Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 423 eBook

Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 423

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 423 eBook....1
Contents....2
Table of Contents....4
Page 1....5
Page 2....7
Page 3....8
Page 4....9
Page 5....10
Page 6....11
Page 7....12
Page 8....13
Page 9....14
Page 10....15
Page 11....17
Page 12....18
Page 13....19
Page 14....20
Page 15....21
Page 16....22
Page 17....24
Page 18....25
Page 19....26
Page 20....27
Page 21....28
Page 22....29

Page 23.....30
Page 24.....31
Page 25.....32
Page 26.....33
Page 27.....34
Page 28.....35
Page 29.....36
Page 30.....37
Page 31.....38
Page 32.....39
Page 33.....40
Page 34.....42
Page 35.....44
Page 36.....45
Page 37.....47
Page 38.....48
Page 39.....49
Page 40.....50
Page 41.....51
Page 42.....53



BOOKRAGS

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
	1
UP THE INDUS.	1
HELPS’S ESSAYS.	8
FOOTNOTES:	16
JELLY-FISHES.	16
STEEPLE-JACK’S SECRET.	23
FOOTNOTES:	27
FOOD OF THE ARCTIC REGIONS —FRANKLIN’S EXPEDITION.	27
THE ARTIST’S SACRIFICE.	33
ACCIDENTS AT SEA.	38
AMERICAN HOMAGE TO SHAKSPEARE AND MRS COWDEN CLARKE.	41
TO WORDSWORTH.	41

Page 1

Title: Chambers' Edinburgh Journal Volume XVII., No 423, New Series. February 7th, 1852

Author: Various

Editor: William Chambers and Robert Chambers

Release Date: March 27, 2005 [EBook #15481]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

*** *Start of this project gutenberg* EBOOK *Chambers*' *Edinburgh journal* ***

Produced by Malcolm Farmer, Richard J. Schiffer and the
Online Distributed Proofreading Team.

Chambers'*Edinburgh journal*

Conducted by William and Robert Chambers, *editors of* 'CHAMBERS'S *information for the people*,' 'CHAMBERS'S *educational course*,' &c.

No. 423. *New series*. *Saturday*, *February* 7, 1852. *Price* 1-1/2 *d.*

UP THE INDUS.

Three years ago, I received orders to proceed from Kurachee to Roree by the river route, for the purpose of joining the siege-train then assembling for the reduction of Mooltan. Subsequent events caused my final destination to be changed to Sukkur. Although my journey was thus not so long as I had both expected and wished, yet I had an opportunity of seeing some three or four hundred miles of a river that the records of the past, and the anticipations of the future, alike combine to render interesting, and which in itself differs in many respects from the other rivers of India. My position in life —that of a non-commissioned officer of the ordnance department—has prevented me from gleaning information on the subject, either from books or official sources; but it may be that a narration of what I merely *saw*, will not prove altogether without interest for those who must run while they read—who have neither time, nor perhaps inclination, to acquire any more than a superficial knowledge of distant countries.

Having been provided with a passage in one of the steamers of the Indus flotilla, and informed that the vessel was to start at daybreak on the following morning, I hastened to procure the necessary documents to authorise my obtaining ten days' sea-rations from the commissariat department. The following was the proportion of food for each day,

and I may remark, that I received it from government gratis, with the exception of the spirits, as I was proceeding on field-service:—1 lb. of biscuits, 1 lb. of salt beef or pork, 1-4th of 1 lb. of rice, 1 oz. and 2-7ths of sugar, 5-7ths of 1 oz. of tea, and 2 drams, or about 1-4th of a bottle of arrack, 24 degrees under proof. Having secured the provant, my mind was now perfectly at ease, and I leisurely set about completing my arrangements for the voyage. These consisted mainly in locking my only box, and tying up in a cotton quilt a blanket and the thick sheet of goat's-hair-felt that served me for a bed. It was dark before I left camp; and as I was detained a considerable time at the *bunder* or landing-place, waiting for a boat to take me off to the steamer, it was late in the night when I got on board.

Page 2

The steam-boat was about the size of the largest of those that ply above bridge on the Thames. When I had scrambled on deck, I found that the forepart of the vessel was crowded with the bodies of natives, every one of whom was testifying the soundness of his repose by notes both loud and deep. Having selected the only spot where there was room even to sit down, I began, in a somewhat high key, to warble a lively strain calculated to cheer the drooping spirits of such of my neighbours as had that evening undergone the pang of parting from their friends. This proceeding soon had the effect of drawing all eyes upon me, and, indeed, not a few of the tongues also; for the now thoroughly awakened sleepers—with great want of taste—growled out, at the expense both of myself and of my performance, sundry maledictions, with a fervency peculiar to the country, until at length I may say I was clad with curses as with a garment. At this juncture, I took out of my provision-bag a remarkably fine piece of pork, and began to contemplate it by the light of the moon with the critical eye of a connoisseur. The reader is no doubt aware, that among the natives of India the popular prejudice does not run in favour of this wholesome article of food; and perhaps to this fact I must attribute it that the surrounding Mussulmans and Hindoos became wondrously polite all on a sudden, and left a wide circle vacant around me, so that I had ample room to make down my bed; nor was I disturbed from a hearty sleep till the morning.

At daybreak, I was aroused by the crew getting up the anchor: in a few minutes, the head of the ‘fire-boat,’ as my dusky neighbours termed it, was turned down the coast, and on we went, steaming, smoking, and splashing, after the most orthodox fashion of fire-boats in general. I had now time and opportunity to look around me. Every available spot of the deck and paddle-boxes of the small, flat-bottomed iron steamer, was crowded with as motley a set of passengers as ever sailed since the days of Captain Noah. Sepoys returning from furlough to join their regiments; lascars, or enlisted workmen belonging to the different civil branches of the army; and camp-followers in all their varieties, were everywhere squatted on their haunches, and although muffled up to their eyes in wrappers of cotton-cloth, were all looking miserably cold from the sharpness of the morning breeze. The crew consisted of about twenty sailors—half of whom were Europeans, and evidently picked hands. Under the influence of good pay, fresh provisions without stint, sleeping all night in their hammocks, and constant change of scene, they were as healthy-looking and good-humoured a lot of seamen as I had ever met with. Their principal employment seemed to be to take their turn at the wheel; and as the natives performed most of the little work that was to be done in a vessel of this description, carrying no sails, I presume they were entertained only with the view

Page 3

of manning the two small howitzers and half-a-dozen swivel-guns, in case our little craft should find it necessary to shew her teeth. The remaining portion of the men were even finer specimens of humanity than the Europeans. With the exception of two tall, bony Scindians, they were all Seedies, or negroes, and there was not one among them that might not have served as a model for a Hercules. Their huge bodies presented an appearance of massiveness and immense strength; and the enormous muscles had even more than the prominence we find in some statues, but so seldom meet with in men of these effeminate times. These particulars were the more easily noted, as their style of costume, in the daytime at least, approached very closely to nudity. But their size was as nothing to their appetites; and deep and vasty as their internal accommodations must have been, it remains a matter of perplexity to me to this day to determine by what mysterious process they managed to stow away one-half of what they devoured. I have repeatedly watched one of these overgrown animals seat himself before a wooden trencher, some three-quarters of a yard broad, and clear from it, as if by magic, a mess piled up to the greatest capacity of the vessel, and consisting of rice, garnished at the top with a couple of pounds or so of curried meat or fish; after which, glaring around him in a hungry and dissatisfied manner, calculated to raise unpleasant sensations in a nervous bystander, he would sullenly catch hold of the hookah common to the party, and seek to deaden his appetite by swallowing down long and repeated draughts of tobacco-smoke, until the tears came into his eyes, and he was forced to desist by a paroxysm of coughing.

Among the passengers, there were two or three persons of my own standing, and on the quarter-deck a small group of officers, one of whom was accompanied by his wife. The lady had certainly no reason to grumble at the inattention of her companions. The fair sex, although much more plentiful at the time I speak of than ten years ago, was still rather scarce in these parts, ladies being few and far between in the stations beyond Kurachee. With a praiseworthy desire to make the most of the honour, the skipper was bustling about, giving all sorts of orders that might in any way conduce to the comfort of his fair passenger, and apparently in a state of mental agony when a momentary turn of the vessel would render the awning and screens ineffectual in preserving her from a chance ray of the sun. Two young subalterns were tumbling over one another in the anxious endeavour to be the first to bring a footstool; a couple of their seniors were standing by, rubbing their hands and smiling blandly, to keep their minds in a fit state for the perpetration of a compliment on the first possible occasion; while even the grim old major was trying very hard to unbend: not that it was a part of his principles to be particularly gallant to the ladies, but as he was going to a place where he might not have the advantage of seeing any of them for some years, and would thus run the chance of growing rusty, he thought he might as well keep his hand in while he had the opportunity.

Page 4

After running down the coast till the sun became so uncomfortably hot as to render an awning over the whole vessel an indispensable necessary, we suddenly struck into one of the many creeks with which the Delta of the Indus is everywhere interlaced. The vessel did not answer her helm well; and as the breadth of the stream did not much exceed her length, we were for some time running ashore, first on one bank, and then on the opposite one. However, as the banks were steep, and composed of a mixture of sand and mud, we were not so much delayed by these accidents as might have been expected; for after grounding with a shock sufficient to floor any one unused to the navigation of the Indus, the tough little craft would slide back of her own accord into her proper element, and go ahead again as if nothing had happened. The first time this took place, I was sent on my beam-ends, and was not a little alarmed into the bargain; but the crew seemed to take it as a matter of course, and in reply to my anxious inquiries as to the extent of damage that had been occasioned, they informed me that she had only brushed the cobwebs off her keel. On entering the creek, we startled large flocks of wild geese and ducks; and here and there a pair of pelicans, after gazing at us for a few seconds, would slowly wing their way to some more sequestered stream, unprofaned by noisy, smoky civilisation.

As we continued on our course, the landscape—a level plain, that stretched away for miles till it met the horizon—was covered with camels grazing upon tamarisk-bushes, which, with a few mangostans, an occasional specimen of acanthus, and a coarse and scanty herbage, were the only specimens of the vegetable kingdom that met our gaze. The scene during the remainder of the afternoon was the same, the monotony being relieved only when we stopped for half an hour to take a supply of wood from a large pile collected on the bank for this purpose, and thus had an opportunity of stretching our legs on *terra firma*. At dusk, the steam-boat was run ashore, the steam blown off, and here we were to remain for the night. The natives immediately rushed on shore, and began preparing fires to cook their provisions. The ship's cook had already supplied me with a cup, or rather a tin pot of tea; but as the growing coolness of the evening, and the example of my neighbours, rather encouraged my appetite, I resolved to make a second edition of my evening meal, and accordingly took under my arm the copper canteen which formed the sum-total of my culinary apparatus—the lid being my only plate or dish—and furnished with a supply of tea, sugar, cold meat, and biscuit, made my way to a spot a short distance off, where I might take my food on the solitary system, according to the custom that we Englishmen most delight in. When I had lighted the fire, and put the water on to boil, I cast myself on the ground, and complacently puffing away at my pipe, gazed at the wild but picturesque

Page 5

scene before me. The position of the river was marked out by a semicircle of some fifty or sixty fires, before which dark and ill-defined figures were ever and anon flitting like phantoms; while, in the midst, the funnel of the steam-boat loomed tall and black above the veil of smoke that hung around—like some dark and horrid object Of heathen idolatry surrounded by its sacrificial fires. The sounds that met my ear, however, dispelled this somewhat fanciful idea; for in the stillness of the night voices grow distinct, while forms are indebted to the imagination for filling up their outlines.

The native passengers, who had remained, silent and dull, in a constrained position during the whole of the day, felt a load taken off their spirits as soon as they set foot on dry land; and in a trice the silence that had hitherto reigned was broken by a very Babel of tongues, among which could be distinguished the guttural jargon of the Scindian, the bastard dialect of Mahratti, of the Hindoo from the Deccan, and the ungrammatical *patois* of Hindostani, which—although, when exclusively used, it marked out the Mussulman—was yet the *lingua franca* of the whole party; but amidst the unceasing torrent of words, little could be distinguished, save when the ear was saluted with an outburst of nature's universal and unvaried language in the shape of a light-hearted laugh. By and by, my attention became directed, by an occasional shout of merriment, to a group of Seedies clustered round a fire near me. Negroes in this country are much the same as in other parts of the World—a happy, easily-contented race, forgetful of the past, and careless of the future. After keeping up their noisy confabulation for some time, they removed to a level spot close to where I was lying: one of them squatted down on the ground, and commenced singing to the music of a sort of tambourine, that he beat with the flat of his hand; and the others at once formed a circle, and commenced a rude dance, which had probably been brought by themselves or their fathers from the shores of Eastern Africa. The air was at first low and monotonous, the time seeming to be more studied than any variation of the tune; but after some minutes a few notes in a higher key were occasionally introduced, giving the music a strangely wild and melancholy character. The dance consisted principally of low jumps, each foot being alternately advanced in strict time with the music. Sometimes the dancers joined hands; again they would pass into one another's places, until they had made the circuit of the ring; and every now and then, in going through these movements, they would leap completely round, apparently without an effort, but as a natural consequence of the momentum produced by the celerity of their motions, and the weight of their huge bodies. The whole affair was gone through in a serious and business-like manner, unusual in the negro. How long I watched them I cannot say; but it seemed to

Page 6

me as if they went on for hours without slackening the pace, or moving one muscle of their countenances, until my eyes became heavy with looking at them. At length, the figures appeared to grow dim, and among them I thought I recognised faces of friends then many thousands of miles from me, and forms that the earth had long before covered over. A death-like chill came over me: by a sudden impulse, I rushed forward, and awoke. With bewildered feelings, I rose on my elbow, and gazed around. The moon had risen; her cold, clear light making every object near me either startlingly distinct, or else a mass of dark shade, while a deep and solemn silence reigned around. All had vanished—the singer and the dancers—the flaming, sparkling, roaring fires, and the noisy groups around them; and I might have imagined that I had awaked to find myself in another world, had it not been for the heap of black ashes beside me, and the dark outline of the steam-boat in the distance. I arose, stiff, cold, and drowsy, and tucking my kitchen under my arm, slowly wended my way on board.

However, there must be an end to all things; and on the third day, we emerged from the dreary net-work of creeks, and entered into the open Indus. The scenery still remained much the same. Here and there, beacons were erected, but they were only of temporary use, for the channel of the river alters almost every year. The breadth of the stream varies with the rise of the water consequent on the melting of the snow on the distant mountains, among which it takes its source. At Sukkur, it is as broad as the Thames at Blackwall; and nearly two hundred miles lower down, it is sometimes found of no greater breadth; while in other spots it spreads into a lake some two or three miles across, depending upon the level of the surrounding country and the rise of the river. Scinde has been called Young Egypt, from the general resemblance of the physical features of the two countries, and the fact, that the existence of an only river in each is the sole cause of an immense tract of territory being prevented from becoming throughout a parched and unprofitable desert. In Upper Scinde, there are very rarely more than three or four showers in the year, and the cultivator has to depend entirely upon the overflow of the river for the growth of his crops, in the same way as the fellah of Egypt is saved from famine by the annual inundation of the Nile. In Fort Bukkur, there is a gauge on which the height of the river is registered, in a similar manner to that of the celebrated one in Egypt; and the news of the rise or fall of a few inches, is received by the Scindians with an eager interest, not a little strange to those who are unaware that such petty fluctuations determine whether a nation shall feast or starve for the next twelve months. It is pleasing to add, that there are hopes of a change for the better in this state of uncertainty of obtaining the necessities of life, which, in a case like this, where so little

Page 7

depends upon the energy of single members of the community, acts as a sure check upon the progress of civilisation. Canals, excavated at a time when all India was one vast empire, but since choked up and fallen into ruins, have been cleaned and repaired, and new ones projected. A late order of government has led the way to the Indus being constituted, instead of the Ganges, the highway from Europe to the fertile and important provinces of North-Western Hindostan. Commerce, in the pride of her prosperity, grows nice about her roads, and she will soon take the Indus in hand, and put a stop to its little irregularities. Mere art, perhaps, could do but little to remove the impediments to the navigation of this immense river. This end could only be obtained by taking advantage of the natural causes which have made a deep channel in one part and a shoal out a few yards lower down. Dame Nature, like dames in general, may be easily led if we can only persuade her that she is acting of her own accord.

On we went, steaming, and smoking, and splashing more than ever, buffeting against the muddy-looking stream, which, however, was sometimes too much for us, so that we were fain to take advantage of the still waters or back-current near the banks. The river being low at this season, we ran aground, in spite of all the care of our Scindian pilot and the Seedic leadsman, often enough to have wrecked a moderately-sized navy. The leadsman was a rather pompous individual, duly impressed with the importance of his position, in having charge of the deep-sea line, which was something short of two fathoms in length. He was stationed at the bows, and ever and anon proclaimed aloud the depth of water in language that he fondly believed to be English. As we dashed along in one fathom water, he seemed perfectly at his ease, and drew the small lead from the river, and again tossed it before him with a studied grace, turning round occasionally, with an air of affected indifference, to read admiration in our eyes. As the water shoaled to four feet, his brow contracted and his motions were quickened; when it became three feet, he hurled the lead into the water, as the gambler dashes down his last dice; and at last, as we grazed on the tail of a hank, it was almost with a shriek that he yelled out, *'Doo foots*!' But our hour had not yet come; and as the water deepened to beyond the four yards that formed the extent of his line, he assumed his former dignified ease, and leisurely made known that there was 'No bot-t-a-a-m!'—an announcement which, although gratifying in one respect, was yet somewhat startling.

Page 8

But we did not always escape in this manner. Not to speak of minor mischances, on one occasion we stuck hard and fast for twenty-four hours, in spite of every attempt to extricate ourselves. Here was a predicament for the captain! He had received instructions to make the greatest speed on his trip; his passengers were all burning with impatience lest they should be too late to acquire glory and prize-money—the prize-money at all events; the military stores on board were urgently required at Mooltan; and, worse than all, the lady began to pout! This was the climax of his misfortune; and the skipper, growing desperate, swore a mighty oath that if the obstinate little craft would not swim through the water, she should walk over the land, and we should see who would get tired of it first. Accordingly, an anchor was carried forward to a spot some forty yards off, where the water was deeper; the greater part of the passengers were made to jump overboard, without even going through the formality of walking the plank; while the remainder manned the capstan-bars. The chain-cable tightened, the capstan creaked, and the paddles dashed round; but we did not stir an inch till the natives, who had been so unceremoniously turned overboard, began to apply the pressure from without, when, amidst shouts and yells, and curses in a dozen different languages, we slid along the surface of the bank until we reached a deeper channel. The outside passengers then scrambled on board, and again we darted on; while the captain took snuff with the triumphant air of a man who was not to be trifled with, and informed the lady confidentially that she (the steam-boat) was not a bad little craft after all, but it did not do to let her have her own way altogether.

Let it now suffice to say, that the amphibious steam-boat carried us to Sukkur in rather less than three weeks—our voyage in some respects resembling the midnight journey of the demon horseman—

> ’Tramp, tramp across the land we ride;
> Splash, splash across the sea!’

Glad we were when a bend of the river shewed us the island and picturesque fort of Bukkur, apparently blocking up all further progress; the left bank being studded with the white bungalows of Sukkur, half-hidden in clumps of date-trees; while the right was clothed to the water’s edge with the bright green foliage of the gardens of Roree.

HELPS’S ESSAYS.

In an age of many books, there must needs be some, highly worthy of attention, with which the general reading-public will be but imperfectly acquainted. Though probably known to many of our readers, we think it likely that the writings of Mr Helps are yet unknown to many others, who might profit by the study of them, and more or less appreciate their excellence. Under this conviction, it is proposed to notice them in the present pages; and we have little doubt of being able to substantiate their claims to consideration.

Page 9

To readers who require of a book something more than mere amusement, or a passing satisfaction to their curiosity; who have any regard or relish for independent thinking—-for an enlarged observation of human life—for the results of study and experience—for practical sense and wisdom, and a general understanding and appreciation of the varied motives, ways, and interests of men and of society—these volumes cannot fail to prove delightful and profitable reading.

All Mr Helps's writings have been published anonymously; and it is only within the last two years that he has become known, out of his own circle, to be the author. His earliest publications were, *Essays written in the Intervals of Business*, and *An Essay on the Duties of the Employers to the Employed*, otherwise entitled *The Claims of Labour*. He has also published a work in two volumes under the title of *The Conquerors of the New World and their Bondsmen*; a historical narrative of the principal events which led to negro slavery in the West Indies and America. But the books from his pen with which we are best acquainted, and which have obtained the largest measure of public attention, are a series of essays intermixed with dialogues, called *Friends in Council*, and a supplementary volume, somewhat different in plan, which he calls *Companions of my Solitude*.[1] As the whole of his characteristics as an essayist are displayed with a more perfect effect in these two latter works than in the others, and as they will afford us as much extract as we shall have space for, we propose to confine our remarks to them exclusively. Matter enough, and even more than enough, will be found in them for illustrating whatever we may find to say respecting the author's powers and attainments.

The *Friends in Council* purports to be edited by a clergyman named Dunsford, who was so obliging and laborious as to set down the conversations in which he, Ellesmere (the great lawyer), and Milverton (the author), had engaged on various occasions, when the last read to his companions a number of short essays which he was writing. We have a page or two of introduction, informing us of this circumstance, and of a few other particulars needful to be mentioned; and then, after a little talk among the friends, an essay is read, followed by the interlocutors' comments, and a discussion of its merits. These conversations form a very agreeable portion of the work, and exhibit a fine mastery of dialogue. They are exactly like the discourse of intelligent and accomplished men, and therefore very much unlike the ordinary run of book-reported talk. A few sentences may be not unfitly quoted, by way of exhibiting their quality. We take the following, on so common a matter as friendship; not because it is the best we might select, but because it seems one of the passages which is most readily extractable:—

'*Ellesmere.* I suppose all of us have, at one time or other, had a huge longing after friendship. If one could get it, it would be much safer than that other thing.

Page 10

’*Milverton.* Well, I wonder whether love—for I imagine you mean love—was ever so described before, “that other thing!”

’*Elles.* When the world was younger, perhaps there was more of this friendship. David and Jonathan!—How does their friendship begin? I know it is very beautiful; but I have forgotten the words. Dunsford will tell us.

’*Dunsford.* “And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.”

’*Elles.* Now that men are more complex, they would require so much. For instance, if I were to have a friend, he must be an uncommunicative man: that limits me to about thirteen or fourteen people in the world. It is only with a man of perfect reticence that you can speak completely without reserve. We talk together far more openly than most people; but there is a skilful fencing even in our talk. We are not inclined to say the whole of what we think.

’*Mil.*. What I should need in a friend would be a certain breadth of nature: I have no sympathy with people who can disturb themselves about small things; who crave the world’s good opinion; are anxious to prove themselves always in the right; can be immersed in personal talk or devoted to self-advancement; who seem to have grown up entirely from the *earth*, whereas even the plants draw most of their sustenance from the air of heaven.

’*Elles.* That is a high flight. I am not prepared to say all that. I do not object to a little earthiness. What I should fear in friendship is the comment, and interference, and talebearing, I often see connected with it.

’*Mil.* That does not particularly belong to friendship, but comes under the general head of injudicious comment on the part of those who live with us. Divines often remind us, that in forming our ideas of the government of Providence, we should recollect that we see only a fragment. The same observation, in its degree, is true too as regards human conduct. We see a little bit here and there, and assume the nature of the whole. Even a very silly man’s actions are often more to the purpose than his friend’s comments upon them.

’*Elles.* True! Then I should not like to have a man for a friend who would bind me down to be consistent, who would form a minute theory of me which was not to be contradicted.

’*Mil.* If he loved you as his own soul, and his soul were knit with yours—to use the words of Scripture—he would not demand this consistency, because each man must know and

feel his own immeasurable vacillation and inconsistency; and if he had complete sympathy with another, he would not be greatly surprised or vexed at that other's inconsistencies.

Page 11

’*Duns.* There always seems to me a want of tenderness in what are called friendships in the present day. Now, for instance, I don’t understand a man ridiculing his friend. The joking of intimates often appears to me coarse and harsh. You will laugh at this in me, and think it rather effeminate, I am afraid.

’*Mil.* No; I do not. I think a great deal of jocose raillery may pass between intimates without the requisite tenderness being infringed upon. If any friend had been in a painful and ludicrous position (such as when Cardinal Balue in full dress is run away with on horseback, which Scott comments upon as one of a class of situations combining “pain, peril, and absurdity"), I would not remind him of it. Why should I bring back a disagreeable impression to his mind? Besides, it would be more painful than ludicrous to me. I should enter into his feelings rather than into those of the ordinary spectator.

’*Duns.* I am glad we are of the same mind in this.

’*Mil.* I have also a notion that, even in the common friendships of the world, we should be very stanch defenders of our absent friends. Supposing that our friend’s character or conduct is justly attacked in our hearing upon some point, we should be careful to let the light and worth of the rest of his character in upon the company, so that they should go away with something of the impression that we have of him; instead of suffering them to dwell only upon this fault or foible that was commented upon, which was as nothing against him in our hearts—mere fringe to the character, which we were accustomed to, and rather liked than otherwise, if the truth must be told.

’*Elles.* I declare we have made out amongst us an essay on friendship, without the fuss of writing one. I always told you our talk was better than your writing, Milverton. Now, we only want a beginning and ending to this peripatetic essay. What would you say to this as a beginning?—it is to be a stately, pompous plunge into the subject, after the Milverton fashion:—“Friendship and the Phoenix, taking into due account the fire-office of that name, have been found upon the earth in not unsimilar abundance.” I flatter myself that “not unsimilar abundance” is eminently Milvertonian.

’*Mil.* Now observe, Dunsford, you were speaking sometime ago about the joking of intimates being frequently unkind. This is just an instance to the contrary. Ellesmere, who is not a bad fellow—at least not so bad as he seems—knows that he can say anything he pleases about my style of writing without much annoying me. I am not very vulnerable on these points; but all the while there is a titillating pleasure to him in being all but impertinent and vexatious to a friend. And he enjoys that. So do I.’

This certainly reads like free and natural conversation, besides being noteworthy for the suggestions it contains.

Page 12

Mr Helps is strictly an original writer, in the sense of thinking for himself; but at the same time, one of his excellences consists in an adroit and novel use of commonplaces. There is, indeed, as much originality in putting a new face upon old verities, as in producing new ones from the mint of one's invention. As Emerson has remarked, valuable originality does not consist in mere novelty or unlikeness to other men, but in range and extent of grasp and insight. This is a fact, too, which Mr Helps has noted. 'A suggestion,' says he, 'may be ever so old; but it is not exhausted until it is acted upon, or rejected on sufficient reason.' He has, therefore, no fastidious dread of saying anything which has been said before, but readily welcomes wise thoughts from all directions, often reproducing them with such felicity of expression, as to give them new effect. Thus, in all the elements of a profitable originality, he is rich and generous; and from few books of modern times could so large a store of aphorisms, fine sayings, and admirable observations be selected. We have marked a great many more than can be incorporated in the present paper; but some few may be, nevertheless, presented. Here, for instance, is a fine remark on time—next to love, the most hackneyed subject in the world:—'Men seldom feel as if they were bounded as to time: they think they can afford to throw away a great deal of that commodity; *thus shewing unconsciously in their trifling the sense that they have of their immortality*.' On another familiar topic—-human progress—he writes thus:—'The progress of mankind is like the incoming of the tide, which, from any given moment, is almost as much of a retreat as an advance, but still the tide moves on.' Emerson has used the same figure, but in a passage which ought not to be regarded as impairing our author's originality.

On the vexed and perplexing question of *Evil*, Mr Helps has said many acute and consolatory things, from among which we have culled the following sentences:—'The man who is satisfied with any given state of things that we are likely to see on earth, must have a creeping imagination: on the other hand, he who is oppressed by the evils around him so as to stand gaping at them in horror, has a feeble will and a want of practical power, and allows his fancy to come in, like too much wavering light upon his work, so that he does not see to go on with it. A man of sagacity, while he apprehends a great deal of the evil around him, resolves what part of it he will be blind to for the present, in order to deal best with what he has in hand; and as to men of any genius, they are not imprisoned or rendered partial even by their own experience of evil, much less are their attacks upon it paralysed by their full consciousness of its large presence.' Here, in the next place, is an aphorism worth pondering and remembrance: —'Vague injurious reports are no men's lies, but all men's carelessness.' And by the side of it we

Page 13

may place a pleasant sarcasm attributed to Ellesmere, and apparently intended as a reminder for stump-orators: 'How exactly proportioned to a man's ignorance of the subject is the noise he makes about it at a public meeting.' Not altogether out of connection here may be this brief sentence:—'Next to the folly of doing a bad thing, is that of fearing to undo it.' In the following, we have a brief sufficient argument against the indulgence of unavailing sorrow or anxiety:—'It has always appeared to me, that there is so much to be done in this world, that all self-inflicted suffering which cannot be turned to good account for others, is a loss—a loss, if you may so express it, to the spiritual world.' There is plain truth, too, in the next, though it is not likely to be much remembered by those who are most in need of it:—'An ill-tempered man often has everything his own way, and seems very triumphant; but the demon he cherishes, tears him as well as awes other people.' In another place, and from another point of view, he indicates the admirable benefits of human, sympathy. 'Often,' says he, 'all that a man wants in order to accomplish something that is good for him to do, is the encouragement of another man's sympathy. What Bacon says the voice of the man is to the dog—the encouragement of a higher nature—each man can in a lesser degree afford his neighbour; for a man receives the suggestions of another mind with somewhat of the respect and courtesy with which he would greet a higher nature.' Speaking with reference to the pursuits of men of literary and artistic genius, it is written: 'Almost any worldly state in which a man can be placed is a hinderance to him, if he have other than mere worldly things to do. Poverty, wealth, many duties, or many affairs, distract and confuse him.' One sentence more is all that can be added here; and if it seems to be suggested by an aphorism of Bacon, it is equal to it in pith and penetration:—'Every *felicity*, as well as wife and children, is a hostage to fortune.'

These sentences have been gathered chiefly from *Friends in Council*, though a few of them are taken from *Companions of my Solitude*. The two books are informed with the same spirit; and to a meditative person, one could not recommend a choicer store of reading. Those, however, to whom the works are as yet unknown, may wish to see some longer and more connected extract. It is difficult to decide upon what ought to be presented, where almost everything is exquisite; yet as a choice must be made, we will take some sentences from an essay on 'Despair,' wherein the writer offers a few remedial suggestions against the burden of remorse:—

Page 14

’To have erred in one branch of our duties, does not unfit us for the performance of all the rest, unless we suffer the dark spot to spread over our whole nature, which may happen almost unobserved in the torpor of despair. This kind of despair is chiefly grounded on a foolish belief that individual words or actions constitute the whole life of man; whereas they are often not fair representatives of portions even of that life. The fragments of rock in a mountain stream may tell much of its history, are, in fact, results of its doings, but they are not the stream. They were brought down when it was turbid; it may now be clear: they are as much the result of other circumstances as of the action of the stream: their history is fitful: they give us no sure intelligence of the future course of the stream, or of the nature of its waters; and may scarcely shew more than that it has not been always as it is. The actions of men are often but little better indications of the men themselves....

’There is frequently much selfishness about remorse. Put what has been done at the worst. Let a man see his own evil word or deed in full light, and own it to be black as hell itself. He is still here. He cannot be isolated. There still remain for him cares and duties; and therefore hopes. Let him not in imagination link all creation to his fate. Let him yet live in the welfare of others, and, if it may be so, work out his own in this way; if not, be content with theirs. The saddest cause of remorseful despair is when a man does something expressly contrary to his character—when an honourable man, for instance, slides into some dishonourable action; or a tender-hearted man falls into cruelty from carelessness; or, as often happens, a sensitive nature continues to give the greatest pain to others’ from temper, feeling all the time perhaps more deeply than the persons aggrieved. All these cases may be summed up in the words, “That which I would not, that I do”—the saddest of all human confessions, made by one of the greatest men. However, the evil cannot be mended by despair. Hope and humility are the only supports under this burden.’

As our space presses, the passages we give must necessarily be short. The beauty of the few sentences following will not be disputed. They are taken from a ‘Chapter of Consolations’ in *Companions of my Solitude*, and will serve to exhibit our author’s style under one of its more animated aspects:—

’Lastly, there is to be said of all suffering—that it is experience. I have forgotten in whose life it is to be found, but there is some man who went out of his way to provide himself with every form of human misery which he could get at. I do not myself see any occasion for any man’s going out of the way to provide misfortune for himself. Like an eminent physician, he might stay at home, and find almost every form of human misery knocking at his door. But still I understand what this chivalrous inquirer meant, who sought to taste all suffering for the sake of the experience it would give him.

Page 15

’There is this admirable commonplace, too, which, from long habit of being introduced in such discourses, wishes to come in before I conclude—namely, that infelicities of various kinds belong to the state here below. Who are we that we should not take our share? See the slight amount of personal happiness requisite to go on with. In noisome dungeons, subject to studied tortures, in abject and shifty poverty, after consummate shame, upon tremendous change of fortune, in the profoundest desolation of mind and soul, in forced companionship with all that is unlovely and uncongenial—-men, persevering nobly, live on, and live through all. The mind, like water, passes through all states, till it shall be united to what it is ever seeking. The very loneliness of man here is the greatest proof, to my mind, of a God.’

One of the things that strikes us most in these essays, is the author’s wise moderation of statement, his habit of looking at all phases of a question, and of saying something appropriate on each. We believe he makes Ellesmere observe somewhere, that moral essays commonly require another essay from the opposite point of view to temper and qualify their meaning. This requirement has been closely kept in mind. There is no undue vehemence, no straining of favourite points, no clap-trap rhetoric or elaborate phrase-makings; but everything is clear, judicious, well considered, and conscientiously set forth. The man does not write for the sake of writing, but because his soul is full of thoughts, and his remembrances charged with the wholesome lessons of experience. The thoughts generally are less remarkable for their depth than for their *breadth*—a free and unembarrassed all-sidedness, which is, perhaps, one of the most difficult of all attainments in the way of writing. There is a mild meditative wisdom in his utterances which can have been derived only through a large acquaintance with life and society; with the manifold diversities of motive and aspiration by which men are actuated; with everything, in short, that interests, degrades, or elevates humanity. Only from an extensive quarry of experience could this strong and graceful pillar of wit, sagacity, and judgment, have been built up. From this, too, has been acquired that broad liberality of opinion which must be welcome to every candid mind—the enlarged tolerance, and generous appreciation of all degrees of difference in men’s ways of thinking and of acting, which is one of the most pleasing and most distinctive characteristics of these writings. Often, in reading, we are inclined to say, here is one of the best-balanced souls in England—a finely-gifted and highly-cultivated man, to whom the pains and difficulties, the joys, the sorrows, the ambitions, and shortcomings of his race, are all familiar; who has felt them all, seen the good and evil of them all, and, with a calm deliberation, can testify at last, that the great Power of the Universe has so

Page 16

constrained and ordered the uncertainties and perils of our lot, as not only to reconcile all its apparent contradictions with the ends of moral discipline and benefit, but to make even the darkness of calamity flash rays of brightness and of hope. Thus, along with an enlarged knowledge of men and things, he gives us the wisest counsel about our conduct and proceedings in the world, and also the most encouraging conclusions with regard to our final destiny and prospects.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] 1. *Friends in Council: a Series of Headings and Discourse thereon*. New Edition. Two vols. 2. *Companions of my Solitude*. Pickering. London: 1851.

JELLY-FISHES.

We inscribe at the head of this paper the popular name of a class of beings, which, though simple in their organisation, are full of interest to the zoologist, and attractive to the common observer from the singularity or beauty of their forms, and, in many cases, the brilliancy of their colouring. The ocean, throughout its wide extent, swarms with myriads of gelatinous creatures—some microscopic, some of large dimensions—which deck it with the gayest colours by day, and at night light up its dreary waste with ‘mimic fires,’ and make it glow and sparkle as if, like the heavens, it had its galaxies and constellations. These are the jelly-fishes, or sea-nettles (*Acalephae*), as they are often called, from the stinging properties with which some of them are endowed. The commoner forms are well known, for the beach is often strewn with the carcasses of the larger species. On fine days in summer and autumn, whole fleets of these strange voyagers appear off our coasts. Their umbrella-shaped, transparent disks float gracefully through the calm water, and their long fishing-lines trail after them as they move onward. At times, multitudes, almost invisible to the naked eye, tenant every wave, and give it by night a crest of flame; while other kinds measure as much as a yard in diameter. The *Acalephae* present the greatest variety of form and colour, as well as of size, but they are all of the most delicate structure, frail, gelatinous, transparent. Some are so perfectly colourless, that their presence can with difficulty be detected in the water.

The following description, by Professor E. Forbes, applies to a large proportion of the species:—’They are active in their habits, graceful in their motions, gay in their colouring, delicate as the finest membrane, transparent as the purest crystal.’ The poet Crabbe has characterised them well in the following passage:—

’Those living jellies which the flesh inflame,
Fierce as a nettle, and from that the name;
Some in huge masses, some that you might bring
In the small compass of a lady’s ring;
Figured by hand divine—there’s not a gem
Wrought by man’s art to be compared to them;
Soft, brilliant, tender, through the wave they glow,
And make the moonbeam brighter where they flow.’

Page 17

The first thing that arrests our attention in these creatures is the extreme delicacy and tenuity of their substance. The jelly-fish is chiefly made up of fluid. A quantity of water and a thin membranaceous film, these are its chief component parts. Professor Owen has ascertained that a large individual, weighing two pounds, when removed from the sea, will be represented, when the fluid which it contains is drained off, 'by a thin film of membrane not exceeding thirty grams in weight.' Naturalists have commonly described the jelly-fish as being little more than 'coagulated water' and the description is correct.

And yet these masses of film and fluid, floating at the mercy of wind and wave, possess powers which we should hardly associate with so simple a structure, and can accomplish works of which we should little suspect them. Delicate and defenceless as they appear, they can capture fishes of large size, and digest them with ease and rapidity. Some of them are in truth formidable monsters. Professor E. Forbes gives the following humorous description of the destructive propensities of some medusae which he had captured in the Zetland seas:—'Being kept,' he says, 'in a jar of salt-water with small crustacea, they devoured these animals, so much more highly organised than themselves, voraciously; apparently enjoying the destruction of the unfortunate members of the upper classes with a truly democratic relish. One of them even attacked and commenced the swallowing of a *Lizzia octopunctata*, quite as good a medusa as itself. An animal which can pout out its mouth twice the length of its body, and stretch its stomach to corresponding dimensions, must indeed be "a triton among the minnows;" and a very terrific one too. Yet is this ferocious creature one of the most delicate and graceful of the inhabitants of the ocean—a very model of tenderness and elegance.'

The jelly-fishes are all, in their adult state, locomotive beings. They float freely and incessantly through the ocean, either impelled by their own efforts, or driven by storm and billow. They for the most part frequent the open seas, and shun the shore, their delicate frames being endangered by the perennial strife between land and water. Being designed for constant motion, for the navigation of the great waters, their entire organisation is adapted to such a mode of life. We find amongst those ocean-floaters the greatest perfection and variety of locomotive apparatus; and they have been divided into sections, according to the modifications of this portion of structure which they exhibit. We shall endeavour to give a popular account of the leading peculiarities of each, and note the most interesting points in the history of the tribe.

Page 18

In the first section, the animals are furnished with a disk or umbrella of varying shape, which serves as a float, beneath which hang certain processes connected with the functions of prehension and digestion. In this division are included some of the best-known forms. The creature, in this case, propels itself by the alternate contraction and expansion of its disk, thus striking the water, and driving itself forward. These movements take place at regular intervals, and serve a double purpose. They not only propel, but at the same time drive the water over the lower surface of the disk. Here is situated a complicated net-work of vessels, and the fluids of the body are thus exposed to the influence of oxygen, and receive the needed aeration. The stroke of the disk, therefore, is not only a locomotive, but also a respiratory act. The jelly-fishes of this section move as they breathe, and breathe as they move. Hence the name which has been given them—*Pulmonigrades*. We find the same admirable economy of resources amongst the lower animalcules. The cilia which propel them secure the aeration of the system.

It is evident that the motive apparatus in this section of the *Acalephae* is but a feeble one. It only avails in calm weather. When the sea is agitated, the jelly-fish is driven helplessly along. It cannot choose its path. As its food, however, is everywhere abundant around it, and it has no business that should lead it in one direction more than another, there is no great hardship in this.

In this section are included some of the most beautiful, as well as common of the tribe. The forms of the umbrella are often most lovely, and present an astonishing variety. As an example of the beauty which they sometimes display, we may refer to a species which resembles an exquisitely formed glass-shade, ornamented with a waved and tinted fringe. The most perfect grace of form, the transparency of the crystal, and colour as delicate as that of the flower, combine to render this frail being one of the loveliest of living things.

In another section, locomotion is effected by a modification of ciliary apparatus. We have a familiar example in the *Beroe* of our own seas, a most attractive little being, and a prime favourite with naturalists, who have described its habits and celebrated its beauty with enthusiasm. We shall not soon forget the delight with which we first made acquaintance with this graceful little rover. While rambling along the shore in quest of marine animals, our attention was arrested by a drop of the clearest jelly, as it seemed to be, lying on a mass of rock, from which the tide had but just receded. On transferring it to a phial of sea-water, its true nature was at once revealed to us. A globular body floated gracefully in the vessel, scarcely less transparent than the fluid which filled it. Presently it began to move up and down within its prison-house, and the paddles by means of which the beroe dances

Page 19

along its ocean-path were distinctly visible. These paddles are nothing more or less than cilia of a peculiar kind, ranged in eight bands upon the surface of the body. They are set in motion at the will of the animal, and their incessant strokes propel it swiftly through the water. By stopping some of its paddles, and keeping others in play, the beroe can change its course at pleasure, and so wander ‘at its own sweet will,’ through the trackless waste. Beauty waits upon the course of this little crystal globe. The grace and sprightliness of its movements must strike the commonest observer. As the sunlight falls upon its cilia, they are ‘tinted with the most lovely iridescent colours;’ and at night they flash forth phosphoric light, as though the little creature were giving a saucy challenge to the stars.

The beroe is a most active being, its habits conforming to the organisation with which it is endowed. Such an array of paddles prophesies of a mercurial temperament and an energetic character. It can, however, anchor itself and lie by when occasion offers. It is provided with two long cables, prettily set with spiral filaments or tendrils, by means of which it can make fast to any point. When not in use, it can retract them, and stow them away in two *sacs* or pouches within the body, where they may be seen coiled up, through the transparent walls. The mouth is a simple opening at one pole of the globular body. No arms are needed. The beroe is spared the labour and uncertainty of the chase. As it dances gaily along, streams of water, bearing nutritive particles, pass through the orifice into its stomach.

In this creature, as in many of the lower animals, there is a remarkable power of retaining vitality after the most serious injuries; nay, in portions actually severed from the body, it will continue for some time. Mr Patterson, in his excellent *Introduction to Zoology*, mentions that on one occasion he divided a fragment of the body of a beroe, lately taken from the shore and shattered by a storm, ’into portions so minute that one piece of skin had but two cilia attached to it, yet the vibration of these organs continued for nearly a couple of days afterwards!’ But we must leave the beroe, charmer though it be.

Another member of this section—the *Ciliograde acalephae*, as they are called—is the Girdle of Venus, which resembles a ribbon in form, and is sometimes five or six feet in length, covered with cilia, and brilliantly phosphorescent. This must be one of the most beautiful of the *fireworks* of the ocean.

Page 20

The jelly-fishes of another section are furnished with one or more air-bags, which assist them in swimming, and hence bear the name of *hydrostatic acalephae*. In the Portuguese man-of-war (*Physalia*), the bag is large, and floats conspicuously on the surface of the water. From the top of it rises a purple crest, which acts as a sail, and by its aid the little voyager scuds gaily before the wind. But should danger threaten—-should some hungry, piratical monster in quest of a dinner heave in sight, or the blast grow furious—the float is at once compressed, through two minute orifices at the extremities a portion of the air escapes, and down goes the little craft to the tranquil depths, leaving the storm or the pirate behind. In one species (*Cuvieria*), the floats are numerous and prettily ranged round the margin of the body. Resting on these, the creature casts about its long fishing-lines, and arrests the passing prey.

One more section remains to be noticed. The jelly-fishes which belong to it have a rudimentary skeleton—a plate which supports the soft, circular body. From the lower part of the body hang numerous tentacles (*cirri*), amidst which the mouth is placed. Probably these multitudinous arms assist in locomotion; and, hence the name of the family, *Cirrigrades*. Amongst the creatures of this division we meet with some very interesting locomotive apparatus. There are some of them by no means obliged to trust to their oars alone—they have also sails. The *Velella*, large fleets of which visit our seas at times, has a plate (the mast) rising from its bluish disk or deck, covered with a delicate membrane (the sail) of snowy whiteness, by means of which it traverses the ocean. This sail, it has been noticed, 'is set at the same angle as the lateen-sail' of the Malays. We cannot doubt that it is admirably suited to its purpose, and the Malays may be proud of having nature as a voucher for their contrivance.

We find in another species a still more perfect rigging. In it (*Rataria*) the crest is supplied with muscular bands, by means of which the sail can be lowered or raised at pleasure. These adaptations of structure are full of interest. Nothing can be more admirable than the sailing-gear of these little creatures. They have to traverse the surface of the ocean amidst all diversities of weather. Paddles alone would not suffice for them. They must be enabled to take advantage of the winds. Sails, therefore, are added, and the mightiest agents in nature are commissioned to speed the little voyagers on their way.

Page 21

We have already mentioned that some of the jelly-fishes possess the power of stinging. Only a few of the larger species, however, seem to be thus endowed; and the name sea-nettle is by no means applicable to the class as a whole. The poisonous fluid which produces the irritating effect on the skin, and no doubt paralyses the creatures upon which the jelly-fish feeds, is secreted by the arms. By means of its poison-bearing tentacles, the soft, gelatinous medusa is more than a match for the armed crustacean and the scale-clad fish. We take from Professor Forbes the following graphic description of one of the stinging species:—'The *Cyanaea capillata* of our seas is a most formidable creature, and the terror of tender-skinned bathers. With its broad, tawny, festooned, and scalloped disk, often a full foot or more across, it flaps its way through the yielding waters, and drags after it a long train of ribbon-like arms, and seemingly interminable tails, marking its course when its body is far away from us. Once tangled in its trailing "hair," the unfortunate who has recklessly ventured across the graceful monster's path too soon writhes in prickly torture. Every struggle but binds the poisonous threads more firmly round his body, and then there is no escape; for when the winder of the fatal net finds his course impeded by the terrified human wrestling in its coils, he, seeking no contest with the mightier biped, casts loose his envenomed arms, and swims away. The amputated weapons severed from their parent body vent vengeance on the cause of their destruction, and sting as fiercely as if their original proprietor itself gave the word of attack.'

We now approach the most extraordinary portion of the history of these creatures. Recent investigations have brought to light the most interesting facts respecting their reproduction and development. It is now known that the young jelly-fish passes through a series of transformations before reaching its perfect state.

At certain seasons, eggs are produced within the body of the parent in appropriate ovaries, where they are retained for a time. They are then transferred to a kind of marsupial pouch, analogous to that of the kangaroo, where their development proceeds. After passing through certain changes here, the egg issues from the maternal pouch as an oval body, clothed with cilia—an animalcule in external aspect, and as unlike its parent as can well be imagined. For awhile the little creature dances freely through the water, and leads a gay, roving life; but at last it prepares to 'settle;' selects a fitting locality; applies one extremity of its body to the surface of stone or weed, and becomes attached. And now another change passes over it. The cilia, no longer needed, disappear. A mouth is developed at the upper extremity of the body, furnished with a number of arms. Gradually this number increases, and the jelly-fish now appears in the disguise of a polype, which feeds voraciously on the members of

Page 22

the class from which it has itself so lately emerged. At this point there is a halt. The medusa remains in its polype state for some months. At the expiration of this term, a strange alteration in its appearance begins to take place. Rings are formed round its body, from ten to fifteen in number. These gradually deepen, until at length it is literally cut up into a number of segments, which rest one upon the other—their upper margins becoming elevated, and divided into eight lobes. It is, in fact, a pile of cup-shaped pieces, very loosely connected together. A little later, these pieces free themselves successively, and the sedate polype disappears in a company of sprightly young medusae. These beings, indeed, still differ in some respects from the adult animal; but the differences gradually vanish, and we have the perfect jelly-fish as the final result of this extraordinary series of transformations.

Similar observations have been made respecting other tribes amongst the lower animals, and some interesting generalisations have been founded upon them, into which, however, it is not our present purpose to enter.

The *Acalephae* are the principal agents concerned in the production of the beautiful phenomena of phosphorescence. The minute species—mere gelatinous specks—-swarm at times by countless myriads in the waters of the ocean, and make its surface glow with ‘vitalised fire.’ The waves, as they curl and break, sparkle and flash forth light, and the track of the moving ship is marked by a lustrous line. ’In the torrid zones between the tropics,’ says Humboldt, ’the ocean simultaneously develops light over a space of many thousand square miles. Here the magical effect of light is owing to the forces of organic nature. Foaming with light, the eddying waves flash in phosphorent sparks over the wide expanse of waters, where every scintillation is the vital manifestation of an invisible animal world.’ Beneath the surface larger forms are seen, brilliantly illuminated, and lighting up the mystic depths of the sea. Fiery balls and flaming ribbons shoot past; and submarine moons shine with a soft and steady light amidst the crowds of meteors. ’While sailing a little south of the Plata on one very dark night,’ says Mr Darwin, ’the sea presented a wonderful and most beautiful spectacle. There was a fresh breeze; and every part of the surface, which during the day is seen as foam, now glowed with a pale light. The vessel drove before her bows two billows of liquid phosphorus, and in her wake she was followed by a milky train. As far as the eye reached, the crest of every wave was bright; and the sky above the, horizon, from the reflected glare of these livid flames, was not so utterly obscure as over the vault of the heavens.’ Even in our own seas very beautiful displays of phosphorescence may be witnessed. On fine summer nights, a soft, tender light plays round the boat as it moves onward, and the oars drop liquid fire. For how much of beauty are we indebted to these living specks of jelly?

Page 23

Of the extreme minuteness of some of the species, an idea may be formed from the fact, that 110,000 might be contained in a cubic foot of water. We can say nothing with certainty as to the cause of the phosphorescence of the medusae, and shall not trouble our readers with mere speculations.

The jelly-fishes furnish us with a striking illustration of the profusion of life in the ocean. Provision has indeed been made for securing in all the realms of our globe the largest possible amount of sentient being, and consequently of happiness. And to each tribe a definite part is assigned—a special mission is intrusted. None can be spared from the economy of nature. The shoals of microscopic medusae store up in their own tissues the minute portions of nutritious matter diffused through the waters, and supply food for the support of higher organisms. All the tribes of animated beings are dependent one upon another. That the greatest may enjoy its existence and fulfil its work, the least must hold its place and discharge its function. They co-operate unconsciously to secure the unity and harmony of a system which is designed to promote alike the interests of each and all of them.

STEEPLE-JACK'S SECRET.

You want me to tell you how it comes to pass that I am able to glide up a steeple like a spider, get astride upon the cross, and pull off my cap to the crowd below, like a gentleman on horseback saluting his acquaintances.[2] You want me to explain on what principle, as you call it, I do this. Well: principle, I suppose, means the rule or law by which a man does what he ought to do; and if so, it is a very good word to use. I will oblige you by explaining my principle, for I am as affable as any man that creeps to his dying day upon the surface of the earth; and I will tell you how it chanced that I found it out: at least I will try, for I am no scholar; and if you wish to understand me, you must have your ears open, and catch a meaning when you can. And this will do you good, whether you make anything out or not. I know fellows that go to the lectures, and come back as empty as they went. But what of that? They think they understand, and thought breeds thought; and when a man's mind is fairly astir, it is odds but something good turns up.

You must know, then, I began the world as a sailor; and I marvel to this day how I ever became anything else. Sailors are the stupidest set in creation. They are mere animals, except in the gift of speech; good, honest, docile animals, perhaps, but dull and narrow. They go round the small circle of their duties like a blind horse in a mill. Their faculties are rocked by the waves and lulled by the winds; and when they come ashore, they can see and understand nothing for the swimming of their heads. Drink makes them feel as if at sea again; and when the tankard is out, they return on board, and exchange one state

Page 24

of stupefaction for another. Well, I *was* a sailor, and the dullest of the tribe. No wonder, for I was at it when a young boy. I was never startled by the sights or sounds of the sea. The moaning of the wind, the rush of the waves, the silence of the calm, were parts of my own existence; and in the wildest storm, my mind never took a wider tack than just to think what the poor devils on shore would do now.

I was a handy lad, however. I could go aloft with any man on board, and never troubled the shrouds in coming down when a rope was within springing distance. But this was instinct or habit: thought was not concerned in it—I had not found the principle. One day, it blew what sailors call great guns; our bulwarks were stove in pieces, and the sea swept the deck, crashing and roaring like a whole herd of tigers. There was something to do at the mast-head; and when the order came through the speaking-trumpet, seeing the men hesitate, I jumped upon the shrouds without thinking twice. But at that moment the ship gave a lurch, and, holding on like grim death, I was buried deep in the waves. Although still clutching the ropes, I had at first an idea that they had parted, and that we were on our way to the bottom together. This could not have lasted above a minute or so; but it seemed to me like a year. I heard every voice that had ever sounded in my ear since childhood; I saw every apparition that had ever glided before my fancy: the Sea-Serpent twisted his folds round my neck, and the keel of the Flying Dutchman grated along my back. When the vessel rose at last, and I rose with her, the waters gurgling in my throat and hissing in my ears, I did not attempt to spring up the shrouds. I looked round in horror for the objects of my excited thoughts; and as I saw another enormous wave advancing till it overhung me, instead of getting out of its reach, which I could easily have done, I kept staring at it as it broke into what seemed innumerable goblin faces and yelling voices over my head. I was down again. My leading thought now was that I would strike out and swim for my life. But when I had just made up my mind to this—which the sailors would have called being washed away—I rose once more to the surface—and struck *up* like a good one! I was at the cross-trees in a breath, and once in safety there, I looked back both with shame and indignation.

When my job was finished, I went higher up in a sort of dogged humour. I went higher, and higher, and higher than I ever ventured before, till I felt the mast bending and quivering in the gale like the point of a fishing-rod; and then I looked down upon the sea. And what, think you, I found there? Why, the goblin faces were small white specks of foam that I could hardly see; and their yelling voices were a smooth, round, swelling tone, that rolled like music through the rigging. The mountain-waves were like a flock of sheep in a meadow, running and gamboling,

Page 25

and lying down and rising up; and in the expanse beyond the neighbourhood of the ship, they were all lying down together, or wandering like shadows over a smooth surface. I felt grand then, I assure you. I looked down, and around, and above, till thoughts that were not the instincts of an animal, came dancing up in my mind, like bubbles upon the face of the sea. And as I returned slowly to the deck, these thoughts grew and multiplied, and began to arrange themselves into a form which I am not scholar enough to describe. But through this new medium, I saw things as they are, not as habit and prejudice make them. I did not fear the waves, and I did not despise them. I humoured the sea as I got down towards the bulwarks, which were still buried every now and then; and so I reached my quarters in safety.

And what has all this to do with it? I will tell you. With the means of doing a thing, nothing is difficult, if you only understand thoroughly the nature of the thing. The obstacles that commonly deter you are not in the thing, but in you; and until you understand this, you will keep gaping and shrinking, and saying, 'It is impossible.' Some folk, when looking out of a three or four storey window, feel as if they were going to fall. This is their own fault, not the fault of the window, for that is just like a parlour window, where they have no sensation of the sort. A man sits peaceably enough on the top of a tall, three-legged stool, and could hitch himself round and round, and then get up and stand upon it erect for half a day, without any risk of falling. Now, a steeple is much more securely fixed than a stool; its top is as broad as a table; and there is nothing to prevent anybody from standing upon it as long as he pleases, if he only will not think he is going to fall. You go up half-a-dozen steps of a ladder without fear, and then persuade yourself you can go no farther; but there is nothing more dangerous in the next half-dozen, so far as they are themselves concerned; nor in the next hundred, nor the next thousand, for that matter. My secret consists in my *knowing* all this, although I feel that I have only described when, not how the knowledge came. Perhaps you, who are book-learned, may be able to make it out, and shew how it is that, when anything occurs to awaken the mind, and enable one to work from knowledge, not habit, he is ten times the man he was. Without this, I should have climbed a mast all my life; but with it, I took to leaping up steeples by means of a kite, in a way that makes many ignorant persons report that I manage it by holding on by the tail.

Page 26

But a man who goes up a steeple must take care how he behaves, for the eyes of the world are upon him. He is not lost in a crowd, where he is seen only by his next neighbours. That man must pull off his cap and be affable; but he must not do even that to extravagance. When the Queen was passing up the Clyde, an American seaman got on the topgallant, and stood on his head. What was that for, I should be glad to know? Suppose her Majesty was coming along Princes Street, just to take the air like a lady, and look into the shop-windows, and I was to go right up to her, and stand on my head —what would she say? I surmise, that she would turn round to her Lord Gold Stick, and order him to give me a knock on the shins. I know she would, for she is a regular trump, and knows how people in every station should behave. I am ashamed of that American: he is a Yankee Noodle!

It may be said, that the Queen has the same advantage as myself—that she is up the steeple; but so is every ordinary bricklayer or emperor. The thing is to be able to look and understand when you *are* up. I once saw a curious sight as I sat with the swallows flying far under my feet. The people did not wander about the street here and there as usual, but hundreds after hundreds of small objects came on in regular array. Then I could see long lines of Lilliputian soldiers marching in the procession, with their tiny bayonets glancing in the sun; and every now and then came up a soft swell of music, feeble but sweet. 'What is all this about?' thought I. 'Are they going to set one of these little creatures over them for a bailie or a king?' And one did march in the middle with a small space round him; 'but perhaps,' thought I again, 'he is only a trumpeter.' Howbeit, the procession at last halted, and gathered, and closed, and stood still for a time; and there was another small swell of the instruments, with a feeble shout from the throng, and then they all stirred, and broke, and dispersed, and disappeared. This was just like the view from the mast-head: it made me feel grand. But when I came down, I had not replaced one prejudice with another. I did not despise the creatures I came among; for they were then of the same size as myself. I pulled off my cap to them, and was affable; only it did give me a queer thought—not a merry one—when I heard that the official they had made that day, on going home to his house, out of the grandeur and the din, was heard to commune with himself, saying: 'And me but a mortal man after all!'

Poetry? No, sirs, I have learned no poetry. I had poetry enough of my own without learning it, and so has everybody else. I once knew a fellow who wrote very good poetry; but few of us understood it. That man lost his labour. It is nature that *makes* poetry; the poet has merely found out the art of stirring it in the hearts of men, where it lies ready-made, like the perfume of a flower. A poet who is not understood only makes a noise; and

Page 27

he is the greatest poet who makes the greatest number of human hearts to leap and tingle. But the fellow I mean piqued himself on not being understood. Like the Yankee Noodle, he cut capers that had no intelligible meaning in them, just to make people stare. As for my own share of poetry, I will tell you when I feel it stirring most. You must know that in the view from a steeple the form of objects is changed only in one direction—that is downwards. The small houses, the narrow streets, the little creatures creeping along them, and the feeble sounds they send up, make me feel grand. But when I turn my eyes to the heavens, I see no shadow of change. The clouds look awful, as if despising my poor attempt at approach; and they glide, and break, and fade, and build themselves up again—all in deep silence—in a way that makes me feel mean. Now this mean feeling is real poetry. The meaner I feel, the grander are they; and when I look long at them, and think long, and then begin to descend to the earth, to mingle with the little creatures who are my fellows, I tremble—but not with fear.

A philosopher, do you say? Fie! don't call names: I am a bricklayer. I know that such distance as human beings can climb to is but a small matter. I see things as they are. I do not fancy that it is more difficult to stand on a steeple than on a stool, or that it is more difficult to hold on by a rope at one height than at another. I observe that men and their affairs, when viewed from a steeple, are very insignificant; but the same insight into things teaches me, when I am among them myself, to pull off my cap and be affable. I know that the things of earth change according to distance, but that the things of heaven are unchangeable. And all I have got further to say is, that I am quite sensible that although when up in the air I am a sign and a marvel to the people below, when down among themselves I am but plain.

STEEPLE JACK.

FOOTNOTES:

[2] See article, 'A Child's Toy,' in No. 418.

FOOD OF THE ARCTIC REGIONS—FRANKLIN'S EXPEDITION.

A certain class of reasoners have argued themselves into the belief that, setting all other considerations aside, Sir John Franklin and his companions must have necessarily perished ere now from *lack of food*. When the four years, or so, of provisions he took out with him for the large crews of the vessels were all consumed, how, say they, would it be possible for so great a number of men to obtain food sufficient to support life in those awfully desolate regions? Let us examine the question a little.

Page 28

Men in very cold climates certainly require a much larger amount of gross animal food than in southern latitudes—varying, of course, with their particular physical constitutions. Now, let us grant—though we do not positively admit it—that, however the provisions taken from England may have been economised, they have, nevertheless, all been consumed a couple of years ago, with the exception of a small quantity of preserved meats, vegetables, lemon-juice, &c. kept in reserve for the sick, or as a resource in the last extremity. As to spirits, we have the testimony of all arctic explorers, that their regular supply and use, so far from being beneficial, is directly the reverse—weakening the constitution, and predisposing it to scurvy and other diseases; and that, consequently, spirits should not be given at all, except on extraordinary occasions, or as a medicine. Sir John Ross, in his search of the North-West Passage in 1829, and following years, early stopped the issue of spirits to his men, and with a most beneficial result. Therefore, the entire consumption of the stock of spirits on board Sir John Franklin's ships must not be regarded as a deficiency of any serious moment.

We shall then presume, that for upwards of two years the adventurers have been wholly dependent on wild animals, birds, and fish for their support. Here it becomes an essential element of consideration to form some approximate idea of the particular locality in which the missing expedition is probably frozen. Captain Penny tracked it up Wellington Strait and thence into Victoria Channel—a newly-discovered lake or sea of unknown extent, which reaches, for anything that can be demonstrated to the contrary, to the pole. It has long been noticed, that the mere latitude in the arctic regions is far from being a certain indication of the degree of cold which might naturally be expected from a nearer approach to the pole. For instance, cold is more intense in some parts of latitude 60 degrees than in 70 or 77 degrees; but this varies very much in different districts of the coast, and in different seasons; and we may remark in passing, that whenever there is a particularly mild winter in Britain, it is the reverse in the arctic regions; and so *vice versa*. The astonishment of Captain Penny on discovering the new polar sea in question was heightened by the fact, that it possessed a much warmer climate than more southern latitudes, and that it swarmed with fish, while its shores were enlivened with animals and flocks of birds. Moreover, *trees* were actually floating about: how they got there, and whence they came, is a mysterious and deeply-interesting problem. Somewhere in this sea Sir John Franklin's ships are undoubtedly at this moment. We say the ships are; for we do not for one moment believe that they have been sunk or annihilated. It is not very likely that any icebergs of great magnitude would be tossing about this inland sea in the summer season—in

Page 29

winter its waters would be frozen—and in navigating it, the ships would, under their experienced and judicious commander, pursue their unknown way with extreme caution and prudence. It is more probable that they were at length fast frozen up in some inlet, or that small floating fields of ice have conglomerated around them, and bound them in icy fetters to the mainland. Or it may be that Franklin sailed slowly along this mystic polar sea, until he reached its extremity and could get no farther; and that extremity would actually seem to be towards the Siberian coasts. One thing is quite certain—namely, that so far as Captain Penny's people were able to penetrate the channel—several hundred miles—there was no indication whatever that up to that point Franklin had met with any serious calamity, or that he had suffered from a fatal deficiency of the necessaries of life.

Wherever his exact position may be, there is every reason to suppose that the country around him produces a supply of food at least equal to any other part of the arctic regions; and probably much more than equal, owing to the greater mildness of the climate. But we will only base our opinion on the fair average supply of food obtainable in the arctic regions generally; and now let us see what result we shall fairly arrive at.

The first consideration that strikes us, is the fact that all over these icy regions isolated tribes of natives are to be met with; and they do not exist in a starved and almost famished condition, like the miserable dwellers in Terra del Fuego, but in absolute abundance—such as it is. When Sir John Ross's ship was frozen up during the remarkably severe winter of 1829-30, in latitude 69 degrees 58 minutes, and longitude 90 degrees, he made the following remarks concerning a tribe of Esquimaux in his vicinity, which we quote as being peculiarly applicable to our view of the subject:—'It was for philosophers to interest themselves in speculating on a horde so small and so secluded, occupying so apparently hopeless a country—so barren, so wild, and so repulsive, and yet enjoying the most perfect vigour, the most *well-fed health*, and all else that here constitutes not merely wealth, but the opulence of luxury, since they were as amply furnished with provisions as with every other thing that could be here necessary to their wants.'

'Yes,' exclaims our friend the reasoner, 'but the constitution of an Esquimaux is peculiarly adapted to the climate and food: what he enjoys would poison a European; and he also possesses skill to capture wild animals and fish, which the civilised man cannot exercise.' Is this true? We answer to the first objection: only partially true; and the second, we utterly deny. The constitution of vigorous men—and all Franklin's crew were fine, picked young fellows—has a marvellous adaptability. It is incredible how soon a man becomes reconciled to, and healthful under, a totally different diet from that to which he has

Page 30

been all his life accustomed, so long as that change is suitable to his new home. We ourselves have personally experienced this to some extent, and were quite amazed at the rapid and easy way in which nature enabled us to enjoy and thrive on food at which our stomach would have revolted in England or any southern land. In every country in the world, 'from Indus to the pole,' the food eaten by the natives is that which is incomparably best suited to the climate. In the frozen regions, and every cold country, the best of all nourishment is that which contains a large proportion of fat and oil. In Britain, we read with disgust of the Greenlander eagerly swallowing whale-oil and blubber; but in his country, it is precisely what is best adapted to sustain vital energy. Europeans in the position of Franklin's crew would become acclimatised, and gradually accustomed to the food of the natives, even before their own provisions were exhausted; and after that, we may be very sure their appetites would lose all delicacy, and they would necessarily and easily conform to the usages, as regards food, of the natives around them. We may strengthen our opinion by the direct and decisive testimony of Sir John Boss himself, who says: 'I have little doubt, indeed, that many of the unhappy men who have perished from wintering in these climates, and whose histories are well known, might have been saved had they conformed, as is so generally prudent, to the usages and the experience of the natives.' Undoubtedly they might!

Secondly, as to the Europeans being unable to capture the beasts, birds, and fishes so dexterously as the natives, we have reason to know that the reverse is the case. It is true that the latter know the habits and haunts of wild creatures by long experience, and also know the best way to capture some of them; but a very little communication with natives enables the European to learn the secret; and he soon far excels his simple instructors in the art, being aided by vastly superior reasoning faculties, and also by incomparably better appliances for the chase. Firearms for shooting beasts and birds, and seines for catching fish, render the Esquimaux spears, and arrows, and traps mere children's toys in comparison. Moreover, a ship is never frozen up many weeks, before some wandering tribe is sure to visit it; and all navigators have found the natives a mild, friendly, grateful people, with fewer vices than almost any other savages in the World. They will thankfully barter as many salmon as will feed a ship's crew one day for a file or two, or needles, or a tin-canister, or piece of old iron-hoop, or any trifling article of hardware; and so long as the vessel remains, they and other tribes of their kindred will frequently visit it, and bring animals and fish to barter for what is literally almost valueless to European adventurers.

Page 31

An important consideration, is the *variety* of food obtainable in the arctic regions. We need not particularly classify the creatures found in the two seasons of summer and winter, but may enumerate the principal together. Of animals fit for food are musk-oxen, bears, reindeer, hares, foxes, &c. Of fish, there is considerable variety, salmon and trout being the chief and never-failing supply. Of birds, there are ducks, geese, cranes, ptarmigan, grouse, plovers, partridges, sand-larks, shear-waters, gannets, gulls, mollemokes, dovekies, and a score of other species. We personally know that the flesh of bears, reindeer, and some of the other animals, is most excellent: we have partaken of them with hearty relish. As to foxes, Ross informs us that, although his men did not like them at first, they eventually preferred fox-flesh to any other meat! And as to such birds as gannets and shear-waters, which are generally condemned as unpalatable, on account of their fishy taste, we would observe that the rancid flavour exists only in the fat. Separate it, and, as we ourselves can testify, the flesh of these birds is little inferior to that of the domestic pigeon, when either boiled or roasted. The majority of the creatures named may be captured in considerable numbers, in their several seasons, with only ordinary skill. But necessity sharpens the faculties of men to an inconceivable degree; and when the life of a crew depends on their success in the chase, they will speedily become expert hunters. It is true that the wild animals habitually existing in a small tract of country may soon be thinned, if not altogether exterminated; but bears, foxes, &c. continue to visit it with little average diminution in numbers. The fish never fail. The quantity of salmon is said to be immense, and they can be preserved in stock a very long period by being simply buried in snow-pits. The birds also regularly make their periodical appearance. Besides, parties of hunters would be despatched to scour the country at considerable distances, and their skill and success would improve with each coming season. In regard to fuel, the Esquimaux plan of burning the oil and blubber of seals, the fat of bears, &c. would be quite effective. In the brief but fervid summer season, every inch of ground is covered with intensely green verdure, and even with flowers; and there is a great variety of wild plants, including abundance of Angelica, sorrel, and scurvy-grass, also lichens and mosses, all of antiscorbutic qualities. We have ourselves seen the Laplanders eat great quantities of the sorrel-grass; and the Nordlanders told us that they boiled it in lieu of greens at table. These vegetables might be gathered each summer, and preserved for winter use.

Page 32

We repeat, that since the poor, ignorant natives live in rude abundance, and lack nothing for mere animal enjoyment of life, it is impossible to doubt that Europeans, who in intelligence and resources are a superior race of beings, can fail to participate equally in all things which the Creator has provided for the support of man in this extremity of the habitable globe; also let it be borne in mind, that half-a-dozen Esquimaux devour almost as much food every day as will suffice for a ship's crew. Sir John Ross declares, that if they only ate moderately, any given district would support 'double their number, and with scarcely the hazard of want.' He says that an Esquimaux eats twenty pounds of flesh and oil a day, and, in fact, never ceases from devouring until compelled to desist from sheer repletion. Speaking of one meal taken in their company, we have this edifying observation:—'While we found that one salmon and half of another were more than enough for all us English, these voracious animals (the Esquimaux) had devoured two each. At this rate of feeding, it is not wonderful that their whole time is occupied in procuring food: each man had eaten fourteen pounds of this raw salmon, and it was probably but a luncheon after all, of a superfluous meal for the sake of our society!.... The glutton bear—scandalised as it may be by its name—might even be deemed a creature of moderate appetite in comparison: with their human reason in addition, these people, could they always command the means, would doubtless outrival a glutton and a boa-constrictor together.'

Finally, we expressly deny that the Esquimaux can or do bear extreme cold and privations better than Englishmen who have been a season or two in their country. Arctic explorers testify that the natives always appeared to suffer from cold quite as much as Europeans; and what little we have ourselves seen of northern countries, induces us to give ample credence to this.

The conclusion, then, at which we arrive is this: that under such experienced and energetic leaders as Sir John Franklin and his chief officers, the gallant crews of the missing expedition have *not* perished for lack of food, and will be enabled, if God so wills, to support life for years to come. Great, indeed, their sufferings must be; for civilised men do not merely eat to sleep, and sleep to eat, like the Esquimaux; but they will be upheld under every suffering by a firm conviction that their countrymen are making almost superhuman exertions to rescue them from their fearful isolation. What the final issue will be, is known only to Him who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and can, if He deems meet, provide a way of deliverance when hope itself has died in every breast. Our individual opinion is, that it is not improbable the lost crews will, sooner or later, achieve their own deliverance by arriving at some coast whence they may be taken off, even as Ross was, after sojourning during four years of unparalleled severity. But it is the bounden duty of our country never to relax its efforts to save Franklin, until there is an absolute certainty that all further human exertions are in vain.

Page 33

[We give the above as a paper on the food of the arctic regions, and can only hope that our correspondent's cheering views as to the fate of the missing expedition may prove to be correct.—ED.]

THE ARTIST'S SACRIFICE.

On a cold evening in January—one of those dark and gloomy evenings which fill one with sadness—there sat watching by the bed of a sick man, in a little room on the fifth floor, a woman of about forty, and two pretty children—a boy of twelve and a little girl of eight. The exquisite neatness of the room almost concealed its wretchedness: everything announced order and economy, but at the same time great poverty. A painted wooden bedstead, covered with coarse but clean calico sheets, blue calico curtains, four chairs, a straw arm-chair, a high desk of dark wood, with a few books and boxes placed on shelves, composed the entire furniture of the room. And yet the man who lay on that wretched bed, whose pallid cheek, and harsh, incessant cough, foretold the approach of death, was one of the brightest ornaments of our literature. His historical works had won for him a European celebrity, his writings having been translated into all the modern languages; yet he had always remained poor, because his devotion to science had prevented him from devoting a sufficient portion of his time to productive labour.

An unfinished piece of costly embroidery thrown on a little stand near the bed, another piece of a less costly kind, but yet too luxurious to be intended for the use of this poor family, shewed that his wife and daughter—this gentle child whose large dark eyes were so full of sadness—endeavoured by the work of their hands to make up for the unproductiveness of his efforts. The sick man slept, and the mother, taking away the lamp and the pieces of embroidery, went with her children into the adjoining room, which served both as antechamber and dining-room: she seated herself at the table, and took up her work with a sad and abstracted air; then observing her little daughter doing the same thing cheerfully, and her son industriously colouring some prints destined for a book of fashions, she embraced them; and raising her tearful eyes towards heaven, she seemed to be thanking the Almighty, and in the midst of her affliction, to be filled with gratitude to Him who had blessed her with such children.

Soon after, a gentle ring was heard at the door, and M. Raymond, a young doctor, with a frank, pleasing countenance, entered and inquired for the invalid. 'Just the same, doctor,' said Mme G——.

The young man went into the next room, and gazed for some moments attentively on the sleeper, whilst the poor wife fixed her eyes on the doctor's countenance, and seemed there to read her fate.

‘Is there no hope, doctor?’ she asked in a choking voice, as she conducted him to the other room. The doctor was silent, and the afflicted mother embraced her children and wept. After a pause she said: ’There is one idea which haunts me continually: I should wish so much to have my husband’s likeness. Do you know of any generous and clever artist, doctor? Oh, how much this would add to the many obligations you have already laid me under!’

Page 34

‘Unfortunately, I am not acquainted with a single artist,’ replied the young doctor.

‘I must then renounce this desire,’ said Mme G—— sighing.

The next morning Henry—so the little boy was called—having assisted his mother and his sister Marie in their household labours, dressed himself carefully, and, as it was a holiday, asked leave to go out.

‘Go, my child,’ said his mother; ’go and breathe a little fresh air: your continual work is injurious to you.’

The boy kissed his father’s wasted hand, embraced his mother and sister, and went out, at once sad and pleased. When he reached the street he hesitated for a moment, then directed his steps towards the drawing-school where he attended every day: he entered, and rung at the door of the apartment belonging to the professor who directed this academy. A servant opened the door, and conducted him into an elegantly-furnished breakfast-room; for the professor was one of the richest and most distinguished painters of the day. He was breakfasting alone with his wife, when Henry entered.

‘There, my dear,’ He said to her, as he perceived Henry; ’there is the cleverest pupil in the academy. This little fellow really promises to do me great credit one day. Well, my little friend, what do you wish to say to me?’

’Sir, my father is very ill—the doctor fears that he may die: poor mamma, who is very fond of papa, wishes to have his portrait. Would you, sir, be kind enough to take it? O do not, pray, sir, do not refuse me!’ said Henry, whose tearful eyes were fixed imploringly on the artist.

‘Impossible, Henry—impossible!’ replied the painter. ’I am paid three thousand francs for every portrait I paint, and I have five or six at present to finish.’

‘But, my dear,’ interposed his wife, ’it seems to me that this portrait would take you but little time: think of the poor mother, whose husband will so soon be lost to her for ever.’

’It grieves me to refuse you, my dear; but you know that my battle-piece, which is destined for Versailles, must be sent to the Louvre in a fortnight, for I cannot miss the Exposition this year. But stay, my little friend, I will give you the address of several of my pupils: tell them I sent you, and you will certainly find some one of them who will do what you wish. Good-morning, Henry!’

‘Good-by, my little friend,’ added the lady. ’I hope you may be successful.’ The boy took his leave with a bursting heart.

Henry wandered through the gardens of the Luxembourg, debating with himself if he should apply to the young artists whose addresses he held in his hand. Fearing that his new efforts might be equally unsuccessful, he was trying to nerve himself to encounter fresh refusals, when he was accosted by a boy of his own age, his fellow-student at the drawing-school. Jules proposed that they should walk together; then observing Henry's sadness, he asked him the cause. Henry told him of his mother's desire; their master's refusal to take the portrait; and of his own dislike to apply to those young artists, who were strangers to him.

Page 35

‘Come with me,’ cried Jules, when his friend had ceased speaking. ’My sister is also an artist: she has always taken care of me, for our father and mother died when we were both very young. She is so kind and so fond of me that I am very sure she will not refuse.’

The two boys traversed the Avenue de l’Observatoire, the merry, joyous face of the one contrasting with the sadness and anxiety of the other. When they got to the end of the avenue they entered the Rue de l’Ouest, and went into a quiet-looking house, up to the fourth storey of which Jules mounted with rapid steps, dragging poor Henry with him. He tapped gaily at a little door, which a young servant opened: he passed through the antechamber, and the two boys found themselves in the presence of Emily d’Orbe, the sister of Jules.

She appeared to be about twenty-five: she was not tall, and her face was rather pleasing than handsome; yet her whole appearance indicated cultivation and amiability. Her dress was simple, but exquisitely neat; her gown of brown stuff fitted well to her graceful figure; her linen cuffs and collar were of a snowy whiteness; her hair was parted in front, and fastened up behind *a l’antique*: but she wore no ribbon, no ornament—nothing but what was necessary. The furniture of the room, which served at the same time as a sitting-room and studio, was equally simple: a little divan, some chairs and two arm-chairs covered with gray cloth, a round table, a black marble time-piece of the simplest form; two engravings, the ‘Spasimo di Sicilia’ and the ‘Three Maries,’ alone ornamented the walls; green blinds were placed over the windows, not for ornament, but to moderate the light, according to the desire of the artist; finally, three easels, on which rested some unfinished portraits, and a large painting representing Anna Boleyn embracing her daughter before going to execution.

When he entered, little Jules went first to embrace his sister; she tenderly returned his caresses, then said to him in a gentle voice, as she returned to her easel: ’Now, my dear child, let me go on with my painting;’ not, however, without addressing a friendly ‘Good-morning’ to Henry, who she thought had come to play with Jules.

Henry had been looking at the unfinished pictures with a sort of terror, because they appeared to him as obstacles between him and his request. He dared not speak, fearing to hear again the terrible word ‘impossible!’ and he was going away, when Jules took him by the hand and drew him towards Emily. ‘Sister,’ he said, ’I have brought my friend Henry to see you; he wishes to ask you something; do speak to him.’

‘Jules,’ she replied, ’let me paint; you know I have very little time. You are playing the spoiled child: you abuse my indulgence.’

’Indeed, Emily, I am not jesting; you must really speak to Henry. If you knew how unhappy he is!’

Page 36

Mlle d'Orbe, raising her eyes to the boy, was struck with his pale and anxious face, and said to him in a kind voice, as she continued her painting: 'Forgive my rudeness, my little friend; this picture is to be sent to the Exposition, and I have not a moment to lose, because, both for my brother's sake and my own, I wish it to do me credit. But speak, my child; speak without fear, and be assured that I will not refuse you anything that is in the power of a poor artist.'

Henry, regaining a little courage, told her what he desired: then Jules having related his friend's visit to their master, Henry added: 'But I see very well, mademoiselle, that you cannot do this portrait either, and I am sorry to have disturbed you.'

In the meantime little Jules had been kissing his sister, and caressing her soft hair, entreating her not to refuse his little friend's request. Mlle d'Orbe was painting Anna Boleyn: she stopped her work; a struggle seemed to arise in the depth of her heart, while she looked affectionately on the children. She, however, soon laid aside her pallett, and casting one glance of regret on her picture: 'I will take your father's portrait,' she said to Henry—'that man of sorrow, and of genius. Your mother's wish shall be fulfilled.'

She had scarcely uttered these words when a lady entered the room. She was young, pretty, and richly dressed. Having announced her name, she asked Mlle d'Orbe to take her portrait, on the express condition that it should be finished in time to be placed in the Exposition.

'It is impossible for me to have this honour, madame,' replied the artist: 'I have a picture to finish, and I have just promised to do a portrait to which I must give all my spare time.'

'You would have been well paid for my portrait, and my name in the catalogue would have made yours known,' added the young countess.

Mlle d'Orbe only replied by a bow; and the lady had scarcely withdrawn, when taking her bonnet and shawl, the young artist embraced her brother, took Henry by the hand, and said to him: 'Bring me to your mother, my child.'

Henry flew rather than walked; Mlle d'Orbe could with difficulty keep up with him. Both ascended to the fifth storey in the house in the Rue Descartes, where this poor family lived. When they reached the door, Henry tapped softly at it. Mme G—— opened it.

'Mamma,' said the boy, trembling with emotion, 'this lady is an artist: she is come to take papa's portrait.' The poor woman, who had not hoped for such an unexpected happiness, wept as she pressed to her lips the hands of Mlle d'Orbe, and could not find words to express her gratitude.

The portrait was commenced at once; and the young artist worked with zeal and devotion, for her admiration of the gifted and unfortunate man was intense. She resolved to make the piece valuable as a work of art, for posterity might one day demand the portrait of this gifted man, and her duty as a painter was to represent him in his noblest aspect.

Page 37

Long sittings fatigued the invalid; so it was resolved to take two each day, and the young artist came regularly twice every day. As by degrees the strength of the sick man declined, the portrait advanced. At length, at the end of twelve days, it was finished: this was about a week before the death of M. G——.

At the same time that she was painting this portrait, Mlle d'Orbe worked with ardour on her large painting, always hoping to have it ready in time. This hope did not fail her until some days before the 1st of February. There was but a week longer to work: and this year she must abandon the idea of sending to the Exposition.

Some artists who had seen her picture had encouraged her very much; she could count, in their opinion, on brilliant success. This she desired with all her heart: first, from that noble thirst of glory which God has implanted in the souls of artists; and, secondly, from the influence it would have on the prospects of her little Jules, whom she loved with a mother's tenderness, and whom she wished to be able to endow with all the treasures of education. This disappointment, these long hours of toil, rendered so vain at the very moment when she looked forward to receive her reward, so depressed the young artist, that she became dangerously ill.

Mlle d'Orbe had very few friends, as she was an orphan, and lived in great retirement; she found herself therefore completely left to the care of her young attendant. When Jules met Henry at the drawing-school he told him of his sister's illness: Henry informed his mother, and Mme G—— immediately hastened to Mlle d'Orbe, whom she found in the delirium of a fever from which she had been suffering for some days. The servant said that her mistress had refused to send for a doctor, pretending that her illness did not signify. Mme G——, terrified at the state of her young friend, went out and soon returned with Dr Raymond.

The invalid was delirious: she unceasingly repeated the words—'portrait,' 'Anna Boleyn,' 'exposition,' 'fortune,' 'disappointed hopes;' which plainly indicated the cause of her illness, and brought tears into the eyes of Mme G——. 'Alas!' she said, 'it is on my account she suffers: I am the cause of her not finishing her picture. Doctor, I am very unfortunate.'

'All may be repaired,' replied the doctor: 'if you will promise to nurse the invalid, I will answer for her recovery.'

In fact, Mme G—— never left the sick-bed of Mlle d'Orbe. The doctor visited her twice in the day, and their united care soon restored the health of the interesting artist.

Page 38

Mademoiselle was scarcely convalescent when she went to the Exposition of paintings at the Louvre, of which she had heard nothing—the doctor and Mme G—— having, as she thought, avoided touching on a subject which might pain her. She passed alone through the galleries, crowded with distinguished artists and elegantly-dressed ladies, saying to herself that perhaps her picture would have been as good as many which attracted the admiration of the crowd. She was thus walking sadly on, looking at the spot where she had hoped to have seen her Anna Boleyn, when she found herself stopped by a group of artists. They were unanimous in their praises. 'This is the best portrait in the Exposition,' said one. 'A celebrated engraver is about to buy from the artist the right to engrave this portrait for the new edition of the author's works,' said another. 'We are very fortunate in having so faithful a likeness of so distinguished a writer as M. G——.'

At this name Mlle d'Orbe raised her eyes, and recognised her own work! Pale, trembling with emotion, the young artist was obliged to lean on the rail for support; then opening the catalogue, she read her name as if in a dream, and remained for some time to enjoy the pleasure of hearing the praises of her genius.

When the Exposition closed she hastened to Mme G——, and heard that it was Dr Raymond who had conceived the happy idea of sending the portrait to the Louvre. 'My only merit is the separating myself for a time from a picture which is my greatest consolation,' added Mme G——.

From this day the young artist became the friend of the poor widow, whose prospects soon brightened. Through the influence of some of the friends of her lost husband, she obtained a pension from government—a merited but tardy reward! The two ladies lived near each other, and spent their evenings together. Henry and Jules played and studied together. Marie read aloud, while her mother and Mlle d'Orbe worked. Dr Raymond sometimes shared in this pleasant intercourse. He had loved the young artist from the day he had seen her renounce so much to do a generous action; but, an orphan like herself, and with no fortune but his profession, he feared to be rejected if he offered her his hand. It was therefore Mme G—— who charged herself with pleading his suit with the young artist.

Mlle d'Orbe felt a lively gratitude towards the young doctor for the care and solicitude he had shewn during her illness, and for sending her portrait to the Exposition. Thanks to him, she had become known; commissions arrived in numbers, a brilliant future opened before her and Jules. Mme G—— had, then, a favourable answer to give to her young friend, who soon became the husband of the interesting artist whose generous sacrifice had been the foundation of her happiness.

ACCIDENTS AT SEA.

Page 39

On this subject an interesting return to an order of the House of Commons was lately made by the management of Lloyd's, and has caused some discussion in the public prints. The return applies to the four years ending December 1850; and during this period, it appears that the number of collisions, wrecks, and other accidents at sea, was 13,510; being at the rate of 3377 per annum, 9 per diem, or 1 for every 2-3/4 hours. Commenting on these details, the *Times* observes, that 'it must not be understood that every accident implies a total wreck, with the loss of all hands. If a ship carries away any of her important spars, or, on entering her port, strikes heavily against a pier, whereby serious damage is occasioned, the accident is duly registered in this pithy chronicle of Lloyd's. Nevertheless, as we glance up and down the columns, it is no exaggeration to say, that two-thirds of the accidents recorded are of the most serious description. We are unable to say to what degree this register of Lloyd's can be accepted as a fair index to the tragedies which are of such hourly occurrence upon the surface of the ocean. If all were known, we fear that this average of accident or wreck every 2-3/4 hours would be fearfully increased. The truth must he told. The incapacity of too many of the masters in the British mercantile marine has been the pregnant cause of loss to their owners and death to their crews. Men scarcely competent to take the responsibility of an ordinary day's work, or, if competent, of notoriously intemperate habits, were placed in command of sea-going ships through the parsimony or nepotism of the owners. The result of the educational clauses in the Mercantile Marine Bill of last session, will no doubt be to provide a much larger body of well-trained men, from among whom our shipowners can select the most competent persons for command.'

These observations called forth a reply from the President of the Seaman's Association, vindicating mariners from the charges so brought against them. A few passages from the letter of this respondent are worth noticing. 'Are British sailors,' he asks, 'really so bad as you represent? If so, then you condemn by implication the seamen of the United States, for they are also Anglo-Saxon. Let me direct your attention to a few facts bearing out this assertion. The desertions from the royal navy in 1846 (see Parliamentary Returns) were 2382; this is about 1 out of every 14 seamen annually. Nearly the whole of these men keep to the United States' service. Again, the desertions from Quebec in consequence of three things—first, low wages; secondly, register-tickets; thirdly, the payment of 1s., exacted from every man on shipment and discharge, to a shipping office, to uphold the Mercantile Marine Act, for which the men receive no value—were upwards of 1400 this season; and about 4000 from all other ports. From American statistics, it is proved that two-thirds of the seamen sailing in ships of the United States are British subjects; and if American ships are preferred to British, it must be because they are manned by our fine spirited tars. A large proportion of their ships are commanded by Englishmen.'

Page 40

An effort, as is well known, has lately been made to elevate the character of British seamen, by means of registries under the Mercantile Marine Act, and the issuing of tickets, which must be produced by sailors. Our belief is, that much of the legislation on this subject has been injurious; as any law must be which attempts to regulate the bargains of employers and employed. It may be proper for master-mariners to be subjected to some kind of test of ability, but it appears to us that it would be equally beneficial to encourage young men to enter the profession. To pay well is, after all, the true way to get good servants. Why do British sailors desert to the American service? Because they are better paid. And having so deserted, they unfortunately cannot again procure employment under the British flag without producing a register-ticket, which, of course, they cannot do. Thus, picked men are permanently lost to the British navy. Besides offering higher wages, it might have proved extremely advantageous to open nautical schools for youths desirous of going to sea. According to existing arrangements, the sailor—like the French workman with his *livret*—is considered to be a child not fit to take care of himself; and the law interposes to say he shall do this, and do that, under a penalty for neglect of its provisions. This is to keep sailors in a state of perpetual tutelage; and being at variance with the principles of civil liberty, it is to be feared that the practice can lead to nothing but mischief.

As to wrecks, the cause of the chief disasters seems as often to be imperfect construction of vessels and imperfect stowage, as anything else; while loss of life for the greater part arises from a deficiency of boats, and the means of readily unshipping them. As victims of ill-made, badly-found, and rotten vessels, not to speak of land-sharks and sea-sharks—as the sufferers in life and limb when shippers and brokers may be actually benefiting from casualties—sailors, as a class, merit public sympathy instead of reproach or discouragement.

‘VISIT TO AN ENGLISH MONASTERY.’

We have received a letter from the Abbot of Mount St Bernard’s, pointing out, in courteous terms, several inaccuracies in the article which appeared with the above title in No. 413 of this Journal. Meat, it seems, is only ‘strictly prohibited’ to the healthy: it is allowed to the sick and infirm when prescribed by the doctor. Every night before compline the brethren meet to hear some pious lecture read, not to confess their thoughts to the superior. Instead of one meal a day, as stated by our correspondent, the lay-brethren, who are employed chiefly in manual labour, have at least two meals every day during the whole year, excepting fast-days; and the choir-brethren two meals a day during the summer, and one during the winter. To the latter, when they are of a weakly constitution, a collation is allowed in addition. The greatest error of all, however, appears to us to exist in the estimate formed of the abbot, who, judging by his correspondence, is evidently as informed and intelligent a person as is usually met with out of the monastic circle.

Page 41

AMERICAN HOMAGE TO SHAKSPEARE AND MRS COWDEN CLARKE.

There is a work to which many of our readers are probably strangers, but which has roused the enthusiasm of the New World. It is a work of immense labour, which in writing and correcting proofs occupied its author sixteen years. This author is a lady, and the production on which she bestowed so much unwearied patience and perseverance, during a space of time equivalent in most cases to an entire literary life, is a Concordance to Shakspeare. 'Her work,' says Mr Webster, the American Secretary of State, 'is a perfect wonder, surprisingly full and accurate, and exhibiting proof of unexampled labour and patience. She has treasured up every word of Shakspeare, as if he were her lover, and she were his.' But Mr Webster and his countrymen were not satisfied even with such generous praise: they determined to present Mrs Clarke with an enduring testimonial of their gratitude and respect; and, accordingly, the ceremony has recently been performed by Mr Abbot Laurence, the American minister. The list of subscribers, we are told, 'contains names from Maine to Mexico. Even the far, far west, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Illinois, have contributed; whilst Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and South Carolina, swell the list of the most distinguished American literati, embracing a fair sprinkling of fair ladies. There is even a subscriber from the shores of the Pacific.' The testimonial is an elaborately carved library chair, bearing on the top rail a mask of Shakspeare, copied in ivory from the Stratford bust, wreathed with oak-leaves and laurel, and shaded by the wings of two of 'Avon's swans.' Although an elegant and costly gift, however, in itself, there is attached to this testimonial a meaning and a value which we trust will make its due impression in the native land of Shakspeare—in that mother-country to which the eyes of her western descendants are thus turned in the lofty sympathy which binds together throughout the whole world the children and worshippers of genius.

TO WORDSWORTH.

The voice of Nature in her changeful moods
Breathes o'er the solemn waters as they flow,
And 'mid the wavings of the ancient woods
Murmurs, now filled with joy, now sad and low.
Thou gentle poet, she hath tuned thy mind
To deep accordance with the harmony
That floats above the mountain summits free—
A concert of Creation on the wind.
And thy calm strains are breathed as though the dove
And nightingale had given thee for thy dower
The soul of music and the heart of love;
And with a holy, tranquillising power

They fall upon the spirit, like a gleam
Of quiet star-light on a troubled stream.
M.A. HOARE.

Page 42

INTELLECT DEVELOPED BY LABOUR.

Are labour and self-culture irreconcilable to each other? In the first place, we have seen that a man, in the midst of labour, may and ought to give himself to the most important improvements, that he may cultivate his sense of justice, his benevolence, and the desire of perfection. Toil is the school for these high principles; and we have here a strong presumption that, in other respects, it does not necessarily blight the soul. Next, we have seen that the most fruitful sources of truth and wisdom are not books, precious as they are, but experience and observation; and these belong to all conditions. It is another important consideration, that almost all labour demands intellectual activity, and is best carried on by those who invigorate their minds; so that the two interests, toil and self-culture, are friends to each other. It is mind, after all, which does the work of the world, so that the more there is of mind, the more work will be accomplished. A man, in proportion as he is intelligent, makes a given force accomplish a greater task; makes skill take the place of muscle, and with less labour, gives a better product. Make men intelligent, and they become inventive; they find shorter processes. Their knowledge of nature helps them to turn its laws to account, to understand the substances on which they work, and to seize on useful hints, which experience continually furnishes. It is among workmen that some of the most useful machines have been contrived. Spread education, and as the history of this country shews, there will be no bounds to useful invention.—*Channing.*

* * * * *

Printed and Published by W. and K. CHAMBERS, High Street, Edinburgh. Also sold by W.S. ORR, Amen Corner, London; D.N. CHAMBERS, 55 West Nile Street, Glasgow; and J. M'GLASHAN, 50 Upper Sackville Street, Dublin.—Advertisements for Monthly Parts are requested to be sent to MAXWELL & Co., 31 Nicholas Lane, Lombard Street, London, to whom all applications respecting their insertion must be made.