Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 418 eBook

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A CHILD'S TOY.

The afternoon was drawing in towards evening; the air was crisp and cool, and the wind near the earth, steady but gentle; while above all was as calm as sleep, and the pale clouds—just beginning in the west to be softly gilded by the declining sun—hung light and motionless. The city, although not distant, was no longer visible, being hidden by one of the many hills which give such enchantment to the aspect of *our* city. There was altogether something singularly soothing in the scene—something that disposed not to gravity, but to elevated thought. As we looked upwards, there was some object that appeared to mingle with the clouds, to form a part of their company, to linger, mute and motionless like them, in that breathless blue, as if feeling the influence of the hour. It was not a white-winged bird that had stolen away to muse in the solitudes of air: it was nothing more than a paper kite.

On that paper kite we looked long and intently. It was the moral of the picture; it appeared to gather in to itself the sympathies of the whole beautiful world; and as it hung there, herding with the things of heaven, our spirit seemed to ascend and perch upon its pale bosom like a wearied dove. Presently we knew the nature of the influence it exercised upon our imagination; for a cord, not visible at first to the external organs, though doubtless felt by the inner sense, connected it with the earth of which we were a denizen. We knew not by what hand the cord was held so steadily. Perhaps by some silent boy, lying prone on the sward behind yonder plantation, gazing up along the delicate ladder, and seeing unconsciously angels ascending and descending. When we had looked our fill, we went slowly and thoughtfully home along the deserted road, and nestled as usual, like a moth, among our books. A dictionary was lying near; and with a languid curiosity to know what was said of the object that had interested us so much, we turned to the word, and read the following definition: Kite—*a child's toy*.

What wonderful children there are in this world, to be sure! Look at that American boy, with his kite on his shoulder, walking in a field near Philadelphia. He is going to have a fly; and it is famous weather for the sport, for it is in June—June 1752. The kite is but a rough one, for Ben has made it himself, out of a silk-handkerchief stretched over two cross-sticks. Up it goes, however, bound direct for a thunder-cloud passing overhead; and when it has arrived at the object of its visit, the flier ties a key to the end of his string, and then fastens it with some silk to a post. By and by he sees some loose threads of the hempen-string bristle out and stand up, as if they had been charged with electricity. He instantly applies his knuckle to the key, and as he draws from it the electrical spark, this strange little boy is struck through the

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very heart with an agony of joy. His labouring chest relieves itself with a deep sigh, and he feels that he could be contented to die that moment. And indeed he was nearer death than he supposed; for as the string was sprinkled with rain, it became a better conductor, and gave out its electricity more copiously; and if it had been wholly wet, the experimenter might have been killed upon the spot. So much for *this* child's toy. The splendid discovery it made—of the identity of lightning and electricity—was not allowed to rest by Ben Franklin. By means of an insulated iron rod the new Prometheus drew down fire from heaven, and experimented with it at leisure in his own house. He then turned the miracle to a practical account, constructing a pointed metallic rod to protect houses from thunder. One end of this true magic wand is higher than the building and the other end buried in the ground; and the submissive lightning, instead of destroying life and property in its gambols, darts direct along the conductor into the earth. We may add that Ben was a humorous boy, and played at various things as well as kite-flying. Hear this description of his pranks at an intended pleasure-party on the banks of the Skuylkill: 'Spirits at the same time are to be fired by a spark sent from side to side through the river, without any other conductor than water—an experiment which we have some time since performed to the amazement of many. A turkey is to be killed for dinner by the electrical shock; and roasted by the electrical jack, before a fire kindled by the electric bottle; when the healths of all the famous electricians in England, Holland, France, and Germany, are to be drunk in electrified bumpers, under the discharge of guns from the electrical battery.'

We now turn to a group of capital little fellows who did something more than fly their kite. These were English skippers, promoted somehow to the command of vessels before they had arrived at years of discretion; and, chancing to meet at the port of Alexandria in Egypt, they took it into their heads—these naughty boys—that they would drink a bowl of punch on the top of Pompey's Pillar. This pillar had often served them for a signal at sea. It was composed of red granite, beautifully polished, and standing 114 feet high, overtopped the town. But how to get up? They sent for a kite, to be sure; and the men, women, and children of Alexandria, wondering what they were going to do with it, followed the toy in crowds. The kite was flown over the Pillar, and with such nicety, that when it fell on the other side the string lodged upon the beautiful Corinthian capital. By this means they were able to draw over the Pillar a two-inch rope, by which one of the youngsters 'swarmed' to the top. The rope was now in a very little while converted into a sort of rude shroud, and the rest of the party followed, and actually drank their punch on a spot which, seen from the surface of the earth, did not appear to be capable of holding more than one man.

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By means of this exploit it was ascertained that a statue had once stood upon the column—and a statue of colossal dimensions it must have been to be properly seen at such a height. But for the rest—if we except the carving of sundry initials on the top—-the result was only the knocking down of one of the volutes of the capital, for boys are always doing mischief; and this was carried to England by one of the skippers, in order to execute the commission of a lady, who, with the true iconoclasm of her country, had asked him to be so kind as to bring her a piece of Pompey's Pillar.

Little fellows, especially of the class of bricklayers, are no great readers, otherwise we might suspect that the feat of the skipper-boys had conveyed some inspiration to Steeple Jack. Who is Steeple Jack? asks some innocent reader at the Antipodes. He is a little spare creature who flies his kite over steeples when there is anything to do to them, and lodging a cord on the apex, contrives by its means to reach the top without the trouble of scaffolding. No fragility, no displacement of stones, no leaning from the perpendicular, frightens Steeple Jack. He is as bold as his namesake Jack-the-Giant-Killer, and does as wonderful things. At Dunfermline, not long ago, when the top of the spire was in so crazy a state that the people in the street gave it a wide berth as they passed, he swung himself up without hesitation, and set everything to rights. At the moment we write his cord is seen stretched from the tall, slim, and elegant spire of the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh, which is to receive through his agency a lightning-conductor; and Jack only waits the subsidence of a gale of wind to glide up that filmy rope like a spider. He is altogether a strange boy, Steeple Jack. Nobody knows where he roosts upon the earth, if he roosts anywhere at all. The last time there was occasion for his services, this advertisement appeared in the *Scotsman*: 'Steeple Jack is wanted at such a place immediately'—and immediately Steeple Jack became visible.

In 1827 the child's toy was put to a very remarkable use by one Master George Pocock. This clever little fellow observed that his kite sometimes gave him a very strong pull, and it occurred to him that if made large enough it might be able to pull something else. In fact, he at length yoked a pair of large kites to a carriage, and travelled in it from Bristol to London, distancing in grand style every other conveyance on the road. A twelve-foot kite, it appears, in a moderate breeze, has a one-man power of draught, and when the wind is brisker, a force equal to 200 lbs. The force in a rather high wind is as the squares of the lengths; and two kites of fifteen and twelve feet respectively, fastened one above the other, will draw a carriage and four or five passengers at the rate of twenty miles an hour. But George's invention went beyond the simple idea. He had an extra line which enabled him to vary the angle of

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the surface of his kites with the horizon, so as to make his aërial horses go fast or slow as he chose; and side-lines to vary the direction of the force, till it came almost to right angles with the direction of the wind. His kites were made of varnished linen, and might be folded up into small compass. The same principle was successfully applied by a nautical lad of the name of Dansey to the purpose of saving vessels in a gale of wind on 'the dread lee-shore.' His kite was of light canvas.

In India, China, and the intermediate countries, the aggregate population of which includes one-half of mankind, kites are the favourite toy of both old and young boys, from three years to threescore and ten. Sometimes they really resemble the conventional dragon, from which, among Scotch children, they derive their name; sometimes they are of a diamond shape, and sometimes they are like a great spider with a narrow waist. Our Old Indian is eloquent on kites, and the glory of their colours, which, in the days of other years, made her girlish heart leap, and her girlish eyes dazzle. The kite-shop is like a tulip-bed, full of all sorts of gay and gorgeous hues. The kites are made of Chinese paper, thin and tough, and the ribs of finely-split bamboo. A wild species of silkworm is pressed into the service, and set to spin *nuck* for the strings —a kind of thread which, although fine, is surprisingly strong. Its strength, however, is wanted for aggression as well as endurance; and a mixture composed of pounded glass and rice gluten is rubbed over it. Having been dried in the sun, the prepared string is now wound upon a handsome reel of split bamboo inserted in a long handle. One of these reels, if of first-rate manufacture, costs a shilling, although coarser ones are very cheap; and of the nuck, about four annas, or sixpence worth, suffices for a kite.

In a Hindoo town the kite-flying usually takes place on some common ground in the vicinity, and there may be seen the young and old boys in eager groups, and all as much interested in the sport as if their lives depended upon their success. And sometimes, indeed, their fortunes do. Many a poor little fellow bets sweetmeats upon his kite to the extent of his only anna in the world; and many a rich baboo has more rupees at stake than he can conveniently spare. But the exhilarating sport makes everybody courageous; and the glowing colours of the kites enable each to identify his own when in the air, and give him in it, as it were, a more absolute property. Matches are soon made. Up go the aërial combatants, and with straining eyes and beating hearts their fate is watched from below. But their masters are far from passive, for this is no game of chance, depending upon the wind. Kite-flying is in these countries an art and mystery; and some there be who would not disclose their recipe for the nuck-ointment, if their own grandfathers should go upon their knees to ask it.

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Sometimes an event occurs on the common. It is the ascent of a pair of kites of a *distingué* air, and whose grand and determined manner shews that the combat is to be *à l'outrance,* and that a large stake of money depends upon the result. The fliers are invisible. They are probably on the flat roof of some neighbouring house; but the kites are not the less interesting on account of their origin being unknown. What a host of anxious faces are turned up to the sky! Some take a liking to the red at first sight, while others feel attracted by a mysterious sympathy to the green. Bets are freely offered and accepted either in sweetmeats or money; and the crowd, condensing, move to and fro in a huge wave, from which their eager voices arise like the continuous roaring of the sea. Higher and higher go the kites. Well done, Red! he has shot above his antagonist, and seems meditating a swoop; but the Green, serenely scornful, continues to soar, and is soon uppermost. And thus they go—now up, now down, relatively to each other, but always ascending higher and higher, till the spectators almost fear that they will vanish out of sight. But at length the Green, taking advantage of a loftier position he has gained, makes a sudden circuit, and by an adroit manoeuvre gets his silken string over the silken string of the other, Here a shout of triumph and a yell of terror break simultaneously from the crowd; for this is the crisis of the fight. The victor gives a fierce cut upon his adversary's line. The backers of the latter fancy they hear it grate, and in an instant their forebodings are realised; far the unfortunate Red is seen to waver like a bird struck by a shot, and then, released from the severed string, he descends in forlorn gyrations to the earth.

Now rush in the smaller boys to play their part, Their object is that of the plunderers who traverse the field after a battle, to rob the dying and the slain. Off run the little Hindoos, like a company of imps from the nether regions, tearing and fighting as they fly; and on reaching the fallen kite, the object of their contention is torn to pieces in the scuffle. Presently the victorious Green is seen descending, and the gross excitement of the common pauses to watch his majestic flight. He is of the largest size of Indian kites called *ching*, and of the spider shape. Before being drawn in, he hangs for an instant high up over the crowd. It is not, however, to sing *Io Pæans* for his victory, but apparently rather to mourn over the ruin he has made; for a wailing music breathes from his wings as he passes. This is caused by the action of the wind upon some finely-split bamboo twigs arched over the kite without touching the paper, and which thus become a true Æolian harp. Sometimes a kite of this kind is sent up at night, bearing a small lighted lantern of talc; and the sleepers awakened, called to their balconies by the unearthly music, gaze after the familiar apparition not without a poetical thrill.

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Upon the whole, it must be admitted, we think, that this is a somewhat interesting child's toy. But has the kite a future? Will its powers exhibit new developments, or has it already reached its pride of place? If a twelve-foot kite has the force of a man, would it take many more feet to lift a man into the air? And supposing the man to be in a strong cage of network, with bamboo ribs, and a seat of the same material, would he have greater difficulty in governing his aërial coursers by means of the Pocock cords, than if he were flashing along the road from Bristol to London? Mind, we do not say that this is possible: we merely ask for the sake of information; and if any little boy will favour us with his opinion, we shall take it very kind. Come and let us fancy that it *is* possible. The traveller feels much more comfortable than in the car of a balloon, for he knows he can go pretty nearly in what direction he chooses, and that he can hasten or check the pace of his horses, and bring them to a stand-still at pleasure. See him, therefore, boldly careering through the air at the rate of any number of miles the wind pleases. At a single bound he spans yonder broad river, and then goes bowling over the plantation beyond, just stirring the leaves as he passes; trees, water, houses, men, and animals gliding away beneath his feet like a dream. Now he stoops towards the earth, just to make the people send up their voices that there may be some sound in the desert air. Now he swings up again; now he leaps over that little green hill; now he—Hold! hold, little boy!—that will do: enough for a time of a Child's Toy.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.

'.... Whose trained eye was keen,
As eagle of the wilderness, to scan
His path by mountain, lake, or deep ravine,
Or ken far friendly huts on good savannas green.'
—Campbell: *Gertrude of Wyoming*.

On the 14th of last September, America lost the greatest of her novelists in the person of James Fenimore Cooper. He was born on the 15th of that month, 1789; so that, had he lived but a few hours longer, he would have completed his sixty-second year. At the time of his birth, his father, Judge Cooper, resided at Burlington, New Jersey, where the future *littérateur* commenced his education, and in so doing acquired a decided reputation for talent, which was not tarnished during subsequent years of tutelage at Newhaven and Yale College. At sixteen he exchanged the study of ancient literature and the repose of academic life for the bustling career of a 'middy' in the American navy; continuing for some half-dozen years his connection with those ocean scenes which he then learned to love so well and to describe so vividly. His retirement into private life took place in 1811, soon after which he married Miss de Lancey (whose brother is known to many as one of the

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New York bishops), and settled at Cooper's Town, his patrimonial estate. Ten years elapsed before his *début* as an author. In 1821 he presented the public with a novel bearing the perhaps apposite title of *Precaution*—apposite, if the two *lustra* thus elapsed were passed in preparation for that début, and as being after all anonymously published. The subject was one with which Cooper never shewed himself conversant—namely, the household life of England. Like his latest works, *Precaution* was a failure, and gave scanty indications of that genius which was to find its true sphere and full scope in the trackless prairies of his native land, and its path upon the mountain-wave he had ridden in buoyant youth. But the same year produced *The Spy*, still considered by many to be his masterpiece, and from that production his fame was secure; and not only America but British voices, exhorted Sir Walter to look to his laurels. Certainly there was a little more reason in calling Cooper the American Scott than in pronouncing Klopstock the German Milton.

The successful novelist visited Europe a few years after this 'sign and seal' of his literary renown, and spent a considerable period among the principalities and powers of Old-World Christendom. In Paris and London especially he was lionised to the top of his bent. Sir Walter met him in the French metropolis in 1826; and in his diary of November 3, after recording a morning visit to 'Cooper the American novelist,' adds: 'this man, who has shewn so much genius, has a good deal of the manners or want of manners peculiar to his countrymen.' Three days later we find the following entry: 'Cooper came to breakfast, but we were *obsédes partout*. Such a number of Frenchmen bounced in successively, and exploded—I mean discharged—their compliments, that I could hardly find an opportunity to speak a word or entertain Mr Cooper at all.'[Footnote: Lockhart's Life of Scott.] The 'illustrious stranger' appears to have spent about ten years in Europe, for which he was, perhaps, in a literary point of view, none the better; as—to use the words of a periodical of the day—'he did not carry back the same fresh spirit that he brought, something of which must be attributed, no doubt, to the years which intervened; but something, too, to his abandonment of that mother-ground which to him, as to the fabled Antaeus, was the source of strength.' The autumn of his life glided quietly on amid the pleasures and pains of literature; its sombre close being pleasantly illuminated by the rays of spring-promise that radiated around the young brow of his daughter, which the dying veteran might well hope would be matured into 'glorious summer by the sun of' time. *Valeat signum*!

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In calling Cooper the greatest of American novelists, we have not incurred much risk of contradiction. Others may rival—some surpass him—in this or that province of the art of fiction; but as a master of the art in its broad aspect, he is *facile princeps*. Brockden Brown treads a circle of mysterious power but mean circumference: Washington Irving is admirable at a sketch, one of the liveliest and most graceful of essayists, and quite equal to the higher demands of imaginative prose—witness his *Rip Van Winkle* and *Sleepy Hollow*—but his forte is in miniature, and the orthodox dimensions of three volumes post-octavo would suit him almost as ill as would the Athenian vesture of Nick Bottom the spruce proportions of royal Oberon: Haliburton is inimitable in his own line of things; his measure of wit and humour—qualities unknown, or nearly so, to Cooper—is 'pressed down, and shaken together, and running over;' but his 'mission' and Cooper's in the tale-telling art are wide as the poles asunder: John Neale had once, particularly by his own appraisement, a high repute as the eccentric author of *Logan* and *Seventy-six*, but the repute, like the *Seventy-six*, is quite in the preterite tense now; and to review him and his works at this time of day would be suspiciously like a *post-mortem* examination, resulting possibly in a verdict of temporary insanity—if not, indeed, of *felo de se*—so wilful and wrongheaded were the vagaries of this 'rough, egotistical Yankee,' as he has been called: Herman Melville is replete with graphic power, and riots in the exuberance of a fresh, racy style; but whether he can sustain the 'burden and heat' of a well-equipped and full-grown novel as deftly as the fragmentary autobiographies he loves to indite; remains to be seen: Longfellow's celebrity in fiction is limited to *Hyperion* and *Kavanagh*—clever, but slight foundations for enduring popularity—as irregular (the former at least) as Jean Paul's nondescript stories, without the great German's tumultuous genius: Hawthorne is probably the most noteworthy of the rising authors of America, and indeed manifests a degree of psychological knowledge and far-sighted, deep-searching observation of which there are few traces or none in Cooper; but the real prowess of the author of *The Scarlet Letter* is, we apprehend, still undeveloped, and the harvest of his honours a thing of the future. All these distinguished persons—not to dwell on the kindred names of Bird, Kennedy, Ware, Paulding, Myers, Willis, Poe, Sedgwick, &c.—must yield the palm to him who has attracted all the peoples and tongues of Europe[Footnote: And, in *one* instance at least, of Asia also; for *The Spy* was translated into Persian!] to follow out the destiny of a Spy on the neutral ground, of a Pilot on the perilous coasts of a hostile race, of a Last of the Mohicans disappearing before the onward tramp of the white man.

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As Rob Roy felt the pulses of life quickened when his foot was on his native heath, so Cooper wrote with vigour and *aplomb* only when his themes were the aboriginal forest and the melancholy main. Pity that, having discovered the fount of his strength—the Samson-lock by which alone he towered above his fellows—he had not restrained himself, and concentrated his efforts within the appointed sphere. He repudiated the oracular counsel which his own consciousness must have approved—*Hoc signo vinces*; and seemed to assume that whatever province he invaded, the bulletin of the campaign would be another *Veni, vidi, vici*. Few things can be more unsatisfactory and insipid than his attempts in the 'silver-fork school' of novel-writing—his dreary commonplaces of fashionable life—his faded sermonisings on domestic, and political, and social economy. Few things can be more inspiriting, more energetic, more impressive, than his pictures of

> 'A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
> A wind that follows fast,
> And fills the white and rustling sail,
> And bends the gallant mast;'

for we see in every stroke that the world of waters is his home, and that to *his* ear there is music in the wild piping of the wind, and that *his* eye beams afresh when it descries tempest in the horned moon, and lightning in the cloud. To him the ocean is indeed 'a glorious mirror,' where the form of the Highest 'glasses itself in tempests;' dear to him it is

> ------'in all time,
> Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm;
> ....Boundless, endless, and sublime—
> The image of Eternity—the throne
> Of the Invisible.'

Well might one who had lived six years on her swelling bosom, combine with his love 'of the old sea some reverential fear,' as Wordsworth has it. This compound feeling is highly effective in his marine fictions, so instinct is it with the reality of personal experience. Mr Griswold tells us that Cooper informed him as follows of the origin of *The Pilot*: 'Talking with the late Charles Wilkes of New York, a man of taste and judgment, our author [Cooper] heard extolled the universal knowledge of Scott, and the sea-portions of *The Pirate* cited as a proof. He laughed at the idea, as most seamen would, and the discussion ended by his promising to write a sea-story which could be read by landsmen, while seamen should feel its truth. *The Pilot* was the result of that conversation.'[Footnote: 'The Prose-Writers of America.'] Of this tale Scott says, in a letter to Miss Edgeworth: 'I have seen a new work, *The Pilot*, by the author of *The Spy* and *The Pioneers*. The hero is the celebrated Paul Jones, whom I well remember

advancing above the island of Inchkeith, with three small vessels, to lay Leith under contribution.... The novel is a very clever one, and the sea-scenes and characters in particular are admirably drawn; and I advise you to read it as soon as possible.’

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Still higher panegyric would not have been misbestowed in this instance, which illustrates Mr Prescott's remark, that Cooper's descriptions of inanimate nature, no less than of savage man, are alive with the breath of poetry—'Witness his infinitely various pictures of the ocean; or, still more, of the beautiful spirit that rides upon its bosom, the gallant ship.' Though it is to *The Pilot*, pre-eminently, and *The Waterwitch*, in nearly an equal degree, that these remarks apply, there is many a passage in Cooper's later novels—for example, *The Two Admirals, Homeward Bound, Mark's Reef, Ashore and Afloat*, and *The Sea-Lions*—in which we recognise the same 'cunning' right hand which pencilled the *Ariel*, and its crew, the moody, mysterious pilot, and stalwart Long Tom Coffin.

Nor was he less at home in the backwoods and prairies of his fatherland, than upon the broad seas which divide it from the Old World. Tastes differ; and there are those—-possibly the majority of his readers—who prefer the Indian associations of *The Last of the Mohicans, The Pioneers*, &c. to the salt-water scenery of the other class of works. For our part, we prefer his prairies to his savages, his forests to his aborigines, his inanimate to his living sketches of Indian story. His wild men of the woods are often too sentimental, too dreamy, too ideal. In this respect Brockden Brown has the advantage of him; for, as Mr Prescott has pointed out, Brown shews the rude and uncouth lineaments of the Indian character, though he is chargeable with withholding intimations of a more generous nature. While Cooper discards all the coarser elements of savage life, and idealises the portrait. The first of this series of tales of

'Painted chiefs with pointed spears,'

was *The Pioneers*—the materials for which, it seems, were to a considerable extent derived from his father, who had an interest in large tracts of land near the 'sources of the Susquehanna,' where the scene is laid, and allied, therefore, to Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming*. It was speedily followed by *The Last of the Mohicans*—not uncommonly pronounced his *chef d'oeuvre*—and *The Prairie*; which, among numerous descriptions of absorbing interest, pervaded throughout by a fine imaginative spirit, contains one of thrilling power—where the squatter discovers and avenges the murder of his son. *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*—a strange story with a strange title, and which forms (chronologically at least) the climax of Cooper's fame—is justly admired by all who appreciate 'minute painting,' and that pensive monotony which begets a certain 'melancholy charm.' His skill in martial narrative was favorably attested in *Lionel Lincoln*; in which he describes with remarkable spirit and equal accuracy the battles of Lexington and of Bunker's Hill. But to go through in detail the *opera omnia* of our prolific author would involve us in difficulties with editor and reader too serious to bear anticipation. Passing over, therefore, such of his earlier writings as are better known—-like *The Red Rover, The Waterwitch, The Pathfinder*, and *The Deerslayer*—we proceed to notice briefly a select few from the long series produced during the last ten years.

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The Two Admirals is of unequal interest—the twin heroes, Sir Gervaise Oakes and Bluewater, engrossing whatever charm it possesses, and reacting disastrously on the tedious scenes wherein they bear no part; but they certainly *do* walk and talk like sound-hearted sons of Neptune, and there is no resisting the spell of the battle and the breeze which they encounter together, in the *Plantagenet* and the *Cæsar*. *The Jack o' Lantern, or the Privateer*, was put forth with an expression of the author's conviction that his faculty in this class of fictions was inexhaustible; to which, however, the critics demurred. One of them observed that, following out the fantastical supposition which ascribes especial virtues to certain numbers, or even working out the analogy of the seventh wave, which sea-shore gossips tell us is ampler and stronger than its predecessors, the seventh sea-novel of Mr Cooper's ought to be the most remarkable of the series for force, brilliancy, and movement. But such symbolism was here found defective: the seventh wave broke abruptly on the shore; the Jack o' Lantern's existence has been brief and uncertain as that of the *ignis fatuus* on the marsh. The story introduces Caraccioli and the Neapolitan court, Nelson and Lady Hamilton; but without striking points. There are some cleverly-drawn characters, however: Clinch, the drunken but winning British tar; Raoul Yvard, brilliant, handsome, and Parisian all over, philosophism included; and Ithuel Bolt, a new (not improved) edition of Long Tom. The plot is ingenious, though perhaps, constrained and far-fetched; and its *dénouement* makes the reader put down the third volume with increased respect for the novelist's tact. *Wyandotte, or the Hutted Knoll* (1843), is a quiet yet animated narrative, descriptive of a family of British settlers and their fortunes in their wild Susquehanna home. There is a pleasure, the author observes, in diving into a virgin forest, and commencing the labours of civilisation, that has no exact parallel in any other human occupation; and some refracted share of this pleasure is secured by every intelligent reader while engaged in perusing records so faithful and characteristic as those embodied in this tale. *Ravensnest*, with no lack of scenic embellishments, introduces to us three of the author's happiest characters—always excepting Leatherstocking and Long Tom—namely, the two Littlepages, 'Captain Hugh' and his 'Uncle Ro,' and Mistress Opportunity Newcome. The didactic asperities in which he indulged naturally marred the fortune of a book whose readers, whatever they might be, were pretty safely 'booked' for a scolding. Otherwise, it gleamed with scintillations, neither faint nor few, of the light of other days. But it was evident that Mr Cooper was overwriting himself. He seemed determined not to be outdone in fecundity by the most prolific of his contemporaries—as though it were a safe speculation or a healthy emulation to run against such light horsemen and horsewomen as Mr James and M. Dumas, and Mesdames Gore and Trollope. Hence he might have appropriately echoed the complaint of the slave in Terence:

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‘Parum succedit quod ago, at facio sedulò.’

In 1847, he produced *Mark’s Reef*, a story of the Crusoe genus, but far behind; the desert island being created ’positively for this occasion only,’ and being swallowed up in the sea again when it has served Mark Woolston and the novelist’s requirements. It is characterised, however, by much glowing description—especially that relating to the crater, with its noble peak, ’ever the same amid the changes of time, and civilisation, and decay; naked, storm-beaten, and familiar to the eye.’ The following year he was ready with *The Bee-Hunter*, wherein he sought to revive his pristine successes among American solitudes and Red Indians. Again we hear the palaver of the stately and sentimental Chippewas; and again we watch, with sadly-relaxed attention, the dodging extraordinary of Pale Faces and Red Men. Alas!

’Both of them speak of something that is gone:...
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?’

The Indians have become comparatively seedy and second-hand individuals; the scenery, with occasional exceptions, looks worn; the machinery creaks and betrays itself, no longer possessing the *ars celare artem*. ’’Tis true, ’tis pity; pity ’tis, ‘tis true.’ One novelty, nevertheless, this tale can boast, and that is the very able and interesting sketch of the bee-hunter following his vocation in the ‘oak-openings;’ nor is the portrait of Buzzing Ben himself an ordinary daub. In 1849 appeared *The Sea-Lions*, a clever but often prolix work, which ought to keep up its interest with the public, if only for its elaborate painting of scenes to which the protracted mystery of Sir John Franklin’s expedition has imparted a melancholy charm. The sufferings of sealers and grasping adventurers among ‘thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice’ are recounted with dramatic earnestness. *The Ways of the Hour* was both ‘nominally’ and ‘really’ Cooper’s last novel: he announced it as such; and the announcement was not related to that fallacious category to which belong the ‘more last nights’ of popular tragedians, and the farewell prefaces of the accomplished author of *Rienzi*. It was not the ‘going, going!’ but the ‘gone!’ of the auctioneer. And critics maliciously said: *Tant mieux*. In *The Ways of the Hour* there was one vigorous portrait, Mary Monson, and several ‘moving accidents by flood and field:’ but with these positive qualities the reader had to accept an unlimited stock of negatives. Besides the works thus referred to, Cooper wrote at short intervals a ‘serried phalanx’ of others, from the ranks of which suffice it to name *The Heidenmauer, The Bravo, The Manikins* (a weak and injudicious tale, quite unworthy of his honourable reputation), *The Headsman of Berne, Mercedes of Castille, Satanstoe, Home as Found, Ashore and Afloat*. In miscellaneous literature his writings include a *History of the Navy of the United States, Lives of Distinguished Naval Officers, Sketches of Switzerland, Gleanings in Europe*, and *Notions of the Americans*.

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It is by his early tales of wilderness and ocean life that he will survive. There his genius is fresh, vigorous, natural—uncramped by restraints, undeformed by excrescences, uninterrupted by crotchets, such as injured its aftergrowth—the swaddling-clothes of its second childhood. If we have spoken freely—we hope not flippantly—of these feeblenesses, it is because the renown of Cooper is too tenaciously and permanently rooted to be 'radically' affected thereby, however they may diminish the symmetry and dim the verdure of blossom and branch. His magnificent panoramas of prairie solitude, his billowy expanses of the 'many-voiced sea,' his artistically-grouped figures of red-skins and trappers, sealers and squatters, are among the things which Anglo-Saxon literature in either hemisphere will not willingly let die. By these he is, and long will be, known and read of all men. And if ever Mr Macaulay's New Zealander should ponder over the ruins of Broadway, as well as of St Paul's, he will probably carry in his pocket one of those romances which tell how the Last of the Mohicans came to his end, and which illustrate the closing destinies of tribes which shall then have disappeared before the chill advance of the Pale Face.

WHY DOES THE PENDULUM SWING?

The attention of the visitor to the recent Exhibition in Hyde Park was arrested, as he advanced westwards down the central promenade of the building, by a large clock busily at work marking off the seconds of passing time. That piece of mechanism had a remarkably independent and honest look of its own. The inmost recesses of its breast were freely bared to the inspection of every passer-by. As if aware of the importance of the work intrusted to its care, it went on telling, in the midst of the ever-changing and bustling crowd, with a bold and unhesitating click, the simple fact it knew; and that there might be no mistake, it registered what it told in palpable signs transmitted through the features of its own stolid face. Mr Dent's great clock was by no means the least distinguished object in the collection of the world's notabilities.

But there was one thing which nearly concerned that industrious and trusty monitor that he surely could not have known, or his quiet countenance would have shewn traces of perturbation. He was doing Exhibition work, but he was not keeping Exhibition time. The wonderful building in which he had taken up his temporary residence was, in fact, of too cosmopolitan a nature to have a time of its own. Its entire length measured off very nearly 1-42,000th part of the circle of terrestrial latitude along which it stretched. The meridian of the Liverpool Model was close upon thirty seconds of space farther west than the meridian of the Greek Slave. Imagine the surface of Hyde Park to have been marked off, before Messrs Fox and Henderson's workmen commenced their labours, by lines running north and south at

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the equal distance of a second of a degree from each other, just as one sees the surface of large maps traced by meridians, nearly thirty of those lines would then have been covered in by the east and west span of the crystal roof. Mr Dent's clock might have been set to the precise time of the Greek Slave, and it would yet have been nearly two seconds wrong by the time of the Liverpool Model. The pendulum swinging so steadily within its case had a longer and more stately stride than most of its congeners. It took a second and a half of time to complete its step from side to side. But notwithstanding this, if a string had been suddenly stretched across in space above the east end of the building, and left there in free suspension, independent of all connection with the terrestrial surface, it would have taken longer for the huge structure to be trailed beneath it by the earth's rotation—swift as that rotation is—than it did for the sober and leisurely mass of metal to finish its beat from side to side.

Our immediate business, however, at this present time is not with the geographical relations of Mr Paxton's building, but rather with that sober and leisurely-moving mass—the pendulum. Even in the seventeenth century, old Graunt was shocked when some irreverent babbler spoke of one of its honourable race by the rude epithet of 'a swing-swang;' and he penned an indignant protest on the subject to the Royal Society. Since that time the pendulum has done much more to merit the reverence of the world. Plain and simple as its outward bearing is, it really holds a high and dignified position in the annals of science.

Instead, however, of touching upon its pedigree and achievements, we proceed at once to speak of certain interesting peculiarities that enter as an element into all considerations in which it has concern. In the first place, what is that characteristic motion which it so constantly assumes—that restless swinging from side to side? Is it a property inherent in its own nature, or is it a power communicated to it from without? There is a train of wheelwork enclosed with it in the case. Is that the source of its vibratile mobility? Assuredly not. For if we arrest its motion with our hand at the instant that its form hangs perpendicularly suspended, that motion is not renewed although the wheels remain in unaltered relation. Those mechanical contrivances clearly do not comprise the secret of its swinging. We must look elsewhere if we would ascertain the fundamental cause.

Has the reader ever looked at the plain white building, with successive rows of little windows, which so often spans the breadth of our smaller streams? If he has, the thought has at once arisen that within those walls huge wheels and heavy-revolving stones remorselessly tear and crush to powder heaps upon heaps of yellow grain, with a power that is equal to the combined effort of a whole troop of horses concentred in the task. But we question very much whether

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he has as clearly seen whence those clattering wheels derive their many horse-power! If we were to ask him to tell us how they acquired their rolling strength, he would most probably answer—from the current of the stream. This reply would amount to nothing in the matter of explanation; the force of the current is as much a borrowed attribute as the force of the wheelwork. The running water is no more an independent and living agent than is the machinery which it turns. Beyond both is the one grand determining influence—the attractive energy inherent in the substance of the vast earth. This it is which makes the water run; this it is which enables the running water to move the wheelwork inserted into its channel. As the magnet draws to itself the fragment of steel, the earth draws to itself all ponderable matter; and whenever ponderable matter is free to move, it rushes as far as it can go towards the centre of the earth's substance, in obedience to the summons. Mobile water runs down from a higher to a lower level because the latter is nearer to the earth's centre than the former, and as it falls it pushes before it such minor obstructions as are unable to resist the influence of its weight. The float-boards of the mill-wheel are of this nature; they are striving to uphold the water by means of the rubbing and friction of the apparatus that is mechanically connected with the axle. But the resistance of the friction is less than the strength with which the earth tugs at the water, and therefore the wheel goes round and the water rushes down. The force which really grinds the hard corn into flour it terrestrial attraction! Gravitation of material substance towards material substance, acting with an energy proportioned to the relative masses and to the relative distances of the elements concerned.

Let us now suppose that the matter drawn towards the earth is not free to move. Let us fancy, for instance, a drop of the running water all at once stopped in its downward path by the attachment of a string from above. The earth would then tug at that string in its effort to get the drop of water, and would consequently stretch it to a certain extent. The power that was before expended in causing the drop to move, would be now employed in striving to tear asunder the substance of the string. A heavy body hanging by a cord from a fixed point is then in this predicament. It is drawn towards the earth, but is prevented from moving to it. It consequently finds a position of rest in which it is placed as near to the source of attraction as the suspending string allows; that is, it hangs perpendicularly and immovably beneath it, stretching the string by its tendency toward the ground.

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If, however, the suspended body be raised up from its position of forced repose by any interference that draws it to one side, the string being still kept on the stretch, it will be observed that it has been made to move in a curved line away from the earth's attracting mass, and that the pull of the attraction is then to a certain extent taken off from the string and transferred to the supporting hand; the force of the attraction consequently becomes then sensible as the weight of the body that is upheld. If in this state of affairs the supporting hand is taken away, the body at once rushes down sideways to the position it before occupied, with a pace accelerating considerably as it goes; for the earth continues to attract it during each instant of its descent. When it has reached the second stage of its journey, it is moving with a velocity that is caused by the addition of the attraction exercised in that stage to the attraction that had been exercised in the first stage; and so of the third, fourth, and other successive stages. It must go quicker and quicker until it comes to the place which was before its position of absolute repose.

But when it has at last arrived at this place, it cannot rest there, for during its increasingly-rapid journey downwards, it has been perseveringly acquiring a new force of its own—an onward impulse that proves to be sufficient to carry it forward and upward in spite of the earth's pressing solicitation to it to stay. Moving bodies can no more stop of their own accord than resting bodies can move of their own accord. Both require that some extraneous force shall be exerted upon them before the condition in which they are can be changed.

Now, in the case of the vibrating pendulum, it is the downward pull of the earth's attraction that first causes the stationary body to move, and as this commencing motion is downwards, in the direction of the pull, it is also an accelerating one. As soon, however, as this motion is changed by the resistance of the string into an upward one, it becomes a retarded one from the same cause. The body is now going upwards, away from the earth, and the earth's attraction therefore drags upon it and keeps it back instead of hastening it. As it travels up in its curved path, more and more of its weight is taken off the string, and thrown, so to speak, upon the moving impulse. In the descending portion of the vibration the weight of the body increases its movement; in the ascending portion it diminishes its movement. At last the upward movement becomes so slow, that the impulse of momentum is lost, and the earth's attraction is again unopposed. The body then begins to retrograde, acquires progressively increasing velocity as it descends, overshoots the place of its original repose, and once more commences the ascent on the opposite side.

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Whenever, then, a heavy body suspended by a flexible string is drawn to one side, and dropped from the hand, a vibrating pendulum is made, because weight and acquired impulse influence it alternately with a sort of see-saw action, the power of the one diminishing as the power of the other augments. Weight pulls down—confers velocity and impulse during the pulling—and then velocity carries up. As velocity carries up, weight diminishes its impulse, and at last arrests it, and then begins to pull down again. In the middle of the vibration velocity is at its greatest, and weight at its least, as regards their influence on the motion. At the extremes of the vibration velocity is at its least, and weight at its greatest. Now here it is the earth's attraction clearly that confers the impulse of the downward movement, just as much as it is the earth's attraction that causes the downward movement of running water. Therefore the power which makes the pendulum swing is the same with the power which grinds the corn in the water-mill —the attraction of the earth's vast mass for the mass of a smaller body placed near to its surface under certain peculiar conditions of position.

But there is a very startling reflection connected with this consideration. How strange it is that the vast 'substantial fabric' of the earth should, after all, present itself as one grand source of motion in terrestrial things! Gravitation, weight, the majestic influence that holds the stable pyramid upon its base through centuries of time, condescending to turn the restless wheels of man's machinery! When the expansive burst of the vapour confined within the cylinder of the condensing steam-engine thrusts upwards the piston-rod with its mighty beams, it is simple weight—the weight of the superincumbent transparent atmosphere—that crushes the metal back with antagonistic force. When particles of water have been sublimated into the air by the heating power of the solar rays, it is simple weight—the weight of their own aqueous substance—that brings them down again, and that causes their falling currents to turn the countless mill-wheels implanted in the direction of their descent. When isolated tracts of the atmosphere have been rendered rare and light under the concentrated warmth of the sun, it is simple weight—the weight of colder and heavier portions of the air—that makes winds rush into the spots where the deficient downward pressure is, and that causes the sails of innumerable windmills to whirl before the impulse of the breeze.

In the steam-engine we see the earth's gravitation and artificial heat combining to effect sundry useful purposes, requiring enormous expenditure of effort. In windmills and watermills we see the earth's gravitation and natural or solar heat working together to perform like service. In the pendulum, the earth's gravitation acting alone as an enumerator of passing moments; for the momentum conferred by motion is after all but a secondary result, an offspring

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of the earth's attraction. In the steady oscillations of this little instrument no less a power is concerned than that grand elementary force of nature, that is able to uphold the orbitual movements of massive worlds. In the one case, the majestic presence is revealed in its Atlantean task of establishing the firm foundations of the universe; in the other, in its Saturnian occupation of marking the lapse of time. In the planetary movements, material attraction bends onward impulse round into a circling curve; in the pendulum oscillations, material attraction alternately causes and destroys onward impulse. In the former it acts by a steady sweep; in the latter by recurring broken starts. The reason of the difference is simply this: the planetary bodies are free to go as the two powers, attraction and impulse, urge them. The weight of the pendulum is prevented from doing so by the restraining power of the string or rod, that holds it bound by a certain invariable interval to a point of suspension placed farther than the weight from the source of attraction. A pendulum, in all its main features, is a terrestrial satellite in bonds—unable to fall to the surface of the earth, and unable to get away and circle round it, yet influenced by a resistless tendency to do both. Its vibrations are its useless struggles to free itself from the constraint of its double chains.

THE COUNTRY COUSIN.

The village of Westbourne was what Americans would call a stylish place, though situated deep in the heart of Derbyshire. Most of its houses had green palings and flowers in front; there was a circulating library, a milliner's shop, and a ladies' boarding-school, within its bounds; and from each extremity of its larger and smaller street—for Westbourne had only two—outlying cottages of various names dotted the surrounding fields. The largest of these, and decidedly the handsomest, belonged, as the door-plate set forth, to Mr Harry Phipps Bunting. It had been called Bunting Cottage, ever since the late possessor—after having made what his neighbours esteemed a fortune, by himself keeping the circulating library, and his spouse the boarding-school—built it by way of consolation for the second year of his widowhood, and retired there from business to hold high gentility in his latter days with his only daughter and heiress, Miss Jenny. At least half of Westbourne believed that in the said arrangements Mr Bunting had his eye on a second and somewhat superior match: in short, those good people averred that the handsome cottage was neither more nor less than a substantial snare for Mrs Phipps, the widow of a captain and second-cousin of a baronet, who, with a small annuity and an only son, lived in the odour of great rank and fashion in a neat brick-house at the other end of the village.

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But if Mr Bunting had indeed indulged in speculations on the widow's heart, they were cut short by a sudden summons to take the journey on which his early partner had preceded him; and Miss Jenny was left the undisputed heiress of all his gains and gatherings, now amounting to a comfortable sum in a London bank, besides the newly-built cottage. None of the village remembered the time when Miss Jenny was young—-not but that there were older ladies in the community, and few who wore their years so well—but a matronly staidnees and industry, a solidity of manner and appearance, had grown so early on the lady, that she had no youth, and scarcely any childhood, in the recollection of her neighbours, and she was now on the shady side of thirty.

Miss Jenny might have had suitors, had her encouragement been more liberal: where is the maiden of fortune who might not? But she had no admirers, though there was not a more popular woman in Westbourne. Time out of mind she was known to have a good advice and a helping-hand for all who required either. The help was always kindly given, and the advice generally judicious: indeed, if Miss Jenny had a weakness, it was the love of direction and counsel-giving; and by that breach the strong citadel of her heart was won. There was no house in Westbourne that gave her abilities half such scope as that of Mrs Captain Phipps—so the lady continued to style herself. Miss Jenny's father had advised there till he departed; after which event, the widow and her son confided in his heiress. Master Harry Phipps was not what would be called a successful young man. He was not either wild or remarkably stupid, as the world goes; his mother knew him to be a dear domestic fellow, who would play the flute or dominos for weeks of evenings in her back-parlour. He had taken one prize at college and sundry at school; had the reputation of being almost a beau, and, at least in Westbourne society, half a wit; and was a tall, fair-faced, lathy young man, dressing well, and looking rather genteel, in spite of an overgrown boyishness which hung about him and kept the Master fastened to his name, though he had left twenty-five behind him. Master Harry had made attempts on law, physic, and divinity, without completing the studies requisite for any of those learned professions; somehow he had always got disgusted when just half-way, and at the time of our tale, had a serious notion of civil engineering. The fates, nevertheless, chalked out another line for Master Harry Phipps. How it first came about the keenest-eared gossips in Westbourne never knew, but the widow's son was observed to become a frequent visitor at the cottage as the days of Miss Jenny's mourning for her father expired. In these expeditions he was occasionally supported by Mrs Captain Phipps, who at length told her confidential friends, and they informed the village, that her son was about to marry, and take the name of Bunting. Some said that Miss Jenny insisted on the latter step

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as a badge of her perpetual sovereignty; some that it was a provision in her father's will, the old gentleman having been heard to hope that none but Buntings would ever inhabit the cottage; but while they disputed that point the wedding came off with a liberal distribution of cards, cake, and gloves, a breakfast, at which Mrs Captain Phipps presided, and an excursion of three weeks to the Lakes; after which, Mr and Mrs Phipps Bunting, having got a new door-plate, and an additional crest on the spoons, settled down comfortably at home, where our story found them.

There they were duly visited and made due returns, even to their uttermost acquaintance. Evening parties wore got up for their benefit, as Westbourne gentility dictated. A few responses were given at the cottage, and people learned to call them the Buntings. When these occurrences and the talk concerning them were fairly over, it was surprising how little things had altered. Mrs Phipps Bunting superintended everything, from the napery in the drawers to the bee-hives in the garden, with so much of her old and independent activity, that people caught themselves occasionally calling her Miss Jenny. As for her lord, he was Master Harry still. Matrimony made no change in him. On Sundays he dressed himself and went to church with Mrs Phipps Bunting. On week-days, he said he studied, paid little visits, took small excursions, and came home to dinner. Even bachelors agreed that he lived under the mildest form of gynecocracy. Mrs Captain Phipps gave him good advices at the one end of the village, Mrs Phipps Bunting kept him all right at the other; and between them an indescribable amount of nobodyism grew and gathered around him.

Mr Phipps Bunting—as the best bred of his neighbours now endeavoured to call him—-was doubtless not less contented than most men in the married state. Miss Jenny—that was—made a noble housekeeper, that was natural to her; she was not given to storms nor temper, nor fault-finding, nor what is called gaiety: they had kind country neighbours; and Mrs Phipps Bunting sometimes spoke of her mother's relatives, who were known to be fine people in London.

There was no appearance of change when the second of their wedded years commenced; but one December morning an extraordinary event occurred at the cottage, for Harry received a letter. It came from Charles Lacy, an old college-friend, whose achievements in the fast line had furnished him with many a joke and tale. He had been till lately a briefless barrister, but had just fallen heir to a neat property in an adjoining county, bequeathed him by a distant relative, his advent to which he intended celebrating with a notable bachelors' party, and Harry's presence was requested, together with that of many a college comrade.

'I think I'll go,' said Harry, in a hesitating tone, as the note was read at the breakfast-table.

‘Of course you will, dear,’ said Mrs Bunting. ’And now that I think of it; something must be done with that parlour chimney, it smokes so. Just send up the mason on your way to the coach.’

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The vehicle thus mentioned was an old stager which passed through Westbourne daily, carrying passengers to sundry of the unrailwayed towns on its track; and within two hours from the receipt of the invitation Mr Phipps Bunting, well wrapped up, and better warned against taking cold, with his best things in a carpet bag and his lady's commands delivered to the mason, took possession of an inside seat on his way to Charles Lacy's domicile.

How the bachelors' party proceeded in that locality, and how the failings of the parlour chimney were corrected at the cottage, imaginative readers may suppose; but on the third day after Harry's departure there arrived a note, stating that his host had invited him to remain a fortnight that they were to have shooting in the fine frosty weather he thought he might stay. Mrs. Phipps Bunting sent her approbation by return of post. There was a colony of rats to be expatriated, a clearing out of the coal cellar to be achieved, and a bottling of cider to get forward, under which considerations she concluded he was better out of the way; but all these things were accomplished, and more than the specified time elapsed, when another note came to say that Lacy positively would not let Harry home without seeing his uncle, the great barrister, who lived in the nearest assize town; and the legal protector of Miss Jenny 'thought he might go on that visit.'

There was a graver and more lengthy reply to that communication; but the fates forbade that Harry should read Mrs Bunting's in time. Charles Lacy's housekeeper had a standing-order to put all letters into a huge card-bracket, which that young gentleman affirmed had been presented to him by an heiress of L.20,000 in her own right; and Mrs Bunting's epistle was placed in the receptacle—for before its arrival Harry had, like an undutiful husband, started with Charles for the house of his uncle. The old barrister, though not one of the brightest, was among the successful of his profession, and kept a hospitable, easy-going house, with a maiden sister and two dashing nephews, in a comfortable English country town, at one end of which was a railway station for the coming and going of London trains. Our Harry had been always an agreeable, commodious fellow. There were no angles on his temper to come in contact with those of other people: rich uncle, maiden aunt, and sporting nephews, all joined in requesting his stay from week to week; while three successive notes were in turn committed to the card-bracket on Charles Lacy's mantelpiece.

'Harry, my boy,' said that gay gentleman, as they stood looking at a passing train, 'what do you say to a run for London? I have another uncle there—a first-rate solicitor in the firm of Grindley, Blackmore, & Co. Ours is a legal family. Grindley and the old hen would be glad to see us; and I'll introduce you to the Blackmores, a delightful mother and four daughters; all charming girls with three thousand a piece. I wish you could only hear Clementina Blackmore sing *Will you still be true to me?* Harry, if ever I am so left to myself as to think of marrying, that's the girl!'

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Let us now suppose that a quantity of additional pressing took place—that the nephews offered to go along as Christmas was coming—that Harry sent home another note to say 'he thought he might go'—and that long before it reached the cottage, he was installed at the house of Mr Grindley in London, who, as his nephew promised, divided a capital legal business with his partner Mr Blackmore.

The proverb which says, 'Out of sight out of mind,' was by this time in course of being fulfilled as regarded the good woman at the cottage. In the revival of old associations his college-friend partially forgot that Harry was a family man, and the easy gentleman himself never thought of intruding the circumstance on people's notice. To do him justice, he had a remarkably single look; all his acquaintances called him Harry Phipps. It was therefore no marvel that the unsuspecting household of Blackmore received him as a bachelor.

The papa of it was a hard-witted, busy lawyer; the mamma an excessively fine lady; and the four daughters pretty, accomplished, fashionable-looking girls, from twenty-two—-their mamma said seventeen—upwards, who judiciously came out in different lines; for Miss Blackmore was metaphysical, Miss Caroline sentimental, Miss Maria fast, and Miss Clementina musical. Between the last mentioned and Charles Lacy a strong and not discouraged flirtation was in progress, which afforded Harry better than ordinary opportunities for cultivating that domestic circle. It was not every day he would have such a house to call at, and Harry did his best to be popular. He hunted up high-life gossip for Mrs Blackmore; he admired the solicitor's law-stories after dinner; he was the humble servant of all the young ladies in turn, but his chief devoirs were paid to the fast Maria. The reason was that the fast Maria would have it so. She thought him, it is true—as she said once to a confidential friend—a sort of goosey-goosey-gander, but he polked capitally, was a personable fellow—and Maria was a spinster. Christmas was coming, and Harry stood high in favour with all the Blackmores. The senior miss found out that he had a philosophic mind; Miss Caroline said she knew there was a little romance about him—he had been disappointed in first-love or something; and Charles Lacy had an intuitive suspicion that the old people would soon begin to inquire regarding his income and prospects. The idea was excessively amusing, but yet somewhat alarming. He thought Harry was carrying it on too far—he was. Hadn't he better give Clementina a hint? But then Clementina would think he ought to have done so long ago. Charles was puzzled, and he did not like to be puzzled. He would have nothing more to do with it. He would wash his hands of it. How was he obliged to know that they were not aware of Harry's being tied up? The whole thing was really uncomfortable, and he did not like anything that was uncomfortable. He would take Harry to task for his enormity, and then think no more about it. Meditating thus, he entered Mrs Blackmore's drawing-room one forenoon early enough to find mamma and the young ladies hard at Berlin wool—they were finishing Christmas presents—all but Maria, for whose amusement Harry was turning over a volume of sporting prints at a little table by themselves.

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‘We are all industrious to-day,’ said Mrs Blackmore, ’on account of our country cousin—-a dear odd creature. She has sent us hampers and baskets full of everything nice, for I don’t know how long. The girls can scarcely remember when she was here last, and it would be such a comfort to her to have some of their work. Do, Maria, try and finish that purse.’

Charles and Harry had heard of that ‘dear odd country cousin’ ever since they first entered the house. The turkeys and chickens she sent had been described in their hearing till they thought they had eaten them. From the conversation of her relatives Harry concluded her to be a spinster or widow of an uninteresting age. However, the threatened arrival created a new employment for him in the shape of holding purse-silk for Miss Maria to wind; and owing perhaps to the quietness of this employment—-perhaps to its occupying so long a time—the awkwardness of his position began to stare him in the face. He began to think he was a bad fellow—although it was all Charles’s fault. He did not know that Miss Maria thought him a goosey-goosey-gander, but he began at last to hate her all the same—we are so liable to hate those we are conscious of injuring! He became in truth afraid of her—she haunted him. He knew he ought to do something, but he did not know what to do. He had all his life acted under advice, and he now felt as if he had broken from his moorings, and was on the wide, wide sea, drifting at the mercy of this calamity.

At the moment we have arrived at, things had come to an alarming climax. In reply to his bewildered look Charles had turned away with severity—washing his hands of it—to join Miss Clementina in the corner; and the rest of the family, who seemed suddenly to find themselves *de trop*, scattered away to other parts of the room. Now Miss Maria was a fast girl, and Harry knew it. She looked wicked, as if determined upon a *coup d’etat*; and he began to perspire all over. The skein fared badly. At this moment some slight diversion was made in his favour by a servant appearing with a message regarding somebody in the back-parlour; whereupon Mrs Blackmore went hastily down stairs; and Harry’s eyes followed her wistfully: he thought he should like to get out.

‘Oh, girls,’ said Caroline, returning in a few minutes, ’it is poor cozy, and mamma is bringing her up for us all to comfort her. She has lost I don’t know how much money by the failure of that horrid Skinner’s bank; and what’s worse, she can’t find her husband.’

‘He ought to be sent home wherever he is,’ replied Maria; ’I’m sure she was just too good to him. Oh, Mr Harry Phipps, what a sad set you men are! I declare you are ravelling again.’

Harry, colouring to the roots of the hair, bent forward to plead some unintelligible excuse; the fast Maria took hold of his finger as if she was cross; and at that instant another finger was pressed upon his shoulder, and looking up, he gazed into the eyes of his wife!

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For some seconds Harry and his spouse looked at each other as if unable to believe their eyes; but the lady's good sense at last prevailed, and gulping down something which would have come out with most women, she gently shook her husband's hand, now liberated from the purse-silk, with 'Harry, love, I am so glad to find you here. I was really afraid that worse had happened than the failure of Skinner & Co.'

Harry replied in rather an indistinct tone, though Charles Lacy ever after vowed he did wonderfully, considering the looks of Mrs Blackmore and her daughters. As for Maria she retired from silk and all, without a word about deceivers, which was also remarkable. Sense in the person of Mrs Bunting for once appeared contagious. The Blackmores, one and all, tacitly agreed that there had been no mistake whatever in the family, beyond the droll particular of their not recognising in a gentleman introduced to them as Mr Harry Phipps the husband of a lady whom they had been accustomed to address as Mrs Bunting. By the failure of Skinner & Co. poor Mrs Bunting had lost everything but the cottage and furniture at Westbourne; a fact which she learned only on her arrival in London to pay a long-projected visit to her mother's relatives, the Blackmores.

The Buntings in due time went home. We have reason to believe that there was never even a curtain-lecture delivered on the subject of the purse-silk. When we last visited Westbourne, Mrs Phipps Bunting was as active, as good-natured, and as popular as ever; but people had forgotten to say Master Harry, for Henry Phipps Bunting, Esquire, had been appointed Her Majesty's stamp-distributer for the district. He was also invested with a couple of agencies for certain absent proprietors; but he never again 'thought he might go' on sporting-excursions; and no family could have imagined him to be a bachelor, for ever since he set fairly to work, a more married-like man we never saw.

THE DROLLERIES OF FALSE POLITICAL ECONOMY.

WINES AND OTHER LIQUORS.

The portion devoted to the subject of intoxicating liquors would make a curious chapter in the history of legislation in almost every European country. Here there is a double cause of disturbance, since besides notions about the balance of trade and the like, many well-meaning, though not always judicious, attempts have been made to render such legislation conducive to sobriety and morality. Thus among the Irish statutes one stumbles on an act of Queen Elizabeth's reign 'Against making of Aqua Vitæ.' It is justly described as 'a drink nothing profitable to be daily drunken and used,' 'and thereby much corn, grain, and other things are consumed, spent, and wasted to the great hinderance, loss, and damages of the poor inhabitants of this realm'—for which reason are passed provisions, not to modify but entirely to suppress it—with what effect we may easily know. But our object at present is not with legislation for the suppression of

drunkenness, which always deserves favourable consideration, but with the commercial regulations affecting liquors, and the strange notions of political economy involved in them. The subject is so ample that we are obliged to restrict our illustrations almost entirely to one small country—Scotland.

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It will rather surprise the reader perhaps to find that, for the promotion of their economic ends, the laws seem to have been directed more to the encouragement than the suppression of drinking. The earliest interference with commerce in liquors appearing among the Scottish acts of parliament is very imperious and comprehensive, but not very explicable in its objects. Statutes at that time were short, and it will cost the reader little trouble to peruse that which was passed in the year 1436, and the reign of James I., 'anent Flemish wines.' 'It is statute and ordained that no man buy at Flemings of the Dane in Scotland, any kind of wine, under the pain of escheat (or forfeiture) thereof.' Doubtless parliament believed that it had reasons for this enactment, but it would not be easy to find out at the present day what they were. In 1503 a more minute act was passed referrible to ale and other provisions. It appoints magistrates of towns 'that they set and ordain a certain price, goodness, and fineness, upon bread, ale, and all other necessary things that is wrought and daily bought and used by the king's lieges. And that they make certain purviews and examinations to wait daily upon the keeping thereof. And when any workman be's noted taking an exorbitant price for his stuff, above the price, and over far disproportionate of the stuff he buys, that he be punished by the said barons, provosts, and bailies, &c.' A little later, in 1540, an act was passed 'touching the exorbitant prices of wine, salt, and timmer.' The provisions that follow are somewhat curious, and rank among the most barefaced instances of a class legislating, not only for its own interest, but its own enjoyment. In the first place, the provosts and bailies—supposed to be always excellent judges of good cheer—are to fix a low and reasonable price at which the wines and other commodities are obtainable. When this is fixed, it is appointed that 'na man is to buy till the king's grace be first served. And His Grace and officers being content for so meikle (much) as will please them to take to our sovereign's use entirely, that noblemen of the realm, such as prelates, barons, and other gentlemen of the same, be served at the same prices; and thereafter all and sundry our sovereign lord's lieges be served at the same prices.' Evidently it was cunningly foreseen that but little wine would be imported at a compulsory and necessarily an unremunerating price. Of such as did come, and was thus sold cheap, the 'prelates, barons, and other gentlemen' who sat in parliament, sagaciously provided that they should have the preemption; and it is pretty clear that the 'all and sundry' who were to come after them would have little chance of obtaining any of the cheap wine.

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Fifteen years afterwards, during the regency of Mary of Lorraine, it was found that the act just cited was not sufficiently stringent, and that some sterner provision must be made to enable the aristocracy to get cheap wine. An act was passed referring to the previous one, and stating that 'nevertheless the noblemen—such as prelates, earls, lords, barons, and other gentlemen—are not served according to the said act, but are constrained to buy the same from merchants at greater prices, contrary to the tenor of the said acts.' Hence it is declared that whenever wines have arrived in any town, and the prices have been fixed, the magistrates 'shall incontinent pass to the market-cross of that burgh, and there, by open proclamation, declare none of the goods foresaid as they are made, and that none of the goods foresaid be disposed of for the space of four days.' Thus were measures taken to let the privileged persons have the benefit of their preemption.

That these acts, and the proclamations for enforcing them, were not a dead letter is shewn by the criminal records. On the 8th of March 1550, Robert Hathwy, John Sym, and James Lourie, burgesses of Edinburgh, confess their guilt in transgressing a regulation against purchasing Bordeaux wines dearer than L.22, 10s. (Scots of course) per tun, and Rochelle wines dearer than L.18 per tun. On the 4th of May 1555, George Hume and thirteen other citizens of Leith were arraigned for retailing wines above the proclaimed price—which for Bordeaux and Anjou wine was 10d. per pint; and for Rochelle, Sherry, and something called Cunezeoch—which may for all we know to the contrary mean Cognac—8d. per pint.

In Ireland the privilege of having their wine cheaper than other people was given to the aristocracy with almost more flagrant audacity. By the Irish statute of the 28th Elizabeth, chap. 4, imposing customs-duties on wines, the lord-lieutenant is not only authorised to take for his own consumption twenty tuns, duty free, annually, but he is at the same time declared to have 'full power to grant, limit, and appoint, unto every peer of this realm, and to every of the Privy-Council in the same, and the queen's learned counsel for the time being, at his or their discretion from time to time, such portion and quantity of wines, to be free and discharged of and from the said customs and subsidy, as he shall think to be mete and competent for every of them, after their degrees and callings to have.'

To return to Scotland. In the ensuing century we find the legislature resorting to the homely liquor of the working-classes. On the 23d December 1669, an act was passed which begins in the following considerate and paternal fashion:—

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’Our sovereign lord, considering that it is most agreeable to reason and equity, and of universal concernment to all his majesty’s subjects, and especially to those of the meaner sort, that a due proportion be observed betwixt the price of the boll of beer and the pint and other measures of ale and drinking-beer rented and sold within this kingdom, that thereby the liberty taken by brewers and vintners, to exact exorbitant prices for ale and drinking-beer at their pleasure, may be restrained. Therefore his majesty, with advice and consent of his estates of parliament, doth recommend to and authorise the lords of his majesty’s Privy-Council from time to time, after consideration had of the ordinary rates of rough beer and barley for the time, to regulate and set down the prices of ale and drinking-beer rented and sold in the several shires and burghs of the kingdom, as they shall think just and reasonable.’ The council were authorised to make their regulations by acts and orders, ’and to inflict such censures, pains, and penalties upon the contraveners of these acts and orders as they shall think fit; and to do all other things requisite for the execution of the same.’

When the Scottish Privy-Council ceased to exist by the union with England, there was some difficulty in knowing how this act should be applied. The Court of Session, looking upon the supply of ale as vital to the country, took on itself to protect the public, just as a passenger sometimes undertakes the management of a vessel which has lost its proper commander. On the occasion of the malt-duty being extended to Scotland in 1725, they thought a juncture had come when it was absolutely necessary to interfere, as there was no saying how far the brewers, let loose from the old regulations of the Privy-Council, might abuse the public by charging an extravagant price or selling a bad article. The Court of Session is the supreme civil tribunal in Scotland. Its rules of court for the regulation of judicial proceedings are called ‘acts of sederunt.’ On this occasion it passed ’an act for preventing the sale of bad ale.’ The object was an excellent one, but we are apt at the present day to consider that brewers under the influence of competition can best save the public from bad ale, and that judges are better employed when they direct their attention to the protection of the public from bad law. They enacted that the brewers should sell by wholesale at a merk Scots per gallon, and that dealers should sell by retail at 2d. per pint. They professed to make this regulation from ’taking into consideration the frequent abuses in vending and retailing bad twopenny ale; and that from the present duties and burdens wherewith the brewers of ale in and about the city of Edinburgh are charged, occasion may be taken by ill-designing persons to impose on the lieges and undersell fair dealers, unless the prices for brewers and retailers be certain and fixed.’

The brewers threatened to give up their business, and the court found it necessary to take farther measures. Another act of sederunt was passed. It is best, we think, where their contents are so curious, to quote the documents themselves, however stiff or formal they may seem, and the commencement of the act follows:

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’Whereas, in the information and memorial this day offered by his majesty’s advocate to the Lords of Council and Session, it is represented that the brewers within the city of Edinburgh and liberties thereof, and others who have the privilege of furnishing the said city with ale, have entered into a resolution and confederacy that they will at once give over brewing when the duties on malt granted to his majesty by act of parliament are attempted to be recovered; that this resolution and confederacy must bring much distress on the good people of the said city through want of ale, and likewise by want of bread, the preparing whereof depends upon yeast or barm, and must produce tumults and confusions, to the overthrow of all good government, and to the great loss and hurt of the most innocent of his majesty’s subjects, and is most dangerous and highly criminal.’

Thus, it being clearly shewn that the refusal of brewers to brew ale at the price fixed by the judges of the Court of Session must produce something like a French revolution, and be followed by general anarchy, the court next proceeds to declare—not in the best of composition—’that it is illegal and inconsistent with the public welfare for common brewers, or others whose employment is to provide necessary sustenance for the people, all at once to quit and forbear the exercise of their occupation, when they are in the sole possession of the materials, houses, and instruments for to carry on the trade, so that the people may be deprived of, or much straitened in their meat or drink; and that so to do in defiance and contempt of the laws is highly criminal and severely punishable. And therefore the said Lords of Council and Session, to prevent the mischiefs threatened to the city and limits aforesaid, do hereby require and ordain all and every brewer and brewers within the city of Edinburgh and liberties thereof, and others who have the privilege of furnishing the said city with ale, to continue and carry on their trade of brewing for the service of the lieges.’

It is astonishing to find that the brewers gave way. Scotland was at that time much under government and aristocratic influence; and very likely the poor men felt that it would be better to lose a little money than to fight a battle with the Court of Session, especially as the Lord Advocate threatened to indict them for a conspiracy. That they continued permanently to accept of the profits—or rather, perhaps, losses—fixed by the Court of Session no one will believe. They would in due time manage to get the usual profit of capital and exertion from their operations, or else would contrive to give up business.

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It is one of the consequences of adopting false and artificial notions on political economy, that these drive the most conscientious and virtuous men to the most mischievous and violent extremities. Where things should be left to themselves they believe interference to be right, and so believing, they think it necessary to carry out their views at whatever cost. A remarkable instance of this was shewn by the virtuous and high-minded Duncan Forbes of Culloden. He thought the introduction of foreign commodities ruinous to the country. He considered that whatever was paid for them was so much lost to his fellow-countrymen. On this principle he waged a determined war against a foreign commodity coming into vogue in his latter days, using all his endeavours to suppress its use, and substitute for it a commodity of home-produce. Will the reader, in the days of temperance societies, believe that the commodity which he desired to suppress was *tea*, and that which he wished to encourage was *beer*? Here are his own words in a letter to a statesman of the time: 'The cause of the mischief we complain of is evidently the excessive use of *tea*, which is now become so common that the meanest families even of labouring people, particularly in burghs, make their morning's meal of it, and thereby wholly disuse the ale which heretofore was their accustomed drink; and the same drug supplies all the labouring women with their afternoon's entertainment, even to the exclusion of the twopenny.' After so formidable a picture, it is not unnatural to find him thus crying out against the influence of Dutch enterprise, which was then spreading the drink which cheers but not inebriates throughout Europe: 'They run their low-priced tea into Scotland, and sold it very cheap —a pound went from half a crown to three or four shillings. The goodwife was fond of it because her betters made use of tea; a pound of it would last her a month, which made her breakfast very cheap, so she made no account of the sugar which she took up only in ounces. In short, the itch spread; the refuse of the vilest teas were run into this country from Holland, sold and bought at the prices I have mentioned; and at present there are very few cobblers in any of the burghs of this country who do not sit down gravely with their wives and families to tea.'[Footnote: Culloden Papers, 191.] What a frightful picture! We may laugh at it, but it really was frightful to one who sincerely believed that the money paid for tea was a dead loss to the country, and who did not know that the tea was paid for by the exportation of home-produce.

FAMILY LIFE IN A NEGRO TOWN.

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There is a large mass of mankind occupying an intermediate position between the savage and the civilised nations of the world. These have no literature of their own, yet they have received some amount of knowledge by tradition or communication with other people. They know little or nothing of science, yet they are skilled in some of the useful arts of life. They have no regular legislation nor codes of civil law, yet they have forms of government and unwritten laws to which they steadfastly adhere, and about which they can plead as eloquently as a Chancery barrister or an advocate in the Courts of Session. While they cultivate the ground, keep cattle, and live upon the lawful products of the soil, they have none of the culinary dainties of life; whilst they plant the cotton-tree, and weave and dye cloth to make their garments, their clothing is scant, and devoid of all excellence in the manufacture. As far removed from the polite European on the one hand, as from the savage Indian or the rude Hottentot on the other, they may be rightly termed the semi-barbarous portion of mankind. It is a curious question how they came to occupy this middle state of civilisation, which they have retained for so many centuries. We know that the wandering tribes of Asia, and some of the kingdoms of that continent which partake of the characteristics now described, in former ages enjoyed seasons of national splendour and gleams of civilisation, the twilight of which has not yet passed away; but we know nothing of the history of Central Africa, a large part of which is composed of semi-barbarous nations.

We now specially refer to that portion of the African continent which lies between the Great Desert and the Kong Mountains, with a continuation toward Lake Tchad—-comprising a tract of country about 300 miles in length and 2000 in breadth. South of this latitude the people are more barbarous and cruel, and the deserts of the west are inhabited by tribes more purely negro and ignorant. Moors, Mandingoes, Foolahs, and Jaloofs, principally dwell in this vast region of West-Central Africa. All these peoples are more or less European in their form and countenance; the pure negroes occasionally mixed with them being probably imported slaves or their descendants. These nations differ from each other in their languages, and in some of their customs and manners; but there is a similarity in their mode of living, if we except the Moors, which makes it as unnecessary as it would be tedious to describe each of them separately. We wish to make our readers acquainted with the forms and habits of semi-barbarous life, whatever local name or geographical appearance it may assume.

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The first and most important feature of observation is the position of the female sex. This regulates the size of the houses and the towns, the nature of agriculture, and the whole social economy. In Africa the women are emphatically the working-class of the community, and hold an intermediate station between wife and slave, occupying the rank and employments of both. A wife is usually bought for so many head of cattle or such a number of slaves, and then becomes the property of her husband. There is no limit to the number of wives. Even the Mohammedan negroes do not conform to the Koran in its restriction to the number of four. One chief boasted that he had eighty wives; and upon the Englishman answering that his countrymen thought one woman quite enough to manage, the African flourished a whip, with which he said he kept them in order. In some countries one of these wives is recognised as head-wife, and enjoys certain prerogatives appertaining to this place.

Being desirous of obtaining an insight into the minutiae of African life, we accepted the invitation of a negro who traded on the Gambia to pay him a visit, and spend a day in his town, especially as there would be a dance in the evening. We left our vessel in the morning, and having rowed for some miles up a tributary stream, landed in an open place. Here we met the horses which Samba had sent for us, as the town lay at a considerable distance. They were fine animals, of a small breed, but very spirited, and apparently only half-trained. Their accoutrements were in some respects novel; for the saddle was an unwieldy article, with a high pommel in front, and an elevation behind, so that we were fairly wedged in the seat, and had many thumps before we learned to sit correctly in these stocks. We therefore had no wish, as we had little opportunity, of trying the speed of our beasts, the road lying through a vast forest. The men who accompanied us were armed with muskets, and kept a sharp look-out among the bushes, though there was not much fear of being attacked in this place by wild beasts in the day-time, as it was a frequented route and had been often visited by the hunter. By and by we came, to a stream, which was fordable in the dry season. Senegambia abounds with rivers and creeks; indeed it seems to be one of the best-watered regions of the earth, and has excellent means of communication for trade. These waters are full of fish, which form an important article of food for the people.

After crossing the river, we saw the place of our destination on a rising ground surrounded with fields. The town was surrounded with a low mud-wall and stockade to keep off wild beasts, and as a slight protection against roving freebooters. Larger towns, especially those belonging to warrior chiefs, have high mud-walls, sometimes with loopholes and bastions, and are capable of standing a siege where the enemy has neither cannon nor battering-rams. The gate was made of planks

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shaped with the axe, for the natives have no saws. The appearance of the place from a distance was very singular, for it consisted of 400 or 500 huts, all built in the same manner, with conical roofs thatched with grass. No chimneys, spires, nor windows relieved the monotony of the scene. Upon entering, we threaded our way through narrow passages, between high fences, as through the mazes of a labyrinth, where we might have wandered all day without finding an exit. At last our guides brought us to a wicket-door, through which we passed, and found ourselves in Samba's enclosure. He welcomed us with great cordiality, and led us towards his dwelling through a group of inquisitive women and children. It was a circular hut, rather larger than the others, and constructed with a little more care. The wall was composed of large lumps of clay in square blocks, laid upon each other while still wet; these speedily dry and harden in the sun, forming a substantial support, of about four feet high, for the roof. The roof is a conical frame of bamboo-cane thatched with long grass, having long eaves to protect the walls from the deluging rains of Africa. The most substantial of these dwellings are liable to be undermined by wet, if the ground be level, or to be penetrated by rain, if the roof be not kept in good repair; in which case the sides can no longer support its weight. For this, reason, deserted towns soon become heaps of mud ruins, and finally a mound of clay.

The interior of Samba's dwelling was as simple as the outside. On one side was a platform or hurdle of cane, raised about two feet from the ground upon stakes. This served for a bedstead, and the bedding was composed of a simple skin or mat. Being rich, Samba had other mats for himself and his friends to sit upon, and two or three low stools. His gun, spear, leathern bottle, and other accoutrements, lay in a convenient place: and we observed a couple of boxes, one of which contained clothes, and the other a heterogeneous mass of trifling valuables received from Europeans. Of course such boxes and their contents are not of frequent occurrence in these lowly dwellings. Near this hut was another small one which served for a kitchen: it contained some earthen pots, wooden bowls, and calabashes, with iron pots and neat baskets as articles of distinction. Here was also the large pestle and mortar, the use of which will be presently described.

Samba was dressed in the usual garb of a negro gentleman. He wore large cotton drawers, which reached half-way down the leg, and a loose smock with wide sleeves. On his feet were sandals, fastened with leathern straps over his toes, the legs being bare. His head was covered with a white cap encircled with a Paisley shawl—which I had formerly given him—and which was worn in the manner of a turban. Two large *greegrees* or amulets—being leathern purses, containing some holy words or sacred scraps—depended from his neck by silken

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cords. This costume was pleasing, and set off his manly form to advantage. One of his wives immediately presented us with a calabash of sour milk, and some cakes of rice of pounded nuts and honey. The Africans have in general only two meals a day; but some, who can afford it, take lunch about two o'clock. Strict Mohammedans profess not to drink intoxicating liquors; but looser religionists cannot resist the temptation of rum, of which the pagan negroes drink to excess. Samba brought out a bottle of this liquor, and presented it with evident glee, himself doing justice to its contents.

We then proceeded to view the rest of the premises. Samba had six wives, each of whom had a separate hut. Their dwellings resembled that of their lord, but were of smaller size, and the doors were very low, so as to require considerable stooping to enter. These apertures for admitting light, air, and human beings, and for letting out the smoke, always look towards the west, for the easterly wind brings clouds of sand; and if the tornadoes which blow from the same quarter are allowed an inlet to a hut, they speedily make an outlet for themselves by whirling the roof into the air. The women were dressed in their best style on the occasion of our visit. One cloth, or *pang*, was fastened round their waist, and hung down to the ankles: another was thrown loosely over the bosom and shoulders. Their hair was plaited with ribbons, and decorated with beads, coral, and pieces of gold. Their legs were bare; but they had neat sandals on their feet. They were loaded with necklaces, bracelets, armlets, and anklets, composed of coral, amber, and fine glass-beads, interspersed with beads of gold and silver. These are their wealth and their pride. Some had little children, whose only covering was strings of beads round the waist, neck, ankles, and wrists: an elder girl of about ten years had a small cloth about her loins. We saw no furniture in their huts except a few bowls and calabashes, a rude distaff for spinning cotton, and the usual bed-hurdle covered with mats. The ladies were very garrulous and inquisitive, narrowly inspecting our skin and dress, and asking many questions about European females. They wondered how a rich man could do with only one wife, but thought monogamy was a good thing for the women. These mothers never carry their children in their arms, but infants are borne in a *pang* upon the back.

Another hut served for Samba's store, where he kept his merchandise; another was occupied by some female slaves, and another by male slaves. These poor creatures wore only a cloth round their loins, hanging as far as the knees; the females had each a necklace of common beads given by their mistresses. At night they lie down upon a mat or skin, and light a fire in the middle of the hut. This serves both for warmth and to keep away noxious insects. Their furniture consisted of working instruments—hoes, calabashes, rush-baskets, and the redoubtable *paloon*.

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The last-mentioned instrument is a large wooden mortar made by the Loubles, a wandering class of Foolahs, one of the most stunted and ugly of African races, and quite different from the pastoral and warrior tribes. These roving gipsies work in wood, and may be called the coopers of Africa. When they find a convenient spot of ground furnished with the proper kind of trees, they immediately proceed to cut them down: the branches are formed into temporary huts, and the trunks are made into canoes, bowls, pestles and mortars, and other wooden utensils. Their chief implements are an axe and a knife, which they use with great dexterity.

The freemen are very indolent, and, with the exception of the Foolahs, seldom engage in any useful work. The time not occupied in hunting, fishing, travelling, or public business, is usually spent in indolent smoking, gossipping, or revelling. The male slaves are employed in felling timber, weaving, drawing water, collecting grass for horses, and helping the women in the fields; but as all this, excepting the first, can be done by females, the slaveholders do not care to keep many male slaves. Women generally attend to field-work. Before the rains set in, they make holes in the ground with a hoe, and, after dropping in seeds, cover in the earth with their feet. In case of rice, the surface of the ground is turned up with a narrow spade. After the rains the grain is ripe, and the tops are cut off. When the natives have not separate store-huts of their own, they keep their corn in large rush-baskets raised upon stakes outside the village; and these stores are not violated by their fellow-townsmen. The grain is beaten or trodden out of the husks, and then winnowed in the wind. The women pound it into meal or flour with a pestle nearly five feet long, the ordinary mortar containing about two gallons. This is a most laborious process, and occupies many hours of the day or night.

After gratifying, if not satisfying, the curiosity of Samba's wives, we thought it right that a return should be made by their explaining to us their mode of dressing food, especially the celebrated *kooskoos*. This was cheerfully done, the more so as we presented them with small articles of tinselled finery. The flour is moistened with water, then shaken and stirred in a calabash until it forms into small hard granules like peppercorns, which will keep good for a long time if preserved in a dry place. The poorer class wet this prepared grain with hot water until it swells like rice; others steam it in an earthen pot with holes, which is placed above another containing flesh and water, so that the flavour of the meat makes the kooskoos savoury. We saw a dish of this kind in preparation for our dinner, along with other stews of a daintier kind, made of rice boiled with milk and dried fish, or with butter and meat, not forgetting vegetables and condiments. Some, of these stews, when well prepared, are not to be despised.

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After inspecting the kitchen and its contents, our host conducted us to the *bentang* or *palaver* house, which answers the purpose of a town-hall and assembly-room. It is a large building, without side-walls, being a roof supported upon strong posts, and having a bank of mud to form a seat or lounging-bench. It is generally erected under the shade of a large tabba-tree, which is the pride of the town. Here all public business is transacted, trials are conducted, strangers are received, and hither the idle resort for the news of the day. As Africans are interminable speakers, they make excellent lawyers, and know how to spin out a case or involve it in a labyrinth of figures of speech. Mungo Park, who frequently heard these special pleaders, says that in the forensic qualifications of procrastination and cavil, and the arts of confounding and perplexing a cause, they are not easily surpassed by the ablest pleaders in Europe. The following may serve as an example of their talent:—An ass had got loose and broken into a field of corn, much of which it destroyed. The proprietor of the corn caught the beast in his field, and immediately cut its throat. The owner of the ass then brought an action to recover damages for the loss of the ass, on which he set a high value. The other acknowledged having killed it, but pleaded as a set-off that the value of the corn destroyed was quite equal to that of the beast which he had killed. The law recognised the validity of both claims—that the ass should be paid for, and so should the corn; for the proprietor had no right to kill the beast, and it had no right to damage the field. The glorious uncertainty was therefore displayed in ascertaining the relative value of each; and the learned gentlemen managed so to puzzle the cause, that after a hearing of three days the court broke up without coming to any decision, and the cause was adjourned for a future hearing.

Another *palaver* which lasted four days was on the following occasion:—A slave-merchant had married a woman of Tambacunda, by whom he had two children. He subsequently absented himself for eight years without giving any account of himself to his deserted wife, who, seeing no prospect of his return, at the end of three years married another man, to whom she likewise bore two children. The *slatee* now returned and claimed his wife; but the second husband refused to surrender her, insisting that, by the usage of Africa, when a man has been three years absent from his wife without giving notice of his being alive, the woman is at liberty to marry again. This, however, proved a puzzling question, and all the circumstances on both sides had to be investigated. At last it was determined that the differing claims were so nicely balanced that the court could not pronounce on the side of either, but allowed the woman to make her choice of the husbands. She took time to consider; and it is said that, having ascertained that her first husband, though older than the second, was much richer, she allowed her first love to carry the day.

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These lawsuits afford much amusement to the freemen of African towns, who have little employment, and to whom time seems to be a matter of no importance. Whether a journey occupies a week, a month, or a year, is of little moment, provided they can obtain victuals and find amusement in the place they visit. African labourers are quite surprised at the bustle and impatience of Englishmen; and when urged to make haste in finishing a job, will innocently exclaim—'No hurry, master: there be plenty of time: to-morrow, comes after to-day.'

We went to see the blacksmith and saddler of the town. These are the only professional persons, and they are held in high esteem. The blacksmith is a worker in all kinds of metal, and combines the avocations of goldsmith, silversmith, jeweller, nailer, and gunsmith. In the interior, he also manufactures native iron by smelting the stone in furnaces with charcoal, which process converts it at once into steel: but as this operation is rudely performed, it is attended with a great waste of metal, which is also very hard and difficult to be worked; so that English iron is used when it can be obtained, and bars of iron form a considerable article of commerce. The blacksmith's utensils consist of a hammer, anvil, forceps, and a pair of double bellows made of two goat-skins. When we saw him he and his slaves were making stirrups, but the operation was very tedious.

The saddler tans and dresses leather, and can make a very beautiful and soft material by repeatedly rubbing and beating the hides. The thick skins are converted into sandals; those of sheep and goats are dyed and made into sheaths of various kinds, purses for greegrees, covers for quivers and saddles, and a variety of ornaments, which are neatly sewn, as all negro lads can use the needle. These arts, with those of weaving, working in rushes, soap-making, and a rude pottery, constitute the native crafts. The Africans evidently understand the principles of many useful arts, and evince considerable ingenuity in the execution, considering the rudeness of their instruments, their want of capital, and the total absence of hired labour.

Suspended on a tree near the entrance of the town we saw the strange dress of bark called Mumbo Jumbo. This is a device used by the men to keep their wives in awe when the husband's authority is not sufficient to prevent family feuds and maintain proper subordination. It may be called the pillory of Africa, and is thus employed: Mumbo Jumbo announces his approach by loud cries in the woods, and at night enters the town and proceeds to the bentang, where all the inhabitants are obliged to assemble. The ceremony begins with songs and dances, which last till midnight, by which time Mumbo Jumbo has fixed upon his unfortunate victim. She is immediately seized, stripped, tied to a post, and scourged with Mumbo's rod, amid the shouts and derision of the whole assembly. No wonder that Mumbo Jumbo is held in great awe by the women!

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When we had finished our walks about town, the day was far spent, and the setting sun bade us hasten to our lodging; for here there is no twilight, so that in a few minutes after the orb of day has disappeared night supervenes, and the moon rules the heavens. The few cattle which belonged to the inhabitants were brought into a pen at the town-wall, where they are watched at night by armed men. We found a fire of blazing wood in Samba's hut, and sat down on mats to gossip and smoke till dinner should be served. The ladies brought in the kooskoos, and other viands already described, in wooden bowls, and laid them on the floor; they then retired, as they never eat with the men. Each guest is expected to help himself with his fingers, and Samba hoped to play us a little trick in return for one played upon himself. When he visited us on board ship we provided only knives and forks, which all were expected to use. Poor Samba could hardly get a mouthful, and was the laughing-stock of the company, till in mercy a spoon was brought to him. He now ordered the stews to be made thin, and the meat to be cut up in small morsels, hoping to see us very awkward in using our fingers; when suddenly we produced pocket spoons and knives, which turned the joke against him and his negro friends, for the food was too watery for themselves to manage well with their hands.

After our repast we went out to see the dancing. This favourite amusement of the Africans takes place in the open air when the weather is fine; in wet weather it is held in the bentang, and when it is dark large fires are kindled to give light to the performers. They have two or three musical instruments, the chief of which is a drum. When this is beat, all the young folks become animated, and dance to the sound, clapping their hands, and performing a number of evolutions, some of which are not the most seemly. They keep up this exercise through a great part of the night; so that we left them in the midst of their sport, and retired to rest. Our preparations for sleep were soon made, by simply lying down upon the mats placed upon the hurdle. The negroes are very susceptible of cold, and complain of it when we are panting with heat; but the fire in their huts keeps up the desired temperature. They sleep very soundly, and cannot be easily aroused till after sun-rise. In the morning we made a slight repast of gruel, to which a kind of hasty-pudding with shea-butter was added for our peculiar gratification. This butter is made of the fruit of the shea-tree, which is not unlike a Spanish olive, and has a kernel from which the butter is extracted by boiling. It is in great repute, having a richer taste than the butter of milk, and keeping for a long time without salt, which is very expensive in Africa. After breakfast we took leave of our kind host and his family, and returned in the same way we came.

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The foregoing description of semi-barbarous life may seem to portray it in some attractive colours, so that indolent and licentious persons might ask: Is it not preferable to our sophisticated state of society? We are not judges of other people's taste, but we can see in it nothing desirable. Its evils are numerous and very great. It is a dearth or death of the soul, and of all that which truly constitutes man an intelligent being, aiming at mental progress. Again, it is intimately connected with a state of slavery, with the degradation of females, and with polygamy—three great moral evils, the sources of endless rapine, injustice, and misery. Famine also frequently prevails, and is a dreadful scourge, even compelling mothers to sell some of their children that they may save the rest. For in such an uncertain state of society, no one cares to lay up for the future, as his hordes would only incur the greater risk of being pillaged and destroyed.

THE COMMERCIAL PORTS OF ENGLAND.

A return has just been made, by order of parliament, which shews that Liverpool is now the greatest port in the British Empire in the value of its exports and the extent of its foreign commerce. Being the first port in the British Empire, it is the first port in the world. New York is the only place out of Great Britain which can at all compare with the extent of its commerce. New York is the Liverpool of America, as Liverpool is the New York of Europe. The trade of those two ports is reciprocal. The raw produce of America, shipped in New York, forms the mass of the imports of Liverpool; the manufactures of England, shipped at Liverpool, form the mass of the imports of New York. The two ports are, together, the gates or doors of entry between the Old World and the New. On examining the return just made, it appears that the value of the exports of Liverpool in the year 1850 amounted to nearly L.35,000,000 sterling (L.34,891,847), or considerably more than one-half of the total value of the exports of the three kingdoms for that year. This wonderful export-trade of Liverpool is partly the result of the great mineral riches of Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire; partly of the matchless ingenuity and untiring industry of the population of those counties; partly of a multitude of canals and railways, spreading from Liverpool to all parts of England and the richest parts of Wales; partly to Liverpool being the commercial centre of the three kingdoms; and partly to the fact that very nearly L.12,000,000 have been expended in Liverpool, and more than L.12,000,000 in the river Mersey, in converting a stormy estuary and an unsafe anchorage into the most perfect port ever formed by the skill of man. On comparing the respective amounts of the tonnage of Liverpool and London, it appears at first impossible to account for the fact that the shipping of Liverpool

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is rather less than that of London, while its export-trade is much more than twice as great. The explanation of this fact is, that the vessels employed in carrying the million or million and a half of tons of coal used in London, appear in the London return; while the canal and river flats, to say nothing of the railway trains, employed in carrying the million and a quarter of tons of coal used or employed in Liverpool, do not. State the case fairly, and the maritime superiority of Liverpool will be found to be as decided as is its commercial. We ought also to add, that while the Custom-house returns for 1850 give Liverpool only 3,262,253 tons of shipping, the payment of rates to the Liverpool Dock Estate in the twelve months ending June 25, 1851, gives 3,737,666 tons, or nearly 500,000 tons more. Comparing the rate of increase of the exports of Liverpool with that of other ports, it appears that Liverpool is not only the first port in the kingdom, but that it is becoming more decidedly the first every year. During the last five years the increase of the exports of Liverpool has been from 26,000,000 to nearly 35,000,000, while that of London has been from little less than 11,000,000 to rather more than 14,000,000. The exports of Hull—which is undoubtedly the third port of the kingdom—though still very large, have rather declined, having been L.10,875,870 in 1846, and not more than L.10,366,610 in 1850. The exports of Glasgow, now the fourth port of the empire, shew a fair increase, from L.3,024,343 to L.3,768,646. No other port now sends out exports of the value of L.2,000,000 a year, though Southampton comes near to L.2,000,000, and Cork passes L.1,000,000.—*Liverpool Times*.

AN UNFORTUNATE MAN.

I am fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, and they have taken all from me. What now? Let me look about me. They have left me sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me; and I can still discourse; and, unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance and my cheerful spirits, and a good conscience; they have still left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my religion, and my hope of heaven, and my charity to them too. And still I sleep, and digest, and eat, and drink; I read and meditate; I can walk in my neighbour’s pleasant fields, and see the varieties of natural beauty, and delight in all that in which God delights—that is, in virtue and wisdom, in the whole creation, and in God himself.—*Jeremy Taylor*.

SLOW BUT SURE.

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Some years ago a man was apprehended in Hampshire, charged with a capital offence —sheep-stealing, I believe. After being examined before a justice of the peace, he was committed to the county jail at Winchester for trial at the ensuing assizes. The evidence against the man was too strong to admit of any doubt of his guilt; he was consequently convicted, and sentence of death—rigidly enforced for this crime at the period alluded to —pronounced. Months and years passed away, but no warrant for his execution arrived. In the interval a marked improvement in the man's conduct and bearing became apparent. His natural abilities were good, his temper mild, and his general desire to please attracted the attention and engaged the confidence of the governor of the prison, who at length employed him as a domestic servant; and such was his reliance on his integrity that he even employed him in executing commissions, not only in the city, but to places at a great distance from it. After a considerable lapse of time, however, the awful instrument, which had been inadvertently concealed among other papers, was discovered, and at once forwarded to the high-sheriff, and by the proper authority to the unfortunate delinquent himself. My purpose is brief relation only; suffice it to say, the unhappy man is stated under these affecting circumstances to have suffered the last penalty of the law.—*Notes and Queries*.

THE SEA-KINGS OF NANTUCKET.

Let America add Mexico to Texas, and pile Cuba upon Canada; let the English overswarm all India, and hang out their blazing banner from the sun; two-thirds of this terraqueous globe are the Nantucketer's. For the sea is his—he owns it as emperors own empires, other seamen having but a right to pass through it. Merchant-ships are but extension bridges; armed ones but floating forts; even pirates and privateers, though following the sea as highwaymen the road, they but plunder other ships, other fragments of the land like themselves, without seeking to draw their living from the bottomless sea itself. The Nantucketer, he alone resides and riots on the sea; he alone, in Bible language, goes down to it in ships; to and fro ploughing it as his own special plantation. *There* is his home; *there* lies his business; which a Noah's flood would scarcely interrupt, though it overwhelmed all the millions in China. He lives on the sea as prairie cocks in the prairie; he hides among the waves; he climbs them as chamois hunters climb the Alps. For years he knows not the land; so that when he comes to it at last, it smells like another world, more strangely than the moon would to an earthsman. With the landless gull, that at sunset folds her wings and is rocked to sleep between billows, so at nightfall the Nantucketer, out of sight of land, furls his sails, and lays him to his rest, while under his very pillow rush herds of walruses and whales.—*Herman Melville's The Whale*.

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THE LINNÆA BOREALIS.

’Linné selected a tiny wild-flower that he discovered, of exquisite beauty and delicious odour, to bear his name—one that refuses to exchange the silent glen and melancholy wood for the more gay parterres of horticulture.’—*Rambles in Sweden and Gottland, by Sylvanus*.

’Tis a child of the old green woodlands,
  Where the song of the free wild bird,
And swaying of boughs in the summer breeze,
  Are the only voices heard.

In the richest moss of the lonely dells
  Are its rosy petals found,
With the clear blue skies above it spread,
  And the lordly trees around.

In those still, untrodden solitudes
  Its lovely days are passed;
And the sunny turf is its fragrant bier
  When it gently dies at last.

But if from its own sweet dwelling-place
  By a careless hand ’tis torn,
And to hot and dusty city streets
  In its drooping beauty borne,

Its graceful head is with sorrow bowed,
  And it quickly pines and fades;
Till the fragile bloom is for ever fled
  That gladdened the forest glades.

It will not dwell ’neath a palace dome,
  With rare exotic flowers,
Whose perfumed splendour gaily gleams
  In radiant festal hours:

It loves not the Parian marble vase,
  On the terrace fair and wide;
Or the bright and sheltered garden bowers
  Smiling in gorgeous pride.

But it mourns for the far-off dingles,
  For their fresh and joyous air,

For the dewy sighs and sunny beams
  That lingered o’er it there.

O lonely and lovely forest-flower!
  A holy lot is thine,
Amid nature’s deepest solitudes,
  With radiance meek to shine.

Bright blossom of the shady woods!
Live on in your cool retreat,
Unharmed by the touch of human hand,
Or the tread of careless feet;

With the rich green fern around your home,
The birds’ glad song above,
And the solemn stars in the still night-time
Looking down with eyes of love!

LUCINDA ELLIOTT.

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