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1878

PAPERS

HUMOROUS AND PATHETIC.

PAPERS

HUMOROUS AND PATHETIC:

BEING SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

REVISED AND ABRIDGED BY THE AUTHOR

FOR PUBLIC READING.



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P R E F A C E.

MESSRS. TINSLEY, the esteemed firm who have published some half score of books of mine during as many years, have asked me to make a selection from the works which they hold in such a manner as to render the papers suitable for public reading; and I have done their bidding: to their satisfaction, I hope, although scarcely, I must confess, to my own; since I have been forced, with a view towards sparing the time and the patience of a possibly popular audience, to make very great excisions in the articles printed in this volume. The pruning knife, habitually, and the axe, occasionally, have been used: and to be called upon to mutilate one's own offspring is, to say the least, painful. The father of a numerous progeny should properly, I think, be as fond of his weakest, most rickety and most deformed bantling as of his shapeliest son or his comeliest daughter; and he is the best parent who is unable to tell which of his children he loves

most. If there be any swans among my geese it is for the public, and not for me, to judge. I may mention, however, that one paper in this collection was originally printed in *Household Words* in 1851, and has consequently more than attained its majority. Its reversionary interest in the favour of the public was disposed of (on very liberal terms) many years ago; and it may have but little to inherit in the way of criticism, now that it has come of age. I may further remark that the article in question, 'The Key of the Street,' was not by any means my first printed offence. My original sin was committed, I think, in the columns of the *Family Herald*, and in the shape of a burlesque story bearing on the Railway Mania, in the year 1845; but the kindly acceptance of the 'Key of the Street' by the late Mr. CHARLES DICKENS did in reality lead me to the adoption of the profession of letters as a serious and responsible vocation. Mr. DICKENS had no sooner published my 'Key' than he began, like his own *Oliver Twist*, to 'ask for more;' I continued to write 'more' for him during eighteen years; and I am still writing 'more' in the journal conducted by his son. I have seen in print, both in this country and in the

United States, a number of paragraphs in which the circumstances under which the 'Key of the Street' was written were related in a more or less absurd manner. Not many of my readers, perhaps, desire any enlightenment whatever on the subject; but there are always a few people who are anxious to know whether the author of a tale has really been himself the hero of the adventures he describes; and whether it was indeed Paul Ferroll who wrote that startling narrative of the killing of Paul Ferroll's wife. For the benefit of such inquisitive souls I will state thus much: that more than one-and-twenty years since, being at the time the landlord of an eligible twelve-roomed house, in Wellington Street, Strand, hard by the then office of *Household Words*, I happened one night to be locked out of my own dwelling; and that I did actually walk the streets, shelterless, until next morning, with my receipts for rent and taxes duly paid in my pocket. The documents, unhappily, were not of a nature to be discounted by the 'private gentlemen' or 'retired tradesmen,' who are always so benevolently ready to assist 'persons in want of temporary accommodation.' Since then I have walked the streets all nights bedless, in times of political or festive stress,

many times, and in many countries—notably in Alsace and Lorraine, in Venetia, and in the Tyrol; but the occasions were those when I had plenty of cash, but when beds were not procurable for love or money. In 1851 I beat the London pavement with desolate hoof, simply because I had no bed whither to repair, and no more money than the sum I have set down in print. The statement may be as inelegant as Ben Jonson's retort to John Sylvester; but, as Ben cogently remarked, it is True.

January, 1872.

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HUMOROUS PAPERS.

I.

THE CONVERSION OF COLONEL QUAGG.

SOME of our religions in the States are not so well paid. Down Punkington way, now, they have a religion with a chandelier; at least the chapel in which Reverend Rufus P. Pillsbury officiates has one. That religion has a bell, and a weathercock, and a flight of steps of General Buffum's patent scagliola adamant, and columns with Corinthian fixings outside—bright and handsome. There's another religion in those parts though, that has no better chapel than a loft, formerly used for warehousing dry goods; and our citizens have to go to worship up a ladder, and through a trap-door. Elder Peabody Eagle proposed that they should have a crane outside the

building, as was the case in Baggby Brothers', the former proprietors' time, and so hoist the congregation up like cotton or molasses; but the proposition, though practical, was thought irreverent, and came to nothing. Reverend Doctor Nathan Flower, who officiated over the dry goods, was very poorly off. Indeed, people said that he had nothing under his black doctor of divinity's gown but a shirt and pants, and that his whole income did not amount to two hundred dolls. a-year; whereas Reverend Rufus P. Pillsbury had a clear seven or eight hundred; besides a store of silk gowns as stiff as boards, and that rustled beautifully; white cambric handkerchiefs by the whole dozen; a real diamond ring; starched collars and bands by scores; and, better than all, the run of all his congregation's sympathies and houses, which was worth I don't know how many corncakes and cups of tea every day; besides comforters, over-shoes, umbrellas, gold watches, silver teapots, self-acting coffee-biggins, and select libraries of theology, given or sent to him in the way of testimonials in the course of the year, without end.

Folks do say, too, that when Reverend Rufus was in the ministry down South,

before he came to Punkington, he was even still richer in worldly goods, for that he owned something mentionable in niggers. But you know how folks will talk.

Punkington is in Buffum county, Mass. There are a good many religions there. They don't quite hate each other; strive, speechify, write and talk against each other, as seems to be indispensable with orthodoxy and heterodoxy in Britain. Each religion gets along pretty well as it can: some grandly, some poorly, from Reverend Rufus P. Pillsbury with his chandelier, stiff silk gown and diamond ring, down to Reverend Lovejoy Snowdrop, who is quite black, and preaches to the coloured people (they can sing, some—coloured people can) down in a little crazy affair sot up with planks and sailcloth close to the wharf, and which is more like a wash-house than a chapel.

It may be ten years ago that there was a religion in rather a small way in Punkington, called the Grace-Walking Brethren. They had originally been called the Punkington Secceders; but, coalescing with Reverend Pygrave Clapp—who had just sloped from Coonopolis, Ga., where he had had a slight difficulty with the citizens on the Freesoil

(whole ticket) question, which ended by his being ridden on a rail out of the State, and a report being spread abroad that the darkness of his complexion came from his having been tarred; and that under his clothes he was feathered like a bird—coalescing with this persecuted Testifier, the amalgamated ticket was thenceforward known as Grace-Walking. They encountered some little opposition at first. The Baal-Peor congregation (brass band connexion) felt it incumbent upon them to denounce and repudiate the Grace-Walkers as Erastians, Ebionites, Arminians, Socinians, nigger-saviours, shoulder-hitters, money-diggers, and traders in shin-plasters; Reverend Lysander Sphoon published a card in the Punkington Sphynx and Commercial Advertiser, in which he accused Reverend Barkley Baggs, of the Grace-Walkers, of whittling in the pulpit, chewing in the vestry, and having a bust of Tom Paine over his bookcase. Reverend B. B. retorted by another card in the Punkington Sibyl and North-and-South Buffum Oracle, in which he alluded to the well-known story of Reverend L. Sphoon having been in early life in Sing-Sing penitentiary for picking up things on the wharf; adding some little anecdotes concerning what

he had done subsequently in the wooden nutmeg trade, the clocks-that-wouldn't-figure trade, the school-teaching trade, the spirit-rapping trade, the tarred-oakum-imitation-India-rubber trade, the temperance-lecturing trade, and the whisky-selling trade. He regretted that his sacerdotal character precluded him from cowhiding Reverend L. Spphoon the first time he met him in town; but offered to match any one of his lay-elders against his opponent's deacons, and to forfeit fifty dolls. if the former left a strip of skin broader than a finger on the body of the latter after half an hour's 'licking.'

This was the only feud of any consequence in which the Grace-Walking Brethren were concerned. They were peaceful, decent, harmless bodies enough, minding their own business, not interfering with that of anybody else, and our citizens took to them kindly. Their congregation soon began to multiply in number, and they had chapels at Marathon, Squashborough, Lower Whittle, Thermopylæ, Jeffersonville, and East Halleluia. Within a year from their establishment they had five circuits within a fifty-mile circle of Punkington.

Now a circuit, you must understand, may

comprehend five, ten, fifteen, twenty congregations; and, the religion not being quite rich enough to entertain a minister for each separate congregation, there are so many circuits—religious ‘beats,’ in fact—each of which is assigned to a different clergyman, who goes the round thereof in turn. Punkington circuit, including as it did the townships of Eggnogville, Bunkum, and Beersheba, together with Rapparoarer city and the villages of Snakesby, Fiscopolis, New Marseilles, Globbs, and Ephesus, was a very popular circuit indeed. There were always dreadful handsome girls at preachings and camp meetings, and plenty of comfortable farm-houses where the ministers were entertained with such delicacies in the way of pork fixings, mush, hominy, johnnycakes, canvas-backed ducks, pumpkin pies, squash, whitepot, curds, molasses, turkeys, hams, and apple pasties; with elder wine, and perhaps a small drop of peach brandy or Monongahela whisky, that would have brought water into the mouth of a London alderman all cloyed and soggy from a tortoise dinner at Guildhall, or a proud British nobleman surfeited with the luxuries of a regal banquet at the court of St. James’s. The country round Punkington was pretty and

picturesome; and the brethren walked in grace with meekness and devoutness. There was but one thing wanting to make the whole circuit one real land of milk and honey; or, rather, there was one thing that turned it into a land of gall and wormwood—of soreness of flesh and bitterness of spirit; and that thing was an individual; and that individual was Colonel Quagg.

A dreadful man, a skeery man, a man to waken snakes and rile monkeys was Colonel Quagg. Goliah Washington Quagg was his name; and two and a half miles from Punkington did he locate, on the main road to Rapparoarer city. He was six foot three without his stockings, which would have made him, in jackboots, screeching tall to look at. He had a bushy beard and whiskers, and the integument that covered his bones was hard and horny as a crab-shell. The hair of his head was like a primeval forest, for it looked as though it had never been lopped, combed, weeded, or trimmed. His eyes were fearful to look upon when they flashed, and they flashed almost always. He ate so much that people said he was hollow all through—legs, arms, and all—and packed his food from the feet upwards. Some people compared him to a

locomotive, for he was always smoking, drinking, roaring, and coming into collision with other folks. He compared himself to a Mississippi steamboat with the safety-valves tied down with rope-yarn. 'Rosin me up, and stand on my boilers,' he used to cry. 'Give me goss and let me rip. Strangers, pay your bills, and liquor up once more before you die, for I must lick every 'coon of you or bust.' He was always licking 'coons. He licked a backwoodsman; four 'Bowery bhoys' from New York, one after the other; an Irish hod-carrier (with one hand), and an English prize-fighter. They sot a giant out of a menagerie at him once, and the giant closed with him, and was heard, soon afterwards, to crack like a nut. The giant said (after he was cracked) that it was a darned, tarnation, everlasting shame it was; for he had gone in to whip a man, not a grisly bear.

Colonel Quagg was a blacksmith. He was not by any means the sort of blacksmith that Professor Longfellow has described. He had no boys to sit in the church among, no little daughter to hear singing in the choir. He was not the sort of blacksmith *I* saw once, during my travels in Europe, in a little village in the south of France, and who, on a broiling

July day, was hammering away at his anvil with might and main,—in his shirt, and with his hair in curl papers; for it was Sunday, and there was to be a fête in the village in the evening. No. Colonel Quagg was a very different kind of Mulciber: not a harmonious blacksmith or a learned blacksmith; but a roaring, rampagious, coaly, knotty, sooty Vulcan of a man. To hear him shout out hoarsely to 'Zeek, his long, lank, bellows-blower: to see him whirl his tremendous hammer above his head as though it had been a feather, and bring it down upon the iron on his anvil with such a monstrous clang that the sparks flew about, and the flames leaped up the chimney and tripped up the heels of the smoke, as if they were frightened out of their wits. This was a sight—grand if you like, but fearful.

The coloneley of Goliah Quagg arose from his command of the Rapparoarer Tigers. These redoubtable volunteers were (of course) the ægis of the Union, and the terror of Buffium County. On fourth of July day they fired off so many rounds of musketry that their eventually blowing themselves up with gunpowder was thought to be by no means a matter of extreme improbability. The Rappa-

roarer Screamer newspaper teemed with cards headed 'Rappararer Tigers, attention!' and commanding the attendance of the corps at reviews, burials or weddings of members, or political meetings. Colonel Quagg, in his Tiger uniform, at the head of his corps, vowing vengeance against the Punkington National Guards, the Lower Whittle Fire Corps; the Squashborough Invincibles; the Bunkum Defenders; the East Halleluia Hussars (between which last-named volunteers and the Tigers there had occurred a deadly fray at the corners of Seventh Street and Slog Avenue, Punkington; the Hussars being at last obliged to take refuge in a liquor store in the next block, and two eyes and unnumbered double teeth being left on the field): Colonel Quagg brandishing his sabre and threatening gouging, cowhiding, and eternal chawing-up to creation in general and rival militia and fire-corps in particular, was a great and glorious sight to see once, perhaps twice, but not oftener; for the sun at noonday dazzles, and distance lends enchantment to the voice of a powder magazine, or Vesuvius, or a mad dog.

Colonel Quagg had neither wife nor relations, chick nor child. He lived behind the smithy, in a grim cabin; where, for aught anybody

knew, he slept on the bones of his enemies, or kept bears and wolves, or burned brimstone and Bengal lights in his stove. Where he was raised was not certain. What he did on Sundays (for he never went to church or meetings, and could not, in deference to our citizens, work in his smithy on the Sabbath) was not known. There were but two things about him on which arguments could be, with tolerable certainty, held. That he liked rum—raw—which he drank in vast quantities without ever winking, or being intoxicated; and that he hated the Grace-Walking Brethren.

What these or any other brethren had ever done to incur his dislike was not stated; but it was clear and certain that he hated them fiercely and implacably. He declaimed against them in drinking bars; he called them opprobrious names in the street; and, which was particularly disagreeable to the brethren themselves, he made a point of giving every minister who passed his smithy—on horse or on foot, on business or pleasure—a sound and particularly humiliating beating.

Colonel Quagg's method was this. 'Zeek, the long, lanky assistant, would, as he blew the bellows, keep a sharp look-out through a little round hole in the smithy wall. When,

on the crest of the little hill in the valley beneath which the smithy lay (the bridge over the Danube, leading to Punkington, was in the other direction), there appeared the devoted figure of a Grace-Walking clergyman, 'Zeek would call out, 'One o' 'em, Colonel!' Whereupon the blacksmith would lay down his hammer, and say grimly, 'Zeek, "ile."'

The 'ile,' or oil, being brought, the colonel would therewith anoint a tremendous leather strap, in size and appearance between the trace for a cart-horse and the lathe for a steam-engine. Then would he sally forth, tug the luckless preacher by one leg off his horse if he happened to be riding, or grapple him by the collar of his coat if he were a-foot, and thrash him with the strap—not till he howled for mercy, for the victim always did *that* at the very first stroke of the terrible leather, but till his own brawny arm could no longer hold the mighty weapon. All this was accompanied by a flood of abuse on the part of the Colonel: the minister, his congregation, sect, person, and presumed character, were all animadverted upon; and, after having been treated with brutality, he was dismissed with scorn, with a sardonic recommendation to send as many more of his brethren that way as he could, to

be served in the same way. Then, execution being done, and the miserable victim of his ferocity gone on his bruised way towards Punkington, the colonel would stride into Silas B. Powkey's tavern over the hill, hot, perspiring, and fatigued; and, throwing his strap on the bar, and seating himself on a puncheon, would throw his legs aloft, half in weariness half in triumph, even till they reached the altitude of the mantelpiece, would there rest them, and, ejecting a mighty stream of tobacco juice, cry :

‘Squire, strapped another Grace-Walker :
Rum.’

Now this, as in the celebrated Frog and Boy case (*vide* spelling-book reports), albeit excellent sport to one party concerned, was death to the other. Martyrdom had not exactly been contracted for when the Grace-Walking Brethren entered the ministry; and without martyrdom there was no riding the Punkington circuit. There was no avoiding the colonel and his awful strap. There was no going round another way. There was no mollifying, persuading, or infusing soft pity into the colonel's breast. ‘I licks ye,’ he was wont to reply when interceded with, ‘because I kin, and because I like, and because ye'se

critturs that licks is good for. Skins ye have on and skins I'll have off; hard or soft, wet or dry, spring or fall. Walk in grace if ye like till pumpkins is peaches; but licked ye must be till your toenails drop off and your noses bleed blue ink.' And licked they were accordingly.

What was to be done with such a man—a man with this dreadful fixed idea of strapping clergymen—a man with an indomitable will, a strong arm, and an abusive tongue? Warrants, summonses, exigents, and actions for battery, the colonel laughed to scorn. 'As much law as you like,' he said, 'but not one lick will that save you.' The female members of the Grace-Walking congregation were fain to write anonymous letters to him, exhorting him to repentance. Reverend Joash M^rTear wrote to Lucretia Z. Tackebogues of Grim-gribberopelis, Va., the celebrated table-turner and spirit-rapper, and begged her to consult a four-legged mahogany of extraordinary talent and penetration with reference to Colonel Quagg's persecution of the saints. He received in reply a highly flattering and interesting communication from the spirits of Cleopatra and Johanna Southcote, in which it was confidently predicted that shortly after the

passing of the Maine liquor law in Holland, and the adoption of Bloomerism at the British court, Colonel Quagg would be bound in leathern straps for five hundred years; which, all things taken into consideration, was not a very encouraging look-out for the Grace-Walkers. Then they took to holding public meetings, mass meetings, indignation meetings, against him; then to praying for him; then to praying to be delivered from him as from a serpent or fiery dragon. One bright spirit of the sect suggested bribery, either directly, by the enclosure of dollar-notes, or indirectly, by the encouragement of the colonel's trade in having horses shod at his smithy. But both artifices failed. The colonel took the first ten-dollar bill that was offered him, and administered a more unmerciful thrashing than ordinary to the giver—as a receipt, he said. The next victim happened to have a horse that opportunely cast both his fore-shoes in front of the colonel's residence. The enemy of Grace-Walkers shod the beast; but the only benefit that its proprietor derived from giving Quagg his custom was the privilege of being strapped inside the smithy instead of out of it, and the threat that the next time he presumed to come that way he should be laid

on the anvil and beaten as flat as a wheel-tire with a red-hot crowbar.

✱ This state of things was growing intolerable. The more the brethren went on preaching, the more the Colonel went on licking. The more they beat the—

‘Pulpit drum ecclesiastic
With fist instead of *a* stick,’

the more Colonel Quagg proved his doctrine orthodox—

‘By apostolic blows and knocks.’

The Punkington circuit began to lack ministers. Clergymen were not forthcoming. The pulpits were deserted. The congregations began to cry out. No wonder. Devotion, meekness, self-abnegation are all admirable qualities in their way, but human nature, after all, is not cast-iron. It will wrestle with wild beasts at Ephesus, but it does not exactly love to wrestle when the wild beasts are twisting the bars of their cage, and have not had a shin-bone to feed on for three weeks. To put one’s head into the lion’s mouth is good once in a way; but it is hardly prudent to do so when the lion’s tail begins to wag, and his mane to bristle, and his eyes to flash fire and fury.

There was a meeting held at Punkington to decide upon what ministers should go the ensuing Spring circuit; [just as, in Europe, the Judges meet to arrange among themselves who shall go a-hanging and where.] The question of Colonel Quagg was debated in solemn conclave: for, though all the other places in the circuit found ready volunteers, not one clergyman could be found to offer to administer to the spiritual necessities of the Rapparorers brethren. Brother M'Tear had a bad cold; Brother Brownjohn would rather not; Brother Knash had a powerful call down Weepingway; Brother Bobberlink would next time—perhaps. Brother Slocum gave a more decided reason than any one of his brother ministers. He said that he would be eternally licked if he'd go, because he'd be sure to be considerably licked if he went.

A brother who, up to that time, had said little or nothing—a long, thin, loose-limbered brother, with a face very like a quince more than three parts withered—who sat in the corner of the room during the debate, with his legs curled up very much in the fashion of a dog:—a brother, to say the truth, of whose abilities a somewhat mean opinion was entertained, for he was given to stammering, blushing, hem-

ming, hawing, scraping with his feet, and seemed to possess no peculiar accomplishment save the questionable one of shutting one eye when he expectorated—this brother, by name Zephaniah Sockdolloger, here addressed himself modestly to speech:—

‘Thorns,’ he said, ‘isn’t good eating; stinging-nettles isn’t pleasant handling, without gloves; nor is thistles comfortable, worn next to the skin. Corns is painful. Man’s skin was not made to be flayed off him like unto the hide of a wild cat. But vocation is vocation, and dooty, dooty—some. I, Zephaniah Sockdolloger, will go on the Rapparoarer location, and if Brother Brownjohn will lone me his hoss I will confront the man—even Goliah Quagg.’ After which the devoted brother shut one eye and expectorated.

The meeting turned their quids and expectorated too; but without shutting their eyes. They adopted the long brother’s disinterested proposition, *nem. con.* But Brother Bobberlink whispered to Brother Slœcum that he had allers thought Zephaniah Sockdolloger considerable of a fool, and that now he knowed it—that was a fact.

The fire roared, the sparks flew up the chimney, and the bellows blew fiercely one

April evening; and Colonel Quagg and his anvil were in fierce dispute about a red hot horseshoe. The Colonel had the advantage of a hammer that Tubal Cain might have wielded when he fashioned the first plough-share; but the anvil was used to hard knocks, and stood out against the blacksmith bravely. Indeed, if a certain metallic vibration was to be taken into account, the anvil had the best of it; for it had the last word. Only the unfortunate horseshoe came to grief; and, like the man between two stools who came to the ground, was battered into all sorts of shapes between the two disputants. Suddenly, 'Zeek, the bellows-blower, ceased for a moment in his occupation, and remarked:

'One 'o them, Colonel, top o' the hill. On a hoss. Legs as long as a coulter.'

'Twankeydillo! twankeydillo!'^{*} sung out Colonel Quagg in great exultation. 'Ile, 'Zeek, and plenty of it for Jack Strap, the crittur, is getting tarnation rusty.'

The fatal strap being 'iled' rather more liberally than usual, the Colonel grasped it in his mighty hand, and passed out of the smithy door.

* Twankeydillo is the burden of an old country blacksmith's song.

He saw, coming towards him down the hill, a long-legged, yellow-faced man in black, with a white neckcloth and a broad brimmed hat. He bestrode a solemn-looking, white horse with a long tail. He had but one spur (the rider) but it was a very long and rusty spur. In his hand he carried a little dog's-eared book ; but, as he rode, he sung quite softly a little hymn that ran something like unto the following :—

‘ We are marching through the gracious ground,
We soon shall hear the trumpet sound ;
And then we shall in glory reign,
And never, never, part again.

What, never part again ?

No, never part again.

No, never, never, never, &c.

And then we shall, &c.’

Colonel Quagg waited till the verse of the hymn was quite finished, and the horseman had got to within a couple of yards of his door, when he called out in a terrible voice,

‘ Hold hard !’

‘ Brother,’ said the man on the horse, ‘ good evening and peace.’

‘ For the matter of that,’ responded Colonel Quagg, ‘ rot ! Hold hard, and git out of that hoss.’

‘Brother?’ the other interrogated, as if not quite understanding the command.

‘Git out, I tell you,’ cried the blacksmith. ‘Legs and feet. Git out, you long-tailed blackbird. Git out, for I’m riz, and snakes will wake! I want to talk to you.’

The long man slid rather than got off his horse. It was indeed, Brother Zephaniah Sockdolloger; for his face was quincier than ever, and, as he descended from his steed, he shut one eye and expectorated.

‘Now,’ said the blacksmith, seating himself on the horse block in front of his dwelling, and giving a blow on the ground with his strap that made the pebbles dance. ‘Where do you hail from?’

‘From Punkington city, brother,’ answered the reverend Zephaniah.

‘And whar are you a goin’ tu?’

‘To Rappararer city.’

‘And what may you be goin’ for to du in that location?’

‘Goin’ on circuit.’

‘What?’

‘Lord’s business, brother.’

Colonel Quagg shook out the strap to its full length, and passed it through his horny hand.

‘There was a brother of yours,’ he said sententiously, ‘that went to Rapparoarer city on Lord’s business last fall. He passed this edifice he did. He met this strap close by here. And this strap made him see comets, and dance like a shaking Quaker, and feel uncommon like a bob-tailed bull in fly-time.’

There was something so dreadfully suggestive in the position of a bob-tailed bull in fly-time (the insects frequently kill cattle with their stings) that Brother Sockdologer wriggled uneasily.

‘And I *du* hope,’ the Colonel continued, ‘that you, brother, aren’t of the same religion as this babe of grace was as met the strap as he was riding. That religion was the Grace-Walking religion, and that religion I always lick.’

‘Lick, brother?’

‘Lick. With the strap. Dreadful.’

‘Colonel Goliah Quagg,’ said the minister, ‘for such I know, is your name in the flesh, I *am* a preacher of the Grace-Walking connexion. Humble, but faithful, I hope.’

‘Then,’ returned Colonel Quagg, making an ironical bow, ‘this *is* the strap with which I am going to lick you into sarse.’

‘Brother, brother,’ the other cried, shaking

his head, 'cast that cruel strap from out of thine hand. Close thine hand, if thou wilt, upon the hammer of thy trade, the coultter of thy plough, upon a pen, the rudder of a ship, the handle of a lantern to light men to peace and love and goodwill; but close it not upon sword of iron, or bludgeon of wood, or strap of leathern hide. For, from the uplifting and downfalling of those wicked instruments came never good; but rather boiling tears, and bruises and blood, and misery, and death.'

'Now look you here,' the blacksmith cried, impatiently. 'Talk as long as you like; but talk while I am a-licking of you. For time is precious, and must not be thrown away nohow. Lick you I must, and lick you I will. Hard.'

'But, brother—but, Colonel——'

'Rot!' exclaimed the Colonel. 'Straps is waiting. Stubs and fences! I'll knock you into horseshoes and then into horsenails, if you keep me waiting.'

'Have you no merciful feelings?' asked Zephaniah, as if sorely troubled.

'Not a cent of 'em' Air you ready! Will you take it fighting, or will you take it lying down! Some takes it fighting; some takes it like lambs, lying down. Only make haste.'

‘Goliah Quagg,’ the minister responded, ‘I am a man of peace, and not one that goes about raging with sword and buckler, like unto Apollyon, or a corporal of the Boston Tigers; and I would rather not take it at all.’

‘You must,’ the Colonel roared, now fairly infuriated. ‘Pickled alligators! you must. Hold hard, you coon! Hold hard! for I’m a goin’ to begin. Now, once more; is it fighting, or is it quiet, you mean for to take it?’

‘Well,’ said Brother Zephaniah, ‘you are hard upon me, Colonel, and that’s true. It’s fighting or lying down, isn’t it?’

‘Aye,’ returned the colonel, brandishing his strap.

‘*Then I’ll take it fighting,*’ the man of peace said quietly.

Colonel Quagg halted for a moment, as if amazed at the audacity of the Grace-Walker. Then, with a wild halloo, he rushed upon him very much as a bob-tailed bull does rush about under the aggravating influence of flies. His hand was upon the minister’s collar; the strap that had done so much execution in its time was swinging high in the air, when——

Stay. Can you imagine the rage, astonishment, and despair of a schoolmaster caned by his pupil; of the Emperor of China sentenced to

be bamboozed by a Hong Kong coolie; of the beadle of the Burlington Arcade expelled therefrom by a boy with a basket; of a butler kicked by a footpage; of a Southern planter cowhided by one of his own niggers; of a Broadway dandy jostled by a newly landed Irish emigrant; of a policeman ordered to move on by an apple-woman; of the Commander-in-chief of the army desired to stand at ease by a drummer; of the Pope of Rome blessed with two fingers by a chorister boy? If you can imagine anything of that sort,—but only if you can,—you may be able to form some idea of how Colonel Quagg felt when a storm of blows, hard, well-directed, and incessant, began to fall on his head, on his breast, on his face, on his shoulders, on his arms, on his legs—all over his body, so rapidly that he felt as if he was being hit everywhere at once,—when he found his strap would hit nowhere on the body of his opponent, but that he himself was hit everywhere.

Sledgehammers! Sledgehammers were nothing to the fists of the Grace-Walking brother. A bob-tailed bull in fly-time was an animal to be envied in comparison to the Colonel. He danced with all the vigour of a nigger toeing and heeling a hornpipe. He saw more comets

than Tycho Brahe or Erra Pater ever dreamed of. He felt that he was all nose, and that a horribly swollen one. Then that he had swallowed all his teeth. Then that he had five hundred eyes, and then none at all. Then that his ribs went in and his blood came out. Then his legs failed under him, and he fell down all of a heap; or perhaps, to speak classically and pugilistically, he hit out wildly, felt groggy, and went down at the ropes. The tall brother went down atop of him, and continued pounding away at his body—not perhaps as hard as he could, but decidedly much harder than the Colonel liked—singing all the while the little hymn beginning

‘We are marching through the gracious ground,’

quite softly to himself.

‘Hold hard!’ gasped the Colonel at last, faintly. ‘You don’t mean murder, do you? You wont hit a man when he’s down, much more, will you, brother?’

‘By no means,’ answered Zephaniah, bringing down his fist nevertheless with a tremendous ‘bash’ upon the Colonel’s nose, as if there were a fly there, and he wanted to kill it. ‘But you’ve took it fighting, Colonel, and you may as well now take it like a lamb, lying down.’

‘But I’m broke, I tell you,’ groaned the vanquished blacksmith. ‘I can’t do no more. You air so mighty hard, you *are*.’

‘Oh! you give in, then?’

‘Aye,’ murmured Colonel Quagg, ‘I cave in.’

‘Speak louder, I’m hard of hearing.’

‘Yes!’ repeated the Colonel, with a groan. ‘I du cave in. For I’m beat; whittled clean away to the small end o’ nothing—chawed up—cornered.’

‘You must promise me one little thing, Colonel Goliah Quagg,’ said the Reverend Sockdologer, without however removing his knees from the Colonel’s chest. ‘You must promise before I leave off hammering of your body, never for to ill-treat by word or deed any of our people—ministers, elders, deacons, or brethren.’

‘I’ll promise,’ replied the Colonel; ‘only let me up. You’re choking me.’

‘Not to rile, lick, or molest any other peaceable critturs as are coming or going past your way upon Lord’s business.’

‘I promise,’ muttered the Colonel, who was now becoming purple in the face.

‘Likewise,’ concluded Zephaniah, playfully knocking away one of his adversary’s loose teeth, so as to make his mouth neat and tidy,

‘you must promise to give up drinking of rum; which is a delusion and a snare, and bad for the innards, besides being on the trunk-line to perdition. And finally, you must promise to come to our next camp meeting, clean shaved, and with a contrite heart.’

‘No,’ cried the almost-expiring Colonel, ‘I wont, not for all the toebacco in Virginnny! Nor yet for Martin Van Buren, or Dan’el Webster! Nor yet for to be postmaster!’

‘You wont, brother?’ asked Zephaniah, persuasively raising his fist.

‘No, I’m darned if I do.’

‘Then,’ said the Grace-Walker, meekly, ‘I must sing you another little hymn.’

Immediately afterwards Colonel Quagg’s tortures recommenced. He struggled, he roared, he entreated, but in vain. All he could see were the long man’s arms whirling about like the sails of windmills. All he could feel was the deadly pain of the blows on his already hideously bruised face and body. All he could hear was the snuffling voice of his tormentor singing, with an occasional stammer, a verse of a little hymn, commencing

‘I’m going home to bliss above—

Will you go, will you go?

To live in mercy, peace, and love—

Will you go, will you go?

My old companions fare you well,
A brighter fate has me befel,
I mean up in the skies to dwell,
Will you go, will you go?’

He could stand it no longer. He threw out his arms, and groaned, ‘Spare my life, and I’ll promise anything.’

‘Happy to hear it, Colonel,’ answered Brother Sockdologer, helping his adversary to rise, and then coolly settling his own white neck-cloth and broadbrimmed hat. ‘Perhaps you’ll be good enough to look after my hoss a bit. He cast a shoe just after I left Punkington.’

Colonel Quagg, quite humiliated and crest-fallen, proceeded to shoe the horse, which had been quietly cropping the stunted herbage while the Colonel was being licked. The operation finished, as well as Quagg’s bruised arms would permit, the Grace-Walker gravely handed him a coin, which the blacksmith as gravely took; then mounted his steed, and rode away. As for Zeek he had been hiding away somewhere during the combat. But he now appeared; and, to judge by the energetic manner in which he blew the bellows, and a certain grin overspreading his swarthy countenance, he seemed not altogether displeased at the discomfiture of his master.

Colonel Quagg had never read Shakspeare,

but he had unconsciously acted the part of Ancient Pistol. He had been compelled to eat the leek which he had mocked. He had been a woodmonger, and bought nothing of Brother Sockdologer but cudgels. He had taken a groat, too, to heal his pate. Let us hope, with Fluellen, that it was good for his wounded sconce.]

There is a seat at religious camp meetings in America called the 'anxious seat.' A camp meeting is not unlike a fair—a very pious one, of course; and the anxious seat is one on which sit the neophytes, or newly-entered—those who have anything to confess, anything to complain of, anything to disclose, or to tell, or to ask.

Upon the anxious seat at the next camp meeting near Rapparoarer city of the Grace-Walking Brethren sat Colonel Goliah Quagg. Amid a breathless silence, he frankly avowed his former evil course of life, narrated the events of his conversion by Brother Sockdologer, and promised amendment for the future. A brother, who had been reposing on a bench, with his limbs curled up after the manner of a dog—a long, yellow-faced brother, who had a curious habit of shutting one eye when he expectorated—rose to speak when the Colonel sat down. He expressed how happy he was to

have been the instrument of Colonel Quagg's conversion, and that the means he had employed, though somewhat rough, had been effectual. With much modesty, also, he alluded to his own conversion. It was not such a long time ago, he said, that he himself had been but as one of the wicked. He owned it with shame that he had at one time been one of the abandoned men called prize-fighters—a pugilist to be backed and betted on for hire and gain; and that he had beaten Dan Grummles, surnamed the Brooklyn Pet, in a stand up fight for two hundred dolls. a side.

Colonel Quagg has kept his promise. He left off rum and parson licking. He resigned the command of the Tigers, and is now, as Elder Quagg, one of the burning and shining lights among the Grace-Walking Brethren.





II.

LITTLE SAINT ZITA.

A CULINARY LEGEND.

ONLY yesterday,* the postman (he is a Parisian postman, and, in appearance, is something between a policeman and a field-marshal in disguise), brought me a deformed little card, on which was pasted an almanack with a whole calendar-full of saints, neatly tied up with cherry-coloured riband, accompanying the gift with the compliments of the season, and an ardent wish that the new year might prove *bonne et belle* to me; all of which meant that I should give him two francs, on pain of being denounced to the door-porter as a curmudgeon, to the landlord as a penniless lodger, and to the police as a suspicious cha-

* Twenty years ago.

racter. Musing over the little almanack, in the futile attempt to get two francs' worth of information out of it, I found a whole army of Saints, of whom I had never heard before, and I noticed the absence of a great many who are duly set down in another calendar I possess. Would you believe that neither Saint Giles nor Saint Swithin was to be found in my postman's hagiology—that no mention was made of Saint Waldeburga, or of the blessed Saint Wuthelstan; while on the other hand I found Saint Yon, Saint Fiacre, Saint Ovid, Saint Babylas, Saint Pepin, Saint Ponce, Saint Frisque, Saint Nestor, and Saint Pantaloon? Who was Saint Pantaloon? What do we know of these Saints in England? Where were Saint Willibald, Saint Winifred, Saint Edward the Confessor, and Saint Dunstan the nose-tweaker? Nowhere! Yet they must all have their days, their eyes, and morrows. Where, above all, was my little Saint Zita?

I have no memory for dates, and no printed information to go upon, so I am unable to state the exact year, or even century, in which Saint Zita flourished. But I know that it was in the dark ages, and that the Christian religion was young, and that is was con-

siderably more than one thousand five hundred years ago.

Now, Pomponius Cotta (I give him that name because it is a sounding one—not that I know his real denomination) was a noble Roman. He was one of the actors in that drama which Mr. Gibbon of London and Lausanne so elegantly described some centuries afterwards: ‘The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.’ It must have been a strange time, that Decline and Fall. Reflecting upon the gigantic, overgrown, diseased civilization of the wonderful empire, surrounded and preyed upon by savage and barbarous Goths and Visigoths, Vandals, Dacians, and Pannonians, I cannot help picturing to myself some superannuated old noble, accomplished, luxurious, diseased, and depraved—learned in *bon-mots* and scandalous histories of a former age, uselessly wealthy, corruptly cultivated, obsoletely magnificent, full of memories of a splendid but infamous life:—too old to reform, too callous to repent, cynically presaging a deluge after him, yet trembling lest that deluge should come while he was yet upon the stage, and wash his death-bed with bitter waters; who is the sport and mock, the unwilling companion and victim unable to help

himself, of a throng of rough, brutal, unpolished youngsters—hobbedehoyes of the new generation—who carouse at his expense, smoke tobacco under his nose, borrow his money, slap him on the back, and call him old fogey behind it, sneer at his worn-out stories, tread on his gouty toes, ridicule his old-fashioned politeness, and tie crackers to the back of his coat collar. Have you not seen the decline and fall of the Human Empire?

But Pomponius Cotta never recked, it is very probable, of such things. He might have occasionally expressed his belief, like some noble Romans of our own age and empire, that the country was going to the bad; but he had large revenues, which he spent in a right noble and Roman manner; and he laid whatever ugly misgivings he had in a Red Sea of Falernian and Chiajian. He had the finest mansion in Genoa; and you who know what glorious palaces the city of the Dorias and the Spinolas can yet boast of, even in these degenerate days, may form an idea of what marvels of marble, statuary, frescoes, and mosaics owned Pomponius Cotta for lord, in the days when there was yet a Parthenon at Athens, and a Capitol at Rome.

The noble Pomponius was a Christian, but

I am afraid only in a very slovenly, lukewarm, semi-pagan sort of way. As for his wife, the Domina Flavia Pomponia, she came of far too noble a Roman family, was far too great a lady, thought far too much of crimping her tresses, perfuming her dress, painting her face, giving grand entertainments, and worrying her slaves, to devote herself to piety; and though Onesimus, that blessed though somewhat unclean hermit, did often come to the Pomponian house and take its mistress roundly to task for her mundane mode of life, she only laughed at the good man; quizzed his hair shirt, and long thickly-peopled beard; and endeavoured to seduce him from his recluse fare of roots and herbs and spring-water, by pressing invitations to partake of dainty meals and draughts of hot wine.

I am not so uncharitable as to assume that all the seven deadly sins found refuge in the mansion of Pomponius Cotta, but it is certain that it was a very fortalice and citadel for one of them—namely, gluttony. There never were such noble Romans (out of Guildhall) as the Pomponii for guzzling and guttling, banqueting, junketing, feasting, and carousing. It was well that plate glass was not invented in these times, for the house was turned out

of windows regularly every day, and the major part of the Pomponian revenues would have been expended in glaziers' bills. But there were dinners, and suppers, and after-suppers. The guests ate till they couldn't move, and drank till they couldn't see. Of course they crowned themselves with flowers, and lolled upon soft couches, and had little boys to titillate their noses with rare perfumes, and pledged each other to the sounds of dulcet music; but they were an emerited set of gormandizers for all that, and richly deserved the visitation of the stern Nemesis that sate ever in the gate in the shape of the fair-haired barbarian, with the brand to burn, the sword to slay, and the hands to pillage. Or, like the Philistine lords, they caroused and made merry, unwotting of that stern, moody, blind Samson sitting apart yonder, with his hair all a-growing, and soon to rise in his might and pull the house down on their gluttonous heads. Or, like Belshazer's feasters, they were drunk in vessels of gold and silver, while the fingers of a man's hand were writing on the wall, and the Medes and Persians were at the gate.

It may easily be imagined that in such a belly-god temple—such a house of feasting and wassail—the cook was a personage of great

power and importance. Pomponius Cotta had simply the best cook not only in Genoa, but in Magna Græcia—not only in Magna Græcia, but in the whole Italian peninsula. But no man-cook had he—no haughty, stately *magister coquinæ*, no pedant in Apicius, or bigoted believer in Lucullus. Yet Pomponius was proud and happy in the possession of a culinary treasure—a real *cordon-bleu*, a Mrs. Glasse of the dark ages, a Miss Acton of antiquity, a Mrs. Rundell of Romanity; and this was no other than a little slave girl whom they called Zita.

We have all heard of the cook who boasted that he could serve up a leathern shoe in twenty-seven different phases of sauce and cookery. I never believed in him, and always set him down as a vapouring fanfaroon—a sort of copper-stewpan captain of cookery. But I have a firm belief that little Zita would have made everything out of anything or nothing culinary; that her stewed pump-handles would have been delicious, her *salmi* of bath-brick exquisite, her *croquettes* of Witney blanket unapproachable, her horsehair *en papillotes* a dish fit for a king. She cooked such irresistible dishes for the noble Pomponius that he frequently wept, and would have given her her

freedom had he not been afraid that she would be off and be married; that the noble Domina Pomponia was jealous of her, and that she would have led a sorry life had the Domina dared to cross her husband; that the guests of the Pomponian house wrote bad sapphics and dactyls in her praise, and would have given her necklaces of pearl and armlets of gold for gifts, but that the Roman finances were in rather an embarrassed condition just then, and that poor trust was dead with the Genoese jewellers.

Little Zita was very pretty; she must have been pretty—and she was. She was as symmetrical as one of Pradier's Bacchantes—as ripe and blooming as the grapes they press; but as pure as the alabaster of which they are made. Her complexion was as delicately, softly tinted as one of Mr. Gibson's Græco-Roman statues; her long hair, when she released it from its confining fillet, hung down about her like a king's mantle; she had wrists and ancles that only gold or gems were worthy to embrace: she had a mouth like a Cupid's bow, and eyes like almonds dyed in ebony: and teeth that were gates of ivory to the dreams of love, and nails like mother of pearl. She danced like *Arbuscula*, and sang like *Galeria*

Coppiola; and she cooked like an angel—as she Is.

None could serve up in such style the great standard dishes of Roman cookery. The wild boar of Troy, with honey, oil, flour, and *garum*; the Campanian sow fed from golden troughs, stuffed with chestnuts and spices, and brought to table whole with her nine little sucking pigs disposed around her in sweet sauce; the *vol-au-vents* of peacocks' tongues, and ortolans' eyes, and nightingales' brains. Yet, though great in these, she excelled in fanciful, ravishing, gem-like dishes—in what the French call *surprises*—in culinary epigrams, edible enigmas, savoury fables, poems that you could eat and drink. She had sauces, the secrets of which have gone to Paradise with her; she had feats of legerdemain in compounding dishes that no life-long apprenticeship could teach. And, withal, she was so saving, so economical, so cleanly in her arrangements, that her kitchen was like a street in the clean village of Brock (I should not like to pass half an hour even in Véfour's kitchen); and her noble master had the satisfaction of knowing that he gave the mightiest 'spreads' in Genoa at anything but an unreasonable or ruinous expense.

She was as honest as a child's smile, and quite regardless of kitchen stuff, perquisites, Christmas boxes from tradesmen; and the dangerous old crones who hang about the area and cried hare-skins.

Now, a pious cook is not considered, in these sceptical days, as a very great desideratum. A pious cook not unfrequently refuses to cook a Sunday's dinner, and entertains a non-serious grenadier on Sunday evening. I have seen many a kitchen drawer in which the presence of a hymn-book and the 'Cook's Spiritual Comforter' (price ninepence per hundred for distribution) did not exclude the company of much surreptitious cold fat and sundry legs of fowls that were not picked clean. Serious cooks occasionally wear their mistresses' black silk stockings to go to chapel in. My aunt had a serious cook who drank; and there is a legend in our family of a peculiarly evangelical cook who could not keep her hands off other people's pomatum. But little Zita was sincerely, unfeignedly, cheerfully, devotedly pious. She did not neglect her duties to pray: she rose up early in the morning before the cock crew, while her masters were sunk in drunken sleep, and prayed for herself and for them, and then went

to her daily labour with vigorous heart of grace. There are some of us who pray, as grudgingly performing a certain duty, and doing it, but no more—some of us as an example (and what an example!) to others—some through mere habit (and those are in a bad case)—some (who shall gainsay it?) in hypocrisy; but do we not all, Scribes and Pharisees, Publicans and Sinners, number among our friends, among those we know, some few good really pious souls who strike us with a sort of awe and reverent respect; who do their good deeds before we rise, or after we retire to rest; creep into heaven the back way, but are not the less received there with trumpets and crowns of glory?

It is in the legend that she would decoy the little white-haired, blue-eyed children of the barbarian soldiers into her kitchen, and there, while giving them sweetmeats and other goodies, teach them to lisp little Latin prayers, and tell over the rosary, and kiss the crucifix appended to it. She bestowed the major part of her wages in gifts to beggars, unmindful whether they were Christian or Pagan; and, for a certainty, the strong-minded would have sneered at her, and the wearers of phylacteries would have frowned on her, for she thought it

a grave sin to disobey the edict of the Church that forbade the eating of flesh on Friday and other appointed fasts. Pomponius Cotta, it must be acknowledged, was troubled with no such scruples. He would have rated his cook soundly, and perchance scourged her, if she had served him up meagre fare on the sixth day of the week; yet I find it in the legend that little Zita was enabled by her own skill, and doubtless by celestial assistance, to perpetrate a pious fraud upon this epicurean Roman. The Fridays' dinners were as rich and succulent, and called forth as loud an encomium, as those of the other days; yet not one scrap of meat, one drop of carnal gravy, did Zita employ in the concoction thereof. Fish, and eggs, and divers mushrooms, truffles and catsups, became, in the hands of the saintly cook, susceptible of giving the most meaty flavours. 'Tis said that Zita invented burnt onions — those grand culinary deceptions! And though they were in reality making meagre, as good Christians should do, Pomponius and his boon companions thought they were feasting upon venison and poultry and choice roasts. This is one of the secrets that died with Saint Zita. I never tasted sorrel pottage that had even the suspicion of a

flavour of meat about it ; and though I have heard much of the rice fritters and savoury soups of the Lancashire vegetarians, I doubt much of their ability to conceal the taste of the domestic cabbage and the homely onion.

Now it fell out in the year—which, by-the-by, has unluckily escaped me—that P. Marennius Citronius Ostendius, a great gastronome and connoisseur in oysters, came from Asia to visit his kinsman Pomponius. There was some talk of his marrying the beautiful Flavia Pomponilia, the eldest daughter of the Pomponian house (she was as jealous of Zita as Fleur de Lys was of Esmeralda, and would have thrust golden pins into her, *à-la-mode Romaine*, but for fear of her father) ; but at all events Ostendius was come down from Asia to Genoa, and there was to be a great feast in honour of his arrival. Ostendius had an aldermanic abdomen under his toga, had a voice that reminded you of fruity port, beeswings in his eyes, a face very like collared brawn, and wore a wig. Those adjuncts to beauty were worn, ladies and gentlemen, fifteen hundred years ago. Ay ! look in at the Egyptian Room of the British Museum, London, and you shall find wigs older than that. He had come from Asia, where he was

reported to have partaken of strange dishes—birds of paradise, gryphons, phœnixes, serpents, elephants — but he despised not the Persicos' apparatus, and was not a man to be trifled with in his victuals! Pomponius Cotta called his cook into his sanctum, and gave her instructions as to the banquet, significantly telling her what she might expect if she failed in satisfying him and his gastronomical guests. Poor Zita felt a cold shudder as she listened to the threats which, in lazy Latin, her noble master lavished upon her. But she determined, less through fear of punishment than a sincere desire of doing her duty, to exert herself to the very utmost in the preparation of the feast. Perhaps there may have been a little spice of vanity in this determination; perhaps she was actuated by a little harmless desire to please the difficult Ostendius, and so prove to him that Pomponius Cotta had a slave who was the best cook in Genoa and in Italy. Why not? I am one who, believing that all is vanity, think that the world as it is could not well get on without some vanity. By which I mean an honest moderate love of and pleasure in approbation. I think we could much easier dispense with money than with this. When I see a conceited man, I

think him to be a fool ; but when I meet a man who tells me he does not rejoice when he is praised for the good book he has written, or the good picture he has painted, or the good deed he has done, I know him to be a humbug, and a mighty dangerous one to his fellow-creatures.

Flowers, waxen torches, perfumes, rich tapestries, cunning musicians—all were ordered for the feast to the guest who was come from Asia. The *piscator* brought fish in abundance; the *lignarius* brought wood and charcoal to light the cooking furnaces withal; the *venator* brought game and venison; the *sartor* stitched unceasingly at vestments of purple and fine linen; the slaves who fed ordinarily upon *salsamentum*, or salt meat, revelled in blithe thoughts of the rich fragments that would fall to their share on the morrow of the banquet. It need scarcely be said that Zita the cook had a whole army of cook's mates, scullions, marmitons, plate-scrapers, and bottle-washers, under her command. These peeled the vegetables, these jointed the meat, these strained the soups and jellies; but to none did she ever confide the real cooking of the dinner. Her spoon was in every *casserole*, her spatula in every sauceboat; she knew the exact number

of mushrooms to every *gratin*, and of truffles to every turkey. Believe me—in the works of great artists there is little vicarious handiwork. Asses say that Mr. Stanfield painted the scenery of *Acis and Galatea* by means of a speaking trumpet from the shilling gallery, his assistants working on the stage. Asses say that *Carême* used to compose his dinners reclining on a crimson velvet couch, while his nephew mixed the magic ingredients in silver stewpans. Asses say that all the hammering and chiselling of *Praxiteles'* statues were done by workmen, and that the sculptor only polished up the noses and finger-tips with a little marble dust. Don't believe such tales. In all great works the master-hand is everywhere.

On the morning of the banquet, early, *Zita* went to market, and sent home stores of provisions, which her assistants knew well how to advance through their preparatory stages. Then, knowing that she had plenty of time before her, the pious little cook—though she had already attended matins—went to church to have a good pray. In the simplicity of her heart, she thought she would render up special thanks for all the good dinners she had cooked, and pray as specially

that this evening's repast should be the very best and most succulent she might ever prepare. You see she was but a poor, ignorant, little slave-girl, and lived in the dark ages.

Zita went to church, heard high mass, confessed, and then, going into a little dark chapel by herself, fell down on her knees before the shrine of Her whom she believed to be the Queen of Heaven. She prayed, and prayed, and prayed so long, so earnestly, so devoutly, that she quite forgot how swiftly the hours fleet by, how impossible it is to overtake them. She prayed and prayed till she lost all consciousness and memory of earthly things, of earthly ties and duties:—till the vaulted roof seemed to open; till she seemed to see through a golden network a sky of lapis-lazuli all peopled with angelic beings in robes of dazzling white; till she heard soft sounds of music such as could only proceed from harps played by celestial hands; till the statue of the Queen of Heaven seemed to smile upon her and bless her; till she was no longer a cook and a slave, but an ecstatic in communion with the saints.

She prayed till the mortal sky without, from the glare of noonday took soberer hues; till the western horizon began to blush for

Zita's tardiness; till the great blue Mediterranean sea grew purple, save where the sunset smote it; till the white palaces of Genoa were tinged with pink, as if the sky had rained roses. She prayed till the lazy dogs which had been basking in the sun rose and shook themselves and raised their shiftless eyes as if to wonder where the sun was; till the barbarian soldiers, who had been lounging on guard-house benches, staggered inside, and fell to dicing and drinking; till hired assassins woke up on their straw pallets, and, rubbing their villanous eyes, began to think that it was pretty nearly time to go a-murdering; till cut-purses' fingers began to itch premonitorily; till maidens watched the early moon, and longed for it to be sole sovereign of the heavens, that the trysting-time might arrive; till the young spendthrift rejoiced that another day was to come, and the old sage sighed that another day was gone; till sick men quarrelled with their nurses for closing their casements, and the birds grew drowsy, and the flowers shut themselves up in secrecy, and the frog began to speak to his neighbour, and the glowworm kindled his lamp.

She prayed till it was dusk, and almost dark, till the vesper bell began to ring, when

she awoke from out her trance ; and not a dish of the dinner was cooked !

And she hurried home, weeping, ah ! so bitterly. For Zita knew her duty towards her neighbour as the road towards heaven. She knew that there were times for all things, and that she had prayed too much and too long. Punishment she did not so much dread as the reproaches of her own conscience for the neglect of her duty. At length, faltering and stumbling in the momentarily increasing darkness, she reached the Pomponian house, which was all lighted up from top to bottom. ‘ Ah ! ’ thought she, ‘ the major domo has, at least, attended to his business. ’ She hurried into a small side court-yard where the kitchen was, and there she found all her army of assistants: the cook’s mates, the scullions, the marmitons, the plate-scrapers, and the bottle-washers, all fast asleep, with their ladles, their knives, and their spits on benches and doorsteps, and in corners. ‘ Ah ! ’ cried little Zita, wringing her hands ; ‘ waiting for me, and quite worn out with fatigue ! ’ Then, stepping among them without awakening them, she approached the great folding-doors of the kitchen, and tried the handle ; but the doors were locked, and through the keyholes and hinges, the chinks

and crannies of the portal, there came a rich, powerful, subtle odour, as of the best dinner that ever was cooked. She thought she understood it all. Enraged at her absence, her master had sent for Maravilla, the corpulent female cook of Septimus Pylorus, his neighbour, to prepare the dinner; or perhaps the great P. Maremnus Citronius Ostendius had himself condescended to assume the cook's cap and apron, and was at that moment engaged within, with locked doors, in blasting her professional reputation for ever. She was ruined as a cook, a servant—a poor little fatherless girl, with nought but her virtue and her cookery for a dower. Unhappy little Zita!

She ran back through the court-yard to the great banqueting saloon, and there, lo! she found the table decked, and the soft couches ranged, the flowers festooned, the rich tapestries hanging, and the perfumes burning in golden censers. And there, too, she found the proud Domina Pomponia, in gala raiment, who greeted her with a smile of unwonted benevolence, saying—

‘Now, Zita, the guests are quite ready for the banquet; and I am sure, from the odour which we can smell even here, that it will be the very best dinner that ever was cooked.’

Then came from an inner chamber the fruity Falernian voice of Ostendius, crying—

‘Ay, ay, I am sure it will be the very best dinner that ever was cooked;’ and the voice of Pomponius Cotta answered him gaily, that ‘Little Zita was not the best cook in Genoa for nothing,’ and that he would not part with her for I don’t know how many thousand sesterces. Poor Zita saw in this only a cruel jest. For certain another cook had been engaged in her place, and she herself would be had up after the banquet, taunted with its success, confronted with her rival, and perhaps scourged to death amid the clatter of drinking-cups. Her eyes blinded with tears, she descended again to the court-yard, and fervently, though despairingly, breathed one more brief prayer to our Lady of the Chapel. She had scarcely concluded, when the great folding-doors of the kitchen flew open, and there issued forth a tremendous cloud of ambrosial vapour, radiant, golden, roseate, azure, in which celestial odours were mingled with the unmistakable smell of the very best dinner that ever was cooked. And lo! hovering in the cloud, the rapt eye of little Saint Zita seemed to descry myriads of little airy figures in white caps and jackets, even like unto cooks, but who

all had wings and little golden knives at their girdles. And she heard the same soft music that had stolen upon her ears in the chapel; and as the angelic cooks fluttered out of the kitchen, it seemed as though each little celestial Soyer saluted the blushing cheek of the trembling maiden with a soft and soothing kiss.

At the same time the army of earthly cook's assistants awoke as one scullion, and, without so much as yawning, took their places at the dresser-board, and composedly began to dish the dinner. And little Zita, hurrying from furnace to furnace, and lifting up the lids of *casseroles* and *bain-marie* pans, found, done to a turn, a dinner even such as she with all her culinary genius would never have dreamt of.

Of course it was a Miracle. Of course it was the very best dinner ever dressed; what else could it have been with such cooks? They talk of it to this day in Genoa; though I am sorry to say the Genoese cooks have not profited by the example, and do not seek to emulate it. They have the best maccaroni, and dress it in worse fashion than any other people in Europe.



III.

THE KEY OF THE STREET.

A.D. 1850.

IT is commonly asserted, and as commonly believed, that there are seventy thousand persons in London who rise every morning without the slightest knowledge as to where they shall lay their heads at night. However the number may be over or understated, it is very certain that a vast number of people are habitually in the above-mentioned state of uncertainty regarding sleeping accommodation; and that when night approaches, a great majority solve the problem in a somewhat (to themselves) disagreeable manner, by not going to bed at all.

People who stop up, or out all night, may be divided into three classes:—First, editors,

bakers, market-gardeners, police-constables, ministers of state, lovers, night nurses, and all those who are kept out of their beds by business. Secondly, gentlemen and 'gents,' anxious to cultivate a knowledge of the 'Lark' species, or intent on the navigation of the 'Spree.' Thirdly, and lastly, those ladies and gentlemen who do not go to bed, for the very simple reason that they have no beds to go to.

The members of this last class—a very numerous one—are said, facetiously, to possess 'the key of the street.' And a remarkably unpleasant key it is. It will unlock for you all manner of caskets you would fain know nothing about. It is the 'open sesame' to dens you never saw before, and would much rather never see again :—a key to knowledge which should surely make the learner a sadder man, if it make him not a wiser one.

Come with me, luxuriant tenant of heavy-draped four-poster—basker on feather bed, and nestler in lawn sheets. Come with me, comfortable civic bolster-presser—snug woollen-nightcap-wearer. Come with me, even workmen, labourer, peasant—sleeper on narrow pallet—though your mattress be hard,

and your rug coarse. Leave your bed—bad as it may be—and gaze on those who have no beds at all. Follow with me the veins and arteries of this huge giant that lies a-sleeping. Listen while with ‘the key of the street’ I unlock the stony coffer, and bring forth the Book, and from the macadamized page read forth the lore of midnight London Life.

I have no bed to-night. Why, it matters not. Perhaps I have lost my latch-key,—perhaps I never had one; yet am fearful of knocking up my landlady after midnight. Perhaps I have a caprice—a fancy—for staying up all night. At all events, I have no bed; and, saving ninepence (sixpence in silver and threepence in coppers), no money. I must walk the streets all night; for I cannot, look you, get anything in the shape of a couch for less than a shilling. Coffee-houses, into which—seduced by their cheap appearance—I have entered, and where I have humbly sought a lodging, laugh my ninepence to scorn. Their proprietors demand impossible eighteenpences—unattainable florins. There is clearly no bed for me.

It is midnight—so the clanging tongue of St. Dunstan’s tells me—as I stand thus, bedless, at Temple Bar. I have walked a good deal

during the day, and have an uncomfortable sensation in my feet, suggesting the idea that the soles of my boots are made of roasted brick-bats. I am thirsty, too (it is July, and sultry); and, just as the last chime of St. Dunstan's is audible, I have half a pint of porter—and a ninth part of my ninepence is gone from me for ever. The public-house where I have my drink (or rather the beer-shop, for it is an establishment of the 'glass of ale and sandwich' description) is an early-closing one; and the landlord, as he serves me, yawningly orders the pot-boy to put up the shutters, for he is 'off' to bed.' Happy proprietor! There is a bristly-bearded tailor, too, very beery, having his last pint, who expresses a similar somniferous intention. He calls it 'Bedfordshire.' Thrice happy snip!

I envy him fiercely, as he goes out, though, God wot, his bedchamber may be but a squalid attic, and his bed a tattered hop-sack, with a slop great-coat—from the emporium of Messrs. Melchisedech and Son, and which he has been working at all day—for a coverlid. I envy his children (I am sure he has a callow ragged brood of them), for they have at least somewhere to sleep,—I haven't.

I watch, with a species of lazy curiosity, the

whole process of closing the 'Original Burton Ale House,' from the sudden shooting up of the shutters, through the area grating, like gigantic Jacks-in-a-box, to the final adjustment of screws and iron nuts. Then I bend my steps westward, and at the corner of Wellington Street stop to contemplate a cab-stand.

Cudgel thyself, weary Brain,—exhaust thyself, Invention,—torture thyself, Ingenuity—all, and in vain, for the miserable acquisition of six feet of palliasse and a blanket!

Had I the delightful impudence, now—the calm audacity—of my friend, Bolt, I should not be five minutes without a bed. Bolt, I verily believe, would not have the slightest hesitation in walking into the grandest hotel in Euston Square or Jermyn Street; asking for supper and a bootjack; having his bed warmed; and would trust to Providence and his happy knack of falling, like a cat, on all-fours, for deliverance in the morning. I could as soon imitate Bolt as I could dance on the tight-rope. Sponge again, that stern Jeremy Diddler, who always bullies you when you relieve him, and whose request for the loan of half a crown is more like a threat than a petition—Sponge, I say, would make a violent irruption into a friend's room; and, if he did

not turn him out of his bed, would at least take possession of his sofa and his great-coats for the night, and impetuously demand breakfast in the morning. If I were only Spunge, now!

What am I to do? It is just a quarter past twelve; how am I to walk about till eight o'clock to-morrow? Suppose I walk three miles an hour, am I to walk twenty-four miles in these fearful London streets? Suppose it rains, can I stand under an archway for six hours?

I have heard of the dark arches of the Adelphi, and of houseless vagrants crouching there by night. But, then, I have read that police constables are nightly enjoined by their inspectors to rout out these vagrants, and drive them from their squalid refuge. Then there are the dry arches of Waterloo Bridge, and the railway arches; but I abandon the idea of seeking refuge *there*, for I am naturally timorous, and I can't help thinking of chloroform and life-preservers in connexion with them. Though I have little to be robbed of, Heaven knows!

I have heard, too, of tramps' lodging-houses, and of the 'twopenny rope.' I am not prepared to state that I would not willingly avail myself of that species of accommodation, for I am

getting terribly tired and foot-sore. But I don't know where to seek for it, and I am ashamed to ask.

I would give something to lie down, too. I wonder whether that cabman would think it beneath his dignity to accept a pot of porter, and allow me to repose in his vehicle till he got a fare? I know some cabmen never obtain one during the night, and I could snooze comfortably in hackney-carriage two thousand and twenty-two. But I cannot form a favourable opinion of the driver, who is discussing beer and democratic politics with the waterman; and neither he nor any of his brother Jehus, indeed, seem at all the persons from whom to ask a favour.

It is Opera night, as I learn from the accidentally-heard remark of a passing policeman. To watch the departing equipages will, surely, help to pass the time on bravely, and with something almost like hope, I stroll to Covent Garden Theatre.

I am in the thick of it at once. Such a scrambling, pushing, jostling, and shouting! Such pawing of spirited horses, and objurgations of excited policemen! Now, Mrs. Fitz-somebody's carriage stops the way; and now, Mr. Smith, of the Stock Exchange, with two ladies

on each arm, stands bewildered in a chaos of carriages, helplessly ejaculating 'Cab.' Now, is there a playful episode in the shape of a policeman dodging a pickpocket among horses' heads, and under wheels; and now, a pitiable one, in the person of an elderly maiden lady, who has lost her party in the crush, and her shoe in the mud, and is hopping about the piazza like an agonized sparrow. It is all over soon, however. The carriages rattle, and the cabs lumber away. The great City people, lords of Lombard Street, and kaisers of Cornhill, depart in gorgeous chariots, emblazoned in front and at the back. The dukes and marquises, and people of that sort, glide away in tiny broughams, and infinitesimal clarences. The highest personage of the land drives off in a plain chariot, with two servants in plain black, more like a doctor (as I hear a gentleman from the country near me indignantly exclaim) than a queen. Mr. Smith has found his party, and the sparrow-like lady her shoe, by this time. Nearly everybody is gone. Stay, the gentleman who thinks it a 'genteel' thing to go to the Opera, appears on the threshold carefully adjusting his white neckcloth with the huge bow, and donning a garment something between a smockfrock and a horsecloth,

which is called, I believe, the 'Opera envelope.' He will walk home to Camberwell with his lorgnette case in his hand, and in white kid gloves, to let everybody know where he has been. The policemen and the night wanderers will be edified, no doubt. Following him comes the *habitué*, who is a lover of music, I am sure. He puts his gloves, neatly folded, into his breast-pocket, stows away his opera-glass, and buttons his coat. Then he goes quietly over to the Albion, where I watch him gravely disposing of a pint of stout at the bar. He is ten to one a gentleman; and I am sure he is a sensible man. And now all, horse and foot, are departed; the heavy portals are closed, and the Royal Italian Opera is left to the fireman, to darkness, and to me.

The bed question has enjoyed a temporary respite while these proceedings are taking place. Its discussion is postponed still further by the amusement and instruction I derive from watching the performances in the ham and beef shop at the corner of Bow Street. Here are crowds of customers, hot and hungry, from the Lyceum or Drury Lane, and clamorous for sandwiches. Ham sandwiches, beef sandwiches, German sausage sandwiches—legions of sand-

wiches are cut and consumed. The cry is 'mustard,' and anon the coppers rattle, and payment is tendered and change given. Then come the people who carry home half a pound of 'cold round' or three-pennyworth of 'brisket;' I scrutinize them, their purchases, and their money. I watch the scale with rapt attention, and wait with trembling eagerness the terrific combat between that last piece of fat and the half-ounce weight. The half-ounce has it; and the beef merchant gives the meat a satisfied slap with the back of his knife, and rattles the price triumphantly. I have been so intent on all this, that I have taken no heed of time as yet; so, when custom at the ham and beef shop begins to flag, glancing at the clock, I am agreeably surprised to find it is ten minutes past one.

A weary waste of hours yet to traverse—the silence of the night season yet to endure. There are many abroad still; but the reputable wayfarers drop off gradually, and the disreputable ones increase with alarming rapidity. The great-coated policeman, the shivering Irish prowlers, and some fleeting shadows that seem to be of women, have taken undisputed possession of Bow Street and Long Acre; and but for a sprinkling of young thieves, and a few

tipsy bricklayers, they would have it all their own way in Drury Lane.

I have wandered into this last-named unsavoury thoroughfare, and stand disconsolately surveying its aspect. And it strikes me now, that it is eminently distinguished for its street-corners. There is scarcely a soul to be seen in the street itself, but all the corners have posts, and nearly all the posts are garnished with leaning figures—now two stalwart policemen holding municipal converse—now two women, God help them!—now a knot of lads with pale faces, long greasy hair, and short pipes. Thieves, my friend—(if I had a friend)—unmistakeable thieves.

There are no professional beggars about—what on earth is there for them to be out for! The *beggees* are gone home to their suppers and their beds, and the beggars are gone home to *their* suppers and *their* beds. They have all got beds, bless you!

Some of the doorways have heaps of something huddled up within them; and ever and anon a policeman will come and stir the something up with his truncheon, or more probably with his boot. Then you will see a chaotic movement of legs and arms, and hear a fretful crooning with an Irish accent. Should

the guardian of the night insist in the enforcement of his 'move on' decree—the legs and arms will stagger a few paces onward, and as soon as the policeman's back is turned, slink into another doorway—to be routed out perchance again in another quarter of an hour by another truncheon, or another boot.

Half-past one by the clock of St. Mary-le-Strand, and I am in Charles Street, Drury Lane. It is a very dirty little street this—full worthy, I take it, to challenge competition with Church Lane or Buckeridge Street. A feeling, however, indefinable, but strong, prompts me to pursue its foul and devious course for some score of yards. Then I stop.

'Lodgings for single men at fourpence per night.' This agreeable information greets me, pictured on the panes of a window, behind which a light is burning. I step into the road to have a good look at the establishment that proffers the invitation. It is a villanous ramshackle house—a horrible cut-throat-looking den, to be sure:—but then the fourpence! Think of that, Master Brooke! There is a profusion of handbills plastered on the door-jambs, which I can read by the light of a gas-lamp a few paces off. I decipher a flattering legend of separate beds, every con-

venience for cooking, and hot water always ready. I am informed that this is the Real Model Lodging-house; and I read, moreover, some derisive couplets relative to the Great Spitalfields Lodging-house (a rival, I presume), which is styled a 'Bastille!' I begin fingering, involuntarily, the eightpence in my pocket. Heaven knows what uncouth company I may fall into; but then, fourpence! and my feet are so tired. *Jacta est alea*, I will have fourpenn'orth.

You have heard ere now what the 'deputy' of a tramps' lodging-house is like. I am received by the deputy—a short-haired, low-browed, stunted lout, sometimes, it is said, not over courteous to inquisitive strangers. As, however, I come to sleep, and not to inspect, I am not abused, but merely inspected and admitted. I am informed that, with the addition my company will make, the establishment is full. I pay my fourpence, without the performance of which ceremony I do not get beyond the filthy entrance passage. Then, the 'deputy' bars the door, and, brandishing an iron candlestick as though it were an antique mace, bids me follow him.

What makes me, when we have ascended

the rotten staircase, when I have entered my bedchamber—when the ‘deputy’ has even bid me a wolfish good-night—what makes me rush downstairs, and, bursting through the passage, beg him to let me out for Heaven’s sake? What makes me, when the ‘deputy’ has unbarred the door, and bade me go out, and be something’d, and has *not* given me back my fourpence, stand sick and stupefied in the street, till I wake up to a disgusted consciousness in being nearly knocked down by a group of staggering roysterers, howling out a drunken chorus? It was not the hang-dog look of the ‘deputy,’ nor the cut-throat appearance of the house. It was not even the aspect of the score or more ragged wretches who were to be my sleeping companions. It was, in plain English, the smell of the *bugs*. Ugh!—the place was alive with them. They crawled on the floor—they dropped from the ceiling—they ran mad races on the walls! Give me the key of the street, and let me wander forth again.

I have not got further than Broad Street, St. Giles’s, before I begin to think that I have been slightly hasty. I feel so tired, so worn, so full of sleep now, that I can’t help the thought that I might have fallen off into

heavy sleep yonder, and that the havoc committed by the insects on my carcase might have been borne unfelt. It is too late now. The four pence are departed, and I dare not face the 'deputy' again.

Two in the morning, and still black, thick, impervious night, as I turn into Oxford Street, by Meux's Brewery. The flitting shadows that seemed to be of women, have grown scarcer. A quarter past two, and I have gained the Regent Circus, and can take my choice, either for a stroll in the neighbourhood of the Regent's Park, or a quiet lounge in the district of the Clubs. Quite an epicure! I choose the Clubs, and shamble down Regent Street, towards Piccadilly.

I feel myself slowly, but surely, becoming more of a regular night skulker—a houseless, hopeless vagrant, every moment. I feel my feet shuffle, my shoulders rise towards my ears; my head goes on one side; I hold my hands in a crouching position before me; I no longer walk, I prowl. Though it is July, I shiver. As I stand at the corner of Conduit Street (all night skulkers affect corners), a passing figure, in satin and black lace, flings me a penny. How does the phantom know that I have the key of the streets? I am not

in rags, and yet my plight must be evident. So I take the penny.

Where are the policemen, I wonder? I am walking in the centre of the road, yet, from end to end of the magnificent street, I cannot see a single soul. Stay, here is one. A little fair-headed ruffian leaps from the shadow of Archbishop Tenison's Chapel. He has on a ragged pair of trousers, and nothing else to speak of. He vehemently demands to be allowed to turn head over heels three times for a penny. I give him the penny the phantom gave me (cheap charity!), and intimate that I can dispense with the tumbling. But he is too honest for that, and, putting the penny in his mouth, disappears in a series of somersaults. Then, the gas-lamps and I have it all to ourselves.

Safe at the corner (corners again, you see!) of what was once the Quadrant, where a mongrel dog joins company. I know he is a dog without a bed, like I am, for he has not that grave trot, so full of purpose, which the dog on business has. This dog wanders irresolutely, and makes feigned turnings up by streets—returning to the main thoroughfare in a slouching manner; he ruminates over cigar-stumps and cabbage-stalks, which no

homeward-bound dog would do. But even that dog is happier than I am, for he can lie down on any doorstep, and take his rest, and no policeman shall say him nay; but the Act of Parliament refuses me that repose, and says sternly that I must 'move on.'

Hallo! a rattle in the distance—nearer—nearer—louder and louder! Now it bursts upon my sight. A fire-engine at full speed; and the street is crowded in a moment!

Where the people come from I don't pretend to say; but there they are—hundreds of them—all wakeful and noisy and clamorous. On goes the engine, with people hallooing, and following and mingling with the night wind the dreadful cry of FIRE.

I follow, of course. An engine at top speed is as potent a spell to a night prowler as a pack of hounds in full cry is to a Leicestershire yeoman. Its influence is contagious, too, and the crowd swells at every yard of distance traversed. The fire is in a narrow street of Soho, at a pickle-shop. It is a fierce one, at which I think the crowd is pleased; but then nobody lives in the house, at which I imagine they are slightly chagrined; for excitement, you see, at a fire is everything. *En revanche* there are no less than three families of small

children next door, and the crowd are hugely delighted when they are expeditiously brought out in their night-dresses by the Fire-brigade.

More excitement! The house on the other side has caught fire. The mob are in ecstasies, and the pickpockets make a simultaneous onslaught on all the likely pockets near them. I am not pleased, but interested—highly interested. I would pump, but I am not strong in the arms. Those who pump, I observe, receive beer.

I have been watching the blazing pile so long—basking, as it were, in the noise and shouting and confusion; the hoarse clank of the engines—the cheering of the crowd—the dull roar of the fire, that the bed question has been quite in abeyance, and I have forgotten all about it and the time. But when the fire is quenched, or at least brought under, as it is at last; when the sheets of flame and sparks are succeeded by columns of smoke and steam; when, as a natural consequence, the excitement begins to flag a little, and the pressure of the crowd diminishes; then, turning away from the charred and gutted pickle-shop, I hear the clock of St. Anne's, Soho, strike four; and find that it is broad daylight.

Four dreary hours yet to wander before a

London day commences; four weary, dismal revolutions on the clock-face, before the milkman makes his rounds, and I can obtain access to my penates, with the matutinal supply of milk!

To add to my discomfort and to the utter heart-weariness and listless misery which is creeping over me, it begins to rain. Not a sharp pelting shower, but a slow, monotonous, ill-conditioned drizzle; damping without wetting—now deluding you into the idea that it is going to hold up; and now with a sudden spurt in your face, mockingly informing you that it has no intention of the kind. Very wretchedly indeed I thread the narrow little streets about Soho, meeting no one but a tom-cat returning from his club, and a misanthropic-looking policeman, who is feeling shutter-bolts and tugging at door handles with a vicious aspect, as though he were disappointed that some unwary householder had not left a slight temptation for a sharp house-breaker.

I meet another policeman in Golden Square, who looks dull, missing, probably, the society of the functionary who guards the fire-escape situated in that fashionable locality, and who hasn't come back from the burnt pickle-shop

yet. He honours me with a long stare as I pass him.

‘ Good morning,’ he says.

I return the compliment.

‘ Going home to bed?’ he asks.

‘ Y-e-es,’ I answer.

He turns on his heels and says no more ; but, bless you ! I can see irony in his bull’s-eye—contemptuous incredulity in his oilskin cape ! It needs not the long low whistle in which he indulges, to tell me that *he* knows very well I have no bed to go home to.

I sneak quietly down Sherrard Street into the Quadrant. I don’t know why, but I begin to be afraid of policemen. I never transgressed the law—yet I avoid the ‘ force.’ The sound of their heavy boot-heels disquiets me. One of them stands at the door of Messrs. Swan and Edgar’s, and to avoid him I actually abandon a resolution I had formed of walking up Regent Street, and turn down the Hay-market instead.

There are three choice spirits who evidently have got beds to go to, though they are somewhat tardy in seeking them. I can tell that they have latch-keys, by their determined air—their bold and confident speech. They have just turned, or have been turned out from an

oyster-room. They are all three very drunk; have on each other's hats; and one of them has a quantity of dressed lobster in his cravat.

These promising gentlemen are out 'on the spree.' The doors of the flash public-houses and oyster-rooms are letting out similar detachments of choice spirits all down the Haymarket; some of a most patrician sort, with most fierce mustachios and whiskers; whom I think I have seen before, and whom I may very probably see again, in jackboots and golden aiguillettes, prancing on huge black horses by the side of Her Majesty's carriage, going to open Parliament. The gentlemen, or rather gents on the 'spree,' call this 'life.' They will probably sleep in the station-house this morning, and will be fined various sums for riotous conduct. They will get drunk, I dare say, three hundred times in the course of a year, for about three years. In the last-mentioned space of time they will bonnet many dozen policemen, break some hundreds of gas-lamps, have some hundreds of 'larks,' and scores of 'rows.' They will go to Epsom by the rail, and create disturbances on the course, and among the 'sticks,' and 'Aunt Sallies.' They will frequent the Adelphi at half-price, and haunt night-houses afterwards.

They will spend their salaries in debauchery, and obtain fresh supplies of money from bill-discounters, and be swindled out of it by the proprietors of gambling-houses. Some day, when their health and their money are gone—when they are sued on all their bills, and by all the tradesmen they have plundered—they will be discharged from their situations, or be discarded by their friends. Then they will subside into Whitecross Street and the Insolvent Debtors' Court*—and then, God knows! they will die miserably, I suppose: of delirium tremens, maybe.

I have taken a fancy to have a stroll—save the mark!—in St. James's Park, and am about to descend the huge flight of stone steps leading to the Mall, when I encounter a martial band, consisting of a grenadier in a great-coat, and holding a lighted lantern (it is light as noon-day), an officer in a cloak, and four or five more grenadiers in great-coats, looking remarkably ridiculous in those hideous grey garments. As to the officer, he appears to regard everything with an air of unmitigated disgust, and to look at the duty upon which

* Two institutions now defunct, but replaced by the new Bankruptcy Court and Holloway Gaol, to which last-named place, in the interest of creditors, a debtors' side has been added.

he is engaged as a special bore. I regard it rather in the light of a farce. Yet, if I mistake not, these are 'Grand Rounds,' or something of the sort. When the officer gets within a few yards of the sentinel at the Duke of York's Column he shouts out some unintelligible question, to which the bearer of Brown Bess gives a responsive, but as unintelligible howl. Then the foremost grenadier plays in an imbecile manner with his lantern, like King Lear with his straw, and the officer flourishes his sword; and 'Grand Rounds' are over, so far as the Duke of York is concerned I suppose; for the whole party trot gravely down Pall Mall, towards the Duchess of Kent's.

I leave them to their devices, and saunter moodily into the Mall. It is but a quarter to five now; and I am so jaded and tired that I can scarcely drag one foot after another. The rain has ceased; but the morning air is raw and cold; and the rawness clings, as it were, to the marrow of my bones. My hair is wet, and falls in draggled hanks on my cheeks. My feet seem to have grown preposterously large, and my boots so preposterously small. I wish I were a dog or a dormouse! I long for a haystack, or a heap of sacks, or anything.

I even think I could find repose on one of those terribly inclined planes which you see tilted towards you through the window of the Morgue at Paris. I have a good mind to smash a lamp, and be taken to the station-house. I have a good mind to throw myself over Westminster Bridge. I suppose I am afraid; for I don't do either.

Seeing a bench under a tree, I fling myself thereon; and, hard and full of knots and bumps as the seat is, roll myself into a species of ball, and strive to go to sleep. But oh, vain delusion! I am horribly, exerceiatingly wakeful. To make the matter worse, I rise, and take a turn or two—*then* I feel as though I could sleep standing; but availing myself of what I consider a favourably drowsy moment, I cast myself on the bench again, and find myself as wide awake as ever.

There is a young vagrant—a tramp of some eighteen summers—sitting beside me—fast asleep, and snoring with provoking pertinacity. He is half naked, and has neither shoes nor stockings. Yet he sleeps, and very soundly, too, to all appearance. As the loud-sounding Horse-Guards clock strikes five, he wakes, eyes me for a moment, and muttering 'hard lines, mate,' turns to sleep again. In the mysterious

freemasonry of misery, he calls me 'mate.' I suppose, eventually, that I catch from him some portion of his vagrant acquirement of somnolence under difficulties, for, after writhing and turning on the comfortless wooden seat till every bone and muscle are sore, I fall into a deep, deep sleep—so deep it seems like death.

So deep that I don't hear the quarters striking of that nuisance to Park-sleepers, the Horse-Guards clock—and rise only, suddenly *en sursaut*, as six o'clock strikes. My vagrant friend has departed, and being apprehensive myself of cross-examination from an approaching policeman (not knowing, in fact, what hideous crime sleeping in St. James's Park might be), I also withdrew, feeling very fagged and footsore—yet slightly refreshed by the hour's nap I have had. I pass the stands where the cows are milked, and curds and whey dispensed, on summer evenings; and enter Charing Cross by the long Spring Garden passage.

I have been apprised several times during the night that this was a market morning in Covent Garden. I have seen waggons surmounted by enormous mountains of vegetable baskets wending their way through the silent streets. I have been met by the early coster-

mongers in their donkey-carts, and chaffed by the costerboys on my forlorn appearance. But I have reserved Covent Garden as a *bonne bouche*—a wind-up to my pilgrimage; for I have heard and read how fertile is the market in question in subjects of amusement and contemplation.

I confess that I am disappointed. Covent Garden seems to me to be but one great accumulation of cabbages. I am pelted with these vegetables as they are thrown from the lofty summits of piled waggons to costermongers standing at the base. I stumble among them as I walk; in short, above, below, on either side, cabbages preponderate.

I dare say, had I patience, that I should see a great deal more; but I am dazed with excessive greenstuff, and jostled to and fro, and ‘danged’ dreadfully by rude market-gardeners—so I eschew the market, and creep round the piazza.

I meet my vagrant friend of the Park here, who is having a cheap and nutritious breakfast at a coffee-stall. The stall itself is a nondescript species of edifice—something between a gipsy’s tent and a watchman’s box: while, to carry out the comparison, as it were, the lady who serves out the coffee very much resembles

a gipsy in person, and is clad in a decided watchman's coat. The aromatic beverage (if I may be allowed to give that name to the compound of burnt beans, roasted horse-liver, and refuse chicory, of which the 'coffee' is composed) is poured, boiling hot, from a very cabalistic-looking caldron into a whole regiment of cups and saucers standing near; while, for more solid refectation, the cups are flanked by plates bearing massive piles of thick bread and butter, and an equivocal substance called 'cake.' Besides my friend the vagrant, two coster-lads are partaking of the hospitalities of the stall; and a huge gardener, straddling over a pile of potato-sacks, hard by, has provided himself with bread and butter and coffee from the same establishment, and is consuming them with such avidity that the tears start from his eyes at every gulp.

I have, meanwhile, remembered the existence of a certain fourpenny-piece in my pocket, and have been twice or thrice tempted to expend it. Yet, on reflection, I deem it better to purchase with it a regular breakfast, and repair to a legitimate coffee-shop. The day is by this time getting rapidly on, and something of the roar of London begins to be heard in earnest.

The dull murmur of wheels has never ceased, indeed, the whole night through; but now, laden cabs come tearing past on their way to the railway station. The night policemen gradually disappear; sleepy potboys as gradually appear, yawning at the doors of public-houses; and sleepy waitresses peep from the half-opened doors of coffee-houses and reading-rooms. There have been both public-houses and coffee-shops open, however, the whole night. The 'Mohawks' Arms' in the market never closes. Young Lord Stultus, with Captain Asinus of the Heavies, endeavoured to turn on all the taps there at four o'clock this morning, but at the earnest desire of Frume, the landlord, desisted; and subsequently subsided into a chivalrous offer of standing glasses of 'Old Tom' all round, which was as chivalrously accepted. As the 'all round' comprised some thirty ladies and gentlemen, Frume made a very good thing of it; and, like a prudent tradesman as he is, he still further acted on the golden opportunity, by giving all those members of the company (about three-fourths) who were drunk, glasses of water instead of gin; which operation contributed to discourage intemperance, and improve his own exchequer in a very signal and

efficacious manner.* As with the 'Mohawks' Arms,' so with the 'Turpin's Head,' the great market-gardeners' house," and the 'Pipe and Horse Collar,' frequented by the night cabmen—to say nothing of that remarkably snug little house near Drury Lane, 'The Blue Bludgeon,' which is well known to be the rendezvous of the famous Tom Thug and his gang, whose achievements in the strangling line, by means of a silk handkerchief and a life-preserver, used *tourniquet* fashion, were so generally admired by the consistent advocates of the ticket-of-leave system. I peep into some of these noted hostelries as I saunter about. They begin to grow rather quiet and demure as the day advances, and will be till midnight, indeed, very dull and drowsy pothouses, as times go. They don't light up to life and jollity and robbery and violence, before the small hours.

So with the coffee-shops. The one I enter, to invest my fourpence in a breakfast of coffee and bread and butter, has been open all night likewise; but the sole occupants now are a dirty waiter, in a pitiable state of drowsiness, and half a dozen homeless wretches who have

* Entirely an institution of the past, and that will not, I should say, be easily revived.

earned the privilege of sitting down at the filthy tables by the purchase of a cup of coffee, and, with their heads on their hands, are snatching furtive naps, cut short—too short, alas!—by the pokes and ‘Wake up, there!’ of the waiter. It is apparently his *consigne* to allow no sleeping.

I sit down here, and endeavour to keep myself awake over the columns of the ‘Sun’ newspaper of last Tuesday week—unsuccessfully, however. I am so jaded and weary, so dog-tired and utterly worn out, that I fall off again to sleep; and whether it is that the waiter has gone to sleep too, or that the expenditure of fourpence secures exemption for me, I am allowed to slumber.

I dream this time. A dreadful vision it is, of bugs, and cabbages, and tramping soldiers, and anon of the fire at the pickle-shop. As I wake, and find, to my great joy, that it is ten minutes past eight o’clock, a ragged little news-boy brings in a damp copy of the ‘Times,’ and I see half a column in that journal headed ‘Dreadful Conflagration in Soho.’

Were I not so tired, I should moralize over this, no doubt; but there are now but two things on my mind—two things in the world

for me—HOME and BED. Eight o'clock restores these both to me—so cruelly deprived of them for so long a time. So, just as London—work-away, steady-going London—begins to bestir itself, I hurry across the Strand, cross the shadow of the first omnibus going towards the Bank; and, as I sink between the sheets of MY BED, resign the key of the street into the hands of its proper custodian, whoever he may be [and, whoever he may be, I don't envy him].*

* The words in brackets are Charles Dickens's.





IV.

DOWN WHITECHAPEL WAY.

A.D. 1851.

HOW many thousands of us have lived for years—for a third part of our lives, probably—in London, and have never been down the Whitechapel Road? I declare that there are not half-a-dozen persons in the circle of my acquaintance who can tell me where Bethnal Green is. As to Ratcliffe Highway, Shadwell, Poplar, Limehouse, and Rotherhithe, they are entirely *terræ incognitæ* to shoals of born-and-bred Londoners.

‘Down Whitechapel way.’ Have you ever been ‘down’ that way, reader? Ten to one you have not. You have heard, probably, of Whitechapel needles; and the costermonger from whom you may occasionally have condescended to purchase vegetables would very likely inform you, were you to ask him, that he lives ‘down that way.’ Perhaps your

impressions connected with Whitechapel refer vaguely to butchers, or, probably, to Jews, or possibly to thieves. Very likely you don't trouble yourself at all about the matter. You had an aunt once who lived at Mile End: but she quarrelled with everybody during her lifetime, and left her money to the London Hospital when she died, and you never went to see her. You see scores of omnibuses pass your door daily, with Aldgate, Whitechapel, Mile End, painted on their panels; but you have no business to transact there, and let the omnibuses go on their way without further comment.

On, through Fleet Street—passing St. Dunstan's as eight strikes; noting the newspaper offices blazing with gas from basement to garret; jostled occasionally by the well-looking (though ruined) agricultural gentlemen, with massy watch-chains (and bankrupt purses), who have been discussing port and Protection* after an ample dinner at Peele's or Anderton's. On, and up Ludgate the lofty, watching the red and blue lights of the doctors' shops as they are mirrored in the wet pavement; and

* Written ere 'Protection,' as an idea, died a natural death, and became a 'shadow of the shadow of smoke.'

thinking, perhaps, that, after all, there may be some good in that early closing movement which has fastened the portals of all those magnificent palaces of linendrapery, and sent those shoals of spruce clerks and assistants forth for health and recreation—many, it is to be hoped, to the Literary and Scientific Institute, the class-room and the singing lesson, and not *all* (as some kind souls would insinuate) to the tap-room or the cigar-shop. On, round the solemn dome of St. Paul's, and by that remarkable thoroughfare on the left hand side, where, to my mind, the odours of a pastry-cook's shop, of a tallow-manufactory, of the defunct, yet promising to be phoenix-like Chapter Coffee House, and all the newly-bound books in Paternoster Row are irrevocably combined and blended. On, by Cheapside, the magnificent, where rows of dazzling gas-reflectors illumine shop fronts, teeming with yet more dazzling stores of watches, rich jewellery, and bales of silver spoons and forks. There are desolate ragged wretches staring wistfully at the glittering heaps of baubles, the clocks, the tiny ladies' watches rich in enamel and jewels, the repeaters, the chronometers, the levers jewelled in ever so many holes, the trinkets, and châtelains, and 'charms,'

and Albert guard chains, which Mr. John Bennett, a doughty watchmaker he, exposes to public admiration, just as they would at the pennyworth of pudding in the window of a cook's shop. Are they speculating on the possibility of a gold watch filling a hungry belly? or are they haply contemplating one bold dash through the frail sheet of glass—one hasty snatch at the watches, and rings, and bracelets—one desperate throw for luxury and riot at the best; or at the worst, for the comfortable gaol, the warm convict's dress, and the snug cell with its hot-water pipes?

Leaving Cheapside, the magnificent; avoiding the omnibuses in the Poultry as best we may; skirting the huge Mansion House, where a feeble gleam from an office in the basement suggests that Messrs. John and Daniel Forrester are yet wide awake, while the broad glare of light from the windows in Charlotte Row proclaims jolly civic festivities in the Egyptian Hall; striking through Cornhill, the wealthy; crossing Gracechurch Street, and suppressing a lingering inclination to take a stroll by the old Flower Pot, and older South Sea House, into old Bishopsgate Street, just to have a vagabond quarter of an hour or so of thought about Baring Brothers, Crosby

Hall, Great St. Helen's, Sir Thomas More, and Mr. Ross the hairdresser:—Supposing this, I say, our party boldly invades Leadenhall Street. Opposite the India House I must stop for a moment, however. Is there not Billiter Street hard-by, with that never-dying smell of Cashmere shawls and opium chests about the sale-rooms? Is there not St. Mary Axe, redolent of Hebrew London? Is there not the great house itself, with all its mighty associations of Clive and Warren Hastings, Nuncomar, and Lally Tollendal, Plassy, Arcot, and Seringapatam—Sheridan, thundering in Westminster Hall on the case of the Begums—and the mighty directors, with their millions of subjects, and their palaces in Belgravia and Tyburnia, who were once but poor hucksters and chapmen of Trichinopoly chains and indigo balls—mere buyers and sellers of rice, sugar, and pepper? But my companions are impatient, and, dropping a hasty tear to the memory of Mr. Toole, the great toastmaster and beadle—(dost thou remember him, Eugenio, in that magnificent cocked hat and scarlet coat? and Eugenio replies that he lives again in his son)—we leave Leadenhall Street the broad for Leadenhall Street the narrow; and where the tor-

tuous Fenchurch Street also converges, emerge into the open space by Aldgate pump. We have no time to dilate on the antiquity of the pump. A hundred yards to the left and here we are, not absolutely in Whitechapel itself, but at the entrance of that peculiar and characteristic district, which I take to be bounded by Mile-end gate on the east, and by the establishment of Messrs. Moses and Son on the west.

First, Moses. Gas, splendour, wealth, boundless and immeasurable, at a glance. Countless stories of gorgeous show-rooms, laden to repletion with rich garments. Gas everywhere. Seven hundred burners, they whisper to me. The tailoring department; the haberdashery department; the hat, boots, shawl, outfitting, cutlery department. Hundreds of departments. Legions of "our young men" in irreproachable coats, and neckcloths void of reproach. Corinthian columns, enriched cornices, sculptured panels, arabesque ceilings, massive chandeliers, soft carpets of choice patterns, luxury, elegance, the riches of a world, the merchandize of two, everything that anybody ever could want, from a tin shaving-pot to a Cashmere shawl. Astonishing cheapness—wonderful celerity—enchant-

ing civility! Great is Moses of the Minorities! Of the Minorities? of everywhere. He pervades Aldgate; he looms on Whitechapel; an aerial suspension bridge seems to connect his Minorial palace with his West End Branch. Moses is everywhere. When I came from Weedon the other day, his retainers pelted me with his pamphlets as I quitted the railway station. Moses has wrenched the lyre and the bays from our laureate's hands; he and his son are the monarchs of Parnassus. His circulars are thrown from balloons and fired out of cannon. I believe they must grow in market gardens somewhere out of town--they are so numerous. Of course, Moses is a great public benefactor.

Crossing the Minorities, and keeping on the right hand side of the road, we are in the very thick of 'Butcher Row' at once. A city of meat! The gas, no longer gleaming through ground-glass globes, or aided by polished reflectors, but flaring from primitive tubes, lights up a long vista of beef, mutton, and veal. Legs, shoulders, loins, ribs, hearts, livers, kidneys, gleam in all the gaudy panoply of scarlet and white on every side. 'Buy, buy, buy!' resounds shrilly through the greasy, tobacco-laden, gas-rarefied air. There

are eloquent butchers, who rival Orator Henley in their encomia on the legs and briskets they expose; insinuating butchers, who weedle the softer sex into purchasing, with sly jokes and well-turned compliments; dignified butchers (mostly plethoric, double-chinned men, in top-boots, and doubtless wealthy), who seem to think that the mere appearance of their meat, and of themselves, is sufficient to insure custom, and seldom condescend to mutter more than an occasional 'Buy!' Then there are bold butchers—vehement rogues, in stained frocks—who utter frantic shouts of 'Buy, buy, buy!' ever and anon making a ferocious sally into the street, and seizing some unlucky wight, who buys a leg of mutton or a bullock's heart, *volens volens!*

Bless the women! how they love marketing! Here they are 'by scores. Pretty faces, ugly faces, young and old, chaffering, simpering, and scolding vehemently. Now, it is the portly matron—housekeeper, may be, to some wealthy, retired old bachelor; she awes the boldest butcher, and makes even the dignified one incline in his top-boots. And here is the newly-married artisan's wife—a fresh, rosy-checked girl, delightfully ignorant of house-

keeping, though delighted with its responsibilities—charmingly diffident as to what she shall buy, and placing implicit, and it is to be hoped, not misplaced, confidence in the insinuating butcher, who could, I verily believe, persuade her that a pig's fry is a saddle of mutton. Poor thing! she is anxious to be at home and get Tom's supper ready for him; and as for Tom, the sooner he gets away from the public-house, where his wages are paid him every Saturday night, the better it will be for his wife and for him, too, I opine. There are but few male purchasers of butcher's meat. Stay, here is one—a little, rosy man, in deep black, and with a very big basket, and holding by the hand a little rosy girl, in black as deep as his. He is a widower, I dare say, and the little girl his daughter. How will it be, I wonder, with that couple, a dozen years hence? Will the little girl grow big enough to go to market by herself, while father smokes his pipe at home? or, will father marry again, and a shrewish stepmother ill-treat the girl, till she runs away and——Well, well! we have other matters besides Butcher Row to attend to. We can but spare a glance at that gaunt old man, with the bristly beard and the red eyelids, who is nervously fingering, while

he endeavours to beat down the price of those sorry scraps of meat yonder. His history is plain enough to read, and is printed in three letters on his face. G I N.

On the pavement of this Butcher Row, we have another market, and a grand one too. Not confined, however, to the sale of any one particular article, but diversified in an eminent degree. Half-way over the kerbstone and the gutter, is an apparently interminable line of 'standings' and 'pitches,' consisting of trucks, barrows, baskets, and boards on tressels, laden with almost every imaginable kind of small merchandize. Oysters, vegetables, fruit, combs, prints in inverted umbrellas, ballads, cakes, sweetstuff, fried fish, artificial flowers (!), chairs, brushes and brooms, soap, candles, crockeryware, ironmongery, cheese, walking-sticks, looking-glasses, frying-pans, bibles, waste-paper, toys, nuts, and fire-wood. These form but a tithe of the contents of this Whitechapel Bezesteen. Each stall is illuminated, and each in its own peculiar manner. Some of the vendors are careless, and their lamps are but primitive, consisting of a rushlight stuck in a lump of clay, or a turnip cut in half. But there is a degree of luxury in not a few; 'Holliday's lamps,' green paper shades, 'fish-

tail' burners, and, occasionally, camphine lamps, being freely exhibited. I don't think you could collect together, in any given place in Europe, a much queerer assortment than the sellers of the articles exposed, were it not the buyers thereof. Here are brawny costermongers by dozens, in the orthodox corduroys, fur caps, and 'king's man' handkerchiefs. Lungs of leather have they, marvellous eloquence, also, in praising carrots, turnips, and red herrings. Here, too, are street mechanics, manufacturers of the articles they sell, and striving with might and main to sell them; and you will find very few, or rather, no Irish among this class. I see women among the street sellers, as I move along—some, poor widow souls—some, who have grown old in street trading—some, little puny tottering things, sobbing and shivering as they sell. The buyers are of all descriptions, from the middle to the very lowest class, inclusive. Ruddy mechanics, with their wives no their arms, and some sallow and shabby, reeling to and from the gin-shops. Decent married women, and comely servant girls, with latch-keys and market-baskets. Beggars, by dozens. Slatternly, frowsy, drabs of women, wrangling with wrinkled crones, and bating down the

price of a bunch of carrots fiercely. Blackguard boys, with painted faces, tumbling head over heels in the mud. Bulky costers, whose day's work is over, or who do not care to work at all. Grimy dustmen, newly emancipated from the laystall. The bare-headed or battered-bonneted members of the class, called (and truly) unfortunate, haunt the other side of the road. There is too much light and noise here for them.

But the noise! the yelling, screeching, howling, swearing, laughing, fighting saturnalia; the combination of commerce, fun, frolic, cheating, almsgiving, thieving, and devilry; the Geneva-laden, tobacco-charged atmosphere! The thieves, now pursuing their vocation, by boldly snatching joints of meat from the hooks, or articles from the stalls; now, peacefully, basket in hand, making their Saturday night's marketing (for even thieves must eat). The short pipes, the thick sticks, the mildewed umbrellas, the dirty faces, the ragged coats! Let us turn into the gin-shop here, for a moment.

It is a remarkably lofty, though not very spacious, edifice—the area, both before and behind the bar, being somewhat narrow. There are enormous tubs of gin, marked with

an almost fabulous number of gallons each ; and there are composite columns, and mirrors, and handsome clocks, and ormolu candelabra, in the approved Seven Dials style. But the company are different. They have not the steady, methodical, dram-drinking system of the Seven Dials, Drury Lane, and Holborn gin-shop *habitués* ; the tremulous deposition of the required three halfpence ; the slow, measured, draining of the glass ; the smack of the lips, and quick passing of the hand over the mouth, followed by the speedy exit of the regular dram drinker, who takes his 'drain' and is off, even if he be in again in a short time. These Whitechapel gin drinkers brawl and screech horribly. Blows are freely exchanged, and sometimes pewter measures fly through the air like Shrapnell shells. The stuff itself, which in the western gin-shops, goes generally by the name of 'blue ruin' or 'short,' is here called indifferently, 'tape,' 'max,' 'duke,' 'gatter,' and 'jacky.' Two more peculiarities I observe also. One is, that there are no spruce barmaids, or smiling landladies—stalwart men in white aprons supply their place. The second is, that there is a multiplicity of doors, many more than would at first seem necessary, and for ever on the

swing; but the utility of which is speedily demonstrated to me by the simultaneous ejection of three 'obstropelous' Irish labourers, by three of the stalwart barmen.

The trucks and barrows, the fried fish and artificial flowers, are not quite so abundant when we have passed a thoroughfare called Somerset Street. They become even more scarce when we see, on the other side of the road, two stone posts, or obelisks on a small scale, marking at once the boundaries of the City, and the commencement of that renowned thoroughfare now politely called Middlesex Street, but known to Europe in general, and the nobility and gentry connected with the trade in old clothes in particular, as Petticoat Lane. It is no use going down there this Saturday, for the Hebrew community, who form its chief delight and ornament, are all enjoying their 'shobhouse,' and we shall meet with them elsewhere. We will, if you please, cross over, leaving the kerbstone market (which only exists on one side), and allured by the notes of an execrably played fiddle, enter one of those dazzling halls of delight, called a 'penny gaff.'

The 'gaff' throws out no plausible puffs, no mendacious placards, respecting the entertain-

ment to be found therein. The public take the genuineness of the 'gaff' for granted, and enter by dozens. The 'gaff' has been a shop—a simple shop—with a back parlour to it, and has been converted into a hall of delight, by the very simple process of knocking out the shop front, and knocking down the partition between the shop and parlour. The gas-fittings yet remain, and even the original counters, which are converted into 'reserved seats,' on which, for the outlay of twopence, as many costers, thieves, Jew-boys, and young ladies, as can fight for a place, are sitting, standing, or lounging. For the common herd—the *οἱ πολλοί*—the *conditio vivendi* is simply the payment of one penny, for which they get standing-room in what are somewhat vaguely termed the 'stalls,'—plainly speaking, the body of the shop. The proscenium is marked by two gas 'battens' or pipes, perforated with holes for burners, traversing the room horizontally, above and below. There are some monstrous engravings, in vile frames, suspended from the walls, some vilely coloured plaster casts, and a stuffed monstrosity or two in glass cases. The place is abominably dirty, and the odour of the company generally, and of the shag tobacco they are smoking, is powerful.

A capital house though, to-night : a bumper, indeed. Such a bumper, in fact, that they have been obliged to place benches on the stage (two planks on tressels), on which some of the candidates for the reserved seats are accommodated. As I enter, a gentleman in a fustian suit deliberately walks across the stage and lights his pipe at the footlights ; while a neighbour of mine of the Jewish persuasion, who smells fearfully of fried fish, dexterously throws a cotton handkerchief, containing some savoury condiment from the stalls to the reserved seats, where it is caught by a lady whom he addresses by the title of ‘Bermondsey Bet.’ Bet is, perhaps, a stranger in these parts, and my Hebrew friend wishes to show her that Whitechapel can assert its character for hospitality.

Silence for the manager, if you please !— who comes forward with an elaborate bow, and a white hat in his hand, to address the audience. A slight disturbance has occurred, it appears, in the course of the evening ; the Impresario complains bitterly of the ‘mackinations’ of certain parties ‘next door,’ who seek to injure him by creating an uproar, after he has gone to the expense of engaging ‘four good actors’ for the express amusement of the

British public. The 'next door' parties are, it would seem, the proprietors of an adjacent public-house, who have sought to seduce away the supporters of the 'gaff,' by vaunting the superior qualities of their cream gin, a cuckoo clock, and the 'largest cheroots in the world for a penny.'

Order is restored, and the performances commence. 'Mr. and Mrs. Stitcher,' a buffo duet of exquisite comicality, is announced. Mr. Stitcher is a tailor, attired in the recognised costume of a tailor *on* the stage, though, I must confess, I never saw it *off*. He has nankeen pantaloons, a red nightcap—a redder nose, and a cravat with enormous bows. Mrs. Stitcher is 'made up' to represent a slatternly shrew, and she looks it all over. They sing a verse apiece; they sing a verse together; they quarrel, fight, and make it up again. The audience are delighted. Mr. S. reproaches Mrs. S. with the possession of a private gin-bottle; Mrs. S. inveighs against the hideous turpitude of Mr. S. for pawning three pillow-cases to purchase beer. The audience are in ecstasies. A sturdy coalheaver in the 'stalls' slaps his thigh with delight. It is *so* real. Ugh! terribly real; let us come away, even though murmurs run through the stalls that

'The Baker's Shop' is to be sung. I see, as we edge away to the door, a young lady in a cotton velvet spencer, bare arms, and a short white calico skirt, advance to the footlights. I suppose she is the Fornarina, who is to enchant the dilettanti with the flowery song in question.

We are still in Whitechapel High Street; but in a wider part. The kerbstone market has ceased, and the head-quarters of commerce are in the shops. Wonderful shops, these! Grocers who dazzle their customers with marvellous Chinese paintings, and surmount the elaborate vessels (Properties for a Pantomime) containing their teas and sugars with startling acrostics—pungent conundrums. Is it in imagination only, or in reality, that I see, perched above these groceries, an imp—a fantastic imp, whose head-dress is shaped like a retort, who has a Lancet in his girdle, and a microscope in his hand, and on whose brow is written '*Analysis?*'—that when I read the placards relative to 'Fine young Hyson,' 'Well-flavoured Pekoe,' 'Strong family Souchong,' 'Imperial Gunpowder,' this imp, putting his thumb to his nose, and spreading his fingers out demoniacally, whispers, 'Sloe-leaves,' 'China-clay, Prussian-blue,

yellow-ochre, gum tragacanth, garbage, poison?'—that, pointing to Muscovado, and 'Fine West-India,' and 'superfine lump,' he mutters, 'Sand, chalk, poison?'—that, when I talk of cocoa, he screams, 'Venetian-red, and desiccated manure?'—that, when I allude to coffee, he grins mocking gibes of 'burnt beans, chicory, poison?'—that he dances from the grocer's to the baker's, next door, and executes maniacal gambadoes on the quartern loaves and French rolls, uttering yells about chalk, alum, and dead men's bones?—that he draws chalk and horses' brains from the dairyman's milk; and horse-flesh, and worse offal still, from sausages?—that he shows me everywhere fraud, adulteration, and poison! Avaunt, imp! I begin to think that there is nothing real in the eating and drinking line—that nothing is but what is not—that all beer is *coccus Indicus*—all gin, turpentine, in this delusive Whitechapel. And not in Whitechapel alone. Art thou immaculate, Shore-ditch? Art thou blameless, Borough? Canst thou place thy hand on thy waistcoat, Oxford Street the aristocratic, and say thy tea knows no 'facing or glazing,' thy sugar no potato starch, thy beer no doctoring?

But one of my friends is clamorous for beer:

and, to avoid adulteration, we eschew the delusive main thoroughfare for a moment and strike into a maze of little, unsavoury back streets, between Whitechapel Church and Goodman's Fields. Here is a beer-shop—a little, blinking, wall-eyed edifice, with red curtains in the window, and a bar squeezed up in one corner, as though it were ashamed of itself. From the door of the tap-room which we open, comes forth a thick, compact body of smoke. There are, perhaps, twenty people in the room, and they are all smoking like lime-kilns. From a kiln at the upper extremity comes forth the well-remembered notes of the old *trink-lied*, 'Am Rhein, am Rhein.' We are in Vaterland at once. All these are Teutons—German sugar-bakers. There are hundreds more of their countrymen in the narrow streets about here, and dozens of low lodging-houses, where the German emigrants are crimped and boarded and robbed. Here, also, live the German buy-a-broom girls. There are little German public-houses, and German bakers, and little shops where you can get sauer-kraut and potato-salad, just as though you were in Frankfort or Mayence. Dear old Vaterland! pleasant country of four meals a day, and feather-bed counterpanes—agreeable

land, where you can drink wine in the morning, and where everybody takes off his hat to everybody else! Though thy cookery is execrable, and thy innkeepers are robbers, I love thee, Germany, still!

My experienced friend, when we have refreshed ourselves at this hostelry, brings us, by a short cut, into Union Street, and so into the broad Whitechapel Road. Here the kerbstone market I have alluded to crosses the road itself, and stretches, in a straggling, limping sort of way, up to Whitechapel Workhouse. We come here upon another phase of Saturday-night Whitechapel life. The children of Jewry begin to encompass us, not so much in the way of business; for though their Sabbath is over, and work is legal—though Moses, at the other extremity, is in full swing of money-making activity, yet the majority of the Israelites prefer amusing themselves on a Saturday night. They are peculiar in their amusements, as in everything else. The public-house—the mere bar, at least—has no charms for them; but almost all the low coffee-shops you pass are crowded with young Jews, playing dominoes and draughts; while in the public-houses, where tap-rooms are attached, their elders disport themselves with cards,

bagatelle, and the excitement of a sing-song meeting. Smoking is universal. Cigars the rule—pipes the exception. Houndsditch, the Minories, Leman Street, Duke's Place, St. Mary Axe, Bevis Marks, and Whitechapel itself, have all contributed their quota to fill these places of amusement; and here and there you will see some venerable Israelite, with long beard and strange foreign garb, probably from Tangier or Constantinople, on a visit to his brethren in England. There are legends, too, of obscure places in this vicinity, where what the French call '*gros jeu*,' or high play, is carried on. In Butcher Row, likewise, are Jew butchers, where you may see little leaden seals, inscribed with Hebrew characters, appended to the meat, denoting that the animal has been slaughtered according to the directions of the Synagogue. In the daytime you may see long-bearded rabbins examining the meat, and testing the knives on their nails.

What have we here? 'The Grand Panorama of Australia, a series of moving pictures.' Admission one penny. Just a-going to begin. Some individuals, dressed as Ethiopian serenaders, hang about the door; and one with the largest shirt-collar I have ever seen, takes my penny, and admits me, with some score or

two more, where, though it *is* 'just a-going to begin,' I and my friends wait a good quarter of an hour. There are two policemen off duty beside me, who are indulging in the *dolce far niente*, and cracking nuts. There is a decent, civil-spoken silkweaver from Spitalfields, too, whose ancestors, he tells me, came over to England at the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and who has a romantically French name. He has the old Lyons indentures of his ancestors at home, he says.

We give up the panorama in despair; and, for aught we know, is 'jest a-going to begin' at this moment. In our progress towards the Gate, however, we look in at a few more public-houses. Here is a costermongers' house, where the very truck and baskets are brought to the bar. Here is that famous hostelry, where is preserved an oil painting, containing authentic portraits of three Whitechapel worthies, who once drank one hundred and one pots of beer at one sitting. The name of the captain of this gallant band was 'Old Fish.' Here, again, is a thieves' house—thievish all over, from the squint-eyed landlord to the ruffianly customers. Go in at one door, and go out at another; and don't change more five-pound notes at the bar than you can help, my friend.

Here are houses with queer signs—‘The Grave Morris,’ supposed to be a corruption of some dead-and-gone German Landgrave, and ‘The Blind Beggar,’ close to Mile-end Gate.

Another ‘gaff’ on the right-hand side of the road—but on a grander scale. The Effingham Saloon, with real boxes, a real pit, and a real gallery; dreadfully dirty, and with a dirtier audience. No comic singing, but the drama—the real, legitimate drama. There is a bold bandit, in buff-boots, calling on ‘yon blew Ev’n to bring-a down-a rewing on ther taraytor’s ed.’ There is nothing new in him, nor in the young lady in pink calico, with her back hair down, expressive of affliction. Nor in the Pavilion Theatre over the way, where ‘Rugantino the Terrible’ is the stock piece, and where there are more buff-boots, rusty broad-swords, calico-skirts, and back hairs.

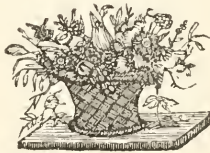
Shops, Gin-palaces, Saloons—Saloons, Gin-palaces, Shops; Costermongers, Thieves, and Beggars—Beggars, Thieves, and Costermongers. As we near the Gate, the London Hospital looms heavily on one side, while on the other the bare, bleak walls of Whitechapel Workhouse stretch grimly along, with a woful skirting-board of crouching Irish paupers,

who have arrived too late for admission into the Workhouse, and are houseless for the night.

Going along, and still anxious to see what is to be seen, I look, curiously, at the portraits hanging on the walls of the coffee-houses and bar-parlours. The democratic element is not very strong in Whitechapel, it would seem; for the effigies of Her Majesty and Prince Consort are as a hundred to one of the effigies of the Cuffies and Meaghers of the sword. One portrait, though, I see everywhere; its multiplications beating all royal, noble, and democratic portraits hollow, and far outnumbering the Dog Billys, and winners of memorable Derbys. In tavern and tap-room, in shop and parlour, I see everywhere the portrait or the bust of SIR ROBERT PEEL.

Mile-end Gate at last, and midnight chimes. There is a 'cheap-jack,' on a rickety platform, and vaunting wares more rickety still, who gets vehemently eloquent as it gets later. But his auditory gradually disperse, and the whole road seems to grow suddenly quiet. Do you know why? The public-houses are closed. The pie-shops, it is true, yet send forth savoury steams; but the rain comes down heavily. Therefore, and as I (and I fear you,

too, dear reader) have had enough of Whitechapel for one while, let us jump into this last omnibus bound westwards, reflecting that if we have not discovered the North-West Passage, or the source of the Niger, we have beheld a strange country, and some strange phases of life.





V.

TATTYBOYS RENTS.

IN Tattyboys Rents the sun shines, and the rain rains, and people are born, and live and die, and are buried and forgotten, much as they do in Rents of greater renown. And I do not think that the obscurity of the Tattyboysians, or the lack of fame of their habitation, cause them much grief, simply because it is to be believed that they are unconscious of both fame and obscurity. That happy conformation of the human mind which leads us firmly and complacently to think that the whole world is ceaselessly occupied with our own little tinpot doings—that serenity of self-importance which lends such a dignity of carriage to little Mr. Claypipkin, as he sails down the street in company with big, burly Mr. Brazenpot—these, I dare say, set my friends in the locality that gives a name to this paper,

quite at their ease in regard to the place they occupy, in the estimation of the Universe, and engender a comfortable indifference as to whether the eyes of Europe (that celebrated visionary) are continually fixed upon Tattyboys Rents or not.

To tell the plain truth about them, nevertheless, the Rents and the Renters are alarmingly obscure. Beyond the postman, the tax-collectors, and those monsters of topographical erudition who deliver County Court summonses, and serve notices for the Insolvent Court, I doubt if there are a hundred persons in London, exclusive of the inhabitants themselves, who know anything about Tattyboys Rents, or even whereabouts they are. It is to be surmised that the names of the magnates of the Rents are inscribed in that golden book of commerce, the Post-Office London Directory; but the place itself finds no mention there. By internal evidence and much collation of the work in question, it may be conjectured that Tattyboys Rents is not even the proper name of the score of houses so called, and that it is legally known—no, not known, for it isn't known—but that it should be designated as—Little Blitsom Street. Plugg, of the water-rates, says that in his youth he well remembers a

small stone tablet on the corner wall of number nineteen, running thus, 'Little Blitsom Street, 1770,'—and old Mrs. Brush, the charwoman, who, in the days of King James the First, would infallibly have been burnt for a witch, but is now venerated as the Oldest Inhabitant, minds the time 'when a ferocious band of miscreants,' whether forgers, burglars, or murderers is not stated, were captured in Tattyboys Rents by that bold runner Townshend, and his red-waistcoated acolytes, and by him conveyed before Sir Richard Birnie: the wretches being known as the 'Little Blitsom Street Gang.' Mogg's Map of the Metropolis, with the later charts of Richard and Davis, pass the Rents by in contemptuous silence. Blitsom Street, and long, dirty Turk's Lane, into which it leads, are both set down in fair characters, but beyond an anonymous little gap between two blocks of houses, there is nothing to tell you where Tattyboys Rents may be. It is no good asking the policeman anything about them. I have my doubts whether *he* knows; but even granting his sapience, I have my suspicions that unless he knew your position and character well, he would affect entire ignorance on the subject. He has his private reasons for doing so.

Tattyboys Rents are far too snugly situated, peaceable, and well-behaved, for its locality to be divulged to strangers—possibly of indifferent character. Therefore my advice to you is, if you understand navigation, which I do not, to take your observations by the sun and moon, and by the help of your ‘Hamilton Moore,’ chronometers, quadrant, compass steering due north, and a guinea case of mathematical instruments, work out Tattyboys Rents’ exact place on the chart,—and then go and find it. Or, ‘another way,’ as the cookery-book says, follow Turk’s Lane till you come to Blitsom Street, up which wander till you stumble, somehow, into Tattyboys Rents.

The last you are very likely to do literally, for the only approach to the Rents is by a flight of steps, very steep and very treacherous: their vicinity being masked by a grove of posts, and the half-dozen idlers whom you are always sure to find congregated round Chapford’s beer-shop. And it has often happened that, of the few strangers who have travelled in Tattyboys Rents, the proudest and sternest: men who would have scorned to perform the ceremony of the Kotou in China, and would have scouted the idea of salaaming to the Great Mogul: have

made their first entrance into the Rents with the lowliest obeisances, with bended knees, and foreheads touching the pavement.

If Miss Mitford had not written, years ago, 'Our Village,' it is decidedly by that name that I should have called this paper. For Tattyboys Rents form not only a village as regards their isolation and the unsophisticated nature of their inhabitants, but they resemble those villages, few and far between, now-a-days, where there is no railway-station—cross-country villages, where the civilizing shriek of the engine-whistle is never heard; where the building mania in any style of architecture is unfelt; where the inhabitants keep themselves to themselves, and have a supreme contempt for the inhabitants of all other villages, hamlets, townships, and boroughs whatsoever; where strangers are barely tolerated and never popular; where improvements, alterations, and innovations are unanimously scouted; where the father's customs are the son's rule of life, and the daughters do what their mothers did before them. The Metropolitan Buildings Act is a dead letter in Tattyboys Rents, for nobody ever thinks of building—to say nothing of rebuilding or painting—a house. The Common Lodging-House Act goes for nothing, for

there are no common lodging-houses, and the lodgers, where there are any, are of an uncommon character. No one fears the Nuisances Removals Act, for everybody has his own particular nuisance, and is too fond of it to move for its abrogation. The Health of Towns Act has nothing in common with the health of Tattyboys Rents, for fevers don't seem to trouble themselves to come down its steep entrance steps, and the cholera has, on three occasions, given it the cut direct. It is of no use bothering about the drainage, for nobody complains about it, and nobody will tell you whether it is deficient or not. As to the supply of water, there is a pump at the further extremity of the Rents that would satisfy the most exigent hydropathist; and, touching that pump, I should like to see the bold stranger female who would dare to draw a jugful of water from it, or the stranger boy who would presume to lift to his lips the time-worn and water-rusted iron ladle attached by a chain to that pump's nozzle. Such persons as district surveyors and inspectors of nuisances have been heard of in Tattyboys Rents, but they are estimated as being in influence and authority infinitely below the parish beadle. There was a chimney on fire

once at number twelve, and with immense difficulty an engine was lifted into the Rents, but all claims of the Fire Brigade were laughed to scorn, and the boys of the Rents made such a fierce attack on the fire-quenching machine, and manifested so keen a desire to detain it as a hostage; that the helmeted men with the hatchets were glad to make their escape as best they could.

The first peculiarity that will strike you on entering the Rents is the tallness of the houses. The blackness of their fronts and the dinginess of their windows will not appear to you as so uncommon, being characteristic of Blitsom Street, Turk's Lane, and the whole of the neighbourhood. But Tattyboys houses are very tall indeed, as if, being set so closely together, and being prevented by conservative tendencies from spreading beyond the limits of the Rents, they had grown taller instead, and added unto themselves storeys instead of wings. I can't say much, either, for their picturesque aspect. Old as the Rents are, they are not romantically old. Here are no lean-to roofs, no carved gables, no old lintels, no dormer or lattice windows. The houses are all alike—all tall, grimy, all with mathematically dirty windows, flights of steps (quite innocent of

the modern frivolities of washing and hearth-stoning), tall narrow doors, and areas with hideous railings. One uncompromisingly tasteless yet terrible mould was evidently made in the first instance for all the lion's-head knockers: one disproportioned spear-head and tassel for all the railings. I can imagine the first Tattyboys, a stern man of inflexible uniformity of conduct and purpose, saying grimly to his builder: 'Build me a Rents of so many houses, on such and such a model,' and the obedient builder turning out so many houses like so many bricks, or so many bullets from a mould, or pins from a wire, and saying, 'There, Tattyboys, there are your Rents.' Then new, painted, swept, garnished, with the mathematical windows all glistening in one sunbeam, the same lion's-head knockers grinning on the same doors, the regularity of Tattyboys Rents must have been distressing; the houses must all have been as like each other as the beaux in wigs and cocked hats, and the belles in hoops and hair powder, who lived when Tattyboys Rents were built; but age, poverty, and dirt have given as much variety of expression to these houses now, as hair, whiskers, wrinkles, and scars give to the human face. Some of the lion-headed knockers are gone, and many

of the spear-headed railings. Some of the tall doors stand continually open, drooping gracefully on one hinge. The plain fronts of the houses are chequered by lively cartoons, pictorially representing the domestic mangle, the friendly cow that yields fresh milk daily for our nourishment, the household goods that can be removed (by spring vans) in town or country; the enlivening ginger-beer which is the favourite beverage (according to the cartoon) of the British Field-Marshal, and the lady in the Bloomer costume. Variety is given to the windows by many of their panes being broken, or patched with parti-coloured paper and textile fabrics; and by many of the windows themselves being open the major part of the day, disclosing heads and shoulders of various stages of muscular development, with a foreground of tobacco-pipes and a background of shirt-sleeves. Pails, brooms, and multifarious odds and ends relieve the uniformity of the areas, while the area gates (where there are any left) swing cheerfully to and fro. Groups of laughing children bespangle the pavement, and diversify the door-steps: and liveliness, colour, form, are given to the houses and the inhabitants by dust, linen on poles, half dismantled placards, domestic fowls, dogs, decayed

vegetables, oyster tubs, pewter pots, broken shutters, torn blinds, ragged door-mats, lidless kettles, bottomless saucepans, shattered plates, bits of frayed rope, and cats whose race is run, and whose last tile has been prowled on.

Tattyboys originally intended the houses in his Rents to be all private mansions. Of that there can be no doubt: else, why the areas, why the doorsteps and the lion-headed knockers? But, that mutability of time and fashion which has converted the monastery of the Crutched Friars into a nest of sugar-brokers' counting-houses, and the Palace of Henry the Eighth and Cardinal Wolsey into a hairdresser's shop, has dealt as hardly with the private houses in Tattyboys Rents. The shopkeeping element has not yet wholly destroyed the aristocratic aspect of the place; still, in very many instances, petty commerce has set up its petty wares in the front-parlour windows, and the chapman has built his counters and shelves on the groundfloors of gentility.

I have spoken so often of Tattyboys Rents, that the question might aptly be asked, Who was Tattyboys? When did it occur to him to build Rents? By what fortunate inheritance, what adventitious accession of wealth, what

prosperous result of astute speculations, was he enabled to give his name to, and derive quarterly revenues from, the two blocks of houses christened after him? So dense is the obscurity that surrounds all the antecedents of the locality, that I do not even know the sex of the primary Tattyboys.

The estates, titles, muniments, and manorial rights (whatever they may be) of the clan Tattyboys, are at present enjoyed by a black beaver bonnet and black silk cloak of antediluvian design and antemundane rustiness, supposed to contain Miss Tattyboys herself. I say 'supposed,' for though the cloak and the bonnet are patent in the Rents on certain periodical occasions, the ancient female (she *must* be old) whom they enshroud is facially as unknown as the first Odalisque of the Harem to Hassan the cobbler, or as the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan was to the meanest of his adorers. No man has seen Miss Tattyboys, not even Mr. Barwise, her agent; nay, nor old Mr. Fazzle, the immensely rich bachelor of number thirteen; but many have heard her stern demands for rent, and her shrill denunciation of the 'carryings on' of her tenants. It is said that Miss Tattyboys resides at Hoxton, and that she keeps her own cows.

Men also say that she discounts bills, and is the proprietor of a weekly newspaper. It is certain that she is in frequent communication with Mr. Hemp, the officer of the Sheriff's Court;* and many are the proclamations of outlawry made against sprigs of nobility, with tremendously long and aristocratic names, at the 'suit of Bridget Tattyboys.' Likewise she arrested the Honourable Tom Scaleybridge, M.P., at the close of the last session, before the advent of the present Administration, but was compelled to release him immediately afterwards; he claiming his privilege. There are many solicitors of my acquaintance, who in their mysteriously musty and monied private offices have battered tin boxes with half-effaced inscriptions relative to 'Tattyboys Estate, 1829;' 'Tattyboys Trust, 1832;'' 'Tattyboys *versus* Patcherly;' and 'Miss Bridget Tattyboys.' She is mixed up with an infinity of trusts, estates, and will cases. She is the subject of dreary lawsuits in which the nominal plaintiff is the real defendant, and the defendant ought not to be a party to the suit at all. [Time is always being given to speak to her, or communicate with her, or to summon her to produce papers which she

* His occupation is gone.

never will produce.] The lines in brackets are Mr. Dickens's. Law reports about her cases begin with 'So far back as eighteen hundred and ten;' 'it will be remembered that;' 'this part-heard case;' and the daily newspapers occasionally contain letters denying that she made a proposition to A, or sued B, or was indebted to C: signed by Driver, Chizzle, and Wrench, solicitors for Miss Tattyboys. She got as far as the House of Lords once, in an appeal case against Coger Alley Ram Chunder Loll, of Bombay; but how this litigious old female managed to get out, physically or literally, to Hindostan, or into difficulties with a Parsee broker, passes my comprehension. A mysterious old lady!

Meanwhile, Miss Bridget Tattyboys is the landlady of Tattyboys Rents. There is no dubiety about her existence *there*. Only be a little behindhand with your rent, and you will soon be favoured with one of Mr. Barwise's 'Sir, I am instructed by Miss Tattyboys;' and close upon that will follow Mr. S. Scrutor, Miss Tattyboys' broker, with his distraint, and his levy, and his inventory, and all the ceremonies of selling up. I should opine that Miss Tattyboys is deaf, for she is remarkable (in cases of unpaid rent) for not hearkening to

appeals for time, and not giving ear to suggestions for a compromise. Gilks, the chandler's shopkeeper of number nine, whose wife is always in the family-way, and himself in difficulties, once 'bound himself by a curse' to seek out Miss Tattyboys at Hoxton, to beard her in her very den, and appeal to her mercy, her charity, her womanhood, in a matter of two quarters owing. He started one morning, with a determined shirt-collar, and fortified by sundry small libations at the Cape of Good Hope. He returned at nightfall with a haggard face, disordered apparel, and an unsteady gait; was inarticulate and incoherent in his speech; shortly afterwards went to bed; and to this day cannot be prevailed upon by his acquaintances, by the wife of his bosom even, to give any account of his interview (if interview he had) with the Terrible Woman of Hoxton. Mrs. Gilks, a wary soul, who has brought, and is bringing, up a prodigious family, has whispered to Mrs. Spileburg, of the Cape of Good Hope tavern, that, on the morning after Gilks's expedition, examining his garments, as it is the blessed conjugal custom to do, she found, imprinted in chalky dust, on the back of his coat, *the mark of a human foot!* What could this portend? Did

Gilks penetrate to Hoxton, and was he indeed *kicked* by Miss Tattyboys? or did he suffer the insulting infliction at the foot of some pampered menial? Or, coming home despairing, was he led to the consumption (and the redundancy of coppers, and the paucity of silver, in his pockets would favour this view of the case) of more liquid sustenance of a fermented nature than was good for him? And was he in this state kicked by outraged landlord or infuriated pot-companion? Gilks lives, and makes no sign. Pressed on the subject of Miss Tattyboys, he reluctantly grumbles that she is an 'old image,' and this is all.

I *do* wonder what Miss Tattyboys is like. Is she really the stern, harsh, uncompromising female that her acts bespeak her? Does she sit in a rigid cap, or still accoutred in the black bonnet and veil in a dreary office-like parlour at Hoxton, with all her documents docketed on a table before her, or glaring from pigeon-holes, shelves, and cupboards? Or is she a jolly, apple-faced little woman, in a cheery room with birds and plants and flowers, liking a cozy glass and a merry song: a Lady Bountiful in the neighbourhood, a Dorcas to the poor, the idol of all the dissenting ministers around? Perhaps. Who

knows? Ah! how unlike we all are to what we seem! How the roar of the lion abroad softens into the bleat of the lamb at home! How meekly the fierce potent schoolmaster of the class-room holds out his knuckles for the ruler in the study! He who is the same in his own home of homes as he is abroad, is a marvel.

Miss Tattyboys has a carriage and a horse, but for certain reasons upon which I briefly touched in allusion to the parish engine, her visits to the Rents are made perforce on foot. Monday mornings, black Mondays emphatically, are her ordinary visiting days; and on such mornings you will see her dusky form looming at Mr. Fazzle's door, or flitting through the Rents as she is escorted to her carriage by Barwise, her agent. Communications may be made direct to her, but they always come somehow through Barwise. He may be described as the buffer to the Tattyboys train; and run at her ever so hard, Barwise receives the first collision, and detracts from its force. If Gilks wants time, or Chapford threatens to leave unless his roof is looked to, or Mrs. Chownes asks again about that kitchen range, or Spileburg expresses a savage opinion that his house will

tumble in next week, and that there'll be manslaughter against somebody, Barwise interposes, explains, promises, refuses, will see about it. Which Barwise never does. You try to get at Miss Tattyboys, but you can't, though you are within hand and earshot of her. The portentous black veil flutters in the wind; you are dazzled and terrified by her huge black reticule bursting with papers; you strive to speak; but Miss Tattyboys is gone [and all you can do is to throw yourself upon Barwise, who throws you over*].

The carriage of the landlady of the Rents is an anomalous vehicle on very high springs, of which the body seems decidedly never to have been made for the wheels, which on their part appear to be all of different sizes, and shriek while moving dreadfully. Much basket-work enters into the composition of Miss Tattyboys' carriage; also much rusty leather, and a considerable quantity of a fabric resembling bed-ticking. There are two lamps, one of which is quite blind and glassless, and the other blinking and knocked on one side in some bygone collision, to a very squinting obliquity. A complication of straps and rusty iron attaches this equipage to a very long-

bodied, short-legged black horse, not unlike a turnspit dog, which appears to be utterly disgusted with the whole turn-out, and drags it with an outstretched head and outstretched legs, as though he *were* a dog and the carriage a tin kettle tied to his tail. There have been blood and bone once about this horse doubtless; but the blood is confined at present to a perpetual raw on his shoulder, artfully veiled from the Society's constables by the rags of his dilapidated collar, and the bone to a lamentably anatomical development of his ribs. To him, is Jehu, a man of grim aspect and of brickdust complexion, whose hat and coat are as the hat and coat of a groom, but whose legs are as the legs of an agricultural labourer, inasmuch as they are clad in corduroy, and terminate in heavy shoes, much clayed. He amuses himself while waiting for his mistress with aggravating the long-bodied horse with his whip on his blind side (he, the horse, is wall-eyed), and with reading a tattered volume, averred by many to be a book of tracts, but declared by some to be a 'Little Warbler,' insomuch as smothered refrains of 'right tooral lol looral' have been heard at times from his dreary coachbox. It is not a pleasant sight—this rusty carriage with the long horse and the grim coachman

jolting and staggering about Blitsom Street. It does not do a man good to see the black bonnet and veil inside, with the big reticule and the papers; and, overshadowed by them all, as though a cypress had been drawn over her, a poor little weazened diminutive pale-faced little girl, in a bonnet preposterously large for her, supposed to be Miss 'Tattyboys' niece, also to be a something in Chancery, and the 'infant' about whose 'custody' there is such a fluster every other term, the unhappy heiress of thousands of disputed pounds.

There are three notable institutions in 'Tattyboys Rents'—these are the posts, the children, and the dogs—and all three as connected with the steps. 'The Rents, if it were famous for anything, which it is not, should be famous for its dogs. They are remarkable, firstly, for not having any particular breed. Gilks, the chandler's shopkeeper, had a puppy which was 'giv to him by a party as was always mixed up with dogs,' which he thought, at first, would turn out a pointer, then a terrier, then a spaniel; but was miserably disappointed in all his conjectures. He had gone to the expense of a collar for him, and the conversion of an emptied butter-firkin into a kennel, and, in despair, took him to

Chuffers, the greengrocer and dogs'-meat vendor in Blitsom Street, and solemnly asked his opinion upon him. 'There ain't a hinch of breed in him' was the dictum of Chuffers, as he contemptuously bestowed a morsel of eleemosynary paunch upon the low-bred cur. Charley (this was the animal's name) grew up to be a gaunt dog of wolf-like aspect, an incorrigible thief, a shameless profligate, a bully, and a tyrant. He was the terror of the children and the other dogs; and as if that unhappy Gilks had not already sufficient sorrows upon his head, Charley had the inconceivable folly and wickedness to make an attack one Monday morning upon the sacred black silk dress of Miss Tattyboys. You may imagine that Barwise was down upon Gilks the very next day, like a porteullis. Charley thenceforth disappeared. Gilks had a strange affection for him, and still cherished a fond belief that he would turn out something in the thorough-bred line some day; but the butterfirkin was removed to the back yard, and Charley was supposed to pass the rest of his existence in howling and fighting with his chain in that town-house amid brickbats, cabbage-stalks, and clothes-pegs, having in addition a *villegiatura* or country-house in an

adjacent dust-bin, into which the length of his chain just allowed him to scramble, and in the which he sat among the dust and ashes, rasping himself occasionally (for depilatory purposes) against a potsherd.

There is a brown dog of an uncertain shade of mongrelism who belongs to nobody in particular, and is generally known in the Rents as the Bow-wow. As such it is his avocation and delight to seek the company of very young children (those of from eighteen months to two years of age are his preference), whose favour and familiarity he courts, and whom he amuses by his gambols and good-humour. The bow-wow is a welcome guest on all door-steps, and in most entrance-halls. His gymnastics are a never-failing source of amusement to the juvenile population, and he derives immense gratification from the terms of endearment and cajolement addressed by the mothers and nurses to their children, all of which expressions this feeble-minded animal takes to be addressed to himself, and at which he sniggers his head and wags his stump of a tail tremendously. I have yet to learn whether this brown, hairy, ugly dog is so fond of the little children, and frisks round them, and rolls them over with such tender lovingness, and suffers

himself to be pulled and pinched and poked by his playmates, all with immovable complacency—I say, I have yet to learn whether he does all this through sheer good-humour and fondness for children, or whether he is a profound hypocrite, skilled in the ways of the world, and knowing that the way to Mother Hubbard's cupboard, when there are any bones in it, is through Mother Hubbard's motherly heart. I hope, for the credit of dog nature, and for my own satisfaction, loving that nature, that the first is the cause.

The only dog in the Rents that can claim any family or breed is an animal by the name of Buffo, who was, in remote times, a French poodle. I say *was*, for the poodleian appearance has long since departed from him, and he resembles much more, now, a very dirty, shaggy white bear, seen through the small end of an opera-glass. He was the property, on his first introduction to the Rents, of one Monsieur Phillips—whether originally Philippe or not, I do not know—who, it was inferred, from sundry strange paraphernalia that he left behind him on his abrupt departure from his residence, was something in the magician, not to say conjuror and mountebank line. Buffo was then a glorious animal, half-shaved, as

poodles should be, with fluffy rings round his legs, and two tufts on his haunches, and a coal-black nose, due perhaps to the employment of nitrate of silver as a cosmetic, and a pink skin. He could mount and descend a ladder; he could run away when Monsieur Phillips hinted that there was a 'policeman coming;' he could limp on one leg; he could drop down dead, dance, climb up a lamp-post at the word of command. It was even said that he had been seen in James Street, Covent Garden, on a ragged piece of carpet, telling fortunes upon the cards, and pointing out Monsieur Phillips as the greatest rogue in company. Monsieur Phillips, however, one morning suddenly disappeared, leaving sundry weeks' rent owing to his landlord, Chapford, of the beer-shop; his only effects being the strange implements of legerdemain I have noticed, and the dog Buffo, whom he had placed at livery, so to state, at least at a fixed weekly stipend for his board and lodging. I need not say that in a very short time the unfortunate dog 'ate his head right off;' the amount of paunch he had consumed far exceeding his marketable value. Chapford, after vainly debating as to the propriety of turning the magician's cups into half-pint measures,

and his balls into bagatelle balls, sold them to Scrutor, the broker, and Buffo himself to Joe (surname unknown), who is a helper up Spavins's yard, the livery and bait stables, in Blitsom Street. Joe 'knowed of a lady down Kensington wot was werry nuts upon poodles;' and Buffo, prior to his introduction to the lady amateur, was subjected to sundry dreadful operations of dog farriery, in the way of clipping, staining, and curtailing, which made him from that day forward a dog of sullen and morose temper. He soon came back from Kensington in disgrace, the alleged cause of his dismissal being his having fought with, killed, and eaten a grey cockatoo. He was re-sold to Mrs. Lazenby, old Mr. Fazzle's housekeeper; but he had either forgotten or was too misanthropic to perform any of his old tricks, regarded policemen unmoved, and passed by the whole pack of cards with profound disdain. A report, too, founded on an inadvertent remark of Chapford, that he (Buffo) had once been on the stage and had been fired out of a cannon by the clown in a pantomime, succeeded in ruining him in the opinion of the Rents, who hold all 'play-actors' in horror: he passed from owner to owner, and was successively kicked out and discarded by all, and now hangs about

Chapford's, a shabby, used-up, degraded, broken-down beast.

Is there anything more pitiable in animal nature than a thoroughly hard-up dog? Such a one I met two Sundays back in a shiningly genteel street in Pimlico. He was a cur, most wretchedly attenuated, and there in Pimlico he sat, with elongated jaws, his head on one side, his eyes wofully upturned, his haunches turned out, his feet together, his tail subdued, his ribs rampant: an utterly worn-out, denuded, ruined old dog. If he had taken a piece of chalk, and written 'I am starving' fifty times on the pavement in the most ornamental calligraphy, it could not have excited more sympathy than the unutterable expression of his oblique misery, propped up sideways as he was against a kitchen railing. I had no sooner halted to accost him, than, taking it for granted that I was going to kick or beat him because he was miserable, he shambled meekly into the gutter, where he stood, shivering; but I spoke him fair, and addressing him in what little I knew of the Doggee language, strove to reassure him. But how could I relieve him? What could I do for him? It was a stern uncompromising shining British Sunday; there was no back slum

nigh ; no lowly shop, whither I could convey him to regale on dogs'-meat. Moreover it was church time, and I could not even purchase licensed victuals for his succour. It was no good giving him a penny. I might as well have given him a tract. He was unmistakably mangy, and I dared not convey him home ; and I knew of no dog-hospital.* So I exhorted him to patience and resignation, and left him reluctantly ; persuaded that the greatest charity I could have extended to him would have been to blow his brains out.

You are not to think that these I have mentioned are all the dogs of which Tattyboys Rents can boast. Many more are they, big dogs and little dogs : from that corpulent Newfoundland dog of Scrutor's, the broker, whose sagacity is so astounding as to lead to his being trusted with baskets and cash, to purchase bread and butchers' meat—the which he does faithfully, bringing back change with scrupulous exactitude—and whose only fault is his rapid rate of locomotion, and defective vision, which cause him to run up against and upset very nearly everybody he meets in

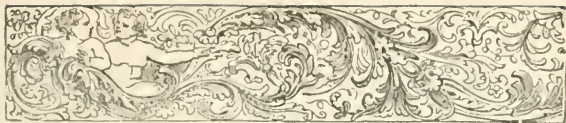
* There is now a refuge for Lost and Starving Dogs, which is deserving of the most liberal support.

his journeys—to Bob Blather, the barber's, cock-tail terrier, which can kill a 'power of rats,' and has more than once been matched in 'Bell's Life' (familiarily called by the sporting part of the Rents, 'The Life') to do so. I may say, to the honour of the dogs of Tattyboys Rents, that they seldom stray beyond its limits; and that if any strange dog descend the steps leading thereunto, they invariably fall upon, and strive to demolish him with the utmost ferocity.

The children of the Rents are so much like other street children, that they preserve the same traditions of street games and songs common to other localities. They are remarkable, however, for a certain grave and sedate demeanour, which I have never failed to observe in children who are in the habit of sitting much upon flights of steps. Such steps are the beach of street life, and the sea of the streets rolls on towards the stony shore. The steps of Tattyboys Rents are to the children there a place of deliberation, recreation, observation, and repose. There, is to-morrow's lesson studied; there, does the baby learn a vivâ-voce lesson in walking; there, is the dirt-pie made, and there the sharp-pointed 'cat' constructed; there, does the nurse-child rest,

and the little maid achieve her task of sewing ; there, are tops wound, and marbles gambled for, and juvenile scandals promulgated ; there, is the quarrel engendered, and the difference adjusted. It is good to see this Trinità di Monte of Tattyboys Rents on a sunshiny day ; its degrees sown with little people, whose juvenile talk falls cheerfully on the ear after the ruder conversation at the posts. The posts are immediately behind the steps, forming a grove of egress,—a sort of forest of Soignies, behind the Mont Saint Jean of the Rents,—into Blitsom Street. At the posts, is Chapford's beer-shop ; pots are tossed for at the posts, and bets are made on horse-races. Many a married woman in the Rents ' drats' the posts, at whose bases she lays the Saturday night vagaries of her ' master ;' forgetting how many of her own sex are postally guilty, and how often she herself has stood a-gossiping at the posts and at the pump.





VI.

HOW I WENT TO SEA.

HOW many years ago is it, I wonder, when, resenting some boyish grievance, deeply and irrecoverably irate at some fancied injury, wounded and exacerbated in my tenderest feelings, I ran away from school with the hard, determined, unalterable intention of going on the tramp and then going to sea? The curtain has fallen years ago, and the lights have been put out long since, on that portion of my history. The door of the theatre has been long locked and the key lost where *that* play was acted. Let me break the door open now and clear away the cobwebs.

About that time there must have been an epidemic, I think, for running away at Mr. Bogryne's establishment, Bolting House, Ealing. 'Chivying' we called it. We had three or four Eton boys among us, who had carried

out so well the maxim of *Floreat Ettona* at that classic establishment, that they had flourished clean out of it; and—whether it was they missed the daily flogging (Mr. Bogryne was tender-hearted) or the fagging, or, the interminable treadmill on the *Gradus ad Parnassum* (we were more commercial than classical)—they were always running away. One boy ‘chivied’ in consequence of a compulsory small-tooth comb on Wednesday evenings—he wouldn’t have minded it, he said, if it had been on Saturdays. Another fled his *Alma Mater* because he was obliged to eat fat, and another because he could not get fat enough.

I think, were I to be put upon my affirmation relative to the cause of *my* running away from Mr. Bogryne’s establishment, and going on tramp, that I should place it to the account of the Pie. There was a dreadful pie for dinner every Monday; a meat-pie with a stony crust that did not break, but split into scaly layers, with horrible lumps of gristle inside, and such strings of sinew (alternated by lumps of flabby fat) as a ghoul might use as a rosary. We called it kitten pie—resurrection pie—rag pie—dead man’s pie. We abused it by night, we abused it by day: we wouldn’t stand it, we said; we would write to our friends; we would

go to sea. Old Bogryne (we called him 'old' as an insulting adjective, as a disparaging adjective, and not at all with reference to the affection and respect due to age)—old Bogryne kept Giggleswick the monitor seven hours on a form with the pie before him; but Giggleswick held out bravely, and would not taste the accursed food. Old Bogryne boxed the ears of Clitheroe (whose father supplied the groceries to the establishment, and who was called in consequence 'Ginger') for remarking, sneeringly, to the cook, that he (Bogryne) never ate any of the pie himself, and *that he knew the reason why*. Candyman, my chum, found a tooth in the pie one day—a dreadful double-tooth. Who was going to stop in a school where they fed you with double teeth? This, combined with the tyranny of the dancing master, some difficulties connected with the size of the breakfast roll, and others respecting the conjugation of the verb $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\tau\omega$ (for, though we were commercial, we learnt Greek, hang it!), and the confiscation of a favourite hockey stick—for which I had given no less a sum than fourpence and a copy of Philip Quarll—drove me to desperation. I 'chivied' with the full intention of walking to Portsmouth, and going to sea.

One bright moonlight night I rose stealthily from my bed, dressed, and stole downstairs. I held my breath, and trod softly as I passed dormitory after dormitory; but all slept soundly. The French master—who was wont to decorate himself at night with a green handkerchief round his head, and a night-garment emblazoned like the *San benito* of a victim of the Inquisition—gurgled and moaned as I passed his door: but he had a habit of choking himself in his sleep, and I feared him not. Clitheroe, who slept under the last flight of stairs, was snoring like a barrel organ; and Runks, his bedfellow, who was the best story-teller in the school, was telling idiotic tales, full of sound and fury signifying nothing, to himself in his slumbers. I crept across the playground cautiously, in the shadow of the wall. The play-shed; the brick wall against which we were wont to play ‘fives;’ the trim little gardens, three feet by four, where we cultivated mustard and cress, and flowering plants which never flowered; all seemed to glance reproachfully at me as I stole out, like a thief in the night. The tall gymnastic pole up which we climbed appeared to cast a loving, lingering shadow towards me, as if to bring me back. The sky was so clear,

the moon was so bright, and the fleecy clouds were so calm and peaceful as they floated by, that I half repented of my design and began to blubber. But the clock of Ealing church striking, called to mind the bell I hated most—the ‘getting-up bell.’ The pie, the tooth, the dancing-master, the diminished roll, and the Greek verb, came trooping up; and, my unquenchable nautical ardour filling me with daring, I got over the low palings of the playground, and dropped into the high road on my way to sea.

Nobody was in my confidence. Such friends and relatives as I had were far away, and I felt that ‘the world was all before me where to choose.’ My capital was not extensive. I had jacket, waistcoat, and trousers with the *et ceteras*, half a crown in money, a curiously-bladed knife with a boot-hook and a corkscrew by way of rider, and an accordion. I felt that, with these though, I had the riches of Peru.

To this day I cannot imagine what the New Police could have been about, that moonlight night, that they did not pounce upon me, many-bladed knife, accordion and all, long before I reached Hyde Park Corner. Nor can I discover why Mr. Bogryne pursued me in a chaise-cart and sent foot runners after me up

and down all roads save the very one I was walking quietly along. I must have looked so very like a runaway boy. The ink was scarcely dry on my fingers; the traces of yesterday's ruler were yet fresh on my knuckles; the dust of the play-ground adhered to my knees.

A bed next night at a London coffee-shop; a breakfast and a wild debauch on raspberry tarts and ginger beer, very soon brought my half-crown to twopence [and I felt a lowness of spirits and the want of stimulants].* A penny roll and a saveloy brought me to zero. The accordion was a bed the next night, and a sausage roll by way of breakfast, the next morning. The many-bladed knife produced a mouthful of bread and cheese and half a pint of beer for dinner. Then, having nothing, I felt independent.

By some strange intuitive training, I felt myself all at once a tramp, and looked at the journey to Portsmouth quite philosophically. Curiously, when the produce of the many-bladed knife had been consumed and forgotten, and the want of another repast began to be very unpleasantly remembered; it never once

* C. D.

occurred to me to turn back, to seek assistance from any friend or friend's friend or boy's father with whom I had spent a holiday in London. It never struck me that if employment were to be found at sea, there were docks and ships in London. I was bound for Portsmouth—why I know not—but bound as irrevocably as though I had a passport made out for that particular seaport, and the route was not by any means to be deviated from. If the London Docks were situated in New York, and if Blackwall were the port of Bombay, they could not, in my mind, have been more unattainable for the purpose of going to sea than they were, only a mile or so off. I was not afraid of Mr. Bogryne. I seemed to have done with him, ages ago. I had quite finished and settled up accounts with him; so it appeared to me. He, and the days when I wore clean linen, and was Master Anybody, with a name written in the fly-leaf of a ciphering book; with a playbox, and with friends to send me plum-cakes and bright five-shilling pieces, were fifty thousand miles away. They loomed in the distance, just as the burning cities might have done to Lot's wife, very dimly indeed.

It was Saturday afternoon. I well remem-

ber loitering some time about Vauxhall, and wondering whether that hot dusty road—with the odours of half a dozen bone-boiling establishments coursing up and down it like siroccos—could be near the fairy establishment where there were always fifty thousand additional lamps, and to which young Simms at Bolting House had been—marvellous boy!—twice during the Midsummer holidays. After listlessly counting the fat sluggish barges on the river, and the tall dusty trees at Nine Elms (there was no railway station there then), I set out walking, doggedly. I caught a glimpse of myself in the polished plate-glass window of a baker's shop, and found myself to be a very black grimy boy. Vagabondism had already set its mark upon me. I looked so long and so earnestly in at the baker's window that the baker—a lean, spiky Scotchman (whose name, McCorquodale, in lean, spiky letters above his shop front looked like himself)—appeared to think I was meditating a bold border foray on his stock in trade, and rushed at me so fiercely round his counter with a bread-tin, that I fled like a young gazelle. I plodded down the Wandsworth Road; blushing very much as I passed people in clean shirts and well-brushed clothes, and

pretty servant maids, dressed out in ribbons like Maypoles, laughing and chattering in the gardens, and at the doors of suburban villas.

By some circuitous route which took me, I think, over Wandsworth Common, and through Putney and Roehampton, I got that evening to Kingston-upon-Thames. The sun was setting as I leaned over the bridge. I was tired and hungry; but, dismissing the idea of supper as something not sufficiently within the range of possibility to be discussed, I certainly began to feel anxious concerning bed. Where or how was it to be? Was it to be barn, or hay-rick, or outhouse—or simply field, with the grass for a pillow, and the sky for a counterpane? My thoughts were interrupted by a stranger.

He was, like myself, a tramp; but I think I may say, without vanity, he was infinitely more hideous to look at. Short and squat and squarely built, he had the neck of a bull and the legs of a bandy tailor. His hands were as the hands of a prizefighter. They were so brown and horny that where the wrists joined on to his arm you might fancy the termination of a pair of leather gloves. His face was burnt, and tanned with exposure to sun and rain to a dull brickdust colour; purple-red on

the cheek-bones and tips of the nose and chin. Both hands and face were inlaid with a curious chequer-work of dirt, warranted to stand the most vigorous application of a scrubbing-brush. His head was close cropped, like a blighted stubble-field, and his flabby ears kept watch on either side of it like scarecrows. He had pigs' eyes of no particular colour; no eyebrows, no beard save a stubbly mildew on his upper lip like unto the mildew on a pot of paste, a 'bashed' nose, and a horrible hare-lip. He had an indefinite jacket with some letters—a W, I think, and an I—branded on one sleeve, a pair of doubtful trousers, and something that was intended for a shirt. None of these were ragged, nor could they be called patched, for they were one patch. Finally, he had a bundle in his hand, a cap like a disc cut out of a door-mat on his head, and something on his feet which I took to be a pair of fawn-coloured slippers, but which I subsequently found to be a coating of hardened mud and dust upon his skin.

He looked at me for a moment half curiously, half menacingly; and then said, in a shrill falsetto voice that threw me into a violent perspiration:—

‘Where was you a-going to?’

I replied, trembling, that I was going to bed.

‘And where was you a-going to sleep?’ he asked.

I said I didn’t know.

He stroked the mildew on his lip and spoke again :—

‘I s’pose, now, you’d be a young midship-mite?’

I am certain that I must have looked more like a young sweep, but I contented myself with saying that I did not belong to Her Majesty’s service ;—yet.

‘What might you be a-doing of now?’ he demanded.

It was a dreadful peculiarity of this man that when he spoke he scratched himself, and that when he didn’t speak he gave his body an angular oscillatory wrench backwards and forwards from the shoulder to the hip, as if he had something to rasp between his jacket and his skin ; which there is no doubt he had. I was so fearful and fascinated by his uncouth gestures that he had to repeat his question twice before I answered ; then, not knowing how to describe myself (for I could not even assume that most ambiguous of all titles, a gentleman), I said, at hazard, that I was a Tailor.

‘Where was you a-going to-morrow?’

I replied, hesitatingly, to Portsmouth.

‘Ah! to Portsmouth,’ resumed the man, ‘to Portsmouth, surely! Have you got thruppence?’

I replied, humbly, that I hadn’t.

‘No more haven’t I,’ said the tramp, conclusively; ‘not a mag.’

There ensued an ambiguous, and, to me, somewhat terrifying silence. I feared that my companion was indignant at my poverty, and that, on the principle of having meal if he couldn’t get malt, he would have three-penn’orth of jacket, or three-penn’orth of waistcoat, or three-penn’orth of blood. But I was agreeably disappointed: the villanous countenance of my companion cleared up; and he said condescendingly—

‘I’m a traveller.’

‘And a very evil-looking traveller, too,’ I thought.

‘If you had got thruppence, and I had got thruppence,’ he went on to say, ‘I knows a crib down yonder where we might a snoozed snug. But if you ain’t got nuffin, and I ain’t got nuffin,’ the traveller continued, quite in a logical style, ‘we must turn in at the Union. Do you know what the Union is?’

I had heard of the repeal of the Union, and the Union Jack, and one of our boys' fathers was a member of the Union Club. I had an indistinct notion, too, of an Union workhouse; but my fellow-tramp had some difficulty in explaining to me that the Union was a species of gratuitous hotel; a caravansary kept by the Poor Law Commissioners for the special relief of the class of travellers known in ordinary parlance as tramps, and in the new Poor Law Act as 'casual paupers;' and where, in consideration of doing an hour's work in the morning, I could be provided with supper and bed.

We walked together to the house of the relieving officer to obtain tickets of admission. The functionary in question lived in a pretty little cottage, with a shining brass door-plate much too large for the door, and a fierce bell, which, every time it pealed, shook the little house to its every honeysuckle. The parochial magnate was not at home; but a rosy girl—with an illuminated ribbon and a species of petrified oyster as a brooch, and who was his daughter, I suppose—came to a little side window in the wall in answer to our summons, and, scarcely deigning to look at us, handed us the required tickets. Ah me! A twitch,

a transient twitch came over me when I thought that there had been days when Master Somebody in a prodigious lay-down collar with white ducks, had walked with young ladies quite as rosy, with brooches quite as petrified, and had even been called by them 'a bold boy.'

Misery, they say, makes a man acquainted with strange bedfellows: but shall I ever again, I wonder, sleep in company with such strange characters as shared the trusses of straw, the lumps of bread, and slabs of Dutch cheese, that night, in the casual ward of Kingston workhouse? There was a hulking fellow in a smock-frock, who had been a navigator, but had fallen drunk into a lime-pit and burnt his eyes out: who was too lazy to beg for himself, and was led about by a ragged, sharp-eyed boy. There were two lads who tramped in company; they had been to sea, and were walking from Gosport to London. My fellow, the man with the wrench, had been born a tramp and bred a tramp; his father was a tramp before him, and I dare say his children are tramps now.

'Yer see,' he deigned to explain to me, after he had despatched his supper, 'I likes change. I summers in the country, and

winters in London. There's refuges and "ressipockles" (by which, I presume, he meant receptacles) 'in winter time, and lots of coves as gives yer grub. Then comes spring time; I gets passed to my parish—the farther off the better—and I gets a penny a mile. When I gets there I goes 'cross country on quite another tack. I knows every Union in England. In some they give you bread and cheese, and in some broth, and in some skilly-golee. In some they gives you breakfast in the morning, and in some they doesn't. You have to work your bed out. Here, Kingston way, you wheels barrows; at Guildford you pumps; at Richmond you breaks stones; at Farnham you picks oakum; at Wandsworth they makes you grind corn in a hand-mill till your fingers a'most drops off yer wristés. At Brighton, now, they're a good sort, and only makes you chop up firewood; but Portsmouth's the place! You're a young un,' he pursued, looking at me benignantly, 'and green. Now, I'll give you a wrinkle. If you're a-going to Portsmouth, you manage to get there on a Saturday night; for they keeps you all day Sunday, and they won't let you do no work; and they gives you the jolliest blow-out of beef and taters as ever passed

your breastbone. The taters is like dollops o' meal!

With this enthusiastic eulogium on the way in which they managed matters at Portsmouth the traveller went to sleep—not gradually, but with a sudden grunt and jerk backward. The blind navigator and his guide had been snoring valorously for half an hour; and the two sailor lads, after an amicable kicking match for the biggest heap of straw, soon dropped off to sleep, too. There was an unsociable tinker in the corner, who had smuggled in a blacking-bottle full of gin, notwithstanding the personal search of the workhouse porter. He gave no one, however, any of the surreptitious cordial, but muddled himself in silence; merely throwing out a general apothegm to the auditory that he preferred getting drunk in bed, as 'he hadn't far to fall.' He did get drunk, and he did fall. I was too tired, I think, to sleep; but none of my companions woke during the night save an Irish reaper, who appeared more destitute than any of us; but whom I watched, in the dead of the night, tying up some gold and silver in a dirty rag.

Next morning was Sunday—a glorious, sunshiny, bird-singing, tree-waving Sunday. They turned us out at eight o'clock with a meal of

hot gruel, and without exacting any work from us. The hereditary tramp and I walked together from Kingston to Esher. The navigator stopped in Kingston, having a genteel begging walk in the environs; and the Irishman sallied forth London-ward with a slipshod wife, and a tribe of ragged children, who had slept in the women's casual ward. With them went the two sailor lads; one of whom, with a rough kindness that would have made me give him a penny if I had possessed one, carried the Irishwoman's sickly baby.

'Why don't you chuck them ere shoes off?' asked my friend as we plodded along. 'They wouldn't fetch nothing to sell, and they're only a bother to walk in, unless you was to put some wet grass in 'em. Look at my trotters,' he continued, pointing to his feet, and tapping the sole of one of them with the blade of his knife, 'they'se as hard as bricks, they is. Go buff-steppered — that's the game.'

Some remnants of Master Somebody's pride in his neat Bluchers must have lingered about me, for I declined the invitation to walk on barefoot.

'When shoes is shoes,' pursued the tramp argumentatively, 'they'se good for those as

likes 'em, which I don't; but when they're "crab-shells," and leaky and gummy in the soles, and lark-heeled, the sooner you get shut of 'em the better. There's togs, too,' he pursued, looking with proper pride at his own attire, 'the sooner you peels off them cloth kicksies the better. There ain't no wear in 'em, and they'se no good, if you ain't on the flash lay. My jacket's Guildford gaol; my trousers is Dartford Union; and my flannel shirt is the Society for the 'Ouseless Poor. When I can't patch 'em no longer, and they gets all alive like, I tears up. Do you know what "tearing" up is? A course you don't. Well, I goes to a Union one night, and I rips up into bits every mortal bit I has upon me. Then they comes in the morning, and they puts me into a sack, and they chucks me in a cart and takes me afore the beak. Tearing up is twenty-one days, and quod meals, which is, mind ye, reglar, is good for a cove, and freshens him up.'

Here he sat down on a milestone; and producing a remarkably neat housewife case, proceeded to overhaul all parts of his apparel with as much care and circumspection as if they had been of purple and fine linen, catching up any stray rents and 'Jacob's ladders' with a grave and deliberate countenance.

How long this man and I might have kept company I am not prepared to say; but we soon fell out. He descried, or fancied that he could descry, something in my face that would be sure to attract the sympathies of the benevolent, and loosen their purse-strings: or, as he phrased it, ‘nobble the flats;’ and he urged me with great vehemence, not only to beg pecuniary relief from all passers by, but also to diverge from the high road, and go ‘a grub cadging’—*i.e.*, to beg broken victuals at small cottages and gentlemen’s lodge-gates. Finding that I was too shamefaced, he felt himself, I suppose, called upon to renounce and repudiate me as unworthy his distinguished company and advice; and, telling me that I warn’t fit for tramping nohow, he departed in great dudgeon down a cross road leading towards Reading. I never saw him again.

I walked that day—very slowly and painfully, for my feet had begun to swell—to Guildford. I was very hungry and faint when I arrived, but could not muster courage enough to beg. I had a drink or two of water at public-houses going along, which was always readily granted; and I comforted myself from milestone to milestone with the

thought of a supper and bed at Guildford, where my ex-mentor had informed me there was a 'stunning Union.' But, woful event! when I got to Guildford it was full nine o'clock in the evening. The good people of that pleasant market town were taking their walks abroad after church-service; good, easy, comfortable, family folk—fathers of families—sweethearts in loving couples—all, doubtless, with cozy suppers to go home to, and snug beds—and knowing and caring nothing for one poor, soiled, miserable tramp, toiling along the highway with his fainting spirit just kept breast high by the problematical reversion of a pauper's pallet and a pauper's crust. I soon found out the relieving officer, who gave me my ticket, and told me to look sharp or the Union would be closed; but I mistook the way, and stumbled through dark lanes, and found myself, weeping piteously and praying incoherently, in quagmires, and when I did get at last to the grim, brick, castellated Union-house, the gates were closed, and admission to the casual ward was impossible. The porter, a fat, timid man, surveyed me through the grate, and drew back again as by the light of a lantern he scanned my gaunt, hunger-stricken mien. He thrust a piece of

bread to me between the bars, and recommended me to seek the relieving officer again, who, he said, would find me a bed. Then he wished me good-night, and retreated into his little lodge or den with the air of a man who has got rid of a troublesome customer.

Good-night! It began to rain, and to menace a thunder-storm; but I sat down in a ditch and devoured the bread. It was eleven o'clock, and I was wet to the skin; when by dint of dodging up and down dark lanes, and knocking up against posts, and bruising my shins over milestones, I got to the relieving officer's again.

The relieving officer lived up a steep flight of steps, and, as I approached the bottom thereof, was peeping out at the door to see what sort of a night it was. He shook his head, either at the dirty aspect of the weather or at that of your humble servant, and was just about closing his door when I ran up the steps and caught him by the coat-tail.

'Dear-a deary me!' said the relieving officer when I had explained my errand to him, 'dear-a deary me!'

This was perplexing rather than encouraging; and I waited some moments for a more definite communication. But none

came, and the relieving officer kept staring at me with a bewildered expression, twitching nervously at a watch-ribbon meanwhile, and then whirling it round as if he intended presently to sling the seals at my head; but I made bold to tell him what the porter had told me about his finding me a bed.

‘Dear-a deary me!’ said the relieving officer again, dropping the threatened missiles; but this time with a shake of the head that gave solemn significance to his words. ‘Where am I to find a bed?’

This was a question that I could not answer; nor, apparently, could the relieving officer. So he changed the theme.

‘There *isn't* such a thing as a bed,’ he remarked.

I don't think that he meant to deny the existence of such a thing as a bed, taken in the light of a bed; but rather that he intended to convey the impossibility of there being such an institution as a bed for such as I was.

‘You must go further,’ he said.

‘Where further?’ I asked desperately.

‘Oh, I'm sure I can't say,’ replied the relieving officer; ‘you must go on. ‘Yes,’ he repeated with another stare of bewilderment

and clutch at his watch appendages, 'go on—further—there's a good lad.'

Whatever I may have found inclination to respond to this invitation, was cut short by the relieving officer shutting the door precipitately, and putting up the chain. So I did go on: but not much further. I wandered down to the banks of the canal, where I found a coal-barge just unladen. It was very hard, and black, and gritty; but I found out the softest board, and, in that barge, in spite of all the rain and coal-dust, I slept soundly.

From Guildford to Farnham next day, through Alton; where, if I remember right, the ale is brewed. My feet were terribly swollen and blistered; but with a sullen pride I kept to my shoes. I have those shoes to this day in a neat case. Such crabshells! It was just one o'clock when I walked into Farnham; but, I was so tired out, that, pending the opening of my hotel, the workhouse, I turned into a field, and slept there, under a hedge, until nearly eight o'clock.

When I woke up I went straight to the workhouse. Farnham did not boast an Union, but had a workhouse of the old school. The master was a pleasant old man, with a large white apron, and gave me a liberal ration of

bread and cheese. I happened to be the only occupant of the ward that evening; and, being locked up early, I had time to look about me, and select the cleanest and softest-looking truss of straw. The whitewashed walls were covered with the names of former tramps; their poetical effusions and their political sentiments were scratched with nails or scrawled in charcoal. John Hind had laboured hard to rhyme 'workhouse' with 'sorrow;' but, although he had covered some six feet of wall with his efforts, he had not succeeded. Some anonymous hand had scrawled in desperate Roman capitals 'God help the poor;' to which I said 'Amen.' Mr. Jack Bullivant had recorded in energetic but untranscribable terms, his disapproval of the quality of the cheese; and J. Naylor had given vent to his democratic enthusiasm in 'Hurrah for uni'—something which looked like unicorn, but was intended, I fancy, to mean 'universal suffrage.' Chartism was the great wall-cry in those days. Close to the door was the sign manual of 'Paul Sweeny, bound to London with Fore Kids.' Motherless, perhaps.

There had been one 'casual' in before me; but he was taken so violently ill immediately after his admission, that he had been removed

into another out-house, on to a truckle bed : the rules of the establishment not permitting his being transferred to the infirmary. The poor wretch lay groaning piteously, as I could hear with painful distinctness through the thin wall that separated him from the casual ward. His groans became at last so appalling that they worked me into an agony of terror ; and I clung to the locked door (in the centre of which there was a largish grating) and beat against it, to the great disgust and irritation of the porter ; who, with a lantern at the end of a pitchfork, came in to look at the moribund occasionally, and who made a rush at me at last as he would have done at a young bull. ‘It’s all over with him,’ he said to me in remonstrance ; ‘so where’s the good ? The doctor’s gone to a birth ; but we’ve give him a bottle of stuff till he comes, and made him comf’able. So lie down.’

Whatever the ‘stuff’ was—doctors’ stuff, kitchen stuff, or household stuff—the miserable man continued ‘moaning of his life out,’ as the porter said querulously, until it was almost morning. Then the doctor (a pale, over-worked, under-paid young man with tight trousers, and spectacles, always in a chaise and a perspiration) came ; and I heard him

tell the porter that the man would 'go off easily.' He presently did.

They let me out at eight o'clock—sick, dizzy, and terrified. 'I told you so,' the porter said with apologetic complacency, 'he went off quite "comf'able."' This was his epitaph. Who he was or what he was—where he came from or whither he was going—no man knew, and it was no man's business to inquire. I suppose they put him in the plain deal shell, which I saw the village carpenter tacking together as I turned down the street, and so lowered him under ground. They might have written 'comf'able' on his tombstone, for any purpose a word would serve—if they gave paupers tombstones; which they do not.

But this poor dead unknown man did me a service. For, whether I was superstitious, or whether my nerves were unstrung, or whether repentance at my obdurate folly came tardily, but came at last, I went no farther on the way to Portsmouth, but thought I wouldn't go to sea, just at present, and tramped manfully back to Ealing, determined to take all Mr. Bogryne could give me, and be thankful. But I did not get what I expected and what I deserved. I found anxious friends just

on the point of putting out bills of discovery as for a strayed puppy; I found a fatted calf already slaughtered—kindness, affection, forgiveness, and *Home*.

I have walked a good deal to and fro on the surface of this globe since then; but I have never been to sea—on similar terms—since, any more.





VII.

NIAGARA IN WINTER.

I HAD some thoughts, when I was staying at the Clifton House in August, 1864, of appending as a foot-note to one of my letters home the remark: 'There are some water-falls hereabouts, which are said to be pretty.' Or this: 'For a description of the Falls of Niagara the reader is referred to the works of Mr. Charles Dickens, Dr. Charles Mackay, Mr. Nicholas Woods, Mr. N. P. Willis, Baron Humboldt, Sir Charles Lyell, Professor Agassiz, and ten thousand more or less accomplished tourists, *savans*, and sketch-writers.' Understand, to begin with, that I abandon any attempt at picturesque narrative, or at striving to emulate that which has been done, and done admirably, by a hundred famous men of letters.

Niagara was the first famous waterfall I had as yet seen ; for Terni and Lodore had not been among the European lions I had visited, and it was not until many months afterwards that I was permitted to see the exquisitely beautiful falls of Montmorency, near Quebec, and the wonderful cascade of Regla, in Mexico. My first trip to Niagara was made in the last week of December, 1863, and I had endeavoured to saturate myself with an idea of what the place was like by gazing on the Niagara pictures of the admirable American artists, Church and Gignoux. I had been, with an esteemed English friend, making a rapid Christmas tour through Canada. We had come from Montreal down to Toronto, a distance of between three and four hundred miles, and were thus nearing the river which serves as a boundary-line between the British provinces and the United States.

We halted on a raw, murky winter's evening at Hamilton, distant about forty miles from Niagara : and just one word is necessary to explain the manner in which we were travelling. Through the courteous kindness of the authorities of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada—to whose managing director, Mr. Brydges, and to whose accountant-general,

Mr. Hickson, I owe my warmest acknowledgments—there had been placed at our disposal one of the most elegant and commodious saloon-carriages it was possible to conceive. In another place I have referred more in detail to the construction of these locomotive palaces; but for my present purpose it will be sufficient to observe that our car was the one which was built for and occupied by the Prince of Wales on his journey through Canada, and which is now used by the directors of the Grand Trunk on their periodical business trips. With commendable modesty, the directors had obliterated from their car all superfluous gilding and unnecessary symbols of splendour; but no amount of quakerization could render the vehicle uncomfortable; and, with a lounging and drawing and smoking room, two sleeping apartments, a kitchen and pantry, plenty of books, an amply supplied commissariat, and a civil French-Canadian servant, all running on one set of wheels, it may easily be imagined that we had a ‘good time’ of it. We halted then at Hamilton to look up her Majesty’s Rifle Brigade, much renowned in those parts for their urbane hospitality to pilgrims. There we recuperated. We dined royally at mess,

our hosts insisted on seeing us to the depôt; and later in the evening there must have been, I think, a kind of harmonic meeting in our car.

It was just the grey of the winter's day when our French-Canadian valet entered my state room. 'No boots to-day,' I said, 'I will wear moccasins.' 'It vas not de boots,' he made answer; 'you are dere.' 'Where?' I asked, sleepily and querulously. 'At Niagara, sare.' I sprang from my cot, and made a toilette so swift that the circus-rider who becomes in the space of five minutes a belted knight, a kilted Highlander, a buy-a-broom girl, General Washington, and William in 'Black-eyed Susan,' all the while careering madly on one barebacked steed, might have envied my celerity. I was at Niagara. Where were the Falls? About a mile and a half distant. How could I reach them? There were hack carriages in plenty at the Great Western Railway depôt—for the G. W. had kindly permitted the G. T. car to run over their line—at the foot of the Suspension Bridge.

I was enabled to secure a little ramshackle 'one-horse shay' of a curricule, with a horse not much bigger than an Exmoor pony, and

such a very tall and stout Irishman for a driver, that I expected every moment, with my superabundant weight, that the springs would break, and the entire concern go to irremediable 'pi.' The Irish driver was jocular and loquacious, but appeared somewhat disgusted with the world in general, and Niagara in particular. To every remark he made he added the observation that it was 'a divil of a place.' I asked if there were any tourists here just now. 'Begorra, there's nobody,' he replied. I asked which was the best hotel. 'Begorra, there's none,' he responded; 'they're all shut up. It's a divil of a place.' I was somewhat disconsolate at the receipt of this information, so I asked him if he knew where we could get some breakfast. 'Divil a bit of breakfast is there for love or money. It's a divil of a place;' but he added, with a glance of that sly humour for which his countrymen are unrivalled, 'the Falls are in illigant condition, *and you may see them all the year round for nothing.*'

He was driving me along the brink of a steep and abrupt precipice—a mere ledge of road, like the commencement of the Cornice at Genoa. On the near side arose, not mountains, but rows of naked larch and stunted pollard. Beyond them were the ice-bound

fields, with here and there clumps of the black funereal pine, standing like mutes at the door of one who had died in mid-winter. The snow was all around, in lumps and nuggets—in festoons, as though old Father Christmas had hung his trees with bundles of store-candles—in great sheets, dense and compact, with the thin layer of last night's frosty glaze upon them. The sky looked thick and soft—a very blanket-covering of snow that was to fall soon and envelope us. The stark saplings came up rigid and spiky through the ghastly mantle, like the beard from the cheek of a dead man. There was an evil wind blowing about a few leaves, so brown and withered that they must have belonged to the autumn before last. The declivity of the precipice looked horrible, and hundreds of feet down, so it seemed, rushed along a black, swollen, and sullen river.

‘Stop till I give him the bhutt,’ cried the Irish driver. The little horse had become recalcitrant. He was sick, perhaps, of seeing Niagara for nothing, and planting his stumpy little legs very wide apart, refused to budge any more. The driver reversed his whip, shortened it, and with the ‘bhutt,’ or butt-end thereof, proceeded to belabour the dorsal vertebræ of the unhappy little animal till I

threatened to alight and not pay him. The very word 'bhutt' had, however, apparently operated as an incentive on the Niagara-Exmoor pony, and he started afresh. The road made a slight curve. 'Begorra, there they are!' cried the driver, pointing with his whip. I strained my eyes, looked down, and saw, so close upon me that I thought I could have leaped into their midst, but they were at least a mile distant—the Falls of Niagara.

How it was that the ramshackle shay, the little horse, and the big driver utterly vanished from my view and remembrance, I shall probably never be able to realize. I suppose I must have got out of the chaise, somehow, and given the man a dollar; but of how it all came about I have not the dimmest recollection. I found myself standing on the very edge of the precipice, straining with a dull stare of absorption at the two Falls—the American and the Horseshoe—which were within my view. I saw over against me the Niagara river running between steep and precipitous banks, very much resembling those of Clifton Heights in England; and over the bank opposite to me there was tumbling with almost mathematical exactitude an enormous stream of water. At the base a great cloud of foam and spray

arose. This was the American Fall. Then the bank stretched away, and I could see some large and small houses, and an island thickly wooded, at whose head was a lighthouse-looking tower, approached by a causeway. This was Goat Island with Terrapin Tower. Then the lower bed of the river became a *cul de sac*, a blind alley, its finial being curved in a great wall of rock, and over this was precipitated from the upper bed a much more enormous stream of water, its edges raggeder than those of the American Fall, with much more foam at the bottom, and casting up not a cloud, but a column of spray—a column like a water-spout—like Lot's wife—like the Pillar that went before the Israelites by day and night—and rising many scores of feet above the level of the cataract. This was the great Fall, the Canadian Fall, the Horseshoe Fall. This forms the half-circle from Goat Island to the Canadian side of the river. Three parts of it belong incontestably to Great Britain, and it can only be seen to advantage from the British side; but our cousins are very angry that it should be called the Canadian Fall, and claim more than half of it as their own. Indeed, when they go abroad, Americans are accustomed to speak of the Falls of Niagara as being

exclusively one of the glories of their magnificent country, and as much part and parcel of the United States as Plymouth Rock or Bunker Hill. The width of the Horseshoe Fall is said to be 144 rods, and its perpendicular height 158 feet. It derived its name of Horseshoe from its shape, of which some traces are still visible; but it must have altered its form considerably, as large masses of rock in its neighbourhood fall every year. Sir Charles Lyell is of opinion that 1500 millions of cubic feet of water pass over the Falls every minute. 'I should think,' remarks one *savant*, 'that the river would exhaust itself.' Yes, when Lake Erie and all the upper lakes, with their vast tributaries, 'give out,' Niagara will be no more.

These then were the famous Falls I had come so far to see;—144 rods wide, 158 feet high, 1500 millions of cubic feet of water tumbling over a wall of rock every minute, a column of spray 200—some say 300—feet in altitude. Well, I confess that as I stood staring there came over me a sensation of bitter disappointment. And was this all? You who have seen the field of Waterloo, who have seen the Pyramids, who have seen St. Peter's, bear with me. Was this all? There was a great deal of water, a great deal of foam, a great

deal of spray, and a thundering noise. This *was* all, abating the snow where I stood and the black river beneath. These were the Falls of Niagara. *They looked comparatively small, and the water looked dingy.* Where was the grand effect—the light and shade? There was, it is true, a considerable amount of effervescence; but the foaminess of the Falls, together with the tinge of tawny yellow in the troubled waters, only reminded me of so much unattainable soda and sherry, and made me feel thirstier than ever.

I found a wretched little place open, half tavern and half Indian curiosity shop, but on the roof it had a belvedere. I was permitted to ascend to this, and a civil negro serving-man volunteered to accompany me. There was a good view from the belvedere, and I remained staring at the Falls for another half-hour, the negro remaining silent by my side. I asked him, almost mechanically, whether the water was continually rushing over at that rate. I had spoken like a Fool, and he answered me according to my folly. ‘I ’spect, massa,’ he said, ‘they goes on for ebber and ebber.’ Remarks, as absurd and incongruous as mine, have become historical among the *ana* of Niagara. A Swiss watchmaker observed that he

was very glad 'de beautiful ting was going.' He looked upon it as some kind of clockwork arrangement, which would run down and be wound up again. Everybody knows the story of the 'cute Yankee who called it 'an almighty water privilege.' It *is* one, and would turn all the mill-wheels in the world. 'Here creation's done its d—dest,' remarked another; and, quoth a fifth, 'I guess this lyar suckles the ocean-sea considerable.'

I went back to the railway depôt, and found my friend dressed, rosy, and clean shaven. I told him gloomily that I had seen the Falls. 'Bother the Falls,' he remarked, blithely. 'Let's go out and forage for some breakfast.' He was an old hand at Niagara, and was principally concerned at the knowledge that, the season for tourists being at an end, the Clifton, the Cataract, and the International, the principal hotels at Niagara, were all closed. We crossed the Suspension Bridge, however, on a voyage of discovery, and, after much hunting about, found on the American side a third-rate house open, where, for a dollar, we obtained an indifferent meal. Then we started to do the lions. Everything looked dreary and dingy white, save the Shillibeer pines, and the negroes, who were of an ashen liver hue. The

roads were very slippery; but fortunately we wore cloth moccasins, or pedestrianism would have been impossible. Beyond negroes, a few hack-drivers, and the keepers of half a dozen shanties for the sale of Indian curiosities and ice-creams—ice-creams on the twenty-third of December!—there did not seem to be any inhabitants at Niagara. There is a little straggling village on the British and on the American side, but both have a most wobegone and poverty-stricken appearance. The shut-up hotels looked inexpressibly gaunt and spectral. There were no guides or hotel touters about, which was a blessing.

Being on the American side, we crossed a smaller suspension bridge to Goat Island. We wandered around its half-snowed-up lanes, and then, so slippery was the ice, crawled on our hands and knees along a stone causeway to Terrapin Tower, and from its summit looked upon the Falls. Then we went to see the Rapids by the Cataract House, which appeared to me a mass of intolerable suds, and put me in mind of nothing half so much as a gigantic washing-day. There was no colour, no light and shade: nothing but water and foam, water and spray, water and noise. And everything dingy. We were lowered down an inclined

plane in a species of horse-box on the American side, and there found a ferry boat to convey us across the Niagara river to Canada. From the river there was a much better view of both Falls. They looked considerably taller, but they were still dingy. The boatman was a most savage-looking person; cursed us when we paid him in paper instead of silver, and I thought when we landed that he would have dismissed us with a clout of his oar, as Charon does in Gustave Doré's picture of the souls crossing the Styx in the 'Inferno.' Then we scrambled over stones, rimy with ice, and slipped down glassy declivities, *à la Montagne Russe*, and creeping close to the base of the fall, right under the lee of Table Rock, peeped at the masses of frozen spray and great blocks and boulders of ice piled one atop of another—a cold eruption of the Glacial Period.

We thus wandered about, talking very little, until early in the afternoon, when my friend suggested lunch. We had ascended to the river bank on the Canada side by this time, and in the highway, close to Table Rock, found, to our great joy, that Mr. Sol Davis's well-known establishment was open. Mr. Sol Davis sells Indian curiosities, and Lowther Arcade and Ramsgate Bazaar nicknacks of

every description; and a very stiff price does Mr. Sol Davis charge for those objects of vertu. Mr. Sol Davis likewise sells cigars and stereoscopic slides of the Falls; and Mr. Sol Davis has, to sum up his wealth of accommodation for tourists, a bar in the rear of his premises where exciseable articles are retailed. Mrs. Sol Davis is a very comely and affable matron, with a sharp eye to business; and Miss Sol Davis is very beautiful but haughty.

Mr. Sol Davis, junior, the fourth in this worthy quartette, is a character. Said he to me, when he became better acquainted with me—

‘What might be your business, now?’

Wishing to keep within the limits of the truth, and at the same time not to be too communicative, I replied that paper-staining was my business.

‘Ah! paper staining. Do pretty well at it?’ continued Mr. Sol Davis, junior.

I said that I did do pretty well, considering.

‘Ah!’ pursued my interlocutor, ‘you should go in for felt hats. My brother-in-law went out to San Francisco a year and seven months ago, and he’s made a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, all out of felt hats. Think of that!’

I did think that, in case the paper-staining business came to grief, I would follow the friendly advice of Mr. Sol Davis, junior, and go in for felt hats.

We lunched at Mr. Sol Davis's, in a very cosy little back parlour, and an admirable roast fowl and a capital bottle of Médoc we had. Then my friend took a nap; and then, feeling somewhat relieved, with a fragrant 'planter' from Mr. Sol Davis's private box between my lips, I strolled out to have another view of the Falls. It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon. I stood on the brink of Table Rock and gazed once more on the great, dreary, colourless expanse of water, foam, and spray. And this was Niagara, and there was nothing more.

Nothing? With a burst like the sound of a trumpet, the sudden Sun came out. God bless him! there he was; and there, too, in the midst of the foaming waters, was set the Everlasting Bow. The rainbow shone out upon the cataract; the sky turned sapphire; the bright clarion had served to call all Nature to arms; the very birds that had been flapping dully over the spray throughout the morning began to sing; and, looking around me, I saw that the whole scene had become glorified.

There was light and colour everywhere. The river ran a stream of liquid gold. The dark hills glistened. The boulders of ice sparkled like gems. The snow was all bathed in iris tints—crimson, and yellow, and blue, and green, and orange, and violet. The white houses and belvederes started up against the azure like the mosques and minarets of Stamboul; and, soaring high behind the Bow, was the great pillar of spray, glancing and flashing like an obelisk of diamonds. And it was then I began, as many men have begun, perchance, to wonder at and to love Niagara.

As I stood gazing on the sun and the rainbow, and the glittering spray and the sparkling snow, and as the constant roar of the cataract had become to me, through its even monotony of sonorous continuity, quite soft and subdued, the very oddest, the very absurdest, the most incongruous thing it is possible to conceive, happened. I am almost ashamed to set it down here. I feel that Niagara should be held as holy ground, and the mean and the grotesque rigidly excluded from its precincts.

It was in this wise. Mr. Sol Davis is a thrifty man, and keeps live stock. From the rear of his premises there came gravely and consequentially waddling towards me a certain

domestic bird. This bird, it may be, flattered himself that his plumage was white; but, contrasted with the virgin snow over which he sacrilegiously waddled, he had a dirty, tawny hue. And the varlet thought, no doubt, that he had red legs. Red! These, and his splay web feet, were of a dingy cinnabar tint, like unto the worn-out jacket of an untidy militiaman. His bill was unbearable. He was the ugliest biped I ever set eyes upon; and yet I dare say Mr. Sol Davis thought him in the plumpest of condition, and intended to send him presently into the States, with a view to the Christmas market. There, the truth must out. He was a Goose, and this beast of a bird waddled to the brink of Table Rock, and stood beside me, gazing out upon Niagara.

It would be a mean and paltry thing, I knew, for a strong man to kick a goose—or rather a gander—over a precipice. It would have been a cruel and dishonest thing to steal Mr. Sol Davis's property, or wring its neck. Yet something must be done, I felt. Why didn't he fly away? Why didn't he waddle back? No; there he remained, ruminating, and occasionally gobbling, to himself. Perhaps he was indulging in aspirations that the sage and onion crop had failed, and that he

would not be roasted until next Thanksgiving Day. I told him savagely to get out of that. He turned his bill and his eye upwards to me, stood on one leg, and hissed slightly, as though to say, 'Have I not as much right here as you, brother? What do you think of the Falls, any way? As for me, I am *blasé*. I am a Goose. Men may come and men may go, but I and the Falls go on for ever. More rain drops from the heavens, and sinks into the mountains, and gushes from the source, and feeds the lakes, and flushes the river, and rushes from Erie to Ontario, and tumbles over these rocks, and is shattered into spray and becomes vapour, and in time gathers again in clouds, and falls once more in rain. More goslings chip from the shell, more mother-geese drive off with strong wing and angry hiss the barn-door cat, more geese are baked and roasted, or are set before fires, or caged in coops and crammed that their livers may swell, and the fatty degeneration be made into pies. I am a Goose, and have gone on for thousands of years. And you, brother? I was in Noah's Ark. I saved the Roman Capitol. I once laid golden eggs. The clodhopper thought he had killed me, but here I am again. How old is the world, and for

how many thousands of years has this cataract been roaring, and I, or my brothers, who are me, hissing and gobbling on the edge of the precipice?' I declined to answer the implied questions he propounded. I left the abominable thing in deepest dudgeon; and for my part I don't see anything cruel in the process of preparing *pâtés de foie gras*, or plucking geese alive.

'The goose had hung high'—I use a Yankee locution—when I had first seen the rainbow. Now it was hanging low indeed. To thicken my gloom the sun went in, and all became, as before, dingy, colourless, and shadowless. Slowly and sadly I walked along the precipice road towards the Suspension Bridge, when I came on some one standing, as I had stood, on the verge of a crag, and gazing on the Falls.

He had his dog with him—a patient little black fellow with ragged ears—a poverty-stricken mongrel cur. Mange had marked that dog for her own. He looked as though he had been bred a turnspit, but, that branch of business declining through the introduction of bottle-jacks, had attempted the water-spaniel line of business. Poor little beast! He shivered and looked lamentably uncom-

portable in his sporting character, but was quite meek and resigned. His master was somewhat under the middle size, but was a brawny, thickset fellow. The facial angles of his countenance would not have been amiss on a medal representing one of the Twelve Cæsars, for his nose was purely aquiline, his cheek-bones high, his lips firmly set, and his chin broad and massive; but there his classicality stopped. His forehead was low; his eye, though black and lustrous, small and sunken; and his head, so far as I could discern for the fur cap he wore, thatched with long, coarse, matted black hair—raven black, if you please, but the sable of a raven who has fed on anything but succulent garbage. He was very dirty, very ragged, and very greasy. Wrapped round him was a blanket coat, patched here and there with scraps of leather; his loins were girt with a wampum belt, but the beads were broken and lustreless. There was some shabby embroidery, too, on the canvas pouch he carried at his side. His legs were swathed in bandages of coarse linen, with criss-cross ligaments, such as Italian brigands wear, and such as you may note in the statues of the Gauls of old. On his feet he wore moccasins, and these offered a curious contrast to the

poverty of the rest of his attire, for they were of new black cloth, glowing with parti-coloured *passementerie*, and, in their embroidery, quite a marvel of bead-work. On one arm rested a long duck-gun with bright barrel, and his shot-belt and powder-flask hung on his hip opposite the pouch. He had been out birding—seeking, perchance, the ptarmigan or the capercailzie, or more probably in quest of smaller and prettier quarries, such as that exquisite little blue bird of Canada which forms a centrepiece to the feather fans made by his race, and which are sold at an enormous advance on their wholesale price by the curiosity dealers with whom both sides of the Niagara river abound.

There he stood, silent and motionless, contemplating the raging waters. He was plainly a poor devil, and the clothes he had on would not have fetched two dollars and a half. His gun was the most valuable part of his accoutrements, and the stock of that weapon, even, was worn and notched. He had been out probably for many weary hours, and would not gather more than fifty cents by his day's work. He was, in Yankee estimation, a worn-out 'cuss,' shattered, unclean, and oleaginous—a creature to be 'run-out' or stamped down

as though he were a 'possum or a skunk. And even here, on British soil, he was looked upon as a kind of bore and encumbrance, not, it is true, to be absolutely maltreated or violently expelled, but so prevailed upon to 'move on,' and generally wiped out, as early as the proprieties of civilization would permit of that process. This was clearly no place for him. White hunters could be found to catch the blue bird as well as he, and white women in crinoline could make the fans as deftly as the blanketed squaws of his feeble and scattered race. Niagara was wanted for tourists and excursionists, for hotel-keepers and guide-book sellers. He was an anomaly and an anachronism here. It was time for him to clear out. Do we not read in the works of the Yankee bard—

' Here the wild Injun once did take delight,
Hunted the buffaler, fished, fit, and bled;
Now the inhabitants are mostly white,
And nary red.'

Yes, this was a Red Man. He was the first North American Indian, in his own land, I had seen. I am not about to get up any spasmodic enthusiasm concerning the Noble Savage. He is, I am aware, at a painful discount just at present, and I confess that his

nobility is, in the main, nonsense, and he himself a nuisance. I have seen a good deal of him in Canada since my first meeting with the bird-man with the duck-gun at Niagara. I have seen him five million strong—whole-blooded and half-blooded in Mexico, and I am bound to admit that according to our ideas of civilization—and they need not be quite infallible ideas, after all—he is, at the best, but a poor creature. I have nothing favourable to say about the war paint, or the war path, or the war dance. The calumet of peace has, I know, been smoked to the last ashes. I give up the Noble Savage morally. I confess him to be a shiftless and degraded vagrant, who does not wash himself—who is not at all scrupulous about taking things which do not belong to him—who will get blind or mad drunk on rum or whisky whenever he has a chance—who is not a much better shot than a white man, and who has only one special aptitude—that for playing at cards, at which he will cheat you. But, fallen and debased as he is, not much more picturesque than an English gipsy, and quite as dishonest, nothing can rob him of a certain dignity of mien, a composure of carriage, and an imperturbability of countenance, which the descendant

of a hundred European kings might envy. Nothing moves him, nothing excites his surprise, nothing excites him to merriment. A friend told me, that travelling once in Nova Scotia he came in an Indian village, where a chief was being installed in office. He was invited to take part in the festivities, and was regaled at a grand banquet composed of one dish. What do you think it was? Conger eel, cut into pieces about four inches long, Indian corn and molasses; yet the manner in which the chief ladled out this horrible mess *from a tin slop-pail* was, according to my friend, the most dignified and imposing performance he had ever witnessed since, in days gone by, he had seen a Royal personage presiding at a public dinner.

And so this Red Man stood grave and immobile, surveying the Falls. His dress was a mean and bastard compromise between the past and the present; but in port and visage he was the same Indian who, with unquivering lip and unfaltering eye, looks upon the dying Wolfe in Benjamin West's picture. There he stood, statuesque and dumb, heeding me not, heeding nothing, seemingly, but his own thoughts. Of what may he have been thinking? Perhaps in this wise: 'All this was

once mine. The river and the Falls, the bank and the brake, all belonged to the Red Man. In their bark canoes my fathers shot the rapids more skilfully than the helmsmen of that black boat which puffs smoke from a pipe on its deck, and makes a noise like the whip-poor-will in pain. All this belonged to me, and now I am a vagrant and an outcast, and the white man chaffers with me for the birds I have slain.' Poor copper-hued child of the wilderness! Perhaps he was listening for the flutter of a wing, and keeping a sharp look-out for the blue-bird of Canada. I went on my way, and saw him no more.

But he, and the gander, and the roar of the Falls haunted me for many winter nights. Have you not experienced, landing from a long sea voyage, the rocking, and tumbling, and oscillating motion of the ship which has brought you to your bourne, long after you are free from that thralldom? You are on dry land, on carpeted floors, on smooth turnpike roads, on paved streets—and yet you seem to be rolling and pitching as in the days when you strove to get your sea legs. So is it with Niagara. Shut your eyes tightly as you will, press down your fingers on the orbs; but in the eyes of your soul you will see the Falls

still, plain and distinct as on the table of a camera obscura. Stop your ears, stop them with cotton, stop them with wax, as the Heathen man of old stopped his, against the Wantons of the Sea; but in the ears of your mind you will hear the dull, constant roar of the Cataract. And I seem to see and to hear it now.





VIII.

THE WORMS.

IT is the last straw that breaks the camel's back. I had been kneeling, metaphorically speaking, in the court-yard of a caravanserai at Smyrna any time during six months, meekly bowing the hump to the remorselessly accumulated load. I had borne it all; raw silk, figs, dates, flax, hemp, myrrh, ambergris, opium, rhubarb, and magnesia—insult, obloquy, reproach, misrepresentation. I had endured quietly. I knew that I was a Camel, and that it was my lot to be a carrier and not to grumble. I cherished the hope of rising anon, and, hearing the tinkling caravan bells, and, after plodding for many a weary rood through hot sand, finding myself at Mecca—I mean at home. I could have borne more burdens even, had they been adjusted with tolerable decency to this patient back. The

oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, the insolence of office, the ferocity of hack-drivers, the sulkiness of railway conductors, the assaults of rowdies, the boys who sell 'fig and gum drops' in the cars, the infernal hotel gong, the hardness of the times, gloves at three dollars twenty-five cents a pair, champagne at seven dollars a bottle, cigars at sixty cents apiece, the young lady next door who was perpetually hammering at the valse from *Faust*, and always breaking down over the first bar, anything, in fine, you please to mention—anything but this. But there is a limit to human sufferance. There is a point beyond which it is perilous to pile up the agony of mortal man. I didn't bargain for *this*. I never contracted to undergo the whole seven plagues of Egypt concentrated into one hideous and abominable nuisance. You will naturally wish to know what the terrible infliction I denounce is like. Stay but a moment and you shall hear.

I was taking my walks abroad in Fifth Avenue, one summer's morn, meaning harm to no man, and with my heart full of sweet and placid feelings towards the United States. I loved *pro tem*. the Loyal League, admired the Cabinet, and adhered to the Monroe doc-

trine. Suddenly I saw, advancing towards me with fierce and rapid strides, an Old Lady. Now I am not afraid of ladies. In youth I was wont to be alarmed at them all, the young and the old ; but I can bear a great deal of Woman by this time. She has ceased to appal me ; she wouldn't have anything to do with me when I yearned for sympathy ; but now, when she has nothing to give, or I, the rather, nothing to accept, she is kind. This was, nevertheless, a very fearsome old lady to look upon. She was tall and wore no crinoline, and was crowned with a coal-scuttle bonnet. She had spectacles, also, and a very hard hickory-looking face beneath them. 'This is an old lady from New England,' I mused. 'I see it all. She is from the State of Massachusetts. Residence East Buffum, profession widow, sectarian proclivities Heterodox Congregational. This is the old lady who is a great hand at broiling shad, preserving cranberries, scrubbing floors, and making apple pasties and berry pies. Her father was a Deacon ; her uncle a Select Man ; she has two sons, Zeke and Ike, whom she switches frightfully, and her grandmother, one of the 'hunky girls' of the '76, broke her china teapot after the last family Souchong had been

thrown into Boston Harbour and took never another cup of the refreshing beverage until the evacuation of New York by the Britishers.' I drew aside to allow this respectable but formidable female to pass; but to pass me was apparently not her aim. She meant mischief. Her eyes were inflamed with ire. Her lips moved as though in wrath. She held in one woollen-gloved hand a monstrous gingham umbrella; and with it she made as though to strike me down. She brandished this weapon of offence, this gingham Excalibur, above her head. She swung it to the right and the left. She brought it down, in the 'St. George' with a force and precision which had I been stricken, must have cloven me from the nave to the chaps.

She delivered the *carte* and the *tierce* and the reason demonstrative. She was clearly cunning of fence; and I thought I would see her blessed ere I fought with her. Her umbrella was, at last, within an inch of my nose. The hair of my flesh stood up. This old lady had evidently sworn to have my blood. Conscience makes cowards of us all. But who was she? A Woman's Rights Convention delegate? a Black Republican? a manufacturer of chewing tobacco? a spiritualist

medium? or an abolitionist lecturer? I had made up my mind for the worst, and was preparing either to fly or to cast myself at the feet of the vengeful old lady, and sue for mercy. 'Transatlantic female,' I was on the point of saying, 'spare me. I am very sorry for it. I cave in. I acknowledge the corn. I am not young, nor tender, but I am an Orphan, and penitent. Spare me, for the sake of your Banner in the Sky—of the Lone Star which shines above the statue of the Father of his Country in Union Square—of that great American eagle who, with untarnished wings, is flapping out the blar and bloodshot eye of Treason and Rebellion all over this vast continent—from the dusty turnpikes of Todd's Tavern to the swampy shores of Bayou Sara. Spare me for the sake of our common blood, our common language, our common creed; for the sweet sake of Shakspeare, who was our common Grandmother—of Spenser, who was our mutual Cousin-german, only ninety-nine times removed—of Milton, who, it is well known, came of a reputable family, down to Salem, Mass., and was educated at Harvard, and who was the common Uncle of us all. Spare me for the sake of Civilization, Humanity, and the Brother-

hood and Sisterhood of Nations.' I was rehearsing this little speech, the tropes and flourishes in which are, I am free to confess, culled from the vocabulary of Orator Pop, when the old lady rushed by me, still wildly waving her umbrella, but with singular clemency, forbearing to knock my head off. And, looking back, I beheld her still urging on her wild career down Fifth Avenue, towards Tenth Street, brandishing her gingham all the way. Was she mad? Was she in a spiritual ecstasy, and speeding from a Revival? No, a hasty remark she made as she passed me at once explained the mystery of her proceedings. In a tone of dolorous agony she cried, 'Oh, them Worms!'

Yes, those Worms. They are the Seven Plagues of Egypt to which I adverted anon. They are the bane, the scourge, the nuisance, which, in the merry month of June, make a man's life a torment to him. The side walks of the streets of New York, faithful to their Dutch origin, are bordered with trees, principally limes and elms. In joyous June, when they are in full leaf, and their verdure has not been burnt up by the white heat of the summer sun, they are refreshingly umbrageous and look very pretty. But these trees are,

one and all, infested by a horrible little reptile, known commonly as the 'measuring worm,' the 'canker worm,' or the 'pace-maggot,' but which, according to scientific authorities, has quite as much right to be called the 'geometer,' the 'arpenteur,' or the 'hindrometer.' It is of a dusky olive in hue, with a tawny head and a pea-green tail. It is about as long as a bit of string, and as big as a piece of chalk—stay, the length of the middle joint of your little finger affords an apter standard of measurement. I don't know whether it has any eyes; but, when touched, a hideous green matter exudes from it. This worm swings by an almost imperceptible cord or filament from the branches of the highest trees, as of the lowliest shrubs. As you walk along the street, myriads of these worms are hanging motionless in the air. Suddenly they bob against your nose, they slide down your shirt collar, they enter your eye and sit on your lid. Open your mouth, and a worm slides down your throat. They light on your hands and your feet. A lady comes home from walking with her parasol tasseled, and the hem of her dress fringed, by these beastly worms. When they have munched their fill of the young leaves of the trees, they spin out of their own depraved

bodies a slack rope of gluten ; and down this aerial bridge they slide till they are within a distance of five feet from the earth. There they ruminate, till, gorged with vegetable dirt, these green leeches tumble down on the pavement, where they wriggle and wallow, and, after a time, I trust, die. The flagstones are so speckled with surfeited worms, that, on the finest and most cloudless afternoon, you may fancy it is just beginning to rain. As I have said, they specially affect to perform their Blondin and Leotard performances on a level with the faces of human beings walking erect, and the only way to prevent their choking or blinding you is to arm yourself with a stick or an umbrella, and slash them away as you travel. The old lady I had met was evidently, and of old, aware of the worms, and of the means to combat them. Hence her violent and apparently hostile demonstrations with the umbrella.

These detestable creatures are no mere petty nuisance. They are destroying the finest trees in the streets of New York. You might take them to be pipe-layers, or log-rollers, or lobbyists, or members of a municipal 'ring,' so speedily and so completely do they devour every green thing. Like every other social

nuisance, the worms have their friends, and one enthusiastic student of natural history writes to the papers to claim for them 'a certain amount of brains, or at least of instinct.' He watched, it seems, a flock of birds light upon a tree full of worms. The reptiles, knowing full well what the intent of these early birds must be, hastily 'skedaddled' down their air-ladders, whence, like the showman's kangaroo who took refuge down his own throat, they doubtless (if worms can cachinnate) derisively guffawed at their baffled pursuers. The birds flew away, and then the worms went back to gobble up more leaves. The strangest circumstance about these diminutive 'cusses' is that their appearance in New York is a comparative novelty. Ten years ago they were unknown, and they are rarely seen in the streets of the New England towns, which are bordered by the most beautiful trees. Are they emigrants, I wonder? Did they land at Castle Garden? And, again, it has been remarked that, by a grotesque coincidence, the worms and the barrel-organs come out together. You seldom see these 'Alfred Le Measurers' before the end of May, you rarely hear an organ before the beginning of June. By this time the first

are squirming, and the last are grinding all day long. To make the matter worse, these most disgusting libels on the caterpillar tribe are but in a chrysalis state. They turn out to be, in the long run, not reptiles, but insects. In a month or so they will cast their slough of dusky olive, and blunder about the world and the gas-burners as the large, uncouth moths which, from the loose, white, flowery pollen with which their wings are covered, are known as 'millers.'

Allow me also to remark that the beautiful summer nights of New York are made hideous by the disturbance created by an intolerable little ruffian called a 'tree-toad,' a denizen likewise of the street arboretum. I never saw a tree-toad; but I have been told that he is a cross between a lizard, a cricket, and that genuine article who is said to wear a jewel in his head and doesn't. He begins about nine o'clock in the evening, and comes to an end about four o'clock in the morning, when the flies relieve guard and drive you mad with their buzzing. I can scarcely give an imitation of his frightful chant; but remembering the precedent set by one Aristophanes in his celebrated 'Froggee' chorus, I may note down the song of the tree-toad somewhat in this

wise—‘Chick, chick, cluck, cluck, yuk, yuk, cleck, cleck, chuck, scheuckh!’ and so on, for seven mortal hours. An American friend who found language in everything—in the snortings of locomotives, the puffings of steam tugs, the jangling of bells, and the rumbling of wheels—used to declare that he understood the speech of these night-pests, and that it ran thus:—“World six thousand years old, and only a tree-toad. Education, civilization, and refinement; and only a tree-toad. Nothing created without a Purpose, and Only a Tree-Toad.”

Then the flies: I have something to say about them elsewhere. Then the mosquitoes: I have written a chapter about them. And the moths! Really I must protest against the moth—our old enemy the measuring-worm in another form. He ate me up, so far as my wardrobe was concerned, bodily in three months.

Don’t run away with the notion that allusion to a petty nuisance means hatred to the United States. I don’t think the Cingalese would have massacred Sir Emerson Tennent, if he had gone back, for describing the countless reptile and insect plagues of Ceylon—the leeches that used to hang about his horse’s hoofs

in crimson tassels—the white ants that drove a neat tunnel right through a set of the British Essayists and the Waverley Novels. The Americans can't help their moths, nor their flies, nor their worms, nor their mosquitoes; and I am glad to remark, in conclusion, that from two most noxious inflictions American houses are singularly free. You scarcely ever meet with a flea, or with that now objectionable insect which I have seen somewhere described as 'a gentleman in brown.' The traveller who put up at the inn at Stoney Stratford would have had no excuse for his *non sequitur* in the States. I have been in scores of American hotels, and lived in furnished lodgings, but fleas, or 'chintzes,' as Mr. Trollope declared American euphuists were wont to call the brown pests, never assailed me. When I went to Cuba and Mexico I was bitten half to death.





IX.

SCHENECTADY.

MR. ALFRED TENNYSON waited for the train at Coventry. He hung with grooms and porters o'er the bridge. He watched the three tall spires, and shaped the city's ancient legend into an immortal rhyme. I had to wait for a train an hour and forty minutes at Schenectady, in the State of New York, in August, '64, but how can the humblest of prose writers hope to make anything worthy of record out of that railway leisure which the Laureate turned to such glorious account? There is a bridge at Schenectady, constructed apparently from lucifer matches and half-inch deals tied together with twopenny twine, and very dirty and ruinous, as most public works in the States seem to be; but there was little to be got by hanging o'er it. Schenectady being—with all respect I say it—but a one-horse kind

of a place, there were no grooms about; and as for the porters they were, failing the arrival of any travellers at Givens's Hotel, tranquilly liquoring up and talking politics in the underground bars of the city. I suppose Schenectady *is* a city; but, at any rate, it is but an act of politeness to call it one.

There were no tall spires to watch. Schenectady is not barren of ecclesiastical edifices, but the majority are barn-like. The Basilica—I don't know what persuasion it is dedicated to—is of wood, and whitewashed. The foundations are pine logs, and it could be moved down town or into the next county, I apprehend, within half a dozen hours. The only steeple I saw was a wooden one, which appeared to have begun architectural life as a beanstalk, then to have made up its mind—by breaking out in niches—to try the pigeon-cote line of business, then to have striven hard to be a factory chimney, failing which it had gone into the church, and whitewashed itself. As regards any ancient legends belonging Schenectady, they must have faded out with its aboriginal inhabitants. Here, within two or three generations, perchance, there were wigwams. The Sachem said, 'Let us dig the hatchet and go forth and eat up that

nation ;' the young brave speared trout and hunted moose, the medicine-man worked his charms, the squaws wove baskets and embroidered moccasins, the calumet was lit, and the war paint daubed on. It may have been so, but I am perfectly ignorant as to the period when Schenectady was 'organized,' and the last Indian tribe was elbowed forth into the wilderness, perplexed by the inventions and distracted by the questions of that irrepressible Yankee, who is always 'wanting to know,' and always 'fixing up' new devices. Legends there may have been in the old time of 'stone canoes,' 'happy hunting grounds,' and 'enchanted elks ;' but they have given place, now, to placards and wall-stencillings relating to Sozodont, to the Night Blooming Cereus, the Bloom of a Thousand Flowers, Kimball's Ambrosia, Van Buskirk's Stomach Bitters, and other quackeries. Nothing is left of the Cherokees, but disgusting mural advertisements of 'Cherokee Medicines ;' and the 'Mohawk Bank of Schenectady,' a pert, spruce, brown-stone building, with a plate-glass window occupying nine-tenths of its façade, is all that remains to remind you of the savage Redskins, who once owned the soil, and who would have experienced infinite delight, I

should imagine, in bursting into the bank, burning the bird's-eye maple fixings, scalping the president, disembowelling the directors, and sticking themselves all over with the greenbacks in the till. For they *will* stick. The Prussian soldiers say, that if you fling a loaf of pumpernickel against a wall, the nasty pasty dough will stick there; and so, if you press a ten or a twenty-five cent note on the back of your hand, and breathe upon it, it will, after a while, adhere as firmly as a postage stamp; so much glue, as well as grease, has it picked up in its travels.

There was a very large refreshment-room at the Schenectady Station, where 'warm meals at all hours' were advertised. I looked over the tariff, and found that 'boiled dinner' cost forty cents. What is a boiled dinner? Soup, fish, turkey and oysters, vegetables, and suet dumplings, or merely corned beef and hominy? Had I been hungry, or had the weather been cooler, or had there been fewer flies about, I would have ventured upon some boiled dinner; but with the white furnace heat, and the maddening swarms of insects, dinner, either boiled, baked, broiled, stewed, or fried, was a thing not to be dreamt of. You home-staying people, you can't know anything of active

entomology until you spend a summer in the United States. The island of Cuba is pretty fertile in things that flap with wings, and crawl with an unchristian number of legs; but the heat in Havana is a quiet, drowsy heat, and during the daytime, at least, the insects sleep, and don't trouble you. I shall never forget finding a scorpion, which is about the size of, and looks very like, a young lobster unboiled, snugly nestled, and sleeping the sleep of the just, in a suit of white linen just come home from the tailor's at Havana. There is another little insect, too, which, if you are incautious enough to cross the room barefooted, is given to burrowing a hole in the ball of your great toe, building a nest there, laying half a million of eggs or so, and then silyly vamousing; but he is the quietest little creature alive. You notice not his coming or going, and you are without signs of his presence for the best part of a week, when your toe begins to swell, your blood is poisoned, and unless you pay Don José Sangrado y Sganarella, chief *medico* to the Captain-General, many ounces of gold for blood-letting, cathartic lemonade, and mint tea—the only medicinal treatment I ever heard of in the Fidelisma Isla—you will have spotted fever, blue convulsions, tetanus, and die. Yet,

on the whole, I think I prefer the insect plagues of the West Indies to those of the States. The Mexican mosquito, for instance, is a gentleman. His trumpet buzz has the purest Castilian accent, and he only comes at night and takes you *in cuerpo*. The Northern mosquito is a mean little 'cuss,' who stings in the noonday as well as the night. He seems, like a certain proportion of the people among whom he dwells, to experience a continual need for imbibing stimulants, and there is no end to the blood cocktails he takes at your expense. At Saratoga my travelling companion was continually startling me with discoveries of strange insects on the walls or on the furniture. There was a dreadful though diminutive monster, half beetle and half grasshopper, with a hump on its back like a Lilliputian buffalo. There was a frightful winged worm, not much bigger than a 'small white,' but a persistent nuisance. After all, the flies are perhaps the worst. I don't think they care for sugar. I have endeavoured to ward off their attacks by suspending pieces of paper, endued with honey and molasses, to the ceiling of the room; but they seemed to disdain everything of the 'catch-'em-alive-o' order, and preferred pork—that is to say, to

settle on human flesh. Lie down on a couch, and simulate sleep, and in two minutes you will have select parties of flies congregated on your forehead, your eyeballs, your chin, and the bridge of your nose. I was never acquainted with flies so thoroughly domesticated and fond of the society of man. As I write this I have a fly on each finger, and one comfortably perched on my pen, close to the point, cooling his many feet in the black sea of thought, and deriving moral benefit, I trust, from that which I am writing. Burn him! can he read *that*, I wonder. I have striven to drown him again and again by sudden dips into the inkstand; but he is artful, and only moves further up the barrel of the pen. Beware of shaking off these inflictions too violently. These insects are ferocious, although so small, and even fly at you. They are not stupid, only deceitful. They lie *perdu* during the night, to avoid the bats and spiders; but so soon as the sun rises they are upon you. In this respect, and as provocatives to early rising, they are infinitely superior to alarums and to the crowing of many cocks.

The citizen who kept the refreshment-room at Schenectady and who had presumably passed many years of flyblown existence, was wise in

his generation, and covered the whole of his line of counters, as well as his bottles, glasses, and ice pails, with coarse yellow gauze ; but I could see what cakes there were beneath this napery. I know well enough, by this time, the fare you find invariably in American refreshment-rooms. For a set meal, ham—ugh! such salt, fatless, mahogany-looking ham—and eggs ; the latter always fresh and good. Then beefsteak, the toughest and most flavourless that any one not accustomed to chew hippopotamus hide can imagine. In winter oyster soup, and at all times coffee, which is generally roasted rye, pure and simple, and villanous black tea, with delicious milk. For eggs and milk our cousins are without rivals. Now and then you get a chicken, broiled to a most rich and appetizing brown tint ; but as no refreshment-room knife was ever known to cut, and as the forks, which are of the rudest iron, have usually but two prongs, an attempt to get a mouthful off the fowl—there are just five on an ordinary one—ends as a rule by its ricocheting into the bosom of your next neighbour, precisely as Mr. Edward Everett is said to have sent the hot roast goose flying into the lap of the lady in crimson satin at the Boston dinner-table. ‘ Madam, I will trouble

you for that goose,' the orator and philosopher, in no wise discomposed, is reported to have said. I make the reservation, for the story has been told a hundred times of a hundred different people, and in all probability dates from the Temple of Hercules and the Book of the Sixty. For a banquet such as this, and which is called 'supper,' you are now charged seventy-five cents. If you eschew 'supper,' and seek perpendicular refreshment at the counter, you have first of all the bars where, in the non-liquor-law States, you may obtain poisonous whisky, brandy even viler, mawkish lager beer, excellent Philadelphia and Albany ale, a wretched effervescing decoction known as sarsaparilla—not unlike the *coco* the men with the turrets behind them sell in the Champs Elysées—and in New England cider as good as any to be procured in Devonshire. For eatables, these. Ice-creams. You have ice-creams everywhere, and at all seasons. I should not be surprised to learn that the convicts in the penitentiary were regaled with ice-creams on Independence Day, or that the cows in winter gave ice-creams instead of milk. In the filthiest, most tumbledown village you will find a 'city saloon,' where ice-cream is sold.

Next to ice-creams, you are sure to find slabs of very greasy pound-cake. There was wont to be a confectioner on Holborn Hill who sold the largest Bath buns for a penny, and the largest slice of pound-cake for three halfpence, that human eyes had hitherto gazed upon. The pound-cake was in hue a most gorgeous yellow; but the confectioner put too much saffron both into the cake and in his buns. They pleased the eye, but they nauseated the stomach. I wonder, did that confectioner subsequently emigrate to the United States? The pound-cake at the railway stations is almost as yellow as the Holborn article; but it is greasier. Our cousins like rich food, although it by no means makes them plump and shiny, as it did Master Wackford Squeers. They are inordinately fond of pound-cake, and consume vast quantities of it at dessert. The celebrated Mr. Barnum once told me an anecdote bearing on this fondness. A gentleman went to a charity dinner—a kind of banquet not very much patronized here. The American Dives ‘donate’ without dining. ‘What’ll ye have, sir?’ asked the negro waiter towards the last stage of the banquet. ‘What is there?’ ‘Like some ham, sir?’ ‘HAM!’ ejaculated the gentleman, with infinite scorn

and wrath ; ‘ d’ye think I paid five dollars to have ham ? *Bring me some pound-cake and plenty of butter with it.*’ Then there are ‘ crackers’ or square butter-biscuits, good with cheese, but somewhat dry to the mouth ; sandwiches of which the less said the better ; candies, or lollipops, of every conceivable colour and shape, generally made of maple sugar, and very sickly ; and gingerbread, the which is soft, treacly, and hasn’t any ginger in it. But I have kept the *bonne bouche* for the last. The *bonne bouche* ! say rather the evil mouthful : the viand which is fraught with headache, heartburn, anxiety, dread, plethora, swimming in the head, fulness after meals, noises in the ears, motes or webs before the eyes, tumbling, pains in the joints, and all other symptoms of derangement of the digestive organs so eloquently enumerated in the advertisements of Drake’s Plantation Bitters. That maleficent thing, that handmaid to dyspepsia, and all other its attendant woes, is PIE. I can see the Pie, in innumerable equilateral triangles, gleaming with a ghastly sheen beneath the yellow gauze. There it is ; pumpkin pie, blackberry pie, whortleberry pie, huckleberry pie—pie of all kinds, but always

of the same grinning, splay shape, and with a foundation and border of flabby, indigestible crust. Talk not to me of an inflated currency, of Seranton coals at fourteen dollars a ton, and tea at twenty-five cents an ounce; of the scarcity of nickel or copper cents, of measuring-worms and Fourth of July fireworks, of municipal jobs and railway monopolies; the real social curse of the Atlantic States is Pie. In the West it is pronounced 'poy,' and the backwoodsmen are fond of it; but a man who lives in a log-hut and is felling trees or toiling in the prairies all day long can eat Pie with impunity. It is in the North and in the East, in cities and townships and manufacturing districts, where dense populations congregate, and where the occupations of men, women, and children are sedentary, that an unholy appetite for Pie works untold woes. There the Pie fiend reigns supreme; there he sits heavy on the diaphragms and on the souls of his votaries. The sallow faces, the shrunken forms, the sunken eyes, the morose looks, the tetchy temperament of the Northerners are attributable not half so much to iced water, candies, tough beefsteaks, tight lacing, and tobacco-chewing, as to unbridled indulgence

in Pie. New England can count the greatest number of votaries to this most deleterious fetish; but Pie-worship is prevalent all over the North. In the State of Massachusetts, for instance, you have pork and beans every Sunday, but you have Pie morning, noon, and night every day, and all the year round. I daresay you have often observed what gross feeders the professed teetotallers are, and how unwholesome they look for all their abstinence from fermented liquors. Set this down in England to a ghoulish craving for heavy meat teas, greasy muffins, Sally Lunn's, and hot suppers, and in the United States to an overweening addictedness to Pie. Pie is nowhere spoken against in Scripture, as Jonathan Wild's ordinary observed with reference to punch. Thus you will find American ministers of the gospel gorging pie till the *odium theologicum* rises in their throats, and they must curse their brethren or choke. Full of pride and Pie, they wax bloated, and kick at their apostolic mission. Plethoric with Pie, they bellow forth denunciations from their pulpits, and roar for blood. There is nothing open and above board in Pie. It can be eaten stealthily and in secret. A slice off a cut pie is never missed. I have heard of

young ladies who took Pie to bed with them. I told you many months ago how angry the Americans were with Mr. Anthony Trollope for saying that the little children in the States are fed on pickles. He erred, but in degree. There will sometimes intervene a short period when there are no fresh berries to be had, and when the preserved ones have 'gin out.' Then the juveniles are raised on pickles. At other times their pabulum is Pie. The 'Confessions of a Pie-Eater' have just been published. They are heart-rending. Through an unconquerable hunger for Pie, the wretched man who is their subject often incurred in infancy the penal visitation of hickory, and brought the hairs of an aged grandmother with sorrow to the grave. He wasted in gormandizing Pie those precious hours which should have been devoted to study; and in the end, not only failed to graduate at West Point, but even to marry a niece of the late Daniel Webster. Pie darkened his mind, stupefied his faculties, paralysed his energy. Pie forced him to abandon a lucrative and honourable career for an unsuccessful whaling voyage from Cape Cod. Pie drove him into exile. Deadened to all the finer moral feelings by this ungovernable lust for Pie, he obtained, under false and

fraudulent pretences, a through ticket for California by the Cornelius Vanderbilt line ; but, detected in 'smouching-a-tom-cod' from the altar of the Chinese temple in San Francisco, he was disgracefully expelled the Golden State. It was for purloining Pie—a digger's noon-tide lunch—that he was subsequently ridden on a rail out of the territory of Arizona. Beggared, broken in health, he deserted his wife and family, drew cheques upon wild-cat banks, and voted on the Bell and Everett ticket—all in consequence of Pie. At length, after a course of 'shinning round the free lunches' in quest of eleemosynary Pie, and wolfing the hideous meal with Dead Rabbits, Plug-uglies, and other unscrupulous politicians, in the Fourth Ward, he was arrested in Philadelphia—being then located on Pine, two blocks from Cedar—for passing bogus notes on the Hide and Leather Bank, and was sent to States Prison for ten years. All owing to Pie. I tell the tale as it was told to me. It may read very like a burlesque ; but there is a substratum of sad truth in it. The late illustrious Abernethy had a presentiment of the ravages which Pie was making in the American constitution, when he rebuked his dyspeptic patient from beyond the sea with

the gorging propensities of his countrymen. Mexico is said to owe her ruin to the game of *Monté*; and if Columbia does not abate her fearful craving for Pie, the very direst future may be augured for her.

I did not partake of Pie at Schenectady. I thought I would take a walk about the city instead. There was not much to be seen in Schenectady. There is a terrible sameness about American towns—a sameness which very soon wearies, next appals, and finally disheartens you from travelling backwards and forwards in the States at all. Where is the use, you ask, of halting at Utica or at Syracuse? Cæsar and Pompey are very much alike; so in the States are Cato and Dionysius. When you have seen Utica you have seen Syracuse, and Rochester is like both. Albany is like Troy, and Troy like Albany. The great cities, the metropolises, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, New Orleans, have something approaching a distinctive *cachet* and separate individuality; although, with the exception of the last-named place, the side streets, branching from the main thoroughfares, are distressingly alike; but the smaller towns seem to have been cast in a mould, so much do they resemble one

another. The only thoroughly original city I have yet seen north of Mason and Dixon's line is Washington, and that is uninhabitable. I suppose the native Americans, on the principle of the shepherd who declared that he knew every sheep in his flock, and that no two had faces alike, are able to discriminate between their towns, and that to them Springfield has a different type from Hartford, Brooklyn from Jersey City, Newark from Wilmington. That difference of type is to me invisible. In our England, can you point out two towns that are like one another? Well, an American might declare that Manchester is like Oldham, and Oldham like Preston; that Bradford is like Leeds, and Birmingham like Sheffield; but then they are not to the manner born, and it is the shepherd and sheep story over again.

Schenectady! There are throughout the North five hundred Schenectadys feeding like one. A broad, dusty main thoroughfare, bordered with trees and irregularly paved. No three houses of the same size together; but the same types of many-windowed factory, tumbledown shanty, shingle villa white-washed, and packing-case-looking shop of dun brick, repeated over and over again *ad nauseam*.

To the whitewashed shingled villas green venetians. No knockers to the doors; but the bell-pulls and name-plates electro-silvered. At some gates a ragged, dirty negress, dully babbling with an Irish help—not ragged she, but dirtier. High steps or ‘stoops’ to the private houses, and towards evening the entire family sitting, standing, or lounging thereupon: the father, spectacles on nose, reading the local newspaper, in which there is nothing to read save advertisements, eight lines of telegraphic despatches, mostly apocryphal, and sixteen lines of editorial, setting forth that the local’s contemporary—if it have one—is a liar and scoundrel, and that its brother-in-law suffered two years in the penitentiary for stealing a horse; the young ladies, in grand evening toilette, staring other young ladies who may happen to pass out of countenance; mamma, grandmamma, and two or three maiden aunts or acidulated cousins, knitting socks for the Sanitary Commission; and the younger branches of the family yelling over contested candy, beating upon drums, or—if any of them are girls, and above six years old—fanning themselves and twirling their skirts in imitation of their elders. I dare say, were you rude enough to peep through the window at

the table laid out for supper, you would find there was Pie. To this add the jangling of half a dozen pianofortes, and the familiar strains of the waltz from *Faust*. In front of the stores, on what should be the kerbstone, but is in general only the boundary-line of the gutter, there are at intervals posts and joists extending to the first floors of the houses, and intended to support awnings in hot weather. It is only, however, the more liberal-minded among the storekeepers who supply such awnings for the benefit of the wayfarer. The bare beams and uprights have a shabby and comfortless look, but are eminently characteristic of all American streets, giving to them a mingled resemblance to the New Cut (Blackfriars end), London, the external Boulevards of Paris, and the suburbs of Moscow. The American streets have—I may have made the observation before—a curiously Russian look. This may be owing partially to so many of the houses being built of wood, and next to the multiplicity of signs. Signboards are generally most prevalent among communities who cannot read, and this is why the colonnades of the Gostinnoi Dvors in Russian towns are so profusely embellished with pictorial emblems of the articles sold within. The unlettered

moujik knows at once, from the hat, or the boot, or the tobacco-pipe painted on the door-jamb, where to find the commodity of which he is in quest. But every American can read and write too; whence, then, so many signs? First, I imagine, from old last-century English habits—only look at the signs clustering in Canaletto's picture of Northumberland House—and the absence of any municipal restrictions, in times more modern, forbidding the disfigurement of the public way by unwieldy representations of handicrafts; and lastly, from the enormous and continuous German immigration. The German, you know, can no more get on without his sign than without his tobacco and lager beer. At all events, in all the American towns I have seen, everybody hangs out his sign. The doctor has his: white letters on a black plate, nailed to the wall of his place of business. His consulting-room is called an 'office.' I don't think he sees patients at his own residence; it might shock his wife's nerves. The lawyer puts forth a very big signboard indeed. 'Jabez C. So-and-so, Attorney, Notary Public, and Counsellor-at-Law.' Another practitioner's sign informs the public that he is a 'justice of the peace,' and agent to boot of an insurance company. Fancy Mr. Henry

or Mr. Knox doing a little business for the West Diddlesex or the Anglo-Bengalee in their spare time!

But these are only the written signs. Their name is legion. Everybody writes, or prints, or paints up what he has to sell, in order that there may be no mistake. 'Nails, spikes, screws,' cries the ironmonger. 'Corn and feed,' cries the cornhandler. 'Flour, pork, and fish,' says another dealer. Odd trades commingle. The butcher, who calls his store a 'meat market,' sells fruit and vegetables as well as joints. The grocer transacts business in whisky and rum, and in all likelihood has a private bar in his back yard, or down in his cellar. The druggist dispenses 'solace tobacco' and 'Excelsior chewing gum, highly flavoured.' You may buy bonnets at the bookseller's, and sweetmeats at the dry goods store. Were Mother Hubbard to come a-marketing to Schenectady for that Dog who was always wanting something, and doing something else preposterous and incongruous when she came home, the Dame would be puzzled, I think, to find all her tradespeople as she wanted them. Then come the signs which have form and substance, which are carved, and gilt, and painted. *Their* name, too, is legion. Wooden watches,

five feet in diameter, and their hands always at a quarter to twelve—or a quarter *of* twelve in Yankee parlance; monstrous jack-boots with scarlet tops; bonnets that might suit a maid of honour to the Queen of Brobdingnag; hats of all colours, such as the Giant Bolivörag might wear; padlocks and keys of preternatural size; boluses and syringes, eye-glasses and telescopes, all of abnormal proportions. Our old friend Sir William Wallace, or Rob Roy, or Looney M'Twolter, or Saunders M'Gillcuddy, you know; the snuffshop Highlander stands in front of the tobacconist's, his open mull in one hand, the thumb of the other poised in air, noseward, with that perpetual pinch of sneeshing which he is never to snuff up. The Scotchman is a relic of the old provincial times; a closer local colouring is visible at the rival tobacconist's, who has a life-sized figure of the lovely Pocahontas, tall feathers in her head, a bow and arrow in her hand, her exquisite features very copper-coloured indeed, and war-painted in the liveliest manner. These big, uncouth, and grotesque effigies and objects were irresistibly suggestive to me of the property-room of a London theatre during the run of a pantomime.

An Irish carman, driving a dray, with palings

to its edges, like a Smithfield pen on wheels; one of the two dandies of Schenectady in a trotting waggon so bright and shiny with varnish, and whose big wheels revolve so rapidly as to remind you of a cock-pheasant getting up—whir! there is a blaze of splendour, and then the astonishing vision is gone; a knot of young town hobbledehoy, or ‘gawks,’ in felt hats and grey suits, chewing, swearing, and indulging in horseplay at the street corner; two young ladies, one apparently nineteen, the other twenty, coming home from school, with their satchels full of books and their japanned tin lunch-boxes swinging to straps—they go to school to a master, and he ferules them till they are fourteen or fifteen; the never-failing, weasel-faced, ferret-eyed newsboy vending his quires; many more hotels than you would imagine there were guests for, all dirty, all full, all with piazzas in front, in which are seated men in their shirt-sleeves, loafing, reading newspapers, and spitting, and with their feet perched on the rails before them—a pair of soles, in fact, looking out of every other window; the ‘City Bakery,’ where I observe they sell wax dolls; the ‘Photographic Hall,’ to judge from the frame in front of which every inhabitant of Schenectady had had his or her

portrait taken half a dozen times; the 'Daguerrian Rooms,' a rival establishment, with a life-size photograph of the negro boy who carries about the operator's show-boards—young Sambo grinning hugely, as though in delight at being photographed for nothing; a wounded soldier, on crutches; an idiot, more than half 'tight,' who hangs about the bars and the railway-station; some flaming woodcuts, announcing the approaching advent of a Hippotheatron—in plainer English, a horse-riding circus—with that admired equestrian and favourite, Miss Carrie Smithers; any number of white stencilled laudations of 'Sozodont' and 'Plantation Bitters,' 'Brandreth' and 'Herrick's' Pills, and 'Old Doctor Ragabosh, the world-celebrated female's physician;' ice-cream saloons—in winter devoted to the sale of oysters. This is what I saw in an hour and forty minutes. This is Schenectady, and any other American town you like to mention. *Qu'en pensez-vous?*

A word or two more. Milliners' shops are far more numerous than they would be in a town of the same extent in Europe; and both the newspapers and the coloured plates of the fashions are brought down to the very latest dates. Our cousins *must* know how the world wags, how stocks rule, and how sleeves are

worn—or die. I cannot see any public buildings. The railway station is a scandalous shed, the bridge is in a disgraceful state, and this is the case pretty nearly all over the Union. Liberal almost to lavishness in their private transactions, the Americans are in their corporate and municipal capacity most laughably stingy. With the exception of the whited sepulchres in Washington, and the Girard Asylum in Philadelphia, there is not a public building in any American city which can cope with those in second-rate Mexican towns; whereas *private* edifices of great magnificence abound throughout the North. Our cousins 'don't see' the fun of building for the public weal or for posterity. That the Central Park at New York should ever have been laid out and the ornamental bridges built is a marvel which I should like Mr. Calvert Vaux to explain. Habitually our cousins wont spend a cent to beautify their cities; or, if any money *is* voted or raised for such a purpose, some ingenious lobbyist steals it *in medio*, and the scheme is dwarfed and dwindles down to the meanest proportions.

As I trudge towards the station, I hear a locomotive in the distance, screaming and bell-ringing,—I see a railway train puffing and

sporting along the open street, with the children playing almost underneath the wheels—another characteristic of American towns. I pass a mean little wooden building, which might be the office of a wharfinger in a small way, or a steamboat ticket-collector, or a coal agent. But a tattered American banner hangs over the portal. There are the usual posters up, ‘Now, gentlemen, if you wish to join a heavy artillery regiment, fall in.’ ‘Boys, attention. Highest bounties given.’ This is an enrolment office and recruiting rendezvous. Ensign Plume is within, sitting at a table, twisting his ‘goatee,’ and chewing for want of thought; and Sergeant Kite has just taken two promising-looking ‘boys’ into an adjoining grog-shop to drink. Even in this slow-going little Schenectady we are not destitute of signs of that America which is in the *Midst of War.*





X.

A POODLE AT THE PROW.

I KNOW,' he seemed to say, 'that four-leggedness is at a discount in this amphibious place. I am aware that Lord Byron is dead, and that nobody since his lordship's time has ridden a horse along the Riva de' Schiavoni. I have been told by an uncle of mine, that in the last century the idea, in the superlatively sarcastic degree, of a sinecure, was that of Master of the Horse to the Chief of the late Republic. I apprehend that the old lion on the pillar yonder, and on the myriad bas-reliefs, brooches, and panels in mosaic and fresco besides, was furnished with wings through a preconceived conviction on the part of his designers that legs could be of no possible use to him. I grant that I might be more welcome were I a dolphin or a mermaid, or a Nereid, or a Triton, or some-

thing scaly, or watery, or finny. At all events, the force of circumstances has driven me here. Let me put in a plea in favour of the four-legged creation. You wont see many quadrupeds during your stay in these parts. I will walk on my hind-legs, if you insist upon it, but don't utterly disdain my fore-paws. Mayn't I come too?'

There was no refusing a poodle so remarkably well-behaved and so scrupulously clean shaven. He had an insinuating way about him that disarmed objection. Grave yet urbane, learned yet devoid of pedantry, polite but not servile, he was a pattern to all possible poodles. Pray understand, to begin with, that he was not a Frenchman. I was rashly about to address him as *Monsieur*, but haply reflected, and, accosting him as *Signore*, asked him when he was last at Bologna? No grinning, chattering, mopping, mowing Parisian mountebank was he. His ears and tail gave emphasis to the parlance of his eyes, but in gesticulation he never indulged. There was nothing theatrical, nothing tawdry in his appearance or demeanour. They have gotten a dreadful habit in the French capital of staining their poodles all over with sky-blue or rose-pink. Had this Italian poodle been

subjected to such an affront, he would have died, I believe. Yes ; he was a scholar and a gentleman. He took every morning, it was easy to notice, his salt-water bath, then had a douche of the warm soft fresh, and was ultimately lathered with fine soap, and shaved. His frills, and tuckers, and whiskers remaining after the application of the razor, were not crisped and pinched into impertinent and obtrusive gauffres, but hung in soft and flossy curls, the Order of the Snowy Fleece, about him. His shaven parts blushed with a delicate, creamy carnation. He had never had sore eyes. His nose only seemed to have been tipped with a little patent blacking. His nails were beautifully pared, filbert fashion. For all ornament, he had a slender collar of blue silk, fastened with a golden shell. He had a gentle way of pattering about, and hesitating when he found his front paw on a slippery part of the boat. He had a persuasive way of wagging, or rather of mildly undulating his tufted tail. No violence, no haste, no irrational uncertainty, but a deliberate, well-weighed expression of complacency. Had the old lion on the pillar wagged *his* tail, he could not have done it more majestically. At a glance, you saw this poodle to be intelligent,

well educated, and refined—a poodle that had seen men, if not cities, and marked their ways.

He was larger than the ordinary run of poodles, but an inch shorter than a remarkable specimen of the breed in question I once knew called Neno. *He* was from Bergamo. He visited this country in 1859, but getting into some trouble through a whimsical habit of pulling off people's hats in Hyde Park, and throwing them into the Serpentine, he was compelled to return to the Continent. He subsequently joined the army, and has now, I believe, the honour of marching at the head of the Hundred and First Regiment of the Line.

I knew this present poodle to be an animal, a brute beast, soulless and futureless; at least, my miserable human conceit taught me thus to regard him. He had no reason, of course; only instinct. He could know no pleasures beyond the gratification of his sensual appetites. And yet, all brute as he was, he did not look like a poodle that would over-eat himself. He was, patently, a total abstainer from intoxicating liquors. He was a brute, but he didn't bark at passing strangers; and from the little I saw of him on dry land, he

was not prone to association with low dogs. It was very strange, and very irreverent, and a vagabond kind of thought altogether, but the more I considered him, the more I grew to deem that, to be complete, he ought to have a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles across his nose, a neatly puckered frill with a diamond brooch in his bosom, a snuff-box, or a golden-headed cane in one paw, and a sprinkling of hair-powder on his pate. Thus accoutred, he would have been, to me, the image of a grave, wise, cultivated physician of the old school—no solemn humbug, no voluble quack, but a sapient, polished medico. The allusion was enhanced by the fact of there being at the corner of the canal, where I took oars, a cool and shady chemist's shop; and I fancied that he had been writing prescriptions in the Pharmacy, and had now come out for a mouthful of the sea breeze, or to see a patient at the Giudecca. He was not, however, attached to the compounder of drugs. He was the friend and Mentor of the boatman I had just engaged. He, the boat, and the boatman, belonged to each other, and made up one harmonious whole. As I have noted, he appeared as a matter of courtesy, to ask my permission to be of the party for a stroll on the Canalazzo; and, that being granted, he tripped

blithely over the bulwarks from the marble landing-stairs to the carpeted keelson, and was of us directly.

‘*Alci, qui?*’ said the boatman.

Observe, that to the ‘*qui*’ I have appended a note of interrogation. The inflection of the boatman’s tone justifies me in the act. It was not a brutal command—a savage ‘come here!’ It was a kindly query as to where he intended to sit. ‘*Qui*’ meant the afterpart, behind my cabin. The poodle did not shake his head. Instinct did not go so far as that; but his tail deflected in the wag negative. He elected to sit at the prow, and at that carved and fiddle-headed promontory he took his station immediately over against the bench where I was reclining. The boatman called him ‘*Alci,*’ whence I conjectured that the poodle’s name was Alcibiades.

The water-side in England is associated with noise, scurrility, and extortion. The waterman you have hired makes up his mind to cheat you. The Tom Tugs who have failed in securing you, curse their colleague and his fare as the wherry pushes off. You depart from a shore of mud, ordure, broken bottles, and fragments of pottery. Abroad even, I have found the canotiers at Asnières a ruffianly

crew, and the red-shirted and bearded Charons who ferry you over the Neva little better than savages. Here we went off in cheerful tranquillity. In a place where everybody *must* take a boat, competition is robbed of its feverish fierceness. If it be Giacomo's turn this time, it will be Paolo's within five or ten minutes. Extortion does not obtain to any great extent. You cannot be ten minutes in the city without somebody telling you that the water-fare for the first hour (single-oared) is a franc, and for every succeeding hour half that sum, and that for five francs you may have a boat and boatman for the entire day. As for the extra gratuity, the 'buonamano,' a couple of soldi will suffice, and a hundred soldi go to a florin. The only little 'pull' possessed by the boatman lies in the franc in these latitudes being an imaginary coin, and in the quarter florin, which he tells you is worth only half a franc, representing about a third more. Altogether, the financial state of things is curious. You see in actual circulation nothing but Austrian florins, zwanzigers, kreuzers, and soldi; but the accounts are all kept in francs and centimes—the Italian lire and centesimi. In adopting this mode of reckoning, perhaps, the people cherish a mournful chimera that

they have still some kind of union with the beloved and distant land—the land beyond the lagunes and the Quadrilateral—the land where human speech and action are free—the land where Victor Emmanuel, the fighting king who tells no lies, reigns by the grace of God and the national will, over twenty-two millions of Italians who can call their souls their own.

Back, then. I stretched myself upon the cushions in full enjoyment of the long-desired at last attained haven; and the poodle sat outside the door calmly contemplating me, his wise head a little on one side. No Mordecai in the gate he, full of minatory remonstrance; the rather a cheerful harbinger, a pleasant cicerone, an obliging gentleman-usher, murmuring, ‘Welcome to the wonderful city that is moored on the bosom of the salt, salt sea.’ ‘Poodle,’ I said, ‘you and the boatman shall be my guides to-day, and I will have no other.’

In this city of a hundred and seventy-five thousand inhabitants I did not know one living soul. Does it matter, when every instant you can commune with millions of the mighty dead? In a churchyard you seldom feel lonely. You can almost dispense with the clergyman’s white pony, quietly browsing on parishioners

that have sprouted up into salad. The dead by daylight are not such very bad company. If their tombstones lie, you can gird at them for their fibbing, and they have never a word to answer. You can pick out some truthful tombs now and then, of good old dames and yeomen who in their lives-time you feel sure were friendly, and merry, and single-hearted. Beyond a poodle, you require nothing more that has life in it, during your first day in Venice. For a season turn away from the quick. This place belongs to the dead. The dead alive, the modern Venetians, have buried their dead-departed—their history, their wealth, their happiness, their love, in stately mausoleums of many-coloured marbles. These sepulchres are not whited. They have the reverent hue of age. Time has beaten upon them with his wing, and the strong pinion has worn down the sharp edges and blunted the chisel's fine tracery; but the marble is, after all, too hard for his scythe, and Time hacks at the palaces in vain.

I lighted a cigarette, and was lazy, and not ashamed of myself; activity would be almost a crime in this voiceless city. Industry!—where was the use of being industrious? People don't come here to work, but to idle.

From the loom there hangs a gorgeous piece of Venice stuff, cunningly 'broidered, shot with gold and silver thread. But it is a fragment, rent and frayed. Warp and woof are tarnished and faded. And the loom is motionless, and the shuttle flies no more, and the weaver has sickened and died.

Thus having comfortably settled myself, and in reply to the boatman's inquiry as to whither I wished to be conducted, having informed him that my view did not extend beyond a 'piccolo giro' of an hour's duration—in other words, that he might go anywhere he liked about Venice, which he construed into a stroll from the Palazzo Corner to the Rialto and back again—I had full leisure to inspect the apartment of which I had become a denizen. Is there, can there be, anything new in the way of description to be written about the interior of a gondola? The gondola is your first acquaintance in Venice, and it is your last. It brings you from the railway terminus to your hotel on your arrival, and it takes you to the rail or the steamer when you depart; consequently the tourist is usually as minute in his notes of its appearance and peculiarities as of that of the packet-ship which conveys him across the Atlantic.

The outward gondola—the boat itself—it would be impertinent to describe. See Turner, see Roberts, see Stanfield, see Cooke, see Holland, see Pyne, see Carl Haag, see Finden's tableaux, see Heath's Landscape Annual, see the delightful pictures of Mr. John Rogers Herbert, before he took to painting St. Lawrence on the gridiron, and St. Bartholomew being flayed alive. For the gondolas of the past, see Canaletto. The only quarrel I have with the admirable artists just named—always excepting Antonio da Canal, who never gave vent to his imagination, and if he saw dirt and ugliness in Venice, painted the dirty and the ugly in rude juxtaposition to the pure and beautiful—is in the persistency with which they strive to make stay-at-home Englishmen believe that gay-coloured gondolas are at all common in Venice. There never was a greater error. Mr. Turner's gondolas were of all the colours of the rainbow. It is true that he might have excused himself on the score that their sides are generally of polished wood, and that his radiant hues were merely the reflection of the sunrise and the sunset. But the tourist, who looks for truth, knows that the pervading hue of the Venetian gondola is deep funereal black; and that the mortuary appearance of the craft

is heightened by the ebony-like carvings, by the metal prow and rullocks, which have an odd guise of being made of coffin-plates beaten out, by the brazen knobs and beads and plates on the door, and by the serried rows of black tufts, like sable ostrich plumes stunted in their growth on the housing over the tilt.

The boatmen who go out to sea, who coast along the Adriatic seaboard, and sometimes cross the gulf to the Turkish littoral, are brightly clad enough, and delight in coloured striped shirts, scarlet and sky-blue caps, sashes, and other accessories of salt-water dandyism. Picturesque and bizarre creatures they still are, barefooted and open-chested, and they lounge and sprawl and grovel in the most romantic attitudes all about and over St. Mark's Place, and the Mole and the Riva, and every inch of quay or stairs that offers room for lazing upon. They are often ragged, but in justice I must admit that they are all very clean, and have a manlier, worthier look than the aquatic scamps who decorate the Chiaja at Naples. Your gondolier is quite another character. I was prepared for all kinds of disappointments in Venice—from the romantic point of view—and underwent, as it turned

out, very few; for the real Venice is, to my mind, twenty times more astounding than the ideal one; but I cannot avert the acknowledgment that the actual gondolier is a sad destroyer of illusions. He is not the least like the personage you fondly imagined him to be. His ordinary head covering is a felt hat of the pattern known as wide-awake. He wears no sash. He patronizes a shooting-jacket. His pantaloons are by no means out of the common. The sole romantic feature in his attire is a negative one—the general absence of shoes and stockings. My particular gondolier—he of the poodle—was a dandy; but in what did his dandyism consist? In a laced front to his shirt—such a shirt as I could have purchased for twelve francs fifty in the Passage des Panoramas, Paris; in a resplendent watch-guard, and a bunch of charms. I was wofully disappointed. I turned to the poodle, seeking consolation. He flapped his tail against the prow, with the wag mournful. ‘What would you have?’ he seemed to ask. ‘Venice is not what it used to be.’ I turned with a sigh; when a ray of relief shot through me. The gondolier wore a pretty cameo in the band of his wide-awake. That was something. Presently I gave him a cigarette, and thanking

me with the frank and dignified courtesy which it strikes me favourably distinguishes the Italians from the French, he inserted my gift in a meerschaum tube with an amber mouthpiece. I am afraid the tube was made at Vienna; but it bore the Lion of St. Mark carved in the meerschaum, and that was something more.

Goethe, fifty years ago, Byron and Rogers, forty years ago, noticed that the gondoliers had ceased to sing. They are, indeed, songless. I never heard, when in company with the poodle or elsewhere, any barcaroles, any ritorrellas, any recitations from Tasso or Ariosto. The gondolier is, however, by no means mute. He is an exceedingly merry fellow, and for centuries has been renowned as a wag. A thick volume might be collected of the droll sayings of these Hansom cabbies of the sea. The stranger, it is true, does not understand much of his facetiæ, for he converses mainly in the soft and flowing Venetian dialect, which dulcifies 'padre' into 'pare,' 'madre' into 'mare,' and abbreviates 'casa' to 'ca.' Then he has his professional gondolier's language, the origin, structure, and syntax of which must alike remain mysterious to those who are not to the Venetian manner

born. The most salient points in the vocabulary seemed to me :

First. 'Ayéhehi!' This is when he approaches the corner of a canal ; it is intended as a warning to any unseen gondolier who may be coming round the said corner.

Next. 'Täi!' or 'Tahyi!' This is when he has turned the corner, and is an aviso to any comrade who is close on his heels.

Last. 'Allajevaismayfachaych-eh-eh!' ad libitum. This is a very complex and prolonged sound, like the sweep of an oar, and is employed when a gondolier wishes to cut through a group of boats collected together, in order to land. As the cry is prolonged, they divide, and allow him to pass. How these sounds are spelt, or what they really mean, I have not the remotest notion ; and I question whether the gondoliers themselves are much better informed. It is probable that their forefathers have cried 'Ayéhehi' and 'Tayhi,' and 'Allajevaismayfachaych-eh-eh,' ever since the days of blind old Dandolo, if not longer.

Fouling is almost unknown in the navigation of the canals. The gondoliers drive their boats, if the term will be permitted me, with exquisite skill and accuracy. When, in rare

instances, a slight bump occurs, there is a slanging match of moderate intensity between the gondoliers. There is one form of objur- gation invariably and plentifully made use of. It is 'Figlio di——' I need not particularize. Have you never observed in what terms of reverential affection foreigners are accustomed to speak of their mothers; and have you never observed how ready they are to take away the characters of other people's mothers when they are quarelling?

I was Cockney enough, just now, to speak of the gondoliers as the Hansom cabbies of the sea. When you have been to Venice, my hypercritical friend, and have gone through your gondola-apprenticeship, you may arrive at the confession that between the gondola and the Hansom, the gondolier and the cabby, there are many points of similarity. First, in the good driving. Next, in the fact that you don't see the driver, but occasionally hear his witticisms behind you. Thirdly, in your having a look-out straight ahead, and side prospects from the two small windows. And lastly, there will scarcely fail to come over you the impression that the gracefully tapering prow, of which the head, looked straight at, seems no thicker than the blade of a carving-

knife, forms, not the end of a boat, but the head and shoulders of a fleet black horse, intelligent, obedient to the will of the charioteer. Only, you never get the charioteer's whip in your face, as is sometimes your misfortune in a Hansom.

But the poodle at the prow is scanning me reproachfully, and I leave exterior objects to turn to the inside of my gondola. It is two o'clock in the afternoon—I don't mean by Venetian time, which seems to be regulated anyhow—but by my watch, which is set by the meridian of Munich, in Bavaria. It is very hot. By-and-by, at sunset, the sea will be of a deep purple, the sky of an intense azure, but both are now as sheets of burnished gold. But I am as cool as a cucumber inside the gondola. The windows are slightly drawn on one side, and hot as is the sun, a cool sea-breeze comes stealing through. Ah! that breeze, how well I remember it a week afterwards at Milan, howling in the agonies of the toothache. The cabin of the gondola is a little black chamber with a high-coved ceiling. It is panelled with rich carved work. There is room in it for three persons to sit at ease on the soft black leather cushions trimmed with black lambswool; but I desire no company.

There are a couple of mirrors in carved ebony frames, garnished with gilt bosses. The door is a wonder of carved work. There are arm-rests, and leg-rests, and every enticement to be lazy. The transverse bench has a raised and sloping back, like an arm-chair, but the space between that and the tilt is covered only by the pendant portion of the black awning, which you can lift at will, to converse with the gondolier. In one instance only is the sable rule departed from. The carpet, which extends from stem to stern, is of a lively polychromatic pattern.

In winter-time, of course, the cabin door is shut, the curtains are drawn, a false panel is inserted in the back, and all things are made snug and comfortable. In summer, the black awning forms the most delightful of sun-shades. But why is it black? Tell me, Venetian antiquarians. Tell me, chatty correspondents of *Notes and Queries*. I was always given to understand that black absorbed heat, and that white was the only wear for hot climates. I stretched out my arm and touched the roof of the cabin, but it was cool. Do they put saturated felt, or wet cloths, between it and the awning?

Many travellers, on their first arrival in this

enchanted town, and in their eager impatience to drink in its beauties, rush from the cabin, and sit or stand in the open, in the forepart of the boat, drinking up the glorious perspective which surrounds them. That I think is a mistake. The windows, the open-doorway, form *picture-frames*, and in those frames are set, in gentle succession, all the marvellous pictures the world has been wondering at for centuries. There is the Grimani Palace, there the Pesaro, there the Vendramin, there the Dogana, there Santa Maria della Salute; there, by Jove! there's the Rialto, which is not unlike the Burlington Arcade on arches. 'Signor Antonio, many a time and oft——' but Signor Antonio politely asks me whether we shall turn back, and I say him yea, and bid him land me at the Mole.

All this time the poodle has been regarding, now me, and now the panorama of panoramas, on either side. The latter he inspects with an air that is accustomed, but not stale. One does not grow tired of Venice. In the cortile of the Ducal Palace you may see the common people eyeing every day, with reverent astonishment ever fresh, the wonderful statues, and friezes, and bas-reliefs. The poodle looked at the palaces as though he were acquainted with

them all, but was as fond of them as when he first set eyes on Venice and sat at the prow of a gondola. Oh, poodle, how long? Did he belong to the mainland — was he ever at Bologna? Was he ever——no; I spurn the thought. He could never have been an Austrian poodle. The gondolier would have tipped him into the sea, and held him down with the oar till he was drowned, had the faintest suspicion come across him that Alcibiades was a Tedesco.

The poodle, and I, and the gondolier came slowly back to the Mole. And there I paid the boatman a little more than his fare, and left him pleased. I shook paws with Alcibiades, and left him pleased, too, if the jocund wag of his tail was to be accepted as evidence. I felt that I had made a friend; and solitary travellers are always privileged to form two kinds of friendships. To be on talking terms with dogs and with little children you require no letters of introduction. And then I traversed the Mole, and finding myself between the two great columns guarding the approach to the Piazzetta, with the Doge's Palace on one side and the Zecca on the other, I lost my senses at once, and was whirled away into the midst of Venetian life, and was as mad as a March hare for the rest of the week.



XI.

THE BLEEDING DIAMOND.

IT was in the early part of the eighteenth century that the Grand-Duchy of Schweinhundhausen, a territory situated as you are aware, geographically accomplished sir, to the north-eastward of the territory of Weissnichtwo, had for its Sovereign Ludwig Adolf the Seventy-fourth, surnamed the Terrible. He was an awful tyrant. The total number of his subjects amounted to about ten thousand, all of whom, from the baby in arms to the alms old woman of eighty, spinning at the almshouse door, hated him with intense cordiality. His family detested him with remarkable unanimity. His eldest son, Prince Ludwig, had been driven into banishment many years before. Opinions were divided as to whether his exile was due to his having knocked down his father for kicking his

mother, or to his papa having been detected in sprinkling some pretty white powder, which glittered very much, over the Spartan ration of sauerkraut, which formed the prince's daily and solitary meal. At all events, he had been comfortably tried for high treason in his absence, and executed in effigy; while, to guard against all contingencies, the whipping-post in the market-place of Schweinhundhausen was garnished with a permanent announcement from the grand-ducal and paternal pen, offering a reward of one hundred florins to whomsoever should capture the condemned traitor, Ludwig von Porkstein (the family name of the Princes of Schweinhundhausen), dead or alive. Friedrich Adolf, the second son, and usually known as Arme Fritz, or poor Fred, had merely been turned out of doors at the age of sixteen, and was supposed to be serving as a sergeant in the armies of the Kaiser. Dorothea Adolfinia, the eldest daughter, rendered desperate by continual persecution, had run away with Count Putz von Putzenburg, the penniless younger son of a sovereign count, whose family had for centuries been bitter foes to the house of Porkstein. Ludwig Adolf the Seventy-fourth had the fugitive and disobedient princess duly cursed in the court chapel by Ober-Hof-

Prediger Dr. Bonassus, and having added his paternal malison thereto, cut her picture to shreds with a penknife, and forbidden her name to be mentioned, under penalty of the pillory and the spinning-house, by any grand-ducal subject, felt comfortable. Of his large family, then, there only remained at the Residenz of Schweinhundhausen two young princesses, who were fed on sauerkraut, kept in continual terror, and whipped every Monday morning by their governess, whether they deserved it or not; and a very small young prince, named Carl Adolf, whom, somehow, his cruel father did not dare to ill-treat, for he had his mother's eyes; and it was only a week before his birth that the poor grand-duchess (who died *en couches* of little Carl) had looked with those same eyes (after a horrible scene in the dining-room of the Residenz) upon Ludwig the Seventy-fourth, and gasped out: 'You are my murderer!' The ground-down population of Schweinhundhausen used to say, that this tiny youngster was the only human being in the grand-duchy who dared say that his soul was his own.

Ludwig Adolf was a prince who did as he liked, and nearly everything he had a liking to was bad. Whenever he put on his yellow

stockings striped with black, it was a sign that he meant mischief, and he put them on at least three times a week. In his grand court suit of yellow velvet, with the famous stockings to match, his *blood*-coloured ribbon of the Grand-Ducal Order—pray observe the colour—of the Pig and Whistle, and a monstrous white periwig surmounting his swollen and violet-stained countenance, he indeed merited his sobriquet of the Terrible, and looked like a gigantic wasp crossed with a Bengál tiger. He had an army of one hundred and fifty men, all clothed in flaming yellow striped with black. He beat them unmercifully, but was sometimes capriciously generous, and caroused with them until unholy hours in the dining-hall of the Residenz. He was very fond of gambling, but woe be to the wretch who won money of his Sovereign! He was given to deep drinking, but he had no mercy upon the soldier whose eyes were inflamed, or whose gait was unsteady on parade. To the halberds, the picket, or the black-hole with him at once! He had invented a cat with thirteen tails for the especial torture of his soldiers; but a cane was his famous instrument of correction. He caned his lackeys, he caned his children (always excepting little Carl), he caned the page who,

with his knees knocking together, presented his mid-day beaker of Rhine wine to him; he caned the sentinel at the palace gate, who always had the palsy when he presented arms to Ludwig the Terrible. He would sally forth in the morning with a well-caned aide-de-camp, carrying horror and confusion with him all over Schweinhundhausen. The mothers hid their children under the bed when his saffron-coloured roquelaure was seen at the end of the street; the girls locked themselves in their bedrooms; the baker felt his oven become icy; the blacksmith shivered at his forge. He would kick over the old women's spinning-wheels and apple-stalls at the street corners. He would burst into the taverns, declare the measures were short, and cause all the beer to be flung into the gutter. He would invade the tribunals, thrust the Staats Procurator from his seat, bully the Assessor, and reverse the sentences, always on the side of severity. A dreadful dumbness accompanied by a sinking of the heart into the shoes, and a quivering of the lip took place when he entered the schools and bade the Magister point out to him the worst-behaved boys. Then he would go home to the Residenz and dine on spiced and fiery meats,

oftentimes flinging the plates and dishes at the heads of the servants, or kicking his secretary's and chamberlain's shins under the table. He ate like a shark, drank like a hippopotamus, bellowed like a bull, swore like a trooper, and then, until it was time to have a carouse with his yellow-clad warriors, snored like a pig. In short, Ludwig Adolf the Seventy-fourth was an absolute monarch, and there were a great many monarchs as trumpery and as tyrannical as he on these charming Rhine banks in the early days of the eighteenth century.

He was very rich. In fact, when one is absolute and has a good private revenue, augmented by the power of taking what does not belong to one; and, moreover, when one takes a good deal, wealth is a matter of course. How many barrels full of gold Ludwigers, to say nothing of thalers and florins, there were in the cellar of the Residenz, I have never heard; but it was universally agreed that Ludwig Adolf was rich enough to buy all Putzenburg and Weissnichtwo, to say little of the adjoining electorate of Kannichtsagen, out-and-out.

When the British Parliament resolved upon calling the illustrious House of Brunswick to the throne of Great Britain, France, and Ire-

land, and when, on the death of Queen Anne, the illustrious Kurfurst or Elector of Hanover became George the First of England, mighty dreams of ambition began to course through the heated brain of Grand-Duke Ludwig. He was on friendly terms with the Elector King. He had drank deep, and played deeper still, with him. His majesty had said all kinds of flattering things to him; why not, through that august influence, now powerful in Germania, should not he exchange his duchy for an electorate, for a kingdom? or rather, why should he not create one by aggrandizing himself at the expense of his neighbours—Putzenburg, and Weissnichtwo, and Kannnichtsagen?

‘It must be,’ cried Ludwig Adolf, twisting his red moustaches—I forgot to tell you that a pair of red eyebrows, one of red eyelashes, and one of red moustaches, flamed beneath the white periwig—‘I have said it; I must send my brother of England the Grand Cross of my order of the Pig and Whistle!’

‘Indeed, a sagacious, generous, and truly grand-ducal thought,’ murmured Mr. High Chamberlain Rappfeugel, who was compelled to come every evening to smoke a pipe and drink strong waters for some hours in the Presence, although the poor man drank no-

thing stronger than barley-water at home, and the mere odour of tobacco gave him hideous qualms.

Ludwig Adolf could swallow any amount of flattery, yet he frowned at this compliment from the chamberlain. ‘Grand-ducal, grand-ducal,’ he grumbled between his teeth, ‘why not kingly warum nicht, oh Grand-Duke of Donkeys?’

Dr. Ober-Hof-Prediger Bonassus, who sat on the other side, and who really liked his pipe, was a better courtier. In a discreet undertone he characterized his sovereign’s ideas as ‘truly imperial.’ He would have been safe for a bishopric, had there been any episcopate in Schweinhundhausen.

Ludwig Adolf was appeased. ‘Yes,’ he continued, ‘I shall send my master of the ceremonies and introducer of ambassadors’—(no diplomatists were ever accredited to the grand-duchy, but that did not in the least matter)—‘Von Schaffundkalben, to London, with the gift to my brother König George. But that you, oh chamberlain, are an incorrigible ass and dunderhead, I would confide the mission to you.’

Mr. High Chamberlain bowed. ‘Your Mansuetude,’ he ventured to remark, ‘will

doubtless send the much-prized decoration in gold.'

'In gold!' thundered Ludwig the Terrible. 'Cow, idiot, blockhead. Thinkest thou I am a pauper, a miser? I shall send it in brilliants. The centre shall be composed of the great Schweinsfleisch diamond. Let Abimelech Ben Azi, the Court Jew, be sent for, to present himself here the first thing on the morrow morning, or it will be the worse for him.'

At the mention of the great Schweinsfleisch diamond there was a buzz of amazement mingled with terror among the courtiers. The poor grand duchess, deceased, had brought this celebrated gem as part of her wedding portion. She had been a princess of Kaltbraten Schweinsfleisch, hence the name of the jewel, which was supposed to be the largest diamond not alone in Germany, but (as the Schweinhundhauseners fondly believed) in all Europe. The surprise, therefore, of the court when they heard that this priceless heirloom was to be sent as a present to a foreign sovereign, may be easily imagined. Their terror may be accounted for when it is mentioned that the great Schweinsfleisch diamond had ever been held as a jewel of evil omen, bringing mis-

fortune upon all who were in any way concerned with it.

Although Schweinhundhausen was a very small town, it had, like most other Germanic capitals at that epoch, its Jews' street, or Judengasse. There dwelt the few Israelites who contrived to shuffle through existence without being skinned alive by the exactions of Ludwig Adolf; and in the smallest, dirtiest house of the whole Judengasse lived certainly, next to the grand-duke, the richest man in Schweinhundhausen, Abimelech Ben Azi. He dealt in old clothes, watches, money, china, tea and coffee, snuff-boxes, anything you please; but he was also a most expert and accomplished goldsmith and jeweller, and by virtue of the last-named qualifications had been promoted to the rank of Court Jew. Ludwig Adolf was, on the whole, very gracious to Abimelech Ben Azi, condescending to borrow a few thousand florins from him at nominal interest from time to time, not because he wanted the money, but in order to let the Court Jew know that he was, in his normal condition, a person to be squeezed.

On the morrow morning, Abimelech, having been duly summoned by a Court page, made his appearance, not without fear and trembling,

at the Residenz; for if there be one thing more disagreeable than being called upon by an absolute monarch, it is having to call upon him. He was received by the high chamberlain, who, as he was in the habit of borrowing his quarter's salary in advance — and Ludwig Adolf always kept his courtiers three-quarters in arrear, and made it high treason to ask for cash—from the Court Jew, was tolerably civil to him. In due time he was ushered into the presence, and made the numerous and lowly obeisances required by Schweinhundhausen etiquette. A cold chill, however, pervaded the spinal marrow of Abimelech Ben Azi when he saw peeping from beneath the dressing-gown of His Mansuetude (flame-coloured taffety embroidered with crimson) those direly renowned yellow stockings which, whenever donned, were assumed to mean mischief.

For a wonder, however, the terrible potentate seemed unusually placable. Little Prince Carl was playing at his feet, quite unmoved by the sight of the flaming legs, and ever and anon Ludwig Adolf would bestow a grin of affection on his youngest born, which would have been positively touching, had it not too closely resembled the leer of a hyæna over

some especially toothsome morsel of a shin-bone of beef.

‘Mr. Court Jew,’ said His Mansuetude, ‘what is the course of exchange?’

Abimelech Ben Azi began to falter out something about thalers, florins, and marks banco, making up his mind that he had been bidden to the presence for the purpose of being squeezed, when Ludwig Adolf stayed him with a gracious movement of his hand. I say gracious, because this prince seldom lifted his hand, save to throw something, or to hit somebody.

‘Mr. Court Jew,’ he pursued, ‘I have a task for you to perform. That, if you fail in performing it to my satisfaction the skin will be removed from the nape of your neck to the sole of your foot, is, I flatter myself, a sufficient guarantee for your zeal and industry. Dog! it is my desire that you set the great Schweinsfleisch diamond forthwith as a centre to the Grand Cross of the Order of the Pig and Whistle.’

To hear, in all matters of business with Ludwig the Terrible, was to obey. Abimelech Ben Azi took away the great diamond with him, not without some remonstrances from little Prince Carl, who wanted to play with it,

and hiding the precious bauble beneath the lappet of his gaberdine, returned to his house in the Judengasse. He had been instructed to spare no expense as to the gold for setting, and some minor gems to encircle the great diamond. He was to make it a truly imperial gift. When he reached home it was dinner time, and his wife and seven children forthwith abandoned their mess of millet and oil, and swarmed round him to gaze upon the wondrous sheen of the great Schweinsfleisch diamond. Jochabad Spass, his long journeyman, saw the diamond too, and grinned an evil grin.

Jochabad Spass had served his apprenticeship at Swederbad, the capital of the principality of Mangel-Wurzelstein. Father or mother he had none. He had an unlovely manner, a cruel eye, and an evil grin; but he was a capital workman, and the right-hand man of Abimelech Ben Azi.

‘What a pity that such a beautiful diamond should be sent to the beef-eating Englanders,’ said the long journeyman.

‘Ah! ’tis a pity, indeed,’ said the Court Jew.

‘Not only a pity, but a cruel shame,’ exclaimed Esther, his wife; an opinion re-echoed by the seven children, who had all loved diamonds from their youth upwards.

‘What a pity, too,’ resumed Jochabad, ‘that even while here it should lie hidden in the treasury of a cruel old tyrant, instead of making the fortune of two honest merchants.’

‘Hush, hush!’ cried Abimelech; ‘you are talking treason, *mein lieber*.’ But still he lent a greedy ear to what his journeyman said.

‘The stone is worth two hundred thousand florins,’ remarked Jochabad.

‘So much?’

‘And diamonds, the bigger the better, are so easy to imitate by those to whom the real secret has been revealed. Did I not learn it from old Father Schink before I came hither, three years since?’

‘*Ach! Himmel!*’ cried the Court Jew, in a fright. ‘Do you want to ruin us, O Jochabad Spass?’ But he listened to the tall tempter nevertheless.

He listened and listened until the two agreed together to commit a great crime. The secret of counterfeiting diamonds by means of a fine vitreous paste was then very little known; indeed, it is questionable whether ever artisan attained so great a proficiency in the sophisticatory craft as Jochabad Spass, the pupil of Father Schink. So well did Spass consummate his fraud, that when he showed

the false diamond to his accomplice, the Court Jew was himself for a moment deceived, and thought that he was gazing on the veritable gem. The Schweinsfleisch diamond itself was placed in an iron casket, and carefully concealed beneath the flooring of the workshop, the two rogues agreeing to wait until Ludwig Adolf the Seventy-fourth died, or was assassinated, or until they could slip away from his dominions, and sell the stolen jewel in some one of the great European capitals.

In due time the Grand Cross of the Pig and Whistle, with a blazing imposture, glistening with all the colours of the rainbow in its centre, was completed, and taken by Abimelech Ben Azi, not without certain inward misgivings, to the Residenz. But Ludwig Adolf suspected no foul play. It could not enter into his serenely absolute mind that any mortal would dare to play any tricks with him. He was, on the contrary, delighted with the decoration; and was pleased to say that he never thought the great Schweinsfleisch diamond could have looked so well. Thenceforward was the Court Jew in high favour, and was even given to understand by the high chamberlain, that, as a mark of His Mansuetude's gracious bounty, he might be permitted,

on His Mansuetude's next birthday, to leave the Judengasse, and purchase for twenty thousand florins an old tumbledown house in the Hof-Kirche-Platz, of which the grand-duke happened to be proprietor.

On the twenty-fourth of August, 17—, Introducer of the Ambassadors and Master of the Ceremonies Schaffundkalben was despatched on his mission. He was graciously permitted to pay his own travelling expenses, but was promised the second class of the Pig and Whistle at his return. As the subjects of the grand-duke had a curious habit of not coming back when they once got clear of the grand-ducal dominions, Ludwig Adolf took the precaution, for fear of accidents, to place Von Schaffundkalben's estates under temporary sequestration, and furthermore to lock up his daughter snugly and comfortably in a community of Lutheran canonesses. However, impelled by loyalty and fidelity, quickened, perhaps, by these little material guarantees, the introducer of ambassadors made his bow again at the Residenz within four months of his departure. He brought the warmest and most grateful acknowledgments from King George the First of England, contained in a letter couched in very bad French, and be-

ginning ‘*Monsieur mon cousin,*’ and was, besides, the bearer of two exquisitely hideous Dutch pugs, an assortment of choice china monsters, a chest of tea, and a dozen of York hams, as a present from the Majesty of England to the Mansuetude of Schweinhundhausen. Ludwig Adolf was slightly wrath that the royal hamper did not contain a brace of Severn salmon and a few barrels of Colchester oysters, and was with difficulty appeased at the representation of his emissary, that those piscine delicacies would have lost somewhat of their freshness in the journey from England.

It is necessary, for a moment, that the scene of my story should be transferred to the cold and foggy, but highly respectable, island I have just named. About that time, in the Haymarket of London, there was an Italian Opera House called the King’s Theatre. His Majesty King George contributed a thousand guineas every season in order to encourage his nobility towards the patronage of that splendid but exotic entertainment. During the winter season of 17—, the principal Italian singing woman at the King’s Theatre was the famous Lusinghiera. Her real name was, I believe, Bobbo; but she was justly entitled to

her sobriquet of the Lusinghiera, for none could flatter the great, or twist them round her little finger, as she could. I detest scandal, and it is therefore sufficient to say that La Lusinghiera found favour in the eyes [of King George, who, if you remember, had left his lawful wife in Hanover, and was not, owing to that unfortunate Königsmark affair, on the best of terms with her. Now, La Lusinghiera was exceedingly fond of money, likewise of monkeys, and of maccaroni; but for diamonds she had a positive passion. I believe that, had she tried her best, she would have flattered King George out of the crown jewels, although, constitutionally speaking, they were not his to give away; but she chose to take into her capricious head a violent longing for that part of the Order of the Pig and Whistle which consisted of the great Schweinsfleisch diamond. The king often wore it in private—although the gross Englanders laughed at it—for he loved everything that reminded him of Germania. The Lusinghiera plainly told him that she would give him no more partridges and cabbage—of which dish he was immoderately fond—for supper, unless he made her a present of the much-coveted decoration. He expostulated at first, on the score

of the courtesy due to his cousin of Schweinhundhausen; but La Lusinghiera laughed at him, and at Ludwig Adolf and his grand-duchy, and the end of it was that the fatuous king satisfied her greed.

Partial as the Italian singing woman was to diamonds for their natural beauty, she did not also disdain them for their intrinsic value. Her curiosity to know how much the great Schweinsfleisch diamond was worth in hard cash had speedily an opportunity of being gratified. It chanced that she wanted some ready-money — say a couple of thousand guineas. As King George happened to be at Hampton Court, and she had been tugging somewhat violently at the royal purse-strings lately, La Lusinghiera condescended to seek temporary assistance from a financier who was always ready to grant it on the slight condition of some tangible security, worth at least three times the amount, being deposited with him. In fine, she stepped into her chariot, and was driven to Cranbourne-alley, to the shop of Mr. Tribulation Triball, pawnbroker. There, producing the Order of the Pig and Whistle from its grand morocco case, whereon were emblazoned the united arms of England and Schweinhundhausen ('like the fellow's

impudence,' King George had muttered, when he first opened his cousin's gift), she dwelt on the beauty of the great Schweinsfleisch diamond, and demanded the sum of which she stood in need.

Mr. Tribulation Triball was a discreet man, who asked very few questions in business. He would have lent money on the great seal of England, or on the Lord Mayor's mace, had either of those valuables been brought to him by ladies or gentlemen of his acquaintance. He examined the decoration very carefully; pronounced the setting to be very pretty; but, with a low bow, regretted his inability to advance more than fifty pounds on the entire ornament.

'Fifty pounds!' screamed the Lusinghiera in a rage. 'What do you mean, fellow?'

'I mean, honoured madam,' replied the pawnbroker, with another low bow, 'that fifty pounds is very nearly the actual value of the gold and the small stones; and for fashion, as you are well aware, we allow nothing.'

'Al Diavolo, your fashion!' exclaimed La Lusinghiera; 'I have sacks full of gold brooches and small stones at home. 'Tis on the pietra grossa, the great diamond, that I want two thousand guineas.'

‘Which sum I should be both proud and happy to lend,’ observed the pawnbroker, ‘but for the unfortunate circumstance that the great centre stone happens to be not worth sixpence. It is false, madam—false as a Brummagem tester.’

‘False!’ yelled La Lusinghiera.

‘False,’ repeated Mr. Triball. ‘A marvellous good copy, I grant you, but it will not deceive such an old hand as I am. It must be one of the famous paste imitations of Father Schink. However, your ladyship must not go away empty-handed. Let us see whether we cannot arrange a small loan on a note of hand.’

I don’t know what sum La Lusinghiera managed to borrow from Mr. Tribulation Triball, but it is certain that she did not leave the great Schweinsfleisch diamond with him in pledge. She went home in a rage, and as soon as his Majesty came back from Hampton Court, she had with him what is termed in modern parlance an ‘explication.’ A terrible one it was. I don’t know which suffered most—his Majesty’s feelings or his periwig. However, a reconciliation, very costly to royalty, followed, and La Lusinghiera gave back the worthless Order of the Pig and Whistle.

Let us now return to Schweinhundhausen.

It was on the twenty-fourth of August, 17—, precisely twelve months from the day when the Introducer of Ambassadors Von Schaffunkalben had started on his mission, that an English courier arrived at the Residenz, and handed a packet to the high chamberlain, who in turn handed it to His Mansuetude. Ludwig Adolf received it with a smile, and ordered the courier to be sumptuously entertained in the buttery. He came from his cousin of England, and the grand-duke felt certain that he must be the bearer of at least the British Order of the Garter.

Ludwig the Terrible opened the packet, perused a letter which it contained, and was soon afterwards seen to turn blue. Then he tore open the inner envelope of the packet and turned crimson. Then he cast something upon the ground and trampled it beneath his heel. Then he ordered his yellow stockings. Then he began to curse and to kick his pages. Eventually he turned to the high chamberlain, flung him the letter, and thundered forth, ‘Read that.’

The missive was not from the King of England, but from his Majesty’s principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who, in terms of contemptuous frigidity, ‘begged leave

to return the spurious jewel sent to his Britannic Majesty, and had the honour to remain.'

By this time Ludwig the Terrible was foaming at the mouth. 'Spurious,' he gasped, 'spurious! I see it all. Rascal, robber. Quick, twelve halberdiers, and let Abimelech Ben Azi, and the dog who is his journeyman, be brought hither.'

It was about twelve at noon that Jochabad Spass was smoking his after-dinner pipe—they dined at eleven in Schweinhundhausen—at the door of his master's shop in the Judengasse. He looked up the street and down the street, when suddenly round the corner which gave on to the Hof-Kirche-Platz, he saw two of the yellow and black halberdiers make their appearance. The Court Jew's house was just at the other extremity of the street, and as soon as Jochabad saw halberdiers one and two succeeded by halberdiers three and four, then Jochabad Spass, who, if he were indeed a dog, was a very sly one, slipped round the corner of the opposite extremity of the street.

'Good-by to Schweinhundhausen,' he said philosophically, running meanwhile as fast as his legs would carry him. 'There is a storm brewing. It will be a bad day for the house-

father. What a pity I had not time to secure the casket.'

The twelve halberdiers arrived at Abimelech Ben Azi's house, seized upon that unfortunate Israelite, and, notwithstanding the entreaties of his wife and children, bound his hands tightly behind his back. It was the invariable practice of the ministers of the grand-ducal justice, whenever they paid a domiciliary visit, to leave marks of their presence by eating and drinking up everything on the premises. This traditional ceremony was gone through while the wretched Abimelech writhed in his bonds and moaned in terror; and then the guards, placing him in their midst, playfully prodded him up the Judengasse, across the Hof-Kirche-Platz, and so through the avenue of lindentrees to the Residenz.

But he was not received in the Hall of Audience. No; the Hall of Justice was the destination of the wretched man. As a preliminary measure he was taken into the guard-room and loaded with heavy fetters, and then he was dragged down a couple of flights of slimy stairs into this so much dreaded Hall of Justice—a gloomy, underground apartment, supported by massive stone pillars, and illumined only by two grated windows on a level with the pave-

ment of the courtyard. The place was very dark and damp, and if it had been situated in an English mansion, and not in a grand-ducal residence, would have most probably gone by the name, not of a Hall of Justice, but of a coal-cellar.

At the upper end of the hall sat Ludwig the Terrible, in a great crimson arm-chair. Facing him, a few paces distant, was another chair, empty, and behind it stood, mute and grim, a swarthy man in a blacksmith's apron, and with his sleeves rolled up to the elbows, whom the unfortunate Ben Azi knew well to be Hans Dummergeist, sworn scourger, headsman, and tormentor to the grand-duke.

'Good-day, Mr. Court Jew,' said Ludwig Adolf, with affected courtesy, as the prisoner was brought in tottering between two halberdiers. 'What is the course of exchange, Mr. Court Jew?'

The miserable man's lips moved convulsively, but he could articulate nothing.

'What is the price of Diamonds?' the grand-duke continued, his voice rising to a yell of derision. 'How stands the great Schweinsfleisch diamond quoted in the market?'

The Court Jew made a desperate effort: 'The great Schweinsfleisch diamond,' he faltered;

‘did not your Highness entrust it to me to set, and did you not send it as a centre-piece of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Pig and Whistle to his Majesty the King of England?’

‘Oh, inconceivably mangy and thievish dog,’ roared Ludwig Adolf, now losing all command of himself, ‘behold and tremble.’ And he thrust beneath the nose of the unhappy Court Jew an open leathern case, in which he saw lying, in confused fragments, the decoration he had made, and in its midst, winking with delusive glitter, the spurious diamond.

‘Court Jew,’ continued Ludwig Adolf, with a growl like that of a hungry bear, ‘you and I will pass the afternoon together. But first, egregious and impudent knave, where is the diamond—the real diamond—the great Schweinsfleisch diamond you have robbed me of?’

In vain did Abimelech Ben Azi protest that he knew nothing about it, that he had set the real stone as he had been ordered to do, that it must have been taken out, and a false one substituted for it in England; that he was as innocent as the babe unborn. He was, by the command of the grand-duke, bound down in the great arm-chair facing that tyrant, and, to extort confession, the dreadful infliction known as the Osnaburg torture was applied to him.

For a long time he held out; but after three applications of the torture—after the boots had been applied to his legs and the thumbscrews to his fingers, his fortitude gave way, and in scarce audible accents he confessed his guilt, and described the place beneath the flooring of his workshop, where, in its iron casket, the great Schweinsfleisch diamond was to be found.

The fury of Ludwig Adolf was still further heightened, when, commanding Jochabad Spass to be brought before him in order that he, too, as with grim facetiousness he expressed it, might make ‘a journey to Osnaburg,’ he was informed that the long journeyman had escaped. How he managed it was never known, but from that day Jochabad Spass was never seen in Schweinhundhausen.

Another detachment of halberdiers accompanied by the high chamberlain, was despatched with chisels and sledge-hammers to the Judengasse, and during their absence restoratives were forced down the throat of Abimelech Ben Azi, who remained still bound to the arm-chair, Ludwig Adolf glaring upon him like a boa-constrictor upon a rabbit.

In half-an-hour’s time the messengers returned with an iron casket, which with their united strength they had not been able to

break open. The deplorable Court Jew, however, made signs that the key would be found hung round his neck. Search being made, this proved to be the case, and at length the long-ravished gem was placed in the hands of Ludwig the Terrible.

I have heard that the tyrant kissed it, and fondled it, and called it by endearing names; then, that, taking the true diamond in one hand and the false one in the other, he thrust each alternately beneath the nose of his captive, crying, 'Smell it, Mr. Court Jew, smell it.' I have heard that all the tortures the wretched creature had already undergone were repeated over and over again in sheer wantonness; that the false diamond was heated in a brazier, and held between pincers, forced into the prisoner's naked flesh. His screams were appalling. Two of the halberdiers fainted. Even the sworn tormentor was heard to mutter 'Es ist genug.' On being called upon for an explanation, he replied that he did not consider the patient could endure any more without Nature giving way.

'It is enough, then,' Ludwig Adolf the Seventy-fourth acquiesced, with a darkling scowl. 'Mr. Sworn Headsman, be good enough to fetch your sword this way.'

At the mention of the word sword, Abimelech Ben Azi, who had been in a semi swoon, set up a horrifying yell. In the most piteous terms he besought forgiveness. He essayed to drag himself towards his persecutor, as though to embrace his knees, when, in his frantic efforts, he lost his balance, and the heavy chair fell over on the top of him, as he, still bound to it, grovelled at the feet of Ludwig the Terrible. 'Set him up again!' thundered the merciless prince; 'and, headsman, despatch. I'll teach him to steal my diamonds!'

The last dreadful deed was soon done. The headsman brought his long sharp sword—a double-handed one with a hollow blade filled with quicksilver, which, as the point was depressed, ran downwards from the hilt, giving increased momentum to the blow. The headsman was as expert as those generally are who serve absolute monarchs. Grasping the hilt of his weapon with both hands, and inclining his body backwards and laterally, he swept off with one semicircular blow the head of Abimelech Ben Azi. Again the body with its chair fell forward at the feet of the tyrant—the head rolled many paces away, and a cascade of blood sprinkled the faces and dresses of the terrified beholders.

It is said that one blood-drop from this shower fell upon the great Schweinsfleisch diamond, which the Grand-Duke, as though loth to part with it, still held in his hand. With a horrid laugh he licked the gout from the surface of the stone, and spurning the body of the Court Jew with his foot, stalked upstairs to carouse with his ruffians. When he staggered into his bed-chamber late that night, he put his hand in his pocket to take forth the diamond. It felt wet and clammy, and when he brought it to the light it was dabbled in blood.

On the twenty-fourth of August in every year that has elapsed since that frightful scene in the Hall of Justice at Schweinhundhausen—from sunrise until sunset—a drop of blood stands on that fatal diamond. It has gone through strange vicissitudes, passed through many hands, been an heirloom in many families; but that drop of gore has never failed to make its appearance on the great Schweinsfleisch diamond on the anniversary of the murder of Abimelech Ben Azi, the Court Jew, by Ludwig Adolf the Seventy-fourth, of Schweinhundhausen, surnamed the Terrible.



XII.

A VISIT TO BEDLAM.

ONE very gloomy Saturday afternoon in October, a hansom cab bore the instant narrator from the London Bridge terminus of the South Coast Railway, to the portals of Bethlehem Hospital. At Brighton, an hour and a half before, I had left beautiful autumn weather; graceful Amazons curveting along the cliffs, pretty little amber-haired children paddling with their tiny toy-spades among the sand and shingle, or staring at the porcelain acrobats and india-rubber balloons in Mr. Chassereau's shop. Between this Fairy land and Babylon the Great were but a roar and a rattle, a few tunnels and thirteen shillings to pay. Then the fog took possession of the train and its inmates. Then came shimmering in pellicles almost visible on the brumous bosom, the raw rime that rusts beards and moustaches;

and we felt in all its inflexibility the grim, uncompromising, marrow-chilling, mind-depressing London October weather. A fit day, indeed, for a visit to Bethlehem.

We stood (I had a companion) before the great iron entrance-gates and looked on to a vast smooth lawn, of which the close shavenness offered some fantastic analogy, to my mind, of a rigidly-cropped madman's head. The grim perspective ended with that sweeping façade and stately cupola familiar as to its exterior to most London-bred men, but the secret of whose interior is as unknown to the majority of dwellers in the great city as the inside of Temple Bar or the White Tower. Many a time, as a child, have I wondered whether they kept the mad folks in that lofty dome—they making the roof ring with their shrieks. Not, therefore, was it without an indefinite feeling of perturbation that I awaited the response to our summons on the gate-bell. An answer soon came, however; and a comely matron admitted us to the precincts of London's oldest and most important lunatic asylum. We were permitted to pass along the gravelled walk skirting the lawn, and anon found ourselves beneath the peristyle of the hospital. The entrance-hall and stair-

case are of noble proportions, and remind one far more of the vestibule of a West End club than of the lobby of a mad-house. In vain, too, did I look for Cibber's famous statues; but my companion informed me that as a last vestige of the dark, coercive Bedlam days, they had been banished the hospital, and removed, as mere relics, to the South Kensington Museum. In their stead, I saw on the staircase a vigorous though unfinished painting of 'The Good Samaritan' by an afflicted artist who has been for years a patient on the 'Government side' of the hospital.

Pending the arrival of Dr. Hood, the skilful and benevolent physician to Bethlehem Hospital, to whom we were accredited, and to whom we had sent our cards, we were ushered into a spacious apartment overlooking the lawn, and serving as a board-room for the governors of the institution. Over the chimney there is a geometrical-looking portrait—I should say a Holbein, or an excellent copy from that master, of the eighth Harry. Then there is a portrait of Sir Peter Laurie. Sir Peter was the beloved president of the hospital; and all round the walls are the armorial bearings blazoned on convex bosses, with frames elaborately carved and gilt, of the several presidents

of the Royal hospitals, from the Tudor's times to those of our gracious Lady Queen Victoria. But we have still some little time to wait, and there cannot be a better time than this, I think, to interpolate a few remarks bearing on the historical antecedents and actual organization of this remarkable charity.

Simon Fitz-Mary, sheriff, gave A.D. 1246, certain lands in St. Botolph-without-Bishopsgate, for the foundation of a priory of canons, brethren, and sisters of the order of the Star of Bethlehem. Simon the founder's lands were on the spot afterwards known as old Bedlam, now Liverpool Street, Moorfields. It is described as an hospital, and was taken under the protection of the City in 1546, and in the same year Harry of the six wives, having in vain endeavoured to sell the freeholds of the lands and tenements to the Corporation, made a virtue of necessity and gave them in 'frankalmagne'—a free gift for ever. Hence I presume the obese benefactor over the marble mantel in Bethlehem's council chamber. The hospital had been an asylum for lunatics since 1402.

These Hospital Priory buildings escaped the Great Fire, but becoming dilapidated, were in 1675-6 demolished, and a new Bedlam built

on ground (leased by the governors of the Corporation) on the south side of Moorfields. It was somewhat of a grand affair, architecturally; was designed by Robert Hook, and cost 17,000*l*. The posterns of Hook's Bedlam gates were surmounted by those stone figures sculptured by Gabriel Cibber, of which I have already spoken. In George the Second's time two additional wings for incurable patients were erected. The average number of inmates was 150, and the hospital is described as consisting chiefly of two immense galleries, one above the other, divided in the centre by two iron gates—the male patients on one side, the females on the other. There were also some out-patients or pensioners, demented, but not raving, and known as 'Tom o' Bedlams,' who wore metal plates on their arms, and were suffered to wander about the streets and beg. Furthermore, to the shame of the eighteenth century, be it confessed that Bedlam Hospital was, till the year 1770, one of the lions of London. The public were admitted for a wretched fee, which yet brought in a considerable revenue, to see the madmen 'all alive,' just as they were enabled to see the wild beasts in Exeter Change, or, as a few years before, the bucks and men about town used

to make up parties of pleasure to see the women flogged in the court-room at Bridewell.

In 1799 the hospital (which had been built on the shifting rubbish of the City Ditch, and in the short space of sixteen months) was reported to be desperately unsafe. It tottered on, however, till 1810, when the site was exchanged for eleven acres in St. George's-fields; the first stone of the present building was laid in 1812, and new Bedlam was completed in 1815. Two wings, for which the Government contributed 25,144*l.*, were built for the criminal lunatics, of whom the governors of the charity have the unwelcome charge. More new buildings and the dome were added between 1838 and 1845; and the present structure is three storeys high, and 897 feet in length. The dome is 150 feet in height from the ground. The improved system of management was introduced in 1816; the system, indeed, mainly inaugurated at the Bicêtre and Charenton during the First Empire, by the benevolent Pinel. The new system of management did not come in before it was needed. The treatment of the insane up to the period named had been almost incredibly disgraceful. A narrative, even in outline, of the atrocities daily and hourly committed on

the helpless patients in the Hospitals of Bedlam and St. Luke—outrages only surpassed, if surpassed they could be, by those wreaked on the miserable wretches confined in private asylums—would pollute this page. It is consoling to know that this new building in St. George's-fields has never been the scene of horrors similar to those recorded in the dismal and obsolete blue-book I speak of. I am glad to quit the ugly theme, to find myself once more in the board-room, with its evidence of the present, its furniture of the past, and this time with Dr. Hood at our elbow, and ready, not to gratify an idle curiosity, but to assist me in the performance of a steady and serious task. Quidnuncs and sightseers are by no means welcome as visitors to this abode of the saddest sorrow with which the Almighty, in his mysterious wisdom, has visited his creatures. The visitors admitted to inspect the establishment, by favour of the governor, treasurer, president, or physician, or by order from the Secretary of State, rarely exceed a yearly average of five hundred, and a large proportion of these consist of distinguished foreigners, statesmen, scientific men, and the like. There must be, indeed, something very worthy of inspection, and much from which

hints may be taken, in the present condition of Bethlehem ; for the uncompromising statistics of the Registrar-General tell us that here the average mortality is seven per cent. In other asylums the patients die at from thirteen to seventy-two per cent.

It is to be borne in mind, that Bethlehem is not strictly a pauper-lunatic asylum. The inmates are either criminal or unfortunate ; the objects of a special care or of a special mercy : and while the slightest evincement of a wish for healthy employment is cheerfully met by the authorities, there does not seem to exist that feverish desire to utilize the patients—to make them ‘worth their salt,’ as it were, which is painfully palpable in some county institutions. In Bethlehem, those who are able and willing, are supplied with light and pleasant occupation about the house. A patient whose terrible attempt twenty years since all the world has heard, is the cleverest painter and grainer in the whole establishment, and a general ‘handy man ;’ but no attempt is made to force the inclinations of the patients, or to set them irksome tasks ; and a sedulous, though to them invisible, supervision takes place, to avert the occurrence of accidents from the dangerous tools

and implements they may use while working at their trades or in the gardens.

I purpose describing the female before the male gallery, as it is in many respects more interesting, and exhibits in a more remarkable degree the benefits derived from the absence of coercion, and the substitution of amusements and light enjoyments for a dull and rigorous restraint. The first female ward I visited was occupied principally by patients who were approaching convalescence, and it was easy to discern an *approach* towards sanity, not only in the elegance and cheerfulness of the decorations, but also in the recreations and the occupations of the denizens of the place. There is nothing absolutely repulsive in the rooms devoted to the most refractory patients; but there is a marked and indispensable difference between their abode and the gallery of which I am now speaking.

The long vista is crowded—though not inconveniently—with little trifles and knick-knacks of comfort and refinement. Flowers, artificial or natural, are to be found on every table. Further ornamentation has been resorted to in the way of climbing and trailing plants, and in the interval between each window is either a bust, or a print neatly framed

and glazed, or a cage containing a singing-bird. The quantity of handsome busts and engravings distributed through the whole of the wards is as surprising as their presence is satisfactory. The engravings are the gift of the late Mr. Graves, the eminent publisher of Pall Mall. The authorities of Bethlehem Hospital cannot be too highly commended for this introduction of an artistic element that mitigates and well-nigh nullifies the depressing influences of the place. The very whitewash necessary for health and cleanliness is tempered to a cheerful hue, and picked out here and there by streaks of red or blue. Verily, this was the last place where I should have expected to have seen in beneficial operation the prismatic canons of Mr. Owen Jones. In the centre of the gallery wall there is a complete aviary full of joyously carolling birds ; and these little songsters seem to possess much power in raising the sometimes drooping spirits and soothing the troubled minds of the unhappy persons who dwell here. Heaven knows to what green fields, what sparkling streams, what chequered shades of brake and thicket, the silver notes of the birds take back their poor wool-gathering minds ! Heaven knows what dim and confused

memories—reminiscences without a beginning or an end, or perchance with a middle and no commencement or termination—are awakened by the sight of these pictures and birds!

From the side facing the line of windows, lead at intervals the sleeping apartments. The doors of these rooms are kept locked during the day, in order that the patients may not be for one moment exempt from the kind and sisterly vigilance of the attendants.

One figure of which we caught sight advancing along the female gallery requires a few words at our hands. She is a patient, and is hastening to the dining-room, bearing some little delicacy of extra diet which has been ordered by the physician for one of her companions.

At a glance the spectator is impressed with the hurried and preoccupied object which characterizes her, and with the anxious and almost agonized expression which pervades her countenance. This poor young woman labours under the impression that she is approaching the table of the Lord, that she will be too late, and that in consequence her soul will be lost. Whenever she sees the physician, or a stranger, she assails him with questions and

entreaties, all bewildered and semi-incoherent, but all bearing on that awful errand and that dreadful doubt. Of every figure in this varied scene some strange characteristic trait might be given, some stranger anecdote related; but I am bidden to forbear. Let me hint, however, that the majority of the females have been either governesses or maid-servants. Overstudy with the former, religion—or rather religious hysteria and love—with the latter, have been the proximate causes of their malady. Seven years since the galleries of Bethlehem presented a very different appearance to that which they now do. There was kindness, and there were comforts and necessaries; but there were none of those little luxuries and elegancies which are now so conspicuous and so beneficial in their influence.

In this particular gallery, now so prettily painted, so well carpeted, cheerfully lighted, and enlivened with prints and busts, with aviaries and pet animals, the walls were simply whitewashed; the furniture was meagre; the windows were so highly pitched that the patient had only the dreary look-out of the London sky. In those days there were no cheerful stoves nor ornamented chimney-pieces, and the sleeping apartments were lighted only

by small circular *lucarnes* high above the reach of the occupant. In fact, that which was once a prison-cell has now become a cheery domestic room. The sleeping apartment of a docile female patient is furnished with a neat little bedstead with snowy drapery, a toilet-glass, a dressing-table, a cushioned easy-chair, and often much pretty decoration in the way of needlework d'oyleys and antimacassars. The reader will doubtless and with some astonishment contrast the description of Bethlehem with the accounts he has been accustomed to listen to.

The changes for the better in Bethlehem Hospital within the last seven years have been truly marvellous. One excellent and amiable man deserves much praise for the social revolution within the walls of this whilom mansion of misery. To the liberality of the Governors, with Sir Peter Laurie and Mr. J. S. Johnson at their head, and the energy of Dr. Charles Hood, must be ascribed the admirable and highly useful improvements that have taken place. To his artistic taste the patients owe the innocent ornamentation of their former gloomy abode, which is now to them a source of solace and delight; and since the advent to the position of physician resi-

dentiary of Dr. Hood, this kind and wise labourer in the field of mercy has, together with his skilful and indefatigable assistant, Dr. Helps, done more to alleviate not only the physical pangs, but the mental woes, of the afflicted beings under his charge, than has perhaps been effected by any medical practitioner in any asylum for the insane throughout the country. Dogmatism and fanaticism are alike out of place in Bethlehem. Suavity, cheerfulness, patience, good-humour, are the best doctors. The patients, with all their comforts, luxuries, and amusements, by the very fact of their tremendous and awful deprivation, are already and must be miserable. The waters of Lethe flow over the head of Idiocy, but not of Insanity. Save only when in an access of frenzy, I believe that all mad people are conscious of, and possessed by, a sense of the unutterable wretchedness of their lot—of their doom to seek and search for continually that which, God help them! they seldom find on this side the grave—their wits. It is a characteristic of the sage and patient policy that now reigns in Bethlehem, that while there is a chapel and a good and pious chaplain, and while the consolations of religion are always at the command of the patients,

they are never teased with religion—they are never worried with misplaced sermons.

The reward of Dr. Hood is pleurably manifest to every visitor that passes through the walls of Bethlehem. You see it in the patients who throng round the kind physician to press his hand, to ask his advice, and whisper—Heaven knows what rambling nonsense sometimes—in his ear. Even the paralytic and bedridden nod and smile as the doctor passes—not with a vacant leer, but with a grateful meaning.

Scattered and scanty as are their poor senses, they know that the doctor is their friend; that he comes not with gags and fetters and scourges, but with tidings of help and comfort; that he comes to soothe and heal; and we all know that he is on his Master's business, that he is doing that which shall be done to him on the great day of reckoning: yea! a thousandfold and a millionfold of talents of imperishable gold and silver for every twopence which the good Samaritan left at the inn for the wounded man who had gone down to Jericho and fallen among thieves.

It is no easy and no immediately thankful task for a man of education and refinement to abandon his beloved pursuits, the intercourse

of society, the comforts of home, and the relaxations of literature almost, and devote himself to the perpetual perambulation of this *via dolorosa*—for ever pacing up and down these corridors, unlocking wickets with his master-key, and doomed to be called up at any hour of the night, to have his ears filled from noon to night with whimperings and croonings, with moans and hysteric laughter. How he must cling to a strange face, shipwrecked as he is in this ocean of vacuous countenances! We see such men as Dr. Hood and Dr. Helps patiently, cheerfully resigning themselves to follow this thorny path. We know that they have many brethren in their calling—scholars, gentlemen, philanthropists—equally patient, cheerfully laborious in the good work; and it is a reassuring and ennobling thing to know that vacancies among these knights of the Order of Mercy are always filled up—that there are always men ready and willing to take up their cross and follow the behests of Him who wept for our sufferings and suffered for us all.

It would be unjust in this case to omit a cordially favourable mention of the male and female attendants at Bethlehem Hospital. None of the cynical sternness of the hired nurse can be imputed to them. They do their

spiriting very gently, and use their patients, not as though they were repulsive burdens, but in a brotherly and sisterly fashion. Some of these attendants have been in the asylum for twenty-two years, during which time not one accusation of misconduct has been alleged against them.

The onerous nature of their duties may be imagined, when we reflect that lunatic patients are often as feeble, as helpless, as exigent and perverse and fractious as children.

When Dr. Hood pays one of his cheerful visits to the ladies' work-room—fitted up with exquisite taste, and where convalescent and docile patients amuse or employ themselves in embroidery, fancy work, and flower painting in water-colours—it is by no means an uncommon occurrence for him to be asked by one of the inmates for permission to go out 'for a day's pleasure.' Think not this is one of the vain and hopeless requests preferred by the maniac pining in his dismal captivity. If the patient be 'well enough' permission is readily granted; and the Soho Bazaar, the Pantheon, or friends and relatives, are visited. I confess that few things surprised me more during my sojourn in this remarkable institution than the calm intimation that there was scarcely a place of

amusement in the metropolis to which Dr. Hood had not sent his patients, and that the great majority of them had participated in this privilege. To which I must add a more noteworthy postscript, that on no occasion has the physician had to regret the extension of such an indulgence.

The male gallery is of the same dimensions as the principal gallery, and is fitted up in a style similar, but not exactly identical, to that employed on the female side. There are fewer flowers and similar elegancies, but the comforts are the same, and there is the same fondness manifested for pet birds and animals, cats, canaries, squirrels, &c. The patients amuse themselves with games of bagatelle, cards, painting, reading, &c. In one corner of the apartment is a party playing chess; others are killing time with music, or with that great consolator the tobacco-pipe. Still, many of the patients take no pleasure in any kind of amusement, but for hours will sit or stand alone, wrapped in thought, some in the attitude of listening, some with sunken heads and hands clasped behind them, others with their arms pinned to their sides like recruits in the presence of the drill-sergeant. Others pace the long gallery incessantly, pouring out their

woes to those who would listen to them, or if there be none to listen, to the dogs and cats, or just as frequently to the air.

The Long Gallery gives access to a very excellent library. The leading journals and periodicals of the day are to be found on the tables, and on the bookshelves is a capital collection of the standard works of modern literature. The library is always well frequented. Many of the patients are well educated and accomplished men; more than one have been celebrated in intellectual pursuits. I need not remind those that are familiar with asylum interiors, that one may be for a long period in conversation with a lunatic who will in all respects behave as a rational being till you touch on the subject of his delusion. Pursuing the plan I proposed to myself at the commencement, I will not particularize the hallucinations that came under my notice. This is no journal of psychological medicine; and to make the special delusions of a madman a topic for picturesque essay-writing is only pandering to a morbid curiosity. Of course, there are kings and emperors and pontiffs among the patients. So there have been, I dare say, for centuries, and so there are in every mad-house in the world. As a fact very

important as evidence in favour of a system not only of non-coercion, but of positive indulgence, let it be recorded that books or periodicals being wantonly torn or defaced are unknown in the institution. It would seem that the mad folks are wiser in their generation than the human monkeys roving at large who tear and smear periodicals, or who, the scandal of this age, have been lately outraging books and maps in the reading-room of the British Museum.

With a brief allusion to two remaining and most noticeable features of the 'new system' of management, my brief survey of Bethlehem Hospital must be brought to a conclusion. The two corresponding saloons at the extremity of the wings, and which are of spacious dimensions, and lighted by large louvre windows, contain, the one a billiard-room, much frequented by the male patients in the evening; the other, a ball-room. The latter is on the female side, and during the autumn and winter months balls are constantly given to the inmates, both male and female, who appear thoroughly to appreciate the enjoyment provided for them. Both Doctor Hood and Doctor Helps join the patients at these entertainments. Refreshments, consisting of home-made wines,

and ale, cake, biscuit, and fruit, are handed down at intervals. Many of the patients remain seated the whole evening, silent, moody, and abstracted, taking no interest in the excitement of the dance. At eleven o'clock, 'God save the Queen' is sung, and the poor creatures go to bed—the majority amused and pleased.

I have said that the more docile often see the outside world, and mingle in the recreations of the people who are not quite mad enough to be received into Bethlehem—I mean yourself, myself, and the rest of the ladies and gentlemen who are so conceited about their sanity. In wet weather, the vast extent of the galleries affords no mean opportunity for exercise. For fine weather, there are spacious and well-laid-out gardens, with lawns and parterres, at the rear of the edifice; in which gardens, under the care of the attendants, some patients take exercise, some smoke, some run and leap, some stand immovable for hours, gazing at the sky, the shrubs, or the ground. No patient looks at his neighbour. But neither passionists nor quietists ever do the slightest injury to the trees, or shrubs, or flowers.

The last of the doors was unlocked, and my tour was at an end. We went back to Doctor

Hood's study, and I looked through an album of photographs taken from patients in their accesses of mania, and in their lucid moments. I glanced at reports and balance-sheets, and learned that the hospital, though not plethoric with wealth, enjoyed an adequate revenue, administered with a wise liberality and discretion. I learned that the improvements were carried out at a great cost; and I thought that he who would grudge one penny of a sum, however liberal, towards such a merciful purpose must be a crooked-hearted curmudgeon, only fit to farm pauper children, and make a profit out of them.

I left Bethlehem Hospital with the conviction that it was the noblest, and yet the least pretentious, of England's many noble but often ostentatious charities. I came out in the October world, and found it as cold, and foggy, and muddy as usual. I dined, and went to the play and the club; but I had dreamt of Bethlehem, sleeping and waking, for days. I mused on what I had seen; I was haunted by what I had heard. I thought of the luxuries and comforts, the plants and the pet animals, the books and the periodicals, the billiard and the ball-room, the skill and tenderness of the physician; but all these, to my mind, would not

fill up the vast abyss of human mental misery yawning beneath the lofty dome in St. George's-fields; and, with an inward groan, I murmured, 'Let me be crippled, deaf, blind, paralytic, mutilated, even to half obliteration of human form, if such be Thy will, but not mad, O Lord, not mad!'

NOTE.—Both Dr. (Sir Charles) Hood and Dr. Helps are dead.





XIII.

MADAME BUSQUE'S.

RESIDENT in Paris some time ago, I had dined well—very well, once, perhaps twice in a way: and began to recognise the necessity of mediocrity in dining. No more for me were the golden columniated downstairs saloons of the Palais Royal. Gold and columns and plate glass I could have in the upper apartments of that palace of gastronomy, and at a very moderate price; but the good meats, good sauces, good wines—they remained below. ‘Prix fixé’ stared me in the face. Dinners at a fixed tariff of prices and a fixed tariff of badness. I could have six courses for one and eightpence, but what courses! Gloom began to settle upon me. I saw visions of dirty little restaurants in back streets; of biftecks like gutta-percha; of wine like pyroligneous acid, with a dash of hemlock in it to give it

body ; of sour bread in loaves of the length of a beefeater's halberd ; of winy stains on the table-cloth ; of a greasy waiter ; of a pervading odour of stale garlic ; of having to ask the deaf man with the asthma and the green shade over his eyes yonder, for the salt. Better, I said, to buy cold halves of fowls at the roasters' shops, and devour them in the solitude of my fifth floor ; better to take to a course of charcuterie or cold pork-butcery ; Lyons sausages, black puddings, pigs' feet, polonies with garlic, or sparerib with savoury jelly. Better almost to go back to the Arcadian diet of red-shelled eggs, penn'orths of fried potatoes, fromage de Brie, and ha'porths of ready-cooked spinach—of which, *entre nous*, I had had in my time some experience. I was meditating between this and the feasibility of cooking a steak over a French wood fire at home (a feat never yet accomplished, I believe, by mortal Englishman) ; I had almost determined to subscribe for a month to a boarding-house in the Banlieue, where the nourishment, as described on the public walls, was 'simple but fortifying,' when the genius of fortuitous good threw Madame Busque in my way.

Through the intermediary of a friend, be it

understood. He and I had dined well, the once, twice, or thrice in a way at which I have hinted. He mentioned at the conclusion of our last repast that he must really dine at Madame's to-morrow.

I don't know what time in the afternoon it was, but it was getting very near dinner-time. A certain inward clock of mine that never goes wrong told me so unmistakably. It was very cold, but we were sitting outside a café on the Boulevard; which you can do in Paris till the thermometer is all sorts of degrees below zero. We were sitting there of course merely for the purpose of reading the latest news from America; but in deference to received café opinion, we were imbibing two petits verres of absinthe, which is a delicious cordial of gall, wormwood, and a few essential oils, and which mixed with a little aniseed and diluted with iced water will give a man a famous appetite for dinner. And thereanent I ventured to propound the momentous question: 'Where shall we dine?'

'Well,' said my friend, 'I was thinking of—of a crib—well, a sort of club in fact, where I dine almost every day when I am in Paris.'

I suggested that he might have some diffi-

culty in introducing me, a stranger, to the club in question.

‘Why, no,’ he answered; ‘because you see it isn’t exactly a club, because it’s a sort of “creamery;” and, in fact, if you don’t mind meeting a few fellows, I think we’d better dine there.’

I suggested that we had better go home and dress.

‘Oh,’ exclaimed my friend, ‘nobody dresses there. To tell the truth, it’s only at Madame Busque’s; and so I think we’d better be off as fast as we can, for nobody waits for anybody there.’

I confided myself blindly to the guidance of my friend, consoling myself with the conviction that whatever the club or ‘creamery’ might be, the dinner could be but a dinner after all, and amount to so many francs on this side a napoleon.

We went up and down a good many streets, whose names I shall not tell you; for, unless I know what sort of a man you be, and what are your likings and dislikings, I would not have you go promiscuously to Madame Busque’s, and perchance abuse her cookery afterwards. At length, after pursuing the sinuosities of a very narrow street, one of the

old, genuine, badly-paved, worse lighted streets of Paris, we slackened our footsteps before a lordly mansion—a vast hotel, with a portecochère and many-barred green shutters. My heart sank within me. This must be some dreadfully aristocratic club, I thought, and still mentally I counted my store of five-franc pieces, and wondered tremblingly whether they played lansquenet after dinner.

‘Is it here?’ I faltered.

‘Not exactly,’ answered my companion, ‘but next door—behold!’

He raised his hand and pointed to a little sign swinging fitfully in the night air and the light of a little lamp; and I read these words:—

‘SPÉCIALITÉ DE PUMPKIN PIE.’

‘Enter,’ said my friend.

We entered a little, a very little shop, on whose tiny window-panes were emblazoned half-effaced legends in yellow paint, relative to eggs, milk, cream, coffee, and broth at all hours. A solitary candle cast a feeble light upon a little counter, where there was a tea-cup and an account-book of extreme narrowness, but of prodigious length. Behind the counter loomed

in the darkness visible some shelves, with many bottles of many sizes. Some tall loaves were leaning up in a corner, as if they were tired of being the staff of life, and wanted to rest themselves. A spectre of a pumpkin, a commentary of the text outside, winked in the crepuscule like a yellow eye. There were no eggs, broth, cream, or coffee to be seen; but there was a pleasant odour of cooking palpable to the olfactory nerves, and this was all.

‘Push on,’ said my friend.

I pushed on towards another little light in the distance, and then I became sensible of a stronger and yet pleasanter odour of cooking; of a cheery voice that welcomed my friend as Monsieur Tompkins (let us say), and of another calmer, softer, sweeter voice, that saluted him as her ‘*amiable cabbage*’—both female voices, and good to hear.

Pushing still onwards, I found myself in a very small many-sided apartment, which, but for a round table and some chairs, seemed furnished exclusively with bottles. There were bottles here and bottles there, bottles above and bottles below, bottles everywhere, like the water round the ship of the *Ancient Mariner*; but the similarity stopped there, for there were many drops to drink. At the round table,

more than three parts covered with bottles, sat five men with beards. They were all large in stature and in beard, and were eating and drinking vigorously. Pasted on the walls above were several portraits in chalk, among which I immediately recognised those of the five bearded guests. Nobody spoke, but the five beards were bowed in grave courtesy: the clatter of knives and forks relaxed for a moment, to recommence with redoubled ardour; and two additional places were found for us at the round table with miraculous silence and promptitude. Then the proprietor of the cheery voice, a rosy-checked country girl, with her handkerchief tied under her chin, which at first suggested toothache, but eventually became picturesque, placed before me bread, butter, a snowy napkin, a knife and fork, and a bottle of wine. Then the calm, soft, sweet voice became a presence incarnated in a mild woman with a grey dress and sad eyes, who addressing me as 'dear friend of Monsieur Tompkins,' suggested potage — in which suggestion I acquiesced immediately.

The round table was of simple oak, and there was no table-cloth. The chairs were straw-bottomed and exceedingly comfortable. The floor was tiled and sanded. A solitary but

very large wax-candle burnt in an iron candlestick. The salt-cellar (to prevent any one asking or being asked for it) was neatly poised on the top of a decanter, and was visible to all. Pepper was a superfluity, so excellently seasoned were the dishes. At intervals hands appeared, very much in the White Cat fashion, and tendered sardines, olives, the mild cheese of Brie, the pungent Roquefort, and the porous Gruyère.

I don't mean to say that I had any ortolans, quails, forced asparagus, or hot-house grapes, at Madame Busque's (though I might have had them too, by ordering them), but I do mean to declare, that I had as good, plentiful, clean, well-dressed a dinner as ever Brillat-Savarin or Dr. Kitchener would have desired to sit down to. Wines of the best, liqueurs of the best, coffee of the best, cigars of the best (these last at the exorbitant rate of a penny apiece), and, above all, conversation of the very best.

For you are not to suppose that the five bearded men were silent during the entire evening. Dinner once discussed, and cigars once lighted, it turned out that the proprietor of one beard was a natural philosopher; another an Oriental linguist; a third a news-

paper correspondent ; a fourth a physician ; a fifth a vice-consul :—that all had travelled very nearly over Europe, had ascended Vesuvius, had smoked cigars in the Coliseum, had taken long walks in the Black Forest. Travel, anecdote, science, literature, art, political discussion, utterly free from personality or prejudice—all these, with a good and cheap dinner, did I find haphazard at Madame Busque's.

Nor perhaps was this the only good thing connected with the 'creamery.' I have since found myself the only Englishman among sometimes not five, but fifteen subjects of a one time Great Republic, three thousand miles away ; and up to this moment I have never heard the slightest allusion to guessing, calculation, gouging, bowie-knifeing, repudiation, lynching, locofocos, know-nothings, 'Hard-shells,' alligators, snags, or sawyers, or any of the topics on which our Republican cousins are supposed almost exclusively to converse. More than this, the much-to-be-aborred questions of dollars or cents are never broached by any chance.

I need not say that I dine very frequently at Madame Busque's. I like her ; her cookery ; her guests ; her good-humoured ser-

vant Florence, and her Pumpkin Pie, for which she has a speciality, and the confection of which was taught her by the vice-consul. I am not going to tell you how cheap her dinners are, or where they are to be had, till I know more of you; but if you will send me certificates of your good temper and citizenship of the world, I don't mind communicating Madame Busque's address to you, in strict confidence.*

* Madame Busque, I rejoice to say, realized, mainly through the patronage of Americans visiting Paris, a handsome competence, and removed from the Rue de la Michodière to more pretentious premises in the Rue Godot-de-Mauroi.





XIV.

THE CLEAN VILLAGE OF BROCK.

ONE of the wittiest things that perhaps ever appeared in the pages of *Punch* was a brief commentary on an advertisement with which some pertinacious upholsterer used, years ago, to worry the public well-nigh to death: — ‘To Persons about to Marry.’ ‘*Don’t,*’ said celibatarian *Punch*. It is not unlikely that the bachelor-cynic may have changed his opinions by this time; for matrimony, like learning to dance, is the thing which most people begin by sneering at, and end—as their fathers ended before them. In a similar spirit Albert Smith used to wind up a long string of hints addressed to intending continental travellers, by advising them to stay at home; while, as you know, the hand-books of games which profess to teach you all that can be learnt about whist and loo, cribbage

and all-fours, usually contain, on the title-page, a brief caveat against touching cards at all. I have all this ghostly counsel in my mind when I approach the subject of my present chapter, and I begin by saying to you earnestly, frankly, pathetically, ‘Don’t go to the clean village of Brock.’ ‘And why,’ you may ask, ‘being at Amsterdam, should we not pay a visit to a place to which all the world has been?’ I answer, very plainly, ‘Because the village of Brock is a bore, and a delusion, and a sham, and isn’t half so clean as Shepherd’s Bush.’

I know you wont follow my advice. I know that so soon as ever you are installed at Brock’s Hotel in the Dodenstraat or the ‘Oude Bible’ in the Warmocostraat, and have done your Het Palais and your Trippenhuis, you will charter a carriage and be off to Brock; and that my warning voice will be, once heard, no more remembered than the ‘don’t touch any champagne’ of the doctor to the recent invalid who is going to dine at Francatelli’s and is addicted to dry sillery. At the principal show-house in the clean village—I shall continue, for mere conformity’s sake, to call it by its usurped and unmerited name—there is a woman with a face, like unto that of one of the highly-trained steeds in the Elgin Marbles.

‘*Mozzoo, Mataame!*’ this dreadful person will cry, in tones much more closely resembling a neigh than the human voice divine, ‘*Mozzoo, Mataame, regardez libre.*’ You will look at the book, which is as big and as dirty as a parish registry, and find it a kind of Court Directory of all nations. It bulges wide as a church door with visiting cards. People have come from all parts of the world to inscribe their names in this monstrous ledger. The four, the five quarters of the globe are all represented here—the Creole Don and the Circassian Prince, the Moldo-Wallachian Boyar, and the Croatian Ban; your doctor, your lawyer, and your tailor; the Bishop of your diocese; the Marquis of Farintosh, Mr. and Mrs. Podsnap; General Tom Thumb, Madame Malibran, Victor Hugo, Sir Edwin Landseer, the Sheriff of Middlesex, Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Skeggs, and the Lord No Zoo—all have deposited their glazed or ivory pasteboard, their copperplate names and addresses.

All this, nevertheless, resolves itself into one fact. Being at Amsterdam, you will naturally go to Brock. I know you will. Go, then, and get your eyes couched. If you are mulet in a dozen guilders, why shouldn’t the rest of the tourist world pay as much or more

for the operation? Oculists must live. Let us continue, then, paying them their fees, even unto the Third Cataract, and then find ourselves as blind as seven-day puppies. Even Bolander admitted that a visit to the dear village of Brock was a perfectly remunerative outlay of cash. ‘Zaandam is cleanerer,’ says Bolander. ‘Twenty village I take you to, not cost a stuyver, is cleanerest. But what can man do? It like not going up de Righi, not going up de Pyramid. Not worth de money. Tire you to death. Yet, must go. What they say in England if you not go? Carriage ready, sure at ten o’clock to-morrow. Must start early; take four hours to do Brock comfortable.’

Thus Bolander: ‘*What will they say in England?*’ Ay, there’s the rub. It inspires the warrior in distant climes to deeds of desperate valour; but it likewise goads the silly tourist to do as other simpletons have done before him.

So I gave myself over, *sciemment*, as the Code Napoleon has it, into the hands of Bolander; and that tormentor took me, on perhaps the most bitterly nipping and cheerless morning that was ever known to occur in any month of December, to the tavern of the Nieuwe Stad’s

Herborg, which is a kind of Dutch Fox-under-the-Hill, supported on piles, of course, in the middle of the Ij. Here I waited half an hour in the cold for a ferry-boat, and was entertained by Bolander with anecdotes of defunct tourists. Bolander is a little man in a very long snuff-coloured coat, very trustworthy, highly recommended by the guide-book, and is to be heard of at Brack's in the Dockenstraat. He is immensely old, but very dry in appearance; at the which I am glad, for a double reason—first that there should be anything dry in this damp metropolis; next, that as Bolander has now reached the mummified stage, he will probably last an indefinite number of years longer. Bolander was Albert Smith's guide, and accompanied him up the Rhine. He speaks very affectionately of him; but is given darkly to insinuate that he and not A. S. wrote the major part of the Mont Blanc entertainment, and that but for him—Bolander—the Egyptian Hall would have been nowhere. Bolander also wrote Murray's 'Guide-book to Holland and Northern Germany,' and took that admirable series of photographs of Egypt and Nubia which were published, I believe, by Messrs. Negretti and Zambra—at least he was there when somebody else did. In this

modesty of self-assertion he reminded me of a communicative gentleman who officiated as *ober-kellner* at an hotel at Berlin some eight years ago, and who told me that his late Majesty King Frederick William IV. had been until four in the morning at the Carnival Ball at the Opera House. I stared somewhat at this announcement. 'Yes,' said the candid *ober-kellner*, 'the King have supper in his box, and I wait upon him.'

Bolander is the most travelled guide I have met with. He has been at it for fifty years. 'I know my Egypt,' he says, 'I know my Spain, my Swisserland, my Rome (three times), my Medicarameans, my Yarmany, and my Russias; and I have been backward forward to Brock four time in one day, each time take different nation.' I asked him if he ever took a holiday. 'Once,' he responded, 'I go mit all my family by Rotterdam steamer to London for eight day. Ah! it was delightful time. We buy one little book, and we go about all de eight day and see de sights—de Tower, de Mint, de Bank, St. Paul, the Britons' Museum, de Madam Waxwork in Baker Street—everything.'

The ferry-boat, which was remarkably like a very large tub with the washhouse boiler in

the middle, and had a full cargo of cabbages—vegetables which, in a raw state and in winter time are but chilly and uncomfortable objects to look at—arrived at last, and conveyed us to the south point of Waterland, one and a half mile from Buiksloot. Hence you can see the provinces both of North and South Holland, likewise the Zuyder Zee; and you have a well laid out and not uninteresting panorama of the great city of Amsterdam capped by the domes of the Palace and the Lutheran Kerk. It is a panorama worth looking at. It rather takes away your breath to think that these two hundred and sixty thousand human beings, these palaces, churches, prisons, hospitals, merchants' counting-rooms, shops, warehouses, dwellings—have no surer foundations than the trunks of trees stuck in the mud; that nothing but a few planks keeps them from the all-swallowing sea. 'A ship is a prison, with the chance of being drowned,' says the sneering moralist. For how many centuries have these brave Hollanders lain in a watery gaol, and yet how stubbornly free they are!

There is another tavern at Waterland where you hire the carriage which is to convey you to Brock and back again, a distance say, of ten miles. For this you have to pay six guilders

with anything you please to the driver, who, of course, receives the smallest donation with thankfulness, but appears profoundly ignorant of the existence of any coin lower in denomination than a guilder. This ignorance is common with all persons in any way connected with the clean village. Everything costs a guilder that doesn't cost two. The cowherds and the tavern-keepers, the dairymaids and the hostlers who wash the horses' mouths out, all have a lively and cheerful faith in one-and-eightpence, but they are exceedingly sceptical with regard to any smaller currency.

It did not tend much to enliven one's spirits to perceive that the steeds harnessed to the rickety little britschka we had chartered were those paunchy, hollow-backed, arch-necked, weak-kneed animals of sable hue and flowing manes and tails which in England are ordinarily attached to the stuffy hackney coach smeared with black varnish, in which, accoutred in a hideous masquerade dress of crape and bombazine, you follow to Kensal-green the remains of our dear brother departed. I suppose the mourning-coach horse came over to England with William III., but his family has not decreased in Holland. Every livery-stable keeper here seems, from his stud, to do 'black work.'

While these funeral prancers, who, like their brethren at home, had a great deal of action and nothing else, were being harnessed to the britschka, Bolander suggested that I should inspect the vast line of dams thrown up of late years, to check the influx of the sea at high tide into the Ij. The dam-keeper's little hut was visible, and his money-taker's box, whence he dispenses tickets at a guilder a head for the privilege of walking over the embankments. I declined patronizing this entertainment, saying that I would see the dams—cut first. Upon my word I think the Dutch would exhibit the remains of their great grandmothers preserved in schiedam for money.

We passed numbers of summer-houses jutting out on piers into the muddy water, where in fine weather the mynheers come to smoke and drink, and sniff the refreshing gales of the odoriferous slush and the spicy ooze. Bolander pointed out a spot in the middle of the Ij where, in the revolutionary war, the Dutch fleet lay, and where, the river being frozen, it was captured by a division of French cavalry and flying artillery. But I have heard more wonderful stories than that, Bolander. Did not Colonel Fremantle tell us once of a Yankee gunboat in the Rio Grande which, under the

broiling heats of July, was captured by a squadron of Texan dragoons?

The road to Brock runs through the fattest of polders by the side of the Great Ship Canal of North Holland—a surprising work of hydraulic engineering, and extending upwards of fifty miles, right down to the Texel. By its means ships of the largest size and burthen can come up to Amsterdam. The canal and port dues are, however, very heavy, and a decided preference is shown by shipowners for the roomy Rotterdam, with its so easily accessible Boomjes. We saw one, a huge English barque, coming up the canal, and threatening our britschka with her terrible bowsprit. Just one gleam of home irradiated this dreary dun Dutch landscape as the *Charming Sally*, of Great Grimsby, sailed in a stately manner across our carriage window. I could see the burly English captain, pea-jacketed and red-comfortered, pacing the deck stamping and thrashing his broad chest with crossed arms, to keep himself warm; his English wife—he must have had good-natured owners—in plaid shawl and black bonnet, knitting by the capstan, a fat baby-boy sprawling and playing like a kitten with a ball of worsted at her feet; the great black ship's dog, like a lion couchant,

with his paws hanging idly over the taffrail—a sagacious supercargo he, knowing all about the *Charming Sally*, her tonnage, rating, charter-parties, bills of lading, and policies of insurance, and holding himself—that good and faithful servant—responsible for all, even for the barking at that little rascal of a cabin-boy when he does not behave himself. Little cabin-boy is just visible in the aperture of the companion-hatch, where he sits mending his trousers. Forward, a short-legged boatswain, with terrific whiskers and mahogany visage, is swearing at Jack or Tom in the rigging for a lazy lubberly son of a sea-cook. I cannot hear his voice, but I am sure he is swearing, and that those are the words, with slight additions, he is using; he would not be a boatswain else. *Fouette cocher!* There is nothing on the field of vision now but willows and windmills; and so God speed the *Charming Sally* of Great Grimsby on her voyage.

The carriage pulls up at the door of an ugly wooden cottage, before which are collected a number of pairs of wooden shoes, as though this had been some inn at which the guests were in the habit of going to bed in the day-time. Is this Brock? No, says Bolander, but it is a dairy farm which everybody is

expected to see. We alight, and passing the threshold find ourselves in what appears to me to be a remarkably dark, dirty, and ill-ventilated cowhouse. The cows seem in the reverse of good condition, and are huddled together in a manner which in England would provoke the criticism of the Government inspectors of nuisances. It is true that the tiled floor is made out here and there in a grotesque pattern, and that the cross-beams are smeared with coarse scroll work and gaudy hues, as though some mountebanks were about to give a performance. 'You should come in summer,' the dairy farmer says, with a deprecatory smile, seeing, I suppose, anything but admiration expressed in my countenance. I can understand as much Dutch as *that* amounts to; and in his deprecatory smile I read the whole mystery of the Brock imposture. The cows, then, are to be got up as a show in summer, for the visitors to stare at. In winter time they may wallow in this filthy lair. Of course I did not expect to see electro-plated mangers, or an alabaster drinking-tank, or rose-wood buckets, or a small-tooth comb, an ivory-handled hair-brush, a pot of glycerine, and a bottle of eau de Cologne provided for each cow; but, after the tremendous fuss that has been

made about these dairy farms in countless books of travel, I certainly did expect to find something more trim and coquettish than a murky den abounding in bad smells. The story about the cows' tails being tied up with blue ribbon I had long dismissed as an idle fable, although I should not be in the least surprised to hear that the show-people did resort to this mode of ornamentation during the summer season, when the visitors come; but I am free to confess that from one end of the stable to the other there does run a gutter; that above it, over each stall, a hook is fastened to the ceiling, and that the cows' tails, in order that they may not dangle in the dirt, are tied up to these same hooks. I doubt, however, whether it is worth coming all the way to Brock to verify this not very important fact. My general impression on quitting this much-vaunted cowshed was that, at a not very remote period, it had been the property of a certain Mynheer Van Augeas, and that the work of the eminent sanitary reformer, Van Hercules, was not yet half concluded. The whole place would certainly have been much the better for a few buckets of cold water.

The farmer and his family lived under the same roof, and were separated only by a thin

partition from the cowhouse. The kitchen came first, then a kind of best parlour or supping-room. Then a couple of cupboards—they were nothing more—with beds in them. These beds—with half a dozen mattresses, chintz curtains, gilt poles, quilted silk counterpanes, and coverlets of sham Brussels lace—were evidently couches of state; so that I was much puzzled in my mind to know where the family actually slept. On the floor? in some friendly cockloft? or among the cows? To show the exquisite cleanliness in which the furniture was kept, and to verify the saying about ‘eating your dinner off the deal boards,’ the mid-day meal of which the family was partaking, and which I trust had not been hastily improvised, so soon as our carriage-wheels had become audible, was set forth on the table without any cloth, plates, or dishes. A very nasty mess that mid-day meal seemed to be, consisting, so far as a hasty glance could show, of bits of stale bread and tablets of bubble-and-squeak which had been subjected to hydraulic pressure and then fried. I did not see any knives, forks, or spoons, and from this, and the fact that the family champed their jaws over their viands in a cheerless and mechanical manner, I was led to surmise that

this might be, after all, not a real dinner, but a theatrical or pantomime meal, provided in pasteboard by the resident 'property man,' and made believe to be eaten whenever visitors came to Brock.

We were glad to pay a guilder and get away from this 'gaff'—as sheer a gaff as any I ever paid a penny to see in the Whitechapel-road. Then we drove on to Brock itself, and had to leave our carriage at a little inn at the entrance, there being neither horse nor cart thoroughfare through the clean village. The common room of the inn was very like one in an American village, bare and comfortless—the table slopped with beer and gin, and the floor fertile in evidences that the citizens who came here were in the habit of smoking, and of expectorating a good deal when they smoked. There was a big billiard-table, covered with a cotton cloth; and this cloth—Bolander having neglected to say we were coming—they had neglected to wash. Or perhaps the inn at Brock is not one of the show-places of the clean village. An old woman was asleep over a spinning-wheel in one corner; the hostess was swabbing her glasses in a little bar; an idle dog was trying to balance himself on the stump of his tail, and continually

falling in the attempt; and, squatting on a couple of joint-stools, two boors were playing a rude kind of backgammon, smoking short pipes with metal tops, and swilling beer. Presently these gentry fell out over their cups, and one proposed to 'cave' the other's head in with a flagon; the old woman at the spinning-wheel woke up; the hostess began to shriek over her glasses; the idle dog barked furiously; a girl who was making cheese in the next room popped a gilt-scalped head through the half-opened door; and the landlord, who had such long legs and such wide shoulders, and such a great unkempt stooping head that he looked like a cow in disguise, came in from the back yard and began to say awful things in low Dutch. All this was delicious to witness; for, abating the billiard-table—and that, as I have said, was covered up—the whole scene became transformed at once into a 'conversation' by Adrian Van Ostade.

Peace being restored, Bolander took us for a walk through the clean village of Brock. Visitors are warned by a notice-board in the outskirts not to walk through it without a stopper to their pipes; but I was much surprised to find that no spittoons were provided at the street corners, and that there were no little metal boxes, such as you see in the

German railway carriages, to receive the ashes of cigars. *En revanche*, ere I had walked fifty paces, I saw several highly-respectable muck-heaps and considerable quantities of unmistakable mud. The village, which is about as large as Thames Ditton, is intersected by those baby canals of which the Dutch are so fond; the water, as usual, stagnant and foul, and crossed by rickety wooden bridges, the planks in many instances absolutely rotten. The streets—or rather lanes—are all paved, flush from one side to the other, with the hard, narrow Dutch bricks called ‘clinkers.’ Some of the houses have petrified and vitreous parterres before them, made of shells and bits of stone and glass stuck in mortar, and arranged in fantastic patterns. The houses are mainly of wood, painted white, with green shutters and shingle roofs. There is a pretty cemetery, but evidently laid out for show; and I should tremble to be locked in there at the witching time of night, for fear of the ghosts leaping out of their graves and dunning one for guilders. In some of the gardens there must be in the summer time a pretty show of dahlias and tulips; but there is not in the whole place such a thing as a tall old tree or a cottage covered with ivy.

There is a handsome orphan asylum—an institution which, to the undying honour of the Dutch people, no hamlet, to the meanest, is without; and there is a gloomy old brick church, which was shut up, of course, and which, not containing the tombs of any admirals, no sexton, with a bunch of keys, was in attendance to exhibit. The pastor has, as of right, the handsomest house in Brock; the schoolhouse is a substantial edifice, but I am not quite certain whether a squad of ragged and dirty boys who were squabbling and playing pitch and toss under the church walls, and who would have derived much benefit from a visit from that strong-armed beadle you see in ‘Industry and Idleness,’ were orphans, or schoolboys, or both. It is likewise extremely unpleasant to mark the ceremonious and sanctimonious bow or curtsy offered to every stranger in the village by every child he meets. It is not the frank or the timid salutation of an English village child. It is accompanied by an outstretched palm, and a hard, impudent, staring leer, and means, clearly enough, *backsheesh*. I think that next to a village where there is an ancient endowed charity for founders’ kin, I would back a show-place for the sure corruption and

demoralization of the population, old and young.

They were making no butter, and but little cheese, in Brock just then. The resident gentry—underwriters, stockbrokers, retired tradesmen, and the like—only come to Brock in the summer, preferring to winter at the Hague. Bolander did not receive with any great favour a proposition that we should call on the clergyman or the schoolmaster. It was not customary, he said. But there was still something else to see. There was a place to be visited to which all the world went. We were accordingly inducted by the back door into a building which I declare I mistook at first for a secondhand curiosity shop in Wardour Street; the stock in trade rubbed up with silver sand to look likely. A suite of three rooms and the usual bed cupboards were crammed with a heterogeneous assemblage of objects; brazen pots and pans innumerable; kettles and caldrons; plates and dishes, carved oak cabinets and presses, paltry plaster casts and sham bronze ornaments of the Lowther Arcade order, and some really good old china. But there was too much of everything: and everything was there evidently for show. We were now presented to the woman with a face like a

horse, and with the strident exordium of 'Mozzoo, Mataame,' she led us through the house, expatiating on the whiteness of the floor and the brightness of the kettles and saucepans, until I was as sick of one as of the other. She showed us the famous ledger with its visiting cards from all parts of the world; she showed us her Sunday clothes, her 'ribbons, chains, and ouches;' her presses full of linen, and her Brussels lace bed-furniture, but she always kept a hawk eye behind and before her, either to see that we did not steal anything, or to watch whether we did not feel inclined to buy anything. The old china, the lace, and glass were all for sale. In fact, the chief show-house in Brock was a *bric-à-brac* shop. Finally, she took us into a room and introduced us to 'Mign Vader.' Father was a venerable personage with a long beard, who, as I conjectured from a thin curl of smoke proceeding from one side of his jacket, had hastily pocketed his pipe on our entrance. The 'old cuss,' if he will permit me to speak of him by that affectionate although familiar name, was shut up by a window in a very high-backed chair, and a large pair of horn-rimmed spectacles on his good old nose, was making believe to read out of a thundering

old book printed in black letter, with double columns. I am sure it was a good book; but of this I am equally sure, that if 'Mign Vader,' his spectacles, and his book were not all part of the show, I, and not that patriarchal personage, must be a Dutchman.

The woman who acted as a cicerone seemed very much disappointed when, on going away, I only presented her with a guilder, and did not purchase any old china. She shouted after us that the china was superb, and of the sixteenth century; but I declined to listen to the voice of the charmer. We went back to the shabby inn, where we had some bread and cheese and execrable beer, for which the host, who resembled a cow in disguise, made us pay four shillings English. 'They charge in winter,' whispered Bolander, 'what they call de high price.' I presume they did so for the sake of antithesis; for nothing could have been lower than the inn itself.

In conclusion, I have to observe that, although Brock is a queer, quaint place enough, there is scarcely a village in Holland that does not offer the same characteristics, which you may study at your leisure, without being set upon by a flock of harpies. As to its cleanliness, it has been impudently and systematically

exaggerated. I grant all the scrubbing, and polishing, and holystoning, and beeswaxing; but in a score of instances I saw signs of untidiness and shiftlessness, and I will back dozens of English villages, and hundreds of English labourers' cottages, to be five thousand times cleaner than the cleanest house in the 'Clean village of Brock.'

THE END.

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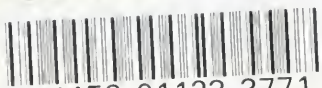
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