own in the jungle; to mould solid silver guns of no earthly use, except to have admiring subjects worship them and offer floral tributes; to perfume their stern conquerors with attar-of-rose and scented waters, tempting the appetite with delicate fruits, aromatic, pungent

nuts, lime-spread leaves, when for some naughty trick of passionate revenge they seem inclined to wrest away the rule of poppy, rice, and cotton-fields from the lawful sovereign, even depriving him of the pleasure of nagging the inhabitants of his densely populated, dirty, ill-paved native city, blocked with gates where lounge ragged soldiery.

The owl, possessed by the spirit of perpetual motion, no longer surprised into ecstasies of admiration at novel spectacles, or dismayed at unexpected inconveniences, drifted to the brink of a sacred river so ancient that the separate drops flowing between two shores would scarcely serve to count for years since the stream first issued from its cradle, bearing the ashes of passing generations on its bosom down to the sea.

On the opposite bank, in a dazzling atmosphere that softened plaster and whitewash into a semblance of marble, with every imperfection of decay or neglect mellowed by the intervening space, rose a city of fabulous splendor. Along the water-line a fringe of bronze-limbed forms laved in the holy waters to cleanse from past sins, flights of broad stone steps led upward from the river's edge with gaudy-clad shadows mingling in changing colors, slender towers encircled by miniature turrets and gilded spires rose above the roofs, cupolas crowned mosques like glittering bubbles, graceful columns shot to airy heights against the blue sky, and ruins toppled, whose worn walls were screened by a

mantle of tender green vines. There were dark cool streets sheltered by lofty houses from the fierce sun-rays, where mules and sober elephants wended their way along; in the narrow cells of shops were workers in gold cloth, weaving caps of rich embroidery; carvers of idols, dealers in precious stones; the temples abounded in elaborate carving, screens of lace-work tracery, tombs of silver and rare marbles; but to cross the river was to rob the picture of the hazy tints of distance in actual contact with repulsive reality.

These birds knew nothing of the American owl. They not only existed without any knowledge of his country, but seemed to scorn the simplicity of republican institutions if they were explained to them.

The earth is spread out on a flat plate, and if one is blessed by being located in the exact centre of the dish, over Shiva's trident, what matters the condition of those nations pushed to the extreme verge of the rim, by fate?

At last Tib reached the Guinea-Pig Empire, famous for pagodas and a certain fragrant plant dear to the hearts of venerable lady birds.

If the structure of Tib's local vanity was not already demolished by severe thrusts received, the superb superiority of the guinea-pigs must have inevitably razed the temple to the ground.

Intrenched in the tradition of hoary ages, and still a powerful kingdom after a tide of savage invading wolves had

leaped over the boundary walls from the arid steppes of the north, the guinea-pigs had profound faith in their maturity, and that nobody could teach them anything new. They built their houses in the queer form of a tent, as their remotest ancestor had done; each might strive for the prize of a *button*; they expended whole lives in dwarfing stately trees to painful distortions of growth; they called all foreign birds dogs, red-haired infidels, and other pretty names. They dreaded the heavy guns of these infidels, all the same.

Of course they informed Tib that their empire was the exact centre of the universe, but then he had heard that so often before that he was growing accustomed to the statement. The blackbird believed in the Doughnut Coast until death; the butterflies listened with charming patience to any contrary statement, then glided back to an original stand-point of devotion to the City of Amusement; the flamingoes laughed to scorn the idea of any other metropolis besides Fogdom being worthy of the name; the languid peacocks pitied the inhabitants of those capitals where a bird was obliged to use his own legs occasionally instead of sailing through calm canals. The guinea-pigs did not make the slightest attempt to conceal the low estimate in which they held Tib; they even dubbed his race "Saxons number two." This was in part due to the owl's not wearing robes of yellow satin, embroidered with dragons, or the

stylish uniforms befrogged and epauletted of other foreigners, and in part to the fact of Tib's representative not being allowed sufficient pocket-money to make the same flourish of trumpets as others, which alone could blow away the cloud of guinea-pig distrust and dislike.

"You teach us nothing," was their argument. "We weave rich silks; we write books of many volumes because we have plenty of leisure; the microscope alone can reveal all the beauty of our minute ingenious labor. Talk of your navigation! We had the compass long before *you* were born, and could go to sea if we liked, only we don't like. Yes, and you plume yourselves finely on the art of printing, just as if we had not known about it since the Flood. We can make gunpowder, too, although we have as often blown up ourselves and singed our own pig-tails as our enemies."

Doubtless this was an atmosphere in which the American owl's pinions must droop. To be despised by a short, squat guinea-pig, devoid of beauty, who lived, ate, drank, and had his being amid scenes of filth, who burned gilt rags of prayers before swinish idols, was calculated to take the wind out of one's sails.

Said Tib, reflectively:

"I think I will go home."

Then he looked out on a vast ocean that held on its bosom chains of islands, with volcanic peaks and coral reefs

fringed by cocoa-nut palms to the brink of transparent lagoons, islands fertile in soil, rich in spice-groves extending from the shores of the great guinea-pig empire to his own remote home, each yielding its treasures to a hungry world and linked to sister isle, or some great continent of the globe, by darting shuttles of steamships, weaving together drifting threads into a compact whole. Girdled by steam; clasped in iron bands.

Could haughty guinea-pig isolation withstand those forces?

Tib rather liked the weasels, those island neighbors of the guinea-pigs, who bowed themselves into the likeness of turtles, with only a square of back visible, as a mark of politeness. Clever and shrewd, they delighted in deceiving and bewildering intrusive strangers by false statements, — they regretted that the rest of creation should be so shamefully backward in the requirements of civilization as not to appreciate the merits of harry-carry, yet they did not say as much about it as the blunt guinea-pigs would have done under the circumstances. The weasels cut off heads so neatly that one could not but admire their skill, acquired by long practice. Nor were they less remarkable in magic arts. The weasel juggler was to the plate-spinning, card-shuffling adept of modern lands what the agile monkey is to the elephant. If he swallowed a lighted brass pipe, washed it down with a cup of water, afterward breathing

forth volumes of smoke from the very pit of his stomach, apparently, then waved his fan quickly, and the pipe re-appeared in his mouth, still glowing like a coal, a weasel audience yawned listlessly. If he poised eggs on a flat lacquered slab, and by an almost imperceptible oscillation caused one egg to waltz gracefully while the other remained quiet, then a second to join in the dance, then a third, and a fourth, without the touch of hand or instrument, the weasels nodded a gentle approval at this perfection of dexterity. To excite any warmth of enthusiasm, however, the juggler must ascend the scales of wonders rapidly, balancing poles on his nose which form only a foundation structure for boys, parasols, and whirling balls, must flutter from his fan troops of puppets, shadows of animals, and pirouette on the rim of lighted lanterns unscorched, with a wonderful quickness and grace of execution, until the audience smile benignantly when he crawls out of sight, like a fly, among the painted clouds of the ceiling.

At length Tib was wafted to the shores of the West again.

What glory to have entered a Golden Gate with the sails of his yacht inflated by the cold wind, icy from the breath of arctic peak, the raw, keen purity of lofty sierras, as he surveyed the scene, standing on the ivory decks!

Alas! that fame is only purchased at so high a price.

The owl was obliged to take his place meekly among other passenger birds on a public steamship.

The evening shadows shrouded the glittering track of waters, lights flashed on the level piers, crested the hills with beacon rays of welcome, twinkled in an undulating line of valley, mirrored tiny boat and stately ship, slender bowsprit and heavy hull in the calm depths of the harbor.

Everywhere gayety and brilliant illumination.

The youngest daughter of the West had planted her standard on a smiling shore, the sea breaking at her feet in waves of wealth from the remote East, bringing dusky natives of the lands toward the rising sun to enrich barren, rocky wastes with patient Oriental care, and the mountains of the background, clasping her in their sheltering embrace, veined with the richest treasures of gold and silver. Across the intervening space dividing her from a former home thrilled the tidings of every hour with electric flash, and through the granite heart of nature's sternest wilderness extended smooth bands of iron uniting her with the whole world.

The guinea-pig was there in advance of owl junior, boring industriously in abandoned mines, accepting the scraps and gleanings of every employment, soberly persistent in getting gain, and sending his bones back to the guinea-pig empire eventually.

Tib, the traveller, surveyed the land, saw the gold spike, which fettered the completed labor to the brink of the sea, driven firmly in its appointed place amidst the acclamation

of glad multitudes, and stepping jauntily into a palace-car of the Terrific Railroad was whirled away.

Such a famous ride!

Past villages and cities embowered among orchards and vineyards, the rose-bloom of oleanders, the clustering sweetness of heliotropes and fuchsias, luxuriant hedges of vivid scarlet, thickets of glossy-leaved plants, all mingling their aromatic perfumes in the sun's hot rays.

Past narrow cañons where smooth rivers danced lightly along in search of green meadows and flower-fringed banks; hillsides honey-combed with the drills of miners eagerly tracing glittering threads, with wooden troughs of trickling water-rills marking the line of labor, and trains of laden mules wending their way along giddy ledges; lakes framed in rocky heights, crimson in the glories of sunset, with the purple twilight lurking around the base of cliffs, and spreading mellow tints over the harsh outlines of the hills.

Stately mountains frowned down from inaccessible summits, the clear atmosphere revealing each immense shadowless dome in sharp distinctness, every rift and scar of time or tempest, disdainful of screening mist and softening distance. Bald, severe, and magnificent, they opened the vista of gorges, precipices, crags, and ledges, untrudged, save by shy wild creatures, to curious eyes, and the shrill notes of steam rang and echoed from peak to peak, all nature quivering in sudden terror, disturbing the unbroken silence of

centuries. Forests of pines, firs, and balsams, swaying their plumes and tassels in the boisterous frolic of the wind, merged into plains of wormwood and sage, belts of azure flowers, and oceans of billowing grass where shadows dimpled the level surface.

Progress startled the sober buffalo in the peaceful retreat of pasture lands. Progress drove the humble little prairie-dog and rattlesnakes from ancestral halls, caused the timid antelope to flee before its noisy life, while the lord of the soil welcomed it with derisive war-whoop of scornful indifference.

Oh, it was glorious!

The owl flew on through miles and leagues of space, with quickened pulse answering in responsive throb to the congenial energy of home influences again.

Not that he intended ever to be anything but a foreigner in his native land, after all he had learned abroad. Dear, no! Still he was conscious of a glowing enthusiasm, a sense of exultation to be spinning along at such a rate of speed over a railroad which formed one of the wonders of his age. Next to flying, buoyed up by airy pinions, to travel on the Terrific Railroad was the most exhilarating sensation to Young America.

To plunge, with a diabolical shriek of locomotive, into the obscurity of long wooden tunnels nailed securely to the mountain-side, and rush at a galloping, tearing pace through

the shed, boxed to all intents and purposes, with a pleasing uncertainty existing whether the other extremity may be in flames, kindled by floating sparks, or the lord of the soil's torch of savage hatred, or not, excites the nerves agreeably.

To glide and twine around curves in the darkness of night, facing terrible phantoms in the obscurity, grinning lords of the soil again, perhaps an opposing steam monster with its guardian nodding drowsily preparatory to the sleep of eternity in store, which might send one bounding down sheer granite walls thousands of feet, keeps a traveller's imagination active.

The young owl enjoyed it, revelled in the sense of danger, would have liked to sit on the roof to serve as a target for a stray bullet, a whistling arrow, or ride on the engine, so as literally to be "in at the death!"

The first welcome Tib received when he entered the City of the Future was from the goose father, who called him "my dear fellow," and "my young friend."

Tib was unmoved by these blandishments. He felt gratified, and acknowledged this gratitude by an additional swagger of manner, and he fully intended to turn the goose father's condescension to good account; yet he was not the same bird he had been when he sailed in the fairy yacht—he had grown several inches in importance, and appreciated his own worth.

Incidentally the goose father alluded to an acquaintance existing between Tib and his daughter Tilly-Lilly.

Incidentally Tib ascertained that she was still *Miss Tilly-Lilly*, and having acquired this amount of information, he maintained a masterly inactivity.

This course made the goose father uneasy and alarmed. He bitterly regretted his daughter's folly in snubbing the prosperous owl while pursuing the shadow of a cardinal bird, and there were certain furrows on the smooth countenance of the great goose induced by the reckless extravagance of the goose son and heir. He had felt assured that a bland cordiality of welcome would encourage the owl to bridge the terrible chasm separating their respective grades of society, and instead Tib showed a frightful tendency to wink one eye and remark :

“With money I can take my choice. Perhaps Tilly-Lilly has faded since I saw her.”

The goose father turned green at the idea, and bade Tilly-Lilly to dress becomingly when the owl called.

The owl family found their darling boy very much improved indeed — so improved that he could find nothing in the old home nest sufficiently good for his fastidious and enlightened taste.

He advised Papa Owl to take toast and tea, or a cup of coffee for breakfast, instead of eating a heavy meal that might give an ostrich indigestion. This was sound advice,

but the choleric old bird, although sinking under the infirmities of years, bade him "go to the devil," with a spark of former spirit.

He criticized the Miss Owls' accent, desired them to eat less pastry and take more exercise, snubbed them if they expressed an opinion on the most trivial matter, and soon established the fact that never a bird in the nest knew anything besides himself. It was agreeable to his feelings to be able to retaliate upon his family for foreign indifference and ignorance of his nationality, in much the same spirit that each successive grade of officer snubs an inferior, if the captain of a man-of-war rises in an ill-humor to scold the lieutenant, until the whole spleen is vented in the kick which the midshipman bestows upon the sailor.

The mother owl, firm in her adoration of the graceless owlet, drifted into the wildest mazes of cookery, helplessly bewildered, yet never suiting his epicurean palate, while all the pepper in the culinary department got into the cook's temper, producing frequent explosions and dismissals.

The star of the owl race was in the ascendant. Tib's insolence and assurance carried him to lofty heights where good Papa Owl had never climbed.

His dear friend, the butterfly vicomte, came across the ocean to visit him, with playful and graceful effusions of affection.

These attentions the vicomte speedily transferred to the

prettiest owl daughter, (that having been his original intention in making Tib's acquaintance,) and she departed accordingly in great state and glory to dwell in the City of Amusements. She adapted herself to her new mode of life with the same facility which had characterized her brother. No one would have recognized in Madame la Vicomtesse Papillon, with her fashionable indifference to home-life, her devotion to dress, her polite frigidity to monsieur when she happened to meet him, as he airily pursued his pleasures while she chose her own, a plain American bird.

Nor was the other Miss Owl less successful in her way, for she purchased a handsome turkey of high connection, and devoted her energies to dressing him prettily, giving him plenty of pocket-money to spend on his little amusements at the club. The turkey would have risen to brilliant eminence in the study of law, if she had allowed him to tax his precious brains; but she preferred that he should serve as a beautiful walking-stick to support her footsteps through life.

Papa Owl offered Tib the fashionable nest, and the son consented to occupy the site, but the nest must be pulled down—not a stone of it would answer—and another erected. This last shock of astonishment finished the old bird; he was gathered to his fathers, and Tib reigned in his place.

So the new nest was built by a butterfly architect, of the

rarest woods and the costliest marbles, and all the town came to gaze admiringly at the gems of art with which Tib adorned it. Yes, it was superb in its chaste simplicity, and evinced much better taste than Papa Owl's nest, which had been gaudy with excess of rich hues; the ignorant old bird having supposed that carpets soft to the foot and colors gay to the eye embodied luxurious wealth. There was another cause of satisfaction in the young owl's residence: it cost as much as it possibly could, and all the world knew it.

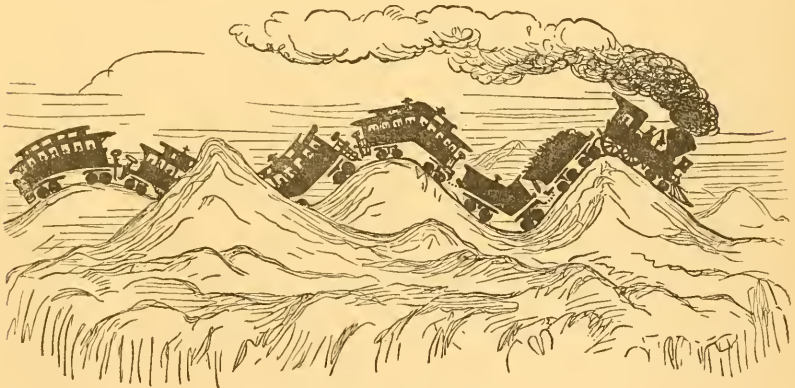
Who presides over the splendid establishment, gathering the ribbons firmly in her dainty fingers and guiding the glittering chariot of fashion as its acknowledged leader? Who but the lovely Tilly-Lilly, with the pensive melancholy of disappointment occasionally heightening her charms, as the dream of ambition and Princess Bobiolanciotti faded.

Who smiles approval on son-in-law Tib, with all his vulgarity, and tells the romantic little tale of the two young people meeting first in foreign lands, just as if the polite listener could not peep behind the mask, smile at the hollow, elf-queen shell of appearances? Who but the courteous goose father, with those curious little lines traced on his fine face by the sharp chisel of care?

Tib has no employment, the old owl having grubbed together sufficient money, and views superciliously those humble birds who drudge for daily bread, with a contempt sadly out of place in the lineal descendant of a mouse

caterer. He has no intellectual amusements or refined tastes. He has none of the nerve and energy which has united his country into a compact whole — he will drift with the current wherever it may lead, and never battle against it. He is a weak copy of others; and while a desire to introduce the beauty and polish of older nations to a new community is always commendable, he cultivates traits that can never assimilate with his native soil.

His principal energies are devoted to bowing in the dust before diplomatic and distinguished foreigners, who drink his wine, accept his hospitality, then ridicule his pretensions. However well calculated to adorn society, the American owl will never be a hero, and his like are many in the land.



CROSSING THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.



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