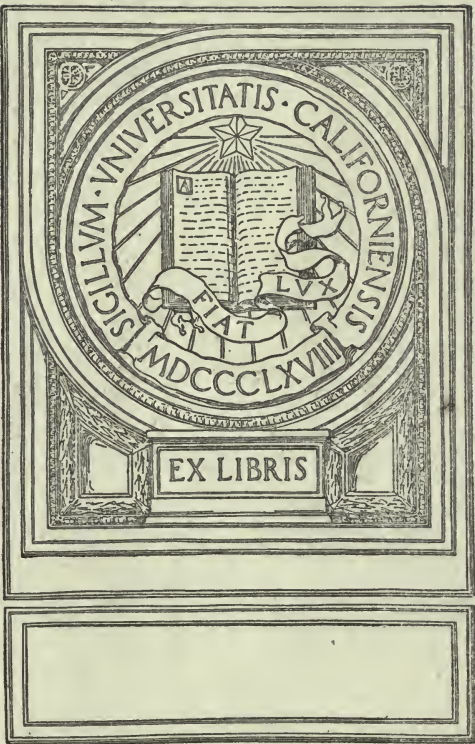


*THE CHILDISHNESS  
AND BRUTALITY  
OF THE TIME.*

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HARGRAVE JENNINGS.





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Margrave Jennings:

June 24<sup>th</sup>. 1883.

THE CHILDISHNESS AND BRUTALITY OF  
THE TIME.

"THE characteristic of the modern time is want of depth. The pace of progress is too swift. To offer a paradox, there is so much of 'life' that there is no *living*. Money is tossed from hand to hand without any thought, or knowledge, of its true use. Life is all one dissipation: whether of Mind, whether of Body, whether of Estate. Denunciation, and satire, in the adequately unsparing and powerful hands, may succeed. Society may become so polished as that everything—whether good or bad—shall slide off it. Has that evil time arrived in these modern days? Ruin, bodily and mental, is the outcome of all the above, if persisted in."—ANON.

See also:

— "The Year Three: A Vision of the Past, Present & Future"

— "Oedipus & the Sphinx of the 19th Century"

THE  
CHILDISHNESS AND BRUTALITY  
OF THE TIME:

*SOME PLAIN TRUTHS IN PLAIN LANGUAGE.*

SUPPLEMENTED BY  
SUNDRY DISCURSIVE ESSAYS AND NARRATIVES.

By HARGRAVE JENNINGS,

AUTHOR OF "THE ROSICRUCIANS;" "THE INDIAN RELIGIONS; OR, RESULTS OF  
THE MYSTERIOUS BUDDHISM;" "ONE OF THE THIRTY;" "CURIOUS THINGS OF  
THE OUTSIDE WORLD," &c., &c.

—"Laws for all faults;  
But faults *so countenanced*, that the strong 'statutes'  
Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,  
*As much in mock as mark.*"

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

London:  
VIZETELLY & CO., CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

1883.

PRINTED BY  
KELLY & Co., LONDON & KINGSTON.



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## PREFACE.

I HAVE for a certain number of years concluded that our present age has become vastly too swift for that which, by a contradictory metaphor, may be called, "safe-running." I do not think I shall be corrected to exactness in averring that, for most purposes of truth and of cool, sound judgment, a previous time was very greatly superior to the hasty and conceited period in which we live. There are various reasons for this falling off. Principally among these causes are love of show, love of money, love of self. All these are good qualities in moderation; but, exaggerated and forced to an extreme, it needs no modern Diogenes—with his proverbial lantern to light him in his search for the "honest man," or, as the best Greek readers assure us is the meaning, the "Man"—to know that they fail.

I may be thought too severe upon this modern

time, and upon that which may be stigmatised (by a bold word) almost as our contemporaneous, noisy—if not even *riotous*—civilization. I do not think that I am unduly bitterly influenced.

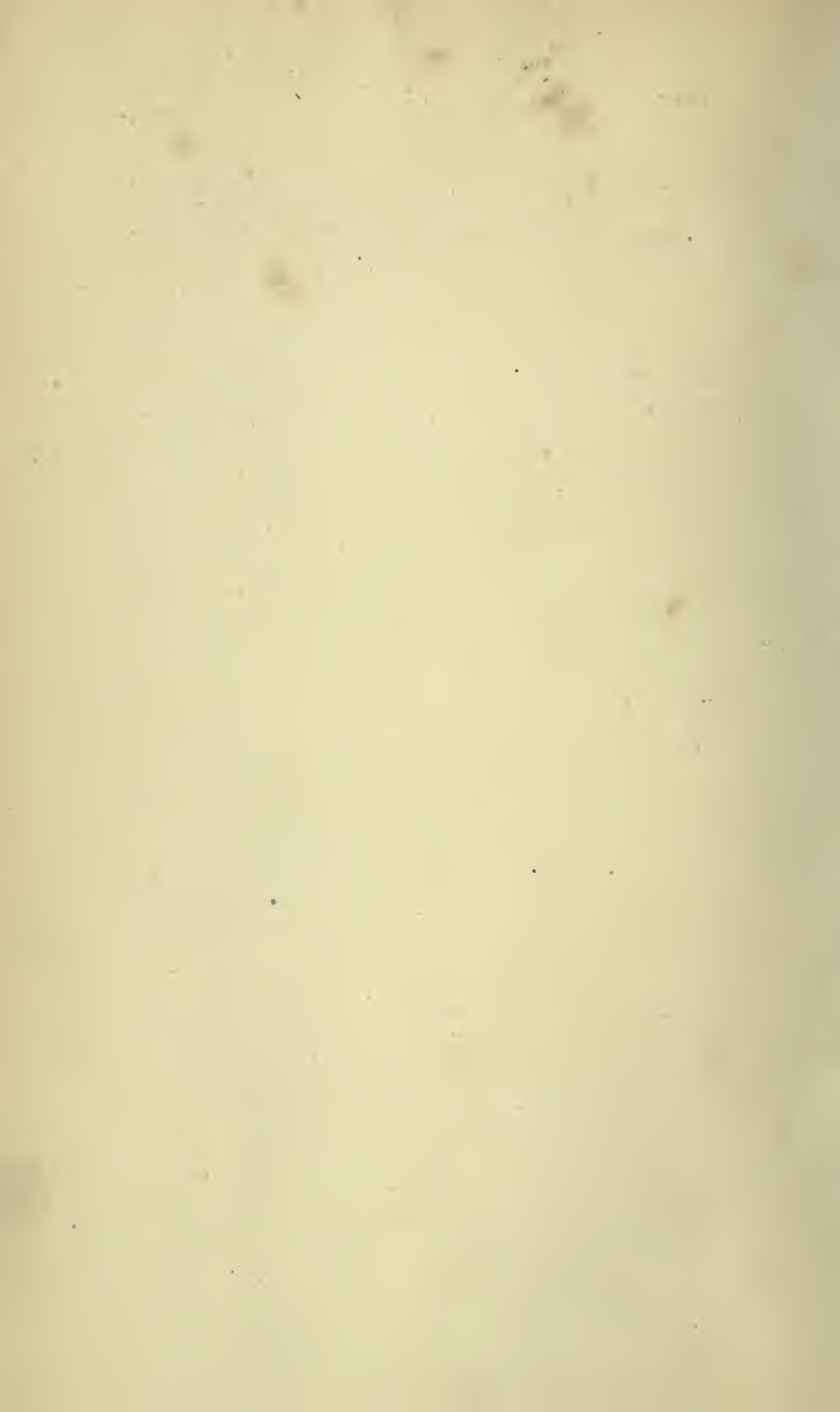
Now, in regard to another feature of my book. It is of no use producing in these days—so worn with toil, and with the feeling of the stings of necessity—a book, unless it be an amusing one. This end of amusement I have sought to secure, or at all events to try towards doing so, by mingling with my sermons—which of course must always be serious—some interesting accounts and narratives, founded I assure my readers, in the greater part from real facts in the real world. For life is much more eccentric and singular, and more laughable, than is usually supposed.

Those who honour me by examining into what I say—especially in those portions that deal with the droll life, or droller impressions of old-fashioned sailors—now unfortunately to the greater extent a “lost quantity”—may be assured that my sea-stories, however difficult of belief in modern ideas, are genuine. I may explain that, when I was a youth of very juvenile age, I wrote side by side

with the distinguished novelist, Captain Marryat, a series of sea-sketches, which appeared anonymously in the *Metropolitan Magazine*, wherein the successive chapters of *Jacob Faithful*, of *Peter Simple*, and *Ratlin the Reefer*, were being published. I recall, even at this distance of time, the look of amused astonishment, years after, when Captain Marryat was informed of the extremely boyish age (fifteen) at which the naval stories were produced by the unknown and ambitious writer; to the boy's own wonder and gratification at their success.

And now I commit this present work—*The Childishness and Brutality of the Time*—to the indulgence of the Critics and the Public.

HARGRAVE JENNINGS.



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# THE CHILDISHNESS AND BRUTALITY OF THE TIME.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE NEWSPAPERS.—THE WHOLESALE NEWSPAPER LIFE OF THE PUBLIC.

IS the Englishman's modern day life a *life*? Is it not rather a negation? At the close of the day he thinks that he has had a day. But has he had one? Has he thought?—has he lived?—is he satisfied? If he has thought at all, it has been a thought of disappointment. If he has lived at all, it has been to dislike and despise that sort of life, and to feel a sort of indignation at the circumstances which have compelled him to advance—for he must advance—in that groove. Take an ordinary inhabitant of this great town of ours—this London. Is the day-after-day life of this man life at all—in the realising, in any sense of the term, TRUE LIFE?<sup>1</sup> Or may it not be designated (and abandoned) as the acquiescence in a wearying round of merely presented things? Our usual occupations—in monotonous repetition—are only a means of somehow reaching to the end of the day. We live outside of ourselves—every man of us. We may more particularly refer to the metropolitan Englishman, the regular London

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<sup>1</sup> "Every man truly lives so long as he acts his nature, or some way makes good the faculties of himself."—*Sir Thomas Browne*.

man, to whom the traffic in the streets, the continual roar of the wheels, and the dizzy succession of vehicles of all sorts and sizes, of all characters, and contrived for all purposes, are an ever-soliciting, never-withdrawing, constantly-reinforced *worry*. The crowds of people overwhelm us. The idea of the multitude overawes us. We are oppressed with the sense of the fact of the generations. Whence did they come? How dwell (and where dwell) these multitudes? And whither are they all tending?—and for what? Unanswerable thought! For “every man hath business and desire, such as it is.” Ah, indeed! Business and desire—*such as it is!*

The conflict of purpose—the never-ending succession of faces, with some design, and some immediate object plainly visible in each, bewildering us in their inextricable multiplicity—all reacts upon oneself. Every man, when he begins to think, seems very lonely, hopelessly solitary, in this crowd. The continual reminder that we feel of how valueless, how insignificant an item our own poor personality is in all this turmoil, brings us down to a very low level of sense of self. We will defy any man to believe—that is, if the individual be capable of giving a glance now and then inwards—that he *lives* in all this noise. What can he know of himself—what can he become aware of as genuine of his own true nature, in all this battle of interests; where each man is bound to get the better of the other to maintain his own foothold; and each object appears with the necessity of becoming dominant, not to be displaced and superseded by some other object. Thus the whole world is fight and contention; it is either little murder or large murder.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix: Note (a).



What have we done, too, that we should be compelled to live alone in the newspapers? These newspapers are the only means of intercommunication in these so continual hurrying days; for men cannot meet to compare opinions personally. Therefore all our ideas and impressions are created by the impersonal newspapers, unseen nobodies, who give us what they please, and who dilute a little truth in a vast ocean of interested, plausible talk; administered to us by we never know whom, served up to us, as opinions which we must accept on our peril, by Mr. Anonymous.

Now we do not want to be misconstrued in what we are going to advance. We are preparing to speak a little truth. To speak truth is very difficult. The reception and the acknowledgement of truth requires some time for preparation. To those who know what prejudices are, it will not appear strange to add that, however well received at last, and admitted with approval in the long run, the full speaking of truth requires very considerable caution. We very much doubt whether man was ever intended for truth, for his "best pleasantness" lies in the being deceived; deceived either by himself or others. People are not prepared for truth. It is a special gift to see truth, and truth is very often not an inviting object when you do see it. Every person professes to love truth; yet if we apply the screw in the most moderate degree, and press people as to a little proof of self, or examine them as to their reliance on this or that little matter which they put forward as truth, or as a fact beyond disputation, you will find that they waver. And if you persevere, and press them just a little more you will discover that they oscillate; that is, vibrate from side to side as if they were coming down like a house of cards, really not

knowing what they do believe, or how they stand in relation to anything on this side, or on the other. We shall encounter much astonishment on the part of confident people that we doubt anything at all! They say this or that is "so very clear." Everybody says that it must be so. The newspapers say it is so, or they pity the untrained inexperience which ventures to doubt. And yet these very people will find in themselves sometimes a small vacuity into which intrudes a doubt of what they themselves maintained the minute before; and at last they discover to their own surprise, that they doubt themselves.

Newspapers, in these modern days, have grown to be esteemed as the public health; for we should think everything wrong if we did not see them every day. Newspapers are the visible presences and reminder of the public wealth, for they are lords, great controlling powers, great "assemblies of the notables," great banks and banking interests, as it were, and plutocrats in their very nature.<sup>1</sup> Ranking among the wonders of this strangely polyglot time, is the prodigious influence which the principal daily newspapers exercise. They are certainly tremendously overgrown—like prodigious plants, ever-growing, and growing gigantically. You can scarcely tell by what singular means they have secured themselves in their present place; but there they are, and their colossal leaves, or sheets, or glaring efflorescence cover the earth. Their fibres interpenetrate through all the streets, and the important morning and evening journals—all save the king, and master, and lord of these plains of pulp, the majestic anarchy of these fields, or provinces, of thin paper—blossom and bud in inscribed white, waylaying and waylaid all over the town,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix: Note (b).

though mainly over the western—the talkative, stupid parts of it.

Somehow or other, owing to an overmastering necessity, we suppose, these great daily newspapers have worked themselves up into the position of our lords and dominators, the *magistri* of the great reading school, armed with the *ferula* which raps our knuckles when we do not believe them. And oh! those wise spectacles through which the editorial eyes gleam upon us! Who has a glance so undaunted as to bear up against them? It requires a large amount of courage to protest against the *dicta* of these self-assuming, absolute truth-tellers. Infallibility! What is infallibility compared with the calmly reliant, self-conscious certitude of the assertions of a lordly “leader” appearing in one of these great papers? They must be right; it is treason to suppose that they are not right.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “It has been said that the test of fame or popularity is to consider the number of times your name is repeated by others, or is brought to their recollection in the course of a year. At this rate, a man has his reputation in his own hands, and by the help of puffing and the press, may forestall the voice of posterity, and stan the ‘groundling’ among his contemporaries. If you see the same name staring you in the face in great letters at the corner of every street, you involuntarily think the owner of it must be a great man, to occupy so large a space in the eye of the town. The appeal is made, in the first instance, to the senses, but it sinks below the surface into the mind. A quack gets himself dubbed doctor or knight, and though you may laugh in his face, it pays expenses.

“There are innumerable ways of playing one’s self off before the public, and keeping one’s name perpetually alive. The newspapers, the lamp-posts, the walls of empty houses, the shutters of windows, the blank covers of magazines and reviews, are open to every one. I have heard of a man of literary celebrity sitting in his study, writing letters of remonstrance to himself, on the gross defects of a plan of education he had just published, and which remained unsold on the bookseller’s counter. A flashy pamphlet has been run to a five-and-thirtieth edition, and thus ensured the writer a ‘deathless date’ among political charlatans, by regularly striking off a new title-page to every fifty or a hundred copies that were sold. This is a vile practice. Formerly when I had to deal with this sort of critical verdict, I was generally sent out of the way when any *debütant* had a friend at court, and was to be tenderly handled.”—*William Hazlitt*.

In the flourish of their pen, there is wisdom. In their nod there is calm approbation, possibly warning, the perhaps letting go of the "thunder," at which the small birds, careering in the sky, shall betake themselves to cover with blinking eyes and drooping wing. What fields and pastures of print in which to disport, if the sky favours, and you have time to pass thus quietly, do these columns of a great "Daily" afford! Columns upon columns of type; a microscopical map or muddle, built up of a multitude of letters, wherein you may find all the politics (and all the commentary upon them) of the world. A sackful of journalistic chaff, in which we have to hunt for—and when found delightedly to hail—the few grains of golden corn, or the few wise and really profitable notions, or new ideas, or good ideas.

Human cattle—to wit, the studious, credulous, and anxious (though asinine, for the greater part) British public—are turned in, or purposely turn themselves into, these fields of *lead*, for some ponderous *spiculae*, some grains or ounces of ballast, to steady them in their windy, foolish, and fool-like walk through this politically or domestically tempestuous and blowing world. The great daily newspapers boast of the mass of information which it is their duty and their pleasure to lay before the world every day. In fact it is astonishing, overwhelming, bewildering. Why, of any one single daily newspaper, it may truly, and with grief, be said that it were the work of a week to read it through! Why should we have the whole world thus administered to us all at once? And why should we thus, with mental compasses opened out with infinite labour and groaning, span latitudes and leap distances? What is India to us, or we to India, at this particular moment? We are in London. Our watch warns us to

the City. Our daily burthen of business has to be at once taken up. We must not dally with the margin of a tempting article, or with the title of some attractive stretches down the page of sensation news. Therefore the daily paper, with all its luring mass of news, is laid aside; and by two o'clock, when the "first editions" of the evening papers come out, the whole "morning paper" will have rolled up as into oblivion, and become of just as much import and consequence to the onrush of humanity—particularly metropolitan humanity—as last year's clouds.

Few of us, except the prozers, who are just the individuals to yield easily their judgment, have time to inspect more of the daily broadsheet than the most intimately and immediately interesting leading article, and the particulars of the last startling atrocity which has excited the greatest amount of curiosity, or the extraordinary "disclosure," or "libel," or what not, which is supplying people with the material to talk about. The town-talk is the circulating medium of society; it is the paper (newspaper) money of the mass. You receive it; you have it to give. There are sovereigns, florins, and six-penny-pieces of it. In the newspapers we always seize upon the principal subject which is exciting the public curiosity. We must be up in conversation. The newspaper, in other respects, is a sea of information, in which, swimming about, as it were, naked and defenceless, we continually stand in need of a buoy, upon whose apex or head we could mount as upon a spire of 'vantage to become aware of our neighbour, or of what is about us. We require some such spying direction-point from which to gather up knowledge and familiarity with the view around. The embarrassment of rich things—jewels of the journalistic

order (paste and scissors)—to the curious, and to the intelligent, is vexatious in its very abundance, especially to those whom time presses. We are overborne by talk, and good talk too! We have a schoolmaster—each of us—in the particular daily newspaper which we take in; and which, in a very large majority of instances, really “takes in” its own readers. It lays down the law. It is not to be contradicted. It cannot be contradicted. *Who* can contradict a daily newspaper—indeed *any* newspaper? Whom is there to contradict? You must have an individuality to deal with before you can assert or prove—if proof be possible of anything, which we really doubt—that that individuality is wrong. You can no more contradict a newspaper than you can contradict a milestone to its face—of stone. The latter must always have the best of you in the argument, since, whatever you may aver in point of protest as a fact, you cannot do away with the steadfastness of the figures, I. II. or III., on the face of this obdurate, perfectly unconscious and immovable, milestone. A milestone always tells the truth; and so does a newspaper, *of course*.

Our modern daily newspapers are like the lawyers; they always have the best of you, for if you be inclined to dispute, whom are you to protest to?—whom are you to insult?—since in all disputes, you must insult somebody? Whom are you to be so severely savage upon, if you feel the impulse upon you to be rude to anybody? You really cannot insult an Editor. He is a myth, an impersonality, something “robed in clouds.” We do not believe that anyone—in real absolute body or corporiety, so that you had your man fairly face to face and there could be no mistake about it—ever saw an Editor, that is, the real undoubted Editor. Like the

mighty "Thunderer," great Jove himself, the Editor of the *Times* has his virgin peak in his Olympus. And his newly-bound and reticulated *fascēs* (flashes or bundle of lightning-electric) are the new scientist's lights as lately introduced into the Printing-House Square mythology of practical printing. Thus Mercury, as he compels, commands, and forces everything into his service in the shape of a Great Daily; which has its eyes and its ears everywhere, above, around and underground; has bound the lightning about his feet, and spurring the restless machine-wheels ever clicking and whirring in the great *Times* offices, evokes a public wearying whirr, clack and hum, to which the far too highly civilized and far too highly educated world (for anything like happiness) replies with a groan.

The Human Sentience, Man, was certainly never born for this untiring demonstrative rasping out of his vitality in an activity which is grinding up life itself into so many items or points of pain; rousing itself for relief even into fits of delirium: for Human Life knoweth not its own meaning, nor whither it is urging in its ignorant, blind, pursued impetus to *something*. Life, in these latter days, becomes headlong in its confused aimlessness. Why is Dives obliged to have all his cushions white-spread with these continuous annoying sheets of information called newspapers, which—so totally do they prevail—are as the white clouds filling the sky of this Land of Shopkeepers? Why has poor Lazarus nothing but this never-ceasing plausible presentment of cruel useless newspapers as white plasters for his woes? The poor man's bones cry out for something better than paper for plasters, or for new restoration of bone. *Papier maché* bones will not prove permanent.

The public, in the hands of the great newspapers, is but

in leading-strings. It listens like a three years' child. It bows like a pupil to his lecturer. At least, so all the great newspapers think of their crowds of readers. They disdain their customers in their secret heart. "They *must* read us—what is better, they must buy us," is the cry of the journals. This is the universal press-policy. Its necessity is the being believed in. Like sheep over a gate, once an affirmation is made, once condemnation is uttered by a great daily paper—one of sufficient superlative greatness to be believed in—like the imitative sheep, like following like, over go the papers in unanimity; shutting their eyes, resolutely holding on in obedient continuity after the first who says, "Yes, thus it is; at least, *thus it is our interest to declare.*" This is the general policy of the newspapers. They must hold together. They speak to the hour. They look not forward, by their own confession. Their principles of living must be that of going on *de die in diem*, following clocks. Thus, there never was, perhaps, such a mass of contradiction not to be detected in the highly wrought periods, the verbiage or skilful playing off of happily-jointed epithets, than the opinions and judgments presented in any two days' papers separated by anything like an interval.

These journals alternate in their favours. They smile to two sides. They are puzzled to prefer. They hover between Paul and Barabbas, with a fidgety hand reaching out feeling fingers to each, when the people are looking, or not looking, just according to circumstances. What does that uncomfortable thing, absolute truth, or any truth, matter? What an unreasonable question. What madness to suppose that it does matter! Newspapers cannot afford to direct public opinion. They leave books (by dead men, who are irresponsible) to do this. "Will it pay, sir? Will the



newspaper pay?" That is the intelligible point. Let those enthusiasts who wish to offer themselves as martyrs for the good of the world, betake themselves to the arena. There they shall stand face to face with their martyrdom, and be torn to pieces. There they shall achieve as much posthumous glory as they please. There they shall find their lions. As for us, say the journalists, we want to be "lions" in another sense, ourselves. These obvious truths are put forward as the grand queries which now dominate east and west, and north and south. The sly directors of public opinion who sit in the editorial chairs, peer like black spying birds out of their respective eyries, to descry the steeples, and particularly to watch the political clocks, to see which way the hands are tending. "Two" or "Ten" is as the bell is made to strike; not as by the natural day. As for the rest of the national dial—so far as the great newspapers are constituted the registers of events—it is all an inside of wire and of wooden hammers.

Newspapers, with such enormous influence (from some of the above stated reasons), could not exist in a community that was less of a nation in itself than this aggregate of between three or four millions of us good, silly, self-absorbed people in London. From the crowds and masses of people who fill this gigantic metropolis, and which multitude of inhabitants may be said, literally, to bury in its depths all judgment, and sometimes all common sense, as equally as common feeling, it is impossible that there can be a general opinion, or any means of arriving at it. The people, themselves, obey the direction-points of the day. They rise in the morning and go to bed at night, and, we trust, also partake of a dinner, or an equivalent. But these people never care how others rise, or when, or where they lie, or whether they have sufficient for the supply of nature's

wants, or nothing at all, a dinner or no dinner, a bed or no bed. It results from this broad fact, of there being such a multitude in London, all necessarily selfish, that there never can be general correspondence, because we never have opportunities of seeing or speaking extensively with one another. Therefore, we run to seek in the columns of the great newspapers for those opinions which each man would express for himself if he could. And we should really know nothing of what is publicly occurring about us, if we did not look into the newspapers for it.

Another, and perhaps the principal reason of all, why men, to so deplorable an extent, surrender their judgment and unconsciously trot along, with their heads to the ground, in the harness of the great charioteers of the press, arises from the fact that folks are *too busy to think*. There is so grand, so unremitting, and so uncomfortable a race, in our scramble for the money that alone enables us to be in the world at all, that people cannot stop to look at objects by the roadside. They take other folks' word for them. In spite of Montaigne's saying, "*Toute notre dignité consiste dans la pensée,*" that must surely be a contemptible art which will rarely deposit a shilling in the pocket—and that is *thinking*; especially thinking about abstract things, or sentimental things, or about other people. Will much virtue or charity, or continual pondering about anything on God's earth put money in the pocket? Nay, thinking will rather prevent good shillings from dropping into the pocket, *thought* in all ages having been the most unproductive and therefore ridiculous faculty.

Thought—that is, abstract thought about this, that, or the other—is a paralysing deterrent, so far as the main object of living in the world is concerned, and this we take to be the *getting-on in the world*. In a civilized

country like England, and in a model metropolis like London—so restlessly engaged, and so wholly engrossed in the universal aim, that of bartering life, of consuming life, in procuring the *means to live*—<sup>1</sup> *thought* should be abandoned by all thoughtful men (to prefer a paradox) and be handed over to the professional thinkers. Or, if not left as the task of men who can afford to think, the faculty of thought, in these days, should be exercised by those wiseheads who are not wholly personified necessity—by those who have not, to the shutting out of all reflection else, to occupy their minds with their shop or counting-house, or business alone, nor to puzzle their ingenuity in the discovery of means whereby they may undersell Mr. So-and-So, or sell at all; indeed, live at all! The most exact conclusions as to public measures will not buy us anything. No knowledge of political affairs can we offer for our rent. Nor will the finest social principles, or the greatest philosophic acumen be taken in satisfaction of our taxes. Men think, and very sensibly think, that the operations of life are confined to the earning bread for their wives and families. These cannot live on politics; and in regard to these there is no truth so triumphant as that the public weal

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<sup>1</sup> A man is apt to flatter himself that in this over-grown metropolis, with its four millions of inhabitants, he will be certain to fall in with employment. Experience convinces me that he can hardly make a greater mistake. He cannot search long for work before he discovers his error, and learns that even London, this immense Babel of cities, is a town of constantly-guarded vested interests, close corporations whose members regard strangers with little favour, but, on the contrary, with much suspicion and distrust. Judging from the evidence given the other week at an inquest at the East-end of London, this unchristian, exclusive sentiment extended even to the gates of the workhouse, where the porter, himself a pauper, refused to admit an unfortunate starving, dying female, who was found, a few minutes after being driven off, dead on the pavement.

must yield to the private necessity—patriotism and public justice to *pabulum*. Accordingly we have no moderation now in our boastful recommendations of ourselves in the advertising columns of the newspapers; all is “puff,” bargain, and sale.

It is, then, this universal selfishness, this sad, this dispiriting, this dreary *necessity*, that we should each tell lies and browbeat one another, to take care of ourselves; it is this compelled holding on to, or clutching at, the main chance, which hardens our hearts, and dulls our understandings, and chills anything like a public effort—even a public feeling. We have no real political blood in us. Our public aspirations are haze and moonshine. We are made up of mechanical muscles, and have a heart-case stuffed with paper. Our eyes are of glass, and our vital pulses are clockwork. We are mere machines, in fact; darting in and out of our places of business, and walking about the streets. The show is ghastly, and the culture of the present day, astonishing as a fact, and profoundly interesting as a study, is the culture of an age which is harassed by perplexity, and haunted with a sense of its own ignorance; an age which knows that it ought to have higher interests, but cannot decide where those higher interests are to be found. We are as the *automata* of some commercial Magus—a Somebody or other who cries “Peace! when there is no peace;” some apostle of expediency, with a name or without a name; some aristocratic or successful spouter, with a mouth of wood, and perhaps a dry nut full of dust for a political heart. We are scarcely freemen.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Among other things said by William Walter Phelps, at a meeting of American physicians and surgeons, the following will bear reading, as strongly applicable to the England of to-day:—“We are a nation without contentment, without rest, without happiness. In a feverish race we pass from the

We are prepared to yield up our opinions to the first newspaper that asks them of us—as Sancho was to surrender himself to the first champion. And these great newspapers—or that which we elect as our chosen one—having grown as the rug to every man's hearth, we believe in it, and yearn towards it, count it as one of our household gods, decline into its arms as our political Dalilah, and permit our mind to take its tone from its felicitations; nay, from the reveries that linger about it, and are as a sort of atmosphere that we carry about us, giving us, in the newspaper breath, a sort of second life.

Nor is this all. Every man so feels the money pressure upon him, that he cannot convert himself into a politician.

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cradle to the grave—successful men to whom life is a failure. Our boys leave the university when English boys leave their school. Our merchants leave their trade, retiring to some more dignified or honourable work, as they believe it, at an age when the German merchant first feels the master of his craft. We are always anticipating the future, forcing the task of a whole life into part. Worse, we are not content with doing a year's work in a month in our calling, but we must do enough in all other callings to win distinction there. In other lands it is enough to be a lawyer, physician, clergyman, merchant. Here we are nobodies unless we fill the sphere of all human occupations. One must be a statesman and know political science as if already in office. He must be an orator, and ready to persuade and instruct; a wit to shine at a dinner-table, a *littérateur*, a critic! There is too much human nature in man for this to mean anything except a discontented life and a premature death. And the remedy? Correct public opinion. We must honour the man who faithfully does his task, whatever it is. Not the task, but the faithfulness with which it is done, must be the measure of the honour. The men will be content with their father's trade. This will give us that family association which is a sure pledge of good conduct and patriotic-love. This will give us too that traditional aptitude which alone gives great mechanical excellence. It will not be a bad time for American manufacturers when we find stamped on their goods what Mr. Griffs finds on Japanese bronzes: 'Done by the ninth bronzer in this family.' Then men will keep the occupation of their youth for life, and, having leisure, will build the foundations broad enough to withstand bankruptcy. Then men will seek excellence in their callings. Then men will alternate labour with rest, and obey the demand of nature."

This, his extremity, becomes the newspaper's opportunity; and your favourite "organ" readily avails itself of it by pouring its own views into the minds of its readers as into cups—a grisly Ganymede! Each man's daily newspaper is the glass in which he, the dresser for the day, trims his beard in the morning. From his commercial dependence, in such innumerable instances, a man cannot afford to have an independent opinion in England. If he makes his private opinions known, he is rendered instantaneously responsible for them. Better have no opinions. Let your opinions coincide with those of the people who are likely to be of use to you. So it happens that we rarely hear any independent view of things expressed. And of a political system whose utilities, every moment of our lives convinces us, lie so remote, we can feel little care. What are Lords and Commons to us? Our "Lords" are our landlords, and our "Commons" are the means by which we earn our bread.

We must live. Our small corner-fight in the great battle of life is to be found in our shop, our warehouse, or our office. We suppose that, somehow, public affairs will be carried on. We imagine that if a man is knocked down in the street, somebody will be taken up for it. There is that great public functionary, the policeman, to see to all this. We look out upon the world, and the first thing we find is that fine feelings are Quixotic, that they stand dreadfully in the way of a man's advance; that, if you would secure a front place in the procession, indeed, to retain almost any place at all, you must not stop by the way to pity those unfortunate passengers that sit or lie groaning with their hurts on their foreheads. Every morning that we open our eyes we see that the world is intent upon one object only, that of money-getting. We

cannot see why *we* should form the exception, and make a sacrifice of ourselves, when we are pretty well assured that, for our care of the public interest, we shall only perhaps get kicks; and that our serving our country—even if it be not self-conceit that induces us to it—will never be repaid, or even acknowledged. And it is from all these selfish, naturally selfish, reasons that we have no public spirit. We never shall have any public spirit while we remain as we are.

Now, the newspapers which have such a large audience (the material they work upon), are well aware of these truths. They rely, in their knowledge of the springs of action, upon that general suspicion which we have one of another, that dreadful habit we all have of putting one hand in a man's pocket, while, with the other, we are shaking hands with another man on the other side of us—and in saying boldly things which it seems to say for all, the Press imposes a belief by the mere effect of reiteration, and for the want of somebody to contest its opinions. Most men are too timid, too lazy, or too busy, to think, and to speak as they think. Nobody dares speak outright. People are too politic even to admit any but that safe, general supposition which the newspapers, with their lesser or larger mouths, are endeavouring to administer as truth, and as the only truth, to everybody. Carefully guarding all the rivets of their armour by plausibility and their apparently excellent common sense, and protected by that oracular "We," and by our ignorance, as to whether it is a minister of state, a doctor of philosophy, or, in fact, WHO it is to whom we owe those leaders, who speaks with all this mighty assurance to us; these great newspapers—which have become as the life of our streets, nay, as a sort of second self, walking with us, talking

with us—win the race in really seeming to follow the runner.

But all this is bad; and beyond all question the time is come to try and excite some independent thought among people. It is manifestly time really to see if we cannot improve things; for the present ways of going on lead to much evil. Reader, if you are a thinker, think! If you have powers of reflection, turn your view inwards, and reflect. Let not seed, which ought to fertilize, fall on stony ground. Reader, take some of our certainly sensible advice to yourself! and do not any longer make a sort of good-natured permissive idolater in your own person. Take the liberty of criticising—for be assured that you are quite equal to it—some of these opinions which the good people of the newspapers would seek either to browbeat you into, or to insinuate. Cultivate the habit of thought; for it shall not altogether despoil you of the goods of this world; and do not accept, as to be taken for granted, all that a newspaper which is in everybody's hand chooses to indoctrinate. A fallacy is no less a fallacy because a trumpet should proclaim it, cannon speak it, or images nod it, any more than mistaken opinions can be made true because they are put forward in the leader columns of the great newspapers.

Old England is set right every day by the newspapers. The worst of it is, that these prints are so self-assured, so conceited, and so contemptuously imperturbable. We want clocks to tell us the true time, and as to the giant press-clock, we hear its bells, and shall listen to it with pleasure when it ceases to be so self-satisfied, so hypocritical; when it becomes a little enthusiastic for the obviously good and obviously right. But let us have the true time from these metropolitan clocks, or time-



telling newspapers. We will not be misled as to the real time of day. When we look for twelve o'clock, let us not have twenty-four o'clock given us! Let some one examine into the cause of these so exclusively-selfish mystifications. Let some determined clock-regulator, clock-curer, or clock-maker rummage out the ancient wheels of the fluent, time-striking press. And of these newspaper clocks that profess to be infallible in telling us the correct time, let us twist off the false hands if they point to wrong hours. At all events, we should make these great, largely circulating old time-tellers, period-registers, newspapers, or clocks—with big hands or little hands, with large numbers or small numbers—aware that the eye of the public is, in a state of very considerable anxiety, suspicion, and distrust, upon them. The truth is, that the very soul of the press is its anonymous character. It is a power mysterious, hidden, imagined only. *Hic et ubique*—it is here, it is there, it is nowhere. It is a voice coming from we know not whence, going we know not whither. It is a face with a veil over it. It may, under that all suggestive cover, be an angel, a devil, or a—*dummy*.

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## CHAPTER II.

THE GENERALLY FALSE, AFFECTED AND PRETENTIOUS  
LITERATURE OF THE PRESENT DAY.

WHAT is sarsenet? It is an old-fashioned term, now become obsolete or faded-out or disappeared, we believe, from all the linendrapers' establishments or *emporia* even in the most obscure and antiquated—for that line of business—streets in town. But this word denotes a thin silk—very light and submissively flimsy in the hand—vapoury; insubstantial; poor. It is a thin, shabby silk, only used, we are given to understand, for linings, or as an apology or makeshift for silk—silk robust, silk proper, silk real, “Gros-de-Naples,” “Foullade,” “Moire Antique,” “Lyons,” “Spitalfields,” whate'er it be. Now we apply this term “sarsenet” to that kind of poor Literature—milk-and-water, amateurish, empty—which prevails, and is much received, in these days of violent, yet insipid, taste. It is this sort of “sarsenet” Literature of which this affected and yet ambitious period—forcibly-feeble and feebly-forcible in intention and execution—is guilty, as bringing to the front rubbish, in large, even unendurable quantities. All this is the class of literature which we stigmatize as “sarsenet” Literature;<sup>1</sup> and we

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<sup>1</sup> The man is dead who said, “Let me make the songs of a country, and I care not who makes its laws.” Had he lived now, he would assuredly have thought we were in a bad way. There is, indeed, plenty of law. Over-legislation is gradually eating away those glorious charters to the key-note of which so many of our national songs were pitched. We are all in danger

consider it as very crude, halting, muddling and mischievous; and thereupon we desire to make some wholesome comment.

The evils of the modern time are very many, assuredly. But perhaps there is no one cause of discomposure more fretting than the general assumption that all people must be, and are, gifted, in a certain way, to teach others. Whence this conceit? Whence this vanity? Whence this assurance that you know so much more than others? Who gave you this power? Where did you get it? By what singular extraordinary personal right have you been so pushed up over the heads of the common crowd? Produce your credentials, sir. Produce your warranty, madame. And pray have mercy upon us, and let your proofs of a title to instruct us—even in any way to amuse us—be some other proofs than those you merely adduce from your

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of falling into gross hypocrisy and an unconscious state of immorality—the usual result of efforts to make mankind virtuous by Act of Parliament. And our songs? Is it best to say at once that we have none that take the place of those which were known as ballads; for if we acknowledge that there is anything to take their place, we should bow our heads in shame before the shop-window of almost every music-seller in London. There still remain—on the barrels of a few street organs—primitive tunes suggestive to some of us of words which, faulty rhythm notwithstanding, had a patriotic flash, or told at least a moving tale. But these have been superseded by versified vulgarity and indecency; “songs” destitute of even the poorest semblance of rhyme; while the lewd meaning is by no means concealed in a jargon of slang which is intended only to give verbal expression to the grin, the stare, and the gesture of the “Great Comique” for whom they are written; and who every evening drives in his brougham to three or four music-halls, where he repeats his degrading performance. These miserable jingles are furnished in any quantity, and being approved by a discerning populace, are published, with the extra attraction of a coloured portrait of the Comique himself, either “in character” or looking like a bibulous prize-fighter in a white tie. If we turn to the circulating libraries of the period, we find a state of things not altogether dissimilar; though there has lately been a slight diminution in the numbers of three-volume novels, intended only to run through a single small edition, to whet the appetites of languid readers for a new “sensation.” Is all this literature? We think it is a very poor form of literature indeed.

own sense of yourself; in other words, from out of the depths of your own vanity.

The press pours forth every season—aye, in season and out of season—books, books without end. And then the newspapers! The newspapers that every day assail our wearied eyes—sensation-dazed, telegram-bewildered—bristle, broaden with advertisements of books, and of publications. Why this torrent of talk? Why this quantity of literary production? Why this unceasing making and writing of books? Why this tirade of book-titles? Simple people in this worrying world of London, who work hard, endeavouring to pay their taxes, and are engaged in a desperate struggle (with no end of groaning and straining) to make both ends meet—when they won't meet—find it hard enough, and difficult enough, just to make themselves acquainted with public affairs in a hurried, disturbed sort of way, in the reading of a “leader” or two treating of a topic which is inordinately and mischievously occupying public attention. The necessitated things (great to the little, little to the great) which they have to do—their business of the hour (whatever it be), their avocations during the day, take up almost all the real time sensible people can earnestly give. Necessity compels this closeness; and there is no contradicting necessity. A few snatches (each of ten minutes' duration) from hard serious business may perhaps be obtained. The perusal of the newspaper supplies some bye-play, so to speak; but the reading of all these multitudinous books (things in covers) which in their number destroy the effect and utility of each other; who manages it? Who compasses the reading of these things? Why, the authors only of the books themselves, we suppose; for few else can; and few else care to read them.

What is worthy of publication? “*My* writing,” “and

*mine*," "and *mine*," "and *mine*"—we think we hear as the instant exclamation of a whole crowd of authors, besetting us everywhere; mostly amateur authors. Great in insufficiency! There is a visitation from house to house of women-authors too, now. The women-authors are more worrying and pertinacious; still shriller and annoying than the men—still more eager in the words they put in for themselves. Gentlemen all, my dear ladies, do not be so sure that any of you (either males or females) are wanted. Neither yourselves nor your originals can the world wish to pay any attention to. It is only the noise that causes the public to turn its head peevishly to you. Very little else than noise is in you, depend upon it. Very often there is not even that; very often not even the mark in the world, the poor denotement of which is noise. We feel nothing, except the desire to be free from your annoyance and bother; our dear, good, mistaken, conceited, well-meaning friends.

The audacity with which would-be authors rush into print is something alarming—when you have time to think about its terrors at all. A true author is a workman who served hard nights and bitter days with his tools. Every real author has groaned through a long and arduous apprenticeship. Wings that he can fly with, do not grow to a man naturally. Nor do shoes, in the ordinary commercial routine—shoes in which he can acceptably walk—arrive to a man of the pen by his merely wishing to boast such *chaussure* for his use. Your real author's "Dance," to which almost all history can be summoned as witness, is too commonly a miserable dance in fetters up to a certain cramped, if not palsied old age. All are not walkers that are talkers. All are certainly not goers that are runners. For there is sometimes a fallacious running backward and

forward which will not tend to advance one a single step in the right direction. The literary worker must move in leaden clogs, with a spike through the instep, before he can successfully dance—that is, dance gracefully and without awkwardness, and without the fear to the beholder that he is coming down disgracefully and making a fool of himself.

All sorts and conditions of men (and women)—every class, from cross old admirals and vain talkative generals, to dapper, young, conceited clerks (whose acquaintance would be much more intimate, one would suppose, with a cigar-end than with a pen) think that it is easy to write—to write well even. Old girls and young girls—women of all ages, kinds and conditions—imagine that the composition of a “work” (bad work, truly) is but very slightly more difficult than the writing of a letter—all stops or no stops, replete (and complete) with even too much grammar; that is, with the too conspicuous working-up or elaboration of the appearance of contentious and specious supposed grammar.

All this irritating outcome of continual blind mistake is very readily possible in the exaggerated self-conceit of this pretentious “sarsenet” empty age. It is supposed that when you have a pen in your hand, your ideas will, in the necessity of things, in some way flow to it; and that the pen will, in some undreamt-of fashion, almost write of itself. The wonder occurs to this shallow class of authors, that there should be so much fuss and talk about the writers of books. They themselves can write books. An amateur candlestick-maker will think himself equal with a Benvenuto Cellini to devise superb candelabra, and that he works upon the same level of art. What are these people—these true authors—and what have they done for the good of the world? The crudest theorist has his

theory. He has his leaf—although a dry one. Now of all alarming objects none bring a more wearying feeling to all of us, than the sight of a book in which you can take no interest; a book which you distrust, expecting nothing from its wit or its workmanship—because you divine that it has nothing in it; or too much (of dullness). Goldsmith used to say that there were very many books of which he could only summon courage to read the titles. He could guess all the rest, knowing what was in the whole book from the title. And there he stopped; because he wanted no more.

In these days of overbearing vanity, men who fail in every other pursuit, nay, in any adventurous walk of life, think that they can fall back upon the pen. All this presumption and absurd self-conceit comes out of a certain secret disdain of the real working wielders of the pen; as if writing were truly a last refuge—a deplorable *pis-aller* to which recourse is only to be had in case of worldly disappointment, and of general discomposure and failure in regard of the objects of your vanity altogether. Your ready man—your dreadfully clever man—conscious of himself, can pen verses by the score. They may be doggerel. In fact, we believe that so wretched is the public taste in all departments of “this-day” art, that the people, the reading public—a public to be called a “reading public” because it can’t *read*—actually prefers doggerel to good verse. And what if most of the modern accepted poetry be doggerel only, not to be endured by men (true men) or gods? Spangle up enough with fine words, surprise with a few gorgeous expletives, go up into the poetic “stores,” and the world, always in too much of a hurry either to recognise that which deserves acknowledgment, or to denounce that which ought to be protested against, the world, we

say, will be none the wiser. Haste in readers is followed by corresponding haste in passing over faults, as well as inattention in the seeing force where existent, or vitality, and value, and power. Attention (half already occupied) judges absurdly, because it judges ignorantly and carelessly; indeed, it judges not at all.

“Story, sir? I have none to tell, sir,” says Canning’s Knifegrinder. This is truly a mistake as regards that bore of all bores, the amateur author, or the would-be author, who has always stories to tell, and that generally the more abundantly, and with the heartier good-will and fervour when they are not wanted and *he* himself is not wanted. Who does not know the weariness that we feel of this man, this ignoramus, the amateur, or would-be ambitious author; and of this woman, the amateur, or would-be ambitious authoress; the latter of whom would approach the slopes of Parnassus with as little of the proper distrust of competency and respect, as if the margin of Helicon were capable of being converted into a sort of literary drying-ground. These people are resources—always ready. They never want ideas. Their in other words, their emptiness—constitute a void that is unfathomable. Its possibility of being filled is enormous.

The new “Knife Grinder” in art is always ready with his sharpening and polish, with his tone and colour, and unheard-of whims and affectations, and false and childish varnish to be applied to everything. This class of art-adventurers—highwaymen, pirates, and robbers in art—has improvement for all; has sly suggestiveness, finish, and brightness for everything. The Jack of all Trades of Literature is the confident author, working not with toil and difficulty, but working—as all the most incompetent suppose they do—with readiness, freshness, despatch,



and success; with ease as well as with effect. The amateur author, or the would-be author, is as that familiar, fussy functionary, the very pedlar with his pack. Let who will lack, he has abundance. He is equal to anything. He will promise anything. He will undertake anything. For undertaking is easy, but executing is difficult. Courage is praised; therefore the courage of the would-be author ought to be praised. Tale or history, essay, discourse, or sermon, he is ready with either, and with all. He will talk with assured familiarity, and profess to have within his range, power, and compass, compositions—to all purposes or to none—lively, grave, severe, technical historical, declamatory, sentimental, exciting, sensational, or dogmatic. He is equal to everything. Nothing daunts him. Confidence is his; wherewith he will attack anything—from windmills to whales. He has no end of “stories to tell”—good, bad, and indifferent; lost, stolen, or strayed; begged, borrowed, picked up—or pillaged.

Only show him the glint of a guinea—that is, the shimmer of a sovereign and a shilling, which two little items of amount constitute together that noble coin with the royal sound, that lordly thing of the fine old English George the Third sort of day—the old-fashioned guinea. Just talk to him of a sovereign<sup>1</sup>—truly royal object and royal idea—and he will rise to the glitter of the bait like a sharp, knowing fish out of the profoundest

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<sup>1</sup>“We are most of us under the impression that there are considerable advantages attaching to a residence in a highly-civilised country, and are wont to congratulate ourselves upon the fact that Great Britain answers fairly well to that description. And yet, when we look at the social life of the present day, and the difficulties which persons, even in what used to be termed good circumstances, labour under, in maintaining a position suited to their respective stations in life, we may begin to doubt whether those advantages are so great as we are apt to suppose them to be, and whether we

depth of water, and of weeds. Lure him with the hope of money—pay—some pay; and truly look for as response any amount of splendour, beauty, or power, as he asserts; and surely, as the possessor, he must be the best acquainted with his own stores. Which is it—good workmanlike “work” which he will execute, or that comes in the matter of nature to him to execute; or is it talk, or twaddle, or bunkum, or lies, or false “sensation” as differing from true effect or sensation, and mere mechanical manufacture in respect of matters, which to be good and genuine, do not admit of manufacture.

Alas! what desire these would-be authors of us? Can we take them at their own top-lofty and exaggerated appraisalment? Or must we exert a little of our own common-sense, and reject them as empty, as utterly unprofitable? Judged by their promises, we look for fine things to grow in their literary garden; but, when we examine, we do not find the product attaining even to the dignity of weeds.

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might not be much happier, and much freer, and spend much simpler and more enjoyable lives, in some other part of the world where we should be obliged to do without the greater part of them. What to the bulk of the population of these islands is their whole life but a constant struggle for existence? And when we say a struggle for existence, we do not merely mean a struggle to obtain a livelihood, the bare means of keeping body and soul together—though that, to be sure, is common enough and hard enough—but a struggle to maintain a position in the society where the accident of birth, the choice of a profession, or the mode in which they have been educated, has placed them. In a country such as England, where wealth rapidly accumulates in a few hands, and the supply of luxuries of all kinds is perpetually being stimulated by the demands of those to whom money is no object, a fashion of expensive living is set, which makes itself felt with ruinous effect through every degree of the social scale. The great prizes in trade and the professions generally fall to the lot of men who have sprung from the middle classes, and it is in apeing them that their former friends and associates, less pecuniarily fortunate, are led into expenses incommensurate with their incomes, even when the latter, as is often the case, are large enough to furnish them with all the comforts, if not with all the luxuries of life.

As their acquisitions and possessions are so great, according to their own showing, they will have recourse to the usual storehouse of incompetency. Out of this all-capacious bank or repository anything can come, as it does always come, somehow or other—the same literary puppets for “characters,” which are half-and-half characters—plausible only, unreal caricatures of something which is like life. We know this style of voluble work with which the fields of Literature are smoothed down, and, when this invasion is loud, dominant, and aggressive, the fields of Literature are devastated. We see administered to us the same sentiments, the same old contrivances and hackneyed literary tricks, the same specious second-hand speeches, the same hollow old bursts of admiration with no nature or true force in them, the same worn-out, used-up, grand words, the same dreadfully “poetic” passages, the same well-accustomed furniture and familiar fitting-up, the same everything. It is wonderful how the lack of imagination can produce everything of imagination. But if you will accept such product you may have it liberally—and really very, very many people will not see any difference; indeed, many will prefer the bad work to the good. It is the truth that “the knowledge of good and evil” in literature is mainly yet to come.

The capacity of men to produce is a deep well, from which anything may be drawn. Vanity, and the love of money will produce everything from out that well. In the mind of a literary pretender the capacity to fill will be just equal to the vacuity, which is saying much. “Copy” can be called up by a very slight process. It can be attracted or provoked into existence by the slightest inducement. The last idea to arrive to a

man is the persuasion of his own folly and unfitness—often of his own completest universal stupidity.

Are we all poets, historians, romancists, essayists? Are we all capable of this kind of thing? Or are there cleverer people, who are abler than we? Too much taste in those with whom we consort is ever tiresome; at least it is liable to be tiresome, because the moment that it becomes prominent, it passes into the region of affectation. Everything is good in moderation and by implication only. Where is the necessity that everybody should be clever? And in regard to the great majority—what on earth are we to do with the fools in the world? The scarcity of ability is the reason that ability is respected. Talent ceases to be a distinction when it is shared by everybody. Thus it may well be doubted whether, in these noisy, talkative, restless silly times, there is not greatly too much education. The happiness of human life consists in the capacity of being taught, not in the acquisition of knowledge; for out of the possession of knowledge all uncomfortableness will come, since standards and comparisons are set up in the mind; and thence come envy and bitterness, and worry and self-mischief—and ruin.

In the world of Literature, we have had so many *effects* that now no effect remains to be effected. After all this continual aim for effect, there is no effect. The world, in these dreadfully highly civilized times, has become so polished that everything, whether good or bad, seems to slide off it. We have nothing but sensations, and yet we are never aroused. As to sensations—what *is* a sensation in these exhausted 'days? Our capacity of being impressed, or improved, or delighted, or frightened, has become blunted. Where is our laughter gone? Where is our enjoyment gone? Where is the vividness of the eye to see? Where

is the ear that can be arrested to attention? The old music which once moved our souls into the height of feeling, or that melted, or fired, or lulled, or soothed, now soothes, indeed, into welcome sleep! We are soothed into the sleepiness, and into the sloth, of indifference. Heroism is no longer heroism. The great passages of life have been performed in vain. Barren is Dan; barren is Beersheba; and spiritless and flat is all the space between. The twinkle of those countless celestial eyes over us—the stars—has become drowsy. The once beautiful clouds in the daily skies are dull, melancholy, mechanical—eternal iteration, with all their sublime poetry eliminated out of them; the fairy forms seem a dull parade. We have been shown the inside of the clock of Nature. We know too much. We have been taught too much. Man has examined himself too closely. His wife is far too familiar to him for the maintenance of any vivid—which ought to be picturesque—interest in her. Man's children are too complete copies of his own stupid, uninteresting self come to re-enact "himself," and to try again for that at which he has himself failed—a better, or, at least, a more ideal and appetising youth.

Can we enjoy in these days, when the whole round world seems to have shrunk into a far smaller size, as the generations did when this globe was nobler, bigger, newer? Time himself—the Old Surveyor of Everything—has grown tired. There is such a mass of them, that he has grown crazy over his clocks. Can we enjoy as we once enjoyed? We have not the nerves for enjoyment. Can we even wonder, as we once wondered when we had impressionable souls? Can we admire as of yore we admired? On the contrary, in these listless, over-taught, over-stimulated, tired days, we respond with acquiescence only, but never with admiration. Aye, and this which follows is truly a much

more serious matter. For, spite of all the reiterated attempts of the realistic philosophers so to flatter him as to cause him to think that he has become so, man is not yet among the gods. To sum up with this section of our bill of complaint against this modern, careless, exhausted, totally unbelieving time: can we respect—aye, we will say it!—even the Eternal Providence that guides and governs all, as the Intelligent Ruler of All that originated all, as we did once respect, ere we had drunk so deeply of this bitter potion, this benumbing poison—brewed, doubtless, in the cauldrons of that “laudanum hell”—modern knowledge.

Truly we think that we cannot, in any one particular, do as we once did in these ways. For does it not actually seem as if there were some dull, or disintegrating blight, or ruin, got into every object that makes up, and goes to accumulate in, and to complete that which may be accepted as the *entourage*, or surrounding scene or life to every one of us? Are not all our sources of interest, spite of all our efforts at resistance and revivification, different and dull to that which we once felt them to be? If—to answer the puzzle—we ask of our friends whether this depressing effect which we discover in ourselves is as equally fixed in their own experience, tempting their natures—very different, sometimes, to our own—we shall find that, however unaccountable, such is in fact the case; becoming more inveterate and powerful every day. All objects of attention, or of pursuit, have become transformed. They are more material; more wearisome and real; less provocative of interest—not to speak of the sense of beauty in them, or of the movement of delight at them. Now all this is not particularly encouraging. On the con-

trary, it is very depressing to the right-minded; to the sensible.

Let us beware of those who have—to use the ordinary and the familiar manner of expressing it, in regard to such people—too much in them. Because the chances are that we shall certainly not be the better, but pretty considerably the worse for what—under the circumstances—may come to light from out of the depths (depths without *deepness*) of most of these very ready, and very confident people who have so much in them.

The truth is that we are solicited with far too many sensations to be comfortable, both in the streets and privately. We cannot live, now, because of that continual “sensation” sense of our life, to speak a paradox. We mean that a sensation of some kind has become almost a necessity every day for us. It is certainly not a proper or an advantageous state of public feeling, or of public healthfulness, that we should be always looking out for these surprises; because appetite “grows by what it feeds on,” and we are thus always wanting new startlers; feeling as if we had lost something, or missed something, if we do not have that novelty, or capping sensation, to occupy our attention. Such carried us through the day yesterday, and it will cause a blank in our mind if we do not have it (like a dram) to-day. A mischievous and unfortunate need (and sickness and sinking otherwise) is this craving for a stimulant every day—born out of restlessness, maintained with uncomfortableness and dissatisfaction, and requiring sensation more and more continually to carry us, and our impatience, over into the future. Thus each day is dull, and to-morrow will be duller than to-day; though we yearn towards it as in possibility better.

The great fact remains that we are all living too fast,

and too much in the future. Hoping, straining, striving, reaching out anxiously for some imagined good; which, even if we did acquire it, would perhaps turn into flat disappointment and vapour. This intolerance of the present—this languishing for something pleasant and startling in the time to come—is a glaring fault and an alarming characteristic of the modern time. We are badly taught by public teachers; because we are taught ignorantly and hastily. A mass of modern accepted literature has passed into weak and foolish banter, in which everything is quietly or outrageously put down or laughed at. The sentiments of the modern day have no true ring in them (like good money), in the majority of contemporaneous books. A great deal of modern literary work is mere cobbler's work, got up by accident, worked on and out clumsily, unequally; ambitiously, but weakly. This sort of literary slop-work will not suffice for your walking in the roads of life to any good purpose. It is bad work. It is scrubby work. It is idle, trumpery work. As the producers, so is the product. No books, no literature of this kind can benefit anybody. It is not real, workmanlike literary shoe-making or boot-making for the pleasant ways, or the rough ways, of life. The tools have been wielded by men who know not the use of them. Intruders and pretenders have aimed at that which they could not compass. The result is incompetency, and the consequences are dissatisfaction, disgust.

The writing of a novel is a very successful and a most effectual mode of betraying your incapacity. How blind is vanity! The insufficient author, being fully occupied with himself, acquiesces in the narrow range which, for want of the farther range, closes in around him. Self-distrust is a blessed gift. The characteristics of this class of would-be



writers are (too completely, alas! for a truer recognition of that which is really good) reflected in the literary work they proffer. After glancing at—for we cannot read—this sort of books, the feeling which comes over us, after closing and laying aside (with the sense of relief) any particular volume, is one of wonder at the innocent, unconscious sort of audacity with which all classes of men—from old generals and admirals, and conceited young subalterns, clerks, curates, and fledglings from every sort of silly nest, to fearful female instructors of the universal babyhood (otherwise governesses), rush into print with their crude ideas, and unformed imitation sallies. The preparation, the thought, the fitness for the task of coming before the world with anything reasonable which you have to say, is rarely thought of. The good fates are supposed to take care of all this. Is it not madness to conclude that this art and mystery of writing—the most difficult art and the deepest mystery in the world—is so very easy that anybody may attempt it? If a man fail in any other profession, is it not the height of assurance in him to suppose that he shall succeed in literature. An acute writer, noticing this absurd kind of competition, and the prodigious amount of personal vanity and self-reliance which fills every individual's mind, and proves the most offensive stumbling-block for those seeking common-sense in the world, makes the following true observations:—

Those who have lost their tricks by the failure of their good cards, think that, after all, they can try writing. They are told that they are clever. They *feel* that they are clever; and to succeed in anything, cleverness is only necessary to do things as well, indeed, possibly to do them better, than most of the professors of

the assumed "specialties," who perhaps possess only the "habit." This kind of person can pen verses by the yard. He confuses feelings, and the means of expressing those feelings. He is wantonly abundant, has to cleave his way through his ideas as through a wood. He can tell stories by the dozen. Why history is only "compilation," and he can lay "this" upon "the other," and this brick upon the other brick, by the help of mortar; and he can transcribe with instinctive judgment, or with the power of picking out that which will "do," from that which will not "do."

As for a leading article in a newspaper, anybody can do that! You have only to set down your good plain thoughts in plain words. Your grandmother can do it. Your grandmother never tried it, but she could do it. Your young son, freshest of the fresh, just come from a public school, where he has had his answer for everything, and who has been "coached up" for everything, and who has made his way—"made his way well, sir"—and has had pass through his hands any number of books, even he can do it. What are newspaper people? Everybody must have a beginning. It was Captain Basil Hall, we believe, who in a description of Abbotsford had occasion to refer to the wonderful fertility of Sir Walter Scott's pen. Scott, in fact, produced a great deal too much. He wrote his brains away, and exhausted himself in this mechanical-like, consuming, continual self-solicitation. The calculation was that he wrote about a sheet of sixteen pages of the Waverley novels every morning before eleven o'clock; and poor old Basil Hall entered into counter-calculations to show that there was nothing wonderful in this, since he himself "*wrote about as much as that of a forenoon.*" The truth of the matter is, that all authors write a great deal too much. Charles Dickens wrote himself into a decline (of his

powers), his later books are mere pale copies; his exaggeration is exaggerated; his caricature simply becomes overdone, feeble and laboured, with more and more of aim and thrust in it, and less of accomplishment and effect. Turner, among the painters, filled a whole world with egotistic, one-sided reiteration, until there became no end to his "figurings-forth," to the weariness and dreariness of the staring public, which cannot believe that this sort of pertinacity is unwelcome and distasteful in the face of art; and that it is a public distress. Too much of anything, even of the good, is worse than almost none of it. No good at all.

The absurd, self-conceited unconsciousness wherewith incapable people, aiming at the power of authorship, make comparison of themselves with artists of distinction, such as are first-rate authors; and compare their own produceable quantity of flimsy work with the judicious, finished product of able pens, provokes one's indignation. It is but an ordinary illustration of the spirit that pervades amateur or pretending authorship. Truly do "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," and that every day. No truer *dictum* was ever uttered than this. Men who could earn a tolerable living, were they to apply themselves alone to work of the mechanical kind for which nature intended them, prefer to starve as the hacks of literature, or to tire out and disgust their friends, failing a larger audience, by the eternal forcing of stupidities or crudities upon their attention. Every old fogey who has retired upon half-pay and his self-conceit, and whose time "hangs heavy on his hands;" every young lady whose friends—except those who are to "come in" for her money—are in terror concerning her health, and who keep her quiet on a sofa like a flower on a hot-bed—flies for amusement and

excitement to the pen; and hopes that the writing which seems so surpassingly clever to him or to her, will equally please the world outside. It is mere vanity—sheer vanity. That Literature should be treated thus, as a hackney steed grazing out upon the common of the world,—as a horse which anyone can mount, and a “mount” free to all comers—is monstrous. If they happen to have money in their pockets, and foolish friends or relations who believe in their “talents,” the coming forward into print, to the worry of the world and their own astonishment (at their failure), and the inducing of these friends or relations to pay solid money to living printers and publishers (great and artful at masked, false blazon and “sensational” advertising), to bring their works before the world under these cash-in-hand circumstances, is easy to every man, woman, and child. But what an ambition! Better to cover umbrellas and trim parasols, or to bind shoes or daub photographs, or to execute any other useful work. It is easy for every fool to find a hearer, if he seems to be tolerably well-off in the world, and for a perfect and unmistakable pump to boast a silver handle.

Literature has come to be regarded not as a serious business, worthy of the labour of a life, and demanding the most assiduous perseverance, God-given talents, and incessant training and improvement in the study of methods, ways, and fashions (if success is ever to arrive to the aspirant); but as a holiday-task, to be resumed or laid down at pleasure, and accessible to every vain man’s efforts, or to the fancies of every fool whose “head is a windmill, grinding chaff, with ears for sails.” Johnson says—“there seems to be a strange affectation in authors, of appearing to have done everything by chance.” There is nothing, indeed, that authors have

been so unwilling to confess to, as honest business labour about their work. Their productions are to be supposed to be the result of sudden inspiration or happy accident; of some leisure time, or some unavoidable compulsion, entreaty or necessity. The author is supposed to be equal to anything, and is imagined to patronise in some way or condescend to do his work. In the great bulk of modern Literature there is little appearance of real earnestness, of serious purpose, and of determined effort. If Literature be a profession, it ought to be a man's entire business. To succeed fully in Literature, a man's whole mind ought to be occupied in its exercise. Present writing seems too much the work of professed "amateurs"—not so much that of working authors as of people who incline to, and dally, and coquet with the kind of thing as reputable, and as an honourable sort of proof of the possession of talent which lifts you and distinguishes you from the mass.

In consequence of this looseness of ideas in regard to the real character of authorship as a thing of honour, of character, and of truth in regard to itself—as fit only for those who are fit for it—we have such spectacles as that of a very successful general, second only historically to such men as Wellington and Marlborough, who, some years ago, came before the public as an author; when it was quite unnecessary and uncalled for (nay obtrusive) that he should do so. This distinguished man should have been contented to remain a great soldier. He ought not to have invaded the realms of Literature, for this was presumption. His egotism must have been extreme. He loses his appointment from the idea that he was neglected, and not rated at his proper value—a very common case. He becomes in his old age a

candidate for literary honours of the first rank ; the attainment of which was impossible to him. And his brother, the well-known historian, who really boasted proper workmanlike powers with his pen, made the great mistake of inviting an invidious comparison between the amateur author—unskilled and unproven—and the most accomplished and versatile of contemporary novelists, even showing an evident inclination to prefer the former. Who could believe so much of perverse blindness? And yet none of this mischievous and childish obliquity was pointed out by the press at the time, with the exception of the gentle recall of one newspaper to a little common sense. Sir Charles Napier proved himself to be a very able general. But it would indeed have been well if he had remembered, and had valued at its proper cogency, the oft forgotten proverb, recommending the shoemaker not to go beyond his last, or to dare beyond his possibilities.

In fine, we believe neither in amateur generalship or captainship, amateur authorship, or indeed, amateur anything. If a man is to produce one thing, two things, or any number of things (the fewer the better) that are truly valuable, and entitled to real admiration, he must walk the right path and encounter his fair share of sharp thorns. He cannot expect to excel, and to tread only past and through the flowers, finding no snake amongst them, no pitfalls, spring guns or mantraps. "Nothing" comes of "nothing." Nothing is good that there has not been a good price paid for. In regard to art and to literature, it is assuredly the groans and the tears which are to win us the way to true deserved success. Literature is very exacting. It will have no compromises. Its rewards are only to be legitimately gained by the love, the devotion and the labour—and the crosses and the losses—of a life.

Even at the cost of a "living death" into the "life." Who will pronounce for literary success to be gained on these terms? No one!

In our opinion, to write so as to produce the true sympathetic effect in a reader's mind and to show him that you are in earnest, and that you are not merely writing *at* the sentiment, and *at* the feeling, but *in* it, and *with* it; it is necessary that you must have suffered—aye, and suffered deeply. You must have been in despair at the want of friends, at the want of money, at the want of everything. At the time of suffering, there is actual pain in a writer's mind which has a benumbing and confusing effect upon his capacity. High sensibility invariably accompanies high powers. There is such an immediate response to the impressions of outside things, that the vibration outwards from them to the apprehensive soul is directly taken up and continued and absorbed, as fluent, into the recognition and the feeling of it. Thus the sympathetic authors, whose efforts we acknowledge in the exclamation, "Dear me, how true!" are such as poor Oliver Goldsmith, when relieved for a little time from a cruel wave of an ocean of despondency, distress, perplexity as to the most corroding trial of an author's worried life—the actual not the moral "screw" of the want of money.

We do not believe in the work of "authors with money," still less in the productions of *rich* authors. Mammon is a makeshift in matters of the intellect. He can do nothing. He is a clog, a log, a weight, a drag—he spoils everything. How can the man possessed of money write about trials which he never experienced, or concerning feelings which he never felt? The man well-off in the world can know nothing of the checks and frowns of authority; the sneers of those who survey the struggling

and the poor, and who count the number of their buttons, and mercilessly descry and point out their deficiencies. The innocent shifts of the respectable poor to hide their poverty are pitiable, but, at the same time, the most beautiful to contemplate. But the well-to-do will not spare the ill-to-do. The world bargains for you to be presentable according to its ideas.

Mammon cannot feel aught of the sentimental and true purposes of his cheerless gold; which can choke, but cannot nourish. Gold, money, fine things of this world—fine houses, fine furniture, surpassing equipages—may dazzle our understandings, may overawe us and compel us to lower our eyes. Prosperity and grand things may extinguish our sight, and replace nature with something other than nature. But fine living, and soft-reclining, and pleasant things cannot help us in our *tragedy*, if we want to express tragedy. Money is so blank, so heavy, so ponderously irresponsive—it hath so little of good in it, or aught holier, and safer, and truer than the shams, and the shames of this wretched, insupportable world—that it hath nought for the soul. Hungering as we are for the air of heaven, it can give us but the thick smoke of the furnaces. It can cover the tables with delicacies ransacked from all corners of the earth, but it cannot give the appetite to enjoy them which is granted to the rustic of the fields, but is denied to the Lucullus of the palaces.<sup>1</sup> What is this

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<sup>1</sup> Gold is the King and Idol of the world. The dusky and dirty Egyptians never worshipped their "Golden Calf" with half the devotion which the present generation bestows upon its golden Ass. A rich fool is more honoured than a poor sage, be he poet, philosopher, or priest. Gold means wealth, and wealth means everything the world can give in the way of comforts, luxuries, and honours. And yet gold cannot buy happiness, nor health, nor bribe the "stern cold messenger" who knocks at the door of the palace as of the cottage. But considering the power that gold gives to its possessor—



nature which does not rest upon nature, and yet must be supported by natural means? The finest thoughts in the world cannot maintain you. Thought wherewith we are dowered is often as the cargo which is to sink the ship. The more you try for heaven, the less are you likely to achieve consolatory and comfortable things in this world. If real things are so barren of good in the matter of the intellect, solidity and money have but little to do with the production and prosperity of works of the mind. Thus, there is small hope for riches, or for rich men, in Literature.

And now to sum up in the foregoing respects with a true conclusion—one which all the world's ingenuity

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the freedom to work or play, to come, or go, or stay when and where he will, the tastes and the appetites it enables him to gratify, we can hardly wonder at the universal love of it. Yet gold itself, being without any intrinsic value, can impart no virtue to him whom accident has made for a time its possessor. It never yet made a man a poet, a philosopher, or a gentleman. All really great men have been born poor. The lights of the world have risen from cabin and cottage, and best of all from the manger. Nor are the greatest benefactors of mankind to be found in the gilt-edged catalogue of the rich. Rich men are generally selfish, and rarely astonish the world by their munificence. In fact, it is acquisitiveness, cold-heartedness and selfishness which have made, and which seem to keep them rich.

The ship *Britannia*, which struck on the rocks off the coast of Brazil had on board a large consignment of Spanish dollars. In the hope of saving some of them, a number of barrels were brought on deck, but the vessel was sinking so fast that the only chance for life was in taking at once to the boats. The last boat was about to push off, when a midshipman rushed back to see if anyone was still on board. To his surprise, there sat a man on deck with a hatchet in his hand, with which he had broken open several of the casks, the contents of which he was now heaping up about him. "What are you doing?" shouted the youth. "Leap for your life! Don't you see the ship is going to pieces?" "The ship may," said the man; "I have lived a poor wretch all my life, but I am determined to die rich." Remonstrances were answered only by another flourish of the hatchet; and he was left to his fate. In a few minutes the ship was engulfed in the waves. We count such a sailor a madman; but he has too many imitators. Many men seem bent on dying rich at all hazards. Least of all risks do they count the chance of losing the *soul* in the struggle.

cannot set aside, invalidate, or contradict—we may be pretty certain of this great fact: Dives was never the author of “The Book of Books,” the Bible; it is Lazarus all over. And yet—in the face of all this wretched scrambling for money—we read the words, “Now *he* is comforted, and *thou* art tormented!” This promise of future reparation and consolation is the sole comfort which is left to the poor in this hard, cold, miserable world. To the poor! What are the poor? Shadows—shadows that even the sun—not to speak the miserable, naked truth too bitterly (which is grimly)—is ashamed of. For that shadow of the utterly overborne, attenuated, famished wretch is a reproach even to the glorious golden sun, which poureth not, was surely not intended ever to pour, his beams in vain. Give him the portly alderman, with his massy form—the Dives of the Day—something, indeed, to enlarge upon! But for Lazarus, and for Lazarus’s daughters—the dogs are ever for the one, spite of the porters and their whips at the gate of Plutus; while for Lazarus’s daughters in England—why there are the streets, even “stony-hearted Oxford Street,” for their *via dolorosa*!

## CHAPTER III.

LIFE ASSURANCE: SOME JUDICIOUS WARNINGS CONCERNING THE  
ABUSE OF IT.

WE do not wish to frighten you, dear reader, if you have a snug Life Assurance contracted for the benefit of your wife and family; and to keep up the proper payments upon which you are somewhat heavily taxed in your necessitated disbursements out of your income. Is your income small?—if so, we indeed pity you; yours is an unhappy common case. Is your income large? Is it expansive? In that case, also, we pity you. If you are a Life Assurance Director, Secretary, Actuary, or Official, do not be angry with us, and exclaim that we are malicious—envious—libellous—what not? We do not want to be reckoned as distinguished for anyone of these amiable characteristics. We shall take care to be on the right side. We shall express cautiously a great amount of truth; but we shall mention no names. We only wish to shake up into a more wakeful state those who are doing us the honour to pay us a little attention, and to excite them into a recognition of some quiet facts, in business,<sup>1</sup> which are ordinarily overlooked in the hurry of the world, and successfully put aside (free of the right to examine them) by those who are interested in having their prestidigitation and their sly operations pass without challenge. No offence is intended—

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix: Note (c).

we beg to *assure* you. Therefore, grumblers and dissentients, ye shall yourselves perhaps benefit by a more intimate knowledge' of the tendency of your own doings.

In the first place, it is not in the nature of things that the accumulated capital of some of these Life Assurance Companies could have grown so great, except to the disadvantage, in some sure but mysterious fashion, of the "insured." We are persuaded that if at the end of a long space—say years—the poorer class of insurers would calmly review their history, and strike a just balance between the presumed great good of these banks of advance and such like, and the solid money which the depositors have parted with to keep themselves thinking so, that they would find the advantage melt—aye, melt like snow against the sun. And this is presuming that all these grand associated funds, in which really there is very little association, and very circumscribed solid "funds," except among four or five persons, who, as a rule, grow by far too familiar, and live on too easy social terms, with each other for the advantage of anybody but themselves; we say this is taking for granted substantiality and solvency. We wish responsibility and soundness were more general. But in not a few instances we greatly doubt prevailing prosperous appearances; and we think that the system is dangerously, even fatally overdone, and absurdly forced in these days.

Stork, Stag, and Peacock, learned men in city affairs, and above all wise in the ins and outs, and the whys and wherefores of speculation, and of other people's concerns—great prevalent names as ye, yourselves, are within the cincture of gas-bound and brass-plated London—can you tell us who those Life Assurance authors are who write such glowing prospectuses? Who constitute this Lower Empire

of commercial essayists? Who are the magnates of that renowned Institute of Actuaries, of which we hear so much? From what celebrated library, or from what mythical musical storehouse, are compiled the flourishes of its "organ?" What is the Council of the Institute which is always sitting? Where is its charter—under what and whose great seals? We should be glad to have these questions answered for the benefit of the learned, if not of the public. Whence came so suddenly the world-spread classic acquirements of these Actuaries? What is an Actuary? An "act" we can understand—"acting" we can gather the meaning of as opposed to doing nothing—all the inflections of the verb "to act" we can readily take to our appreciative soul, and with some "actors"—we mean stage-actors—we have a very pleasant acquaintance. But we confess ourselves in the dark, and at a terrible loss, as regards the meaning of this new word, "Actuary." Is the science of figures one of the "humane" circle? Would Aristotle understand it? Are policies on the part of the offices, and "impolicies" on the part of the assured, subject matter of doubt, discussion, learned inquest and poring among the *savans*, like old *charta*, muniments, and *palimpsests*? Must we light our scholastic candles, assume our iron girdle, mount our triply-critical spectacles, nay, uncage our philosophical answering magic owl to comprehend these wonders? What Plato puzzles himself over the Assurance mysteries? Who are the first "whips" of this new *curriculum*? What academic shades have ripened into such amazing subtlety those "Previsions of Peck"—a distinguished "Assurance" author, we are told. What mean the number of letters which are placed after the names of some of these City men, dangling before the eye like the tail of a kite? We have searched, being

restless, inquisitive persons, doubting continually, for the register of these mysterious "lettered" gentlemen. But we have only been answered by the echoes to our own questions. The heartless irresponsible stone of the principal universities hath not gaped and let out its secret.

We had weakly supposed ourselves to be judges of learned claims; but we confess to being abroad (and not at home) in these matters. We stumble over renowned writers—so boasted of in city prospectuses at least—who have been hiding their talents, to the deprivation of a world, burying stores of erudition—money-making erudition, too, which is saying something for it—like self-denying heroes of Academe, behind addresses, balance-sheets, and dry Joint Stock Bank reports. We are delighted to find merit shading his modest candle and hiding away thus under a "board," if not under a bushel. We shall seek Socrates in future in the boudoir of a Life Assurance Office, and the honest man of Diogenes at a Railway Board. Will any person tell us why Boards of Directors, as they used to be called more modestly in former times, are now imperialised into Courts. Waddington, in the time of the "Railway Rage," was a Great Eastern Potentate who mounted his throne of "sleepers." Grant, the Gracious, boasted his palace at Kensington more recently. Let the old-fashioned kings look to it, or in this eager modern competition for crowns we shall soon have nought left of kings than their ermine muffs, gold walking-sticks, and plated coronals and crowns.

It would be truly a pity for all kinghood to die out of the world. We mean the genuine old-fashioned form of kinghood, which is, after all, the only true thing we have to depend upon in this world of modern upheaval and shabbiness. We tell the reader that with a heart of

stone—regular moral Catos on this behalf—we have put indignantly aside, like Cæsar the crown in the Capitol, the offer of fifty pounds for an essay (otherwise immeasurable prospectus or newspaper puff), which we were to write for one of these insurance offices. The reason and purpose of the temptation was this—that the jaded appetite of the public, spoiled by so many full-flavoured, but now stale, dishes of the prospectus order, should be tempted by a new, skilful, imaginative hand who knows how to manage tropes and figures, and to toss them about as so many opalesque bubbles of soapsuds out of a pretentious blowing-pipe. New pens are like new brooms—as these sweep, so the others write. The commercial Columbuses, anxious for their New World, were not blind to our merits. We decline to name the office which tempted us, like the devil with his bag of doubloons lacquered with sulphur. Curious individuals must by no means suppose that we are so lunatic as to betray confidences unnecessarily. We are discreet—

“And mark the line where sense and madness meet.”

Our morality has not become quite so ruinously sudden and thorough, nor so impetuously taken up as that we should run and voluntarily declare when public virtue was insulted in our instance. Thank Plutus we are cool; though we have beheld, unfortunately, much wickedness in our time! and are, therefore, not surprised at anything. We can endure untold-of things in the way of temptation, we think. We can support any mortification, short of a laugh at our own simplicity when we have displayed ourselves as too rigidly virtuous, in being fools to our own obvious interest. We profess not the least objection to a moral precipitation from the Tarpeian. We

only suggest that it should be managed by machinery, so that we strike the ground with as much gentleness as possible. The heroic is all very well in books; but it has never been found to pay in real life. Anything you please as a sacrifice, be it a cast from the Tower of Famine itself, for an intelligible principle; but in such latter constrained case we would stipulate for a padded cradle, in which gently to be tossed over.

With our Life Assurance Companies we have standing counsel and sitting counsel, mythic and anonymous actuaries and actual actuaries, horsed and unhorsed physicians, policies, premiums, and prize-agents, bonuses as well as companies with Elysian inducements, and every change bogus divisions of profits. We have advertisements rung upon attractions to "agents." Life Assurance, like flowers of spring, rises everywhere at the first golden breath of the vernal change. It is taken into "men's business and bosoms," as if to believe in it, with Bacon's philosophy, were the first duty of man. Hath Assurance, like tea and sugar, become a necessary of life? Is our object in living at all only to make a decent end in dying? The rage for Life Assurance has indubitably become as intense and general as if it was well understood that the Custos of Elysium, with his great keys, would only demand of an applicant for admission the sight of his policy of insurance: this as complete satisfaction regarding his behaviour in the lower world, and as a guarantee of his mindfulness of his duty amongst his fellows.

*Per Jovem!*—to make a classic exclamation. All these left-handed solicitations, and this persistent asking, are growing too vexatiously vehement. This parade of our interest for others is becoming too continuous and too



pertinacious for us to bear. Why were we sent here? We want to live. We do not want to be deprived of our life in order that others may live. It is not fair to play pitch-and-toss with us. It is not reasonable that all the "go"—if "go" there is to be—should be on our side. We do not want to be hurried out of a world, the stay in which we find to be pleasant, or rather, not altogether unpleasant, just because we have so many ties, and have assumed to ourselves, in our unguarded moments, so many responsibilities, that our decent stopping here, in regard to our obstruction of other people's pleasures and interests, is quite out of the question.

Surely we had some business here. At least, we thought so. But we are warned to clear-off in very many ways—intelligible enough, if we have any delicacy of perception. We are quite *de trop*—except to pay premiums. The very walls, the audaciously boasting advertisements in the daily papers, are our accusation. Accidental death, maiming and wounding, stare us in the face at every turning. It is the first, but not the only terrifying thing we see at the Railway Terminus. Railway Insurance upon your limbs and body is placarded on every wall, is hawked up and down every line, and besets you as the temptation to lay out your money in all directions. As if, seriously, there were not already enough about the whole gigantic monopoly of the railway system utterly to terrify, both in regard to our property and our lives—as if there were not in the world altogether more than sufficient to deter, to depress, or to alarm the very boldest heart.

Large brass plates, with every ingenious variation of undeniably advantageous catastrophe, from the Assurance point of view, were it but to happen to you in your own

precious, insured person, flame, like the sinister flashes of Hades, at every corner. They shine as a belt of stars, "where merchants most do congregate," around the great gold, solid throbbing heart of the city—we mean, the Bank of England. We shall not stop to inquire whose should be that surpassing order of Mammon-chivalry. We only wonder that, among other felicitous devices and picturesque trademarks—crests of the curse—that appropriate and startlingly successful anatomical anagram of the death's head and the *saltier* of bones has not, before this, been hit upon by some felicitously inventive and playful projector of these skeleton-traps, in which, as you stride about the streets, you can scarcely escape leaving your leg-bone.

Oh, thinking man! (But, reader, do you ever think? It is troublesome, we know, to think; but still it is better sometimes to do so.) Laughter does not last. We cannot always forget. But if you do reflect sometimes, oh, serious man! never let the want of a loan—bait for the small commercial deer—betray you to some of those particularly elegant Insurance Offices. The tendency of certain of these Assurance prospectuses would seem to be literally to make a luxury of removal of yourself. Quickly pass into Hades! Do this, perhaps, in behalf of a widow whose grief shall not be quite so inconsolable, though her black shall be beautiful, bearing in mind, as one must at the most serious of times, the handsome sum of two thousand (or ten thousand) pounds to which she shall succeed on due proof of the loss of that "dear man," her husband, and of her own executorship. Remember that fortune against which you have wagered (alas! that we should be compelled to use the word) your good, promising limbs, and so much of that personable bulk maintained with excellent beef and with

good wine, which make you so absurdly (and so laughably, in the eccentric philosophical sense) a healthy man. Oh, fond, indulgent, careful husband—too easily believing, it may be, because you have no time otherwise than to believe, absorbed in business as you praiseworthy are—for thee in our hearts we grieve. Let a man make sure that his wife, and his children, and his relations will trouble themselves upon his own personal account, before he pinches himself as in the iron boot of that yearly Life Assurance payment which his real, literal earnings will not afford, cannot afford; and thinking and contriving about which are as rasps and saws to him.

Now, we would ask, if the companies can afford to return insurers so much of their money (as they say) in the shape of bonuses, diminution of premiums, and other paying-back, how happens it that they cannot absolutely *reduce the premiums*—revise their whole tables? They could as easily do this, as by these sidewinds arrive in effect at the same compensation. But a part of the Assurance system—as the offices mainly assume it—would then be impaired. The truth is, the bonuses, &c., are used as an advertising medium, as a trick of trade, in fact. At present, on good *bonâ-fide* lives the premiums are much too high, and press with undue severity. They rise in proportion to the real necessity for insurance on the part of the insurer. The benefits of Life Assurance ought, properly speaking and reasonably speaking, to be more operative towards the poor man than towards the rich. But at present the principal advantage in all these severely commercial arrangements, is to the *high insurer*, whose money performs the office always of money—that of smoothing—indeed of saving.

Everyone is well aware of the usual motive to insurance

in these entirely speculative days. It is a ready means (or is supposed to be) of obtaining ready money. But with how heavy a drag! And to those not possessed of land, goods and chattels, or specialities upon which money-lenders will make advances, or with which those desirous of borrowing money can betake themselves with any confidence into the market, the Life Assurance Office is alluring as a substantive, quick method of securing that of which they are in want. Now how, in reality, stands the case in regard to the true benefit of that invention, Life Assurance? An insurer does not think of the succession of years, with their tale of recurring burthens, which he has to meet. He hopes for long life. And yet it is obviously against his interest to hope for long life. Delay in the receipt of his insurance simply means delay in the arrival of the good and pleasant thing. If he cannot in his own person enjoy the handling of the money payable on the falling-in of his life—for we need not urge that this, as nature is constituted (perhaps not exactly on the calculations of the life-office system), is not possible—why should he selfishly stand in the way of his natural survivors, and not readily clear away the impediment. It is indisputably a man's interest to disappear from the scene in favour of his successors so soon as he has effected his insurance. Delay in the coming-in for his inheritance — his insurance — clearly means postponement in the possession of his property.

I very much doubt whether we are not, all of us, either rascals or fools. I myself admit that I am, personally, an entity very greatly resembling the latter. I can recall such instances of stupidity in myself that, like Hamlet, I think it had been better that such a proven noodle to his own interests had never come into the world. It

may be, too, that I have only escaped being a rascal (an uncomfortable personality after all, if you consider it carefully) by chance, or by some one of those unintelligible "flukes" or accidents, which seem to lay the lines of life for us. If you are not born clever enough to become a rogue, it may be a blessing; but it is a blessing which, in your progress through life, you may have occasion not to be so enthusiastically thankful for.

I am scanty grateful, I fear. I look out into the world, and I see others so evidently comfortable and free from anxiety, with certainly no religious reason to account for it, that it makes me rebellious and angry. Why am I not comfortable, and free from anxiety? I do not know. Probably because I am not rascal enough and was a fool; had a bad education; and grew up too good. Very fit for heaven, perhaps; but greatly too good to succeed upon this earth. And I am upon this earth. Farther—I suppose I must live; honestly, if I can, but anyhow I must live. For the days of martyrdom, and the days of mistakes this way, though even in the instance of the holy ones of the Church, are clearly over; "telegraphed" out of the world by the electricity; jostled aside by the high-flying railway trains; and quizzed out of common consistency by the judicious newspapers, and by the comic periodicals, which laugh at everything and "put down" everything, of course. As to your Life Assurance, my dear friend—get out of the world (you obtuse, obstinately blind cumberer of it!) as quickly as you can. Hard, insensible man, are you at all aware that you stand in the way of your "wife and family?"

The nonsense talked by the Life Assurance Offices ought not to mislead you. Duty; easiness of conversion of

your policy (or your *impolicy*)—what are these words? “Springes to catch woodcocks.” Talk and tricks may bewilder you, my insured or insuring friend, but they cannot change the real central dominating facts of the case. These you cannot talk away, or think away. Now how does the case stand in sober, solemn, although we grant, grim truth, in relation to these insurances. A. is uninsured—he has a wife and family (blessed—or perhaps the reverse—in the fact), or he has no wife and family. A. desires to prevent himself from spending a certain annual sum which his sense of duty insists should be made safe and secure out of his hands, so as to aid towards a provision for his family against the proverbial rainy day. A. therefore betakes himself to some Insurance Office, in the same way that he would to any bank where his money could be kept safe for him, and guarded by some certain insurmountable difficulty in the withdrawal against his own necessities, which would otherwise prevail so as to impel its use. To go on—A. requires money for the extension of his business; for the purchasing of a business; to make purchases; to discharge liabilities; to pay indispensable debts. If the man owes money, or wants money, the good of the Assurance is already compromised. The “wine” of the Assurance, to use the language of Shakspeare’s figure, is already “drawn,” and like Macbeth’s ambition, “the mere lees are left alone to brag of.”

The good is gone; because the amount of money which the man’s Assurance will, as it were, *earn*, is anticipated already. Thus rich people, who need not insurance, should insure, because they can permit their fields of golden corn to grow. Then, as the too treacherously ready-to-hand means of raising money; a Life Assurance Policy is well

understood to become (when a live instrument), a something so merchantable and so marketable as, in fact, to constitute a sort of a bill-of-exchange, which you can take among the commercial people to discount. Is not the Policy like a bill or a note-of-hand, drawn, accepted, endorsed and re-endorsed, pledged and re-pledged—moving about hither and thither like a flying shuttlecock with a sovereign to steady it, or that strange thing in the jargon of the lawyers (odious fowlers)—bird or beast is it?—a *chose-in-action*. Flieth not your precious Policy into the commercial sky as your true merchantable paper, or adventurous “kite”?

My cheerful, rubicund, fellow business-man, intent upon *meum* (that’s mine) and *tuum* (that’s yours—and by the strong help of Plutus this *tuum* shall be as small as I can make it, exclaims the taker of your paper!)—is not the consideration of this Life Policy of yours oft-times a discount; its meaning, accommodation; and the realising day—on which the blessed rich thing ripens into its real sterling, undeniable, solid value—why is this not the day of your death when there really is a sum of money standing there to your credit, lacking, however, the fingers to extend to take it? A lamentable fact, this latter, of the dreadful final removal! But it is an occurrence to be noted in a ledger by survivors; to be cast up as if it were something; and as if *you* were nothing in the profit and loss column but an asset; certainly an asset, because you are now turned into money.

For it is beyond dispute that all the interests of the assuring parties who are concerned in any way in a Life Assurance—resting upon it for their benefit or consolation—concur, converge, combine and merge and meet in this single great fact—the falling-in of your life,

and this as soon as you can make it convenient—of course the sooner the better—because by so doing you save premiums. This is the climax and common-sense of the instrument itself, and it is surely to your own interest, also; because your interest is indubitably that of your wife and family. Oh, pray be not obdurate, my reasonable calculator—my most excellent man of the world and counter of benefits and chances—in seeing this evident fact otherwise, or in regarding it in any other way than its clear logical light.

The Life Assurance Offices hold mortgages upon the majority of their policies. As the offices are to be concluded somewhat keen in their own special round and avenues of business, they are not by any means likely to make a bad bargain. It is the interest of the companies—and their duty to shareholders, their duty commercially and as traders—to sell in the dearest market, and to buy (if they buy at all) in the cheapest. An old and bitter experience of these selfish money-grubbing Insurance Associations, and their sharp self-satisfied secretaries, abounding in pins and prospectuses is in our mind; and we hate the sight of their big books wherein mortality is mortgaged. We despise and hold in abhorrence and contempt all the things that are got up to astonish you in most business speculative offices. We look upon some of these fellows (not to be rude) as a sort of banking-house and plate-glass undertakers. We are plain men, rather satisfied with this world than otherwise; therefore we do not want to be quite so quickly finished-off for the benefit of our family. We love our wife—clearly we love our wife; but we confess that we do not care that she (being a young woman and somewhat noted for her attractions) should have the opportunity (a good one



we grant) of looking so gloriously well and tempting in black, on our account, to Mr. Smiles, our lawyer. Privately we determine that we would rather have Mr. Smiles, our lawyer, to talk to ourselves, in our own person, than admit the amiable man to confidential, feeling discourses with those we love. We do not want to bribe the tears of our son with the three thousand pounds which *will* obtrude on the other side of the Gate of the Cemetery when he comes out of it, spite of all his filial and heroic efforts. We do not want to put temptation in the way of anybody; we had rather be tempted ourselves. We are rather sulky and suspicious in these matters. If anybody is to be tempted, we feel in ourselves sufficient strength to sustain this (at least we will try), and to undergo the offer of the nice things.

We protest against, and feel impatient at, the Life Assurance bowing, compliant physicians. We feel unwell—in anticipation—at these salaried medical advisers, redolent of Assurance-forms, and of mutual dinner-giving—they who go decorously through the examination-drill with finger and thumb delicately placed—prying into Fate's secrets—upon the pulse of the newly-caught "Assured." Yes, we can understand that nod of recognition to the magnificent functionary—Director in diamonds—who at that moment dashes up to the brass and mahogany office-doors in his superb brougham with the astonishing horse, the plated harness, and the coachman himself; all running over, as it were, with "Assurance." We shall catch and pin into a corner, one by one, the smirking clerks, flourishing their papers and expressing £ s. d. in that scramble and scribble over victimised "draft." Nay, we intend, with a certain sort of vengeful glee, to wring the very guilt breast-

button off this—so frequently very ample—cloak of banking commercial pretension. We mean that stall-fed Janitor, the liveried porter—in many instances the honestest man of the whole establishment, seeing that his salary is the smallest, and for that reason that he has the least weight of the base lucre upon his conscience. That man surely is the nearer to heaven by the so many pounds *less* that he takes in this grubbing, grabbing world, where we are told the rich man has very little chance of heaven. But neither rich men, nor ordinary common-sense people, are disturbed much by this doubt.

The foregoing should furnish the reader with materials for serious reflection upon the dismal and dangerous subject of Life Assurance. Our exhortation also explains the risk, uselessness, and vexation of Life Assurance in bad hands, without the proper safeguards, caution and wisdom. We moreover advise and give you warning as to the taking care of your money—if you have money; and we put you, or would put you, on your guard as to running risks without knowing pretty well whither the sanguine and the hopeful—as we all are naturally—are led in their desire for defence, or advantage, or safety. In the idea that it is good sometimes for people to be told truth, we wish, in this satirical disquisition which we have undertaken, as the result of experience, to tell the truth. We are certain that, in this modern period, a vast amount of lying goes on, as that distrust and dismay prevail as to the solidity and stability of very many Life Assurance Offices, and of the majority of money securing institutions. The public—which is usually wildly confiding—has been shocked, and alarmed, and confounded by the reiterated instances of disaster among com-

mercial speculations; and people still remain frightened at the trouble and turmoil that prevailed largely some little while ago among the insured and the insuring.

It is undoubtedly a terrible look-out and a source of constant anxiety for all classes—fathers, husbands, brothers, sons; we are all one or other of these relations. Harassed by the fear that those for whose well-being we are anxious and answerable, and for whose benefit and advantage we toil and worry and strive day by day in such a world of thorns and of disquietude as this, may at some time or other (how sooner or how later we know not and dread to think about) spite of all our anxious exertions to the contrary, be exposed to risks and to troubles, and to a most uncomfortable pinch and pressure for money—driven into a corner from these reasons we naturally seek a harbour and refuge in ASSURANCE, in appropriating every year something out of our earnings or receipts, lesser or larger as they may happen to be, to lie by and accumulate hopefully as a fund or solid rest to draw upon, whenever the time comes that it shall be needed—which dreaded emergency (like all evils for ourselves) we place back as far as we can, like that dreadful day of our own death, about which we cannot think!

Life is hard: Life is severe: Life is cruel.<sup>1</sup> It is hurrying and worrying, and spurs and pricks and whips to all, or most of us. Let us—good, patient, honourable men, as we hope we are—strive to be wise in time. There is no need that we should be cheated, deluded. Money is precious, because it commands and obtains precious things. We cannot live without it.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix: Note (d).

We can obtain no comfort without it. We have no rest, no ease without it.

Let us not, however, be too facile in yielding to the paraded temptations of most of these money (not monied) associations. The commercial world has become wholly a vast advertising shop. It abounds in the most unmitigated shameless puffery. Every thing is represented almost as that which it is not. The time has become so greedy, so tyrannical, so crafty, so spiteful, so false, that it demands warnings from those qualified to give them. Poor, weak, half-confident warnings will not do. Temporising, compromising warnings will not do. We must be courageous and salient; bold to search; bold to point out; bold to proclaim; bold to denounce. The blunt-point of the Sword of Mercy wants sharpening in these foolishly idle, luxuriously indifferent, laughingly indulgent, silly, childish times, into the pitilessly piercing point of the Sword of Justice.

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## CHAPTER IV.

MODERN ADVERTISING.—ITS EMPTINESS.—ITS CHILDISHNESS.—  
ITS FALSENESS.—ITS MISCHIEFS.—ITS PROBABLE COLLAPSE IN  
THE FUTURE.

ADVERTISING? It is the life of modern business—  
the leaven which raises everything.

The world has grown into a large self-advertiser. It cannot be quiet. It cannot be contemplated by itself—*per se* and *in se*. The world is so restless that it has lost its dignity. Is nature—is humanity so tranquil and sedately satisfied and self-conscious in its own sense of self-confidence that it can forbear the self-assertive trumpeting? No, it has its resources for advertising in Natural Philosophy. Science advertises Nature, puffs Nature, flatters Nature into something which it certainly is not. Humanity cannot be satisfied with itself, but must have recourse to its general advertising in its “Opinions of the Press”—in its supposed startling discoveries about itself.

The eternal instinct of pushing, of blowing the trumpet—not to announce honourable circumstances, but to brag of oneself—was never so stirring as in these days. The pace at which noise and boast and talk is going is positively awful. What is to become of this poor unhappy globe, talked down in the immitigable deluge of twaddle and of unblushing boast? There was a time when that blessed thing, Mystery, covered a great part of this good old-fashioned globe, which belongs to us, we suppose, since we were born of it and move about upon it. But now, the electric telegraph, with its

innumerable nerve-wires, that traverse all the oceans and spin through the fabric of the continents—gossamers upon the hard surface of reluctant reality—are babblers that call from the east to the west, and from the north to the south, Agitate! agitate! agitate! Advertise! advertise! advertise! How easily are we beaten at this kind of thing! Bigness, bigness; repetition, repetition; whatever inane folly shall first enforce the call to look; whatever absurd reiteration of ‘Great A’ and ‘Bouncing B’ all down a column of a newspaper—whatever quirks and quilllets, or contrivances or unexpected twists shall astonish and bewilder as to what is to come next: all this Scaramouche or Clown-like kind of work is adopted by the gravest and most respectable people in their notifications and advertisements of their commercial advantages, whatever these may be, that they offer.

What thinking person does not resent this tomfoolery of Trade. Advertising in the newspapers, upon the walls, and in the common uses of speech, has become preposterous. The struggle now is for the sensation, at first sight, of as much “white space” (which of itself looks strange in the page of a newspaper) upon the face of the column of print as possible. All the world, in the advertising sense—that is, in the desire to let you know what it means—as it began with hieroglyphics, seems as if it were going to end with hieroglyphics. Where is common-sense in these matters? Many newspapers, in their rows of advertising columns, have become as mere picture-books. Advertisers have adopted various infant-like *ruses* for the purpose of striking attention, and of making the eyes open the wider. The appeal is simply to childishness and stupidity. Nothing is sensibly said, or moderately stated. All is boast and brag, Tom-Noddy tactics, donkey-dialect, ass-like alliteration.

The town is fast becoming all bills and paper;

paper, paper everywhere; sensation everywhere. We are flogged with follies, beaten with boast, scourged with schemes. This profuse and pitiless system of advertising, without which you can command no sort of success with the public, who will otherwise very naturally pass you altogether over—of course not knowing, nor being able to know, anything in regard of you unless notice of you is forced upon them—this all-embracing and pertinacious, nay, relentless exaggeration of the utilities of advertising, we repeat, has become monstrous, abnormal, ruinous. There is no competing against this advertising war, waged against you. You faint in the struggle with the wide publicity against you. Your small candle is outshone in this glare. Your thin pipe of a voice, quavering in your modest self-distrust, is overborne in the arrogant blowing of these intolerable trumpets. Brass must ever be blatant. The public is caught by the coat-skirt. All our interests, all the really inherent good things, are passed over to this miserable street-contention, to this wearisome babble of the newspaper advertising columns, to this power of the biggest money-box. Reiteration provokes talk. Talk arouses curiosity. Curiosity excites the wish to see. The wish to see creates demand. Demand of an article involves its sale. The sale brings the money. The money crowns the whole as success. Success is the realised joy. How success warms the heart and raises the spirits!

The system of advertising has become absurdly silly. All matters that can engage attention are handed, or jerked over, as it were, with a coolness and a confidence that is really the most impudent in the world, to the domain of paper and big letters; all the new style of letters. We are let down into perdition through the gaps of the alphabet. We are kicked, as it were, into

a moral mummy by the uplifted heels of the A's and the B's and the L's, or the salient or leaping letters which have large feet. Every ingenuity of false representation, every masquerade trick is had recourse to, to attract, to lure, or to enforce the glance of the public eye towards it. The gaze of the public must be fixed, though even for a moment. London streets are turned inside out. Architectural beauties or merits, if any such there be in our buildings or houses in the wilderness of streets in this our modern Babylon, are deposed from their original intention, and used as pegs, whereupon to hang advertising placards. Tom this, Dick the other, and Harry something else—all nobodies trying to puff themselves into somebodies; Lions Comiques, and barbarous Jacks and Jills, and Cosmopolitan Comicalities (at whom the vulgar laugh but the judicious grieve); all the rats and mice, and such small deer of the Music Halls, and of the Apollo and Euterpe booths nowadays called Theatres, licensed as establishments of art, and puffed in the newspapers by partial and incompetent self-dubbed critics for just the qualities which they do not possess; all the masquerade procession of public people, or of private people, doing their utmost to persuade themselves and the world that they are public people: all this never-ending succession of the tag-rag and bob-tail of public entertainers and public aspirants to entertain strut down our streets. Why should public-house, sporting haunts, and sporting characters, and sporting newspapers, jockeys and jokes, champagne and chaff, money-lending and money-borrowing, discounts and drink, Jews and jiggers and jugglers, and theatres and theatrical speculations, be so refluant in their sympathies, interchangeable in their aims, and companionable and



clubbable in their ways, wishes and wanderings—all the world over? But so it is. Mimes are proper for the masquerade side of life.

London is spoiled by all this brag and contention. Our great thoroughfares have become—in this sense of insanely grasping and seizing at publicity—as obtrusive, as overpowering, as wild and untameable, as vulgar as any of the streets of booths in Bartholomew Fair in the old time. It seems to be a rule now, in this money-grasping age, at whatever sacrifice of decency and of public taste, even almost defying the risk of public safety, whenever a new building is to be raised, or any new architectural *façade* contemplated in any part of London—of course, in the more public or choice positions the more immediate and eager is the rush to them—it would appear to be an understood thing, we say, to let out the whole front for the purpose of raising a hideous and cumbersome mask or screen, or timber curtain or hoarding, upon which to place gigantic sheets of paper, covered with every species of deformity and effrontery in the shape of the misrepresentation and exaggeration of public speculations and adventures, or commodities, or plays or shows, with all possible adjurements to “come and see.” Bigger and bigger have grown these monstrosities, until childishness and stupidity have passed into that which is irredeemably vulgar, mischievously distorted, impertinently overdone. A Polyphemus patch-work newspaper, a sort of vast ogre quilt of violent contrasted colours; a wilderness of ugly things and of deterrent rather than of attractive puffs, assail the wearied, sickened eyes at every turning, and at every gap or interruption to the passers on the pavements. No Chinese street of monsters offers such a

masquerading display of puzzles and bewilderments, from the westernmost end of the Strand to the site now dominated over by the inappeasable Dragon, the butt of the barrier, who warns off every right-thinking, truly tasteful person from the art-profaned precincts of the city—grinning with imbecility and horror.

But to our advertising, and to the mischiefs and stupidities so abundantly manifested in a great public avenue like the Strand, from the west to the east. Through it, from the morning to the night, and so to the morning again, pours the human tide. All is salient, all is eager, all is hurrying. Every shop, every place of business is compelled into a self-assertion which has become, year after year, the louder, the more peremptory. Is this *life* for the shopkeepers, not to speak of the crowds of assistants? And all the plea that can be offered for this terrible show of too-abundant competitors in industry—all this struggle for a little more or a little less custom—is the necessity for it, in order that these people may live at all. Surely, surely something must be egregiously wrong here,<sup>1</sup> so to misuse and pervert the

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<sup>1</sup>“The look of England is at this moment *abundantly ominous*, the question of capital and labour growing ever more anarchic, insoluble altogether by the notions hitherto applied to it—pretty sure to issue in petroleum one day, unless some other gospel than that of the ‘Dismal Science’ come to illuminate it. Two things are pretty sure to me. The first is that capital and labour never can or will agree together till they both first of all decide on doing their work faithfully throughout, and like men of conscience and honour, whose highest aim is to behave like faithful citizens of this universe, and obey the eternal commandments of Almighty God, who made them. The second thing is that a sadder object than even that of the bitterest strikes, or any conceivable strike, is the fact that—loosely speaking—we may say all England has decided that the profitablest way is to do its work ill, slurringly, swiftly, and mendaciously. What a contrast between now and say only a hundred years ago! At the latter date, or, still more conspicuously, for ages

natural and the consistent departments of exertion. All this scheming and contriving implies increasing effort. Custom must be forced somehow. All the goods are better in this particular shop than anywhere else.

In the old-fashioned time things were very different. The predecessors of all these worthy shop-proprietors—very early awake in the morning, very diligent in their business; men with account-books very neatly kept, and very honest and upright; these good people, who sought not to trip up everyone else in their efforts to stand themselves, could afford to doze in the afternoons sometimes, because the times were quiet, and it was not thought a disgrace to nod over their counters. All was not plate-glass and brass—then. Goods were goods;—now all the goods are little better than paper. You, my good friend, the modern trader, are not in your shop. You are in the newspaper. You are stuck-up—posted like a dangerous dummy—upon a hoarding, upon a wall, displayed to the public gaze at a street-corner; you are stretched upon a falling house, perhaps to bind up something with your paper muscles. You are baptised in ink and paste; you cling to a lamp-post; you are carted on a man's back, and, according to the money which you have to spend upon this kind of exhibition, you dangle and disport upon the backs of "sandwich-men," who carry you about, as Sindbad carried the Old Man of the Sea.

All this is mean and shabby, if it be nothing worse.

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before that, all England awoke to its work—to an invocation to the Eternal Maker to bless them in their day's labour, and help them to do it well. Now, all England—shopkeepers, workmen, all manner of competing labourers—awaken as if with an unspoken but heartfelt prayer to Beelzebub:—'Oh, help us, thou great Lord of Shoddy, Adulteration, and Malfeasance, to do our work with the maximum of slurriness, swiftmess, profit, and mendacity, for the Devil's sake. Amen.'—*Thomas Carlyle.*

This advertising rage grasps anything and everything. You are persecuted by it everywhere. You cannot move without having some advertisement thrust in your face. When will all this cease? Where will it stop? Serious complaint is of no use against this worse than Egyptian plague. Is anything seriously treated in these days? Life, and the issues, and the ends and the complexities, and the unknown but mysterious *object* of life—all these grave questions are met with banter—with crying-down in the wrong sense—with mad buffoonery. You are driven out of the field with clatter and puff. You are voted slow if you are sensible. The stage and modern literature, and the whole round and iteration of the comic periodicals, and the childish public taste which encourages this weak, and lax, and idle side of life, have an infinite amount of mischief to answer for in this general bringing-down and forcing-down.

It is but a melancholy look-out all over England just now. The great Showboard Advertising Contractors, who buy up all for space and screens—prodigious, ever-vaulting, ever-spreading—have got you, for a consideration. These issue daily their wooden showboard journals. They are logger-headed editors over street-hoardings. Put your hand in your money-bag, and you shall be plastered all over the world. You shall have your mustard and your vinegar, and your blacking posted upon the pyramids. You shall rout out Pharoah from his Temples, flood the world of hieroglyphics with fustian, carry the rubbish of civilization into the most secret places, manipulate Moscow, bring down into desecration, by the ignoble trumpeting of yourself and your shabby wares, even the sacred sites at Jerusalem. Nor is this all. Your trade jingle, your jangle of pots and pans, your restless, Cockney-like forcing

through advertisement, of all your commercial rattle-traps, shall invade the desert, penetrate Peru, traverse rocks, mountain-chains, and seas. Your twelve-shilling trousers shall astonish the cameleopards in South Africa, advertised from the backs of the blacks. All the trash of the modern manufactories, all the toys, in reality, out of the wearying world of over-production, shall fly broadcast—the fluff and seed of the new Masquerading Sower—the Mighty Sower in his piebald panoply—the Devil turned Commercial Impostor and Cheap-Jack. Truly a new thing for His High Mightiness of Mischiefs is it thus to shuffle his hand and utilise new cards (trade cards) instead of his ancient and grander plans. But meaner tricks prevail with this contemporaneous trumpery generation. A dignified devil properly should deal with serious evils and mischief. Not so now—at least in the more extended way. Poor things, and small things, and contemptible things, and pretences, and shams shall take the wings of the wind, and possess themselves of all places, the high and the low.

As to Art, what has become of Art in this boasting, advertising age? Pass along the Strand, glance at the theatres. What do you see? All the best of the things exhibited in the theatres are like the shows of the fair in the old time, displayed outside. Some satin or silk with gold letters and embroidered ornaments (the work of the property man), bearing the name of the sensation piece—whatever it be—perhaps flourished in your face as to be repeated for the 200th time—a matter, in the real interests of the drama, rather to be deplored than exulted in: some of these gaudy flags and banners flaunt outside. Then the photographs! All the ladies—all the gentlemen; the former looking ugly, with distorted or misshapen

figures—the tricks with the lens which nature plays off to caricature in the photograph, whatever may be the endeavoured excellence in the manipulation; the gentlemen posed stiffly, endeavouring to look as near to the character as possible, but suggesting the mere make-up, unnatural, ungraceful, detailing the *costume*, but realising little, if anything else. The theatres, large and small, are notorious for this kind of puff, and the puff wholesale, as evinced in their advertising. We groan at the greatness of their popularity. It is absolutely a favour to let you have a seat at all, at any price, to witness one of their wonderful representations. Is it fact, or a monstrous lie, that we must book our places *two months* before the day—that we must, with great groaning and travail, seize and force the opportunity to see Mr. —, and Miss —, and Mrs. —, and Madame —, and quiver and thrill through every fibre of our befooled and besotted bodies with admiration and transport at these actors and actresses, and at the chairs and tables?

We have tried in vain to persuade ourselves that all this tomfoolery is real genuine sense, worthy of serious British people not quite parted with their wits. Assumption and attitudinising are the characteristics of theatres. They cannot rest upon their solid, unsupported claims. The outsides are covered with paper, adopting every device for forcing attention to the fact simply that the theatre is there, and that the last sensation (of course the most complete) is there to be seen. What an undue amplification of the actors and the actresses—the little and the big, the nobodies and the somebodies, all expanded into a ridiculous importance. All this assumption is the merest moonshine. It is unfounded boasting, taking its stand upon the fact that it is not worth anyone's while to contradict it. The

managers of these theatres trade upon lack of wit and scantness of judgment, and avail themselves of the haste and frivolity of the vast majority. We stop for a moment in the crowd to read the playbills. What do we see? The 100th representation of such and such a silly absurdity—an empty gasconade—a Tom and Jerry burlesque; all its wit—that which is technically called “gag;” all its fun—slang; all its merriment—vulgarity; all its beauty—legs and arms (mainly the former, and of course those of females); all its piquancy derivable from pertness and obscenity; all its glitter from the dresses; all its supposed or accepted correctness of delineation of time and place, and all its heightening by art-effect, realised by the efforts of the man of the chairs and tables and the person of the paints, the glue, the tinfoil; all its starts and surprises owing to the artist of the traps. Angles, triangles, red and blue letters disposed crosswise, thwartships, up and down, in and out; paper pictures, the bigger the better, of some of the most exciting incidents—all the most childish and vulgar tricks to strike the public eye, to stimulate the public desire to see, and to incite the public desire to come—all these contrivances of trade are profusely evident in the outside of all our theatres now-a-days. Such contortions of deluding, as we may call them, if attempted five-and-twenty years ago would have only aroused public contempt, and caused indignation. And then the photograph!—the most obedient servant, as far as actors and actresses are concerned. Combined with artful paragraphs in the newspapers, caricatures of pictures, and bold, blatant advertisements, this has done more to fill the theatres, and to draw the silly crowd, than any means or medium else.

We cannot go into the streets without having our eyes

offended by hideous pictures, repeating perhaps a monstrous nose and a pair of spectacles, with a call to buy; spectacles (a gross of "green" ones, we suppose) for your whole generation, from grandfather to newly-born babe—all spectacles, spectacles half-way down a street, perhaps. What are these miserable calls upon us? Why—oh, why—should our inmost souls be so moved to find that Messrs. Brow-beat and Bother, of such-and-such Buildings, or such-and-such a "House," find their innumerable and invaluable specialties in Costumes and "Comfortings" so much appreciated, that the resources of their establishment are overborne. What are these superlative Morning Suits, Noon Suits, Night Suits? What are these Clipper Clerkenwells, these Unutterable Ulsters, that they should occupy such an unapproachable position? What are these Camberwell Pills and Dragon-Digesters, wherewith everybody is advised to turn themselves inside out? Surely I can live without having these horrible things thrust down my throat; and, moreover, must I pay for them?

I am demolished—used-up by all this host of advertisers. What are they eager for?—my money or my life; probably for both. Surely my wishes ought to be consulted and my consent insisted upon by my supposed protectors, the British House of Commons, if, according to these insatiable advertisers, I am to be rubbed and scrubbed, and re-hung with cloth, and strung about with this, that, and the other; and re-furnished from chimney-pot to cellar with cowls and vanes; and provided so heavily with Cuban cigarettes, real turtle, job and post horses (extra charge after midnight); and to be rebuilt and decorated, brick-laid, glazed, painted, and gilt, and furnished with a glass-house and liver-padded ribs and loins, legs and shins being added. What, too, have I done



to be sown with "Seeds of the highest quality for all Gardening and Agricultural purposes," to be fitted with fashionable curly *toupets*, and to be defended against my will with all the specimens of Colt's Double-action; why have forced upon me an assortment of Alpine boots, Diamond-Wax and Snuff-less Tallow-Mould candles, Aërated Mineral waters, Transparent and Opalescent soaps, Dressing and Travelling bags, Leading Articles by Eminent Writers, L.L. Whisky, Elastic stockings, and Brass and Wood Musical Instruments? Ah, vanity! vanity! Such are the follies of advertising. Such the mistaken fury in the running after it, the lying boasts concerning it, and the wild uses made of it.

I am driven out of the world by all this advertising. I am to be made too comfortable—such an innumerable crowd is interested in my welfare. Perhaps I am an ignorant, slothful ass not to run and avail myself of all these invitations to my pleasure, which are filling the papers and covering every upright in the streets. Of course it does not occur to these kind people that I have not the money to spend, even to do myself all this unheard-of good. If I were to go and order I should have to pay; or be taken in execution and shaken by the collar of my coat, to yield up the rascally sovereigns which procure everything. Ah, good people!—everything is to be had for money in London, and yet there is (to some, to very many, to the multitude, to the *majority*) no money in London, wherewith to have anything. "Put up—put up! it is a melancholy case," as the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, after the supposed decease of poor Juliet, says to the musicians.

Ah, there it is! We come now to the secret of all this boast and talk. Only provided that I have money enough

in my pocket to pay for these so boldly vaunted advertised matters—if I have only the cash to buy that which is to be sold—I may go rushing in the excess of my delight hither and thither, fluttering like the bee from flower to flower, sipping niceness, accumulating all the sweets, adding comfort to comfort, and advantage to advantage, and defence to defence, and consolation to consolation, bettering and bettering continually, until seriously I am PERFECTION. Is it—can it be true—that “Man wants but little here below, nor wan’s that little long?” According to the assurances and adjurements of the advertisers all this limitation is a mistake—all this moderation is mummery. These grovelling, easily satisfied views are a gross error—an inexcusable, blundering misinterpretation of the intentions of nature. Man, in the more rational advertising philosophy, wants everything, and wants that everything for as long as possible. In a state of civilised society man requires everything that he can get, and demands all this for ever and ever, if that “ever and ever” meant any more than a fashion of speaking—a sort of compromise with common sense.

Already there are signs that this vast system of advertising must give way, and it will be an especially excellent change when this cessation of puffery takes place. In this eagerness to outdo and to outbid each other, advertisers have so bettered upon the example, that every possible trick in advertising appears to have been explored and ventured, until novelty in this direction is hopeless, and ingenuity seems to be exhausted. Advertising was really serious at one time, and meant what was said. Now it does not mean what is said, but something else. Besides, and beyond all this, are the evils of the system which hands over to the advertiser a mere blank space in a

newspaper—white amidst the mass of print, and certain to strike the eye, simply because it is so strange to see it there. If not this, a wood-cut pictured object, or some sort of hieroglyphic or mere cunning device of arrangement or of puzzle, or snatch, as it were (hit or miss) at the glance of a reader, is had recourse to as the best means of extorting attention. At present a foolish repetition of some one catchword, in large letters, all down a column, with no sense or object except to create a mere din of sound or stroke to the eye, is supposed to do its work in its own clumsy way; and we suppose it does. But this method of advertising will be tried and tried until *the trick is stale*. All these evils of forced advertising are beginning to tell in the suspicions of the advertiser as unworthy and discreditable, besides being in the long run disadvantageous. In addition to this truth, the weight of the necessity of advertising and the expense of it is a gigantic trouble from which trade languishes to free itself. We foresee in the future, and we welcome in the public interest, the signs of a collapse in the gigantic sham, and of the throwing off of the insupportable *incubus* of the present monstrously false system of full-blown and overgrown advertising.

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## CHAPTER V.

OUR GOVERNING CLASSES.—JEWS—LAWYERS—PUBLICANS.

THE stupidity and madness of the time is evidenced in nothing so convincingly, nothing so overpoweringly, as the sense—when we have the quiet means to think—that we are all of us overworked. Overworked? We live for nothing but work. The day breaks to us for work. Why that sun, rising in all his grandeur? It is but as a mighty candle to permit us to array ourselves for our work. The sun achieves its noon to us only to show that we are in the middle of our work. The western sun flames his last to us as a reminder that to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow is to be to us as to-day; saying his good-bye daily with the prospect of the work again. All our days are full of heart-aching care, full of labour, full of thought about these wretched sovereigns or shillings. Was man ever intended for this miserable drudgery? We think truly not. What is the state of the people in this country at present? What are we but as a whole nation with fetters on our wrists? Have we contentment?—we have not. Have we rest?—no, we have sleep to be sure, but have we true rest? We have not. Are we happy?—the very idea of our being happy is preposterous. We have an occasional fit of enthusiasm or rebellious merriment or delirium that seems a *scintilla* of pleasure for a time, and that leads us on—makes us smile, makes us laugh. But happiness is not

made up of such fugitive impulse—urged into sparkling for a moment; quenched speedily. We rush, we hurry, we worry, we are forced along out of breath, tripping others up or being ourselves tripped-up; encountering innumerable moral kicks, if not real kicks—scoffs, snubs, proud surveyings of us by our “betters,” and puttings-down when we know that we are right.

In a feverish race, not knowing what we want or how to get what we want, we sweep swiftly from childhood to the shutting-up of the shutters of life, eating our meal in fear, and shaken maybe by the terrible dreams and by the apprehensions that haunt us nightly. We are successful men, perhaps: we do not know when to retire and leave the empty clamour. We have money in the bank, perhaps: we do not know how to enjoy it, or to leave it. We are possessed. We spend our lives trying for our rights in the law-courts, to find that we have ~~no~~ no right to be in the law-courts. We have accumulated that which requires us to make a will, having punished ourselves through life to leave it, by our will, to children who only acknowledge the benefit by getting rid of it as quickly and as stupidly as possible. Sometimes we realise a suspicion that we are perfect failures: we have lived no life—we are only—what? We are, spite of our gains, never satisfied, and remain all the time insatiate money-grubbers.

England is governed by three classes of men who have their own way in everything. And why do they have their own way in everything? The reason is because they possess the moving power, money. Without money we cannot do anything. With money we can do almost anything—physically. And in three cases out of four the moral follows the physical. What is the

direct interest of all of us? Why, it is the personal interest. And the personal interest—that is, the money interest of all of us—is bound-up, more or less, with or by one of three potent classes—in one form or other, either as active or representative, our assistant in making profit directly, or a help to us in some way or other. There is not an undertaking in which we engage where one or other of our three directing classes has not the leading hand, and the most influential say. These three classes are the Jews, who mostly have all the money in the country; the Lawyers, who are at the end of every piece of property in the United Kingdom; and the Publicans, who grow rich in supplying the means of stupifying the faculties of the nation—dulling its determination for, and its means of, resistance—and in charming with the never-failing charm of oblivion, or of forgetfulness (for the necessary time to tide over the pain), all the miseries and confusions and sufferings of the people—especially of the lower classes—whose wages were never found yet to build-up into comfortable independent sustainment for old age.

This mischievous wound in the side of the monarchy—this point of the rapacity and of the tyranny of the three selfish classes—the Jews, the Lawyers, and the Publicans—is beyond cavil, mystification or dispute. All these people—through the necessary following-out their natural objects—work for their own aggrandisement, and for others' spoliation. They live for self; they work for selfish gain; their own particular advantage lies in some other individual's ruin. At the end of every trade or business, or any commercial attempt, or any transaction in life, almost, either in the form of money-lender, mortgagee, godfather commercially, referee, or reference or moving personality,

is a Jew or some Jewish connection. The Jews are the masters of all the Exchanges of Europe. The Jews grasp the keys of the money-boxes all over the world, and money is the moving means all over the world. The influence of the Jews extends in some form or other over all classes, and is felt vitally from the peerage to the poorest. Then again, in regard to the Lawyer-tribe, whose numbers are legion. At the farthest extremity of good to you—at the nearest point of mischief<sup>1</sup>—is the Lawyer. His foot-steps are costs; his words are worry; his very comfortings lead to calamities. In the long run, he makes a very short run of you to destruction. In doing his daily business he moves for your gradual or your speedy pulling to pieces. The law, as exercised for your rights and in the advocacy of your rights, is now a superstition. But the greatest enemy of all to the public weal and the most laughable—although the most suffocating and throttling *incubus* for the British subject to take to his bosom and not to throw-off—is the Publican. Drink—drink—drink—intoxicants, continual stimulus to pass again into that world of drink wherein

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<sup>1</sup> The worst feature in these cases is the utter shamelessness of iniquity. We live, as Carlyle says, in “an universal patent treacle age,” when the worst vices of society are touched with a delicate hand, and the only unpardonable sin in the world is the sin of *earnestness*, when the Clubs and the Music-halls are allied in “a covenant with death,” and the moral leprosy of a large portion of the upper ten thousand is gloated over by the leering throng of dissipated Jingoos as they join in their vile chorus, “We all do it.” To use the language of Burke, “It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound;” and, instead, we have left, neither sensibility nor principle, neither honour nor chastity, and the stain is worn as if it were a glorious scar. Human weakness needs to be treated with patience and pity so long as it has that shame which is the proof test that it is not irreparably lost. But pity and patience are worse than wasted when vice is elevated into a fashion, and the foulest immorality becomes a gilded key to open the most guarded doors.

all uncomfortableness is evaporated, and the sharpness of pain muffled. What have the English people done that this greatest reproach to us by foreigners should be the justest in the world! The vice flourishes all over the land, and baffles the continual well-meant but inefficacious protests. And why? Because the deplorable, nay, the awfully ruinous gains from this traffic in slow poisons, produces such vast influx to the ministerial treasury, that governments cannot carry on without this crutch—supplied by the devil—to rest upon as a means to calm down and to stupify.

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## CHAPTER VI.

## THE DRAMA GENERALLY, AND THE THEATRES.

THE present state of the theatres, and of public entertainments, is deplorable. First of all as to the number of theatres. Their multiplication is a sign of the degeneracy of the time. Most of the new theatres that offer to the public the light French operas, extravaganzas, (weak and foolish, often vulgar) and musical absurdities, are decorated barns, shows in sugar-work, palaces of *papier maché*. Most of the new *show* theatres in London have been run-up like painted and gilt sheds in which to show toys or monsters. At the two great patent theatres (Drury Lane and Covent Garden) nothing has been attempted in the shape of true dramatic art. Shakspeare is unactable. Drama is constructed out of the sensations of the *Family Herald* and the *London Journal*. Mind is absent everywhere. Our written Drama has given place to the unwritten. It is very doubtful if a really good play of the true stamp would be acceptable to the miscellaneous, tasteless crowd that now throngs the theatres. The decline of the Drama, in proportion to the increased popularity of it, evidenced in the number of people who seek amusement and excitement at the play nightly, is most remarkable. No play, however bad, fails now. There is no power of disapproval. If there be opposition to the nonsense of the representation, or to the weakness and insufficiency of

the actors, all the theatre come on the stage and out hiss the dissentients.

Everything is praised the next day in all the journals. In the days when there was true dramatic art in England, and when dramatic criticism really existed, skilful and competent critics then declined to mingle continually, as now is their boast, almost their passion, with the people of the theatre. To abuse—even to speak truth of—your friends is very ungracious. Stage seductions of critics, and of the outside, possibly hostile, if honest, public, assume every possible form. Puff is paramount. There is no such a thing existent as true criticism. None is attempted. The public would not welcome truth even if it could judge of it. The reports of performances at all the theatres are replete with the sorriest flattery, full of laudation about nothing, and about nobodies. Dramatic criticism is forcible-feeble; dramatic reviews are, in windy flowing sentences, written, seemingly, only with the object of getting the better of space, time, and objection. There is a supposed necessity in the mind of the reviewer—who perhaps personally knows (here springs the mischief), or wishes to be imagined as knowing, all the personages paraded in costumes studiously manufactured for effect at any cost—that the production must be made to go, as it is called. The reviewer wishes to secure the smiles of all concerned, and is perfectly aware that the readers of the paper are so good-natured, and so readily impressed with anything that is confidently paraded, as to believe all that they encounter in print.

In former times, in the glorious periods that preceded this present empty and childish one, the stage was a stage on which real acting was seen, and real plays were

produced. These, in the former time, were attended with their legitimate expected effects. Shakspeare was possible. Great dramatists were possible. Poetry and passion were to be met with, not their imitations, or plausible crudities. People in the grand old days of the Drama did not flock to the theatre to wonder at the resources of the warehouses of the upholsterer, or the glaring contrivances of the scenic artist. Costumes—dress—the achievements of the *costumieres*, varying their tricks and surprises upon all the colours of the rainbow, revelling in spangles and gold and silver dots, knots, bosses and embroidery—to these alone ought to be rendered the glory of modern theatrical representations. Stage plays have become masquerades, not “moralities,” but immoralities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix: Note (e).

## CHAPTER VII.

## BEFORE AND BEHIND THE CURTAIN AT THE OPERA.

TRUTH must be drawn from reality. A true picture is that which has been brought with the fullest effect directly home to us; and such, we trust, this series of pictures will prove to be. There is nothing like having seen the original of anything, let imitation be never so closely copied. So now for a description of London life at the Opera—at the Opera as it was in its palmyest days, when the Opera was really the fashion. I am going to supply real ideas of how the stage theatrical, how the Opera stage, the Grand Opera stage looks in London; and to pass behind the scenes on a night when all is specially gay and populous, at the height of fashion, and of the season. Aye, the stage and the arena behind the lamps is alive and bustling. All here is animated. Here are groups of fascinating figures; here is life, strange, vigorous, restless almost weird, as it is certainly magic-seeming life; here are to be found the dreams of the actor and the actress-world, that world (very generally) unseen and unsuspected. This class of people, for the most part, lead an existence of dreams, tinsel paper and gilt paper delusions, floating shows, perhaps, in the Great Dream of All; which some philosophers, or old world sages, have declared Life—aye, our very intelligible Life itself—to be.

A complete survey of the enormous building known as Her Majesty's Theatre, or a thorough examination of the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, is not hastily or easily

made. Either one or the other of these great theatres is a repertory of surprises. The patient toil of many hours, aye, and the most keen and acute observation, is necessary to take in all the wonders of a great theatre. As a mere matter of explanation, like the present, the task is no light one. The Great Pyramid! Inspecting the Great Pyramid is monotonous and easily-compassed work in comparison. The traveller, with lamp and guide in a great theatre, must, on the very threshold, look closely to his feet, for he quits the domain of fair daylight, like Columbus on a dangerous voyage of discovery; and he tempts darkness and risks of no less supposed insidious and formidable character than await him in the realms of the Gnomes, or in the winding passages of a wild feudal castle, mighty in its brooding recesses, set off with steel and fenced with rusty iron grilles, and so forth. Then let Aladdin take his wonderful lamp, and, under the guidance of a fireman as the proper functionary, let the curious reader explore with us the strange scenes that a great metropolitan theatre presents.

So, with certain warnings, we will pilot the explorer. He dives down into hidden tremendous abysses, seemingly endless vaults, where gigantic waterpipes, of a certain dusky gloss, with metallic rings, lie wreathed and curled like snakes. Here he lights upon the nearer or remoter glitter of some tinselled scene, answering with instant and, as it were, sly faint glow to the coruscating inquisitive query of his slow-passing lantern; shining gems—emeralds, rubies, sapphires—suggest treasures which black serpents lie supinely guarding. Quitting this eternal “property” realm of darkness and of night, the discoverer mounts to the singular “barrel-loft,” and he therein gropes his way as amidst the pulleys and the vast complicated cordage of

some old line-of-battle ship. Through traps in the floor he looks down, as from a terraced Alp, upon a diminished world below. He must twist himself through a web of Sindbad enchantment of ropes, and pass in array a regular series of suspended beams, prodigious yards of a ship seemingly, extending through three lofty stories. All forms an apparent tangle, in comparison with which the ropes of the Flying Dutchman and his fluent hamper would cease to be a magic puzzle. The traveller must shudder along dizzy single-plank, rod-like bridges, at an awful height. He must attempt a line of yet more terrifying slenderness for his feet than a single long pine laid for a sort of a wire of a bridge betwixt giddy mountain-peaks, up there amidst clouds. He traces, indeed, something that suggests the spider-work architecture of a dream, with genii as the urging and the not-to-be-contradicted force. Painfully must he insert himself between scissor-like beams, at the risk of their sudden closing through him in some wild dream, with the imagined sharp cut of the gleaming glaives to make him cry "oh!" And he must struggle into recesses (in each an owl) which the unguided eye would never have discovered, but through which he is to find the only sidelong frightened outlet to escape. He must peer, with his handkerchief over his nose, like some neophyte Rasselas, into grim iron tanks like cauldrons for crocodiles, red-lighted at night from below; and he must essay the perspective of Egyptian-like, interminable store-rooms, choked with forgotten glories of the spectacles of bygone time.

Nor is this all; for, when at last wearied with constant but most devious locomotion in mid-air, or dodging, without wings, the nests of crows, he finds himself once more approaching daylight, he will be told,

and with truth, that he has seen a good deal, but that he has not yet penetrated one-half of the wonders of the theatre. And by the time that, after all his turnings and windings, he reaches the stage-door and descries the familiar, welcome, comfortable street again, he will feel that he does not understand one quarter of the vivifying business system which is at work in the busy bulk of the immense establishment—waking to its daily life, the effects of which we shall with so much pleasure witness at night when safe on the other side of the orchestra, and away from the frights that move to and fro, without anybody to hold them, on the stage behind that awful line of gaslights.

Never perhaps were there two such dissimilar worlds as those before and behind the scenes at a theatre. A single door—a step—makes all the difference. Wax-lights and white pocket-handkerchiefs, carpets and carriages, give place to dust and devils, to cobwebs, canvas and carpenters. You have left the realm of silks and perfumes, and are now in that of water jugs and pewter pots. Behind that silk-covered door, which might open into a ladies' boudoir, is a Clerkenwell or South Lambeth workshop, all in *dishabille*, paper caps and grimy hands, with interjected pink silk tights, long hair, cherub faces and respectability.<sup>1</sup> The change is sudden. You have no

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<sup>1</sup> "And respectability?"—Yes: in very numerous instances. Virtue in "tights"—virgins in "tights," side by side with Fallen Angels with faces of the very Tempter's, also in tights of another and of a more meretricious kind that are rather too tight for virtue to be too rashly concluded of them—"Fallen Angels?" Rightly looked at some of these seductive presences are of a sublime loveliness—with limbs to match—the pair a snare, and the face—ah, the face! Let us conclude—"that way madness lies."

Good friend, avoid temptation, and seek not this Garden of Hesperides, the stage of a great modern theatre, where nudity is offered for worship with half-guineas charged therefore by the priests. The red-fire of the playhouse may

middle world of preparation between a Mayfair drawing-room and a Mile End or Manchester factory.

That phrase, "behind the scenes," applied, indeed, as it can be, to all scenes of civilized life, and to all the double-sided personal history which men and women daily enact in the world, conveys much. It will never hint the strangeness and the dinginess of that half of a theatre behind the curtain. Even the initiated, though, as it were, to the manner born, do not altogether get over the difference. You sink suddenly in the transfer from the front part to the back part of a theatre two score degrees in your estimation of it. If seeing things on the wrong side be a pleasure, this is surely a pleasure. Suppose that a grand picture, in its great gold frame be suddenly turned, and that you are set to view the wood and the black ropy, ravelled canvas: such is the reverse of the medal of the theatre—all gold on the one side, all mould on the other. Narrow passages with smoky ceilings and walls of no colour in particular—which means of any colour and of all colours—stains, begrimings, rings of black surrounding the gas jets, blank doors on which paint is a tradition of the dark ages, loose rattling door-handles of green brass, convoluted gas pipes, and fractured plaster here and there disclosing the thin ribs of the sinewy, strained laths, bare floors,

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not be the most harmless fire for you, and the watchful Dragon of this Garden may not be your worst friend; nay, you may find your best friend in the person of this stage-door keeper (usually an honest, honourable man, so far as the world will permit him to be, with its golden bait), who will be very cross and send you away smartly if you attempt anything irritating, and whose suspicions you will have to allay with more than the usual sop; he may not be the spiteful enemy who warns you away, though you may think so at the time; still at the command of his superiors he must carefully guard his "Garden."



patched and knotty, obscure glass and fractured glass, and a general impression as of *an old house without any furniture in it*—these are the shows that a theatre presents on the other side of the curtain.

A stranger in the private part of a theatre is instantly marked-out for suspicious observation—"so shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,"—and he is as much out of place "behind the scenes," as a sailor in a sentry-box, or a tailor descried on a ship's yard, shears (dock-yard shears) in hand. The stranger in a theatre is in a new world. He is taken aback in his endeavours to make out the odd sort of place in which he finds himself. He feels that he ought to have no business in that queer place. You have all sorts of light; full light, half light, no light; daylight when you approach doors or descry windows; gaslight when you intertwine among passages or ascend barrack-like staircases, knocking your head against low ceilings, tapping for the expected natural invitation to enter at wrong doors; whence strange apparitions disclose a head, perhaps, when you have gone by and along the passage and the purpose is superseded; or when you are out of sight, perhaps—half a mile, as it were, off. You puzzle amongst odd nooks and unexpected corners, thinking that you have got into a nightmare of all sorts of buildings at once, erections of all kinds, from the Tower of Babel to Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle, or from a cobbler's stall serving for parlour, kitchen, and hall, to a broken-down barrack, or a bewildering Palace of Aladdin set about with thunder and lightning, and hen's (not roc's) eggs, giving hints also of catapults and Cloth Fair, gimcracks and Jews.

You move cautiously about this private part, or this

“behind the scenes” of a great theatre with much the same amount of distrust, and with much about the same curious, uncomfortable feeling as you would make turns in passages and through rooms, threading the complexities of a private lunatic asylum, where you are not sure incredible, nervously-disturbing surprises might not await you in the next turning or two. You doubt whether a maniac may not rush out who would refuse to understand “what o’clock” it was. Manners are equally strange in an asylum or in a theatre. From doors in the interior of either no-witted or too-much-witted people might rush out, saluting you with an enquiry after the health of your ‘grandmother,’ or applying a jocosse palliative poke in the ribs; and an instant after with an ultra-polite “I beg your pardon” for it. Avenues promise a way through them, but—

“Break it to the hope.”

You come upon dark steps which lead you up apparently only for the purpose of handing you down again. You discover to your astonishment that the entrance to rooms is through cupboards; and in opening a seeming stately dining-room door with gilt architrave, you suddenly come upon a fireless fireplace, or a foodless cupboard right in your face, offering you nothing but soot. All the designs of building seem inverted in this literal topsy-turvy or tipsy “house that Jack built.” The constructors appear madly to have left off every thing just at the promised moment of completion, and to have set upon something else exactly at the wrong end of it, or in the middle of the two ends of it. Crazy furniture and a *débris* of every thing which was once of use, but which is now but the wreck of upholstery, a Noah’s Ark of cabinet-makers’ botheration, is scattered about the

apartments. You stumble over chairs and tables in the most ridiculous of places; a satin sofa, perhaps, in a cellar, and a broom set up amidst priceless lace and all the Orders of knighthood.

As you walk about a theatre your observations in the day-time are, for the moment, only disturbed by the mumble of distant conversation; then loud laughs suddenly assail you from round corners; and you will occasionally encounter dim figures singing an intermittent snatch from some popular opera or music hall "catchy-catch," indulging in exaggerated flourishes. A shrill affected scream from a female voice startles you now and then in the dark, and you are struck with surprise and moved to indignant dismay at a rush-bottom chair placed upside down in a door-way, as if for a cherub to descend upon it the wrong way. A chivalric or knightly suggestion is possibly gained from the sight of a property banner spotted not, like Desdemona's handkerchief, with perennial "strawberries," but with hazy spangles, and standing upright in the angle of some passage that may lead from the Pyramids to Polly Hopkins's, you can scarcely decide which is the most likely, or from a "Pub" to Parliament.

But the Opera stage during the performance at night is the strangest and the most exciting spectacle. Look around and you will perceive the make-up of a most singular world in the liveliest action about you. Your back is to the dark curtain, which undulates in billows and "in blank" in the draught from the front of the house. It is as an enormous dusky sail, the summit of which is concealed far above in a groove for the dusk gods in theatrical grey clouds, through which the gas comets flash. Looking up you distinguish in the roof

a sort of misty mighty *sky of gas*, crossing which you discover monster beams of dark wood, extending to an unknown distance, like the flaming yards of a big ship. Suspended to ropes (lowered to different distances) are the rows of lights technically called the "gas battens." Pulleys creak, tackles are stretched in a web-like colossal confusion to the right and left, as if for the hanging of giants of a preposterous altitude. We have all the bustle, and all the complicated and cumbrous machinery of a factory at its busiest (out of the natural season of work) by torchlight. Huge iron windlasses, with their revolving wheels, click like so many capstans to the distant dull-sounding scrapes and the melodious muddle of the fiddles in the orchestra. Phantoms of landscapes and mad interiors ascend by invisible agency in a dusky red light, which looks like a cloud pulsating in its own sensible alternations of fog and flame from over the "Valley of a Hundred Fires." These are the "cloths" as they are called—cloths from not being cloth—which rise with a slow majestic motion to the revolutions of the "barrels." One behind the other, each disclosing itself flatly as the other withdraws from before it—up—up they go.

And on either hand, at the margin of the stage and among a crowd of people you discover the "wing ladders," a series of tall ladder-like frames, black with the gas and the dust of unnumbered—not ages but "seasons." Lengths of gas hose, brass connections, rows of bright starry lights, blue clouds and amber strips of water; columns of a cathedral for *Robert-le-Diable*, the stems of a pine forest for *Der Freischutz*, property statues with flat noses, with one staring and perhaps one blind-eye for *Zampa*; yawning traps opening in the floor with a *grind*, through which strange voices, asking orders, hoarsely issue;

stray rocks split and disconnected, dismembered to the contradiction of all geological propriety from their appropriate "group," a very kaleidoscope of a world, an *omnium gatherum* of heads and tails all this constitutes.

Carpenters in corduroy, grimy gasmen and people as if from out of the streets intermingle with gentlemen visitors, with their hats in their hands and in full evening dress.

As adjuncts to the crowd may be mentioned potboys and peers, and perhaps a lovely slim fairy, with a silver star in her forehead—a "model" of a woman, a wife, possibly good as gold—on the summit of Parnassus; nude as Diana, when caught sight of by that intruding, justly-antlered Actæon; with shapely limbs for mayhap the judgment of—which is it—Paris or London? Broad-faced burly gods are there, with a general red-ochrey, bamboozling effect; bandits sneak to the side with roseate foreheads, raven ringlets and unendurable eyes, as they wake up sharply to your modest wondering glance. Ruffians are there with spade-and-shovel hats, equal to any operative assassination with hearts hard as nether millstone, hearts which perhaps are soft as butter to the little baby in the cradle (or *out* of it) at home. Amongst other wonderful figures, behold a King, with a crown on his head, his proper title to regality, and with an amplitude of red window-curtain, as it seems, by way of drapery, about his stately shoulders. A goatherd (or goat—Pan—is it?) with luxuriant whiskers, blacker than coal, but with no goats. One or two "dressers" move through the crowd, a cracked teacup perhaps being in the hand of the shortest. And in the midst of the crowd of masqueraders, the observed of all observers (that can catch a sight of her) is a whole cloud of a Princess, in the guise of fold upon fold of spangled gauze-lisse,

with a graceful *mademoiselle* (the centre of attraction, naturally) "in tights"—to make you mad—in the middle of it.

You may scatter about seductive groups of feminine pages dressed *to the closest*, that is to the slimmest and trimmest and slenderest, with glossy hair, golden or dark, flowing off their girlish carmine cheeks, and waving down their backs, and clinging round their Hebe, or rather, at present (from the characters they assume) Hyperion seeming waists. Tunics or "tights" (disclosing the thighs) gleam and glitter and show and glide nearer and farther, really aweing and kindling in their beauty; for this is the effect to the artistic and the imaginative eye which can contemplate perfect and beautiful female forms without dishonest freedom.

The whole of this section of stage presentments hints at a populace of the Houris, or dreams of the enchanted, bound and fastened in their girdles as in fetters, from some garden of delight over which jealous dragons keep watch; as you would like them to do in your own sole interest—yours, and yours only. Circe is for the somnolent, for the beguiled lingerer in such a place, which, if he regard his soul's peace, we would advise him to quit as quickly as may be, before he half loses his heart—or wholly loses it, perhaps—to one of these tempting rose-buds of the whole glorious "Rose-Bush" (so to speak fantastically) which some of our metropolitan stages are, in the matter of the nymphs displaying their limbs and their seductive graces upon them.

Twos or threes together, or more generally all in a group, busily occupied in talking and laughing, you may observe the Ballet, or the dancers of the all important choregraphist *corps*, continually reappearing under a new

form, and in modern days magnificent as the prop of all theatres. Gossip is uninterrupted, as if a given quantum of talk were to be expended before the prompter's bell summons to business. The loudest laughter generally covers the slightest occasion for it. Side by side stand the most unlikely people. Here extremes are fused into an identity, and the most contradictory elements meet to make up the uniform brilliant scene. Two beautiful fairies (except that one has a face rather too strongly marked for the appropriate aërial expression, and that the shoulders of the other are somewhat too high for the supposed matchless symmetry of the Court Celestial), both with a very low *corsage*, with much bust, with pink silk pantaloons and flowing hair, Eves to tempt or damsels to delight—pass with their arms twined in an inviting theatrical embrace.

The most opposing spirits meet on equal terms upon the Opera stage. A devil with visage in proof of the influences of Styx (now, since the eye of the public is not upon him, with no necessity of being infernal) saunters sideways, all fiend and fire out of him, with the dissatisfied *nonchalance* of a melancholy dandy. Shaking hands with a Moslem, who does not at all seem to dread the fiery contact, another devil, perhaps, asks some sudden slangy question about Epsom, and enforces his query with a familiar but a happy poke of his spear, red-hot with the reddest of foil. Apollo takes snuff and blows his nose with a coloured pocket-handkerchief. This was in a former day, when fashions were different. A baker delivering his bread would, of course, be ashamed of a coloured pocket-handkerchief—in 1882. Nobody takes snuff, now, on the stage or off it. All the snuff-boxes, gold and otherwise, are in museums, in company with

the hackney coach, the sedan chair, the cocked hat, the last tinder-box and candle-snuffers.

The above passage (a private note) was written of the celebrated Perrot, one of the finest of ballet-masters, and a genius in his way, who composed some of the most celebrated ballets which ever delighted a past generation. Perrot was the high priest of Ballet at Her Majesty's Theatre for many years. Yes, reader, before white pocket-handkerchiefs, those indispensable items of civilisation, became universal from Pall Mall to the Sandwich or the Society Islands.

But to resume our review of the forces on the Opera stage. A muffled figure, which may be Monk or Mameluke, Mumbo-Jumbo or Momus, in hurried but subdued whispering (because the curtain is to go up soon), discusses a contested point, concerning eighteenpence, with a fat Muse, commercially indebted to him. She, to cut short the argument, having probably not the money to pay, with a decidedly naying air has taken her seat upon a "set-piece," which only holding one seems fortunately set there for the purpose of enabling the female occupant to sit it out and conquer. Baffled or called off for a moment, but resolute, because money is a *desideratum* instant and pressing, the muffled figure lingers still. A laugh, at something which it is not easy to make out as laughable, passes among a group composed of a Peri, two Cupids, a Courtier of the time of Louis the Fifteenth, and a Huntsman in green with a broad boarspear and brown boots of extraordinary and apparently limp *mouth*.

Hard words and gesticulations, accusing and repudiating, are exchanged, concerning a misused crescent and an oriental slipper, on the ledge of a rock which overhangs



a dreadful precipice, between a malignant and turbaned Turk and his expostulating "dresser," who has climbed to that eminence like Manfred—urged by the wardrobe-keeper, compelled again by the stage manager, violently and suddenly anxious for the interests of the management. But the misunderstanding is put an end to opportunely by two stage carpenters, mindful only of their business and obeying the master machinist, who tumbles out worlds, rummages regions, and piles rocks like the Titans when the "hour strikes and the man"—or the prompter. This despot of a master carpenter orders his myrmidons to displace the disputants. In fact the whole mountain is lifted by the projecting "profile;" and the men carry the mountain—with difficulty it may be assumed—to a distance of seven miles (by the prompt book), and they set it upright—in seventeen yards of brilliant azure sea, or in the sunny Mediterranean as a Greek Island, whose peaks, from out a coronal or wreath of golden cloudlets, are gloriously displayed.

But as for realities on a favourite fashionable stage, one of the most edifying spectacles is the prosaic indifference and English dulness amusingly visible in the countenances of a group of blackcoated "swells," as they are called vulgarly in stage language. Each is a study in black and white, with the invariable "button-hole." These gentlemen look on with gravity and attentive silence, not speaking, of course, when they do not know each other. They gaze at the springs and spinning of the *danseuses premières*, or the gyrations and *poses* of the short-skirted ballet girls, all, more or less, white skirt and flourishing pink legs and tiny boots.

You may also mark—but this only on the Grand Opera stage in the former time—a little removed from

the other dancers, but also with *his* interested group of gazers about him, the twists and turns and *pirouettes* of a middle-aged Cupid, as he looks, with a cast in his eye, costumed airily in a sky-blue tunic, and equipped or shorn close for the top of Olympus; for no beards—as not being celestially poetical—are allowed to any of the class of Apollo, or the winged, or the super-essentially refined, or the poetical.

The activity about the stage increases. A murmur is heard in the peopled depths of the house from the other side of the curtain. Rows of gas-lights are carried streaming over the stage like miniature “man-carried” comets; wheels of machinery click livelily; the flats making up the scene ascend and descend; fairies betake themselves to their appointed places on the stage; demons disappear. Succeeding this change there is a clapping of hands by the prompter, seconded by his assistants. The crowd on the stage reluctantly loosens and disperses. And the last thing arresting attention is the authoritative voice of the manager, calling out “Clear the stage.”

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<sup>1</sup> This sketch is a life-like portrait of the great French Maitre-de-Ballet, Perrot, of the Grand Opera, Paris, and of Her Majesty's Theatre, London, in its palmy days, in the time of the eminent Opera director, Benjamin Lumley. Male dancers are reckoned as an abomination now, and excluded from the Opera stage—in fact from any stage, unless they figure as *grotesques* in appropriate characters. Male representatives of female characters on any stage or platform are inexpressibly vulgar, offensive and unendurable. This is a fact fixed in tasteful repugnance for innumerable reasons. On the other hand, female representatives of male characters, if young and pretty and well formed (indispensable qualifications all these), are both popular, and held in the judgment and exercise of the finest and most refined taste as of the greatest value, presenting never-failing attraction. Here is the widest and the most successful field for ingenuity and grace, in costuming and in exquisite adaptation—for the female form is the most elegant and lovely in the world. It is in itself poetry; and in all its suggestions philosophy. It stands at the top of beauty; the height of excellence. In certain senses it is wonder and sublimity itself.

All is now an open space when the call-bell rings, heard from nowhere. The mighty curtain ascends whirring, and there rushes a sudden flow of light and of excitement about you, as you, the visitor, move round into the front and leave the "behind the scenes" at the Opera and resume your temporarily-abandoned stall, exchanging the life of *lorgnettes* before the curtain, for the dazzling life and the new world (the enchanted world) behind the curtain.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

LAW AND LAWYERS: AN ENQUIRY INTO THEIR FUNCTIONS,  
MISCHIEFS, STUPIDITIES, PLAUSIBILITIES, AND BARBARITIES.

*Are Lawyers Benevolent or Malign? Are they "White Devils" or "Black Devils," or any "Devils?"*

OUR discourse one evening at the club, was on the mischiefs and enormities of Lawyers. They are an evil set of people of whom I am afraid to speak. Few persons except themselves give them good characters; and these simple folk only under allowance and with very considerable reserve. Why Lawyers were ever introduced into this world except to render it extra bad I cannot tell. But because I am unable to account for the origin of many exceptional and alarming things, am I to be called upon to explain the natural beginning of this race of devourers, almost insatiate?

Silas Anthony Peppercorne, Esq., of Warnford Court, Throgmorton Street, City (perhaps by reason of his severe law experiences), was very hard upon the whole tribe of Lawyers. And being permitted to do so—although we laughed pretty considerably at his earnestness—he spoke his mind to the following effect, and we may hope that the Lawyers will be all the better for these severe expressions. We know most people will agree with us, including all who have burnt their fingers in the devouring fire of the Law.

## TRUTH ABOUT THE LAWYERS.

My dear friends, have you ever had a Lawyer? In other and more circuitous and more emollient words, have you ever had anybody who transacted that business for you which, as I may rather more curiously than gracefully figure it, *has prongs*, and cuts as if with sharp knives?

My friends, I repeat, in all kindly human interest for you, have you ever gone in search of that terrible tearing animal called a Lawyer? Have you ever entered his den, strewn with the bones of those whom he has devoured in the shape of white rolls of legal paper, and with old musty skins of yellow parchment? Has it ever been your misfortune to contemplate in an absorbed moment of despair, the bald (but not reverend) head of an old, yellow-footed kite of an attorney? If so, I heartily pity you. For you must have fallen into bad hands; heavy must have been your grief.

But if you have ever been necessitated to cast about for an attorney, you know what it is to beat your brains and worry yourself towards the discovery of what is technically called a "good man." A "good man," in this acceptation, only means a man good at his law. And after all your trouble you frequently find that you must decide just as circumstances force you. Now circumstances constitute those at first silken strings which are afterwards converted as into a net of iron. And in this net of circumstance (or of legal iron) you are caught as a fly or a puppet, and as the latter your arms and legs are made to perform antics of ghastly fun (indignation) quite against your will.

But when thus "perplexed in the extreme" with the necessity of finding a man to sue for you or to defend you, you doubt and you hesitate. This is vexatious work,

this making up your mind as to the cleverest, most honest, cheapest man of law. And now you seem to espy extrication out of your dilemma; for you and your law are questions of Money, like all questions. Ah! he who really goes upon the principle of "no cure, no pay," is the best. And he who affirms to you that he will never—no never—charge you anything if he succeed or not in your case is the pearl above price—far indeed above rubies. That is, if he hold to his word; getting his money *out of your enemy*.

I admire, and altogether give in, to this principle of "NO CURE, NO PAY." Of all the, at least, six dozen law-cases, complaints, *assumpsits*, claims, demands, "rights" of action, real actions and so forth—about rights, the justest of course, and all the most certain (being so just) of triumph in court—all these law matters, I say, which have been real or meditated to become real with me, and which have fallen on my back as my *quantum* of legal weight to carry to the court of deliverance like Christian's sack of sins; of all this botheration there is not one single item which I would not have put out to some Lawyer to make up for me, as some people do their cloth for clothes, but that I had been seized with a sudden misgiving. I was deterred by the suspicion that whether I was right or whether I was wrong I should eventually have to pay in my own person for my law.

And in this overpowering dread, so much right and justice has been thrown by me into the highway or into the Thames for anybody to pick up if they would, that I am ill in thinking about it all. My excellent intentions have everyone gone a-begging. So many good actions—I mean law actions—have been precipitated into the river (near the Temple) by me that I have ceased to look

with reverence upon Themis. I have only grown to regard Justice and her scales as one huge mousetrap, nibbling with "hooks of Hades," hot and sharp, hot and sharp!

In these doubts I have, as it were, offended the haughty dame, sitting as she is made to sit, with her evenly swinging balances, blindfold on her stone throne. I have shaken my fist at her as if I knew what tricks she was after, though she could not see. That blank, affected look of impartiality disgusted me with justice. If I could have been sure that all those disinterested enthusiastic promises of victory on the part of my Lawyers were sincere, I should have been happy. If I could have convinced myself that I had such a clear case, I should have slept quiet at nights. I laboured in vain (being a fearing man) to see as distinctly as the Lawyer from whom I sought the opinion, that my case was sure—that its legal face was so very clean and beautiful, with truth so obvious and incontrovertible. I was told that my success was a point of the commonest certainty in any Court of the United Kingdom; that my grievance was so unmistakable and the decree to be made in my favour so evident, that the judge would frown at my enemy, and nod and say to the Court—"Give this man justice; give it him I say! Take his proper costs for him. Here is the legal money-bag."

Perhaps, even in his kindness, the judge would considerately hand it over the Bench: "Here is the bag out of which you have the fullest right, gentlemen, you who have had his case in charge, to reimburse in his behalf as an atrociously wronged man."

Now this would have been polite of the judge, and kind of the law. But it did not take place. If all this

romance had really been true, I should have darted into the embrace first of Mr. Quirk, then of Mr. Gammon, and lastly of Mr. Snap—all the three heads successively of the triple Cerberus of the firm of attorneys—and saluted them as my best friends.

If even my Lawyers had been merciful and had managed to save me the costs, all would have been well. Even if the afflicting result of my law-making had been the loss of my suit (out of his legal “old-clothes” bag) by my Lawyer, and he had spared me the law costs, I should have regarded him as a good friend to me *after a shipwreck*. I should not only have hailed him as a “man and a brother,” but have looked upon him as—what is more to the purpose—a man who tells truth. For in sincerity he would then have undertaken a client’s cause upon the intelligible principle of “no cure, no pay,” and have kept to his word. But I had my doubts from the first, because I was acquainted with the nature of the sly animal called Lawyer. I reiterate that I had my doubts.

He was too confident. He was too off-hand. He saw too little difficulty. It was too much coming and seeing and conquering with him. He was too ready—he was too eager, I repeat, in maintaining that my case was as good as settled—*that* I knew beforehand it would be, but the way in which it was to be settled was the point. There were many tales told me in my Lawyers’ office of Court and Jury thrilling with eagerness to right me in my wrong. Hope, and my Lawyers, told a flattering tale. Then as to my timorous hints about costs, regarding which subject I dreaded definite approach (as a snake in the bosom of my friends and professional advisers), I thought it best to let it lie asleep. Costs! Tremendous



word; I will record the light way in which my Lawyers lifted off that stone which lay heavy on my heart. "As to the costs," said they, "all will come out of your enemy's pocket. He is the defendant, and he is justly to suffer for his disregard of his duties." As to the plaintiff, to wit (if there be much *wit* in law) myself—I was to walk off, if not with flying colours—for to march with flying colours (being military) is not proper—at all events with the Court's money-bag—yea, a good one. Dear, delightful dreams! I saw nothing comic about the whole case, except the judge's wig; and, being an uncomfortable man, that I laughed at (as the rude people say) on the wrong side of my mouth, when the judge decided against me.

Now listen, my sacrificed poor friends, and profit by my experience. My advice to all to whom I mean well, is to avoid law by every means. Good or bad cases, all come out alike accursed rags in their termination. It is loss either way if you will go into Court. Law is a double-action chopping-engine, that cuts two ways. Law has teeth to tear you. Law has a mouth that can swallow you up. If you must, in your wrong-headed prejudice, try your hand in that sharp game of law against anybody or regarding anything, just be prudent and take your leap with as soft a fool's cushion as you can contrive to fall saved upon. When you are saluted, in your angry indignant antics, by a sudden knock, do not fall through and alight upon glass that may cut.

The politeness of your Lawyer is that of an executioner, when you have lost your action. If you will not be easy without law, try law against your grandmother, who can be talked over, if things go wrong, quietly in her back parlour. You can fix her, by-and-bye, quite apart from

the hardness of both her Lawyers and your own; at the worst you can smother your grandmother the quietest. Before you put your finger into this lion's mouth of the law, perhaps to have your hand snapped clean off at the wrist, be sure that you in the first instance make safe about the costs. Give a wide berth to all those plausible members of the profession who offer to do your law work for only the money which they may happen to be out of pocket. This is a tempting term of wide latitude which may embrace a terrible result. I have said that I am a fearing man. Perhaps that money which your Lawyer may be found to be "out of pocket," may be *just all that is in your own*.

In such cases it is the advice which is made to cost little. It is the money which is "out of pocket," whether truly or not (for you never see the bill *till it is paid*), which makes up the weight that sometimes sinks you into insolvency and destruction.

I do not insist that every man in the Law List is of this very sharp kind. All the Lawyers' fingers are not so many Sheffield clasp-knives; nor are attorneys and solicitors every one bent on that single object—the conjuring of as many sovereigns out of your pocket into theirs as they can manage to clear. Sometimes the dreadful strife will intermit, and there is peace occasionally even in the Halls of Orcus. Hell itself will cease for a time with its roar. Constantly as he is by nature at his mischief, you would not have even a devil always spitting snakes.

You will perceive, my friends, from the way in which I treat this subject that I must know something of it; indeed, I ought to do so, for in my early days I studied the law. There are not only clever men in this

much-abused profession, who strive to steer themselves rightly; but, what is infinitely more to the purpose, there are strictly conscientious men whom it is possible to meet. Unhappily these latter are but as pilgrims in a wilderness of thieves. These white, in contradiction to the black, legal sheep would scorn mean and shabby actions—that is, mean and shabby *law*-actions—the malicious might rejoin. They would be indignant—and justly—if taxed with the shortcomings, or more than the shortcomings—with the *over-goings*—of the less scrupulous members of the profession.

Tortuous politics, lying, cajolery, wrong, the wresting and twisting and persuading things all your own way, after all, cost a deal of trouble. A little reflection will satisfy us that rogues must undergo a great amount of hard work that ought to be handsomely acknowledged. Difficult as it is to keep innocent, or even to remain commonly honest in this wicked world, we doubt whether it is not easier to be honest than to make oneself the holder of the strings of so many nets, whose pulling is to catch other persons' legs, but whose unexpected and awkward effect might be just to hamper one's own legs and to break one's head.

As a mere man, it is no part of the business of a Lawyer to cheat you. Out of his profession he is not always to have his hands full of false cards. He is not necessarily cruel. There is no absolute need for his heart to be of red cornelian. But as a man of red tape; as one who in some sort looks upon the Book of Costs as his Bible; as one who has for a single thing to tell, a thousand things to reserve, or suppress, or to lie about; as a gentleman who has to look at the main chance; as a diplomatist of cold precedents in the midst of his politeness, who has to

arrange little technical affairs and to sell you up, it becomes a very different affair. These Lawyers' knives are very sharp, and do their work.

I will give you some remarks by a clever friend of mine, now dead, who, in some sharp observations, has chose to proffer his say concerning the Lawyers. In truth his experience of men of the law (equally as mine) seems not to have been of the most favourable or forgiving character.

“Men act too often in the present day,” he exclaims, “as if they were all their own greedy and malignant solicitors. Let us draw a fanciful picture of one of the latter. Imagine a firm of two partners, a dyspeptic and malignant partner, and an easy and genteel partner. There is the polite assurance, and the fox-like, dull-eyed caution. One mixes in the world; the other meditates upon the world at his desk. But they are careful, and *do not steal pocket-handkerchiefs*. Therefore they continue with their bold brass-plate, and prosper—aye, and prosper vigorously.

“A widow and a prodigal pass through their hands. There is advice and friendship for these, if clients; there is the trap, with steel teeth, if foes. But as either they equally suffer; the Queen's Bench Prison and the Workhouse—or something like—await them. They pass away—having yielded their cash-bag—and the successful firm rubs its hands and moves on its way rejoicing. Those hands are not dirty—*there is water and a jack-towel in the office*.

“They spread their toils for new game. They do not intend evil. The vast perversion of the law serves them better than if they did. They have done nothing criminal—perhaps nothing wrong in the world's view.

They have only committed moral robbery and extortion. Ingratitude is no crime—it is only forgetfulness. Betrayal is not exactly defined. Insinuation, although an electric eel and one that can sting, you cannot grasp. Men like these only arm against your property. But in a highly civilized state of society like ours—property is life. For a man who has nothing (whereupon to live) may be literally said to have no life (wherewith to live).”

Every damage may be done to you, until you become as a mere shell; a husk into which despair may creep to finish up! You are as an empty peascod. Society, after its shelling, throws the husks of the peas or the men out of its lap. Anything may be done to you when you have a numbed pair of hands, hands numbed with despairing cold, with a sovereign in neither. Still you have no redress. To take your stick and in sudden natural passion to fall foul of those who have ruined you and killed you morally, is only to get yourself handed over to the policeman. To inform the public is to be prosecuted for libel. And the public, who may read your case for amusement, in the papers, will not pay your damages for pity. To remonstrate is to make yourself ridiculous; every ill-used person being adjudged as through some cause deservedly so ill-used. Thus it is that you may be cheated, betrayed, and ruined by cautious practitioners of the law, watching carefully their steps and your decay, and there is no redress. The world does not hear you. The world, if it did, would not care for you. It would not trouble itself about the punishment of rogues who have not hurt *it*. The world has its own friends to conciliate; its own ends to gain; its own thoughts to think; its own enemies to guard

against, and to disarm. These are melancholy truths; but in a highly civilised society, such as that in which we live, everything, whether good or bad (so polished is the surface), slides off.

Lawyers, although guilty of every barbarity, have not committed felony. They are safe from the criminal badges which the law affixes. They have not stolen any little absolute thing. The whole has been done by rule, and according to law. The entire method has been "respectable." All has been done in a delicate manner. The Lawyers have plundered you, with less necessity though with more politeness than highwaymen. Their great grace is that they have taken a longer time about cutting you up. They have only committed moral offences against your purse and person. Worse perhaps, these may be thought, than the deed of the violent, because to their errors you must add ingratitude and betrayal, while the undisguised robber selects you according to chance as his victim; and having once made up his mind to the commission of robbery, he owes you no more respect or forbearance than he does any other person or victim.

Such characters as these curious professionals abound, and the money-making world grows universally too like them. There are dignified exceptions. We indeed do not accuse all. We speak of the struggle for life, exhibited in the perfection of civilisation, where any man may hold any office of the State (aye, or of the Church) and be stained black as an Ethiop with legalised vices.

There is indeed public opinion; but public opinion is a generality not much regarded. The rich know that, to them, there can be no instant mischief. Ever slow, and

easily to be appeased by the wealthy and plausible, justice halts. Be your pocket deep, your voice sonorous, your front not so brazen as to excite distrust, and you need not fear real indictments. The false indictment of the "opinion of the world" has a very large hole through which you can creep, and come out of and through the "Devil's Fire" as an "Angel of Light," very bright and white.

I will put it fairly, whether there is not absolute truth in all this which I assert of the characteristics of the profession of the Lawyers. The Society of the present age, though it may shudder at the duel or the sudden outrage, has established no real rigorous censor of the heart or the conduct, and boasts no recognised tribunal of equity or of honour—or even of decency or of common pity. Ah, I repeat, it is a cruel world! A cruel pitiless world. Everything yields to appearances. Everyone is in too great a hurry for justice to be possible. Within the circle of a sovereign, in the view of the modern generation, lies excellence, lies happiness, lies heaven. Five-pound notes are grand things, and a carriage and plate are, beyond expression, beautiful objects. Greediness envies you everything almost; so long as you *have* anything. But I am tired of moralising. It is an old tune, now nearly played out; this moralising.

But before I cease, let me beg of you, Lawyers, to reflect upon some of the faults which have troubled me concerning you. It may relate to us both. I may perhaps feel sorry for you; you by chance may experience some slight twinge of conscience. I leave you to the beneficial effects of the exertion of this latter doubt of yourselves. Meantime, men of the law, repel not my

observations ; other people will not, I am sure. Reflect whether I may not, after all, have addressed to you a little wholesome, although I admit it may at first seem unpalatable, truth. Look with a little more real kindness of heart upon the next person who may apply to you for your legal assistance. Don't sharpen the bright scissors and the thirsty knives of the law too keenly for his golden blood: for the poor man, despite his present fine clothes, may lose all.

After this expostulation—to whom made, except to that unimportant person, Justice, nobody could tell—as to the character of Lawyers, we were silent some time, considering whether it were true. I am not an uncharitable man, and therefore I said something to myself in protesting somewhat in behalf of these bad people. At the same time I could not suppress a most sincere silent wish, that from their operations and from their more pronounced and open, as their cooler tricks, I might be delivered—safely delivered.

“ Well, as we have finished with this satirical Bill of Complaint, let us have some rose-water to alleviate with its sentimental, sweet suggestions; or some real natural sunshine to let in, to chase away this darkness and this stifling sensation of so many unwelcome black gowns,” said Captain Boyd, who presided for us this evening.

“ A good notion, boldly made,” responded Mr. Schuyler. “ And therefore I volunteer a sketch of such a Summer in England as I have experienced. Here it is ! ”

“ A capital theme. It is a subject which has always struck me as having the attraction of a fine painting—or rather of a beautiful water-colour delineation of nature, such as we sometimes see upon the walls of



the Exhibitions. Begin, my dear friend, Mr. Schuyler, with your brush. We are all attention to your pictorial efforts." This was said by Dr. Cornelius Butler.

And Mr. Schuyler commenced upon a very happy sketch of Summer, in our own good country.

## CHAPTER IX.

A BRIGHT SKETCH OF A SUMMER'S DAY, AND OF ITS EFFECTS.

LET us endeavour to give a sketch of Summer, a bright detail full of *minutiæ*. July shall be our theme, as being especially the summer month. Therefore let us talk of July in England.

July, then, is the month of hot bright skies. The clouds are as pieces of silver floating in a sea of sapphire. The sunshine is palpable, tinging all yellow, setting the air on fire, and standing bodily between you and objects, and surrounding you, and pressing you down, as it were, in itself. The world is all light and heat, the trees live, every leaf blazes, every stone dazzles, all the country is on fire with the sun. Windows are all thrown open and holland blinds drawn down—or green blinds folded, and the room feels hot and still, and there is a sort of green twilight in it, looking cool, and shutting you up as in a cool grot, out of the glare and stare of the noonday. Flowers are stars, and are brilliant, like pieces of fire, and their perfume comes out in strength. Street doors are hot to the hand, and are peeling and cracking. The sun is on your window-sills, and on your tables, and on the floor, *like something laid upon them*.

The fields are hot, dry, and still, the green is dazzling, the trees and hedges stand up like something exposed there, patiently to be scorched. Stones in the road glisten, and pebbles in sand shine like diamonds, and the fresh sward is all hot. Grass looks silky, and there is a con-

stant hum all about you, sounding drowsy in the stillness and inclining you to nod. Wheels sound dull and as if they were rolling on flannel, and horses' hoofs tread gently, and a sudden laugh out of doors sounds like a song, and cocks crow as if there were a new atmosphere about their red top-knotted lordships, quiet and lazy.

Waggon-horses plod along, and the bells jingle softly and the horses strike up the white dust with their shoes, and the waggoner's back feels burning, and he twitches up his mouth and hangs his head, and his face looks as if it stood in need of his pocket-handkerchief, if he happen to have one, which is doubtful—beyond the snowy skirt of his smock frock. A stage-coach dashes by, all the brass brilliant, and the horses shining, and the inside with the one sleeping passenger, looking dark and cool. The white gravestones in the churchyard look whiter than usual, and sheep stand still and gaze at you; and cows swing their tails about, every now and then bobbing back the head; and flies dimple the still stream, and the sun flickers on it, and the shadow of the leaves trembles like an aspen;—all made out strong.

Children stand at cottage doors with fingers in their mouths, or with hands up to their eyes, or with their eyes half shut. Cats are seen asleep in cottage windows, looking as if they had been lying there quietly dosing for a week, and old Dutch clocks tick more sleepily than usual. Old women yawn, and every now and then put down the needlework in their laps and lean back in their chairs and close their eyes. Men are seen, twos and threes together, asleep on their faces at the side of the road; dogs lie extended in the sun; everything seems too lazy to stir. Nothing is on the wing. Now and then a straggling bird may pass before you, but he sweeps

swiftly into shadow. All the country is intensely silent, so much so that on this hot, still, summer's day, you might fancy you could hear a conversation a mile off, or a whisper at ever so great a distance.

In London the pavements look glaring, and omnibuses are full, and all the people are on the shady side of the way. As you pass them, a different scent comes from each shop, and coachmakers' establishments look cool, and the water sprinkled on the floor and the leather smell refreshingly, and many men with watering-pots water the pavement before the shops, and water-carts, with the drivers in their shirt-sleeves, pass along and pour out sparkling cataracts, making ladies scamper if they happen to be near the kerbstone.

Now in Oxford Street or Holborn, or the Strand, or any such long street, you see a perspective of white awnings all drawn down to shade the shops, hot and dazzling in the sun, and there is an abundance of fancy trousers (walking along the pavement, as it appears) that seem to stand out in their brightness; and light dresses and ribbons are the order of the day, and numberless parasols are up, and countrymen perhaps carry umbrellas, and hats are lifted from the melting brows, and foreheads are suffused, and men go with their gloves, like dependent rags, in their hands, and watchguards glitter powerfully, and the city hums as if it were smoking with the heat.

Glimpses of the river now are pleasant, and the water shines clear and cool, and watermen in white shirt-sleeves skim about in their flashing wherries, and men are asleep in the sun on the wharves, and porters stand exhausted in public ways resting themselves, with their burdens on posts. People stand in the shade talking, and a close

alley is a comfort, and in the sky over the houses it looks fiercely hot; and in many of the houses is cold meat for dinner, with pickles and new potatoes and cool ale or beer; folks having little appetite. The fire-places are done up, and the household forgets them, and the shady rooms are much used. The shops of bakers seem stifling, hundreds of flies are seen, and the men look as pallid as their own potatoes.

Butchers' shops are now most offensive, and butchers themselves seem greasier than usual, and more detestable, and poulterers' shops are an abomination; but fishmongers' places seem comfortable, dabbling in water being a delight. People saunter, and seem lazy all day, and half inclined to go to sleep. The sight of a chemist's shop is refreshing, with its cool floor and oil-cloth, its bottles, its glass, its blinds, its white-aproned shopmen; and, above all, its soda-water fountain, with the clear glasses temptingly displayed. Strawberries are cried in the streets by men and boys in their shirt-sleeves, and cherries are sold by old women at the street corners; and in the evening all the streets are full of loungers, listening to itinerant bands and to Ethiopians, walking to and fro in a crowd.

On Sunday evenings the galleries and windows of public-houses in the suburbs are full of men and women—the men smoking and drinking; omnibuses are full, and the roads are crowded with people coming in from the country. Charity children in the morning and afternoon walk slowly in the sun, and beadles stand at church doors, and the bells toll quietly, and the city seems still—Summer dividing it with silence.

On week days at London Bridge steamers are up at wharves, and luggage is coming down dark lanes and

round corners in cabs (in the old day it was in hackney coaches), and funnels smoke, and the white steam is roaring and gushing. Cricket-matches are played. Boat-races take place on the river. Open-air fêtes draw people to the Horticultural Gardens or the Botanical Gardens in carriages. Vans go out of town with holiday folk. People used to cross Westminster Bridge in the afternoon, as it seemed, to go to Astley's—but all this journeying to Astley's is past.

In the country, benches at inn doors are full, and horses and carts stop, and the cattle hang their heads and move instinctively aside (head protruded) to the water-trough. Horsemen are tired and gape in the sunshine, and out comes the ale, and the landlord in his white shirt-sleeves, no hat on his head, talks to folk loitering at his door. In all the roads and lanes it seems *as if there were nobody in the world but yourself*. A long path across fields displays only you to walk, pilgrim-like, along it. A dry, long dusty road in strait perspective seems to you as if you could never get to the end of it; and pools and pieces of water are bowered with the leaves, and cottages are half concealed in the green.

Sometimes on an evening when the air long previously has been exceedingly sultry, there is a muttering in the distance, and pale lightning comes in the clouds; half of the heavens is dark and the other half threatening, and the clouds slowly come up. By-and-bye the red and yellow lightning bursts from the clouds, tearing them open laterally and showing all the edges in amber fire. It quivers blue, first in the distance, then near; first on one side and then on the other. Sometimes it flashes as bright as day—dazzles like sunshine and shows everything as brilliantly. Sometimes

it reiterates a bright blue flash three or four times successively, shining on the ground; and then, unexpectedly, it opens yellow—bright yellow—in the sky. It flashes and glances and explodes like fireworks. Meantime the thunder is rolling, and making a dropping kind of sound, and rumbling and crashing around. If the storm be heavy, the lightning indeed seems scarcely to cease—flashing and streaming and glancing in every direction, wherever you can turn your eye. Then down the rain comes in a storm. And such is an English July; sketched from nature but a few years ago.

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CHAPTER X.

SOCIETY.—SILLY MEN.—CONCEITED MEN.—FOPS AND FRIBBLES.

I REALLY think that this world, in the present day, is afflicted with two most deplorable annoyances. The old plagues, which were so direful in their consequences, have been used-up—have gone out of fashion. Famines, in this generation, are limited to the poor, who cannot afford to pay tenpence or a shilling for their loaf. It is their worst penalty to have a number of children and nobody to keep them. War for us English happens fortunately at a distance, and villages are burnt for us, and hospitals are crowded with dead and dying—in the last telegrams of foreign intelligence in the daily newspapers. Sudden death is realised to the public appreciation of dreadful things more in that large list of arrivals on the other side of the commercial “Styx,” the *London Gazette*, with our amiable public friends, Mr. Pennell or Mr. Bell, official assignees, as their Charon, and in your exit from society, than in the real mortal disappearance. It is terrible that this should be so, but such is the case.

But, my good friend, (you will all of you urge) what are these twin evils who wear the crown of pre-eminence in this confessedly not so perfect world of ours? Enlighten our feeble understandings, for we often anticipate your moralities. And do not be more spiteful than you can help.



My dear brethren, the world that I indicate is that called civilised, and the two things that seem to me to divide empire in it are universal CONCEIT and immitigable SELFISHNESS. I believe that these two bad qualities mutually react upon and intensify each other. And I know not which is the worst of the two, for Selfishness is but unexpressed and latent conceit, while Conceit is expressed and active selfishness. But Conceit—that is, the lively indomitable form of it, which is so very like an eel—is the vice of what is assumed as elegant society. Ah, how should I enumerate its countless forms, when the whole thing is a masquerade in which you may as readily detect the gown of the ecclesiastic, the snuffle of the Methodist preacher, and the thick-headed prosing of the Scotch justice, as the giggle of girls, the boasting of boys, and the rhodomontade of the bewhiskered.

It is really because there is but One Man in the world, and that man Himself, that we have all this turgid *afflatus*—this concentrated grandeur—this Kingdom with but One Cushion for the Throne, and that for Yourself to place yourself on. Is there no second He to the first He, or is the Egoist lord paramount, the giver and receiver, the beginning and the end, and the everything between; beginning and end, and so ALL. However, I design in this present speech or entertainment only to discuss but a certain single form of this coxcomby. And, Jupiter, forgive me for handling with a silken glove so monstrous a paw!

Preaching is unpopular, especially where you are believed to be preaching *at* people. So long as you make your charges general, all well and good. Nobody takes offence at that which *anybody* may claim as censure. Don't blame individuals; or, if you comment, reprove

excess of fine feeling, fine qualities run mad, anything superlative, out of the way, and heroic. Make every man a Tartar in his excellencies. Exalt every woman as the pattern of her sex. If you rail, rail generally. By no means grow too dangerously particular in your denunciations. Folk become accustomed to being told they are bad. Everybody soon gets wonderfully weary of being informed that he or she does anything wrong. Not that they believe what you say when you find fault with them. They are only astonished that you should forget yourself. Really, think they, they had been inclined to consider you a rather agreeable person. But if you will persist in criticising in that very unpleasant manner, you know you must not be surprised if you are listened to with impatience. You ought not to be so indignant and at a loss for fierce words, and yet so ruffled and hurt if you are not met afterwards quite so cordially.

Your friends do not want truth from you. They want no fault-finding. They desire praise and acquiescence. They want you to hold up the mirror, not perhaps to nature, but to hold up a glass that they therein may complacently smooth their hair, and smirk approval to themselves of their good looks while they pretend to listen to you. For what other reason have you a share of their hearth, or a seat now and then at their table? Why else do they call you a candid, truthful person, who takes "admirable" views of things. Why else do they give you their arm at public places, and consent now and then to laugh gently at your pleasantries—feeble enough witticisms, but meant for fun no doubt? It is the clergyman's business to tell people of their misdoings once a week. This, if delicately done, and in the pulpit, may

not be too obtrusive.<sup>1</sup> You are thinking of something of the kind coming when the church bells begin to ring every Sunday. Indeed, it is something proper and pleasant to have a little fault-finding at church. This, of course, applies only to other people—most certainly not to you.

That little harmless, nay, pleasurable excitement, which you gain from a few hard words—scriptural, kid-gloved, strictly proper reproaches—carefully applied and yet not to be too pertinaciously followed-up with unmistakable

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<sup>1</sup> At the present day purity of life, and dignity of manners, seem almost, if not altogether, to have departed from amongst us; and while the House of Lords, as a political institution, appears to be slowly dying of inanition, not a few of its present or prospective members emulate each other in a coarse selfishness and recklessness which fills thoughtful men with amazement and aversion. In the earlier portion of the present reign, when Queen Victoria really had a Court, it was our boast that that Court was the purest in Europe. Flagrant vice could not bask in the sunshine of Royalty. It had to hide its head. It is far otherwise now. Only a few years ago we had to witness boon companions (very high-placed) appearing as co-respondents in a great divorce case, and great people going into the witness-box to deny on oath charges of the gravest immorality. Since then we have had scandals of the worst kind constantly floating about in Society, and implicating exalted names. Nor is this all. Who does not recollect that terrible story of a young lady springing out of a carriage door and clinging to the handle while the train was speeding on its way, risking her life to protect her honour against an officer and a soldier. That man was kept in honourable captivity for a few months to make a show of satisfying the law, but was subjected to no more degradation than that prisoner for conscience' sake, Mr. Tooth, who was incarcerated in the same prison and under similar restrictions.

A tradesman, whose only offence is that he has published a pamphlet giving to the poor the information how the wealthy avoid the responsibilities of parentage, was sent to pick oakum in a common gaol, and almost at the same time the would-be violator of innocence was dining in great company, as if nothing in his past career had occurred to render his presence an offence to every honourable man and virtuous woman in the country. It is expedient that those who, from their exalted positions, possess an incalculable influence for good or evil, should *assume a virtue* if they have it not. There is every disposition in this country to look with a lenient eye upon the follies and errors of Courts and Princes, and to be, indeed, as long as possible, wilfully blind.

home-thrusts and too much hammering at the pulpit cushion and looking at you, is not bad. Bitter allusions, which you are compelled to assume to yourself, because the clergyman (although he does not know you) knows some friends of yours—these may mix not so violently with your dallying over violet silk-covered prayer-books and the red cloth and gilt nails on the wainscot of your pew. You would not convert that snug seat into a confessional, my dear friend, would you? It should not be a place of penance, where you must beat your breast. It would look ugly in church to beat breasts. You would not place moral pins of compunction in that wool-stuffed comfortable cushion. You like to sit elegantly, for the people are looking. You would not for the world wriggle and shake your head in despair, when to remain steady with that imperturbable countenance, with that respectably conscious air, suits you so much better. Through this unmoved position you run no risk of disarranging those successful flowers in your hat, my dear lady, or ruffling those killing pretty ribbons with which Madame Cerise, of New Bond Street, has, for the expected severity of church service, fortified you.

And my friend, Mr. Josephus Baggs, so ready, not only with your attendance at church, but with the white cambric pocket-handkerchief which is so distinguished a feature in it, how if a sharp, awkward clergyman were to deal too unpreparedly in rough ugly words, which should bring ripples of fear over your fine countenance, and startle the congregation into thinking of something other than that graceful and altogether irresistible air with which you decline your supposed white fingers, or depose them with an easy negligence (and three rings) on the rim of your pew; fingering the brass-branch or

upright gas lustre, perhaps, in an aristocratic absence of mind, thinking of your estate, like a man of long descent as you are: how we ask, in any temporary torment of the soul incited by the preacher's vehemence, could you preserve the Brennus-like sweep of your curls? Could you in these straits save your collar, my friend, and the fall, perhaps, over the shoulder of that paletot? Could you save yourself, not from moral, but, what is worse, from personal mischief, and crumpling-up, and ruin in this case of conscientious home-push? The very stone cherubs would flutter their winglets with a more ponderous flap at your unfashionable discomposure. And Jessy, a few pews off, whom you felt sure was admiring you, would squeeze, doubtless, her beautiful lips together in sudden shame at the disgrace (in the picturesque) of her object of temporary attraction.

No, these possible *contretemps* are to be rigidly taken account of. Peers and great people are not to be morally rumbled either on Sunday or any other day. Are the illustrious to be made as free with as Thomas Cannister or Jack Trowell?—common men, whose vulgar blue coat and brass buttons or checked neckerchief nobody notices, except in a general, far-off, superior sort of way, to approve as all very proper for “that sort of people.” These shall find some underground, anyhow-way of getting to Heaven from the church doors, but they certainly shall not go off in the “flying chariot,” for flying chariots belong properly to those who can pay for them.

I have thus glanced at the impolicy of preaching at other persons, distinctly to show that although I am afraid I am myself constantly doing it, still I am not a whit the less impressed with its untold-of danger. But if a man's house is on fire, you do not usually take off

your hat and make him a bow before you seize him tight round the neck and plunge with him, for his rescue, suddenly out of the window and down a ladder. So we will snatch you for your safety from your house fire of PRIDE, my fine friend.

The Conceited Man takes a whim into his head very early in life that there is something about him adapted to attract female admiration. This field of female admiration is to be his grand battle-ground. In it he yearly extinguishes a whole increasing array of fair ones—like a row of white wax candles with a brass extinguisher. He can hardly tell what it is about his appearance. But it is unquestionable that he inspires nascent affection. This Herod of an exquisite really pays very little attention to his undeserved “slaughter of the innocents.” Hylas must have his water nymphs though they split in half his marble pitcher about him in their rivalries. I have heard of a hard-hearted milkman, evidently a person of presence, who, persecuted by the attentions of an admiring fair one, actually was obliged in his “walk,” whereto he was every day lovingly followed, to throw milk over her to keep her off; even to the waste in the space of a fortnight of at least two full cans. Such was her infatuation and his cruelty.

The conscious Adonis was at one time disposed to disregard his claims, thinks he; but now, in justice to himself, the more especially as he finds it such capital amusement, he does not see why he should give in, nor so vigorously harden his heart into cornelian. Blandishments will succeed even with the most iron natures. Bayard loved, doubtless. All the most perfect men of old had a soft place if not in their understandings at all events in their hearts. Our vain friend’s scowls in his retirement have

been altogether tremendous at his ill-treatment by fate in the princely way. Though he has every morning gone punctually to the Bank at nine o'clock, or thrown off his cloak behind that seat regularly at a quarter past ten at other places—at Somerset House or at some nameless office (the “Red Tape” and “Despatch Envelope” perhaps)—further west; yet the brougham, most rightfully his own, has been a long time coming to fetch him.

Office duties are not brilliant duties; they supply scant opportunities of distinguishing oneself in the way one would like. “Anything but this humdrum commercial mean life,” exclaims the modern hero. He cannot forget that his soul is elsewhere, and that his untamed and daring spirit feels its common-place fetters. He knows he is out of his proper walk. He reads character so like himself in novels, and out of the expositions in history he discovers his own desired chances. He challengeth emancipation from that unintellectual drudgery to which inexorable Monday morning bows him cruelly, or rather nods him—taking no “Nay,” and admitting no excuses.

And why should he trouble himself about all this? you innocently ask. Why? Why, indeed! The question answers itself, you slow coach of an enquirer, by far too good for the world. Because if *her* love is as burning and Etna-like as his own (of which he cannot doubt since HE must be the object of it), he longs to throw himself and his fortune, which consists of an ebony ruler, three Bristol-diamond shirt studs and one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, less the income tax, at the feet of that beauty (certainly with expectations), who, spite of her attempts to conceal it, could not resist the (to him) most triumphant exhibition of her feelings at such-and-such a place. And she shall be rewarded, exclaims the vain youth, enthusi-

astically, for a choice as flattering to her own judgment as assuasive (the quiet observer remarks to himself) to the now seven years full-blown self-conceit of Gustavus Greatrex, Esq.

Oh, the infinite shades, the sinuosities of men's vanity when displayed, as they only can be displayed, at an evening assembly or a dinner party. These are the grand battle grounds whereon are put forward all your forces, ye believers in your fascinations. Do you imagine that we cannot see through all your arts? Do you really think that all women do not fathom your game—whether sensible or silly they be? It really makes very little difference, in their sharp knowledge of you, whether the fair ones are very Cornelias of good sense or poor little simple, humming birds; indeed, we rather believe that the silly ones are the quicker of the two, in detection of your stupidities. Now, old or young dandies, do you imagine that all women cannot take your measure almost at a glance? And cannot they see, so to say, how many yards of affectation or of good wearing-stuff go to the making of you up. Women are not the gushingly credulous creatures that man in his constant condescension, and in his appreciation of himself, would deem. They know all about the Battle of Thermopylæ a great deal better perhaps than you do. And they can tell you perhaps who Cardinal Ximenes was—and this is a stretch of knowledge to which by chance, you best-informed man, you may not yourself pretend.

Coxcombray is in full feather at all the *réunions* of the two sexes. By the way, this austere but literal term of the "two sexes" is an exact rude sort of distinction which was all very natural and proper in the good old homely times, when there were men and women. But



it is now exploded. *There are no men and women now*; they are all ladies and gentlemen. Except the navvies who make the railways—who halt somewhat between the nature of the horse and the alligator—"how bred, by whom fed" would puzzle a Professor Queckett—all are a certain sort of something of satin, or of fine cloth.

Ah, Theophilus Tomnoddy. Do you think that I do not know how, as you ascended those stairs, your heart, if it did not beat, dilated in the anticipation of that great terror of your powers, oratorical and pictorial, which was to accompany your entrance into the drawing room? Slayer of the sex! How shall that floor be covered with these trophies of your success, disintegrated unconsciously while you were being thought of—the rose-leaves from a hundred bouquets. The drawing-room is the Cressy or the Poitiers of this (so far as his eyebrows and moustachios are concerned) Edward the Black Prince; though his chivalry may extend no farther than the varnish.

The very man-servant anticipated the effect the well-dressed traitor would produce in scaling that fortress. Brown paled from that instant of Theophilus's conquering entry; Jones felt done for from his first glance at the new arrival; Robinson hid his diminished head, plunging amidst "brutes" (as he called them) for consolation in the pages of a photographic album. Did I not see wholesale lady-murder in the corner of your eye, oh determined Cavalier in the white tie? Was not that the dart of Cupid—although it spoke of starch—that point of the snowy cravat, which contrasted so gloriously with the jet of whiskers which a Paladin or Peter the Great might have envied? Was not that look of anticipated vanquishment such as might have been given

even in the heat of battle, or while Orlando's own awful horn was blowing? That pink muslin assuredly stirred a little on your account. Two or three white skirts in another quarter also glanced your way. That chaplet of amaranth with the ribbons hanging low down behind, shook at the ends very visibly. And that divine Gloriana with the sweeping bands and the diamond brooch,<sup>1</sup> if they *were* diamonds and not things resembling them, like your own affected fashion in comparison with real *gentillesse*—swerved her dark eyes your way, and evidently

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<sup>1</sup> The mischief of this extravagant love for dress is not confined to the upper and middle classes; it spreads through the whole of society, and takes in servants, shopkeepers, the wives of artisans, and even still lower grades. All women spend more on their backs, more on temporary show, than they ever did before. In olden times, materials were of a stouter and more durable kind. A good dress lasted for some years, but now the world has gone in for constant changes, and the dress of one season will scarcely suit the fashions of the next, even if it would last the three months' wear. The petticoat which came down to Phyllis from her grandmother, and in which three generations had fascinated their successive Corydons, would now be cast aside after a year's use, and the first question a girl of the lower classes asks herself in relation to her toilette is, "Is it worn?" Whether it is becoming to her individual self or not, whether it is in harmony with her station, useful of its kind, or proportionate to her means, these requisites never trouble her foolish young head; only this consideration, do the grand ladies in London, who count their hundreds to her pence, affect such and such a shape, and will she look like them if she adopts their patterns? Comely Phyllis does not reflect that beauty is relative, and that harmony is the first law of loveliness. If my lady trails a peacock's train of costly silk, sweeping grandly behind her as she glides over her well-carpeted floors, Phyllis will swish at her broad heels a length of crackling cotton, or some of that ungainly material which falls in angles rather than folds, and looks twin brother to parchment. If my lady in her idleness piles above her brows tier on tier of hair that never grew on her own shapely head, till she has built up an erection both fearful and strange, Phyllis follows suit with huge lumps of tow, and makes herself ugly by apeing a fashion that was never admirable. With her chignon she must have hats and bonnets and flowers and ribbons to correspond, all as much like the real thing as she can compass; and when she has spent her money on rubbish and made herself hideous and ridiculous, she has reached the acme of her ambition, and thinks, "Now I am like my lady," without the chill shadow of doubt crossing the effulgence of her content.

whispered something greatly in your favour, though you could not hear it, to the young Miss who walked with her; who actually blushed her answer to her friend's remark, as her look caught your conscious eye.

Doubtless this was an ingenious though silent acknowledgement of your handsome face or patrician air. Which was it, or rather which do you prefer that it should be, for it must have been one or the other? You will be merciful. You will not clatter too lavishly in your classic panoply, you soldier of Imperial or other Rome!—gleaming in your white waistcoat and with your costly camelia—in pursuit of this flying Parthian graceful cavalry, flinging back melting glances like tantalising sharpest-pointed arrows. You will not carry away more than half-a-dozen hearts to-night. There shall be only three pairs of crying eyes the next morning on your account, and no more than one refusal of a most eligible offer wished for by papa, even desired before your appearance on the scene by the dear girl herself. But now it is flung suddenly and indignantly aside, solely because that sweet female mind has been made rebellious in the remembrance of you as the new apparition. Really the demolition of damsels by this class of young gentlemen is something awful to contemplate. The snatching-up of the Sabine women was as nothing to it. These fellows, in their own conceit, do indeed “come, see, and conquer.”

In the intervals of the removal of the dishes at a dinner-table, how altogether extravagant are the taking-up and playing-out of *tricks* at this capital game of flirtation. Muffs of husbands, take the advice of a muff who has been bitten for his muffdom, and place your wives only by the side of your insensible fellow muffs. Trust only the Master Slenders and the Simples.

Many are the highly attractive ladies who are delighted to exchange the cool indifference of their husbands for the novelty of the admiration of some chance, new, and unproven cavaliers at a dinner-table;—men to whom their marriage-rings are an incitement. You are assured that that newly-married lady who was placed at your side by your host at dinner, and whom you are inclined condescendingly to admire, has several times in the course of that interesting and beyond all question poetical conversation which you two have maintained—she with her eyes regardful only apparently of her plate, and you whispering in her jewelled ear;—we say that you are convinced that she has made incessant comparisons in your favour over that crumpled husband of hers, who, a city man, sits all red face and fidget, and white “choker” on the other side of the cloth. How these two ever came together is a puzzle to you, except that Plutus was ever the most acceptable companion for Venus.

But these weak bendings and leanings must not be in *your* case. You must teach women that you are naturally a high and magnanimous soul, positively defiant of your own advantages. Yea, verily, in your *embarras de richesses* you are not disposed to let off more frequent fireworks in your flirtations than are likely to be perfectly safe, so far at least as the spotlessness of your gloves is concerned. There must never be a storm brought over your set countenance. There must never be an angry fiz in your fireworks coming, not from a lady’s (for that would be complimentary) but from a gentleman’s side. “Discretion is the better part of valour” in your contraband love-makings; and your courser must never be so headlong but that the rein of prudence can bring him safely and immediately back for you into the allowable.

But husbands are not all to be trusted in this matter of flirtation with their wives. They do not all turn their heads and go off quietly when they are wanted to go. Irregular and vain man that we mean in our disquisition, you covet the reputation, though you are not at all prepared to accept the accompanying risks of that pattern ladies' man, the stage Don Giovanni. The fifty swords at his breast on the part of the outraged guests at his banquet would seem a bitter nuisance. Still worse and more chilling to his audacity would be that imperative Stone Man that ascends Don Giovanni's grand stairs uninvited, and who will not be said "Nay" to at last about morality, and his threats of retribution, and all that "slow stuff," as you think when the lights shine. Very different preaching it seems when the figure comes striding stolid and solid through the door, making the marbles shudder with his heavy tread. Anything but that Marble Man and his hard grasp.

Seriously speaking, and finally, it is impossible to fathom the coldness and heartlessness of your thoroughly vain man. We have no belief whatever in the full-blown egotist, or in any coxcomb. We set these down as all flame upon the surface—that is, when they have their sole passion to gratify, that of self-admiration; but with the lump of ice that rattles in the hollow bosom for the heart. Ah, my dear sisters, you cannot help your silliness, but you can amend your heedlessness. Avoid this moral Vampire. Learn to value the unassuming and the modest lover; even he that creepeth into a corner, where his eyes are only to be caught fixed, for your flirtations, reproachfully at a distance upon you when you look his way. Grow to look upon him with that pity which is akin to love. For that flame,

although you may never understand it, which burneth so brightly in his heart that he cannot even speak to you for the light, palpitates there ceaselessly.

There is great love felt even in your instance, perhaps, O immitigable, contemptuous coquette. Reject the good, quiet man not for the gaudy Dragonfly, with his self-assured buz. Be wise, O woman! be wise in time! The fondest, and therefore the most foolish, love may be excited for the most fearful coquette in the worthiest breast; little as giddy women are worthy of it. Your favourite coxcomb is, perhaps, thinking of his other appointments, of which he is ruminating the succession all the time that he is talking to you. Silent, he is deliberating their convenient keeping. Is not a true man better than a false one? And is not that man, although he is clumsy; because he is so filled with the divine *afflatus* of love for you as not to be able to cross a room to approach you without some trivial violation of grace, which you instantly resent; is not such a manly man better than the coxcomb prepared at all points for you, who, while he whispers pretended adoration, means his approving glances only for himself, caught sight of in the glass.

There are better things, even in this bad world, than jewels merely to be hung over the dry bones of passion. Avoid that human thing as hideous, or as an ominous raven with its sidelong gait, its glassy yellow eye, and its affected croak, that would assume showy devotion and simulate homage. That is the best and the honestest man who, without waiting for the world's long artful courting, in his irrepressible sympathies, yet to his mischief, tells you at once that he loves you. After all, is not a heart when it is to be had, which is not

always, better than compliments? And is not real love worth something.

Now, vain woman, if you cannot see these things after careful thinking of them, why we relegate you, as Hamlet did the suspected Ophelia, not to the altar where an expectant honourable husband shall await you, but to the nunnery. It would be by far the most appropriate place for you in the event of your recusancy, except that you are not fit for religion.

Furthermore, in regard of this my long sermon upon particular forms of vanity, I feel assured, my honourable hearers, that you have little in common with anyone of these forms. And though I have apostrophised giddy women as well as vain men, I am certain that in so far as they have some reason, among your female relations will never be found any to match the fanciful, but sometimes the over-true pictures that I have drawn of women.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Little by little in the honeymoon the absolute pettiness, the dense dulness of woman's life breaks on the disenchanting devotee. His deity is without occupation, without thought, without resource. He has a faint faith left in her finer sensibility, in her poetic nature; he fetches his Tennyson from his travelling-bag, and wastes *In Memoriam* on a critic who pronounces it "pretty." He still takes her love of caresses as a sign of an affection passing the love of men, and he unfolds to her his hope that a year or two more may give him the chance of a retreat into the country and a quiet life of conjugal happiness. The confession startles the blighted being into a real interest at last. She has not escaped from the dulness of the nursery to plunge into the dulness of home. She amuses herself with her spouse's indifference to all that makes life worth the living. But then men are such odd creatures, so Quixotic, so unpractical, so romantically blind to the actual necessities of life! It is this idleness, this boredom of the honeymoon, that begets dreams so absurd, so fanciful. The dear odd creature must be got back to town, to his business, to his books, and the honeymoon must end. It is time, in fact, that it did end, for boredom has done its work, and the disenchantment of the man is complete. Absurd, fanciful, as these dreams of a rural future may be, they have startled the poetic being into the revelation of her own plans of life. As you whirl home together she tells you all about them with a charming enthusiasm, but with the startling coolness of a woman of the world.

They are not the crude fancies, like your own, of a moment of romance. Long ago, in those hours of mysterious musing when her lover watched her figure at the casement, she was counting the cost of the season, the number of her dresses, the chance of a box at the opera, the cheapest way of hiring a brougham. That morning of saddest farewell, when both walked hand in hand through the coppice with hearts too full for even a word of affection, she was laying her plans for eclipsing her married cousin, and forcing her way into Lady Deuceace's set. One sees dimly, as the honeymoon ends, what an immense advantage this poetic being has gained over her prosaic spouse in the completeness of her previous study of her position. The man is mystified, puzzled, indignant. His dim conceptions of imaginative woman float sadly away, but they leave him no formula to which he can reduce this hard cynical being who has taken her place at his fireside. Woman, on the other hand, is far from being puzzled or mystified. It is part of her faith that she thoroughly understands her husband. There is a traditional theory of spouses that one feminine generation hands down to another, and into this theory he is simply fitted. While he was flinging away his last cigar, and confessing his worldliness and unworthiness, she was taking from mamma a series of practical instructions in the great art of managing a husband. The art is something like the Egyptian art of medicine: it is purely traditional, and it assumes a certain absolute identity in the patients, which the patients obstinately deny.

But woman clings to it with a perfect faith, and meets with it every problem of domestic life. She knows the exact temper in which her spouse had better be induced to go to the club; she knows the peculiar mood in which he had better be let alone. The same frivolous creature who lay sulking on a sofa because the honeymoon was dull, wastes the patience and skill of a diplomatist in wheedling her husband out of his season on the moors. Her life is full of difficult questions which nothing but tact and time can solve—questions like the great question of husbands' friends, or the greater question of husbands' dinners. The exact proportion in which his old acquaintances may be encouraged to relieve him of the sense of boredom at home without detaching him absolutely from it, the precise bounds within which his taste for a good dinner may be satisfied without detriment to that little bill at the milliner's—these are the problems which the poetic nature is turning over as she bids farewell to the honeymoon. The poor iron pot has no particular fear now of the possible consequences of a collision with the fine porcelain. He finds himself floating whichever way he is guided; wheedled, managed, the husband—as women tell him—of an admirable wife. He does his weary round of work, pumping up the means for carrying out her admirable projects of social existence. But the dreams, the romance, the poetry, the sentiment—"where," as the song runs, "where is last winter's snow?"



## CHAPTER XI.

## A DROLL STORY—THE “BRASS THUMB.”

POOR Peppercorne, brow-beaten because he was so good, could not hold up his head any longer. “Of course I speak uncomfortably of things, for I am a grieved, but not an evil-minded, cantankerous man.” And so he slyly sought to divert the displeasure of the company at his useless freedoms. They protested against his mistakes and his obvious malice regarding this present perfect state of Society, by proposing that Mr. Peter Schuyler should tell an amusing Dutch tale, which, being about money and not being particularly severe, should offend nobody.

Mr. Peppercorne professed his sorrow at having spoken “slowly,” that is very morally. Meekly, but still with a slight suspicious self-assertive twinkle in his eye, he declared that he knew that Mr. Peter Schuyler’s story would reinstate him in the worldly-wise opinion of his friends, because of his (Mr. Peppercorne’s) proposal of it. “I know the tale,” said Mr. Peppercorne, “and it has nothing to do with complaints against either Society or Politics; that is, in our sense, for our ‘society’ is a very queer society, and our politics and morals are of course the rule of *thumb*. And wherefore ‘thumb,’ you will say?”

“Explained in this manner,” interrupted Mr. Peter Schuyler: “for the title of my story is the singular one of the ‘Brass Thumb.’”

“The Brass Thumb,” echoed Dr. Cornelius Butler—and to that it *points*.

“I think you will see, on a little reflection, Mr. Peppercorne, that such wholesale denunciation of the political world,” said Mr. Peter Schuyler, “is not right. And you attack society, too, in such a dreadfully sharp way that people really will not stand it. Don’t you see that our modern life has grown wholly artificial and conventional? We are such creatures of habit—mostly comfortable habits—that we have become absolutely *artificial wax-work people*. Men, women, and children, we are all alike; we are posed, wearied—used up—tired, yawning—dreadfully highly taught—distrustful of ourselves sometimes, and yet arrogant—full of ourselves, because we cannot be full of anybody else. Talking is a bore—preaching is a worse bore. We know everybody ought to be good, virtuous and high-minded. We know all that already. Who does not prefer a comfortable path to walk upon, avoiding the thorns and the stones? I have feet to be wounded, I suppose. People do not like to be told what they ought to do. In these days, even Diogenes would have liked to have had his tub lined with velvet.”

Mr. Peter Schuyler then disposed himself to tell us his promised amusing legend or story, and Mr. Peter Schuyler thus began:

I will tell you a story to which I have given the name of the “Brass Thumb,” because Brass Thumb is the index point of it, and a singular article is a Brass Thumb. It is hard—it is hard, sir!

Amongst other pieces and snips, and odds and ends of old world literature and out-of-the-way husky, dusty moralities, I found, when I was looking for some such, the following two crabbed-looking, but, when understood, brilliant and

suggestive truths. I will not so ill-compliment my learned hearers as to suppose that they are unable to translate these maxims; and, I give you my assurance, you will be rewarded if you succeed. The following are these two maxims or truths: "*Der de noot vol yte, motze kreeke*"—it is an old Freisland proverb, "Hard as nuts—dry as nuts;" "*Die de noot vol eaten, moetze kraaken*"—and this is a famous Dutch saying, "Plain as pantiles."

And so aptly do these snips and maxims assort with my purpose, that it is with a certain gladness of heart, of which I feel the lively benefit, that I gather them *instantly*, like choice flowers out of the Low Dutch literary garden, marking them thus for my own, and transferring them as for the best buttonhole of my listeners. They form the *caput*, head or beginning of my singular, but *true* narrative, nevertheless.

And now, just at this point, for a moral reflection. Hard must his heart be who refuses to sympathise with that dejection and discomfiture of spirit which beset the worthy Dutchman (my hearers, ye know him not, but I do), Hans Hobbler. A good man was he.

That evil destiny which *will* happen to men, and as accords with common observation, in its most severe form when they are least warned or prepared, chanced to Hans. He was an honest, thriving trader of the good town of Leyden; a brother of its reverend guild of brewers, and a man well-to-do. Remorseless indeed must the deity of love have been, and gratuitously mischievous when Cupid lay in wait for him. But he who levels all things and all objects, big and little, from the castle to the cottage, and jostles up against everybody, and tumbles down alike, without any respect to either, the gold crown of the emperor, and the frieze cap of the peasant, was

not likely to pass by the sturdy Mynheer Hans Hobbler only with a bow. The god of love, in truth, for some time had not had a "hobbling" eye upon Hobbler.

And though beer barrels and taps, and spigots and caps would appear at first sight to have but little in common with so elegant a passion as divine love, still we need not be surprised even when we catch the rosy urchin set astride with his drooping hyacinthine curls upon a bulky double *X*; like the infant Bacchus, flourishing vauntingly his cups of beautiful confusion. In his meditations there was not a tub that had not its share of top-heavy love for Hans. And love had caused such a wave-like wind to blow agitation among them, that there was not one butt or barrel, nor even a small stoup that did not roll as crazily, as if verily, instead of one, three dozen infant Bacchuses, or young loves (for they are mythologically the same), sprawled over them; urging their legless coursers on to one general tumble-me-down intoxication; laying at "shorts or longs," or "heads or tails," and flying off their staves like feathers of lath whipped or snipped for the wings of these bibulous Cherubs.

In love, and deep as one of his own barrels, was Hans Hobbler, and that with the fairest and most seductive daughter of Leyden. Her father was clerk and seneschal of the old Church of St. Ignatius the "Plain" (or "of the Plain," I forget which). He was a rigorous man, who, though no tyrant like Dionysius of old, had in early days kept a school; but he had closed his books with his first opening of the Church doors. Punctual as his own church clock—which, to insure extra exactness, had four hands, two to take care of and point out the other two—Snrarl Highsitter always assumed his lofty perch under

the fat, smoothfaced Lutheran clergyman, with his bands, but beardless, who officiated at St. Ignatius's, precisely as the last toll of the bell notified to the ancient black inmates of this steeple that they could, as soon as the tower had ceased trembling after the clang, resume their grey lodgings without fear of being tumbled off their perch by the sonorous vibration which rendered foothold and home insecure while it lasted. When all this ringing clatter and rumble of the bells was brought to an end, with first a wide cautious wheel and then a complacent caw, one after the other, following the boldest, would the crows settle, and hide all but their sly sleek heads in the crumbled *quatrefoils*, which provided so many comfortable cells for them to look out of; winking at other cawing crows like so many black monks, pert and cheery.

Poor Hans Hobbler, as well as circumstances would admit of it, used to hover, like his friends the crows, not only about the top, but also about the bottom of the tower of the Church of St. Ignatius; partly because his love, the darling fair Leuchidde Highsitter used three times on Sundays, and twice in the week, to pay her devotions at her father's place of worship, and the door under the steeple was always that at which the beautiful slim creature entered; but principally because she herself did not live far off.

Leuchidde, so lovely and languishing as she was, did not, of course, want for followers and suitors in addition to Hans Hobbler, who in his Sunday doublet and his big roundabout claret-colour cloth breeches, really looked the pink and pattern of a gallant loving brewer, and who might have deserved even a fairer maiden. Leuchidde had numerous amorous attendants of various heights and rotundities; but in this impersonated kissing and hugging

and squeezing geography, incontestably there was more of latitude than of longitude. She, however, was modest; retiring as that Chinese-like lady flower which always closes its eyes in terror at the sight of the rising of the sun, and never opens them but at night, when he goes down. In her progress to Church her eyes were always bent upon the ground, and the secret of her loveliness was confided and entrusted to the folds of a scarf of double silk, so thick that the sharpest of amorous glances might not pierce it. Within this cavern of silk, however, like a wanton skipping witchlight, Leuchidde concealed mischief and merriment enough. And often when her old neighbours compassionately attributed certain convulsive movements perceivable in the hood wherewith she covered her head, to a bad cough, the truth was that all the time she was only laughing heartily (giggling greatly) at the stupid rueful visages of the rows of expectant gallants, some as attenuated as fishing rods, and others as rolling and ungraceful as runlets, who were following her pretty mincing footsteps. Droll, indeed, sometimes was this procession, and two lines of these enamoured gentry, coming contrary ways with their noses to the stones, have been known suddenly to wake up and to stand up short and angered in the face of each other at the church door; and then, after fierce looks, blown up into respect, scared as it were, by the great organ heard from within side, to turn on their heel and disappear, slinking backwards along the buttresses of either side of the edifice.

So tantalising was the temper of this wayward Leyden nymph, that besides those in love with her, whose movements from the intoxication of their passion with Cupid's wine should naturally be unsteady, she provoked her old

father into astonishment at her antics. He, in his grand white wig, at his nightly conferences with his ancient church worthies, would wail interjectively, with more of clamorous sharpness at his daughter's goings on than otherwise, because of the melting sugar of his natural disposition; not understanding the vagaries of young women. Leuchidde, being such a beauty, had of course the privilege to be wilful and despotic. But she ruled with a rod of the Italian iron, or rather she ironed out her gallants *flat*. She set them such impossible tasks to prove their devotion, that many gave her up in despair, and vowed that she was worse than the Inquisition, for that she devised more unheard-of torments.

Besides being a lovely creature (fashioned and made out of the finest fleshly ivory), Leuchidde boasted of accomplishments in the shape of four corpulent bags of gold, with little heads and strings round their necks; and which were so unnaturally distended in the stomach, that had their disease been of a less comfortable character, it would have been distressing to contemplate them. Theirs was a sort of prodigious yellow *hydrocephalus*, except that the globosity, instead of being in the head, was in the lower region. So munificently had these tender, originally infant-asking bags, from time to time, been fed, and petted, and patted with golden pap (or florins) by Leuchidde's dry-nursing father, that theirs was indeed a glorious mature repletion, testifying to his liberality and affection for his daughter; for these were to be her dowry, these big bags of gold.

Humble and submissive, because Leuchidde's wonderful face had quite subdued him, Hans, the lover, presented himself to his magic enslaver one bright Dutch afternoon, when the sun shone as dazzlingly as one of

the country's own brass saucepans. He had been accorded the privilege of *sitting* in her presence, a mark of high favour; and in the strength of the consequent comfort he had even ventured, not boldly but fearfully, to speak of love. But Leuchidde was perverse this day, and took him short up, with:

"Love, master Hans, is a matter not lightly to be spoken of by either man or woman—especially by man. I am awearry of Leyden, of my father, of everything, and of you, too, if you are anything, or if anything that belongs to you be anything."

Leuchidde said this somewhat rudely, tossing her pretty head slightly, as beauties are wont to do, all pouting and dimples.

"But, respected Leuchidde—but, much respected Leuchidde."

"I am not respected, 'tis plain I am not," replied Leuchidde, in a pet and with pretty flashing eyes. "No wish of mine is regarded—no desire is gratified. I could weep with vexation."

"Thou shalt not weep, fair Leuchidde," said Hans, tenderly, in his kindness quite gratuitously searching in his pocket to give his handkerchief to her; for the foolish man and lost lover was quite touched and almost cried himself.

Leuchidde, however, was in one of her obstinate fits, and she "refused to be comforted," like Rachel of old. After many *pros* and *cons* as to her even looking at him, she dismissed Hans with an intimation that she had a desire which must be gratified by any competent man who would think of *her*; for she would choose through a thousand till she had her whim, she said.

Strange enough this whim was—strange at least it



would have been, had Leuchidde not been a woman; for women were born to be puzzles. You must know that Leuchidde, sometimes when she was in a studious mood, looking at pictures, smoked a peculiar Persian tobacco of irrepressible, deceiving, dangerous delicacy. Not far off the church of St. Ignatius was a grim stern statue of Piebaldus—an old Gaulish worthy. When you ask in regard of his descent, how he came down, he was of rather uncertain strain that way. In those very dark ages, when there was no lamplight from literature, he had flourished; and his profession was a double-faced one, half-priest, half-warrior; for he was a stone Janus, looking two ways at once. His statue or effigy was set upon a high, ancient, grey pedestal, which looked as if it had been chiselled with a fossil bladebone, by Gog and Magog, during a misdirection of their faculties from two gallons of three-strike double-Dutch Babylonian beer. Piebaldus (or St. Piebald) had a venerable beard of brass, and his hands and feet and mitre were of the same originally glowing, but now green yellow metal.

A fancy had taken possession of Leuchidde's giddy head, that very morning, as she passed the stiff-looking statue on her way to church, for his bright brass long thumb, as an unheard of magical tobacco stopper for the pipe which she smoked.

"Mercy on me," cried the despairing Hans, "that the fair foolish creature should have taken such a mad fancy into her head; I am undone; I am banished her presence until I procure the brass thumb of this ram-paging, irregular old saint, and 'tis sacrilege even to think of it—ah, real right down wickedness and sin."

That unhappy man who would seek to satisfy a woman's whims is indeed to be pitied. Oh, my disap-

pointed, cruelly-used brethren, who have been tricked and made fools of by some charmer, who have waited and watched day by day, who have indeed lived upon the smallest hope, and who have persevered through weary suns and sighed through foolish nights till the morning broke miserably again, what think ye now—advanced to mature years, perhaps—of the chains and the tight grip in which ye groaned so many years past? Have ye not been guilty of some certain amount of folly? The dear creatures cannot help their disposition. To be “loving and true” is indeed to “look blue,” to “pretend and to boast” is to have the “clear coast.” Who can hide fire? No man in love can hide his fire or his love; but fancy and desire sets in so early in the woman, that the most cautious man, determined to be first and foremost, has only to ask the young, unprepared, newly-budding young creature, of I am ashamed to say what tender years, if she has ever experienced the soft emotion, to find from the damsel of ten, perhaps, that even she has the place in her heart already bespoken by some male earlier in in the field than himself, presumably the first asker.

Love is at all times a sufficient torment, even when its inherent terrors are not aggravated by inflictions from the fair one; but even in that very lowest depth of love, for a Dutchman, where Hans Hobbler had fallen, his mistress seemed determined to discover some still lower gap into which, when it opened like a trap-door in a black castle, he should be deeper precipitated. Cruelty is common with barbarians, and with beautiful young maidens, when they know they have a lover, or slave (for the terms are synonymous) at their disposal, looking into their eyes for comfort and finding daggers.

I should prove tedious and irreconcilable to common-

sense, were I to impart all the troubles of this good man, and persecuted brewer, in the lot which fate had cast for him. The impossibility of complying with Leuchidde's unreasonable desire (for no man was equal to the filching of this Brass Thumb) drove sleep from his eyes, and he wandered about like the shadow of himself; he was hourly becoming as meagre as one of his favourite long proving gimlets. Nought could yield him the smallest comfort, since he was debarred and dismissed from the sight of his mistress; for she absolutely forbade her miserable knight her presence until he had achieved the capture of this extraordinary prize, which was to be his limited service. He dreaded, too, that some bolder adventurer or dancer into delight, might in the meantime strike in, and more decisive than himself, displace the *whole* saint out of his plinth; whipping him up from his lead clamps and out of his dull metal into lunatic life, in the turning of a hand. If poor Hans Hobbler's love was arithmetically rateable as half a dozen, his fears were as no less a logarithm, and he felt that until he could count on some preponderating inducements to arise from his love, he should remain as stationary and with as impassive and stupid a lead-bob for a head as the dead-weight of one of his own Dutch clocks.

But at last Hans, alarmed at the rumours he heard that others were in the field against him, bent also, to please Leuchidde, on mischief to the Saint, determined to cut matters short and be up and be doing. Therefore he set upon the stern gardener's task—to dig up this intractable iron screw of a plant. So one bright moonlight night, which he chose for the company afforded by the light, though otherwise it would have seemed too

dangerously clear for his purpose, he sallied out of his house; sighing heavily at the necessity of it, as he left his door-step. Intent upon his daring act, he bent his brows and tried to think himself a Goliath.

Though ordinarily a most sober man, if truth must be told, this night he concealed in his bosom a silver flask of his own national liquor, Hollands. He was now known to make eager applications to it for advice on several occasions at a puzzling corner. He was enveloped in a cloak which went so many times round him that he was fully ten minutes before he had succeeded in rolling himself wholly up in it. On his head he wore a sugar-loaf hat with a broad brim; his legs, from his knees downwards, were cased in wide boots like warming-pans with the lids up; and he had mounted a pair of awful moustachios, and a long, pointed, black-painted beard of so singular and incomprehensible a character that, in its direfulness, the very sight of it might have slain a tolerably-grown child. His disguise was admirably chosen, and was sure not only to preserve his incognito, but to strike terror into the breast of any night-wanderer who might interfere with him. And he reached the corner of the church where Saint Piebald stood, as it were, on guard, firm in spirit and resolved to win the ungloved thumb—risk or no risk—or die in the attempt, battling with brass right manfully.

The night was lovely. The full moon, bright as a plate of clear cold steel, shone in the sky, and handfuls of sparkling stars were scattered over the soft placid purple. One star glittered bright like a fairy shield, or like a fairy ship shining with magic light, near the great Island of Light. The scene close at hand was quite of the up-and-down, in-and-out, quaint, Dutch character.

Tall, peaky houses, with innumerable outlandish lattices and the countless weathercocks, still and shining in the moonlight; the galleries and crooked Gothic bartizans, with their grotesques for trusses; the cut pediments and protruding eaves, and barge boards inexhaustible in variety, and presenting carved penthouses or "stoops," as they call them in Holland; the queer gateways, which, as you approached them, seemed a whole retiring well of moonlight with a Mermaid at the bottom of it; the gargoyles at the gable-juts, like snags or goblin-teeth set over the whole face of the city, or like fanciful glinting silver birds; and chiefly the fine old Gothic church, looking a little hill of priceless fragments, either of stone or silver, with its high air-hung steeple which struck upwards through a cloud and which seemed of lace-work, and the rows of church statues high in the air, gleaming like a shadowy battalion; all these objects were striking—even touching and deeply loveable to the picture-loving fancy; and exciting in a high degree. The streets were silent, but for a melancholy touch of wind moving up and down them; and which, when it ceased, made the quiet, of course, more profound. Nothing of life was there but the dusky muffled figure of a watchman; now glimmering, now dark. And this uncertain shape glided, as you would suppose one of the statues from the ranks of marble above might glide, which had stepped in the solitude quietly down (but armed with pike, not crosier), to take a solemnly stiff, unobserved, moonlight walk.

Hans slunk along in the interjecting shadow and startling light of the buttresses of the church like somebody bent upon no good; and by the time he had reached a point opposite the statue, the watchman had disappeared round a corner with his crossbow in his hand. For the

reader must understand that the faithful, resentfully orthodox watchmen of the period, especially those in the guardianship of churches, carried *crossbows* (as naturally the more Christian weapon), and forebore, for their arms, guns, and such-like unblest implements, in the use of which is required that sulphuric explosive pop and fumigation, noisy gunpowder—choice unexpected pastilles out of the “devil’s” box of perfumes, rich and enchanting.

A strange fear, not unmixed with awe, took possession of Hobbler’s mind when he arrived before the effigy of Saint Piebald. There stood the statue with a singular sunken, and yet majestic visage. His eyes, though far lost in the hollow caves which contained them, were penetrating and mysterious to a degree. And when the moon shone upon his face, there came two pale fleeting sparks of weird fire into his eyes. His mitre, or helmet, rose above; his right hand was extended with the far-famed Thumb pointing upwards. Severe, nay, savage as were his lineaments, there was a simplicity and grace in the great folds of the drapery of the statue which deeply interested. Hans mounted the quaint old pedestal, which had three flats, or platforms.

The moonlight fell blue and abundant around him, lighting everything up; pallid its reflection on the front draperies of this equivocal dignitary, whose hands and feet and mitre, or helmet, and long beard of ancient brass, shone dull and queerly in the wizard light. The wakeful stars above, in the quiet and the loneliness, seemed to Hans’ excited mind the myriad candles to a strange heathen incongruous worship in which he was guiltily to join. He and the shadows were as the only life in the whole still world: and the Moon seemed the great Ark sailing away.

“This will never do,” said Hans to himself, trembling all over; “I must not look, but act. And now that that convenient cloud has been thrown like a nun’s black gauze veil over Diana’s face, I will make an end of this matter, and possess myself of the Brass Thumb.”

Hans stepped up upon some of the chiselled scrolls of the ancient *acroterium*, and, looking round in fear, grasped the Brass Hand of the spectral Piebald.

“The Thumb, though all is rotten else, sticks fast,” said Hans. “Methought an effort might have broken it off. Stay—these metal appendages are generally mere adjuncts to the stone of the statue, and have a metal spike to pierce the member. Suppose I finish with the *whole* hand, and give this child Leuchidde instead of the Thumb only, verily the saint’s entire Brass Hand in her own. That were cold spoil methinks; worthy of a great Goth. But since the child will have it so, it shall be but the ‘touch and go.’”

Hans had great difficulty in loosening the hand. The stone wrist was harsh and dry; the Brass Hand grated and screamed, and whined and howled and hissed and spirted fire in his frightened attempts to *have it out*. Hans trembled with fright and often desisted; now for fear of discovery, now through dread at the sacrilege he was committing, for he thought the outraged figure was clutching with the brass fingers of the other hand to artfully stop him. At last in a desperate attempt the hand came off wholly at the wrist, bringing white supernatural blood or white marble powder with it. And the Brass Hand was like lead, and weighed as heavy as an anchor, in Hans’ own shaking and guilty hand. He in fact had struggled with a statue, and had the best of it, or—as it might prove to be—the worst of it.

To clutch up this despoiled member was the work of a moment; to descend the steps was that of another moment. Hans had the yellow brass flesh of the Metal Man in his hand to condemn him and denounce him and imperil him.

But what was Hans' dismay when he touched ground to see lying comically under the statue—the figure of a great bulky man. Propped-up with his back against the base of Saint Piebald's effigy, his hat lying beside him, and his ample cloak folded and spread as a pillow under him, was an old Dutch gentleman with the most absurd visage in the world; at this moment mingling a reproving gravity and conscious fun, evidently the result of strong drink: very Samson-like strong drink.

“By the Five Fat Burgesses, but this is a dreadful business,” said Hans. “Let me look. As I am a sinful man this unhappy old gentlemen is no other antiquated, forgetful sinner than Mynheer Von Plots; the very Chief Magistrate of the town. No less than our intoxicated and incapable lord and master. And I am another guilty though humble wretch, who have stolen the dreadful Hand as it were from under Justice's very eye. If the magistrate has vision left, I am undone.”

Hans, in a dreadful hurry, essayed to open his own extraordinary cloak; but it was a long time before he could disentangle himself out of it, and he was nearly tumbled off his feet two or three times in his attempts. But at last he stood a plain man, with two legs and no other continuation out of this muffling devil of a vexing cloak; and he produced a dark lantern, with which backwards and forwards he dared to question the unconscious face of his worthy town elder, insulted in the act. Mynheer Von Plots's full-moon countenance showed no farther token



of enlightenment than a certain occasional winking; and there was a grunt every time that Hans' inquisitive lantern persisted with its light, in restlessness more jealous and alarmed than usual.

But Hans' examination relieved him. He found the sinning magistrate quite incapable even of any knowledge of his presence, much less of the very deep, but we fear selfish, interest that he evinced. After a few unintelligible gutturals (*i.e.* groans from the gutter) with the ambition, though with none of the grace of a grand operatic prelude, the magistrate burst suddenly into a ribald Dutch song. And grasping feebly at the dark umbrella-brim of Hans' wide-awake hat, he waved his hand furiously but absurdly, and essayed to get up. But Hans pushed him down gently like a lawyer's black bag, every time that he tried to rise.

"This is bad," said Hans. "He'll alarm the watch. Fie, fie! a magistrate to be singing such a song, and lying there drunk. He'll secure my hat if I don't take care; and then there's evidence against me. My head's in a whirl. I feel as if the Brass Hand was stretching out its cold fingers over my chest—feeling here and there and round about to grasp my heart, as my best money-box. But my heart has shrunk to a nut, bouncing and rattling about in my body. I must go—I must fly—and it is expedient that I remain here no longer. Cannot I turn my magistrate's tipsiness to my account?"

Hans' thought was quick. A little exertion sufficed to take off the mitre, or helmet, whichever it was, on Piebald's head; and the cunning Hans placed Von Plots' fist in it, so as to imply that all the insult to the statue and its mutilation lay with the drunken Burgomaster. But to complete Hans' plot it was necessary that the magistrate

should know that there lived a witness, in Hans' own person, who might testify against him at any future time; and that to save disgrace he must be silent equally as to the loss of the Saint's hand, and any knowledge of Hans on that night altogether; who would otherwise expose him.

Hans shook his magistrate heartily until the latter gathered some sense. And when he was assured that Von Plots had picked up enough knowledge of the place and of him to answer his purpose, he growled out of his beard into the Burgomaster's ear, in a very gruff, bearish voice—for the magistrate was still in such a state that he was not competent to comprehend any warning less savage—"My name is Hans Hobbler, the Brewer," said Hans; "yours Von Plots, Chief Magistrate of Leyden. You know me. I know you. That is all. Good night!"

Hans Hobbler did not hobble at all on this occasion, but seems to have stood up to the mark considerably. Cunningly had he gained all his points, which are usually blunt points enough with a Dutchman. His fair Leuchidde was overjoyed next morning, when her faithful swain placed in her hands not only the BRASS THUMB, but the whole brass appurtenance of his reverence the tremendous saint. Sensibly touched with this proof of his devotion, she embraced her stout lover, and promised soon to make him the happiest brewer in all the Low Countries, and to take the vows of wife.

As for Mynheer Von Plots—when the town rung with the morning *carillons* that are so beautiful, on the day ensuing the insult offered to Saint Piebald, and when there was an indignant cry-out for the wrong-doer—knowing his own dereliction over-night, and that he had a witness to it in the person of Hans, Von Plots set himself

hard at work to stifle enquiry, and sent his ushers so industriously about Leyden, with one finger on the lip and the other pointing backwards significantly and rod in hand, that the outraged Piebald was left absolutely without redress for his mutilation. Thus things are managed. The statue remains *handless* to this day, the best proof of the reality of the story, for I would have scorned to take advantage of the belief of my hearers. I am a conscientious man and always tell the truth, unless the truth be something—so delicate am I—of which a hearer ought not, in its precise details, to be put in possession.

My friends, if with curiosity concerning the foregoing singular matters you should betake yourselves—any one of you—to the quaint town of Leyden in Holland, and should previously consult Mr. Murray's Hand-Book, you will see all about the places which I advise you to visit. You will discover the particulars of Saint Piebald, and be convinced of my historical faithfulness. Also you will be entertained, which is something in this world of barrenness. Therefore I refer you confidently to Mr. Murray's Hand-Book to Holland (see article "Leyden" to confirm me); and to assure you of my conscientious exactness in my narrative of all these romantic, but amusing particulars, I tell you that I add my name to this account.

Therefore, if I add my name to this account, surely you may believe me.

PETER SCHUYLER.

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## CHAPTER XII.

MR. PONDICHERRY'S SINGULAR ADVENTURE.—THE MECHANICAL  
OR CLOCKWORK MAN.

I AM in London. Hyde Park Gardens—the Terrace—is on my right hand—being so named, I suppose, on the *a non lucendo* principle, similarly to Spring Gardens—which have no gardens. The appellations are bestowed sometimes ironically upon that which possesses the least which it hath its name from, as in the poorest localities there is the denomination of “Rents,” where rent may be the last thing looked for. A highly commendable as well as singularly satisfactory practice is that which deduces things from the want of them.

Hyde Park Gardens consist of a row of magnificent mansions rising from the basement to the parapet—as most mansions must—and looking like one large palace; except that there would be too many street-doors to it. Hyde Park Gardens are on my right hand, and the Victoria Gate and the railing of Hyde Park are on my left.

I walked down into Kensington Gardens, my stick in my hand; but with a lounge that of itself showed I was among green trees and heard no louder noise than a woodland hum. Individuals fond of thought and of enjoying their own company and reflections on such occasions, I should not advise to do what I did; which was—not that I was particularly tired or oppressively hot—to turn aside from the straight path—bad omen for my morals—and enter roundly, which here means circuitously, one of

those painted alcoves, which in their green, or rather white, old age stand at certain distances like corpulent watch-boxes studding the Bayswater wall. Before I looked inside the alcove chosen as my place of rest, I had a sort of physiological consciousness that somebody was sitting there, which addition to a place of retreat, when one is in Kensington Gardens and seeking peace, is what in the latter respect we deem equivalent to finding none.

However, I did not permit my mind to change. Nor did I walk on and try another lodge in the vast wilderness. This would have been cowardly. It would have proved that the sight of the person I discovered in the first alcove had operated nervously and deterrently upon me. So I walked collectedly in and sat myself over against the individual. He was a man I knew intuitively without looking at him. I was affected seriously, as it were.

Now, I do not know whether the reader has experienced that *the very sitting* in some enclosed space, in a secluded spot such as that in which I then was, creates an alarming state of consciousness of yourself and of your company. I do not know whether he has discovered that such sense interferes grievously with one's thoughts and with one's composure. But this effect *is* produced, and it is not comfortable. It is very different, and the fact gives you far less of an impression of occupying in your own person than the sitting upon garden seats when you have the air all round you.

I sat alone sometime with this man. I was getting frightened. There was complete silence between us. Our reveries were deepened and not disturbed by the motion of the trees, and by the distant murmur of water. But I was wide awake. Opposite me this man sat without moving a limb, and looking like a post straight out of

the alcove. I sat directly facing, tapping in affected abstraction with my stick my pursed-out under lip. It is singular how much of a mysterious communication, what a terrible sympathetic secret physiological interchange is engendered in sitting thus so close with some one. I did not know the man. The man did not know me. But we were made familiar on the spot. We felt that we had silently and spiritually saluted each other—in our own way, asked each other how we did?

But in a little while I grew insupportably nervous. I could no longer think. I sat a dreadful time in stillness. When the person passed his foot along the gritty floor of the alcove or re-settled himself, it seemed an event. It was as if he spoke, but he said nothing. These ridiculous tricks formed epochs in our afternoon chronology. We felt at last as if we could neither of us even draw a single breath without the knowledge and privity and consent of the other. I put it to my readers if anyone could long remain decently composed in this fashion.

These alcoves are not the places, thought I at last, giving a nervous involuntary twitch of my face, for either dreaming of love or dreaming metaphysics. Gardens are places where you ought to talk to yourself, and only have yourself to answer. I do not think that a single word would have resulted from this which we both, through some occult magnetic means, doubtless felt to be acquaintance, if feet had not been heard approaching, and a person had not looked in upon us as though he saw something as he slunk by. This broke the ice cheerfully. The frozen waters of our spirits burst at once their chains, and the fragments distributed, flowing in all directions impetuously away. I was a man again, and released from my nervous fetters.

“Very fine day this, sir, for the time of year,” said my companion at a jump, looking me full in the face as if he then first saw me, feeling as if he had shaken off my occult presence.

Now that it was a very fine day for the time of year there could be no doubt. Therefore, without thinking at all about it, I answered, “Very fine,” and I looked my friend full in the face. I took at once his height, and length, and breadth, and depth, if I may say so. I positively looked straight at him. I sounded him suddenly. But being rather distrustful and fearful of hasty conclusions, I waited and reserved myself to build up my ideas of him into result more cautiously, than as through waters in which I had dipped plummet thus suddenly.

I found him a man that I should set down as of the middle size—certainly of the middle size—though I surveyed him sitting; a bad means from which to judge, and somewhat as difficult as from seeing a man on horseback to judge of his height. Bodily height is often the only height to which, in these degenerate days, a man is able to attain. My friend was somewhat thin in the face, though he looked healthy. His age I took to be fifty at the least, as I calculated from the sober, settled expression of his countenance. Though from the bright restlessness of his eyes, the scrolls of his mouth which time had not drawn out into lines, and the redness of his cheeks, he might really have been younger. He had not much hair; what he had of it was brushed stiffly out; it was intermixed with grey. His eyes were sharp and light in colour. His eyebrows were like arcs of circles, with one end pointing upwards like a salient S. His forehead was bold and smooth, except when he frowned or looked pryingly at objects, which he did

frequently, as if he were short-sighted; and then the marks would show themselves, and then shortly the whole of his face would be displayed as though marked like a map with the lines of latitude and longitude. Queer latitude and longitude, marking where all sorts of thoughts had been; ports and harbours.

This person had on his head a flat-crowned broad-brimmed hat, stuck firmly and straight on his upper-story like a good broad tile upon the top of a good broad chimney-pot. He was singularly queer. He wore a blue cravat with little white spots, a dark green coat, of a shape like a sportsman's or a gamekeeper's; that is the skirts of the coat were cut in the rectangular style, with "thwartships" instead of perpendicular pocket-holes, and deep pocket-flaps. He also had a brown waistcoat, displaying much of a smoothly-ironed shirt-front. Thus, prim were the articles of his dress. His nether garments, otherwise trousers, were of dark blue cloth, and he had on his feet, square-toed boots. A brown umbrella was standing beside him, with a ring of yellow ivory. The umbrella I thought rather an unnecessary travelling companion, since the day was fine, and there was no threatening of rain.

"This is a nice place to come and study in," said my new friend; "a very excellent place for meditation, and all that sort of thing. Kensington Gardens reduce into quiet all the noise and bustle of the streets. We have no noise or bustle here. This place permits one to draw breath; which I will defy anyone to do in London, where one is in the whirl of the tide of people."

"Hither then," said I, "should we send all the short-winded, and come ourselves if we feel that peculiar incapacity to breathe of which you complain. But I must



confess that I can breathe; though it is, I find, the secluded places, such as this, which make me sensible that I am breathing at all."

"And Kensington Gardens, for that very reason, was always a favourite haunt of mine," returned my companion. "I can't think in the streets. I cannot be aware of myself. That is something which I daresay you have found out, sir, if you, like me, have no interest in that class of thoughts which generally occupies men's foolish minds. I sometimes think that it would be better if I had an interest. I should then live in other people, and not live so ruinously in myself. From living in self there is no escaping if you get used to it."

"Those," I observed, "who live too much in other people's houses may stand the chance of finding that they are guests not wanted. But I see what you mean. You are somewhat eccentric in your methods of thinking. You do not give in to the 'usual.' You are fond of self-examination, self-entertainment, and all that sort of thing. You have probably time for such indulgence. In short you are a philosopher, with something in your pocket."

"My time is at my own disposal," answered he; "and perhaps it is for that very reason that I dispose of it to so little advantage. For I have observed that when one has plenty of time in which to do a thing, the chance is that the thing will never be done. *Carpe diem*, sir;—seize the occasion. And this is advice which every man among us would be the better for taking."

"Undoubtedly," I said. That was a safe word to use, for by it I coincided with the person with whom I was conversing, and I could not commit myself either one way or the other. A good rule; always coincide.

“I was tired,” resumed my new acquaintance, “altogether vexed at seeing that same round of mental living out of doors. We are railroads and steam engines, powerlooms and politics, banks and bankers, now, sir; but we are not men. This present period of public life is all commercial vanity and babble, and our intercourse with people and with objects is wearisome, vexatious, and a nuisance. All that passes every day about us, and in us, and around us is ‘sticks and straws,’ not ‘life and living,’ and I think that to contentedly lead such a life is a mistake. You will not think me far out, I know. We are not living men; we are things. I was forced, in my own person for a time, into the stream of business; and I certainly do not reckon that I lived during that time; I *found myself* again after a considerable interval, having no recollection of anything, except that I had begun the world, as it is called, with two hundred pounds, and that I somehow had in my hands when I arrived at myself again, a tolerable competence, which was a comfort” (a sneer from my philosophical friend, and a slight disdainful shrug of the shoulders). “I drudged like the rest, and I could not, or I would not see the sun during my business time. When I was amongst the mass I picked up my fair share of stones; these I neither threw away again after I had gathered them together with so much pains, nor piled I them up in a heap and went and set myself on the top. I walked off when I had done, buttoned up my pockets, and I said to myself, I have now settled accounts with what they call the trumpery world; I have terminated with its objects.”

“But you devoted your leisure subsequently to useful pursuits?” inquired I, with an affectation of interest

because such matters are popular, and somewhat *distrustfully* asked.

“Surely I did, sir,” said my companion. “Do you not think that we are radically wrong in going on contentedly, without making any attempt to become closely acquainted with ourselves as actual and physical? Man is *himself* and no other person; therefore, as I understand it, to know his own individual self, to examine into his own personality, by which latter I mean his body and the natural carrying on of the functions of his body, is an object of pursuit the most important, and that of the last benefit. It is something which concerns him exclusively and wholly. We lose days, sir—we lose days. We die without having advanced a single step in that true knowledge—a knowledge of ourselves; I mean of our own bodies. We do not even essay it; we never think it necessary. Such our hands; such our feet; such our legs; such our arms and their shape, and so on. ‘What a piece of work is Man!’ He is the admiration of the universe; he is the most perfect piece of Mechanism; he is the wonder of art in his own person; he is a treasury of curiosities; a mine of incalculable wealth. I can see centuries of profit positively in him. But *no one ever saw me in this light yet*. I am a MAN; a beautiful MAN, but nobody notices me.

“But let us be practical—oh, yes, sir, in all things let us be practical. I would assert that Man—and here let it be understood that I confine myself to man in his body—is a miracle. We see in him an exposition at once of all the material sciences—a display of all the principles which compose the universe, for I have nothing to do with the vagaries of physiologists, or the dreams of metaphysicians. There is no art which does not carry

itself out in him. There is no set of mathematical truths which stand not entirely displayed in his body. In fact, I may say, that the whole of mathematics stands at once shining in him. Mechanics, the science, finds in him its theatre. All the exact sciences, and all the inexact, too, provide their history and furnish their illustration in the body of that THING which we call MAN. He is a microcosm—a kingdom of universal manufacture—an *omnium gatherum* of all forms of existence—a *camera obscura* in which we again meet all outward objects—a grand display of the whole round of knowledge. All that can interest us is the human body. Remember, sir, if you please, in these truths I speak of man's frame-of-being or machine only. He is a great piece of Clock-work.

Now the world is wholly thoughtless of the treasure each individual bears about him. Men rise with wonders in themselves. They sit down with them. They go to bed and shut themselves up a whole cabinet of curiosities. Talk of a man being poor! No man is poor, sir, who has a body. He is richer in the possession of it than Cræsus—greater than kings. A priceless congeries of Mechanism, he could set himself up in any capital of the world as the greatest curiosity the universe ever saw. And his value would be infinitely heightened if he were THE ONLY MAN. Which latter circumstance is the drawback, I can see, in the whole question. It is however an unavoidable contingency. The quantity of the article destroys the curiousness and the value of it. The market is over-stocked. Man is unfortunately no rarity. There is nobody to see Man as I should like him to be seen—none but the Angels; and we cannot know what they think of us.

“It was this high value I set upon myself as a *grand piece of Mechanism* which led me from my earliest time to show more reserve and pride in intercourse than was perhaps commendable. How could I help it? Think of my beautiful lungs, sir, and their wonderful work. Look at my stupendous stomach. Note this head, sir, and its inexpressibly perfect watchwork. Why, sir, I can think of YOU perfectly as I sit—OUTSIDE of ME. My legs, my arms, these and the wonderfully developing engine like a telescope which I have about me—are things to fall down before and worship. Oh, sir, I am a most admirable creature. I was curious about this beautiful ‘watch’ that I was. As I had no door to open and look in upon myself—’pon my honour” (and here my friend leaned towards me and whispered in a very secret but in a surprisingly gentlemanly sort of way in my ear), “I could not tell in my anxious thinking how I was really formed inside, and whether or not in some fit of oblivion or sleep, or dreaming, or of counterchange and interchange—of persons—The terrible thing—”

“What?” said I, suspiciously eyeing him, and somewhat alarmed, although the manner of my friend was so singularly delicate that it ought to have set me quite at ease.

“Why, sir,” he went on, “would you believe it?—I fancy sometimes—in my prodigiously profound thinking, and considering my Protean perfections in connection with some ideas from my natural fashion and make, in my umbilical centre and otherwise—that I might prove—some day, actually, to my terror—to—to be—with child.”

“Good God,” I exclaimed, recoiling two or three paces; even thinking (the man was so cool and so confident about his suspicions, and such is the force of a

bright fancy) that such a catastrophe *might* be possible. This only shows what strange things can come to us when we are not on the alert; because it requires second thoughts for us to be convinced of anything—even convinced of those things that we know to be REALLY impossible.

“I have been caused much trouble in the world,” said my friend, “with this invincible habit of continually thinking of myself. My FEELING OF SELF caused me estrangement on the part of relations and friends. I was proud of myself. I loved and admired myself; but I was not unsocially disposed. I could not altogether separate myself from the world; but I was extremely careful. I felt that to avert danger to machinery so delicate as that of which I was conscious, it was necessary that I should keep people at a distance. No old lady was ever more careful of a rare piece of ancient cracked china than I was over myself. I was harassed with dread of injury to my Mechanism. This disturbance of mind brought another alarm with it, for I dreaded some day that this very anxiety concerning myself might affect that perfect working state in which I desired to be kept. I say again, I was like a watch.

“I trembled lest my hands should go wrong, and that I might lose the mastership over them. My hands might wildly attempt at thieving, with my consciousness, alas! but without my consent. I shook lest some of the wheelwork that I felt, whirring so quick, within me, should grow stiff, or turn and twist about somehow the wrong way. I felt a nameless distress at the probability of the drying-up of that oil which I imbibed in the shape of drink, and which indispensable assimilating liquid was diffused all over my body. I find it really

difficult to explain sensations which were so peculiar and yet so intense. I feel it madness to interpret and justify this extreme watchfulness I had over myself. I was so jealous of myself that I felt I could not let myself out of my own sight. No devoted lover could have been more jealous over his chosen one, or frighten himself with more exaggerated possible mischief.

“People thought me growing very odd. I saw it in their eyes. And yet my manners, though haughty and cold, were those of the world. But in this frame of mind, as you will suppose, my demeanour appeared strange; my ways had ceased to be of that careless diffuse order which characterise people easy about themselves, and who live without troubling their heads as to the manner in which they live—who never disturb themselves with ideas of what they are, or how they are made. But these are madmen, *I am the only sane man*. I wish I could take myself all to pieces, dust and regulate myself and put myself together again. I want it. But I do not know where to get the material for repairs. Meantime I take as much care as I can of myself, and am specially watchful as people pass me.

“When I could not avoid sitting down—though I always stood bolt upright when I could do so without attracting unpleasant observation—I used to drop myself into the chair as if I had the leaden regulator at my base—like the bob of a pendulum. And I was anxious not to twist myself too suddenly, stretch myself too incautiously, or turn myself upon my own centre with a *fling*, for fear of displacing the certain pivot. I shook with fear lest I might induce some internal tumbling-about.

“Some fluff getting into my stomach might clog the small wheels. Even a temporary mischance and an

accident which could have been remedied, would have been something to cause me the most poignant distress. I had tools about me and means carefully provided wherewith to repair myself, and I had temporary appliances to stop gaps. I had a stock-in-trade in the shape of physic, pills and surgical apparatus to keep me up. I looked upon my medical attendant as a mechanic, not a doctor. If I had broken any part of my machinery I should never have forgiven myself, so did I treasure myself as a masterpiece. I had the cards of all the surgical-apparatus makers in London, Paris and Edinburgh.

“I gaped with great caution. I sneezed with careful management. I economised my coughs. I talked only for judicious exercise. You will readily perceive that the natural carrying on of the functions of my body in this state of mind became a source of ceaseless disquietude. I could have willingly resigned eating and drinking, and so have foregone all those hazardous though unavoidable necessities to which our body has been rendered thereby subject. One of these, I assuredly feared, would one day induce entanglement. There might be some possible disarrangement, like a skein of thread badly reeled-off with a pin in it, in my complicated system.

“My situation was growing pathetic. How could I be thankful to Providence for making me so perfect? I often wished that I had been thrown together more roughly. That I had been of boards and clout nails instead of fine ivory-carving and wirework. I found it difficult to understand why so many intertwisting, intertwining, I may say intermeddling mechanical powers; such delicate and perilous machinery—so wonderfully fine—should have been introduced into me and no consent asked. Consider the trouble that I had in keeping myself in order



and the ceaseless care that was necessary over so much indescribable small machinery. This thought about the risk that I ran tormented me every day till I forgot it in sleep; and then I was indeed glad. For I handed over the care of me to a better Power than myself. I had been happy otherwise—beset by none of these ever-present distresses; for I had friends and money. I could not—without becoming ridiculous—in going about in the public ways, place a label on my front, inscribed with the caution—‘Fragile; with care.’ This thought about my personal perils was the bitter drop in my cup.”

There was something in my friend’s talk which struck me as cogent and reasonable—*if he were not mad*; a fact *which might have been possible*. But he talked some excellent sense with all his madness. I began seriously to doubt whether in ordinary life *we* ought not to be called mad, in taking so little thought about our bodies and slighting and neglecting them and postponing their care—this in the way that we daily do, in drinking so much nasty stuff and in so much eating, and troubling. “What a piece of work is man.” Indeed, what a piece of work is He as a masterpiece of ingenuity in his make. Surely man ought to be ashamed of himself in destroying his body as he does—his mind only intent on pelf, and telegrams, and rubbish, and vice and drunkenness; and his daily, silly, hard work; silly where it is not imposed as a necessity for bread.

“I see, sir, that you are disposed rather to think as I think,” said my friend. “We are all wrong, depend upon it. I doubt whether our christian duties are not concerned, and our misdemeanours implicated, in the not watching over and taking care of our bodies.

“We are such consummate *phenomena*—we are such

works of art with the beautiful watchwork inside—costing no end of pounds as we should, if we had to be paid for; and with little doors wherein to insert the keys as if to twist—twist—and to wind us up; why we are such surprising mechanism that we are inexpressibly valuable. And here we are with our voices piping and modulating and with other strange sounds—*coming from us.*”

Our conversation proceeded, if that can be called conversation which was all confession on one side and all confusion and all wonder on the other. I spoke but little. When I did speak, it was only by a slight doubt and a delicate disbelief, hinted now and then to draw this singular man—of whom I was at first frightened as a madman—farther amusingly out. I discovered that he was very fond of science and had it all at his fingers' ends. This was not a man for speculation, or for a search after philosophical or metaphysical theories about causes. He was an individual born for mechanics. He told me that he had devoted many years to the study of science in all its practical and useful branches.<sup>1</sup> In the course of his investigation into all these matters he had been thrown into a state of astonishment, and of great delight, by a curious exhibition which was opened in London some few

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<sup>1</sup> A critic in America, in answer to a request for his opinion of an organ constructed upon highly scientific principles by a firm of very ambitious organ builders and musical instrument makers, sought to bring down their conceit by expressing his ideas in the following domineering manner—“Your organ is, without doubt, one of the most wretched machines of the name to be found anywhere. It rattles, it wheezes, it squeals, it squeaks, it snorts, it grunts, it groans and growls, it blows like a fish-horn, and puffs like a locomotive, it thumps and whimpers, snuffles and whines, it lows like a cow, neighs like a horse, and brays like an ass—and yet you wonder that the music is unsatisfactory.” The vanity of man in his mechanical efforts to forestal, improve upon, to rival or to supersede nature needs a corrective from common-sense continually. The hypochondria who fancies himself a machine cannot command nature's unconscious success.

years ago, and purported to display all the wonders of the human body as exemplified in two perfect models, produced by extraordinary art, of a Male Specimen and a Female Specimen. He was particularly delighted with the Female Specimen. My friend extended warmly his countenance to these beautiful Anatomical Figures; and he marked his interest and approval by taking out a permanent season-ticket for the exhibition.

I could well understand how, at this fixed, curious exposition of the natural human bodies, he would only have missed the sense of life about them—however truly impossible this was—which would have been amply supplied by witnessing as vivisection the operations in the living subject. Short of this, he was content to evince his gratitude to the ingenious artist, and really to consider him (with the piquant exaltation of the connoisseur) as the cleverest man in his knowledge, in the transcendent walk, and as a constructor without rival in his Imitations of Nature.

“Oh, sir,” he said, “this Man and this Woman were perfect in their glass-cases. And what must we think of OURSELVES, if, when the imitation merely is so priceless—so astonishingly instructive—so noble and great—truly I am breathless in the terms of admiration that I must apply to this ORIGINAL—namely ourselves—you and I; begging your pardon only in one respect, because you are not possibly up to my ideal, and have not all the organs and peculiarities authentic and complete as a Model Man.

“I have no doubt you are passable, even perhaps worthier than the average—my dear sir, if you will allow me to call you so,—surpassing the average. But you are not the ‘Model Man,’ because you are not MYSELF as I know myself—perfect flesh and blood of the solidified

Oh, a prosperously working composition—*ne plus ultra* in its excellence, refruently alterative and identical in return, without a screw loose; self-maintaining, self-corrective—in short THE perfect watch! keeping exact time with the astronomical chronometer all day and wound-up every night in SLEEP. You are not all this, sir. But I am all this. I have maps of myself and ichnographical projections, rates of pressure and latitudes and longitudes—superbly mounted and gilt. Mounted and gilt, sir.”

Our conversation was instructive to me, inasmuch as it afforded strange lights in and through a heretofore dark hole of philosophy—like a coal-hole. It drew back the shade, as it were, from a show-glass at which, when I put my eye, I saw an undreamt-of Little World of puppet-mechanism all going, clicking, whirring, and tumbling (like Jacks-a-Dandy) at once. But our talk was rather more abruptly than, as I felt, pleasantly put an end to. My friend happened to spy some mechanician of Poland Street (as he, turning round, stated to me) wandering over the grass towards the Gate, with a retort under his arm. With this person it seems my man of science had some business respecting the colour for glass-eyes. To secure the exactness of a similarity to nature in glass eyes, was, it seems, the *ultima Thule* of ambitious achievement to these unparelled professors, or Man Fanciers of Poland Street.

“That transparent opacity which goes with nature is now secure,” whispered my friend to me, “or I should not see him out”—and he nodded and winked. “I shall go after him, sir, and hear the particulars. And meantime—good afternoon, sir!—here is my card. Let us renew our agreeable conversation on another occasion.”

“I do not know whether I should not be distrustful of you,” thought I, “as a Man to make me alarmed in the world.”

Lastly, my friend buttoned up his coat with smiling deliberation, took his umbrella from the seat more like an image than a man, and moved-out of the alcove as if impelled—first arm, next leg, then arm, then leg—by clock-work. He said “good-bye” with warmth and with abundance of pride, though it seemed interjected gruffly, in some temporary whirr and jerk as of his make-up like some serious Indian-rubber jumper with gold eyes.

The alcove impressed me as lonely after this Strange Man had gone, and therefore I rose up to go, too.

Was I in a dream? I did not know what to think. Whether this very clever fellow or madman joined the glass-eye maker of Poland Street or not I cannot say, for the trees as I looked back shortly cut him off from my sight. But one result was distinct from my encounter with this singular philosopher. For the next half-hour I certainly drew my breath with an uncomfortable consciousness about it and anxiety; stopping every now and then and taking the “inspiration” and expanding my chest with attention to see that it was all right—to be *sure* that it was all right.

I afterwards caught myself walking more upright and carefully. I seemed to put my hand on the bellows of my lungs. I was even detecting some of the movements of my sly, secret, interior economy, as if I had got something in my stomach. I felt as if I wanted to shake off care about all this. I had never before troubled myself concerning these matters. But I now seemed to become for the first time in my life AWARE OF MYSELF. Was I about subsiding as an anatomical *hortus siccus*—a

dry garden ; in which metaphorically the inquisitive, restlessly active spade and rake of my mind were to search disturbingly my mould, my infinite vegetation—much better left alone, as well as all the perplexing mechanical inside. What a pretty fellow must I be to meddle with so precious a specimen of art—even in idea to turn my enquiries within and not to take nature on trust—letting her be at her private business and not presuming to watch her—getting perhaps the worst of it.

Men have been known before now to swallow twos and threes of knives and pebblestones ; and to like them ! The horror of all this struck me forcibly. I thought that if there were any more International Exhibitions, if I did not go mad over them, I would go and claim space and set myself up as the greatest curiosity in the world, for people to come and examine and to wonder over. Displaying my beautiful interior as a perfect appeal against drunkenness, for instance, and as a protest against the vile doctrine of evolution.

But back to life. Back to real life, where there is no unwelcome consciousness, and where self is enjoyment, without the trouble of puzzling out one's ins-and-outs, and becoming mischievously aware of our make-up, belongings and contents. The green grass looking so inviting beguiled me from the gravel, and I turned off and walked through the clump of trees towards the Round Pond, the quaintness of the old windows and that Netherlandish antiquity of Kensington Palace being imperfectly, from its distance, revealed unto me.

As I went along the path rendered as impressive of solitude from the few stragglers in the gardens—stragglers that I discerned when I looked for them like dots on

the horizon—distant sails, which if not out of sight were certainly out of hail—I saw advancing towards me a young woman, who, I could see, was a nursery-maid, with a couple of children. The young girl looked a good humoured lassie enough (as an auld Scotch wife would have styled her), fresh from Somersetshire, I would take an oath. She was neatly dressed in a coloured print. She had a straw hat with blue ribbons. She had rosy cheeks, bright and cheerful eyes, and white teeth. Little darlings the children were—boy and girl. I glanced upon them with evident pleasure, and was sorry at the moment that I had not my spectacles on.

I am a lover of children. I delight to look in the face of these little men and women, fancying and trying to find out what their destiny is like to be in the future years. It is pleasant employment thus for one, whose sun is past meridian, to guess their social history in the years yet to arrive, and to conjecture possibilities in a sweet infantine countenance at present unexpanded and in miniature—faces unprofaned and fresh from nature—faces sympathetic as yet with nought that is not directly real, and enjoyable, and beautiful around them. These two little abstracts of humanity, when they caught my eye, which notice children are quick enough in detecting, made a shy wheel around me in their advance, looking at me all the time with curiosity, to see what I was looking at. As to strangership, where was that? Children are no strangers to anybody. Their smile of sunny frankness could interpose nothing of doubt between my good humour and theirs. And so the boy came up and quietly said—“This is my sister;” as if it were a new and most important fact to tell me.

“I thought so,” I said; “and you are her brother?”

“No,” the little girl said, half shyly and slyly—“he is Willie.”

They said this as if I must have known it all as truth before.

“Well, Willie,” said I, smiling at both of them, “I am glad to see you. And why can’t you be ‘Willie’ and the brother of your sister at the same time, Willie?” said I.

“I don’t know,” said Willie, stoutly. “I must go away. Here—*she’s coming*,” meaning the maid, who was now close by.

The little girl was about seven years of age. She had abundance of light hair flowing down her back, and she had clear blue eyes, large and penetrating. This little girl’s complexion was like milk in its whiteness, or rather she was as a rose bud, or a pink rose blushing in snow; if that were possible. At all events in the light the whiteness of the fair child was contra-distinguished with the rose colour—the red diffusing into the whiteness. That little child must, if living, be a grown-up girl now, beautiful as Hebe or as Helen, I vow.

Her little hat was perfection, her muslin skirts were perfection. A tiny parasol and her gloves were in her hand. Her fairy parasol she playfully waved to and fro as she advanced along the walk, her chin accompanying the movement pertly and slightly petulant.

The boy was a fine child of eight, or thereabouts, in one of the modern boy’s picturesque suits, but neither gaudy nor otherwise provoking to the eye. His hair was long and hung in ringlets about his head. He is a man now, and ringlets are no longer for him; nor any of the consolations or ornaments of boyhood. But it matters not. His eyes were bright and bold, and his face showed



a large amount of spirit and fun; but it was repressed into a half-shy, half-advancing, and half withdrawing observation and doubt about me, when he caught my eye scrutinising him curiously, and with speculation. Poor child! he knew nothing of philosophers, and he was wondering and puzzling why I should look at him so inquisitively, and take the trouble to do so.

Thoughts passed quietly through my mind—many thoughts. “Leaves of the universal book of life,” murmured I—“of fine paper these tiny leaves—blank at present, or with slight mark—gilt-edged,” I added, glancing at the children’s dresses. “What will be the writing on these white human pages by-and-bye?”

May it be beautiful and fair. May the pen be itself well mended that writes here. Let the inditers look sharply to themselves. If what is to be here put down *must* be inscribed in *black*, to be read at all by an eye of this world, let there be as little black, and let the upstrokes and the downstrokes be as fine and as delicate and as cautious as possible. If to bind those heavenly proofs of God’s love and pity to you in this, their unspotted early infancy, it be necessary, as it were, to make fast their cherub-wings—that they fly not suddenly in disgust *back* to the heaven from which they came, order it so that these world-ligatures be easily got rid of—slipped—if special fear of taint affright these particular gifts of these “Children of the Court of God”—these white doves of the blue sky of heaven.

Beware that you are fearful and reverential in your own person, and that these angelic prisoners here may—if they should so please—spread their light-reflecting wings and soar back into the bosom of the universal

purity; becoming safe from the sins and the blackness, and the consequent thunders. Clip not their wings as the feathers of the rainbow, with sharp malicious steel, metal black, which owns hell as its mine, with Mulciber or Moloch and his journeymen workers to give it polish and edge—steel to do its mischief, otherwise it were not steel. Treat these children nobly, as visitants from among the angels rather than as toys to amuse, or as prisoners shipwrecked out of their blue sea of the sky here upon this dark planet. Curiously enough, there came a cloud in the sky, dulling the distant water, as I thought of the possible lot of these children born to us—the “Little people of the world of the Invisible,” perhaps angels wrecked out of heaven into this dark material world of penance.

I should have continued my reflections, I have no doubt, very profitably; but just at this moment a child's sudden scream stopped me. I turned with alarm, I saw that the little boy who had engaged my attention had tumbled flat on his face. His sister, who was some little distance behind him, brought herself to a sudden stand when she descried the disaster. Her hands were unconsciously outspread as she stood arrested in her fright, at seeing her little brother fall, and she had much ado to prevent herself from crying.

“Oh, Willy,” cried the little girl, fully impressed with the possible penalty for the mischief, “look at that, now! *You've tumbled down*—and didn't Susan say that you were not to *run away?*”

Willy soon got upon his feet and went running back, the tears streaming down his cheeks. And he was holding out his hands widely and helplessly all the way, as if the child, in his simple little mind, was uncon-

sciously impressed with the certainty of help at hand, and held hands out as if to catch an invisible rope of rescue; truly as if a thin sloped sunline, bright as the flash of a gold thread, thrown out by the watching attendant angels—the guardians and preservers and rescuers of helpless childhood.

“It has begun,” thought I, “these are the results of disobedience, caught up unconsciously from some thoughtless and unnoticed instance of rebellion and of presumptuous evil-doing, exhibited in the presence of the child. There is the first blot; there is the first spot of ink on the white page.”

Children ought to be to us a conscience; we should look at them carefully to correct ourselves. We should take them as the eye of our guardian angel fixed upon us. We might blush before them a hundred times a day. Who could do an evil deed, who could think an evil thought in the presence of a child? The man who could do so, must have more courage than I.

## CHAPTER XIII.

SIGNS.—WORDS OF QUAIN T WISDOM THEREABOUT.

IN ancient times, amongst the philosophers, a grand dispute went on as to whether, after all, this world were a Sham, or a Reality. Honest, plain-thinking men, were told that they ought to doubt whether a post was really a post. Archelaus was argued with, until, in compliance with his teachers, for whom, as learned men, he had great respect, he almost brought himself to believe that he was Antipater. And Thormio, after somewhat tough persuasion, however, was led to clearly see that he had all his life been making a mistake about himself, and that he, in reality, was Harpax; not Thormio by any means, as he had fancied himself, but Harpax, with an ugly name.

Now, the philosophers were right. For we are not making a mistake in asserting the non-reality of things; that is, extra, and outside of the world. On the other hand, to speak in Cervantes' vein of them, the men were not wrong, because we, human creatures, are correct enough in holding by our own convictions, and the hard common-sense of matters. To grave wits, the point just simplified itself into the question, whether this thing which we call *world*, is really objective or subjective. In other words, whether it was something without or within, something IN or OUT of your head. Mill holds to the one idea, Plato to the other.

Start not! There is truth in these dilemmas, insane enough as you may deem me in propounding them; offering such paradoxes to persons who so unmistakably see that two and two are four; and those that distinguish the difference between their right hand and their left.

Now, I confess that I am no philosopher; at least I am not much of a philosopher. Shall I tell you why? *It makes my head ache.* In truth these doubts in regard of THAT WHICH I AM—whether Mouse or Man—worry me to death. In my youth I ran my head against some hard things, which the University Doctors told me were “philosophical problems;” and as there are no Literary Hospitals—at least as I never heard of such—I was obliged to betake myself to my own infirmary, poorly provided as that was, to plaster myself as I could with articles out of newspapers, or pages out of philosophers; with the Quarterly and Monthly Reviews.

Despite the fact that I retain no marks, I still possess the ache, and all resulting from ill-considered vexations—collision with ugly, outside, physiological, if not psychological stuff and nonsense, with which really I had nothing to do. I entertain the most particular and thorough horror—an indescribable creeping, which, if only a few more minutes prolonged, I feel would make me cry for literary flannel. I tremble at unusually wise propositions. Of all nuts for critical teeth that are not already half-cracked, I go in hourly fear for my life, and so would you, reader, if you had suffered as much by them as I have for so many years.

Now, my friends, you will say that this is dreadful, that it indicates mental bruises. You will set me down

as a literary Lazarus, full—to speak the uncomfortable fact mildly—of excoriated places; in other rougher words, *of sores*. The ship, you will urge, tight and strong enough perhaps originally, has, during some queer metaphysical voyage into philosophic cloudland—like the pot of clay against the pot of brass—lighted upon a hard-bound, bluff-bowed wanderer (SOME PROBLEM), that has had no pity. You show in your own person the effects of the blow, you will say. Your head should have been something harder than an egg-shell, and contained something sounder than saw-dust to be scattered out of it.

You should have been something less fragile, you will insist, than a glass man, to withstand such knocks—speculative only in their philosophical character, but by no means fanciful in the effect.

All this may be very true and very witty, respectable hearers, so strong in your own humorous power, I reply. But understand that I only hint at this unhappy condition that you may be yourselves prepared for something that may be perceived loose about my discourse. However, have patience, and my experience of the world—metaphysic and solid—may profit you. It is the wounded man that can best speak of the chances of the battle and of the doctor.

Whether this world be a sham or not is of very remote consequence, my good friends, so long as we can all live in it. This, for my own part, I have found difficult. But despise me not on that account; though I regret, almost as soon as it is said, that I made you my confidant about my lack of houses and land—of bags of sovereigns and other such weighty matters as make us solid things. However, I shall succeed one of these days. I shall attain to the having a weight upon my back. I am waiting as

well for money as for the discovery of most other only hazily apprehended things, until I can get myself bound to the arm of some philosophic, popular windmill—that which, proving popular, shall raise me fairly out of and over the world; and taken round upon whose whirl I shall circle wonderfully—perhaps very foolishly, but still to the astonishment of gazers, and the putting of money in my pocket.

It has long occurred to me that most of the characters we meet with in this turnpike and trading world, are mere pencil outlines, which another man's mind fills in, and this with body-colour. In the last century, when London was literally a more open-hearted place than it is now, and when people's characters really showed distinct outside, it was the fashion all through the streets to hang Signs. You had no number then to your house;—you had a Sign over your door to distinguish it.

This, letting alone the pictorial effect, was by far the honestest way of informing people what sort of folk the in-dwellers were. It was your public advertisement and saved profession. You did your hypocrisy in painted wood—and saved much thereby. For who under the “Lion”—white, black, or red—would expect to meet at the door a very *Lamb* of a man? Who would anticipate, under so fierce a Sign, an innocent-looking man, submissive, ready to black your shoes, and a water-drinker? No *roarer*, except when there was no one to roar against him—only a tyrant to his own wife. Or who, between the windows of a first-floor, desecrating the Sign or symbol of the “Three Cups,” or the “Infant Bacchus,” squeezing his grapes lustily in uplifted hand and bestriding his butt and galloping it so tipsy-turvily—who, I say, seeing such a sign of top-heaviness or upside-downiness, would

look to meet as the owner of the house (respecting whose collateral claims to mastership there could be no question) an unmistakable, perpendicular, straight-backed chapel-goer?—a shred and caricature of a landlord, with lean jaws, an irreclaimable psalm-singer, and an indulger in starched Puritan band and black Calvinistic coif.

Signs must so often have belied their owners, in those days that the possessor of the "Castle" might have proved a mouse of a man, termagants have rated from under the cloak of a "Patient Grissel," or "Goliath of Gath" turned out only mighty in his littleness, and the "Angel" and the "Pilgrim" have respectively spoke and acted as a devil and a kicker and a curser and swearer.

No, men chose their Signs—and they were wise to do so—as they did their wives, for something as they thought conformable to themselves; or perhaps even for something *contrary*. Men in these pictorial transcripts turned their hearts, as it were, inside out, and they hung up these pictures as something answering to their own notions of what was right and fair to see, as something, therefore, respondent to themselves. These they endeavoured to make explanatory and indicative of their own natures; or at least of their own ideas of their natures.

Thus society, in the days of Signs, was more candid, more honest, more truth-telling, more reliable than in these present days of numbers, and of mere names on brass plates, on doors or over them. Some would-be fashionable people may perhaps be said, in their squaring and contriving, to live in the sense of a stretcher or board upon a door. And so thus they make a tolerable living off a brass plate with nothing other on it than a name. We would stake that great fact—our insight, from experience,



into the smallest social matters—upon this truth of doors and dignities.

Thus it is that we see, or rather we hear, men's voices behind doors or when they are coming upstairs, as the most immediate, familiar, and true sign of them. These, rightly heard, answer patly to the people's natures. Yea, in its very inflections the voice opens, as it were, the book wherein we read, or at least in which the gifted may, a whole history of men's predilections, prejudices, humours, natures. Each man, as it were, in his voice paints himself out, wields and flourishes a brush where-with nature daily sets him colouring himself truly, to the comprehension of his fellows. Refuse to listen to a man when he talks about himself. He will be sure to dip in the wrong paint-pot. Receive not his own sign when he has just touched it all with the gilding for you. Believe not even in the plain letters that he sticks under it. Away with a man's words, we say, when he himself is the subject of them. Away with all those capitally chosen phrases. With these, as it were, he will soon, in his deceit, lay you down a whole pavement for you to walk his own mosaic way over and be let through.

No, we must have our friends—aye, and our best friends—at a disadvantage. We must catch, to know them, even our wives unawares. If you knock at a man's door there will be always the specious, smooth-spoken porter to answer it in the sly guise of the man himself.

We are sadly changed in these modern times. Civilisation has indeed wrought wonders amongst us. Not the least remarkable of its transformations is, that we do not in any way now correspond to the appearance which we offer to other people of ourselves. And we shall be told

that no man can afford to paint himself out to the comprehension of his fellows in his true colours, because then perhaps he will be ruined.

Thus I have thought, and lamented, that there should be greatly too considerable an amount of this moral sign-painting among us. The worst of it is, too, that while you very contentedly read the false Sign; and while they who offer thus, in their acuteness, not their blind but their seeing side to you, laugh to themselves at your believing stupidity; the real Sign, if at all to be found, would be discovered most unexpectedly. Those pictures of what people really are, that private knowledge of our associates for which we would give a whole bank of treasure, are to be found only—such is the dissimulation of the world—by the greatest exertion of our sagacity; nay of our suspicion. Alas, that this world should be a place through which we, in our own defence, are compelled to walk so continuously armed, and looking to the right and left for attacks.

And now for some moral warnings. I am perfectly aware that such are unpalatable. But in the excess of my sincerity, misguided and mischievous even to myself, as it may prove, since I shall be voted censorious, I cannot avoid imparting truths that appear to me to be serious. Readers, or hearers, believe that I am friendly to you, when I advise caution about this picturing-out of yourself so favourably to others—in other words about this sign-painting. Be careful of the colours wherein you offer your likeness. If you are so happy to be able to manage it, have but one Sign hung out, and take care that that be true. You will have to reckon with the Angels for these masks—steel, or wood, or paste-board, whichever you may select as the easiest to wear, or the

surest to delude. Most men have *two* Signs. They have one for themselves, and another for those who are to believe in them. And do not hang yourself—or that which is the same thing, do not hang your Sign, which is your presentment—too ostentatiously, or too conspicuously out. The world hath affairs of its own, of as equal moment, to busy itself about, as the contemplation of your probably insignificant countenance.

*People in the world think as little of you as you think of them, be assured.*

Stick no more gold than thou can'st help at the foot of thy Sign to be stared at of men. Use as little tinfoil as possible. To carry out my metaphor of the Signs, affect not the high places to expose thyself out upon, nor the gilt crooks upon which to make music in the wind. And as thou art a "Sign," hang thyself so easily that thou may'st creak and whine as little to the setting of the teeth on edge as, in the plenitude of thy satisfaction, thou can'st afford.

So shalt thou be blest of thy neighbours. Indulge in no vain "Queen's Arms" about thy fitments or figments. Search in the Fields of Heraldry—if into Heraldry it be that thy wife, or thine own desire for fine things, compel thee to make audacious, unjustified excursions—for simple sheep, rather than grope in its caves or beat its bushes in the armorial books, for wild and falsely-called *noble* animals—lions, leopards, or collared or uncollared unicorns.

In plain words, be meek, be modest; above all be a truth-teller. Remember—to speak in parable—that a day will come when all this glitter and the colours of the embellished, naturally plain, homely Signs of this *village* which men call the World will fall off. That a sharp cold

wind, setting from we know not what oblivion point, shall at the wrong moment for us begin to blow. It produces fine unexpected havoc down the street, confusing our comfortable notions of the stability of things. Yea, it shall leave, in place of goodly, publicly-recognised *Signs* in all their bright colour, gilding and bravery, mere naked *posts*; the natural posts without any of the furnishing. The pictures, human or otherwise shall tumble off. The fabrics shall shrink into dust, and the very skeleton frames shall be at last carted away as mere lumber—the literal *pabulum Acherontis*, transported as items done with, to that dead warehouse—ah, universal and ever swallowing it is!—to which shall arrive no rescuing auctioneer! The churchyard, we mean, which brings sad thoughts. Gatherer of the dead shadows from the lights that were once!

Take these things to thy heart, for then shall they profit thee.

For are we not mere figures?—Jaunty Jacks in the Magic Lantern of the World. Are not our friends and neighbours—nay, all our lines of ancestors, little and big—mere flitting shows projected upon that stretched white incomprehensible cloth, the medium on which is displayed this Masquerade of a world? Ah, readers and hearers, man's life is queer carpenter's work! Our Man's furniture is three boxes—the first box, or white cradle, in which the youngling future man wails; the intermediate little box, in which, as the dicebox, the shadowy lots of his fate are shaken together; and the last box, or second or black cradle, in which—lamplight out—the departing man is hushed infant-like again into the arms of the Great Unknown. And all history has been like this, and all the people have been like this.

But think not because of these odd allegories and far-off hints—this falling back upon what is after all *truth*—that Momus is to be mournful with me. No, I intend to be merry as well as wise as we go on, and to extract healthful mirth out of our own friendly cheery characters we hope.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

## A SINGULAR AMERICAN.

“MR. Douglas Pennyfeather Crookback, you will perceive that, in all compliment, I give you your full, great, high-sounding name,” said Mr. Peppercorne.

“Mr. Silas Anthony Peppercorne, so I acknowledge with gratitude,” returned Mr. Crookback.

“I have a thing to say, as King John remarked on a certain memorably truculent occasion to Hubert his confidant.”

“Say it,” replied Mr. Crookback; “as several celebrated persons have enunciated at numerous special trial-times.”

“Will you do me a particular favour, and concede these gentlemen in general a request which, if I rightly surmise, *you* only, of all our party, are capable of granting; and which request I know they desire to make,” added Mr. Peppercorne. “But I am bold for them.”

“Tell me what I can do for you, my good sir, and I shall be very happy to try my best; which best I do not vaunt,” were Mr. Crookback’s decided but kind words.

“Then tell us some tale of Nigger Life, such as *you* only know how to give; gathered-up from some public source, or consisting of your own special experience.”

“The very thing to raise our spirits. This is a cloudy evening,” two or three of our party chimed-in. For in truth the evening, though warm, was gloomy with cloud; and it was premature, as to the hour, in its obscurity. For there are sometimes very dull days in summer-time.

## CHAPTER XV.

A PATENT AMERICAN WAKING-UP APPARATUS FOR LAZY PEOPLE  
IN THE MORNING.

“**I**N my experience,” said Mr. Douglas Pennyfeather Crookback, leaning back in his chair, crossing his legs, and taking his cigar jauntily out of his mouth, as if he had something to say worth the hearing, “I have had many singular difficulties to overcome, and in the States I have happened upon some very extraordinary and very eccentric, and I may add some exceedingly comic transactions now and then. We are a people of resource, we Americans, very inventive; and I need not say, particularly enterprising. I will give you a proof in my own person. Fecundity in invention, when we are put to it, is a great thing; and so is the necessity to invent; for as they say, ‘Necessity is the mother of invention.’”

“At one time—it is some years ago now—when I was in New York, I had some very important speculations on hand, which necessitated early rising. This enabled me to anticipate, in the character of the early bird, that proverbial worm which we are assured it is so advantageous to catch. Well, gentlemen, I was at that period of my life—but I am not so now, for I am as early a riser as anyone—particularly hazy with sleep in the morning. I was late to get up, and stubbornly lazy. I had lost considerably by this dangerous and yet

this seductive indulgence. Now as my rising only depended on some effectual 'rouzer,' I was determined to see if I could not devise some sure, though it might be noisy, method of expelling this sleep—tumbling it ignominiously out of me. I succeeded at last, as you will find by my patent.

"Distrusting my own ingenuity, even zeal, I had recourse to a very stern, rigorous mechanical friend of mine in the matter of getting-up, whose patents for new things were innumerable; although some of his clever contrivances were truly terrific when put in operation. He remedied my case of perverse, determined sleepiness in the morning at once in the following decisive and memorable manner. And I recommend the 'New Patent American, Morning-Calling, Effectual, Universal Machine' to the notice of all gentlemen as unfailing. And I advise its adoption at Hotels, Pensions, and large Boarding Houses, where there would be proper room to let fly its mechanical complications, and dissipate or modify its unavoidable noise, clatter and clamour.

"After the description of this Machine, which I will now supply, who will not say that we Americans are the very people for a means of turning lazy people out of bed. I would fit up one of these inventions in the Star Hotel were I not afraid that our excellent host, Mr. Hubbard, who is somewhat timorous in innovations, might object to the invention as too tremendous. But I will give a sketch of the daring design in a twinkling. The following is from my diary. It meets the case perfectly:—

"The whole apparatus is stowed-away in a cask, which is rolled, wrapped in velvet or soft-pile stuff, into the room where the person to be woke up is about to retire. He has previously placed on a notice-board in the hall



of the Hotel the precise minute at which he desires to be called in the morning. The apparatus is 'set' by an attendant, and the exact time denoted on a dial which is displayed in the bedchamber itself. Before the person to be called in the morning dismisses attendance, the contents of the cask are taken-out and distributed over his bedroom-floor, all in due form. The first article is a Yankee-clock, which is arranged on a vibration-board with 'fly-circulators,' over the top of the case which is set to start at the absolute minute required. You then, with the assistance of several men, lift the whole affair on a chair at the head of your bed; and you go to bed.

You doubtless sleep. Immediately at the hour specified the alarum runs down, and the vibration of the board with the 'fly circulators' sets in motion several revolving dinner-gongs, which in turn discharge a pistol aimed with precision at a peg supporting five-and-twenty pans of buck-shot; and of course it upsets the whole affair, and by a curious contrivance gives an inclination to the cask; and unless the sleeper gets out of bed marvelously quick, the whole concern, Yankee-clock and all, is tumbled on the top of him."

"Did you try this, sir?" said one of our company, very gravely.

"I grew a very wakeful person after this admirable rousing contrivance had been once tried on me. I was, after that time, on no single occasion found late for the Railway Cars—because I was afraid of the tremendous thumps I might get.

"I had occasion to travel West about a year after this alteration in my habits, and I went among the 'Revival People;' induced to do so by an amiable but somewhat enthusiastic friend, who to his religious interests wished

to unite his commercial views, too—with a handsome balance of leaning for the latter. He was a dealer in barrels and bags, playing-cards and pack-thread, figs and fuses, deal-boards and dolls, candles and cloth—in short, he traded in all kinds of ‘notions.’ We had a pleasant, rattling, jingling, thumping journey (I speak of the railroad) to our destination, and there we refreshed, and washed our heads and hands.

“We were invited to attend one of these great Revival Gatherings that are so much in vogue out West, in America; and, having never seen anything of the kind, it was, I must say, with considerable curiosity that I anticipated the sights and sounds.

“My companion and I arrived on the ground at five o’clock, when the afternoon meeting was finished, and the uninteresting character of the exercises at first disposed us to melancholy. I regretted we had ridden so far to so little purpose. But black faces soon came about us.

“The Rev. Joel Jones, from Bridgetown, espied us soon, and asked us to join his table for supper and psalms.

“The table stood in the rear of his bush-tent, and was covered with cedar-boughs for a canopy. The following was the blessing asked by the aforesaid Rev. Joel Jones:

“‘For these and oder combustibles be world widout end; and to the ebification of the heathen be de glory and honor. Eben so: Amen.’

“The meal consisted of bacon, clams, cheese, and fresh eggs, with very excellent pilot-bread. We were introduced to the great revivalist, the Rev. Horsham Biggs, of Byberry, Pennsylvania, who told us that he expected to preach a sermon of the most awakening character at

seven o'clock, if we would not go to sleep in the meantime.

“‘Dat sermon of Brudder Biggs’,’ said Mr. Jones, ‘hab saved an ebnormous multitude ob sinners already. Ef he remembers it as I used to heer it, it’ll jus’ make all de dry bones put on dere boots.’

“There was a good deal of chuckling in the straw of the tents after supper, while a number of scouts lit up the circle of seats with great pine-knots.

“The sermon commenced at 7 p.m., and was announced by the sound of a tin horn; after which the following hymn was sung by acclamation:

“‘De trumpet is ‘a blowin’,  
 Jog along, jog along;  
 And de seed de sinner’s sowin’  
 To de tares on deff is growin’,  
 Jog along, jog along.

“‘Oh, come away, Christian!  
 Come away, Christian!  
 De angel ob de Jubilee  
 Is turning up to set us free,  
 And soon salvation you shall see,  
 Jog along, jog along.’

“The text was declared to be a selection from the forty-fifth chapter of Genesis, the twenty-fourth verse: ‘And Joseph said unto them, see that ye fall not out by the way.’

“Having balanced himself upon his heel, and fingered the hymn-book with his index-finger, Mr. Biggs said:

“‘De littleness ob dis tex is its great objection. It don’t splainify itself. Oderwise, de meanin’ ain’t so clar

dat two or three oder constructions may'nt set demselves up agin Scripter.

“‘But, my bruddern, it is written, dat false prophets shell arise, which is hidden from the wise and prudent.

“‘Derefore, I propose briefly to tell what de tex *don't* mean, which will lead us by de eye of faith to de correck interpretation.

“‘Fustly.—*See* dat ye fall not out. If ye wait till ye *hear* suffin drap, de divine injuntshun will fall froo. Do not see froo a glass darkly, like de wicked wid dere opera glasses at the shapesome legs of ballet dancers. Frank heaben, de pore can see de Scriptors wid de naked eye. Don't go to be goin' blind like de owl, which only sees by night for de purpose of robbin' hen coops. De debbil always comes like a tief in de night. Ef ye wouldn't fall by de way de wise aposles trod, see straight before you, or de Scripter will be of no mo' avail than a stolen guide-board.'

“At this moment there were voices heard in the congregation: 'Dat's sound doctrin! He's a close preacher! Dat's evangelical!'

“The preacher resumed. 'Moreover, in the second place, see dat ye *fall* not out. Dis phase ob de tex leads me, my bruddern, to remark upon de different description ob falls. De debbil has many ob dem: de pitfall, de windfall, de wimmin's waterfall, de backslide, and so forth. Nobody falls without a cause; and, in nine cases out ob ten, intemperance is what's de matter.'

“‘Oh, bruddern, see dat ye *fall* not out by de way. Better to be carried home upon your shields, wid yer sword flourished over your head, and with yer heels to de foe, and de gospel banner in its scabbard, dan to *fall* in de march.'

“Exclamations followed here, of ‘Amen! Halleloojorum! Glory!’ And great feelings in the congregation; with earnest cries of ‘He’s orfodox! Dere ain’t no doubt about *him!* He’s a chile of de lam!’”

“‘Lassly, my hearers, fall not out by de *way*. Here I would add, de tex don’t say, ‘fall not out by yer weight.’ It ain’t dat sort ob *weigh*. De gospel excepts no sinner on de pint of color, or sex, or size. It cured de man wid de drapsy, and built up de gloomy skeleton. De troo signification is, ‘Don’t lose your road,’ ‘Go ahead, hit or miss, or try over again.’ Keep a leggin’ it! Watch the cart-tracks. Many a good man has been in ’em—Moses and Deuteronomy, and Isaiah, and Pentecost; it is de way dey long hab trod. I say to you, my bruddern, keep to the track! De heathen roar, and de politicians *hab dere peculiar ideas*. But mind old Joseph. He was a great governor, and wore de coat of many colors.

“‘Would ye know dis chosen way? It is jus’ by yer, in the straw-path that leads behind the altar. Come and kneel in it, behind me, while we sing the good ole hymn:

“‘De trumpet is a blowin’,  
 Jog along, jog along;  
 And de seed de sinner’s sowin’,  
 To de tares on deff is growin’,  
 Jog along, jog along.

“‘Oh, come away, Christian!  
 Come away, Christian!  
 De angel ob de Jubilee  
 Is turning up to set us free,  
 And soon salvation you shall see,  
 Jog along, jog along.’”

“‘Now, bruddern, in the fifteen and sixteen places, mind ye take the chosen and de proper way—there by the ole house, minding the pump in the corner, so dat the spout don’t come suddenly upon you, pouring water upon ye, in his power. Oh, look not to the right or to the left, my dear bruddern, but look only straight ahead; go in at the right gate, knock at de door. Ye have Titus and Timothy: and step up on this wayside stone and look over the hedge, but persevar; persevar I tell you—and be not puffed up; for he dat puffeth himself up—Lo, he dat puffeth himself up, and puts on vain apparel, and drinketh of the strong wine and tasteth of iniquity, and putteth his head in de wrong coat collars, and singeth at banquets, and sitteth on the high seats—yea, he shall be let down, and there he shall be, and de fowls ob the sea, and de fishes ob de air, and de men and de pelican ob de wilderness, and de women ob de streets and ob de purple and de fine linen, that sit upon the seven hills, shall come and say “The sinner hab been overthrown,” yea, the malefactor hab been jostled off his stool ob pride, and he be gone for ebber—ebbermore; he and his horses and his mules, and his chariots, and his oxen, and his asses, and his spotted leopards—yea, and all abomination; he and his, my dear bruddern—Ah, lost in the big sea; there in de great waste and de wilderness ob de waters; there in the sea, cast in the tub thrown to the great whale—to Jonah, and to Japhet, and to Jericho: there, ‘where go the ships, and where is that lieutenant!’ basking in the sun and the sin.’”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Bishop of Tennessee is reported to have told the following story at a recent Church Congress. He said:—“I was visiting a plantation, and the bell was rung, and the negroes, numbering some 500, gathered in the parlours and piazza of the house, belonging, unfortunately for himself, to a bachelor. After reading a chapter to them I preached, and said that I would

“A very amusing story,” said Mr. Silas Peppercorne, “and very well told, and rather free and lively, as most American stories are.”

“I am sure you are very welcome to it, gentlemen,” cried Mr. Crookback, evidently pleased, with his small eyes twinkling at his fun. He assured us that his account of the Revival had very little exaggeration in it.

“Let us now ask Mr. Peter Schuyler,” said Colonel Cunningham, “to entertain us with another of his descriptions of the appearance of the months in England.”

“I am so grateful and sensible of your own skill in story-telling, and in most other respects, gentlemen,” replied Mr. Peter Schuyler, “that you shall not ask twice for my contribution to the general amusement. I will proceed to paint a picture—or rather a slight sketch of August. August is a pleasant month, and it is the month (as you know) when many of us are out for our annual holiday and are travelling.”

hold a service the next day to baptise such as should be presented. I baptised between 70 and 80, and after the service I fell into conversation with ‘Uncle Tony,’ a plantation preacher. I asked him about various Christian doctrines, and finally said, ‘And what about the resurrection?’ With a very solemn face he replied, ‘You see, master, eintment is eintment.’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Well, you see, dere is a speritual body, and dis here body made out of dus.’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Well you see, when de Angel Gabriel comes down from heaben, and goin’ up and down the riber Jordan, a-blowin’ of his trumpet, and de birds of heaben singin’, and de bells of heaben ringin’, and de milk and de honey rainen down on all de hills of heaben, he will bring de speritual body wid him down from heaben, and take dis here body up out of de dus’, and tak’ the eintment and rub it on, den dey stick togedder—and dare dey is.’”

## CHAPTER XVI.

## A SKETCH OF AUGUST.

AUGUST is generally hot—fervid—with very little rain, and still less wind. It is the month of hot skies, dry and dusty country, moonlight nights, grain all gold and brown. It is the month of harvest, of “stooks”<sup>1</sup> and sheaves. It is the last month of Summer, when the skies have been *summered* a long time, and when we have become so accustomed to the warm green leafy season, that we think winter, with its cold and ice, and its grey skies and white snow, can never come again; nay, that it is a fable. August is the month of brown husbandmen with brittle straw hats, hot looking faces, swarthy hands, and shirts open abundantly in front to let in to their skins the slow moving, deliciously warm air. August is the month of the great harvest-moon, round as a gigantic distant shield, yellow, and broad in the pearly-blue of the slightly misty evening. Some silvery-yellow, amber-coloured (rather) clouds may be seen encircling and feathering the moon when she rises, changing to bright silver as she gradually mounts in the sky, throwing off her haze, and with her clear light deepening the soft grey into deep sky-blue, spangled with (as silver dots) the twinkling stars.

There is the warm noontide in August, when the air

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<sup>1</sup> “Stooks” is the technical term applied to the sheaves of corn stacked against each other.



in the bright blue is too hot for the leaves of the trees to stir, and when all the mass of foliage glitters in the gold, sparkling in the flood of sunshine, and casting deep shadows over the sunshiny sandy roads; the shadows are deep in proportion as the glare in open spots is great. Red roofs, and the houses of the villages gleam softly at a little distance. The gilded greens of the woods are mellowed as into gilt grasshopper-green masses of foliage in the country quiet. The grass looks smooth, soft, and glossy. And the light clouds which float in white, amber and pink, look like fine fairy chariots coursing the blue roads of heaven—"a fairy Hyde Park," in the blue tracts of summer sky.

The golden grain is in the fields. Here is a field where the reapers, with a *swish-swishing*, monotonous, in the heat, *snoring* noise, scythe or sickle in hand, as they advance straight in it, make the corn bow. Farther on, single sheaves lie on the yellow ground, which is seemingly burnt up in the fervid blazing sun. Stooks cover the field on your right hand, with the heads of the grain massed and bowing gracefully like Ceres' plumes, over their particular sheaf. Poppies speckle the amber surface like carnation-coloured silk dots of the *Legion d'Honneur* in a new "Field of the Cloth of Gold." A hum and buzz surround you.

Such is August in the valleys and on the verdant slopes of pleasant England. Pleasant England—which we all love, and like to live in!

## CHAPTER XVII.

## OUR MODERN NAVY SYSTEM.

A STRANGE change has come over the character of the British seaman. He has grown more collected, less uproarious, more genteel. His ancient lion-like spirit has, in a certain sense, been combed out of him. He is infinitely less preposterous. He dances no hornpipes now. He does not stare so much at civilised things as he used. His loud laugh is sobering into a simper. This notable alteration in the character of the regulation British sailor, according to the old ideas, is by no means surprising when we recall the rate at which all England has moved ahead. Ships? Once there were ships; and most beautiful objects they were, sailing over the seas. Let us acknowledge the fact that, in this modern mechanical day, there are no such things as ships; all is steam now, and steam requires machinery to suit it. Steam has superseded wind as the motive power. There were once windmills. I have myself seen some; but windmills—and the country, according to the true ideas of the country—have almost disappeared. I have looked at a windmill in the twilight, and have nearly as equally thought it a giant as ever did Don Quixote. Mills still grind, but these are *steam* mills that grind. There are innumerable waterfalls more or less picturesque, but watermills, especially fine old ruined watermills, are in these times objects for pictures and story-books.

In a parallel manner nearly all the picturesqueness,

all the mighty grandeur of our old-fashioned men of war—indeed the picturesque beauty of all sailing-ships—is fast becoming a thing of the past. The war-ship of former times, when in full-sail, looked truly almost a sensitive gigantic object—real in its splendour, real in its graceful, its grand life. “How have the mighty fallen.”<sup>1</sup> Now the British Navy is composed of floating iron-blocks, with occasional streamers of smoke; unwieldy monsters—

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<sup>1</sup> We call ourselves a Christian nation, or those among us who have ceased to be Christians are, so they affirm, the members of a higher, broader, and more universal faith—the religion of Humanity. Well, our religion, whether of the Christian or Humanitarian order, lately received a very striking practical illustration in an incident which took place at the Chatham Royal Dockyard. At that place there was launched into the sea one of the most cunningly contrived pieces of mechanism for the wholesale destruction of human life which the ingenuity of man has conceived. This was the ram, *Polyphemus*. The *Polyphemus*, it appears, is a sort of duplicate being. Above water it has turrets and Nordenfeldt guns, excessively powerful in the illustration of our Christian and Humanitarian principles; but these are not, so to speak, essential to the life of the ram, *Polyphemus*. They may be all shot away, and the destroying energies of the ram would remain substantially unimpaired.

The *Polyphemus*, it would seem, has been constructed after the model of a sword-fish, with improvements which are due mainly to the ingenuity of Mr. R. Barnaby, C.B., Director of Naval Construction. In imitation of the sword-fish, the *Polyphemus* has a ram which projects fourteen feet beyond the body of the ship. This ram is under water, and enables the *Polyphemus* to approach an enemy's vessel and rip it up from below, just as the sword-fish is said to swim under a whale and rip it up. But, thanks to Mr. Barnaby, the ram of the *Polyphemus* may be put to uses for which we can find no counterpart in the sword-fish. Through the ram of the *Polyphemus* it is possible for our eminently humane and Christian nation so to discharge torpedoesthat an enemy's ship and all her crew will, in a moment, be blown into ten thousand atoms.

After this it is almost needless to add that when the *Polyphemus* was launched, the act was performed by a lady, who accompanied it by the expression of her best wishes for the future success of this man-destroying monster. Is it possible to conceive of a keener satire on the blind folly and unteachable wickedness of this (so-called) enlightened era of ours, than is furnished by the launch of the *Polyphemus*, amid the shouts of the crowd, and the self-congratulatory applause of all the newspapers? We suppose that close upon a million of money is locked up in the iron ribs of this huge and unsightly monster. And for what use? Absolutely for none.

prodigious kettles with the lids to take off—loaded with enormous hollowed tubes of black iron, from out of the horrible metal lips of which are to come, flying-out, cubes and dusky iron sugar-loaves, and bolted shanks and long-pointed things that they call shot. Terror there is in all these things; but it is a coarse terror—a lubberly, headlong, barbarous, bumping, thumping terror. Our sea-service has become savage in all its detail, administered however, with admirably assuasive intelligence, by some of the softest-mannered, politest, most highly-disciplined, and pleasant people possible. The sailors of the British Navy are firemen, “stokers and pokers,” men to tend wheels, watch bolts and springs, heat up a weight of water into steam, and then watch and check.

What all this will eventually come to no one on earth knows! Our sea heroes of Trafalgar and the Nile, of the Baltic and the famous “First of June” day are no more. Their manners, their talk, their ways, their comical prejudiced style in which to view things, their obtuseness, and yet their misdirected sharpness, their craft in the wrong place, their credulity in the right place (for credulity)—all these characteristics of the true British, honest, fine-minded, in the real good sense, noble sailor—all these are of the past. These traditions are perishing even out of Greenwich Hospital. The real British seaman—his humorous traits and his queer salt-water, unnatural-natural, natural-unnatural personality—are best depicted in the pages of the old marine novelists, in the whole-length, half-length, or any length personifications of such adroit sea-penmen, writing of what they well understood, as Smollett, as Marryat, as Michael Scott (“Tom Cringle”), as George Cupples (the “Green Hand”), as Chamier, as the “Old Sailor,” as Dibdin and other nautical lyrists.

The comic or serious chroniclers of the sea can get nothing, no item sentimental or sufficiently wild or peculiar, out of modern sailors. Ours is a tremendous "tea-kettle marine."

We add a characteristic sketch of some of the humorous blunders of a Jack Tar of the right old-fashioned type—a type now scarcely believable by the modern generation—when ships were ships, and when sailors were children of nature, not as now, children of the engineering yard—"Cupids amidst the coal-bunks." And now for—

#### THE OLD-FASHIONED SAILOR'S STORY.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Come, I say, lords and ladies, look alive!" cried Stephen Spanker, reaching out his hand upon the bunk on board ship for his pipe, and, after giving a vigorous puff, laying it quietly down, and then squeezing up his right eye and afterwards giving a wink with it as if he were gathering up his wits. "Look alive! for the First Officer's got his eye on you. We're not agoing to pass the blessed time in this tarnation slow, sleepy fashion; only nodding our heads at one another as wise as owls, and with arms interweaved, as the schoolmaster says, with the Gorging Knot. Don't sit mumchance like a dumb figgur-head. And only listen and I'll give ye a story, and it shall be a real rum one. A story what I'll warrant will keep ye wondering with your eyes wide open, and with your chins all a-pointed like, in expectation. No blinking now, lads and lasses, no winking, as if I was agoing to pop a candle in your mouth. But don't shut your eyes, and come Tom the Tinker with his wooden spoon! and I'll ladle ye out something so smart that you shall all sneeze of a row, like with mad pepper."

This attracted general attention. There were plenty of "lads," but there were no "lasses" present. But all the party prepared to listen with an excellent readiness. Arrangements were soon complete for the comfort of Stephen's auditors; for, in his opinion, these were all best settled before he commenced his narration. He sought, in this forethought, to prevent distraction and therefore interruption about comfort afterwards.

"Now, d'ye mind me, my fine fellows—I mean my fine company," said Stephen correcting himself, remembering he had no females for auditors, who otherwise would all burst into a laugh and stop him. "Now, you see," said he, "I'm no way particular as to the sort o' yarn that I'm going to spin. Have what ye like! Satin I don't understand anythink about; but perhaps the ladies, if we had any here, would like a bit o' sentiment—a Rembrandt, perhaps, as I thinks the haberdashers call it. Ah, yes, I'm wery sentimental myself, at times, when I comes across a sentimental story with a Ruin in it and plenty o' White Handkerchers; such as the parson had who wiped his eyes up in the preaching-box in the chapel down-town that I went to last Monday—no, I mean *Sunday*," said Stephen, correcting himself. "For my part, I'd quite as soon have the story a gloomy one, black as night with only a stripe or two of grey through it, as we may say, to be configurative; or a taste o' whitey-brown. Flary, flyaway, bran new red or blue, or slow or sad, or dark and bad, or coloured or dismal; all's one to *me*."

"You know I'm never a one, in these matters, to please myself. I always think, you know, when one *talks* that one don't talk to please oneself but to please hearers; and when you talk to others you mustn't overwhelm

them with a heap o' stuff that *you* like only; but you must give 'em a little *element*, as they calls it, as will agree with their own disgestering. That's all fair and above-board. As to me—mark ye—I've no likings. I'm not partic'lar—none in the world partic'lar, mates—I mean, ladies (if we had any here to listen to my sentimental story-telling). Say the word, or give me a wink with your lee eye, and I'll be as mournful as the Mogul. Aha! what shall be the story, cobblers all? Will ye have the 'Three Black Boys in a Turnip Field?' Have the bottles up, cool from the cellar—cobwebbed up to the throat—lips stopped with sealing-wax. I'm a sort o' marine monster or willing wine-marchant. Longshanks for glasses or corporation goblets. Thick or thin. And, to get out the corks, shall we have a double-pronged table-fork or a hay-fork; a long pin or a short pin, a pair o' tongs, or the regular *tweestum-tweester*—the right-down regulation *carkscrew*?"

"Starnation seize ye, Stevie!" cried Christopher Curtis, "make a end of all that shally-bedeवilling! Get on, do, or we'll be hammering here all night on wool-bags, and getting nothing but the white dust out of them—white fluff to cover 'huff.'"

"Well, here goes," says Stephen, taking the hint. "'Off with you!'" as the man said when he caught the baker a-kissing his wife."

He then gave two or three subdolous, reproved sort of puffs with his pipe; and then said—melancholy like, after a pause:—"You never, none o' ye, know'd Bill?"

"Bill?—what Bill?" replied Christopher Curtis. "I've known a round dozen o' Bills."

"I dare to say," resumed Stephen. "But this Bill war a regular Bill—a long un and a short un rolled

together and the ends hanging out. I'll draw his pictur' for ye. Now, first, he was as round as a apple; and he stood plump down on his two toes like a beer-barrel on a stand. His face looked as hard as if it was cut out o' wood, and he was al'ays red in the face—like the sun shining out of a fog, or like the Empry o' Morocco painted a fine cherry colour. He'd got a nose that looked as if it had been tossed on by accident, like a dab o' clay flatten'd on a wall. Then his two eyes sparkled-like, like blue glass; and he looked piteously at you like a flaxen-headed cowboy (caught at it), a-staring over the palings. His wisage was pulled-down long like a face in a shining spoon. And he'd got a thin, little, running whisker what stealed round before his ears and came you twiddling all along under his chin. His thatch was wear'd away in front from his continual stroking of his head with both hands, and he'd got a rickety *crikety* voice; that, when he laughed, *criddled* like a pipkin full o' peas. Oh, he was the queerest-built craft what ever found his way to his mouth!

“Well, Bill Poker, for that was the chap's name (and a odd name it was to have, for I never know'd he poked anything at anybody except a spit, one arternoon in the Admiral's kitchen, where Bill was by accident, and when a impudent great dog was a having his say or his sneeze rather too near to the meat while the cook's back war tarn'd). Well, as I'm telling ye, Poker, who wasn't a bad seaman by no means; and, if anything, was al'ays flinging his arms out to do too much like Simon Spoon, the tailor, who, in his eagerness at his work, struck his fists through his windows to let in more light—well, Bill Poker belonged to the *Wengeance* frigate, thirty-six, what was then on the South Amerikey station, a-burning the hornets out



o' the creeks along the coast. At last, you see, a'ter a good bit o' badgering about up-and-down; now standing off the coast under a cloud o' sail, and now dodging in again and up-and-down under topsails a ferreting out the warment, with plenty o' boat-duty and blue lights—at last, when all was up, the *Wengeance* received orders to sail for England, and to be paid off. The crew wasn't at all sorry to get away. They'd had enough of black pepper and the fever; so they stuck reg'larly to it till they'd made enough easting for soundings; and they runn'd up channel with stud-sails out both sides, and with the cheering expectation o' soon getting into port. By-and-bye *through* they goes running past the Needles; and gets them up into Portsmouth Harbour and drops anchor just at the top of the tide; *heave-a-head!*

“Bill Poker had a good bit o' cash to receive, you see, for he'd been two year out, and had much prize commodity. So he taked his money, put it into a money-box; and he rolled all tight up in his night-cap to sleep upon. For he was a werry careful chap; and al'ays when on shore he liked to feel his money safe between his hands under him.

“Well, when he'd done with the *Wengeance*, he takes a shore-boat, put on his sou'-wester, though it was the middle o' June; and with his money-box, rolled up in his night-cap, in his hand, and with his eye 'a-squinting out for the sharks and other birds o' prey, what he felt well-persuaded was a-cocking their peepers for a snatch at his money, he comes me safe ashore and steps out on the Hard. Werry hard lines that Hard is sometimes.

““Ah, what 'fliction,' says Bill, heaving a long *scythe* as he comes softly ashore. ‘Here's your money, my lad,’ says Pll, turning round and seeing the boy holding out

his hand. 'Here's your money,' says he, paying his boat. 'Thank yer honour,' says the boy.

"And then he comes all lonesome ashore. And, 'Ah, bless my stars,' says he, 'what trouble and anxiety o' mind those suffers what —. Blow you, what do you want?—wasn't it you what pulled my cuff? Jack?—remember Jack?—why so I do, for I remember myself for *I'm a Jack*. I've had too much trouble to come myself at all ashore to give you a'knowldgment for bringing me. Jack?—go to old Harry! I knows you're a Jack. *And I'm one*; only with this difference, that you're a *jackanapes* and I'm, perhaps, a *jackass*.'

"'Now, see the countrydiction o' this life,' Bill goes on' when he had got rid of this Jack in the water. 'Happy's the seaman who, a'ter a long voyage, comes home and steps his foot ashore; and has only to give a slap to his forehead and call to mind at least two or three relations what lives in the town, if they ben't even at the water side a-looking out for their man with a tear in the eye and a pint in the hand. But I—I comes ashore and I knows nobody. All are strangers when I gets ashore, except the *posts*. Here's no individual to receive *me* with open arms. Never a glass o' grog offered in the hand of your father; nor a pipe, ready lighted, in the hand o' my mother, for me directly I puts a foot down. I haven't nothing of tenderness for me of womankind—neither mother nor wife—there's not even a aunt or a uncle for Bill! Ah, bless my soul, too, now I thinks on it, that reminds me o' summut! Ey—ey!—let me see now. Easy there,' cries Bill: and Bill, all serious, takes his big bundle in his lap, and sits down thinking on a stone at the side o' the landing-place.

"Bill kept his finger to his forehead, and sat deep in

thought for a long time. And then he looked-up bright, with a cheery smile, as if he suddenly remembered something good.

“ ‘Talking of uncles, now, I remember that I *have* an uncle, what lives, I know, somewhere out roundabout the town, if I could follow him and lay hold on him. I thinks it was somewhere out at the back o’ the town, and he sold rattle-traps, and cheeses, and tinderboxes. I remember that when I was last in Portsmouth, my uncle borrowed my money, and that when I went off to sea again he gave me a bill on “Clouds and Company.” Being away, of course I couldn’t present it in the middle of the sea to “Clouds and Company.” Bless my soul, I never thought of it since! But if I hunt him out now, I can go and lodge with him, and stop the damage for the keep for a day or two out o’ this bill; and then ask where “Clouds and Company” is, that I may go for the balance. So here’s fill and stand off.’

“Bill had precious ado to remember the name of his uncle. But at last he discovered that it was his *internal* uncle, as they calls it; and as Bill’s name was Poker, this eternal uncle couldn’t be *another* Poker. And it was in consequence o’ this, that he know’d it warn’t no use to ask for no Poker in the town; but Bill remembered the affinity, and how they al’ays went together, and how close they stood together, and so he made up his mind—which was just the same—to ask for Tongs, Mr. Tongs. And so he started up sudden, now, and cruised about the town, axing all the swabs—backing and filling all down the street, heaving-to and hailing. But somehow or ’nother he couldn’t overhaul the craft what he was in chase of, till suddenly at the corner of a street, who should he chance upon but the uncle himself—aye,

by Jingo! the werry 'dential old ruffian. He'd got a short cloak on and a shovel hat, summut atween a dilapidated Bishop's and a mad Jew's, and there he was a-shuffling along with his back bent, a following his toes with a peaky nose, as if sniffing his spectacles.

"'I say, Unky,' cries Bill, making him out in a minute; 'I say, Unky, heave all flat aback till I comes up with ye.' But the uncle only went the faster, thinking that he'd got a wild sailor with a harpoon to stick him through with, and half a mile of rope behind him. But Bill wasn't to be done in this way; and so he made sail in chase, and he comes up with his uncle and lays him sharp aboard, and shakes him hard by the shirt collar, like a butterfly by the wing.

"'Why, what a lucky sudden find's this been o' mine,' says Bill, quite out o' breath with his running. 'Why, uncle, I've been hunting you up all over the town all the morning; and by George, I thinks that you must have know'd it, and been cutting away from me, dodging me in and out about the streets and following your nose, sharp straight, to get out o' my way, with your eye round the corner still after me.'

"'Who's that a pulling at me?—who's that a pulling me?' cries the old chap in a fluster, trying to get his collar out o' Bill's gripe; and then he looked up and stared at him, but the uncle didn't seem to know the nevee, for he kept staring without any marks o' 'cognition.

"'Why, surely your'e my uncle,' says Bill, 'or I was never more deceived in my life. Bow and starn, I remembers your whole build now, old chap, as well as if I'd hammered at ye for days, and stuck in the nails myself. Don't you remember that I lived with you for a fortnight, some years ago, here in this here town?'

And, *I say*, don't you remember that you borrow'd my money, and that when I went 'board ship, that you gave me a bill on 'Clouds and Company?' and I never could find any clouds—only fun and a fog.'

"'Why, now', said the uncle, 'I spy at ye, I acknowledge I have some sort of uncertain recollection that I've seed your face afore, and that its not impossible that you is my nevee, for I had a nevee named Daniel once, and you may be Daniel—but, I say, my friend, Daniel had a beard.'

"'Daniel, and a beard!' called out Bill, 'why my name's Bill, and I never had no beard in my life, except once when I was in the Sandwich Islands, and then they stuck one on me to make a priest of me; but I tear'd it off, and that was a black and white bird; and my face, except for that, has been all my life as smooth as the palm o' your Christian hand, with no bard.'

"'Hand or no hand, beard or no beard, you *may* be my nevee, as I said afore, and I don't deny it,' answers the old chap; 'but I certainly have no remembrance that you ever lent me any money, and I never borrow'd none.'

"'Well, never mind the money,' says Bill, 'I'm not going to talk about that, if you only recals me kindly as your nevee; you're my eternal uncle, for my mother was your sister.'

"'Well, she might ha' been my sister for all I know to the contrary,' says the old man. 'You're a sailor, arn't you?'

"'A sailor?' says Bill, 'aye, I thought all the world could know that! I'm a right-down Jack, Old Neptun's my father. I'm a chip of the old hanker stock. I'm a rigglar blue, and I can hand, reef and steer with any chap in Her Blessed Majesty's Navy, no matter who the other!—only put on coals enough!'

“‘Ah—well,’ returns the old chap thinking—old Tongs, I suppose I must call him—‘my nevee was a sailor, and I suppose it’s all the same. Well, if you’re my nevee, why I’m glad to see ye then, and I shakes your hand, so take my arm and come along home. I makes mistakes sometimes, I know; but your aunt will see if it’s you. She knows my nevee better nor I do.’

“Bill stopped short in the middle o’ the road with much grave indignation. ‘Take y’er arm?’ says he to the old fellow, ‘take y’er arm? D’ye suppose now, Tongs, I’m such a unsteady lubber that I wants towage? I’m not such an hinfant as to want to hold on to an apron—though you are no woman and you arn’t got no apron; d’ye suppose, now, that I’m such a tumbledown old coach that I slip back into the mud, and can’t be got out without a pull from all the ropes round the posts, my dear Tongs? But there’s smoke ahead, Unky, and if you longs to lead into action, why begin with your guns and stand up like a Cannibal. I’m bother’d if I’m in soundings here, and I don’t know how to buoy the channel; so fill away, by and large, like a fine old admiral, one o’ the olden time, and I’ll shape a modest course—not in your wake, for I wants to see the town; but somewheres, you see, on your weather-quarter. For ne’er a man in the ’nited kingdom shall say he took’d the wind out o’ me. So heave along! spread your duck—I mean your cloak—and get the most o’ the wind.’

“‘You’re too ’petuous,’ says the uncle approachfully, ‘and if you warn’t my nevee, dash my buttons, but I might be offended with ye, you’re so free. But your’s isn’t bad advice, and so I’ll get into me as much wind as I can stagger under.’

“So the old lubber worked himself an offing, followed

by Bill only under his top-sails; for the elderly gentleman was a heavy sailer. So they stretched away through some of the streets o' the town, till the uncle shook the wind out of him, made a short leg to the side, and ran into a house with the door open.

“Here they found Bill's aunt, who was ironing in the winder with her night-cap on, and who, at the sound of their feet, as soon as she'd stick'd on her spectacles to see, dropped down in her flurry her hot iron slap on the blanket, and she scorched a great round hole in it, but she made out Bill on the spot, and runned to him, and fell smack aboard him with her foreyard arm grappling his lee rigging; and then her glasses fell over her nose; but she was recalled to common sense by seeing suddenly a great smoke rise from her blanket, to which she ran back with a scream. My eyes, there *was* a great display of affection—for she warn't Bill's Mother, but only his Aunt, you know—and then there was mighty fuss in getting him snug into road, and a cheer to moor to; and they gave away four penn'worth o' barley sugar to the boys, they was so joyful.

“Well, Bill finding it was all right, and that his aunt know'd him, and that he was welcome where he was, and that the old man was 'fectionate, like as one's uncle should be, Bill had his chest bring'd up; and he stow'd it away up the cabin stairs in a berth with a bull's eye, where he seed all the town like as through a telescope. Here lay Bill, head and starn, werry comfortable for a fortnight, spending his money like any nobleman, and smoking his pipe and drinking his grog a'ter dinner, and singing his song, ‘We're the boys for noise,’ every day snug in his cheer, like the Pope o' Rome. He'd got nothing to do all day but to cruise about the town,

sometimes alone, and sometimes with company, staring in at the pictur' shops, and sitting on a post on the Hard with his legs dangling down, and a gossiping with the craft and the girls. This was what Bill called his Gol en Age, as a Sage.

“But I'm going to tarn over a new leaf, now, in Bill's history, and to tell you how the devil, in the shape of the little boy Cupid, lay snares for Bill, and stick'd down thirty-six barrels o' gunpowder under him, like another Guy Fox, to blow him into ribands with love. You wouldn't ha' thought Bill such a fool, would ye? But he'd got a heart o' butter in his bussum, what melted when a fine 'oman, like the sun, looked at him. Ah, it's a pitiful tale!—it's a pitiful tale! but it must be told. Love spoils most men; but it ruins a sailor.

“Well, you must know, friends all, that Bill one sunshiny a'ternoon went with his Aunt Tongs, leaving the old man at home minding house, to see somebody or other up in Mile End—you knows where Mile End is at Portsmouth. As Bill had got money, and as he was gen'rous, he'd rigg'd out his aunt as fine as five-pence, as they says, and she'd got a fine new maintop on her head and a bran new square o' bunting over her shoulders what she wrapp'd up her bluff old bows in.

“Well, there was a regular procession of them. Bill goes first this time, with the clay in his cheek. And some little distance astern, just handsomely on Bill's quarter, comes me up his aunt under easy sail, with her parasol, you know. By-and-bye, they makes Mile End out, broad on the larboard bow, and they steers in through the streets to old Ginger's, whose wife and family Aunt Poker—Tongs I mean—was taking Bill to see.



“Well, Bill Poker finds the house a comfortable little craft enough, with a taste o’ starn gallery and a flush deck and bulwarks, with plants on ’em, all ‘a-growing and a-blowing,’ as the gardeners calls out in the streets. Just plump in the hatchway they meets old Mrs. Ginger, what had got on her a’ternoon cap; and there was Betsey Ginger and Nelly Ginger, all in holiday toggery, as bright o’ colours as a Chiny junk, with the streamers and the gongs agoing. Well, in they all goes into the cabin. And when they gets in, there they finds old Father Ginger bring’d to a anchor and riding easy by the fire, with a yard o’ clay stuck straight in his forred port. So when they’d sat down they soon gets—d’ye see me—as thick as pickpockets, and full o’ fun and joy and all that sort o’ thing—and jollification.

“So it was a rigglar tea-party, and they had slops and soft tack; and then, a’ter cranks and conundrums, they fell’d to cards. And, my eyes! you should ha’ seen the game, and how they lost and won, forking out and rousing-in as bright and sudden as old Jupiter’s bag o’ lightning when the string’s run. Bill lost a fortin’, I tell ye, for he lost eighteen and tuppence; but he boused the money out like a man, slap on deck out of his starboard becket. And in this way they went on, and so did the old clock go on, till it was time to ’bout ship.

“And so at last they all says ‘good-bye,’ and they all comes out, and Bill’s old ’oman—I mean his aunt—he shoves out o’ the hatch and over the gutter; and then the sly rogue turns his’self round a’ter Betsey Ginger, what he’d been mighty thick with and doing the handsome to all night. Howsomever, it was too late then for him to twiddle up in corners with her, and so he takes

her starboard flipper, silent-like as it was before company; and he gives her a twist as he steps off the door-step what makes her tears start, meaning it all for love. Well, she looked down over her forefoot, what meant she rayther liked the chap; and then Bill, struck all of a heap, heaves a tremendous scythe. But he couldn't stop no longer now, so he makes sail, cause o' the old woman outside the door waiting all this time for him; and so he ups me his helm smart, and works into the channel, bolt upright.

“Well, you know, come the long and the short on it, Bill hangs about a'ter this Betsey Ginger some certain time. And then at last, one cloudy night, when there warn't no moon to interrupt him with its glinting, Bill makes a declaration of his 'tachment, as they calls it. This he did as he parts wi' Bet, what he overtook, and who'd been down into Portsea to buy half-a-pound of tea, what Bill would carry for her for a pretence, because he said is war too heavy. Well Betsey said 'Yes;' she didn't know that she minded,' when she was axed to be married; and so, you see, it was as good as a splice. And then they went to the parson, and only waited for him to get a new book, when he said he'd enter their names, 'kase his own was near full and his last leaf was blotted.

“Well Bill and Bet was rigglarly axed-out in Church; and one Tuesday the parson had his gown clean-washed, and he put it on, and he taked his big book under his arm, and the church-key twirling gaily on his finger, and he went before them, and the fiddle went behind them, playing 'Drops of brandy,' only on one string, out o' respect to the parson, and the clerk was there; and they was married. So the thing was done, you see; only they was surprised to see the parson hold out his hand at last, with

'please remember the parson!' But Bill was so 'strava-gant that he giv'd the old cove a guinea. D——d if he didn't give the old chap a guinea!

"Now, you see, these people—I mean Bet's relations—didn't like the sea. They'd got a notion in their noddles that a sailor couldn't be a gentleman; and these bad people objected to Bill's remaining in the perfession. And as it wasn't very likely, under existing circumstances, that Bill would become a Admiral quite as soon as he'd open a cupboard door and look into it, they proposed that he should go into trade. 'Cause they said people in trade kept their carriages.

"Well, as I tell ye, Bet's relations, what had these mighty lofty notions, offered to help Bill into some store; and this design was heartily seconded by the lass herself, who didn't think anythink small of her own deservings and cleverness. And so, you see, there was a sartain consarn of a crockery shop someways up the street, what was to be disposed of; and Bet's friends and a lawyer what they had got among them, persuaded Bill that it was *just the thing* for him, 'kase he'd got some money, and Bet's father wasn't unwilling to do sommut for her, too. And so there was this crockery shop with the good-will and all standing to be had for a bid, and the bid war made, and the bargain were closed; and Bill and Bet suddenly found themselves master and mistress of all the pans and jugs, and of the ship besides, what was in Landport—you know Landport!—not fur off the old man's. So, afore they'd gone in, they'd had a 'wentory—as the lawyer called it—drawed out; and it 'ud ha' made ye laugh to see Bill counting the cargo with a two-foot rule in his hand what he'd buy'd; because he thought he'd have to measure the crockery.

“Well, the lawyer looked sly as he shook Bill’s fin as he left the house, and some misgivings striked Bill whether he hadn’t got into the wrong-box. For he didn’t know the ropes, and he got frightened at all the queer jugs and mugs that poked their noses at him whichever way he tarded. And he couldn’t work in and out of his anchorage in the back-parlour, without the nat’ral fear o’ fouling amongst the breakers and smashing their noddles.

“So one morn Bill says to his wife, says he, ‘I say, Bet, are we all right in taking the Admiral’s advice and dropping anchor here in such a berth, where one can’t have no confidence in the hold on the ground. ‘Spose the bo’sun suddenly popped his head in at the winder and bawl’d us all, you and me, and the baby by-and-bye to quarters. I’m bless’d if I don’t think, when I started-up, that the deck ’ud slip away from under me, and that I should go down in the middle o’ these traps. And then no “Ship ahoy!” would do, my lass; but you’d see your husband go smack ashore, crashing his hull on the hard rocks like a ship o’ glass. That’d be a mighty sell for these cocklofty notions, wouldn’t it now?’

“Ho, Bill, don’t frighten one?’ says the young woman what Bill had spliced. ‘It’s all right, you know. It’s quite a safe consarn whilst I looks after it. I’m always at home except sometimes when I’m out. And I don’t go out often, and I’ll look after the crockery, and I’ll sarve the customers. Oh, it’s a right-down fash’nable store!’ says she, looking proudly round. ‘Everything’s ship-shape and Bristol-fashion in it!’ says she. ‘And always when you’re at home, which I hopes for my sake will be all day long, you’ll sit, you know, at the side o’ the entrance ’top o’ the ’commodation ladder. And there you’ll smoke your

pipe like a gentleman, with a clean shirt and a frill on; and you'll only get-up and make your distant respectful bow as the gentry comes by you, you know, leaving the port free for the people to shove in their figgur-heads at, and me, where I'll be waiting for 'em in the inside with a crock in each hand and a decanter stopper in my mouth.'

“ ‘Werry well, Bet,’ says Bill, ‘I see, I see. All that’s chalk and I’ve the board. We’ll get on somehow I dare to say. Give me the compass-bearings and I’ll contrive to work in-and-out of harbour. We’ll be as dext’rous as any craft what swims. Keep the lead agoing and a bright look-out! And at night I suppose, in this navigation of the crockery, you’ll make headlands show lights. But set all your lights and chart the passage ne’er so well, I doubt it will be a tarnation dangerous strait; because I roll a little at night, coming home.’

“Well, my lads, as was right, you know, all went on swimmingly for some time. Oh, it was a glorious sight! The shop looked capital grand. There was basins and jugs, and pans and mugs, and teacups and saucers and ups and downs of pitchers, and crocks and crinkums all stuck of a row—some of them;—and some dangling to strings. You could’nt move for the chany. And the wonder was nobody break’d none of it. And the special ’stonishment was Bill didn’t smash some of it, for he’d roll a-bit—do his best to steer straight!—sometimes when he was working his way to Bet and his berth at the back, when he got merry.

“Now, you must know that one day this young ’oman, Betsey Poker, had to go up to town about summut. And I believes, now I thinks on it, that her business was about some custom, or some duty, or some botheration

about her barkie. Well, she leaves the shop, you know, to Bill to take care on; and he's got now, you see, the customers upon his hands. Bill looked as melancholy as the cow with the crumpley horn when Bet told him of this. And you can't wonder at it neither; for he didn't know the top from the bottom of any of the notions what he'd got there to sell. But there warn't no help for it; and off Bet went, with Bill looking arter her all down the street; and she throwing out private signals for him to keep his weather-eye open and to take care, till a bluff hid her what runned into the fairway. And there was Bill standing staring arter her.

"Well, Bill, when she was gone, took off his tile and rubbed his truck, quite at a loss to know what to do. 'Twas an onorous undertaking, as they says. For he felt as if, like that feller in the pictur', he'd got all the world upon his shoulders and nobody to help him down with it! He couldn't sit, for the wind, when it moved, was a-clattering all the crockery behind him; and he couldn't smoke, for he seemed quite queer. He felt sure that he was going to do some dreadful act, and his boat was adrift. So he snaps his pipe suddenly in two, and chucks it at a silent, thoughtful dog, what happened to be passing the door, and who seemed to be giving him a sidelong, wondering look in at the door, with one paw up, standing for a moment.

"'I'm all reel'd the wrong way,' says Bill, 'blow'd if I know what to do in this puzzling place. But it won't do to sit here mumchance, and not to try for custom. I wonder how they do when they wants to sell; there's a way, in course. Bet will haze me beautiful when she comes back if I don't get off at least a teacup and saucer. All hands here, up anchor, ahoy! Tumble up,

tumble up, you lubbers! I must drop outside o' the harbour, and if nobody will come in I must interrupt the navigation and make 'em come in.'

"So what enters the stupid feller's head, but that he must go into the street and tout for customers. He works into the middle o' the stream, and then he heaves to across the tide, and he begins—

"'Jugs and mugs! mugs and jugs! all o' the right sort here! Tight as a trivet! Teacups and teapots! New-caulk'd and all-ataunto, or jury-rigged! Bowsprit and spanker, tops and tophampers, round starns and square starns, copper-bottom'd basins and fir-built fire-brands, long eighteens and milk-jug to match, decanters bitted and stopper'd! What d'ye buy? what d'ye buy? Here's all agoing sudden smash, it's so cheap, like a grand glass auction!'

"Well, my lads, Bill keeps up this sort o' row quite serious for a long time, thinking that he was doing the thing in right-down, real chany selling earnest. So he sees, by-and-bye, a old 'oman a-ogling, out o' the corner on her eye, one o' the thingumbobs in the starnlights. And so, very delighted, he gives over his public invitation, and goes softly upon his toes behind her, and putting his two hands to his mouth, he bawls in the old woman's ear,

"'Ship ahoy! I say marm, you're head on my harbour. Take a wind and steer in! 'Tween you and me, I wants devilish hard to sell summut afore my old 'oman comes home; and if you takes a fancy to anythink you sees here, why d—— me, I'll make the purchase come light t'ye. Come in, old gal, and you shall have a bargain. Brace up a bit, hug me and the wind, and you're in in a jiffy! Come in, old feathers and furbelows!'

“‘Are you the chanyman?’ says the old ’oman, frightened and looking with suspicion at Bill through her barnacles, as if Bill couldn’t be anything like a human creature. ‘Are you the chanyman?’

“‘No, missus,’ says Bill, ‘the chanyman’s ashore. But I’m his mate, and got charge of the ship till he boards us again. I’ll overhaul the stores for ye as quick as Queer Street. Don’t be alarmed—don’t be alarmed? I’ve got no grampus under the counter to say “bow, wow.” Give me your flipper, old lady, and I’ll tow you into still water. Stow your spectacles, and bouse your hands. I’m all honest and aboveboard, except when I dives below and can’t find the tinderbox. As I’m blessed if I can now!’ says Bill, muttering to himself.

“So the old lady taked Bill’s hand. And when she’d got indoors and had reached a cheer, ‘You see, my good man,’ says she, quite quiet and out of breath, ‘I don’t know that I am not in want of a small set o’ chany, if I could find a handsome set. And ’specially a teapot——’

“‘Beg your parding, marm, for axing the question,’ says Bill to the old lady, says he, rubbing his hands affably one over the other in his perplexity, but werry polite, ‘hasn’t a teapot a jibboom forred and a round-about outrigger over the starn that you’re to take hold on? I arn’t quite certain o’ the *natur of the thing*; but I say, old lady,’ says he, winking rudely to the old lady, ‘I thinks here’s the boy! Here’s the thing,’ says Bill, triumphantly, hooking a teapot down—‘as handsome a thing with a point as ever swim’d the sea. See here,’ ses he, whipping out the lid and putting it smart in again with a click, ‘you can fasten down the hatch whenever you like. And here’s the tenders to match, all of a pattern, like Greenwich Hospital regglation wooden-legs. As



fine a squadron o' cups and sarcers as ever comed up with a tea-kettle. Here's admiral, and here's commodore, and false keels for the cruisers.'

"The old lady taked the teapot—or as Bill called it the admiral—out o' Bill's hand, and examines it werry 'tentive inside and out. Bill keeps up, while she's a-delaying over the tea-pot, an anxious look outside the shop, dreading Bet's return till he'd managed a sale. But at last, after pottering a long time over the thing, the customer puts back the teapot into Bill's hand and points out a crack with a shake of the head.

"'Some of the timbers parted, eh missus?' says Bill, turning pale. 'But where is it,' he asks. 'Ah, I sees, I sees!—starboard side just amidships. Well, we'll caulk her for ye, clap her into dock and 'spect ship's bottom. No extry charge if you likes to have her, and I'll take off sixpence in consideration o' the damage, and I'll paint her and touch-up the fancy work about her starn, if you like. Aye—aye, I sees how it is. She's foul'd summut. That's plain. Here's been a squall amongst the crockery, and things have been let down by the run. Here's been a bull in the chany shop,' says Bill, thinking to carry it off with a joke. 'I say, marm, there's been a bull——'

"But the old lady sat as glum as a bear. 'That there flaw's fatal,' says she, decidedly. 'I *did* like the thing,' says she; 'but I can't have it now at no price. I think there is really a "bull" in the chany shop—as you says' says the old gal."

"'Well, I likes doing business,' says Bill. 'S'pose, missus, you takes a couple o' pitchers instead of this fancy thing. I'll warrant the pitchers as strong as the Rock o' Gibraltar. Here's the brown Jockey's,' said Bill,

taking them up one after the other. 'Look at this feller! He's a Trojan! He'd stand a whole cart-load o' paving stones throw'd at him. He's so steady under his canvas that you won't hit him at the longest long-bowls. But tother's the one to my mind. He's a clipper, now. Neat and handy. He's as fast to the well as a flying Mercury, and a devil on a wind when he comes from it. Blow you, old lady! see it under sail, and you'd swear that all the witches whatever mounted broom were flying along snug in it. It 'ull hold so much that all the fillers in the world could never fill it, and it 'ull pour out the water again like the Falls of Niagara. Why, you see, you don't know your own int'rest if you don't have it. What a slow coach you is, to be sure,' said he, with much freedom. 'Take a couple o' jugs, now!—two for twopence, and a half-penny a week to pay for them. Why, what an obstinate old devil you must be,' cries Bill; 'that you won't buy nothing with no persuading whatsomever. Look here, old lass! Here's half-a-dozen white mugs for the grandchildren, and a odd one for the big uns to shy at. Here they goes; here they goes, like a flight o' flying fish.'

"Bill's talk, somehow, weren't of no use, for the old 'oman sits straight up in her cheer, like a image, and wouldn't buy. I s'pose she was frighten'd; for Bill had no manner o' control over himself. He kept flinging out his arms, and a-shovelling with his feet in a dreadful, outlandish fashion, more like a wild Ingyan or Jim Crow, than a civilised sailor what ate bread. The truth was, you know, that he'd *gone wild* with this shop, and so there wasn't no steady sail to be got out on him. So, you know, much to Bill's vexation, the old 'oman

cuts her lucky without spending so much as one shot upon him. She made a bolt of it from under his arm, crossed royals, up'd gib, and was hull down afore he could slip cable a'ter her; though he fired a gun, and threw out signals to her to heave-to, quiet and peaceable.

“Well, you know, the ould devil of a customer gone, Bill was all in a fix to know what to do to persuade Bet that he knowed how to keep shop, and that he had really sold something.

“So he walk'd fore-and-aft the deck, swearing like a new-un, and now and then giving a kick at the pots and pans. He 'spected Bet back every minute, so he suddenly thinks he'll weather her somehow; so he whips me up half-a-dozen teacups and sarcers and tosses them all out of the back winder into the yard, and there's a grand smash. And then he sweeps up the bits and goes and sits down on the top of them in the corner, as if there was nothing the matter.

“So, you know, Bet comes home at last; and the first thing she does when she gets in is to seat herself, panting, on a cheer, and to look round. And when she misses the teacups and the sarcers, she looks at Bill, very scrutinising like, and she says, ‘Bill,’ says she, ‘what's gone o' them ten teacups and sarcers what hang'd hereaway?’

“‘Gone!’ said Bill, nodding his head at her, after he'd puffed his pipe werry deliberate.

“‘Gone, is they?’ says she. Well, that's good; you've sold 'em, of course. That's pretty well,’ says she, ‘for a first day's work. It's more than I 'spected of your capacity at chany selling. 'Taint bad.’

“‘'Taint bad? It's right down good!’ says Bill,

knocking his knuckles down. 'But I'm glad I've got your appropriation. What start's next?' says Bill, slyly, a-cocking his eye at his wife.

"'And who did you sell 'em to?' says Bet, who was much more curious, Bill thought, than was wanting about what he had done.

"'Who did I sell 'em to? Why,' says Bill, 'I sell'd 'em to a old lady what had four new cloths to her mains'l, and a gilt ring on her starboard flipper. She tried deuced hard to weather me, but I warn't to be done; and I called all hands, and I luff'd beautiful across her forefoot, and I raked her topmasts down, sails and all, and cleared off the stock.'

"'That war good,' says Bet. 'And what did she give for the crocks, and *where's the money?*'

"'There now! Tarnation hit it! Blow'd if I thought o' the money,' cries Bill, getting up suddenly, and slapping his forehead. 'Here's a pretty go! Sold cargo and never taked no money! But I say, Bet, up anchor, and pursue the old b——! If she won't pay, and 'tempts to give us the slip and fling the crockery overboard, I'm bless'd if I doesn't get it out of her bones. You shall tow her back by the bonnet-string, riddled like a old hulk, and we'll seize her 'quipment, and sell it to pay the damage, and send her back to Portsmouth stripped to her clogs.'

"'Pay the damage,' cries Bet: 'why, *what* a fool you must be! The old 'oman's stripped to her deck herself, by this time, and safe moor'd inside her own battery. Shut-to the door, and put up the shutters, and strike flag; for I see tain't no use to keep shop with you for the captain.'

"Well, boys, whether they kept on shop or no I don't

undertake to defer. But anyhow 'twas precious stupid to make away of the china, and not get nothing for it, warn't it?—precious stupid.”

“Ah, 'twas indeed! That was Bill's fault,” said all; and the audience laughed.

And then the men began to smoke, and looked thoughtful; as if they wondered whether they would have done the same under the like circumstances, and been similar fools.

And the moral of my story is, that seamen shouldn't take china shops; and that their wives should never go out, leaving their husbands with charge of anything at home, as very possible mischief may be the result.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

ANOTHER SITTING OF THE CLUB.—THE FALSE AND FOOLISH  
SIDE OF LONDON SOCIETY.

ONE evening, when the Club had assembled as usual, after some discourse upon occurrences of which we had read in the newspapers of the day, Mr. Silas Peppercorne proceeded to descant upon politics in the following terms—

Men really in these latter days would almost seem to go out of their way to give themselves trouble. They do this in their vices, they do it in the wrong they commit. A good, honest, straightforward life is supposed to be conducive to health, and to long continuance in this pleasant mortal state. People who are not always setting traps to catch their neighbours, must be less fixed in ugly work, and less engrossed uncomfortably than those who have their hands full of wires, whose meaning is mischief, and whose success must be some person's undoing. We never thought a ratcatcher a happy man. We never thought lawyers joyous persons. We never supposed wicked people comfortable. We never imagined that those who dug pits for others, found pleasure in admiring the mere fresh, natural green, deceiving grass with which they cover the hole. Actual *strabismus*, for that is the learned name for *squinting*, is accounted an unsightly thing. But there is a large amount of *moral squinting*. Truth is too direct for most people in this world. And so there is such an amount of wilful aversion from the positively true, that in these days nothing is

thought about its mischief. Neither in political, nor in private society, is deceit considered a deviation from the proper laws of duty; indirect vision, on the contrary, is something that conduces often to our interest. Aversion of the eyes, when it is sometimes not convenient to see, is praised as discretion; it has the usual approval in what this good, tolerant world calls success. To be short-sighted at ugly things must be to be sharp-sighted for pretty things.

Now we are disposed to quarrel with this universal *winking*. We question its righteousness, though it prevails through the public world and through private society. Human life is not to be altogether made up of dodges. Our governors shall not make ninepins of us. We are not to be tumbled down with this expediency. It is not at all necessary that we, every man of us, should be straining, with prolonged neck, round a corner; and that with eager eyes we should watch the opportunity of catching a friend, whose back is turned, by the leg, and pulling him down. We are not to be like that cheating clown in the pantomime. We must not sidle up to our fellow, and affectionately looking up, canting, in his face, close his fist over a stone, whilst we smuggle to that big old rascal, our confederate pantaloon, the money-box out of the grasp of which we have contrived to delude our friend's other beguiled, unconsciously given hand. It is not right in us to ask the accidental passenger, with sudden simulated friendship, how his respectable mother is, whilst in our treacherously disarming embrace of him, we strip his coat down his reliant unsuspecting back. Whipping off that which ought to be, if respectable, even closer to him than his mother—his good coat.

It is against the law of right so to "smile and smile,

and be a villain." And besides it is very clumsy work, and we shall be rightly served if it earns us kicks. Now, if in private life it is not thought quite the glorious thing to entrap your friend, or to divert with dexterous sleight of hand the bread from his mouth, like some "penny" or "five pound" conjuror, whilst you deposit between his lips only the soft end of your walking stick, surely in your public capacity, and when you are trusted as a servant of the nation, so sworn over and over again to guard its interests, it is something next to guilt—if it be not guilt itself—to shuffle and job, and cut villainously, and contrive, until all your patronage has been sifted as into a great basin of gold, to be put away in your own private cupboard (of selfish self-seeking).

We speak to thee, public Cataline!—seller of your country. But there are other conspirators, we think, sometimes more dangerous and intolerable, who sit snugly and hug each other on that long bench of public patronage. The World, both of Public Offices and of Private Society, provokes. Fools abound—incapables, great talkers but little doers; men of dimensions alone in vanity; unwieldy Gogs and Magogs of self-conceit, with their large foolish heads wagging from side to side, lowering with apparent overpowering wisdom. We all know these men with an exaggerated *os frontis*, on which is written all the cleverness of Parliament. We meet these men who have walnuts for hearts—big with the little, little with the big, as all such specimens of artificial life are. Time servers, place hunters, grasping with nervous eagerness the coat-skirt of any one before them, in whose power it is to lift them, some three or four rounds extra, up that enticing ladder of preferment. There are watchers in the purlieux of possibility for those who, mawworm-



like, can drag up after them their hangers-on into the sunshiny heaven of the Court. What eager looks are directed in at that Golden Gate. Some persons are as dull wheatsheaves—obtuse and agricultural—to be thrashed out of their mass of golden grain in the hope of the parting with it to purpose. Welcome the dauntless hand at which the golden speckles fly, if the hand be vigorous and jewelled! The brow-beating, cajoling flail performs well its work, if it be at once well applied, relentless, tipped with stamped metal. These are flourishes against the craving crowd that are sure to reduce into the one *flat* line of submission.

Indeed, my good friends and readers—yourself a Member of Parliament, my esteemed first friend, or thinking that you would make a very good, and of course, a very honest one—you are disposed, however reluctant, sometimes to question the morality of this period. Truly, my hard-thinking brother at the ways of getting on<sup>1</sup> in this difficult world, having contemplated, or wishing, something through the help of some Man of Influence, you are all the more qualified to pronounce upon the justice of my views concerning this political world. You may take my word for it—there are many living woolbags to be reduced into softness for you, placed on end upon that purple-coloured bench in the House of Uppers, or nodding, either wholly or half asleep, on that quarter-mile of crimson cushion in the Commons. Society is the great posture-master. It is the very best in the world at that which we shall choose to call “Position Drill.” It is the easiest thing possible to acquire a reputation for talent, provided you only look occasionally fierce and hold your tongue. Say you are a Great Man—if you have money

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix: Note (*f*).

in your pocket—and people will believe you. They will stare at first; but never mind! Take our advice and only *insist*; and the people at last will grow to believe your *dictum*. They are quicker at this kind of reception if you have money than, in your simplicity, you might at first be disposed to imagine. Before you are aware of it almost, you will have become so great that in your new self-complacent looking-out, you may only need the *pedestal* to step upon; and that will be soon supplied.

Men will see a whole *future* of possibilities in you, if you only know how to sit imposingly at the top of your table, and you have a gilt knocker to your door. Gentlemen having the advantage of a bald head, or who have acquired the accomplishment of snapping-up people authoritatively, have got into Parliament, or into some good place, before even their next-door neighbour thought of it. Men have become great political characters, ere this, solely by referring, in an off-hand way, to the baskets of envelopes which they have daily sent empty away; bishops have fluttered upwards in lawn, like rosy cherubim in white summer clouds; rising men in the Church have grasped crooks to lift them yet higher, whilst they have been feeling about speculatively with their hands for something pleasant; and ascetic deans, whose only sack-cloth has been that in which their coals have been brought, have maintained their kitchen-fires at an intensity of luxurious red, have dined with dukes, and been advanced they know not where, merely through the sermons which they never preached, and the theology which they had too much worldly sense—common sense—ever to puzzle their heads about. Englishmen like to be brow-beaten by a great man. They rather like to be *put down* by a person whose position is not to be questioned.

We may endeavour to persuade ourselves to the contrary; but the best-half of our London world is composed of hopeless snobs—of those who would sell their very souls for a Bristol-stone necklace, provided they could have but a prince to hang it round their necks—their suppliant, devoted, flattering necks.

People are charmed, in the Park, with a grand startling charge of Social cavalry. They like, if they cannot override admiring gazers themselves, to see superb carriage horses, or high-stepping blood-mares of other people's, make folks get out of the way and rush to the sidewalk. Ah, what a place of places is that Park! What envy and astonishment is felt as the coronet, or the "red hand," or the fiery plush, or the clattering plate harness—the whole a blessed vision of some unknown fashionable Sainthood (the more properly from Pimlico, we should imagine)—flashes like a meteor by. Idolaters of the great world, who cannot dash about themselves, like to effect their fashionable coruscations by deputy. Go, we say, into public places. Go into Parliament. Penetrate into the House of Peers. Investigate—like some curious fox, or some clever prying squirrel with restless movements and sharp eyes, ruminating in the direct gainful way—one of your busiest Members of Parliament. Catch him at his breakfast of paper and of red tape. Dry food that! Yet all that he would persuade you he munches. Bag bishops and baronets in this, your moral pursuit of game, feathered and unfeathered. Amuse yourself with the contemplation of those Birds of Paradise, who fly brightly in the aristocratic region, careering daringly even into the direct beams of Royalty; then make the comparison with the obscurer fowls, the dingy clericals and other plumeless professors, certificated and otherwise, who,

in consequence of the want even of the silver lining to *their* cloud of scholarly black, can only long at a distance for the fleshpots and for the fine things. The observers of the happy lights of the prosperous only creep envious into their holes, congenial with the shadows when they commence deepening—growing dark.

Consider ministers of state, officials of all grades, public functionaries of all the varieties. Look at men who have things to give, and the crowd of men who want those particular things. Review in your mind the stars and garters, the ends of ribbon, doctors' gowns, batons of field-m Marshals, all the grand odds and ends, all the gold and silver lace, and all the velvet and nodding ostrich feathers, and sticks and staves which comprise the furniture of this indiscriminate masquerade, of which the queer, supposed social, but really unsocial world, political and private, is composed. Where now, we ask, and we ask it confidently, should be found, in all this ceaseless procession, this confusing rout of intermingled royalties and rags, this grand march down the slope of Time, with the flambeaux, and the solemn gongs agoing, this pilgrimage from the know-not-whence to the know-not-where—where, in this turmoil and Babel, should be found much Christian honour or charity? Where shall we seek for true religion—where for real honour? Where shall we find instances of self-sacrifice in these wholesale thoughts of self? In what direction may we search for patriotism and not expect to be put off with puffs? Is there anything that can enable us to lay our hand on our heart and aver that, to the best of our poor ability, we have done God's work? Have we been determined good workers? Have we reason to hope for pardon from Providence in that future world which, whatever we may

think of our certain long lease of life, is speeding tolerably fast towards us—nay, perhaps is at our door.

We hate jobs. We turn with disgust from men who do not care for merit in their choice of a candidate for an office, provided that their objects are answered, in relation to it, in other ways. These men would raise money upon the very keys of St. Peter. We almost believe in a certain metaphysic double-doing; and that the acts of this world are faithfully copied into—perhaps proceeding from or caused by another world, which we are insensible of, and of which this world is only the copy. In this queer but not unphilosophical view of things—disciples of Spinoza, Berkeley, and Swedenborg (majestic Triad!) will understand us—all our petty acts of religious treason, all our devil's barter, all our mammon huckstering and infidel compromise hath perhaps its shadow to our Lightened Drama of Life, going contemporaneously on to our future destruction—faint or intense in the dark realms of Orcus, according to the redness of our sin-stain or of our guilt-glow in this present, pleasant-seeming world. Apprehended through altogether another medium (perhaps this terrible chance is) than any which in this mortal state we can understand. Terrible suspicion! There may be invisible witnesses and unsuspected register against us—aye, about our footsteps every day—alone as we think ourselves in this quiet, common-place world. There, in that fact, the belief that SPIRITS ARE OUT OF THE WORLD, lies, we think, the source of all vice and sin. Men in their secret heart believe that there is no such thing as Providence. They act as if they thought that God had forgotten and gone out of the world. It is too much of an everyday place of business to them for high truths to seem any other than as

impracticable, excellent stories and notions to frighten children. Priests remain satisfied with *forms* and decline to question conscience too closely. They sleep, or we should see these—by name and office—holy ministers, torch in hand and with cries of real alarm, arousing the Dead Midnight in their knocks at the door of this, by far too luxuriously housed generation:—this people buried in dreams, which may well indeed be called perilous—this English world leading its laughable life of shams and drams, of telegrams and sensations.

Our rulers and governors, and those who are put in authority over us, have much carelessness, much muddle to answer for. We fear there are even pickers and stealers amongst them. They make the Government of this great England, in many respects, nothing but as a miserable game of cards;—a perpetual game of cribbage. It is all trade. It is to a considerable extent, shuffle and cut. Do we pay our taxes to have our Public Boards so frequently nothing but the *wood*? Is this huge banner of public expediency that is so ostentatiously paraded in our faces, and sent up and down the streets, and in the shadow of which all these fine gentlemen with their bags, green or blue, and their bundles of papers advance, crouching or standing erect, every now and then blowing some blast upon their thousand penny, vain-glorious trumpets—is this banner of presumed super-excellent government and grand patriotic leading—this embellished ensign so marched up-and-down and bobbed impudently in, to astonish us, at our second-floor windows—is this, we say, to be continually immediately *patched* when public disgust tears a great hole in it? Alas, little of our grand, gold British lions shall we have remaining but their gilt-thread tails, if we go on at this

present rate of demolition of the banner on the part of the public, and the *private piecing* of it in the retirement of sly reparation.

Flag of St. George! we tremble for thee. Is it to be thy fate, in this official stumbling and mumbling;—this talk round-and-round but never touching the purpose;—this over officious hasty throwing-down of upper class cushions on which those displaced through the just public charge of muddle, incapacity, or evil-doing may fall comfortable;—this greasing of the wheels of the carriage of the public service with golden government ointment when it creaks villainously;—this thrusting, for excellent private reasons, the wrong men into (only) the right places for themselves, and the right men not into the wrong places even, but nowhere in fact;—is it to be thy fate, oh glorious flag, with that Red Cross upon thee, amidst all this scramble about the staff—this kicking, fawning, bawling, and hat-tossing—to be hustled at last away to some pawnbroker's, or to be cut up and sold?

We do not know! Strange things happen. If the leaders of the public bodies be so many Merry Andrews, it ought to be no wonder if queer antics are played in the national skirmishing into action at the head of the daily business-battalions. Boards, offices, commissions, seats for secretaries, stalls for church dignitaries, despatch-boxes for fingers with the claims to handle them in the portrayed escutcheons on the finger nails, laced coats, cocked hats, a whole draper's shop of red tape, all this furniture and these odds and ends, and items of government are all very well. But we should like to see the great national HOUSE—on which Britannia's flag is flying, especially now that Radical clouds are rolling threateningly about

it—put a little in order. We should like quite a new face to be superimposed upon things. “Oh, for a hour of blind old Dandolo!” Oh, for a whole waggon-load of new brooms! England’s old Constitutional Castle demands a thorough rummage, and its queer nooks and neglected corners, its public departments and its private conscience, its well of capacity and its airy bartizans stuffed with titles, its whole auctioneer’s catalogue of the heraldic Noah’s Ark, its Gothic cupboards down below, and its private snuggeries up aloft—nay, the whole time-honoured pile of it cries out for a turn out! that is, for a restoration. But in the meantime, and while this good work is coming about (for we suspect it will be long), do ye—we speak to all our patrons, and government or giving people—take care that you think *twice* before you give away a place *once*. And give it then to the right man.

The first thought in relation to every place that is bestowed should be the public advantage. The solid requirement in a candidate is not mere make-believe competitive-examination recommendations, but real gifts. England is accustomed to have a sort of crockery-shop disposition or disposal of her public service. The strange characters, chosen for pretended reasons, should take no part in national affairs. But misusing is so natural to zanies, that we would scarcely like to commit to almost anybody the conduct of serious things. But, inasmuch as we suppose that deserving men have not yet quite all died out of the world, we advise that public givers should institute search; and that, when found, the worthy and the modest should take the places of the noodles, whose only assumed qualifications are in the fancies and the wishes for their success of their particular patrons; who seem to think that Noodledom is the natural and intended



state of the ruling class. And judging by the proofs afforded by very many high in place, it is evident that impudence, assumption and incapacity are largely prevalent among the rulers of the world.

But grieving goes for little—does nothing. I may be wrong. The world may be all very right. Life may be *nothing*, and money may be *everything*, for all I know. Our modern art may be best. Our literature may be of the true stamp. Our politics may be perfect. Pardon me, if I make a mistake. But I am afraid——.

“My dear Mr. Peppercorne,” broke in Dr. Cornelius Butler, “I am surprised that you, a City man, should express such dissent to things and men as they are. For what could you or I do (let me put it sensibly to you) with our weak, insufficient voices against the conviction of such crowds of hard-headed, clever people, who insist that money is the ‘be-all’ and the ‘end-all.’ I confess I believe in money. Things look so very like what they tell us. I acknowledge myself, for my part, a most contemptible wretch when I have not a sovereign in my pocket. I have felt an emptiness and a mean stupidity for want of money; an insufficiency which I cannot describe. And of that case of suspension—for it is a suspension of my faculties—I have not a word to rejoin in any condemnation of money. Everything, my dear sir, lies within the circle of that golden metal stamp of her Most Excellent Majesty’s countenance, that we recognize as a sovereign. A sovereign will purchase me twenty joys, or forty assuagements of worry at the rate of twenty shillings respectively, or forty sixpences. Think that now. Without money, last year’s dead leaves have more justification in their existence in this world, than you, a living man, have. Have goodness and forget-

fulness of worldly advantage really so much to do with the nature of things in the other world, that they have nothing to do with success in this? My dear sir, you have made a grievous mistake in attacking institutions. Hermits and saints are neither institutions nor any thing useful. In these brisk modern days they are drones. But the Bank of England is excellent and a sight to see. And the City with its populous life, so abounding in generosity, self-denial, Christianity, good-sense, pitiful feeling, and forbearance has so often gladdened my soul."

It may be asked are these things true of this great City of London, and of our modern habitudes and fashions, or are they not? Are we at the height of civilisation—taking the lead in art, science, and literature—and are our aims and our lives true and noble, or do we fall short? To sum-up:—in justification of my general design, and as an apology for my occasional complaints, am I right in charging this present busy, noisy age—in very numerous particulars—with childishness and mistake, with ignorance and prejudice, with selfishness and not infrequent cruelty? Most of our errors arise from the present incessant hurry of the world. Let us endeavour, then, to slacken our moving-on in life, and to check that which has been truly and not extravagantly denounced as the "pace that kills.

And of these matters—very important concerns indeed they are to all and every one of us—and of my correctness, let my audience judge. Reader, in your "yea," or "nay," I acquiesce.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE RIVER THAMES AND ITS STEAM-BOATS.—A SEA CAPTAIN  
OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

I THINK crowds in the street intolerable. I consider crowds at public places very unpleasant. Any play, or any show at a theatre or public place of exhibition must offer me very great temptation before I would essay access to witness it in a crowd. I am afraid I am not gregarious. I never was very greatly predisposed to the society of my fellow-creatures. I wish them no ill, of course; but I am fearful of being bored therefrom. I am easily disturbed, and very easily made to feel uncomfortable.

I am fully aware of the fact, without being officiously reminded, that the people whom I see around me must be my "fellow creatures," but if I do not want anything of them I do not see what they should want of me, except indifference—that is, if they are of the ordinary commonplace level. I am convinced, by continual proofs in my own unimportant person, of a close relationship, in a certain sense, with the individuals that I see (somewhat inconveniently) about me. The evidence of this grand fact is too forcible, and too immediate and continuous for me ever to doubt it. And here, I am not indisposed to let the conclusion rest.

On a bright warm day, even so recently as of this

present waning summer of 1882, happening to be in the City, and finding myself close to the steamboat wharf of London Bridge, where the river steamboats are incessantly plying, I could not resist the temptation of the warm enlivening sun and the brightly glancing river. Therefore, intending to abandon the afternoon and evening to a little holiday relaxation, I embarked in the Woolwich steamboat, and was soon seated upon a hard bench contemplating the river craft and the gigantic steamers, and listening to a rheumatic harp, somewhat loose, apparently, in the joints, which was twanging out daring *arpeggios* not at all up to the mark. Shortly through all the deviations and meandering which vitiated the true rendering of a beautiful tune—an old friend of mine, and a favourite of my boyhood—also first heard, I think, upon this ancient river of Thames, aboard a “Star” steamer — noteworthy river-boats then, as the elder members of the present generation can remember.

Alas, as the “times change, we change with them!” The sympathies, stirred and awoke at this old dreamy revival, came almost troubling me, in fact. The long past years unrolled. I heard again the flowing melody, keeping time in the quiet of the river to the beating of the paddles. I think music on the water always has a special charm. But those who were with me in the old time when I heard that beautifully touching tune—those who were with me then—where are some of them now? At any rate, there was the long-remembered *refrain*: “I loved her; how I loved her.” It was a most beautiful, tender air, out of Auber’s splendid opera, “Gustavus.” Melancholy feelings stole over me. The river was the same, but how many suns had risen

and set since that time! The palsied, tinkling harp forbore its jingle, became a heavenly harp touched with feeling, not "flying" fingers, by a new Timotheus, and the serious-looking, evidently "used up" old harp-player changed his likeness into a sort of "Druid-angel," playing new feelings into the old heart, as if the "long ago" was almost even the "now." Ah, that word "now!" that "now"—that "makes" us or "mars" us!

At the Tunnel Pier, when the steamboat paused, there came on board a tall, personable, elderly man, of most prepossessing appearance in many respects. This was Captain Boyd, of the mercantile marine, whose name will frequently appear a little farther on. Acquaintance, even valuable friendships, have been formed in a similar manner to this chance meeting aboard this particular steamboat, this particular day. Commencing in an enquiry by me as to the "rig" of a vessel which was moving down with the tide, our conversation resulted, when we parted, in an exchange of cards, but on a friendly footing.

From that day I stand indebted to Captain Boyd for much agreeable fellowship on various occasions. The account of some most interesting adventures at sea, which will be found farther on, was furnished by him to me and several friends in the course of a recital of his career. This accomplished sea-captain so attracted my fancy by his excellent sense and his large knowledge and experience, gathered in nearly all parts of the world, that I grew very partial to his society. To be brief—supplemented at different times, and amplified in repeated question and answer as to minor points and desired explanations, the narrative appears, and a deeply interesting narrative it is,

very nearly as it was related to me.<sup>1</sup> Professional men will readily recognise the true pictures of salt-water life under the most exciting circumstances. Seamen and others will appreciate bygone manners and customs, and doings at sea very different in character from the present time of the British merchant-marine service. Captain Boyd's story refers to a period now hastening away. In two generations we have, in all scientific respects, swept forward three or four hundred years. We know that the present pace cannot last; but we do not desire violent arrest or too peremptory material retardation in any of our designs, or in any of our hopes or national aims.

In some respects I do not think that we are changing, by any means, for the better. We have revolutionised the practical, every-day side of our existence. We have smoothed our habits, overlaid our good, honest, sincere old English life with much hardness and innumerable affectations; we strive to be what we are not, and never shall be; our style and manners have been operated upon by currents of false taste from two very questionable points of direction. Carelessness, excess of ornament, an "out-of-door" fashion of living, irreligion, an ambitious, conceited, forcing upwards—all this has come

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<sup>1</sup> *Extract from a letter to the Transcriber, recently forwarded to the Author of this book at his request:—*

"We remember Captain Boyd exceedingly well. He has long retired from our employ. We always found him not only a skilful commander, but in all his transactions and averments truth itself."

"For Self and Partners,

"PHILIP LAKE PRICE.

"(Messrs. Dunbar, Price, Crossley and Co.,

"Merchants, Mincing Lane,

"London, and Liverpool.)"

Captain Boyd had given the names of these gentlemen as his references.

from France. Brag, boasting, and bunkum; gross levity towards serious things; greediness and vain glory—all these have been superadded and intensified, in the very tolerable accumulation which we already possessed, of this “sliding side” of life:—this mass of mischiefs is the very dubious present which has been handed over to us from America.

The headlong rate at which we are moving forward is fast relegating all the solid interests of mankind—nay, the whole personality “Man” to a gulf of vulgar alteration, which threatens to swallow up all sentiment, all sense of true picturesqueness, all tender character, all resigned, contented long-suffering, all the—you may call it quixotism (fine this, because it implies knight-errantry, and the feelings that inspire knight-errantry), all genuine innocence, simpleness, and purity of life; also all noble self-sacrificing patriotism, not to say possibility of martyrdom—all that is true, beautiful, good and great, therefore, not of *this* world, but, let us hope, of a better!—all, to sum up, comprised in the fine holy lines traced by the supernatural hand in the celestial teaching of that “Divine Personality,” who, by a modern, clever man, has been called, in regard of his life and living on the earth, the truest, kindest gentleman who ever came to mingle in, and to recorrect, the affairs of men.<sup>1</sup>

“I do not know what you think of the supernatural,” said my friend Boyd, one day, suddenly, looking at me curiously, as if he was afraid of saying more, and as if he doubted what I might feel.

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<sup>1</sup> “It came to me to say this to-night, Jennie, and I am not ashamed. I’d try and walk, if it was a long way off, in the footsteps of Him who was the kindest gentleman that ever trod the earth.”—“CRUEL LONDON”: A Novel, by Joseph Hatton.

“The world says that the supernatural is manifestly impossible, because it violates the laws of nature. The world says that all these ‘accounts’ of the ‘unaccountable,’ are dreams—delusions, where they are not cheats and forgeries.”

“Then I think that the world is *wrong*—that the world is so full of the world—to put the idea roughly—that it cannot see anything *out* of the world. There are parts of my own story that I confess I cannot believe—still less I am able to explain them. But I certainly saw that which yet seems an impossibility to me. Notwithstanding all this, my natural difficulty, I think that, on deliberate consideration, you will share my own firm opinion that, although often false, falsely accepted and a mistake, the ‘supernatural’ is a true thing after all.”

“Anyhow, the supernatural must be the basis of religion,” said I, “for, without the supernatural, otherwise independence of nature, otherwise miracle, no religion—and, of course, not even Christianity—can be.”

“Well—*true*, sir,” said Captain Boyd, interrupting me, as if he had made up his mind, “if that is what you mean.”

And in reality it was just that which I meant.

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## CHAPTER XX.

## CAPTAIN THOMAS BOYD'S NARRATIVE—HIS SEARCH FOR A SHIP.

I AT once commence with one of the singular and striking parts of my story. The relation which I am about to give the company treats of matters in which I was myself 'the principal actor, or one, at all events, of the leading *dramatis personæ*; I have no need to draw on imagination for the purpose of arousing interest, or to add to the impression which the incidents of my narrative will create. I have seen much of life. In the language of the theatre, I have had the "scenes shifted" for me. And I have made my "exits and my entrances" sometimes under the illumination of the lamps (deck lamps), and sometimes in the twilight; and occasionally even in the dark.

Some of the little dramas of life which have fallen under my observation have even drawn tears. "Albeit, unused to the melting mood," even those whose habit it is to be as hard as the wood of their own masts to casual distresses provoking their pity, are now and then greatly moved. I have been used, all my life, to contend with the elements, but I have never been able to contend successfully with the "elements" of my own affections. I have always been weak in the influx of sympathies, and they have found me a ready subject. Pain is not pleasant, which is a truism. And some of the incidents of the mingled drama which has supplied the tenour of

my life, have been so impressed on my memory that they recur at times when I would have more cheerful companions, infinitely less desiring their "company" than their "room." For these sections of my tale which I am now going to lay before my auditors, I need not (with self-distrusting modesty or with the affectation of it) bespeak indulgence. I am under no necessity to forestall criticism further than to wish that pardon may be extended to my style, wherever the manner in which I tell my story may be suspected to be faulty. And now, then, to proceed with the more important part of my narrative, which has the one merit of being true.

I shall, by-and-bye, perhaps relate certain adventures of mine in Portsmouth, and shall interest my hearers in, I hope, the fortunes of some of the good people I met in that quaint seafaring town; which may be esteemed as Neptune's own parade-ground, when the briny monarch doffs his seaweed cloak, sticks his trident, point downwards of course, like some marine dandy in the golden ooze of an "empurpled sea-cave," and steps ashore to take his "walks abroad," and to see life on the land.

I came from Portsmouth to London, and, as I was well known among merchants and ship insurers in the city, it was not long before I had some offer of employment. But I had made up my mind to a long voyage this time. And so I principally went among the charterers, and those whose business led to speculation stretching to remote ports. In London, all the golden threads, stretched to every latitude, may be said to be drawn up; the middle commercial sun, its radii diverge to and seek out the remotest angles.

In my way into the City I usually wound my serpentine road through narrower approaches than ever knave

insinuated through. In the bye-paths, close on the border of that watery highway, which has been poetically called the "silent," I was often sided, for a long space, by two grimy walls of warehouse, and condemned to a lazy pace. I dodged at the stern of a lumbering waggon, looking ahead whenever it stopped, first on one side, then on the other, to descry interruptions, the contented carter, meanwhile, slouching on the pavement. Men popped about from right to left. Unknown were my delays from porters, draymen, dogs, and whistling boys. Compulsory descents into gutters, and ascents into doorways and up church steps, were not the least of my deviations. In due time I emerged upon that sloping esplanade where wooden posts, stones for carriages to rumble over, dirty gravel, glazed hats, and soap-and-waterless faces tell the pedestrian that he is on Tower Hill. The Trinity House I have on my right hand; on my left is the Tower, with the Tower buildings, and perhaps a peeping soldier, in a red coat and with a fur cap all in the sun, caught sight of from some nook.

Saint Catherine's Docks are elegant docks, if such a term properly apply to such places. They are very fine, but one feels cramped up in them, shut up hopelessly with a puzzle of ships and spars. The intruder seems caught in the web of ropes when the docks are full.

Thinking this, I abandoned the Saint Catherine's Docks, and, passing on down Pennington street, soon found myself at the great gates of the London Docks.

Just emerging from the dock entrance, I met a friend named Seyton. We recognised each other very readily, and instantly fell into a conversation regarding our own particular immediate affairs. Finding him desirous of going quickly to sea for reasons of his own, which he

assured me were important, I promised to take him on board with me as my first officer if I were fortunate enough shortly to meet with a ship. These words of mine seemed to please him, and he turned back with me, and we both entered the dock together.

There is something imposing in the very stones of the London Docks. But the effect is all of the "far-away." There is a great courtyard at first, or an esplanade, by whichever name you may choose to distinguish it. This is certainly the reverse of smooth, and there is a notched flagstaff in the centre of it. This you discover after you have passed through the open space in front of the dock, which is bounded on one side by a brick wall with certain openings in it. A wicket gate reminds you of the entrance to a debtor's prison, with its row of spikes somewhat kept in the background. Square boards are fixed on either side of this maritime gate; and boards stand on the ground, and others invite your attention all about. On these you will read announcements of the departures of ships, with a detail of their particular attractions. Ships are like horses or like beauties, and need auctioneers to praise their recommendations. Notices like the following salute you:—

"Will meet with quick dispatch, the well-known, fast-sailing, first-class barque *Trusty*, for Sidney; 600 tons burthen."

"For Bombay and China, the fine, frigate-built ship, *Hindustan*, 800 tons burthen, Matthew Cormack, commander; lying in the London Dock. This ship has great height between decks, and superior accommodation for passengers, carries an experienced surgeon, and will sail on the 10th of May, embarking her passengers at Gravesend on the 11th; and will call at Portsmouth. For

freight or passage apply to the commander on board, or to——”

Glancing at the wall, the observer encounters names in red and names in black; “Alerts,” “Arabs,” “Arrows,” “Apollos,” “Brahmins,” “James Thompsons,” and “Helen Marrs.” For the reader may remark that commonly the nautical female distinguished by this name spells her Ellen with an “H,” and drops the second “l.”

Outside the gates are usually commercial or nautical hangers-on. There are carmen, dirty-looking women, and a sailor or two. Carts, jingling loosely, and horsed by veterans of horses, stand in a row. Looking back westward, we descry a street that resembles one in Portsmouth, or in the suburb called “Blue Town,” at Sheerness. Every second house in such places is a low public-house, and is marked by the sign of a “Jolly Sailor,” or a “Ship,” or perhaps by the portrait of her blessed Majesty Queen Victoria herself, as large as but a great deal more red than life. There are slop-shops too, with round windows and dull dusty glass, abounding in tarpaulin hats and odds and ends; there are shops for old iron, and shuttle-cocks and penny books; there are besides “ups and downs” of houses, salt-herrings alternating with tobacco, cotton pocket-handkerchiefs and spy-glasses, the “Christian Monitor” and “Man Friday,” crocks and cut-and-thrusts.

Large heavy-looking buildings (very commercial castles, without windows, which have an extremely serious expression) are on your right hand. These are warehouses, and are inscribed with various commercial and dock-like names. Before you are directions specifying “North Quay,” “South Quay,” “First Berth,” “Second Berth,” “To the New Jetty,” “To the Old Basin;” and if there happened to be a public lavatory in the Docks, considering

the blackness all around, one might, amidst these guiding words, expect to light in company with the basin, upon a welcome reference to the inseparable "Water Jug."

Stranger friend, you see the warehouses stretching dim and dirty; you make your way over pebbly streets, with no houses in them; you find yourself on the wharf, with an interminable narrow shed over your head, stretching to impossible distance, and you have all sorts of timber posts and pillars and beams and quaint Dutch-looking woodwork round you; timber work, which looks as if it never had any paint since that (beyond expression) remote day when Noah's ark was "payed-down," which proper *pitch-like* operation was perhaps effected in some accommodating London Docks of the period, with another sun than this not-to-be-contradicted old friend overhead.

There is a confused mass of ships, at the edge of which the great craft seem almost in contact with you. There are immense black hulls—very giants of the sea—with their dingy timbers, their channels or chains, and their bolts. Perhaps the blankest "dead eyes," with their corresponding ropy laniard, peer into your puzzled face. Sternwards or stemwards (looking at them) one fancies a resemblance in the black blocks to nigger heads, stuck all of a row like monster black wooden onions, and "detailed" for his dinner, perhaps, by some maritime Ogre, who may be lying his lubber length below, unknown in this very same awful slip, of whose ships he makes his (by far) too near magic larder to you.

You wonder how these mighty floating citadels of trade, even with all dismemberment of spars and so on, could have got into this dock, big as it is. All is a perspective of ships with a forest of masts and yards, and with a whole minor thick wood of rigging. Interlaced and

tangled-up, you cannot make out an entire ship in this medley. Nothing is distinctly shown to you, except—to your alarm—the gigantic cranes—those monster metal long-legged fowls, which twist on their toes, in and out with creak and shriek ; and which with busy *bill* or hooks like Polyphemus's fishhooks, pick daintily out of holds weights like small hills to lift into other beasts' monster wooden stomachs.

Bustle and cries prevailed, with occasional pauses in the work. There was looseness of action, however, and gazing on the part of the men that were at work, when, as the saying is, they did not have their hands "full," and were waiting for the crane to swing forward again out over the deck of the big ship which was being unloaded.

Such strange sights are to be seen, such queer noises are to be heard, every day, in the docks in the East of London. To talk of the outlandish birds and beasts, and long-snouted objects in the fashionable Zoological Gardens at the West end of London, makes one smile at the feebleness of the comparison; when I would take any Bishop, or any "Charity School" with its white aprons, mob-caps, and medals, and frighten them to their hearts' content with the many monsters, with their long prongs of bills or bowsprits shut in like telescopes, in the mechanical zoological gardens which I call "docks." By day, and in the sunshine, these things are bad enough; but in the night (and by moonshine especially) those bulky portentous stems of ships or figure-heads, like great glaring heads lifted up originally out of the deep, but caught now in a cage, would startle even an old sea-dog.

## CHAPTER XXI.

CAPTAIN BOYD OBTAINS THE COMMAND OF THE "PLEIAD" AND PREPARES FOR SEA.

AT last I succeeded in obtaining a vessel. The command of a splendid Indiaman was entrusted to me: the *Pleiad* was her name. It was my first ship, and you may well imagine the pride and gratification with which I stepped on her deck as her commander. My owners were merchants of eminence in London. They were proprietors of a Chinaman in which I had served my proper time as second mate and first mate. In both capacities of command, especially of the last, I had been spoken of so highly by my commander, and recommended so warmly by passengers, that our owners determined to entrust the next vessel that they should send to sea, to me as her captain.

They had just purchased a fine vessel of large tonnage of the assignees of a ship-builder at Limehouse, who had become bankrupt. The opportunity occurring in the very "nick of time" (as we say) I had the luck to be constituted the master of this ship. Her lading my owners took care of. But on the first day that I was informed of my appointment I could not restrain my impatience, and I bustled down to the East India Basin to get a quick sight of my new craft. As my story deals so largely with her, you must not be displeased at my giving you a little account of my ship. She was a glorious "three-master."



You are too familiar with the rig-out of a regular Indiaman—such ships as you will have seen in the docks, if it has not been in your lines of life to make long voyages—for it to be necessary that I should be diffuse respecting my ship. But there are some particulars that I cannot help noticing. There is a pleasure in calling to mind how she looked. She is now far below, deep down under the salt waves, and her “ruins” are water-logged amidst the mounts at the bottom of the sea.

Her run was beautiful—so beautiful that she appeared more a thing to dream of, a picture of a ship to fall in love with, than a working vessel to toss about on the stormy water. Her mould was the *ne plus ultra* of naval grace, of nautical grandeur. I have seen many fine vessels, I have commanded some of the noblest; but the *Pleiad* beat them all. Her hull seemed an aërial daughter amidst the symmetried ships; a congeries of sea-born beauties. Above ran her bulwarks, black and shining as jet, studded with deadeyes, ennobled to the eye in the shadows of the channels, and concealing behind the row of three-part lowered ports the grinning range of ghastly, teethlike deck-guns. Below this was the broad riband of snowy, dazzling white, seeming in its polish almost a glass in which the waters might see their bright blue hue again reflected. Under this range she sloped away in a jetty mingling of colour, till her sweep was only broken-up by the glancing row of cabin-lights, with their blazing glass (in the tropics), the neatly-finished mouldings, and the gilded wreaths and fancy-work about the stern.

Davits above hung, in their swinging falls, our jolly boat; while a trophy, as it were, on each side of black anchors and monster cables, hung and netted-up about our bows and forecastle.

The figurehead was a noble piece of chiselling, at least it looked so then to my eyes. It seemed quite a glory of sculpture. A star flamed on her forehead, a wand was in her hand, and one of her feet was raised and one arm extended, as if she had a mind to wing, Ariel-like, before the craft to whose prow she seemed chained as though by the tropic sunbeams.

The masts of the ship shot loftily and thickly until they fined away and sprang into wands, and mounted from lowermast into topmast, from topmast into topgallant-mast, and from topgallant-mast right into royal-mast, tapering at last into fine lines. White they were, with crosses of a series of slim rods of black yards. Hung in the hamper were a cloud of tiny, black blocks; and the tackle passed and repassed, shot aloft, and drew down, in and out and all about, in a web that, to the inexperienced eye, was hopelessly complex as fairy reticulation.

At our gaff-end floated the colours—those which, as a trade ship, we were entitled only to carry—the red field and union, which wander the world over for the merchant princes of Great Britain.

But when I first saw this beautiful ship her masts were unstepped, and her rigging was unrove. She was like a beautiful woman, slender and white, in her flowing hair or in her unconfined tresses, and with her white sails hanging about her like a loose dress. Notwithstanding her *déshabille*, I saw enough of her at the first moment to fall in love with my ship. For it is no new thing for a seaman to love his ship. I thought that I should be able to make her do anything—to sail into the wind's eye. A mate and some of her intended crew were aboard; the rest of the ship's company and the officers we had

to make up. And I was busy on this point of my duty.

My owners intended to freight their ship as soon as possible, and, therefore, they directed me to fill up my list of hands as soon as I could. A first mate, who was my friend Seyton, and a third mate were soon sent aboard by my owners, after having been duly submitted to my approval; and about the docks we picked up sixteen hands, some few of whom were "shore-goers," but the majority were regular seamen. And I thought I had an excellent crew.

In about a fortnight I had completed my crew and made my arrangements, and was busy in getting ready for sea. We had warped the ship into the outer dock, and were at the wharf every day taking in goods and ship stores, with cranes swinging and waggons unloading in bulk. Eighteen days after we were "entered outwards" at the Custom House. We had almost all of our cargo on board.

We were to sail on the 2nd of September, and it now wanted but ten days to our time of "getting out." Every new day saw us busier. We were scraping masts, painting inside and out, blacking the bends, examining our sheathing, getting up our topmost-masts, and fitting and reeving the rigging. Stores of all kinds were coming on board every half-hour. The crew were asking for holidays to go and see their sweethearts and friends, and to take leave of all previous to their voyage. Some requested and had wages given them in advance, which were laid out not only in necessaries for the voyage, but in haberdashery and copper trinkets, bought at second-rate jewellery shops about Wapping and the Minories for female friends. In short, as the day for sailing approached

the ship's noise grew to be a nuisance. I longed for sea, which is a wish that I dare say every master of a ship in the like circumstances, and with his decks in a muddle, has amply shared. But time, which regulates everything, clears a ship.

I had as yet had but few applications for passages. None came through the owners. I was not surprised at this, as our ship was not exactly of that eagerly-sought first class of passenger ships trading out of London; besides, there were one or two of the East India Company's noble first-rates sailing nearly at the same time with me. These ships, of course, had the preference; and the fact of mine being a new ship, and that I was myself a new commander, had, perhaps, resulted in the *Pleiad* being passed over by passengers seeking either single berths or cabins. But I did not care. My cargo was of the best, commercially speaking, and I did not despair of carrying one or two passengers after all. And sometimes it happens that those who prove the best and most agreeable passengers are the latest to make their applications. Such was the case with me on this occasion. I will soon tell you about the passengers I carried. Before long we had adventures enough all round.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

THE "PLEIAD" SAILS WITH PLEASANT EXPECTATIONS OF A GOOD VOYAGE.

SOME few days before I sailed I was, as usual, at the Jerusalem Coffee House. About noon a young gentleman waited on me, drawn by the usual advertisements, as it proved, and desiring a passage. In the course of our conversation I became aware that he was going out with a considerable amount of money to meet the engagements of his uncle, a merchant at Madras, whose affairs were in a somewhat embarrassed condition, and who, to speak the fact in a word, wanted cash to meet his bills. There was a species of partnership existing between my intending passenger's father and uncle. The father belonged to an extensive house in London; the uncle was doing business for himself at Madras. The London merchant was unwilling to entrust so large a sum of money to the hands of any person other than a relation; and he was therefore sending out his son in charge of it. Communication with India was not then by any means so rapid or so sure as it has become since, and solid money was being sent, and not simple drafts.

"I have come for two passages," said the young man. "One is for myself, the other is for my sister. She is going out to her aunt, who is in bad health, and naturally wishes to have some of her relations about her, especially as she promises to leave us all her money. I

hope we shall all be able to make ourselves agreeable during the voyage. Have you engaged with many passengers?"

"Perhaps I shall only carry out yourself and your sister," said I; "that will be but few passengers."

"You'll carry few indeed, at that rate, Captain Boyd. But you may have more passengers yet."

"We shall see," replied I. "In fact, I do not greatly care about it." And after bidding me a most friendly good morning, the young man quitted me.

I took his age to be about five-and-twenty. He was tall and handsome, though he was dark complexioned. His eyes were black, his hair was of the same colour; his singularly white teeth, and a very pleasing smile and excellent lips, made his physiognomy very attractive. His manners were gentlemanly, and he appeared most intelligent and exceedingly cultivated in mind.

I saw him again several times as the day of our departure drew near. He improved the impression he had made upon me on acquaintance. His baggage came on board the day before that appointed for our getting out of dock. That same afternoon himself and his sister arrived. But in the bustle consequent upon the disentangling of a large ship and her making ready for sea, I had not much leisure to welcome them or to notice strangers. Our decks were cumbered with all sorts of things. At this time all the stores were placed in confusion, and were left to be arranged when we had entirely done with the shore. Two of my owners also were aboard; and I had to attend to them. Besides some of the crew were ashore; and they had to be looked after. What with one thing and another, I found it impossible to cast off till morning, and so we lay where we were for this night.

But early the following morning all hands being aboard, all stores shipped, and everything arranged as well as we could, we cast off our moorings and began to warp-out of dock. This was a tedious process. Anyone who has been in the habit of observing the movements of ships must have remarked the lazy, desultory way in which vessels work out of that black labyrinth of hulls which a large dock presents. But the basin having been entered and the swivel bridges thrown open, we got out by little and little till we breasted the tideway, in mid-river, at Blackwall.

We took our pilot on board. And steam-tugs not being then in fashion, we had to tide it down to Gravesend. I remember the occasion very well. It was one of those beautiful days we see in England sometimes in the month of September. The air was intensely warm; but very few clouds were in the sky, which was blue and intense in lustre. Whichever way you turned you met the warm air. The river shone like plates of silver—the shores looked green as the margin of Paradise; and with that blue strip of distant, dreamy country stretching above—everything, river and land, was brilliant in the sun. I could not help admiring the successive landscapes. They were quite delightful as we passed. Woolwich with its dockyard and elevated church and churchyard; Erith with its ivied spire and the broad woods which spread as its background; Greenhithe, Grays, lastly Gravesend with its picturesque front of red-brown houses and of grey wharves; where we clewed up our sails and dropped anchor. I speak of the river Thames in past times. Here we remained two days, waiting for a wind and taking in further supplies and our pilot. The last pilot

was to quit us when he had carried us safely into the Downs. On the third morning, the wind being tolerably fair, we let fall, and spread our canvas widely out, called in all stragglers, and weighed, and then stood stately down the Lower Hope. How eagerly do we look out at that first broad blue, that deep line of the open ocean expanding to our eyes, when we round the far point and get fairly into Sea Reach, the lines of land widening until they melt into the quiet, silent sea; the sea opening, as the clouds, to us!

By dint of tacking we made no inconsiderable way this day, and we were not long before we brought up in Margate roads, waiting for a new wind; for the wind had lately become too baffling for us to proceed smartly. Fortunately that night a breeze in a fair quarter sprang up, and we bore away, getting into the Downs in a few hours.

Our last communications were here made with the shore. Our pilot quitted us, and with all sail spread we shaped our course south-west—a beautiful ship upon the beautiful sea in the hot weather—moving to magic music on the ear.

Things were looking a little more comfortable now on board. I had time to make acquaintance with my passengers, the two persons noticed before being the only passengers I carried, except a female servant of Miss Revel. The young man I have already described; his sister I discovered to be a young lady of great beauty; full of spirit as well as of sensible and accomplished mind. She was much like her brother in face; but her complexion was singularly white, with peach bloom on her soft cheek and a volant rosebud for a mouth. Her eyes were, if anything, more black and



expressive than her handsome brother's; and her voice had a pleasing softness in it that not one of the roughest sailors could listen to without tenderly turning the head. She played and sung with exquisite taste, sketched beautifully, and was altogether a most delightful inmate of the ship.

I found the time pass away very pleasantly. Our first mate, Mr. Seyton, was a young man of good education, and was very gentlemanly in his manners. And so my two passengers, my mate, the surgeon, and myself made up a very agreeable party as we sat at our tea in the cabin, or gathered in a group on deck watching the ocean sights. And at sea there is never a lack of these.

Rounding the southern coast we looked in at Portsmouth. And then we bore away fairly through the Needles. As we made to sea, so did the white cliff-line of our native England fade romantically into distance; till all that remained was a thin vapoury streak, which at last itself sank, as it were, dimly in the blue distant water. By this time everything was in its proper place on board—the cargo was stowed, the decks were cleared, and the passengers were beginning to settle down in their new situation, with the planet-like splendid stars above, and the profound deep blue water below.

Our second mate, the officer you will remember I found on board when I first entered upon my vessel, was a singular man. His berth had been given him by a "sing-song" canting Scotch partner in our "house of owners," who seemed to have a high opinion of his nautical acquirements and had had him recommended by a cunning monied cousin in Glasgow. I had not much liked this man at the first moment I set eyes on

him; but I tried to get over what I considered to be an unreasonable and an unwarrantable prejudice. He was about five-and-forty years of age, was a Northumbrian by birth; very tall, very broad-shouldered, and seemingly possessed of a frame of iron. He generally stooped, wore his hair long, had a cast in his eye, a scar on his neck, and a rigid, knotty and obstinate forehead. Two fine lines were drawn down from his nostrils to the corners of his mouth, which gave the latter a most sinister, sneering expression. His eyes were grey, and seemed to look at you from one corner; while owing to weakness of sight, or habit, they were always peering or half-closed. He was superstitious and ignorant, though a bold and able seaman. However, he went about his business stoutly and regularly; and therefore I had no reason to complain of him—certainly I had no right to find fault with his bad looks, which were not his making.

In due time we made Madeira, where we took in some delicious fruit as well as water and other necessaries. We stopped here three days, our passengers going ashore each day and enjoying their stay much.

On the morning of the fourth day the capstan was manned, the anchor drawn out of its bed, the sails cast loose, and we drifted out of the harbour with the first set of the tide. Passing out of the mouth of the harbour the sails were sheeted home, the yards hoisted, and the head-sails sent flapping up.

So we had completed the first part of our voyage auspiciously. And so we went to brave the "Spirits of the Sea" in the Southern Ocean.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

HINTS OF DANGER.—CAPTAIN BOYD HAS REASON TO  
DISTRUST HIS CREW.

WE were soon out of sight of the island of Madeira, and were bearing southwards. For five days all was a blue line of water around us, with the ship in the middle of the great flat circle.

The sixth morning after we left Madeira I was on deck with Wolfe Davis, our second mate. He was conning to the helmsman, and I was directing some fresh canvas to be set, and the studding sails, up to the royals, rigged. I was standing near, when Davis opened a drawling conversation.

“The young man below,” said he, “would lose if we had a fisting with a pirate,” and he laughed a low inward laugh.

“So should we,” said I; “but I don’t intend that he *should* lose, or the ship either; for we are somewhat strong.”

“True,” he returned; “the cash is considerable is it not, Captain?” This he said vacantly, as if he were thinking of something else.

“What cash?” I asked, and I turned fully upon him.

“The cash he has with him,” he said, looking at me.

“I believe it amounts to something,” I said, carelessly, walking up and down, as if I had a thought in my head.

“Hasn’t he told you the amount?” resumed Davis, when I came his way. “He’s got it private; I’ve heard it’s nigh five thousand pounds. What a deal could be done with such a sum of money.”

“Something greatly above that, I’ll be bound there is,” replied I.

“Above that, and all in specie!” he answered, in a vacant, thinking tone. “Five thousand pounds in specie is a great sum; and I didn’t—I mean I shouldn’t at all have thought it had been more. Well, I wish him well out of the ship with his money, for if he lose it in the *Pleiad* ’twill get a good ship a bad name; and we are all honest people.”

“If he lose it,” said I, “the ship’s bad name, or ours either, will not much matter; for she and we will go to the bottom—so much for honesty. But what makes your mind dwell so on any chance of his losing it, Davis?” I asked. “You are singular in your remarks; you know we have means of resistance; and we have no fear but that we can take care of the money.”

“These seas have a good many cruisers; some with consciences; some with no conscience at all. It’s all a chance for a man-of-war to look them up,” he returned; “and five out of six rovers would make free with the young chap’s money, giving him a boat without a bottom for a receipt.”

I gathered Davis’s ugly meaning, and turned it off with an affected laugh; but I did not like all this in Davis.

Further conversation was interrupted by Augustus Revel and his sister Matilda coming on deck. They walked aft, and we all soon began to talk gaily of the weather, the ship, and a hundred other topics that

in our situation were obvious and interesting. But a weight of fear seemed to hang over me, nevertheless; for I could not get Davis's unpleasant conversation and his sly, self-possessed examining *look* out of my mind. This conversation was "Cloud the First" upon our voyage.

Having made St. Helena, and taken on board fresh provisions, we set sail for the Cape; nothing particular occurring, except that we saw some birds, from the day of our departure from the island to that of our entrance into Table Bay. The wind was fair, the sea was tranquil; and with a few calms now and then and one squall, our passage from the Island was unusually prosperous. But there was danger brewing, and there was thunder murmuring for us, deep under the ocean. There are no risks like sea-risks; because at sea everything is possible to you, and you are kept in a state of continual excitement.

On the twenty-fourth day of October we entered Table Bay, and were soon busy getting in fresh water and provisions. Pigs, poultry, sheep and cows were taken on board, with vegetables, fruit and other supplies of the usual description necessary for us.

We lay abreast of the town, examining our sails and rigging, and preparing ourselves for that buffeting which we might soon expect. Getting eastwards in the Cape sea is always attended with more or less difficulty; but day and night went and came, and we lay where we were tranquilly.

At last we got our top-gallants up, our royal yards crossed, and everything on deck "ship-shape and Bristol fashion," to use the nautical expression.

It was on the 29th of October, about seven a.m., that we clapped hand to capstan-bar, worked ourselves

“short,” and catted the single anchor we had underfoot. This done, sails were spread, and in the last of the tide we got fairly out to sea, and we saw the waves begin to roll.

The day was beautiful. Large masses of purple clouds were floating like chains of fairy mountains above us; and the bright and, in the new lights, fiery, rather than yellow, sunshine gushed out between the clouds, throwing over the wide waste of weltering water alternate bands of dazzling glory and of lurid gloom. It was a peculiar looking day, with something awful about it; but one not unfrequent in those latitudes; now dark, now light, the whole expanse showed singularly. The heat was great, occasionally stifflingly great.

Late in the afternoon we found ourselves many leagues from land; and as the wind still held fair, we carried on with studding sails all abroad, and with everything spread which would draw or which we could crowd. The ship, indeed, stood on the sea like a pyramid of sails—a speck of white upon the lone blue ocean. No situation can be conceived more solitary; even the clouds above seemed, in the silence, to come down; to be as *speaking things* to us; and in that undisturbed repose of Nature wherein we swam, we felt ourselves almost like Noah in an empty world, suspended between sea and sky; for all was sea and sky with one ship under the stars.

But about seven p.m., just about dusk, it came on to blow, and by nine the sea ran high; a heavy, continuous, mountainous swell, which rolled our vessel to and fro upon it “like a ship of pasteboard.” The motion was uniform, though great. The blue antediluvian mountains seemed to be in undulating motion, under a mighty cope of stars; a vault of glittering stars.

The night was a sailor's "bad night," and seemed to threaten to become worse. The moon, when she came out, looked brighter and much larger than usual; but she every now and then glanced in and out with broken, magically changeful light, of the rolling masses of immense clouds; arrow-flights, as it were, of her straight, "silver plate" light would sometimes be darted out; long flat beams would stream down across the vapours of the horizon, and light up in a ghastly manner spots or long strips of sea, in which we could see the waves toss in the "acreage" of greenish silver, like as in the theatre. Equally as soon would the moon pass in again, and all become black as midnight; till a slender silver line of light would seem to catch itself silently up along the gloomy sea-distance, and then it would gradually break and stretch, from a centre, into breadth and strength, shining at last upon the whole sea.

Thus passed the night. Cloud and uncertainty were about us. The wind blew in angry, fitful gusts, and by eight the next morning it was blowing hard; the clouds appeared to thicken into themselves all the forenoon; one or two squalls came driving and roaring upon us, lashing and dashing up the whole breadth of distant sea, till the horizon seemed to form a long and rainy fringe to that ink-blue curtain which shut out all beyond and spread far up towards the zenith. Often did we see the squall, when our sails, were flapping against the masts and all was still *with us*, come hissing and boiling down, bringing the furious wind with it, and bursting on us like the violent genius of the air. Rain clouds occasionally splashed and burst up right over us; storms enveloped us in a sheet of watery, driving mist, in which drift we had much difficulty in seeing our sharp

bowsprit. Meantime the ship was dipping and bowing with her towering sails gracefully; such was the heave and roll about us now, and the darkness.

Thus wore the hours till evening. I perceived a strange mystery and apparent fear about my crew; they seemed to be restless and fidgetty, and they were looking out every now and then anxiously ahead. They appeared to go about their work with slowness and dissatisfaction, and their minds were evidently depressed and preoccupied. My own anxiety rose to an alarming extent. I saw no cause for this fear.

It was at this moment that I overheard one of my men imparting an experience in a half-whisper to a group of his fellows.

“It was in just such a sea,” said he, “that I saw *him* five years ago.”

There was a start among the seamen, eager questions were asked by half-a-dozen anxious enquirers; then they spoke so low that I could not catch the conversation.

I could not stand this. I walked up to them. “Come, my lads,” said I, “this won’t do; there is nothing to mind, but the sea is increasing, and you must bestir yourselves. Come, strip sail, bear a hand and ease the vessel by the head, or we may chance to get a little worse touch than we should like. ’Tis but a short blow.”

“What’s the use? What’s the utility of stripping sail or of doing anything else in the face of this magic Old Dutchman?—he’s coming down upon us as sure as a gun! If the ship’s to carry through, she’ll carry through—if not, our labour’s vain. Better, to my thinking, to —”



“To what, Davis? How is this,” I asked, breaking in upon him. “You don’t presume to question my orders, Davis?”

“No, I don’t. That is, I mean to—perhaps I must.”

Davis did not further answer; but he looked abroad and he grumbled to himself. All the men were sulky and afraid, seemingly.

“I don’t like the look of this,” said I, sternly, in a loud tone, for I made no concealment. “What makes you look so strange and bend such surly brows at me, men? See to your work immediately, and give me no sullen looks; and if Davis refuse——”

“Refuse,” interrupted Davis, doggedly. “I didn’t refuse.”

“I hope not,” I said, significantly; “for it should be the worse for you. See to your duty and reef that top-sail and foretopsail—double-reef them, mind you! and be quick.”

Davis walked off with an air almost of defiance, and with an expression out of his eyes and upon his lip which I thought most dangerous. The other men dared not look me in the face.

“What can be the meaning of this, men?” I asked of those who remained. “Surely you are not such swabs to care for the few puffs of wind which we have had; we’ve seen the worst, that’s clear. And if the weather had been ten times ——”

“Ay, ten times worse,” interrupted the boatswain, “we shouldn’t have cared a d—— for it. God forgive me for swearing just now. It’s the worst and the wickedest thing we can do, when the very next thing which we may see may be the *flat* of ‘His’ demon’s sails. Come high or low, let it blow great guns, and let the sea run

as high as it like, I don't care a rotten rope-yarn for any of these usual reasonable things. That is, so long as I've got a clear sea, and am likely to meet with nothing scudding-like and coming worse than myself. But this is just the time ——”

“For what,” I demanded. “What is this just the time for?”

All the men were silent, but they cast down their eyes and looked disturbed; they tried to exclaim, but they turned pale, or laughed uneasily.

“What do you mean that this is just the time for, Gaulty?” said I, asking the question decidedly of him, though I well knew.

“Just the time to see the *Flying Dutchman*, that old ‘Flyer,’ *that's all*, captain; just the short and the long of it, you know, and *we* all think so—one and all of us. We can see the ‘Devil’ in the blink there.”

“*Flying Dutchman!*” I cried, in contempt and in indignation. “Flying Devil! I've heard of this fabled ‘Flyer’; but I've beat up these wild seas over and over again without seeing a sign of him or a rag of a sail of him. I didn't think my crew were lubbers enough to be humbugged so; and to believe such tales is madness.”

“Don't be too audacious, captain; it's just the way to bring misfortun' upon us. We're perhaps like Jonah's ship ——”

“Jonah? How dare you, Gaulty, make use of such an allusion to me?—to speak ill of this ship, and to bring forward Jonah.”

“I didn't make no allusion to you; but cap fits, I s'pose,” he muttered. “No harm done, Captain, and I hope's no offence. Mayhap we're going to run clear,

that's all ; perhaps it will be so, if you say so," said he, with a sneer, "doubtless it will be."

Fearing that the men might get more bold and obstinate in their dangerous fears, I ordered them instantly to disperse to their business. The behaviour of Davis and Gaulty disturbed me much, and it was with no small anxiety that I superintended (from the quarter-deck) the sweeping-in of our canvas. Davis looked to the mainmast. Seyton (first mate) directed forward.

The sublimity of the scene at this moment struck me forcibly. I was singularly affected. The evening was deepening into twilight, mountains of clouds were rolled and heaped in the mysterious half-purple sky ; in the west was a fiery radiation and blaze, casting a deep red illumination over a broad belt of billowy, sparkling sea. But this last light of the great sun was getting dimmer and dimmer every instant ; lurid, sulphury effects of light were spreading in the east among the grandly convoluted clouds and streaming over the ghastly (as it looked to more eyes than mine) breadth of the gloomy extremest sea-distance. In the east the sky grew black and turbid, thunder rolled and muttered like the stirring of the mighty spirits of the ocean along in those awful depths, and pale lightning quivered and streamed through the numerous breaks of cloud and glowed over the surface of the water. I never saw so singular and even awful-looking a darkening of light. Colours of all kinds seemed to glow in the sky and ocean ; and with all this there were the mighty rolling waves grandly heaving our noble vessel, with the vast plains of sea—nothing but sea, with the thunder of the wind loudly mingling with the thunder in the clouds—the tremendous sense of solitude and the overpowering idea of space.

immense, spiritual, magically intense sense of space. But I had not time to look much longer, for my men were drawing together and hurriedly whispering—with pale faces, their features strong and terrible with excitement. They were all disregarding me, and looking in a crowd abroad.

“I must know what all this is about,” I said, going straight up amidst them. “I cannot believe that the *Flying Dutchman* alone——”

“You’re right,” interrupted Davis. “We’re going to hold on no longer, it’s going against fate. I’m sure the voyage is doomed, and I’m resolved to ’bout ship and see if I can’t make something better of matters; we won’t face this awful ‘flyer.’ I say, men, the Devil sails the sea.”

“What do you mean, insolent villain!” I cried, walking up to him and looking him full in the face. “You are mutineering, sir. Do you know that? You are a mutineer.”

“Why, I suppose I am,” he answered coolly; “but I can’t help that. We must take care of ourselves, we have no right to run our head into the bear’s mouth because the Captain bids us.”

“Mutiny,” I called out, turning suddenly round. “Mutiny! Mr. Seyton, fasten the hatches. Arm yourselves there on the quarter-deck! for we shall have need, I think, of something of the kind before we’ve done here. Arm on the quarter-deck!—load, I say!”

At these words Seyton drew his sword, and the other officers ran up at the alarm with pistols and other weapons.

This was the work of a minute. The crew seemed to stand irresolute, with pale faces, and with their hands

behind them. There was a long, painful pause, the uncertainty was terrible.

"Come, my men," said I, "let's at least see who are our friends and who enemies. Those who will abide by their Captain, and don't wish for a swing from the gallows by-and-bye, just walk over to my side."

After an instant's consideration I had a good third of my crew behind me, besides all the officers except Davis and Gaulty. The first pulled out a pair of ship's pistols.

"I'm sorry," said he, "we can't get command without a blow, but we must have the ship. Come, my merry men, there's gold enough aboard to make you all. Pull out your tools, and let us set boldly about it. Gaulty, head some of these barking dogs, will you, and drive us the sheep aft. The voyage is doomed. Look at the day, and see if it doesn't frown black as hell upon us. The *Flying Dutchman's* afore you as sure as there's anger in heaven. Let us fly from his thunder-marked face, then; let us flee from this 'Shadow of a Ship.' Those who don't want to sail into his stony eyes will follow me, and get the command of the ship before we sight his monster-ship, looming-up awful; I saw him ahead a little while ago."

I advanced to seize the villain, and an immediate skirmish amongst us was the dreadful consequence. The whole thing had come so suddenly upon me that I was at a loss to understand my situation. The first shot was fired by the mutineers; then we were all instantly in a pell-mell species of struggle, in which the unattended-to sails seemed to flap of themselves. The first clash of the cutlasses caught my ear. It was all like a fearful dream; but that sound of contending steel was the worst sound

of all. Some few bodies fell heavily to the deck, and over them one or two of my men tumbled, rolling. Muskets were levelled, and a ball or two went hissing along the deck before the explosion and the roll of smoke came.

In a few minutes the mutineers were driven along both gangways, and they were now jumping up the fore-castle ladders. I feared, since they had got into a huddle among themselves, that they might be turning some of the guns upon us; and so I pushed them, purposely not so hard as I might otherwise have done. We kept them in the fore-castle some time, and then we were obliged to retreat till we had got on the quarter-deck. Here I ordered the hammocks to be pulled out, and we made a high breast-work of them; and I strengthened this defence with all the ship's solid furniture that we could lay hands upon, and made a fortification.

Fortunately, we had the helm in our power; and so we kept the ship before the wind; but our state was alarming in the highest degree. I feared that large guns would be pointed aft, which, if they were fired, would have swept our little castle from right to left, and blown us into the sea.

Augustus Revel and his sister, our two passengers, were on deck with us. The latter was trembling fearfully; but still she endeavoured to calm her fright and not to distress us. We put her down for safety in the after-cabin; but in a few minutes she insisted on sharing our dangers above, and came on deck.

"This is a pretty business," said I to Seyton. "What will my owners think?—and our lives are not safe. All's gone if we don't master these fellows soon."

"We are not weak," he answered.

“Thank God for it, we are not,” I cried.

“My good lads,” I said to the crew, turning round briskly, “you are my friends for ever now. If we master those villains, I promise every man (on the part of the owners) fifty guineas when he reaches England. Revel, it was your annoying cash which brought this upon us; that is the temptation.”

“Was it my money that was the temptation,” he replied. “I hope to carry that safe yet; and to master those fellows, and to hang them.”

“Oh, let them have all the money,” said his sister, “if that will content them, and if it will admit of our finishing our voyage in peace. This state is so dreadful; it is too terrible to have this feeling of horrid mastery over us.”

“We cannot give them the money, Miss Revel,” I said. “Fear not, we will die every man of us before you fall into their hands. Are they stirring, Seyton, any of them?”

“No, sir; I cannot see anything of them.”

“Hush! Do you hear nothing?”

“Nothing. They’ve piled everything they can heap together forward. I can’t see. There may be deck guns behind the lumber with their muzzles towards us; but I hardly think so.”

“God in heaven forbid; for they have access to the powder-room! What would you do?” I said. “Shall we risk an attack by them?”

“I should say not,” returned the fourth mate. “They may mow us down with their grape if we quit our defence before we can get at them to have a try at their bodies.”

“What arms have you on deck?” I asked.

“Plenty of arms, as well as ammunition, large and small,” answered Seyton.

“Very good,” I said; “load all your muskets and pistols, and we will see if we cannot turn some of the big guns inwards by-and-bye.”

“The sea is far too high for getting guns in,” observed Seyton. “They would roll in and crush us if we loosened them. If they have a gun or two in, forward, they’re lashed tight down, somehow, depend upon it; but I fancy it’s impossible; they would not have cast them loose first.”

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

A SUDDEN SIGHT OF THE "CAPE FLYER," WHOSE APPEARANCE IS ALWAYS SAID TO BETOKEN MISFORTUNE.

"LOOK out, Seyton," I said, "and see what tack they are upon."

Seyton raised his head, but cautiously.

"By Jove," he cried, all in a moment, and leaping higher up our barricade, "there is a ship close aboard!"

"A ship! Thank God! Thank God, we're saved," I cried; while tears for the first time burst from Matilda Revel's eyes and coursed down her cheeks plentifully.

"What does she look like?" asked Augustus Revel, breathlessly, and trying in his eagerness to mount and see.

"I hardly know," returned Seyton, still intent on the ship, but apparently puzzled. "Look up, Captain Boyd, will you? I never saw so queer a ship in my life."

A strange light, as I looked up at him, seemed to shine on his face, as if from some reflecting object that was near, like a prodigious embodied light.

My hearers will mark these curious particulars, which happened strictly as I am recounting them.

I raised my head, and looked over the bulwark. I could not keep myself steady. The motion of the ship was regular, but deep from side to side. At this moment a formidable rain-cloud broke above us; and

when it had blown over we were buried in a mass of wet, blue vapour, in which the sea seemed to splash and pitch the waves up viciously.

"She's gone into that big black cloud," whispered Seyton, almost frightened. "I think I see her long, wild-looking bowsprit sticking out. She is an unaccountable horned ship, curved head and stern like the new moon; or like a mad Hollander of an old-fashioned cut such as I have seen in a picture. Such a craft never swims the sea now. She can't be real; and yet I see deck-lanterns all alight and arow along her, and I heard a confused noise as of many men; and I distinguished the trumpets going, and the rumble along the decks of metal and so forth, and of guns, like a man-of-war. I really feel very queer, Captain Boyd. I can't understand that ship at all. Either I am mad, or that ship is a mad ship."

And when he came down poor Seyton looked awfully pale. He was sick and ill immediately afterwards.

"Nonsense, Seyton. Either you've mistaken a cloud for a ship, or she's *real*, and we'll hail her. Let's watch. What of the rogues forward?" I asked; "do they see the ship?"

"Ah, the fellows forward are observing her," said Seyton faintly, yet recovering; "I hear voices there."

"Anyhow, the sight is an interposition from heaven for our rescue," said I. "They will be daunted and take her for the *Flying Dutchman*."

"I never was more inclined to believe that wild, impossible story of the *Flying Dutchman* than now," said Seyton, who looked better, but clutched again and again the bitts nervously.

I could have almost joined him in his declaration,

though I had not, as he had, or supposed he had, seen the ship.

The wind blew off the whole body of clouds and mist like an immense curtain, though enormous ragged half-lighted vapours were still flying between the openings of the clouds. And all in a minute there was really a great ship for everybody to see, plain as our hands before us. The sea underneath was awfully grand. It was the last of twilight. But a strange sort of magical illumination appeared to light up different parts of the ocean. The sky soon got clearer; though it was dark. Cloud-piles were towering up into the sky, so electric that they seemed pulsating with sulphury light.

At this moment another cry of "The Ship! the Ship!" burst from the fore-castle. We forgot our unhappy situation at the shout, and gazed with intensity upon this mysterious ship, with all her sails set. Everyone in our ship seemed attracted, and all rose and strained eagerly over the bulwarks. We saw, too, the bright flame of a supposed phantom gun; and we descried a globe of smoke from the stranger; but we heard no more sound than if a discharge had taken place in a looking-glass, in which the *figure of a ship* was to be seen. I do not believe magic; I cannot believe magic. But this ship looked like a ship in a dream.

There was something in the appearance of that wonderful ship which puzzles me exceedingly to this day. Though the wind was blowing violently, there she lay, rolling grandly on the immense swell, with everything set—a cloud of canvas. Broad out was every inch of sail that booms could spread, even up to royals. A queen of ships (though queer and spiky with her sails, and with an enormous spread) indeed she looked. I can

see her now as she rolled slow and royally—a pyramid of mighty sails, rising majestically from her painted mysterious hull, gilt with gold that seemed dull. She had no colours spread—her cock-boats at the davits were swinging at peaked quarter and latticed stern. She had no riband traced along her beautiful run. There were shows that only seemed men aboard her, glancing flat and wild and mad in the fields of the glass, like the “grotesques” in a magic lantern. Every wide sail was packed on from truck to deck; but there was no wind (or there was the wind of another world<sup>1</sup>) on them. A piece of a dream, in fact, had seemed to have got into our day life. It was as if we, ourselves, and the mutiny “were a mistake.” The ship seemed sailing in another world, or rather, there were two worlds; that of the stranger (flat and thin, like one of Danté’s phantoms, lighted from within, centre-like, from Hades), and our own, with a real wind and a sham wind concurrent. We saw her for full five minutes in this clear manner, though we were unable to believe our eyes, or really to credit the thing. As to the possibility of such sail in a sea so high, every sailor except he who saw would have laughed. But I *saw the thing* nevertheless. Refuse to believe who will!

Hardly to be credited, too, she seemed to make no way. She appeared to slip along sideways by us, merely like an entire monstrous figure of a flat ship, or a form like a jack-o’-lantern in a magic lantern, to which she bore perfect resemblance, with the light of the lantern let down from the sky largely to show it. There she

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<sup>1</sup> What is the “wind of another world?” A curious expression, coming from a very singular man, as this enthusiastic and seemingly very superstitious captain of a ship (who is the narrator) appears desirous of proving himself.

was, motionless, spectral; really frightening in her strangeness, and in our disbelief of her. At length she began to pale. Her gigantic outline seemed to lose light from the centre-point, and the ship stretched itself looming on the background. She grew wholly a dull grey—fanciful ribands of mist came sliding athwart her, dull amidst the magnificent bright lights, till she disappeared by little and little, like an apparition. In ten minutes from our first seeing her she had totally disappeared; and she left us with the now blank sea, asking each other if such a thing had been shown upon it. And who we were who had seen it was a doubtful point, in relation to this wonder.

We recovered ourselves, would it be believed, with tears. Doctors may explain the reason, for I cannot—but we wept. And directly after we heard such beautiful sea euphonic music, to which I do not think the ear of man ever before listened. Was it possible? Was it true that this fateful bark was thus to sail through the pathless solitudes of this “haunted Cape Sea,” on its shadowy awful voyage of the many centuries? Was time annihilated to the hapless Vanderdecken, and to his expiating crew? Were all those on board involved in one fate with the guilty commander; atoning, in years upon years of hopeless unreal voyaging, but in the magic consolation of this accompanying beautiful requiem? Was penance the mysterious meaning of this inexpressibly lovely, wandering, melancholy music, swelling or sinking, day and night, over the deserted vast tracks of the ocean? Was this wildered, watery pilgrimage prolonged through the Time which refused to know Him, forbidden to be Time to Him; and was the curse of never-ending life to Vanderdecken like

that of the Wandering Jew? Was it possible that, after all, the familiar story of Vanderdecken and his Phantom Ship might be true; and that to us, men of the modern time—of the contemporaneous time—the sight of the “Flyer,” not in the fancy of the fore-castle, but in the convictions of the educated dis-believers of the quarter-deck, had to our own real senses been vouchsafed. Had we heard intelligibly the Music of the Invisibles? My blood ran cold at the idea. And yet there was a feeling of intense delight, as well as of triumph, at my having—as the moment’s persuasion assured me—transcended man’s experience.

Sailors are superstitious; and I did not like this idea of having really seen—absolutely seen in these modern days, these days that deny all miracles—that Cain of the Ocean, the phantom cruiser, cursed of heaven: the sign and the warning to blasphemous sailors, who, of all men, alone on the deep with the angels, ought to be reverend and prayerful—never audacious and defiant; for the presence of the elements to them is as the presence of God Himself.

And with those two mighty things—all ocean below, and all sky above—there must be the third inexpressibly grand deified Power, greater than Nature—to keep them asunder and to make a world between. When man glides between these two sublime eternal forms of sea and sky—alone except for the presence of the Invisible, mute in the silence of time—let him tremble; for nought is with him but God. I do not know how it is with others, but for “mine own poor part,” I declare that I have never felt the awfulness of creation in such intensity as when I have been placed far out in the solitudes of the great Ocean, with nothing but sea, which

is a sort of sky underfoot, and with nothing but the sky, which then seems a sort of sea, overhead; and it is then and there that I have felt my own meanness, and have prayed the best; for prayers should be best alone on the sea, and under the sky, with none but God to listen. How awful is that remark of Coleridge, on the solitude of the sea, where he says—

“So lonely ’twas that God Himself  
Scarce seeméd there to be.”

Some of us have felt that awe. So lonely is the sea, that God Himself scarcely seems to be there: as if God could rule the land where men are; but that on the sea, which is all silence and solitude, God could not be present.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> And yet we know He is *everywhere*—beside you, or His chosen ministers, at any moment of your life, or in any place wherever you may be. No spot, or place, or point in the universe can be supposed vacant of the Invisible, Guiding and Superintending Intelligence which all men, in all ages, have called—God.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

THE "FLYING DUTCHMAN" FADES AWAY "OFF REALITY" AND SINKS INTO THE FANCY, OR AS INTO "DAYLIGHT DREAMS."

WE now addressed ourselves to our arms. I could hear movements and a hum of discourse, however perturbed, among the mutineers. I wondered in what manner they had sustained the magic sight we had seen, and what they thought of it.

"What could that strange ship have been?" said I. "She took no notice of us. She passed wholly by us, as it were, as silently and unsubstantially as if she had been a painted ship."

"We've been too occupied to once think of making her a signal," said Seyton. "We let her go by, like foolish men."

"It never struck me," I returned, "or rather I seemed to think that we *could not*—that it would be like signalling a cloud; that there was nothing there but a mere show—an idea—a trick of the eyesight. How broadly, majestically, gigantically she passed."

"We passed rather," he rejoined; "for with all her spread of sail she did not appear to shoot ahead by a yard. It was our motion which took her by, like something overtaken."

"Singular enough," said William Anderson, our third mate, as if recovering out of a sleep, "would not this appearance almost make one believe the story of the



‘Cape Flyer?’ Like you, Captain Boyd, I thought I was witnessing some mere empty show. Where can she be now?”

“There is too much cloud in her direction for her to be seen, were she even there,” observed Seyton. “Still we may catch another sight of her. Was she real, or were we all mad?”

“If we do see her again,” said I, “we’ll make some signal—will endeavour to make our situation understood. She couldn’t have been a cruiser. I hardly know what to think of her.”

“A cruiser would have closed and spoke us,” answered Seyton; “would have observed us as sure as the ship we have seen did not notice us. The clouds are opening a little about there! Revel, hand me the glass, will you? She seemed to fire a gun, though, as if she saw us; though it was a pale sort of gun, like as in a vision, without any report.”

“What are they about forward?” I asked of Anderson. “They appear quiet. I cannot see any light or hear a sound among them.”

“This sight has frightened them for a time,” he returned. “They believe she is the *Flying Dutchman* as sure as they’re masters of half the *Pleiad*.”

“What a fool I was,” I exclaimed, my thoughts reverting to the chief mutineer, “to come to sea with such a villain. Where could he have been picked up, and what madness made me take him! How I bitterly rue it now.”

“He was found on the coast—the east coast of Scotland, as I’ve heard,” said Anderson. “He has been, in his time, something of a smuggler, I believe, between some of the fishing hamlets north of Aberdeen, and some place

or places on the Continent. He is only playing his old privateering games aboard the *Pleiad*. The man's a little more inclined to be commander than commanded. Besides, I really think he did not admire the idea of the *Flying Dutchman*. Your gold, Mr. Revel, has formed the strong temptation; and now, of course, as they have broken out into mutiny, they will fight hard before they are reduced; because they know what must otherwise be their lot."

"We've run ourselves into a pretty mess," said I. "Not a chance of a king's ship, and leagues upon leagues of sea here without a sail, except this jack o' lantern, I suppose, that only glimmers before us to pale away into water, or glance off, at a tangent, to a spot fifty leagues hence. Do you see anything, Seyton?" I added, observing him still intent upon the cloud where the strange ship was supposed to be, but where I could see nothing but clouds."

"There is a queer dark centre, hinting a fabric in the cloud yonder," he said, "that looks a little like her; a forky shadow of an idea of a ship, with spars and sails, that you can just discern in the middle of the grey mass. Look ahead, Captain Boyd. Can you distinguish the place where she vanished?"

"Yonder it is," said I, pointing with my finger; "but I cannot tell the precise place, and I do not see what you mean."

"Do you see that point where a line of sea seems breaking thinly and whitely. Raise your eyes, and opening out over it you will perceive a pyramid of cloud which appears at this moment to rest fixedly upon the water. It is like a vast grey rolling curtain; but in the middle there is an angled outline—a projected shadow, which

assumes—now distinctly, and now faintly—the form of a ship. Have you caught the place? There is certainly a ship with her sails.”

“I have caught the place,” I said; “I see her plainly. Give me the glass. I think I can make something out of her. That’s surely a ship.”

I took the glass and directed it to the place to which my attention had been called. The clouds and the haze were very thick, night was gradually shadowing down all round. I had not looked long before this great shadow grew denser and more defined; it now assumed an artificial outline, in contradistinction to its hitherto waving, dreamy appearance, the lines (especially forward of it) grew sharper. It seemed to be breaking spear-like through the clouds. A moment more, and the long shooting bowsprit first came [through, and then the figure of a large ship (hull and great sails complete) became plainly distinguishable. She loomed broadly, in consequence of her enormous outstretching stud-sails.

Just at this moment a long, rolling peal of thunder began to mutter in the distance behind us, and then it gradually deepened till it seemed to make a sweep of the whole sky. It rattled angrily like a cannonade as it spent itself, with a flash of lightning, in the west. Another tremendous flash—a gush rather of blue lightning darted down across the sky, and seemed to set not only the mysterious ship on fire, but lighted up the ocean far and wide. Sky and sea seemed in illumination, with special billows traced and trailing like fireworks. I never gazed upon a more glorious, though a more terrific sight. Ship, sails, hull—even to her gilding—sea, sky and cloud seemed instantaneously shown up with rose-coloured light; everything became distinct all

over her and in her in a moment. I could see her row of bristling guns, her chains, her boats, her anchors, her masts and tops, her booms and crooked ends, and every sail climbing in her pyramid of sear canvas. But the vision was as transitory as it had been superlatively grand. The flash went darting over the sea, darkness closed in over all; the ship was lost again in a whole waste of cloud; shadows settled black on the sea under it; every light waned, and we saw the ship no more. Only, before she disappeared, we saw everything through her.

Not a word had been spoken all this time. We had quite forgotten, in our excitement and occupation with the sight, the signal which we had promised ourselves to make. It would, however, have been of no use, and we felt so. Had we been more satisfied of the character of the vessel, our distance was too great for any motion we might have made to be seen and understood by the people whom we certainly seemed to see on board her. We feared to cast loose a gun; and, besides, we had no cannon-loading on deck. The ship, therefore, departed, and we set ourselves with cold hearts to consider of our situation.

Both Seyton and Anderson were confident that the stranger was no cruiser, as no notice was taken of us, and no sign whatever was given that we were seen. The whole affair was inexplicable in mystery, and we turned our eyes again on board, giving up the stranger with a hundred unreasonable and wild speculations as to who she might be.

I talk of a hundred speculations.

A hundred—many hundred times I have thought of this ship to this day, but I am as wide off the mark as

ever. I am most reluctant to believe an impossibility, and that the ship was supernatural and the *Flying Dutchman*, and that the legend about this Dutch ship and its miserable fate is true. But I find it absolutely impossible to account for its appearance, because there were so many contradictory circumstances attendant on the sights we caught of it, that I cannot explain them by any rational remembrance. What am I to believe? I must leave the whole subject alone; I do not know; it makes my head ache. I must not begin to think too seriously, and too fixedly, and too pertinaciously upon such subjects that contradict evidence and make one uncomfortable.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CREW REBEL IN EARNEST—CAPTAIN BOYD AND THE PASSENGERS ARE PLACED IN CONFINEMENT.

NIGHT had now come dark on, the clouds were a little dispersing, the wind seemed to be going down. Thus we remained for three hours, debating what had best be done. Nothing was heard of the mutineers.

But about ten o'clock we were startled by hearing a sudden bustle forward. Voices were loud; and we immediately concluded that an attack was preparing. We sprung to our arms immediately, and I found an eager row of combatants supporting us.

I could distinguish the voice of Davis issuing orders, and presently the light of battle-lanterns was thrown strong along the deck, and streamed wide on the night-air. All forward was illuminated, and by the light of the lanterns we could see the dark figures of the mutineers gathered together on the edge of the fore-castle and coming down the ladders.

"Look to your arms," I cried, starting up to meet them. "The villains are coming. Every other man of you let fly and charge your guns again as quickly as possible, while the reserve pour in a second volley. Protect your bodies as much as possible by your breast-work. Now's your time, take them in the crowd on the ladders before they're well on the plank below. Look sharp, men, and fire!"

I had scarce time to get out the words before the mutineers had descended the ladder and were approaching.

Just as they were midway on the deck my men poured in a capital volley. Whiz went the balls, rattling amongst the timbers, and bouncing and shaving splinters up from the boards in every direction.

A cloud of white smoke flew along the deck, filling every part of the hollow or middle of the ship, and for the moment concealing our enemies. But the next instant the wind blew the decks clear, and the whole crowd of villains was distinguishable like a horrid picture of a multitude of dreadful rebels.

Their reception, though, had staggered them. I did not perceive any mutineer down, but there was a sharp cry and an oath or two, which showed that some of our balls had done their work.

The next moment our reserve party threw in a second volley—the reports rattled all over the ship, and the smoke again filled all forward. But crack!—crack!—now came the muskets of the mutineers, darting fire through the smoke, though the balls cut the air with a leaden whistle over our heads, without doing us any mischief, very fortunately.

“Let us rush down upon them,” said Seyton; “a strong push will clear the deck, and we may drive them up into twos and threes and so master them.”

“What say you, Anderson?” I suddenly demanded.

“Not a bad idea, sir,” he answered. “Let us try and charge them.”

“Down then, in God’s name, upon them,” I shouted; and, with a ringing cheer, we all lighted down the ladders or over the front of our barricade, and reached the deck below.

In a moment I was in the gangway and piercing a way ahead without hardly seeing where I went. Seyton, however, was on my left; while Anderson, with a good half of our crew, was pushing forward in the lee-gangway. We soon closed hard with the mutineers, Davis was just before me; we were so close that muskets (without bayonets) were mere clubs.

Several pistols I saw presented and flashed; but in the confusion and stamping and close fight I could not see who fell. The clinking of the steel was like the *rattling of loose locks*, and I saw blood running in a little stream and finding its way (as if of itself) to the scuppers. I felt this terror could not last. Spite of a tremendous struggle and the boldest possible pressure forward, I found myself slipping back inch by inch, together with all the brave fellows about me, till we had almost been forced the whole length of the waist, which was the field of battle. What a story for me to tell of such a fight.

On the other side the villains had been still more successful. They had driven all our people rapidly to the foot of the left-hand quarter-deck ladder, and were turning to take my party on the flank with their thirsty steel all arow and glittering.

Just at this moment Davis (who was foremost) dealt Seyton a cruel cut (as it seemed) on the arm, and the poor fellow instantly sank. I pulled him aside, however, by the other arm, and thrust him up that vacant ladder which was just over me. Under these unhappy circumstances I ordered all to mount the ladder after him, and I ascended last myself with Augustus Revel, who had fought with great courage. I whispered him to step up and take his sister into the farthest cabin. And



with my cutlass I waved clear space underneath for me to ascend without anyone getting within my guard.

“Swing-up the ladders,” I cried, lending a hand to do it. “No, you cannot do it. Unship them!—cast them down! Strike the hooks out! Keep the villains below.”

Soon, with wriggling and twisting the fastenings, we threw the ladders furiously down, just as some of the villains had their feet on them to pursue us up into our very citadel, reaching at us with their swords.

“You are a set of d——d idiots,” shouted Davis. “Throw down your arms, you foolish people, unless you’ve a mind to be slaughtered like sheep, every one of ye. You can’t beat us. Gaulty, unmask our battery there, and bring these fools to their lubberly senses, for the ship is ours.”

At these words the barricade they had erected on the fore-castle was swept down, and over it we saw with horror four of our deck-guns grinning (as it were) down at us, and over each was a seaman with bare arms, standing with a flashing portfire, like a torch in his hand, ready to discharge the guns. Resistance would have been madness; they could have blown us into the water at one discharge, and I saw the madness at once.

I threw down my sword and I ordered all with me to do the like; and I called over the rail, only stipulating that our lives should be spared, and that we should be put on shore somewhere when land should be made; I giving up the ship.

Davis and the rest of the fellows were now kings and masters of the *Pleiad*. They all came on the quarter-deck, burly and blustering. They took our arms and bound us. The sea had gone greatly down now; therefore two guns were drawn from the quarters, loaded with grape

and pointed forward, while a couple of guns also were placed inwards on the forecastle, with men ready to fire standing over them, so that at any alarm, or at the least attempt at resistance, they could rake the ship fore-and-aft.

Look-outs were stationed at the bows, in the waist, and on each quarter, while a man was sent to the foretop-gallant yard and ordered to keep a sharp eye all round. Sentries were placed at the cabin door and hatchways; while a gun was loaded up to the muzzle with grape, and pointed with its head down the companion. Two sturdy seamen now took the wheel; Davis planting himself at the binnacle and giving directions like the master. This was our position now.

The course of the ship was changed. The reefs in the courses and topsails were shaken out. The spanker was set, and the foretop-mast staysail and fore staysail run up.

The wind had gone greatly down. But the *Pleiad* was going through the water with great speed.

There we stood, silent, bound in a row, waiting the disposal of a fellow who was master now, and whom I could have willingly knocked down. He ordered us below in a stern, but a quiet and a careless tone, and we were all taken down the companion and shut up in the cabin.

My heart bled for Matilda Revel. When the men approached her I thought her brother would have sealed his fate by throwing himself upon them, but Davis interfered—

“D—n ye, back!” he cried. “Let the young lady alone, will you, you imps of the Devil’s Great Tinder-box. We are not such fools as to trouble ourselves with women of that fashionable, useless, upper sort. I’ve a sister myself, and by anchor and stock I’ll allow no

wrong treatment to any woman in a ship that I command or that I'm aboard of. And I'll fetch the rascal a d——d good cut that doesn't bow and scrape to this young lady just as he would if she were on the quarter-deck of a king's royal man-of-war, or in her own safe drawing-room. Just think of that now, all you fellows! *The money's ours*, as a matter of course. We must see what's to be done with these people to get them away. Walk off with them—clap 'em all up below, and guard the cabin, because with them we've got cumber. As for these sailors," he continued, pointing to the crew, "set them free, but take care they have never even a pin to hurt us with, and let them help us to work the ship. You've mistaken your side, eh men? We'll knock about for the gold by-and-bye. It's all aboard. Steady, you there at the helm! keep her well up to the wind. It's a good day's work. We'll put these people ashore somewhere."

We were now shut in the cabin, with guards outside and nothing but wretchedness within. Plenty to eat and drink, to be sure, was given us. But there was the dreadful uncertainty and anxiety respecting our fate. Our cargo was lost—our lives would most likely eventually be sacrificed. I knew that Davis would carry the ship quite away into strange latitudes, and perhaps turn pirate with her in the Indian Seas. Such things have been done—even in modern times.

It is of no use dwelling on the miserable monotony of this part of our story. Here we were five days, with scarcely a breath of air, and all the time quite ignorant of what was happening above or in what direction we were sailing. We every day expected some catastrophe, and we made up our minds for the worst. Matilda Revel seemed the least afflicted of all of us, she consoled her

brother, and seemed an angel sent down on purpose to make our wretched situation more endurable. Davis surprised me by offering to keep such strict discipline aboard the ship, and I felt grateful to him for it, with all his rebellion.

But I had not mistaken the man. He, although a villain, was a strange mixture of contradictory qualities. There was sometimes, too, a weight of stern sadness about him, the cause of which, in a man of his position in the world, I could not make out. Perhaps hard trials, disappointments and failure in the early part of his life had changed his character. He kept a most determined rule over the men, however; he was strict and rigid to the last degree.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE HORRORS OF CONFINEMENT ON BOARD A SHIP IN THE WIDE OCEAN.

ON the sixth day of our captivity, about two in the afternoon, as nearly as I could guess, for all our watches and time-keepers had been taken away, we heard a sudden bustle overhead, and then there was a very faint, distant gun. Our hearts were in our mouths directly, as they say. What could it be? I crept to the only cabin light that was left partially open; for the mutinous crew had shipped the deadlights and wedged them all in tight, for the purpose of keeping us more secure. A nook was however left mercifully open for the sake of air; it was not much more than a crevice, but the bright light came in.

When I applied my eye to the opening I could not see anything but the wide waste of sunshiny, sparkling sea. Presently, however, I could tell, *by the revolving feel of the cabin floor* that we were hauling our wind, and I again looked out, and now I saw a ship some miles off. What was our joy when I announced this discovery? The stranger showed large and white on the blue, and I took her to be a vessel of war. The wind at the time was easterly, and we were considerably in advance of her. When I first saw her she was under courses, topsails and topgallants; but I now could see she loosed her royals, for there was the white flutter of her

distant sails. They first filled in semicircles and then gradually mounted the three slender royal masts. The white sail over the bowsprit, too, was thickening. Thus I saw with joy preparations were making aboard the stranger for a closer acquaintance with us; for she evidently saw us.

From the voices and bustle above, now, I knew very well that we were pressing sail, and, aware of the wonderful sailing qualities of the *Pleiad*, I was greatly anxious as to the result. We were cutting through the water at a great rate. I could see this from the swirl and the float of bubbles innumerable racing aft. Still from my position I could command a view of the stranger. She was now evidently laid up for us, for her sides went in apparently. Her figure was straight on, the hull black and grim, the bowsprit above white with jibs: the spars were like lines, with the broad sails rising each over each, and the whole ship was circumscribed within a single pyramid. She loomed darkly and greyly in a distant passing cloud, though distinctly, with a heel to port, which added much to the picturesque promise of her appearance: for I thought her a man-of-war. The sea rolled grandly and gigantically; the sun was shining on a strip of sea a long way off, but midway between us and the sail; and in appearance the lighted belt of sea increased the gloom which spread over in the neighbourhood of the strange ship.

“There is a gun!” cried Revel, starting to his feet.

I looked—just in time to see an arrowy jet of snowy smoke succeeding the flash, which latter I did not see. The ball of smoke, as it looked, rolled out and gracefully convolved, gliding as it thinned softly over the water to leeward and curling upwards into a faint last spire.

Some time after the sullen boom came upon our ears from the distance. It was the voice of rescue. In our minds we put power in that sound.

"That's to bring-to," said Seyton. "A cruiser, by Jove!"

"English, French, Dutch, it matters not which country," said I, "she will deliver us from our situation; and we are sure, in any case, of escaping the miserable expectations we have now."

"It must strike them there's something wrong aboard us," said Seyton. "They'll hold-on and close us if it take them a week to do it. Fortune fill their sails!"

"They are determined to lose nothing for want of trying," said Anderson. "See! there go out the booms."

Anderson's eye was at a small glass which he had taken from his pocket.

"The wind crosses their course," said I, "but, fortunately, not very directly; but it will make their studsails of more embarrassment than profit. The starboard ones must be useless. Now the *Pleiad* can lay-on as much as she please, provided she run before the wind and leave the stranger to do the like, but in a parallel direction. To cross upon us would make her lose time, and cause her to haul her wind."

"She gains nothing as yet," said Anderson, in a melancholy tone. "Perhaps she loses way rather than gains it. Does she gain?"

"Nothing," said I; "not a foot. She is just as small as when I first sighted her. She almost seems to recede."

At this moment I thought I could perceive a slight variation in her. She was falling off, and she was hugging the wind not so close as she had hitherto done. By

this partial change of direction we could catch a glimpse of her weather-side, and through Anderson's glass we perceived a double row of ports—that is, the rows of guns of a main and of an upper deck. Her weather stud-sails were spread white abroad, while sky-sails were crowning the royals and adding to the pyramid. Her lower tier of ports were closed, but above that tier the deck guns bristled out like needles. She showed no colours; but she was a solid ship and a real ship.

The *Pleiad* continued to make way; the waves rolled swiftly by her cabin lights; the bubbles and foam were no sooner seen than they raced away. All this time we heard nothing; the people were silent above; by which general quiet I knew we were under a press of canvas and that the men were at quarters.

In half an hour the sky cleared and the sun came brightly out, illuminating the whole sea and brilliantly shining on the strange ship. Some large masses of white clouds were in the sky, which was as clear blue as the sea below.

It was now a race between the ships. By slightly altering her course and putting herself more before the wind the stranger had considerably lessened the distance; she was now clearer and larger than she had been. The greyness which had been upon her was lightening up; her sails were whitening and broadening in the sun, and her glossy side was more clearly black. We were running in a parallel direction, though she was considerably to windward of us, and some miles astern. From the time that I had first observed the stranger, both ships must have run many leagues.

Matters remained in this position for another hour; the ship was sensibly, though gradually, gaining upon us.



Our hearts beat wildly with expectation and anxiety; we seemed to wish we had some giant's power to impede or interrupt the progress of the ship we were aboard of; we appeared vexed at our feebleness and inaction, and impatient at the ease with which we were borne so helplessly away from the salvation which we saw urging to approach us. I longed for a power to increase the speed of our pursuer, and to deaden or stop that of the ship which bore us, and which was flying, so much against our wills, away. I never longed for some impossible strength so much as at that moment. I wildly, yet fondly, fancied myself, with a superhuman power, arresting the ship's onward flight, and detaining her in my grasp till our pursuer had grappled with her. I hugged the idea of striking powerless the wretches above, and of sweeping down the sails which carried us so swiftly, blindly away.

These dreams were the result of impatient longing, born of intense excitement. I felt my own miserable uselessness, and I involuntarily amused myself with thinking what I *would* do were my wishes my power.

Time passed. The stranger drew nearer and nearer; her size increased; she looked more grand, more proud, more angry, more warlike. Oh, how our eyes devoured her! A little more and she would get within gunshot; a lucky shot might cut one of our masts in half and the ship's speed would fall off; she would drift with the not yet expended momentum; she would not possess the capability of continuing her speed which would become fainter and fainter; she would lag and at last lie like a log. Here our wishes took our thoughts in hand and urged by our desires whipped them, like the horses of a coach, beyond the bounds of reason or of probability.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

A FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.—VICTORY IS AT LAST GAINED OVER  
THE MUTINEERS.

THERE was the sharp report of a gun. We all started as if the gun had been fired through the cabin. The ship was nearing us. Oh! how musical—how sweet—how joyful did the explosion sound! Our hopes grew brighter. There was the ship—near in comparison to what she was before. She was sailing abreast of us, though a wide space of sea intervened between our parallel courses. This distance she had to master, and she was to cross; and then came the greatest difficulty, for she would be obliged to take a wind. The wind passed across, between us. She was now rapidly closing in, in a plane, to our side. I tore open a part of the wooden mask of the cabin window, and caught another glimpse. In a little while the ship disappeared forward, and all I saw was the wide open space of sea with no ship upon it, alas!

I knew that she would not go ahead and that she must now tack. This tack, I suppose, was in operation at this moment. Our own course was shifted. We fell off several points, and the ship's head was laid to the south-westward, by which means we ranged up into the wind. I supposed the stranger would still continue on her new tack, though the result, I felt, must be that she would cross astern of us.

By-and-bye the ship came again in sight, stretching grandly across the cabin windows and considerably nearer. She was now directly opposite our open light. When she had reached our track she hauled her wind—her head swung swiftly round—and, lying slightly over, she laid herself directly after us. She was now as first seen—stem on—small, but swift, with all her fabric gathered in, as it were, and piled in a pyramid.

Both ships were before the wind, and it was a trial of speed between them; though our ship had the heels of our pursuer. But she was now so near that she made a trial of a bow-chaser. A flash leapt from her black-looking head; a thin, long, bright pencil of light that glanced but a second; a puff of white smoke followed, rolling up into a globe and taking some time before it opened from its centre. The boom of the gun next struck our ears. The shot we saw nothing of, and knew that it must have spent wide. We were still, apparently, cutting through the water at a great rate. The chase grew more furious. Another gun flashed from the stranger. A moment or two after we saw the light a ball came skipping from wave to wave, feathering up a shower of spray that flew backwards in a long arch or like a fan, and splashing at last close by in a roaring cloud of water. Before the smoke of this gun spread out, another vicious gun followed. I saw the shot before I had time to think of it, ploughing up the water and leaping wildly from one wave to another. This last shot darted past us, though not without dipping a little astern and sending a dash of silver spray right in at the cabin window and in our faces.

I again looked. The ship was astonishingly near. She seemed to tower now like a thing of might over us. They must have been terrified above. There instantly came

two loud reports, two more guns on the heels of each other, and whiz, whiz, came the splashing shot, one striking above with a thump, and the other flying overhead, like a spiteful bird, without mischief, but with a hiss and with a plunge so as to go through anything.

In a minute I heard a great noise above, and, with a confused clatter, something came down, which I guessed was a top-mast. A final crash on the larboard bulwark, that shook the ship to its middle, followed.

Then there was a thundering, splashing sound, as the mast took the deck in its descent, and tumbled, with all its sails and hamper, overboard. Our ship seemed to stagger and sicken in its flight, though the next moment she again lifted on the sea and trembled like a live thing. I looked astern. The stranger was now plainly a man-of-war. She rose broadly, nobly, highly above us. She was close to us. While I was looking, she came suddenly to the wind, swinging her sails wide round, and laid open a most terrible broadside. A fearful battery it indeed looked. A moment more and she was stretching past the window—another, and she was on our quarter.

I squeezed my lips together and *felt* that I was pale, every second nervously expecting to hear the dreadful thunder of the stranger's guns. And at length it came—first two or three guns, then five together, and at last the whole tremendous broadside. It made a horrible noise; I frowned with dread and expectation. Crash—crash—went the balls above, tearing, and rushing, and splintering; the whole ship seemed shattering to pieces as the balls sung and sprung in the smoke.

Matilda Revel threw herself into her brother's arms. He fixed his eyes on the deck above in silent, awful expectation of seeing it tear open. For some time there

was nothing but the falling together of masses of wood and iron; ruined spars and ropes clattering and splitting, and tumbling and rattling, as if bringing down a thousand chains, to the deck.

The mutineers seemed to be paralysed; there was silence for a time, and we were rolling to and fro; and then I knew our head was swinging round. In a little while I heard a gun or two above feebly run out, and presently the reports, loud enough almost to stun us, thundered on our ears, and clouds of smoke came rolling past the windows, and smoke poured thick into our cabin, choking us.

“Why do we sit here?” I suddenly exclaimed. “Let us burst the door, overpower the sentry, if one remain there through this hubbub. If possible, we will put a stop to their resistance. We shall be destroyed here if these guns continue. Let us make a bold push, and, at least, hazard the attempt to save ourselves.”

“Now then to the door! Force it open,” cried Seyton. “But we’ve no arms.”

“No matter for arms,” I said, “We’ll seize some. Now all your strengths against this door.”

By main force the cabin door was burst open, and we rushed on a man guarding outside, who at sight of us darted up the ladder. He was followed and seized by the neck in a minute, and we armed ourselves with his pistols. Seyton took one pistol and I took the other; Anderson caught up a capstan bar, and the surgeon snatched a sword lying on the deck on some lumber; thus we were roughly armed.

We all rushed to the side where the flashes of fire out of the cloud of smoke showed where the stranger was. A terrible scene of destruction was about. The decks

were cumbered—ruin was in every step. The man-of-war now shot out of the smoke like a giant in battle, as it seemed, and was displayed plain to sight with English colours flying. The white vapours, smelling all of gunpowder, were rolling so about the deck that we were not at first noticed by the mutineers. There were sailors at the guns, and a crowd of men forward. But my senses were in too great a whirl to distinguish.

We lost no time. I rushed forward, seeing Davis leaning over the rail of the forecastle. My companions kept close to me, leaving Gaulty and others who were labouring to loose a boat. There were five in my party, though one of us was unarmed. The fifth, who was my steward, however, snatched up a cutlass and pistol from the slippery deck.

We ran on and mounted the forecastle, where, before he was aware of what threatened him, Seyton and I collared and mastered Davis. I left him held firmly down, and turned to some others I saw about. Our cutlasses were so well handled that in a minute or two we had routed all, confused as they were with the cruiser, and uncertain whether we had boarded from her, and how many were their enemies.

Some threw down their arms, others were struck to the deck, and the remainder rushed down the ladders or up the bowsprit or shrouds away from us, hiding in the tackle. Almost before we knew that we had achieved success, we found ourselves masters of the forecastle. But in the smoke and confusion aboard us came more shots from the man-of-war, who, of course, could not distinguish that there were two parties contending for superiority in the ship at which he was firing.

A ball bounded just past me and cut a clean round

hole through the opposite bulwark. Splinters were being shaved up in lengths, and cut rope was flying in flakes. Good effect had been done abaft. Several of the crew were down, and all the mutineers were so perfectly in confusion that on our return to the quarter-deck everybody threw down their arms and fell on their knees and implored mercy. Gaulty and four others were meantime in the stern-boat, and working might and main to lower it and to clear off.

The decks were full of smoke, but it was gradually dispersing. No sooner was the quarter-deck in my power than I ran to the flag-line and swept down the colours. I knew that had they remained, one instant longer, flying and being played with by the wind, we should have had other terrible guns upon us. The man-of-war was already swinging on his heel to give us his other black broadside and to finish the battle. In our confusion he had slipt some distance ahead. I feared that he would stand across our bows, before we could inform him of our surrender, and give us his raking discharge. But the wind was now strong enough to carry off all the smoke in a cloud, and the frigate's people soon saw that our colours were struck.

All was still now aboard the *Pleiad*. The decks were in the utmost disarray owing to the cross-lying of the sails and hamper and the wreck of the masts, and some disabled seamen lying there were crying for water or groaning painfully. I gathered all the men I could find in the run of the ship, bade them stand to their arms and keep hold over everything. I caused the yards to be tipped down and the sails to be loosely brailed. Meantime, I prepared to clear the deck of the lumber, and to look to the wounded and get the ship

again into order. In this interval, the swell rolled us about.

Thus we lay for a little while, riding expectant on the long waves. Presently I saw a boat lowered from the man-of-war, and the crew with its officer rowed smartly for the *Pleiad*, making eager signs to us.

The ship was lying-to, with her courses in the brails and nothing set forward but the large white jib. She was a thirty-six gun frigate of splendid build and powerful to the last degree.

The boat swept alongside, the oars were tossed, and the officer mounted nimbly the side of our ship. I had him introduced to the quarter-deck. The man-of-war was the *Arrogant*, thirty-six gun frigate, and he told us he was midshipman of her. I furnished a detail of all that had occurred aboard my ship. I informed him of the mutiny, and gave an account of how we had been treated, and of the final overthrow of the mutineers and the recovery of the *Pleiad*. He offered any assistance I might require, and he promised to send aboard eight or ten men instanter till I could re-establish order and get the ship to rights. He returned to his own vessel, but presently he came back again with a kind message from the captain, in the first place congratulating us on our conquest of the mutineers, and in the next promising to keep us company for a few days and to see us safe. I accepted the offer, and also an invitation to go aboard the *Arrogant*, and to report formally all that had occurred.

I went on board of the frigate; and, learning that I had passengers, the captain asked them, and myself and my first mate to dinner. The boat went back for Seyton, and for Revel and his sister. But, as for me, I



declined the invitation, wishing not to leave my ship for an instant in her present dubious position.

I set to work with Anderson and the surgeon and his assistant, and we soon, with the honest hands, got the lumber out of the way, and a new maintopmast and topgallant-mast ready for mounting; and the wounded were looked after and in a fair way of doing well. The bulwarks we repaired; we stopped the shot-holes and got forward another jibboom, the former being crippled.

Gaulty and the four who seized the jolly-boat managed to get it afloat and to shove off, but a gun brought them up on a pursuit; they were soon mastered and laid in irons. We had them sent aboard the *Arrogant*, willing rather to work with short hands than to have the ringleaders of the mutiny among our number.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

BETTER FORTUNE IS MET WITH.—ALTERNATE SUNSHINE AND CLOUDS ARE THE INCIDENTS IN A SAILOR'S LIFE.

ALL my crew, who seemed to have been frightened into rebellion before, now returned zealously to their duty. All deluding fear of the Flying Dutchman and any hope of plundering us of the gold aboard me had passed out of their minds.

But to go back.

Revel, his sister, and Seyton returned to the *Pleiad*, and were loud in the praises of their entertainer, and abounding in their thanks to him when they met him again.

I learned afterwards, quietly and privately from Seyton, that the second lieutenant of the *Arrogant* had been much attracted by Miss Revel, and had evidently, for her sake, made himself particularly agreeable and serviceable to her brother. I was greatly interested in so charming a young lady as Matilda Revel, and I was anxious to know what sort of person this lieutenant, her new admirer, was.

So the next day, in the course of my conversation with Captain Kingsbury, of the *Arrogant*, I ascertained that his second lieutenant (by name Henry Pennington) was a highly respectable, as well as an amiable and able young man, that his father was a gentleman of estate in Kent, that Pennington was much valued by his com-

mander and a great favourite everywhere, and that he expected, on arrival in England, very complete promotion and encouragement in his profession.

Captain Kingsbury was no less curious respecting the history of the Revels, particulars of which I told him so far as I myself was acquainted with them. He knew the uncle at Madras very well, and had often met him. He said he was rich. While we were thus agreeably conversing, Lieutenant Pennington came up accidentally to us, and I was introduced to him. He proved a very gentlemanly and highly intelligent, and certainly a strikingly handsome, young man. The conversation into which we entered grew from circumstances so animated that it was some time before I could get back to the *Pleiad*, much as I was wanted there.

In two days we were in very tolerable order again. The crew were again in subjection, the masts were replaced, and every material damage was repaired. Affairs took their own line aboard us, and our evening circle in the cabin or on deck was as cheerful as ever.

Beautiful weather succeeded the late tempestuous changes, and we were standing on with royals, skysails, and studsails all abroad, keeping very close company with our rescuer.

Though a very superior sailer, I found that the *Pleiad* could maintain her own with her. In due time we made Ceylon; and then, steering for the coast of Coromandel, we dropped anchor in Madras Roads at last.

We parted company from the *Arrogant* about a week from the day on which we first made our communications with her. She was shaping her course to join the Admiral, and was then expected to be sent home with dispatches.

Augustus Revel and his sister left us at Madras, with expressions of unbounded friendship; for we had undergone those bitter circumstances together which make friends for lives even out of strangers. They took up their abode in their uncle's residence; we grieved to see them go. By help of the money brought out, Revel contrived to meet great part of the engagements of his uncle, and he obtained time for the remainder. Thus the great house of "Milner, Revel, and Company" was saved.

While we were loading homewards, I again spent several days in company with Revel and his sister, and this time with his uncle. I was appointed for a cargo of East India produce, and expected to be ready for sea in about six weeks. Before I left Madras I had the satisfaction of seeing the white sails of the *Arrogant* come into the Roads. She had been ordered to Madras, and thence to cruise off Ceylon, and look after some Malay pirates rumoured to be in the Southern Indian Ocean, and who had defied some other cruising ships.

As I certainly expected would be the case, Pennington had not been in Madras five days before he made formal proposals to Revel, and was conditionally accepted by him for his sister, who, he was "inclined to think," he said, with a smile and a shake of the hand, "would not offer any very insurmountable objection." Thus these young people were made happy. Captain Kingsbury, who knew how these interesting personal matters stood, wrote to the Admiral, a fine old, amiable gentleman, and caused Pennington to be selected to carry home dispatches; the captain being already aware that no ship of war could be spared from the station for the purpose. Circumstances proved favourable to Pennington.

The Admiral's answer was more than a kind one—it was humorous. He bade Lieutenant Pennington ship himself instanter on board some convenient, fast-sailing Indiaman bound homewards rather than travel overland; because the former was the handiest means of getting to England, and that his mission might be the safer from that circumstance. Being just ready, my ship was, singularly enough, selected for the passage, doubtless not because the Revels were to go back in my ship, but because I had taken aboard some new, excellent hands, and had acquired in my passage out a character for fleetness.

Under her new happy circumstances, Matilda Revel was, of course, to return to London as she came out with her brother, and I looked forward to again having a pleasant group of passengers. I found no lack of these offering themselves at Madras. I arranged with an old Nabob, who was thinking of settling down safe with his money in our less burning climate; with an East India Company's colonel, who was returning home, poor fellow, looking as thin and pale as possible; with the young widow of a civil officer; with two missionaries, both black (I mean in clothes), of whom one was tall and the other was short; with a merchant, his wife and family; and a lawyer, who had realised a fortune, and who desired to return to his native country and, as he said, to burn his law books. There were also one or two others.

The cargo was shipped, and we were all ready for sea. My passengers came aboard, and we prepared next morning to weigh. The *Pleiad* was in fine condition. I had given her a thorough repair; had had her cabins newly fitted, her rigging and spars most carefully set up, and the whole ship freshly painted inside and out. I caused

her to be regilt, her figurehead replaced, and her decks and all the woodwork and brass scrubbed and polished till they shone like those of a man-of-war.

With these advantages, under the brightest of blue Indian skies, with our new red flag streaming, and our snow-white canvas glistening in the sun, we weighed anchor and stood steadily out to sea—out into the long, bright stretches of sea.

We gave a salute to the forts and commodore as we departed, and we were honoured with guns in return.

I shall not enlarge on our homeward voyage; my story has extended to, perhaps, more than sufficient length. I should be sorry to tire even the most indulgent patience of the most languid hearer. But I have alert hearers.

We ran down the coast of Coromandel, looked in at Columbo, and then bore straightaway through the lonely, great Indian Ocean. We touched at Joanna for water and other supplies, and then we shaped our course for the Cape. No incident worth relating occurred, and we cast anchor in Table Bay on the 18th of February, 1839. We stayed here five days, and then bore up for St. Helena.

At St. Helena we found several homeward-bound vessels, among which we got a berth, and a large society of people disposed to be agreeable.

There was also a brig-of-war, which looked in from a cruise in the Bights of Benin. She would sail with us to the latitude of Cape Three-Points or Palmas, for there were rumours of a war with France; and we were but waiting for another ship or two to get up anchors and stand out, and to prosecute our new voyage to England.

## CHAPTER XXX.

THE CLOSE OF THE HISTORY ;—“ALL’S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.”

IN a week a brig from Australia and a Chinaman came in, and were followed by three English East India-men, escorted by a sloop of war. The next day but one all our foretop-sails were loose and “Blue Peter” up, and when morning came there was no small work in “heaving short stay-a-peak,” and “catting,” and “getting away.”

The ships stood off one after the other in grand style, the sloop and gun-brig taking the lead, and the merchantmen following in succession. We had a most prosperous voyage to that latitude where we were to leave the brig, and then we bore away in closer order for Madeira. Nothing occurred to interrupt the excellence of our passage except a squall or two on the African coast. On the 21st of March we made Madeira, dropped anchor, and took on board everything which might conduce to the pleasure of the brief remaining portion of our voyage.

To shorten my story :—the merchantmen and their convoy, the sloop, set sail on the 23rd, and, running along the coast of Spain and weathering smartly through the Bay of Biscay, though there was thick weather ahead, we arrived at last in the “Chops of the Channel.” The sloop went into Plymouth, and we bore for Portsmouth, where we landed nearly all our passengers.

Revel and his sister remained aboard, intending to

land at Deal or Gravesend. But Lieutenant Pennington put off, and went ashore in the sloop, the moment we sighted Plymouth, and posted up to town. In due time, with a favourable breeze, we arrived in the Downs, where I shook hands with Mr. and Miss Revel, who went ashore with the pilot at Deal. Seyton, Anderson, and I worked the ship round to the river; but meeting with a powerful westerly breeze, we brought her to anchor at the Nore.

However, wishing to see my owners and consignees as soon as possible, the moment I could get ashore I went to Sheerness, started thence to Chatham, and travelled per mail to the metropolis, where I installed myself in lodgings in Craven Street, Strand. Three days after my arrival—it was before the days of the universal use of towing steamers—the *Pleiad* got into the London Docks.

We made some stir in the papers with our exciting adventures. The mutiny and the appearances of that “strange ship,” for the character of which I could never account, though we all certainly saw it, formed the subject of numberless speculations. I visited Augustus Revel and his sister, and their father and family often, and generally dined at their table once or twice a week—always being a welcome guest and feeling very happy with them.

Lieutenant Pennington was, of course, at times an all-day visitor. He soon pleased the whole family, including the two cats and the canary-bird—no unimportant members of the household, I assure you. Matilda’s father had at once assented to the match and declared his perfect satisfaction. Preliminaries thus agreeably settled, Miss Revel and Pennington were to be united on a day which I found fortunately permitted me to be present at the ceremony. Therefore one part of my story is happy enough, as it ends with a prosperous marriage.



Now, to conclude. I find people ready enough to believe that I and my friends really saw the ship I have described. But there is no one that will not insist that it *was* real, and no *Flying Dutchman*; and I have been gravely asked by some people, who take obvious views, why I did not “speak her.” How should I have “logged” such a “speaking?” “Latitude, so-and-so; longitude, so-and-so; date, such-and-such; twilight—wind and sea high—some thunder—spoke the *Flying Dutchman* from Amsterdam to Lord knows where!—out beyond her reckoning—had baffling head-winds for two centuries and a half—couldn’t make way with a press of sail—suppose all old newspapers out of date, though the sun keeps on.” Joking apart, however, I thought the affair astonishing enough at the time, I can assure you.

I have to append to my story the following paragraph, which appeared in the papers of the day. The insertion was, of course, among the marriages:—

“Yesterday, at St. George’s, Bloomsbury, by the Rev. Barron Pennington, Matilda, eldest daughter of William Revel, Esq., of Broad Street, City, and Keppel Street, Russell Square, to Lieutenant Henry Brandon Pennington, of H.M.S. *Arrogant*, second son of Walter Brandon Pennington, Esq., of Park Street, Grosvenor Square, and Seafeld House, near Maidstone, Kent.”

I may, perhaps, mention that Davis, Gaulty, and the chief mutineers were brought to England in irons by the first man-of-war which left Madras after their committal. They were carried to the Cape and shipped there in a transport for Plymouth, aboard of which were the headquarters and right wing of the — Regiment. Davis was tried, condemned, and hung; and Gaulty and the others were transported for life to Botany Bay. No one was

more astonished at Davis's villany than the Scotch partner in our house, who had recommended him; and he was the most determined of all in this man's prosecution.

Pennington is now a captain in Her Majesty's Navy; but he is at present on half-pay. I do not believe he will go again into active service. He and his wife reside constantly in London; and, when I was last in town, I had the pleasure of seeing both looking well, and young, and handsome. Augustus Revel is head partner in his father's house, his father having retired, and he manages the East Indian department of it. My first mate, Seyton, is in command of a Chinaman; Anderson is captain of a West India "SS.;" and every person I have mentioned, except the rogues, is, I believe, alive and doing well. None of them forget the strange scenes we experienced together.

That formidable mutiny, the only one that ever happened to me, and the sight that I obtained, of what I *then* thought, and, laugh as you will, *do* still suspect to be something of the *Flying Dutchman*, are the main events of my life. The rest is as uniform as tolerably good fortune, through a lifetime, could make it. I never caught a glimpse of Vanderdecken afterwards, and, whether he boded evil or not, I never wish to see his sear-sails with the clouds, or his visionary hull with the water seen through it, again. It is no romance that I have had to tell you, but only truth itself, which is, sometimes, "stranger than fiction."

And thus, then, ends my story, which I am sure you are very welcome to, gentlemen; as also to my ghostly impartments concerning the "Cape Flyer."

## APPENDIX.

(a) "*It is either little murder, or large murder*" (p. 2).—A German physician has started a pleasing theory with regard to insanity. "It is," he thinks, "a mistake to look upon it as an unmitigated evil, as in many cases it is a boon rather than the reverse to the person immediately affected. The loss of reason lands the sufferer from a sea of trouble into one of comparative calm—often into one of decided happiness; and attempts to restore such a person to sanity would be cruel rather than kind. Moreover," he insists, "without a certain amount of insanity success in life, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, is quite impossible. All eminent men," he contends, "are decidedly more or less mad. Many of them are dangerous monomaniacs whom it would be desirable, on public grounds, to shut-up: but who nevertheless achieve grand careers and are credited with doing a vast amount of good. This false notion he attributes to the fact that the greater mass of mankind are also insane, and quite unable to distinguish between good and evil. Whole nations are," he says, "occasionally seized, like individual persons, with attacks of madness, and, led by eminent madmen, either destroy themselves or their neighbours. These paroxysms are," he admits, "undoubtedly dangerous; but when madness is blended with just sufficient self-control to keep it within bounds and prevent it from betraying itself, it displays itself in nervous energy, and enables the lunatic to exercise immense influence over his fellow-creatures."

This agrees with the strange Buddhistic idea of the non-existence of everything, in the ultimate sense; and that all the phenomena of life, and the phases of history—all sensible existence, indeed—is a mere dream, varied and coloured by the self-produced reflections or emotions; not really produced by anything from without, but simply being magic and delusion or something indescribable within. This amounts to absolute nothingness as an entity. Impressions and ideas arise to the human race which have no correspondence to things outside of the human race. It follows from this, that there can be no such thing as truth; and that absolute submission, absolute surrender, is the only fit state or attitude for humanity to that Producer, or Master—whatever It be, or He be—outside. "I am sensible of myself—therefore I am," was the conclusion of the philosopher in his resistless array of process of terms. But he did not say, nor could he say, *in what manner* he was. The waves of consciousness rise and fall. Given the consciousness, the waves are a phantom to the consciousness. Carrying out the uncomfortable view of the physician whose opinions we cite at the

outset of the abstract observations in this note, man's efforts and struggles are only madness—necessitated madness—in this void. The deeply metaphysical Buddhists, too, have originated in their humiliating, although very profound, reveries the idea that *Man is asleep*; by which we mean, to put the position in ordinary intelligible language, that the Human Race is buried in a dream of many thousand years' duration—that nothing is real, because there is nothing really real at the back of anything to make it real.

Most philosophers, indeed all modern scholars, totally mistake the real meaning of that shadowy mystical *Nirvanā*—or Nothingness—which the real Buddhists (accused of Atheism, while, as a matter of fact, they are only too spiritual), put forward as, in their notion, the only possible and the only feasible explanation or supposition of the drift or the philosophical meaning of Creation. These Buddhists assert that their philosophy is the only rescuing means of untwisting the complications, or of reconciling the contradictions of Creation. Querists as to these airy speculations respecting the mysterious stars placed by God Almighty in His still more mysterious sky—wishing to comprehend these extraordinary guessers, denying all human balance and setting at naught all comfortable common sense, indeed *all* sense—must search (with the adequate means of gauging, which are exceedingly rare of bestowal) the thoughts, nay, the distrusts of Plato of this scheme of things, and the writings of the mystics, with the worldly help of practised men in the region in which these remote ideas arose. Such men for instance as Sir William Jones, a writer and philosopher, who was fully acquainted with the abstruse mysteriousness and profound theosophy of the religions of that cradle of the human race, that mother of the migrating nations—India. It was a great statement of the metaphysician, Hume, although his conclusions against the possibility of miracle were otherwise unsound (begging the question only, but not demonstrating it) that there was in that which is commonly received as the *most reliable* of truth, no connection between cause and effect. This was directing the axe literally to sever the tree. And beyond custom and habitude it is impossible to prove that there is any real connection between cause and its effect, out of and beyond the experience of men; which is what Hume meant.

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(b) "*Newspapers—plutocrats in their very nature*," (p. 4).—Some of the causes of the power and the influence of the Press may be gathered from the following story of journalism in Paris at a comparatively recent date:—

"The political journal has assumed an importance which can only be understood by the state of uncertainty prevailing in the mind of the Parisian public. The capital has resisted every effort of decentralisation, the sittings of the National Assembly at Versailles failed to prevent people in the provinces from consulting the opinions of Paris, and now that no express permission is required to bring out a daily paper, providing the caution-money is forthcoming, the number of journals published in Paris has

increased tenfold. Every branch of science and industry has its special organ; periodicals of every kind, useful and entertaining, invite the eye of the reader, and the influence of the Fourth Estate is gradually increasing. Each political group has a journal of its own wherein to vent the opinions it advocates, and point to the coming man who alone can secure the welfare of the country. The chances of the success of so many different journals appear problematical to those who are not behind the scenes. The caution-money required by the Government as a guarantee for the good behaviour of the paper and for the payment of fines inflicted, it is not difficult to find. There are financiers who are willing to provide the necessary amount for a share of the profits or a portion of the subsidies received from certain persons who are interested in having their ideas and opinions brought prominently under public notice. The new journal owes its origin to a breakfast or dinner at some *café*. The new staff gather round the *impresario*, who has obtained the support of a financier, the programme is discussed, the parts are distributed, and a printer is found to publish the newspaper. Advertisements are stuck on every hoarding. Phineas Barnum would blush at his ignorance in the art of "puffing" could he read the promises held out to the subscribers and readers, who for a mere trifle are to be allowed to pick the brains of the best writers of the day. The journal is to contain news of every kind. Political, social, and general items are to be supplied with rapidity and accuracy; while the inevitable *feuilleton*, or sensational novel, without which French papers would be incomplete, is to be written by M. X—, the author of half-a-dozen thrilling romances.

"Persons who are ready to peruse articles which are a reflex of their own peculiar opinions, put down their names as subscribers, and then the sponsors of the new-born journal cast about for ways and means to equalise their budget. A literary financier or jobber who hears of the venture comes forward and offers a handsome sum for the privilege of writing the "Money Market" article, or expresses his willingness to share the amounts received from his colleagues as blackmail levied on promoters of public companies, or on bankers anxious to issue a new loan or put certain shares in the hands of the general public. The financial buccaneer is more dreaded than the corsair who, in olden times, swept the Spanish main. Those who refuse to come to terms with him at first are ultimately compelled to capitulate, for the unfavourable article written in one paper is maliciously echoed by others; and the public hesitate before speculating.

"Another source of income is found in the first page of the newspaper, under the heading of social paragraphs. The *soirée* or party given by the rich *parvenu* is chronicled at so much per line; the arrival of the foreign prince, whose castle and lands are in Spain or elsewhere, and who comes to test the simplicity of Paris tradesmen, is heralded by a paragraph which is well paid for. The science of puffing has been raised to the level of a fine art. The editor has no occasion to torture his brains in order to extend the field of his operations. Anonymous and gratuitous contributors give him details enough, and the paragraphs dropped into the editorial letter-box, prove that in France nothing can subdue the desire some possess of publishing their neighbour's

shame. Every department of a well-organised and established journal brings in a certain revenue. The most difficult and capricious individual with whom the *éditeur* and proprietors have to deal, is the *agent de publicité*, or advertising agent. This gentleman has a *clientèle* of his own. That is to say, he has persuaded a certain number of tradesmen that their interests will be better served by a regular advertisement in newspapers he can select than by *réclames* or any of the costly announcements painted on canvass outside the hoarding round the *Hôtel de Ville*. The agent undertakes to supply a maximum extent of publicity for a sum of money agreed upon between the advertiser and himself. He makes his own terms with the different journals. The latter have to prove their sale, produce their list of subscribers, and satisfy the agent that the paper has a sale at the kiosks and in the public streets, as the Post-office returns indicating the number of copies mailed stand for nothing.

"Great importance is attached to the number of papers disposed of in the streets of Paris, consequently each journal aims at increasing its sale at the kiosks and newsvendors'. The publisher, or *chef de vente*, contracts to buy the papers at so much a ream, with the proviso that all unsold copies are to be taken back and made up into that *bouillon* or "soup," which is returned to the paper-maker, or sold as waste at so much a pound to shopkeepers and the market-women. The publisher has his staff of messengers or *porteurs*, who attend at the printing offices in the small hours of the morning, and carrying off piles on piles of newspapers, make their way to the general rendezvous in the *Rue du Croissant*. Those who have dived into the humbler walks of popular life in Paris, have omitted to sketch the nocturnal rambler, the newspaper messenger, whose work is done in England by smart carts or by some of the large newsvendors. The *Rue du Croissant* leads out of the *Rue Montmartre*, and is almost opposite the office where M. Emile de Girardin established *La France*. The narrow, gloomy little street is redolent of printing ink. All night long the "Marinoni" is heard groaning like some giant in pain, and when the last copy has been taken off the machine, and the folders upstairs have sent off the papers for the country subscribers, &c., the momentary lull gives place to the noise of the crowd which has assembled in the street and choked the narrow thoroughfare. At one time nearly all the journals were printed in the *Rue du Croissant*, the *Rue Grange-Batelière*, or the *Rue Coq-Héron*. Within the last few years, however, each paper has its own machinery, and is therefore compelled to send its representatives to the great newspaper clearing-house in the *Rue du Croissant*. The houses in the narrow street are occupied by publishers, newsvendors, agents for provincial journals, and by wine shop keepers. The latter predominate, as if Bacchus was required to minister to the mind distressed of those who had an imp for ever at their elbows echoing the cry of "more copy." The wine-shop can close its doors when the evening editions have gone out at 4.30 p.m. There is nothing more to be done, and the liquid consumed by the printers and machinemen, with the occasional cup of black coffee which is ordered by "one of the gentlemen upstairs," hardly warrants the consumption of gas.

“Since the *Soir* has changed offices, and gone to the Rue Grange-Batelière, the Rue du Croissant is almost deserted in the evening. Life only begins about five in the morning, when the shutters are taken down, and hot punch and coffee is brewed for the early comers, who shiver and cough with the keen morning air, for all cannot afford thick great coats and mufflers. The news-vendors arrive from every corner of Paris, and the messenger, while distributing as many as he can of the papers he has brought with him, endeavours to make up the collections which he has undertaken to supply his own special customers with. The wine-shops are filled. The messenger has his money-bag strapped round him, and takes therefrom pencil and pocket-book to note down the number of copies given on credit to the woman who promises to pay him on the morrow. He is responsible to the publisher, and as his emoluments are scanty, he looks twice before admitting anyone to his confidence. The news-vendor has to visit each wine-shop in turn. The tables of these establishments are hardly large enough to hold all the journals thrown on them to feed the appetite of literary Paris every morning. The *Intransigeant* and the *Rappel* lie side by side with the *Gaulois* and the *Triboulet*, while the carping *Petit Parisien* is folded within the broadsheet of the disdainful *Figaro*. Blanqui’s journal, *Ni Dieu, ni Maître*, jostles the clerical newspaper, giving an account of the triumph achieved by the Duchesse de Chevreuse, defended by M. Ernoul, and condemned to £8 fine for having laid her hand on the bronzed cheek of a *gendarme*. Notwithstanding the bustling manner in which business is carried on, nearly two hours elapse before the wants of the news-vendors can be supplied. Unsold copies have to be taken back and replaced, and seven o’clock has struck when the messengers are again starting on their rounds, dropping parcels at the different kiosks along the boulevards and unburdening themselves of the load with which they set out. Many of them have to go out as far as the fortifications, or pay some news-vendors who come from the extreme points of their beat, to deliver certain parcels for them. Very few imagine when they have their papers neatly folded and handed to them at half-past eight or nine in the morning, how many hands the sheet containing the news of the day has passed through before it has reached them, or that it has lain on the tables of the wine-shops in the Rue du Croissant before being placed on the embroidered cover of the table by the side of the bed of Monsieur.”—*Globe*.

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(c) “*Some quiet facts in business*” (p. 45).—The pawnbrokers’ shops in London are a picture of the woeful general state of poverty which prevails (we are assured) amongst almost all classes. This luxurious age requires taming into common sense. The State is the universal pawnbroker in France, and a certain amount of red tapeism was incidental to an establishment of such gigantic proportions when unforeseen exigencies arose in consequence of Paris being besieged. As, however, the institution which goes under the name of the Mont de Piété, is conducted entirely on capital

borrowed from other State institutions, and as the financial embarrassment under which Paris was suffering extended everywhere, there were pecuniary reasons why—in spite of the complaints made by the working classes who, in the days of their extremity, had been obliged to pawn their tools—the Government should not relax its rules, and afford special privileges and facilities to those who have pawned their goods. During the Siege no one was allowed to borrow more than 50*l.* on any article, no matter what its value might be. Notwithstanding this, the pressure for money was so great that the store rooms of the Mont de Piété became encumbered with articles, which 150,000 persons of all classes had brought and pledged.

A writer, who made an inspection of these immense storehouses of private property, walked through labyrinths of pawned jewelry, each little box containing which was coloured and numbered according to its year—all the even numbers indicating one year, and the odd numbers another. Here were no fewer than 100,000 watches, and 25,000 clocks. There were diamond necklaces and bracelets of fabulous values, which had lain there for many years, and were pledged anew every year, but which had glittered, nevertheless, on the arms and necks of their owners at every Imperial ball and on every State occasion, hired from the Imperial pawnbroker for the night. Here, too, were evidences of the more real distress to which persons of rank had been reduced—one piece of lace after the other, the last cashmere shawl, or a pocket handkerchief embroidered with a coronet, of such fine material that it was still possible to raise 3*l.*, the lowest figure allowed, upon it; also gentlemen's gold-headed canes, ordinary riding whips, and no fewer than 2,000 opera glasses. Here was an umbrella, the pawn ticket of which had been renewed every year since 1812, and a silk dress, the owner of which for the last twenty-eight years had been unable to redeem it, but had regularly paid the annual interest on the sum advanced upon it. Here were unwritten romances staring at one from the eye of pawned pictures, and dreadful family secrets locked up in jewel boxes. This quarter of the establishment was what might be called the Faubourg St. Germain of the Mont de Piété. In the Belleville quarter the objects pledged were very different. No fewer than 2,300 poor wretches had pawned their mattresses, and starving seamstresses had pawned 1,500 pairs of scissors. Spades, shovels, tea-pots, were there without end. How many necessaries to existence were stored away in these cruel galleries! How different the stories they told from those of the fashionable deposits below! There was not much of the romantic or the mysterious here, and little was left to the imagination; starvation was the gaunt secret frowning on us from every loaded shelf.

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(d) "*Life is hard: Life is severe: Life is cruel*" (p. 61).—It is simply impossible to meet the requirements of a certain class of advertisements, however desirous one might be to do so; these, after giving the character of the vacancy, and enumerating the several duties of the situation,



conclude with the words, "None need apply except those who have been used to similar work." Now, it seems to me that this is sailing very close to the wind; for an elderly man with his faculties may pardonably presume to be fit for many odd jobs, to clean boots and shoes, knives and spoons, and windows, push a truck, run errands, &c., but he naturally feels prevented from applying for the job by the condition that he has not been in similar employment.

The other day, however, I eagerly seized the opportunity afforded by an advertisement, which informed "all those who wanted employment that they should call or write, enclosing a stamped envelope for reply." As there was neither condition nor any qualification stated, and as I lodged not far from the office, I hastened thither, with my hopes unusually elated, and made application.

"Oh," said the gentleman, "I am very sorry; but you see we have any number of people like you on our books. It is no manner of use taking your name and address, I am certain we could not find a job for you." I don't claim to be what is called "a man of mettle," but I lean towards the opinion that *disappointments try a man's mettle*, and if he be endowed with a fair share of moral stamina, he will, when one door is closed against him, look out for another. With the advertisement-sheet under my eye, considering whether another move could be made, this thought must have been in my mind when I observed to myself, "There are no wants for men like me, but there is a great number of wants for boys and lads." Could I, in any way, turn into a boy again? The wages of a lad would help to eke out the trifle which I received from my friends. To prefer employment as a lad, rather than starvation, is surely neither immoral nor criminal, degrading nor dishonourable. Besides, it is the only part that I can act, and have we not it on the authority of Alexander Pope that—

"Honour and shame from no condition rise;  
Act well your part, there all the honour lies?"

Therefore, I thought, before I am absolutely compelled to present myself at the door of the workhouse, I will attempt to procure employment as a lad.

In this last resource there seemed to be no difficulty, for some houses advertise for boys continually, and never get fully supplied. So I set off to a place of business where several *boys* were wanted. When I found the manager and respectfully told him the object of my calling upon him, he appeared to be as much taken aback as if I had demanded ten pounds. Retreating a step or two into his office, he replied, in a nervous tone, "Oh, no, we couldn't think of such a thing! We couldn't think of taking you as a boy; no, nor as anything else." Having given me this answer, he showed some anxiety to see me outside of the building. Like all those to whom, with one or two exceptions, I have applied for employment, this gentleman expressed no sympathy for one in my unlucky position; he had no suggestions to make as to the ways and means of helping lame dogs like me over the stile. Perhaps he regarded me as one of those who ask for work, wishing in their heart that they may not find it. However, his one concern seemed to be by putting on hard looks to get me out of his presence as soon as possible.

But it is no more than justice to say, that, in this respect, he is no worse than society in general. Those who have been fortunate in the scramble for the good things of the world, are apt to regard others left out in the cold as little better than human nuisances, who have no right to be there. The laws of England make no other provision for men out of employment than that furnished to paupers or criminals. Prison reports may say much to prove that able-bodied men think the criminal position the more respectable of the two, and consequently prefer the chances of being sent to Portland or Dartmoor.

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ON MONEY LENDING AND MONEY BORROWING IN GENERAL.—The appended account of moneyborrowing, of which we gladly avail ourselves, is a splendid *exposé* of the mischiefs and the wrongs of the present prevailing system:—"The various species of the genus 'money lender' do not vary so much as to demand very distinctive treatment, but after most careful reflection and observation I have arrived at the conclusion that the genus may be conveniently divided into two great classes—those who really lend money and those who do not. That this statement is not so paradoxical as it seems at first sight will be evident immediately. The latter class may be considered first, in order to clear the ground, by dismissing them altogether. It would be a boon to the public, almost entitling the writer to a national testimonial, if this article were to have the effect of spoiling their game at once and for ever. It consists simply and solely of what are termed 'inquiry fees.' Every applicant has to fill up a form, the preliminary cost of which is twopence—the actual value being a sixteenth of a penny. This form requires information concerning occupation, residence, amount required, for what time, the sureties, their occupation and residence, and, failing securities, what security is offered. It is considerably added, 'If no security, this is to be left blank,' and a hint is given that 'special arrangements' will then be made. Prefixed to the questions there is an intimation that any incorrect answers will invalidate the application; a saving clause, of which the object will speedily appear.

"This form, when duly filled up, has to be returned by hand, and then payment number two is exacted on a scale adjusted to the amount required, and printed at the top of the form. The name given to this payment is 'inquiry fee,' and the scale is nearly the same in all the loan offices:—'For £3 and under, 2s.; for £5, 3s.; for £10, 5s.; for £25 10s. 6d.,' and so on. Some few are content with a maximum charge of two guineas for £100 and upwards. It is plainly stated that 'under no circumstances whatever will the inquiry fee be returned should the inquiries prove unsatisfactory;' but one or two are generous enough to add that two other names may be given in as proposed sureties if the names first given are ineligible, and that further inquiries will be made respecting these without additional charge. It is almost certain, however, that before anything is actually done (if, indeed, anything is ever done) payment number three has to be made; for, on returning the form and tendering the fee, it is discovered that the appli-

cant, or one of his sureties, resides at a distance greater than two miles from the office, and the sum of 6d. per mile is demanded on this account, or a special arrangement' has to be made. At length an intimation is given that a reply will be sent within two days, and the money-seeker has to depart and chew the cud of hope in the meantime. On the second or third day a letter arrives, curtly stating that the 'inquiries are not satisfactory, and that the application is declined.' All complaints, remonstrances, entreaties, threats, made at the office are useless. The man in charge is more than a match for you. Reasons are never given. You are insolently told that you made the application and paid your inquiry fee knowing the conditions, and that you have no remedy.

"To a certain extent this scheme of robbery has been exposed, and many persons are instinctively suspicious of 'inquiry fees,' 'office expenses,' and other methods of extorting money. This has led some loan companies to announce as a prominent feature that there are 'no preliminary expenses;' to which is occasionally added a statement 'that the entire amount borrowed is paid over in cash without any deductions.' Such an intimation is the more needful because unwary persons have been beguiled into taking their loans chiefly in kind, as in bad cigars, execrable wine or spirits, or pictures by some of the great masters (near Leicester Square). It is no uncommon thing for some money lenders to deduct from the payment the first year's interest, cost of stamp, and a 'nominal charge' for legal expenses; all of which, added to the original 30 or 40 per cent. considerably enhances the price of the loan.

"'If you want to know the value of money, try to borrow some,' says the proverb, and the experience of every day confirms its truth. Through unforeseen circumstances, which need not be detailed, I was some time since greatly in need of £200, and the remembrance of what I passed through in my attempts to obtain the loan of that sum causes a moral shiver to seize me. For the benefit of others I here record my experience.

"The intelligent reader may ask at the outset why I did not borrow the money of a friend; but a sufficient answer may be returned in a very few words. I never did borrow money of my friends, although I have often lent them money, which has seldom been seen again, and which has uniformly entailed the loss of friendship; not that I asked for a return of the loan, or altered in any way my demeanour towards those whom I had cheerfully accommodated, but they evidently thought of me as a creditor, and could not meet me on the old familiar terms. This determined me never to borrow money of my friends, lest the harmony of our mutual relations should be disturbed.

"The intelligent reader may again ask whether I had not some available property that could be realised in the emergency; to which the reply is, that although I was a householder and had a stake in my country, and although I was able to maintain my usual respectable appearance, and did not actually want for necessaries, or even for comforts, yet the nature of the case was such that I could not realise without great sacrifice, and time was pressing. My life-policy was not of sufficient standing and worth to enable me to raise

a loan upon it, and, besides, one or two sureties were required, and the persons whom I must have asked would have lent me the money more readily than they would have incurred distant liability. Thus much to explain matters for the benefit of my intelligent reader. Now for a detail of experience.

“Those who do really lend money may be subdivided into two classes—individuals and companies or associations. The mode of operation is nearly the same with all. The companies sometimes consist of one person, who finds it expedient to remain *incognito*. In such a case the clerks or the manager can readily escape from a difficulty by alleging that a proposed course is ‘contrary to the rules of the company’ or by promising that ‘it shall be laid before the company.’ I have discovered, quite by accident, that a certain ‘Loan and Discount Company’ is made up wholly and solely of a man of good social position, at whose mahogany I have often dined; and I have further discovered that some of the specious advertisements for ‘partners in a lucrative concern, bringing in from 15 to 20 per cent.’ emanate from these loan office cormorants, who want larger capital. It is to be presumed that they obtain what they want from persons who swallow the bait of large interest, asking no inconvenient questions.

“I went to one of the showiest and what appeared to be one of the most respectable of these societies. The exterior of the place of business was faultless, so far as paint, plate glass, venetian blinds, wire blinds with gilded letters, and lace curtains at the upper windows were concerned. Within were polished rosewood desks and counters, brass rails, porcelain hat-pegs, large and well-bound ledgers, oilcloth on the floor, three young clerks in irreproachable suits at the desks, and an embossed glass door marked ‘Private.’ ‘Did I want to see the manager? He was engaged at present; but would I walk through the private door?’ This leads into a waiting room, handsomely furnished, but confirming the unpleasant impression of veneer produced in the outer office. This impression deepened and became more unpleasant as ten minutes passed, and then ten more, without the manager appearing. Just as the third ten were about to expire, and with them my patience, a spick-and-span personage emerged from the farther door, and looked with some surprise, as if it were the strangest possible thing for anyone to be waiting there. He was dressed in a close-fitting blue coat, white waistcoat and fancy trousers, terminating in patent boots. He was elaborately got up, and his fingers and vest front were decorated with rings and chains. Before he spoke I had formed a dislike to him, almost amounting to disgust, caused by his insufferable air of vanity and insolence. ‘Did I want anything? Oh, a loan! How much? For how long? What security had I to offer?’ All this while I was standing; he, with one hand in his pocket and the other twirling a gold eye-glass, all the time taking stock of me. At length, he seemed to conclude that I was a pigeon and might be plucked. ‘Walk in here,’ and I walked in, and my suspicions were confirmed that he had kept me waiting for nearly half an hour to suit his own pleasure, for there was no other door in the room, and no one had passed out while I was in the ante-room.

“Mr. Veneer took up his position on the hearthrug and motioned me to a chair, which I declined to take. (It always gives a man an immense advantage to stand and talk over you.) ‘Well, what had I to suggest?’ I explained that the advertisement offered loans on the borrower’s own security, and this was what I wanted. ‘Exactly; but there must be a deposit of deeds, or a bill of sale, or something of that kind.’ I demurred that this was scarcely consistent with their published statement about ‘sureties, securities, and legal expenses being dispensed with, and loans granted without delay or trouble.’ To this he curtly rejoined that such accommodation was only for well-known persons of influential position, and introduced by responsible parties, &c., &c., accompanying this by a glance at his watch as a reminder. I knew that my furniture was honestly worth five times the amount of the desired loan, so I inquired respecting a bill of sale, and was told that a man should be sent down, at my expense, and if his report was favourable an inventory should be made, also at my expense, and a regular bill of sale drawn up, stamped, and registered, still at my expense. ‘And then?’ I asked. ‘Well, for how long did I require the £200? Only for a year? Had I not better have it for two years? Very well, for one year. It was a risky business, and would require two promissory notes at six and at twelve months. Could I not get two good acceptances? If not, that would add to the risk and the cost. One note must be for £120 at six months, and the other for £110 at twelve months, the stamps to be paid for by me.’ I objected that this was at the rate of 20 per cent. for the year for interest alone, irrespective of incidental charges for registration, office fees, and other expenses, and that this scarcely comported with their advertisement, that the rate was ‘five per cent., with a small risk premium in lieu of security.’ The only reply was that such were their terms. I therefore declined the terms; whereupon Mr. Veneer was instantly transformed into a rude man, and advised me, with a number of very strong expletives, which cannot be repeated here, not to attempt any more of my nonsense. I was not sorry to find myself out in the street, free from the arrogance of this polished blood-sucker.

“After all this chicanery it was quite refreshing to meet with one who candidly disavowed the philanthropic and the moderate, and who publicly declared that he went in for high interest in consideration of the risk. Introduced to this very frank lender of money I found him to be a man of few words, but they were words to the purpose. He had a keen eye and a firmly set mouth, and spoke in a short incisive manner that left you in no doubt of the kind of man. His speech was a model of brevity and point. ‘You want £200, and I can lend it. You propose to give no security, so I must have 40 per cent., if my personal inquiries about your standing are satisfactory. I want no fees, deeds, fines, or any of that stuff, but I deduct a half-year’s interest. Say, now, “Yes or No?”’ I said ‘No’ very promptly, admitting the man’s candour, and we parted good friends.

“The intelligent reader who has followed this true account of my dealings with the money lenders may have acquired so much interest as to ask what I did in the emergency. I did, what I would most earnestly advise my reader

to do under like circumstances—removed from my house into a smaller one, curtailed my expenses, practised the most rigid economy and even self-denial, and parted with some valuable and cherished objects; and I would do this again, and more, too, if driven to it by stress of circumstances, rather than fall into the hands of these human sharks, leeches, and cormorants whose profession is that of money-lending. Once in their clutches, a poor wretch is doomed, for they will not let him go until he has paid the uttermost farthing—not of their demand, but of his capacity. My own inquiries have brought me into contact with not a few cases of miserable victims who in an evil hour came within the grip of these relentless savages, and I have seen and heard enough to make me give the advice and warning with all possible emphasis: better toil early and late; better eat a dry crust for weeks; better go shoeless; better pinch, and contrive, and scheme, and dig, and exercise hard self-denial; better do anything and submit to anything rather than purchase escape from a present difficulty, at the cost, it may be, of years of extortion and horror.

“This is strong language, but the subject demands it. The system is on the increase. It pays handsomely, or it would soon die out. All people nearly need to be saved from themselves, or they may be impelled to do *in a moment of distress and agony* what will involve untold ruin. A tradesman, a householder, a man holding an official position, being of known respectability, can obtain temporary assistance through ordinary trade channels, though it is better to avoid borrowing unless under inexorable necessity. My own case was peculiar. I could not do this without exposing others; hence I tried the methods here explained. I gained knowledge, and was able to avoid the bitter experience. Some who read this may be warned in time.”

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(e) “*Not ‘moralities,’ but immoralities*” (p. 85).—Some self-styled “friends of the theatrical profession” busied themselves a little time ago in getting up certain Dramatic Balls, but when I state that they failed to persuade any actresses of any note whatever to grace these edifying scenes, it will be understood that the grand dramatic show was not exactly what it professed to be, and the innocent youth who paid their half-guinea to see those in the ball-room whom they have often seen for the same sum in the stalls must have occasionally regretted their expenditure. I believe I shall be within the mark when I state that I don’t suppose half a dozen ladies in the room had ever been honoured with a speaking part; but, though mute on the boards, they evidently possessed great powers of persuasion, and were apparently well known and popular with the patrons of this curious and miscellaneous entertainment. To judge by the diamonds they displayed they must, however, be people of some social importance outside the sphere of their occupation, and it is not, therefore, for an old fogey like myself to question their talent. There are undiscovered stars as well as well-defined planets, and I have no doubt that these honoured members of the theatrical

profession, though at present unworthily relegated to the back row of the ballet or to the crowds of fascinating "fellows" in burlesque, will one day burst from obscurity, and be discovered to an ignorant and unappreciative world. I should have thought myself that, under these circumstances, prevailing allusions to the drama and the stage might have been spared as not strictly accurate, and, indeed, in many cases literally untrue; but, apparently, those who are present are not ashamed to take credit for their humble position, or to act as decoy-ducks for the well-dressed gentlemen who appeared upon the scene. If any person objects to my statement, he will be able to refute it by furnishing the curious with the names of the dramatic artists who were present at this masquerade.

Like all entertainments of the kind it seemed to my old-fashioned ideas extremely dull and forced. Before supper it all looked dismally proper, and after that convivial banquet the attendance was as large at the drinking-bar as in the ball-room. My ears did not catch that amount of sparkling wit and humour that might have been expected from so supposed intelligent an assembly, and I should not be far from the truth if I said that an ordinary domestic servant would have been just as amusing a companion as the majority of the guests.

The poor drama is very much in the position of the man who is thus victimised by society, and cannot by any amount of quietude and good feeling clear himself of his original sin. We have all seen in our time a Richardson's show, or some feeble attempt of it, at a country fair. We are familiar with the parade in front of the booth, put forward to attract the gaping crowd, the lady in faded skirts of short tarlatane, the washed out pink stockings, the scowling villain with the dyed moustache, the ingenious young creature with the baby frock and the skipping-rope, the dreary burlesque lady with the painted face and the ill-fitting wig, the noisy, bawling clown and all the inevitable vulgarity of the showman's life. No one thinks worse of this humble section of the Drama. They are honest people trying to get a living in an inoffensive way; they are dirty, and occasionally exceedingly illiterate; but we leave the poor creatures alone, and don't drag them into notoriety. What, however, would be said of an ungenerous person who determined to go back to this seamy side of the profession, and to thrust it under the very nose of the public; who, in order to show the preposterous fallacy of any social advance, made the drama look as contemptible as it could, dragged out its dress to wash it in public, exhibited the love and hunger for all this booth and parade life, magnified the importance of certain very insignificant people, and used the name of the drama and the popularity of the theatrical profession in order to degrade the one and vulgarise the other. I hold that this is done on many occasions, not in an insignificant hole-and-corner way, but openly and publicly under the patronage of those who ought to know better, and with the complete sanction of the proprietary of the largest and most important public halls and assembly places and theatres in London.

The opera stage is very different to all other stages in many respects. You are treated (at least, you were) to real art at the opera. Everything is very different in this classic arena to the low theatrical scenes, at

which (to the degradation of the drama) much like vulgarity may be witnessed.

During this festive evening of tumbled theatrical display a circular was put into my hand announcing a "dramatic fancy dress ball," with "shadow dances and lime-light effects." It struck me that, for the credit of the profession, it would be preferable to organise a better show than anything like a costume ball. The innocent business men and their families putting up at some place for the night must be somewhat surprised to see burlesque sailors in their blue stage trousers, portly maidens with skipping ropes, and dark-eyed sultanas jostling one another on the staircase, and positively confused in their dreams with a constant jiggling to the tunes of "Moses and Aaron" and the *Pinafore*. Commercial gentlemen, resting in the hotel are, on these occasions, pleasantly disturbed by the notes of the "Orleans Club band," and the hoarse and strident laughter of the "Friends of the Dramatic Profession." I know very little about such matters, but I am quite certain that it must have been all right. Until the 9th of November always the morals of the City of London are safe in the custody of the reigning Lord Mayor, and I cannot conceive that the punctiliousness that has been displayed towards photographed Zulus would be removed from the inspection of the drama. Let no word be uttered concerning decorum or taste, for did not the "numerous friends of the dramatic profession" assemble for their gambols under the civic eye?

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(f) "*Ways of getting on in this difficult world*" (p. 235).—The late Mr. Humphrey Brown was in many respects as remarkable an adventurer as the present century has produced. His father was a large barge owner on the river Severn, carrying on an extensive trade, and esteemed a pious, industrious, and respectable man. His residence was at Tewkesbury, where his eldest son, Humphrey, was born. He had also another son and a large family of daughters, who all comfortably married. From early youth Humphrey evinced a taste for speculation, which grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength, until he became a victim of this accursed Moloch. On his father's death he was left in possession of a large and lucrative trade as carrier, which, however, in his hands was so unduly extended as speedily to collapse, and in a few years he became a bankrupt. Then we find him going into business as a cement-manufacturer in Birmingham, and supplying the country far and wide with a patented article in this line which was to supersede all other descriptions by its low price and good quality. Here again his views were too extensive for his pocket, and the cement-manufactory was soon closed. Afterwards he embarked in a variety of speculations, was clerk in a merchant's office, turning to other temporary shifts, living in the most precarious manner until the railway mania of 1846, which formed the foundation of his fleeting fortunes. At this time, the traffic of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway was at a low ebb, and Humphrey Brown, who was



then at Tewkesbury, waiting, like Mr. Micawber, for something "to turn up," was recommended by somebody as a shrewd sort of fellow, who would find means of diverting traffic to the line. He knew the localities, was a man of shifts and resources, and just the official for the place. Mr. Brown had to attend a meeting of the Board at Birmingham, and it is a well authenticated fact that he had not the means of paying his fare there, no one would lend it to him, and he walked the whole distance and was appointed traffic manager to the line.

It is quite certain that Mr. Brown did vastly improve the prospects of the railway, bringing in traffic far and near; and taking advantage of his position, being, as it were, behind the scenes, he dabbled in shares, was one of the lucky men of the mania, and returned to Tewkesbury in two years with £70,000, while he had left it with a solitary half-a-crown. Now he might have settled down comfortably, but the old demon of speculation still lurked within his breast. He bought a handsome residence in the borough, turned the theatre into a silk factory, purchased landed property in the vicinity, and was returned member to the House of Commons by an enormous majority. Those who would not lend him the means to pay his fare but a short time back, were now the most vehement in his praise. Brown and Tewkesbury were henceforth identified with each other. His portrait was lithographed, and hung in everybody's parlour; his name was blazoned in handbills as chairman of every meeting, whether for religious, local, or political purposes. He was looked upon as the most "independent" member of the House of Commons, of fabulous wealth, enterprising spirit, and unbounded liberality. It was true he was no orator, made fearful orthographical blunders in composition, and aspired with astounding energy on the hustings. But he had plenty of money, and spent it profusely, which was an ample passport to the sweet voices of the multitude.

Mr. Humphrey Brown's parliamentary duties necessarily called him to London, and here, falling in with kindred spirits, he embarked on that sea of speculation with the billows of which he had so often buffeted, or had sailed into the harbour of fortune with a favouring breeze. A mere catalogue of the schemes with which he was mixed up would fill an ample volume. They embrace such enterprising undertakings as opening up new slate quarries in Merionethshire, working prolific gold mines in California, extending railway communication throughout Ireland, with a host of other gigantic proposals, any one of which should suffice to absorb the energies of any man; and all this time he was freighting vessels to Calcutta, Melbourne, America, and other parts of the world. He built a splendid pile of warehouses at Gloucester, was importing alike into Liverpool, London, and Cardiff; and with all this accumulation of private and parliamentary duties, he must, forsooth, be a director of the Royal British Bank, and manager of their Glamorganshire works into the bargain. Hercules himself could not have satisfactorily disposed of the multifarious labours taken in hand by this man, who, becoming a fugitive from justice, was now spoken of with scorn, even in his native town of Tewkesbury, where formerly he was presented with a piece of plate, and, it is believed, ended his career as an outlawed exile, a melancholy example of the sin of inordinate speculation.



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