Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 432 eBook

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THE MEDIAEVAL MANIA.

History is said to be a series of reactions. Society, like a pendulum, first drives one way, and then swings back in the opposite direction. At present, we may be said to be returning at full speed towards a taste for everything old, neglected, and for ages despised. Science and refinement have had their day, and now rude nature and the elemental are to be in the ascendant. In our boyhood, we learned the Roman alphabet; but youngsters now had need to add a knowledge of black-letter, which is rapidly getting back into fashion. Perfection is only to be found in the darkness and ignorance of the middle ages.

It is proper, no doubt, to get rid of what is tame and spiritless in art; and it must be owned that nearly everything that was done in architecture and decoration during the Georgian era was detestable. But it is one thing to reform, and another to revolutionise. Let us by all means go to nature for instruction; but nature under the exercise of cultivated feeling—selecting what tends to ennoble and refine, not that which degrades and sends us back to forms and ideas totally out of place in the nineteenth century, and which, for that very reason, can have nothing but a temporary reign, to be followed in the succeeding age by a violent reaction.

On a former occasion, we drew attention to this tendency towards mediaevalism as regards ornamental design, and took the Great Exhibition to witness the fact. We have also pointed to that strange phenomenon, the rise anew of monastic institutions among us, long after their object is accomplished, giving a spectre-like expression to an obsolete idea; we have exposed, likewise, the inclination of the working-classes to trust to the protection, and, on every emergency, claim as a matter of right the aid of the wealthy, thus wilfully and deliberately returning to the condition of serfdom: we have now to trace the mediaeval mania in a department where, notwithstanding all this ominous conjunction of symptoms, its appearance is truly surprising—in the department of high art in painting.

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Our readers need not fear that we are about to inflict on them a scientific dissertation. All we wish to do, is to explain to them a word, with the meaning of which many of them are very imperfectly acquainted, and by the mere explanation, to enable them to determine upon its claims to designate—not merely *a* school, but *the* school of art, destined, if founded in truth and nature, to overturn every other. This word—Pre-Raphaelitism—is taken from the name of one of the Italian masters, and it is necessary, in order to understand the question, to ascertain what were the circumstances and the genius that have thus set him up as a landmark in the history of art.

After the fall of the Western Empire, the fine arts were lost, and their productions literally buried in the wreck. The minds of the composite nations that arose in Europe had no guide. Men were left to their own instincts, only faintly aided by the ruins and traditions of degenerate Rome; and each series of countries had its own style of art, framed or adopted by the genius of the people. During the middle ages, the style most general in Northern Europe was the Gothic; and by that term the whole system of art during the period is popularly known in England. The state of painting, under the Gothic regime, may be seen in the stained windows of the cathedrals; in which strong outlines and bright colours are laid down without any reference to chiaro-scuro, or the scientific arrangement of light and shadow. This seems a natural stage in art-development, and at the same moment it was seen in equal perfection in China and Europe. In the former region, the people are now beginning to advance a step beyond, through their imitation of English pictures; although, but a few years ago, they burst into fits of laughter on seeing the shadow of the nose in a portrait. In Europe, a gigantic and almost sudden stride was made, towards the close of the fifteenth century, under an influence from which the Chinese were debarred, and the nature of which we shall presently explain.

Let us first, however, just notice, that the charms of gaudy inartistic colouring frequently exercise a powerful sway even over minds familiar with better things; although that sway is always indicative of the decay of intellectual or moral freshness. Thus, it is remarked by an old Greek author (Dionysius of Halicarnassus), that the perfection to which painting had been brought by Apelles, had degenerated under Augustus; the painters being so much fascinated by the new art of colouring, that they neglected design, and preferred the brilliant or gaudy to the solid, and counterfeit to natural beauty. What this ‘perfection’ of Apelles was, we cannot now tell; but the probability is, that it existed only in design, and that the union of this with artistic colouring was reserved for the modern masters.

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Before these masters appeared, and before the influence we are about to refer to was felt in Europe, some efforts were made by unassisted genius to rise beyond the conventionalities of the time; in the latter half of the thirteenth century, Cimabue already surpassed his modern Greek preceptors; and his disciple Giotto was considered so natural and original, that his style could not be referred to any existing school, but was called the *maniera di Giotto*. 'Instead of the harsh outline,' says Vasari, 'circumscribing the whole figure, the glaring eyes, the pointed hands and feet, and all the defects arising from a total want of shadow, the figures of Giotto exhibit a better attitude; the heads have an air of life and freedom, the drapery is more natural, and there are even some attempts at fore-shortening the limbs.' All this, however, although a decided improvement on mediaeval art, was rude and imperfect—it was only the first faint dawn of a better light. 'As yet,' to use the words of Roscoe, 'the characters rarely excelled the daily prototypes of common life; and their forms, although at times sufficiently accurate, were often vulgar and heavy.... To everything great and elevated, the art was yet a stranger: even the celebrated picture of Pollajuolo exhibits only a group of half-naked and vulgar wretches, discharging their arrows at a miserable fellow-creature, who, by changing places with one of his murderers, might with equal propriety become a murderer himself.'

But the time at length came when that stimulus was to be communicated to taste which sent a thrill throughout the general heart of Europe. The pictures of the old Greeks were lost for ever, dead and gone; but their statues were only buried—buried alive—and now, at the command of wealth and genius, they were dug out of their tomb of ages, and came forth, unharmed, in their enchanted life and immortal beauty. Yes, unharmed; for in the head, the torso, the limb, the hand, the finger, the same principle of life existed as in the entire figure; and, owing to the sublime law of proportion, which bound all together, the minutest fragment indicated a perfect whole. The palace of Lorenzo de Medici was the assembling-place, and the ideal beauty of the Greeks found a new shrine in the groves of Florence. These became a true academia, where genius studied and taught, and where the presiding spirit of the place was Michael Angelo Buonarotti, [A] the sculptor—painter—architect—poet, whose universal mind appeared to fit him, not so much to shine in any one department—although shine he did in all—as to give an impetus to the whole Revival. But Michael Angelo, as a painter, excelled chiefly in design; while one who was his contemporary, and being a few years later in the field, has been supposed by some to be his imitator, was the painter *par excellence* of the new era—the first great painter of the moderns. This was *Raphael*. He was the pupil of Perugino; and while such, contented himself

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with imitating, with the utmost fidelity, the works of that artist; till at length emancipating himself from tutelage, he went for inspiration to the cartoons of Michael Angelo, to the sculptures of the Medici gardens, and to nature herself. Vasari makes Michael Angelo the magnus Apollo of Raphael; but Quatremere de Quincy assigns to the latter artist a holier worship. In a letter from him, which he quotes, respecting his famous picture of the Galatea, Raphael says, that in order to paint a beautiful woman, he must see many, but that, after all, he must work upon a certain ideal image present in his mind. 'We thus see,' says the French critic, 'that he really sought after the beautiful which Nature presents to art, but which the imagination of the artist alone can seize, and genius alone realise.'

Raphael was the first of the moderns to idealise beauty, or, in other words, to represent nature in the form she is striving, in her infinite progression, to attain, but which as yet she only indicates here and there in those hints and parts that prophetic genius combines and moulds into a whole. He softened the harsh outlines, mellowed the glaring colours, and harmonised the awkward proportions of mediaeval art. With him, a new epoch commenced, adorned by many illustrious names, from Julio Romano, the poet of painters, to Titian, who clipped his pencil in the rainbow. The Lombard school of Titian was the third of the three first great schools of the Revival, in which taste, emancipated from the darkness of the middle ages, sought inspiration in nature and the Greek sculptures. What would be thought if a school were to arise three hundred years later, not merely discarding the experience and teachings of the great masters, but claiming by its very name to return into the gulf from which these had been emancipated? This school of decline has, in fact, made its appearance among the other symptoms of the mediaeval mania, and we now gravely hang up in our exhibitions the productions of the *Pre*-Raphaelites! The name at first provoked so much ridicule in England, that their friends were at pains to inform the world, that it was assumed merely for the purpose of intimating their entire separation from the *schools* of Raphael and his successors, and their exclusive devotion to nature. The artists of Germany, however, with whom the mania commenced, were less scrupulous.[1] They imitated, purposely, the rudeness of the early painters, and even favourably distinguished the juvenile works of Raphael when he was as yet the mere copyist of Perugino. It is thus only the reformed schools the Pre-Raphaelists avoid; for Mr Ruskin's notion, that there were no schools at all before Raphael, is quite too wild for answer.[2] The name, however, is of little consequence. The nature returned to is obviously, to any one who has eyes in his head, the nature of the middle ages; and if our readers will look again at the quotations we have made above—which were not taken at random—they will find, in the words of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Vasari, and William Roscoe, a pretty accurate description of the genius and manner of the Pre-Raphaelites.

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Nor could the fact be otherwise. We have noticed the identity of taste between the Chinese and the unawakened Europeans, as pointing to a natural stage in art-development; and if we allot to the new school a position one degree higher than that of Cimabue and Giotto, it is all that can be claimed by artists, who have even attempted to dismiss from their minds a later and nobler experience. Their rule is—to have no rule; to copy nature, just as she happens to be before them; to select nothing, reject nothing, subordinate nothing, and thus to have no composition and no chiaro-scuro. They recognise no inequality, no relationship of objects: a pin in a lady's dress, and the nose on the lady's face, are treated with the same even-handed justice. The harmony of colours is a mere dream: let them only be as bright as a stained-glass window, and all is well.

At this moment, there are two specimens of Pre-Raphaelitism to be seen at the Exhibition of the Scottish Academy in Edinburgh. They are both distinguished, like the philosopher in Andersen's Drop of Ditchwater, by having no name; but a quotation is appended to each of the numbers in the catalogue, and is to be supposed to indicate, the subject. No. 9, in the Great Room, has this quatrain from Tennyson—

> 'She only said: "My life is dreary—
> He cometh not!" she said;
> She said: "I'm aweary, aweary—
> I would that I were dead."'

In illustration of this awkwardly-constructed stanza, a female, uncomely and ungraceful, is represented as standing in the attitude of a yawn, not indicated by the gaping mouth, but by the contorted person, and arms twisted behind the back. She is close to a stained-glass window, whose gaudy colours are challenged by her own bright blue dress, the object of the artist throughout appearing to be violent opposition, not harmony. The picture, with its violent dislocations, both of bones and impressions, conveys the idea of anything but repose, although a mouse on the floor bids us notice, that notwithstanding appearances, the ungainly lady stretches herself in silence. There cannot well be anything more inelegant and untrue than this piece; yet there is clever painting here and there; and some of the accessories, if taken without reference to the design, in which they are blots, are models of their kind. The thought belongs to the middle ages; the mechanical touch to the post-Raphaelite era.

The other picture, No. 93, in the same room, is larger and more ambitious. It represents a carpenter's workshop, with a mechanic at each end of the long bench; one of these, a half-starved, hideous wretch, with hardly a trace of the human anatomy in his composition; and the other, a respectable and rather sagacious-looking person, with immeasurable legs. Behind the bench is a frightful old woman, of the lowest class; and before it another, younger, but repulsively ugly and vulgar, examining, in conjunction with the respectable

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workman—and with her brow knotted in an awful congeries of wrinkles up to her fiery hair—the hand of a little boy. This little boy, though plebeian and red-haired, is not unpleasing: he has apparently cut his hand while playing with some of the edge-tools lying about the shop; while his brother, a better-figured as well as better-behaved boy, with a hairy apron round him, is making himself useful in carrying a basin of some dark-coloured stuff—probably carpenter's glue. But let us see what the legend attached to the number says: 'And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'—-Zechariah, xiii. 6. What does this mean? It means, innocent reader, that the piece we have described in its principal features is the Holy Family of the Pre-Raphaelites! This is their mode of going to nature, selecting nothing but the mean and repulsive, and rejecting nothing but poetical and religious feeling and common decency.

But if the theory of the Pre-Raphaelites is just as regards painting, it must be just as regards the other departments of taste. Suppose it applied to musical composition. Let us throw overboard everything that degrades music to a science, and 'go to nature,' as Mr Ruskin counsels, 'rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing.' What would be the result? The result would be the torture of everybody in the country who had the misfortune to possess a cultivated ear. And yet the music of that time would not be absolutely disagreeable in itself: it would merely involve the deprivation of what had become a necessary to the taste; for nature would still inspire simple sounds, connected more or less with the feelings. Nature, in fact, proceeds in music upon laws that are merely elaborated and carried out by science; while in painting, she offers an endless variety of objects and effects, to be selected, grouped, and made into a picture by the artist. We all feel this when gazing on natural scenery. We are actuated by an unconscious eclecticism, and make the composition for ourselves. To some natural scenes, no skill could impart interest of any kind; others attain to a certain character of the picturesque; while others, again, combine in themselves all the elements of a good picture. But even with these last, mere imitation will not do. Nature, as Hazlitt observes, 'has a larger canvas than man'—a canvas immensely larger; and the artist, since he cannot copy, must select. The same reasoning applies to figure and group-painting, and its accessories. Nature rarely forms a perfect group, because it is not her purpose to embody a single expression. As for small accessorial objects, such as a pin or a leaf, being painted with the same care and accuracy as principal objects, this is a defect in drawing, that argues a singular want of reflection. In nature, we see distinctly the figure and its more prominent parts, but we see the minute accessorial parts so indistinctly, that sometimes we can scarcely tell what they are. The precise detailing of these objects, therefore, may have the truth of fact, but it is destitute of the truth of nature.

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What would be the effect of the new system, if applied to romantic fiction? But the question is unnecessary; for the new system ignores romance, which is the truth of nature not of fact. A pre-Raphaelite story, taken from real life, might be romantic in its incidents and striking in its catastrophe; but it would want coherence in the design, and therefore produce no sustained emotion; and its characters being drawn, without selection, from vulgar prototypes, would excite more disgust than interest. The drama? —but there the new theory of art becomes too ridiculous: a tragedy on such a plan would be received with alternate yawns of ennui and shouts of laughter. All these are pertinent questions; for fine art, in literature, music, sculpture, painting, architecture, forms a homogeneous circle under one law of taste.

It may be supposed that we are ascribing too much importance to the department of the mediaeval mania under examination; but, for our part, we ‘scorn nothing’ that presents a bar, however slight, to the progress of civilisation and refinement. Pre-Raphaelitism is only one form of a degradation of taste which appears to keep pace with the utilities of the time, and we shall never be slow in lending our aid to cleanse the temple of its desecrators. L.R.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] See the *Moyen Age* of Du Sommirard.

[2] *Pre-Raphaelitism.* By the author of *Modern Painters*.

A LEGEND OF AMEN-CORNER.

About the time that every prince in Europe was sending a special embassy to London, to congratulate James I. on his book against witchcraft, which none of them ever professed to have read, a strange occurrence happened in an ancient house, situated in the Amen-Corner of Paternoster Row. Like most of the houses of old London, its lower half was brick, and its upper, English oak. It had been built in the time of the first Tudor, but, being still a substantial tenement, was purchased some ten years before the period of this narrative, by two brothers named Christopher and Hubert, who carried on their business there. They were of English blood, but had been born in Germany, their grandfather having fled thither in Queen Mary’s day under strong suspicion of owning a Coverdale Bible; and in the good city of Augsburg his son and grandsons had been brought up to his own craft, then known as the singular art and mystery of printing. A separate and a thinly-scattered guild was that of the printer in those days. Their craft had nothing in common with the world’s older arts, excepting those of the scribe and the scholar. The entire book-trade, now divided into so many branches, was in their hands —binder, engraver, printer and publisher, being generally the same person; and this,

together with the laborious precision required in working the primitive press, made them throughout Christendom a sort of caste who

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acquired their trade by inheritance, and kept it as such. Two generations of their family had transmitted the types to Christopher and Hubert; but not to them alone. There had been an elder brother, Gottleib, who printed with them at Augsburg. Their mother had died early: the plague summoned their father when they were little more than boys, and the man grieved sore to leave his sons so young, and an edition of the Latin Fathers, which he had calculated on finishing in five years with great praise and profit, just begun; but Gottleib promised him that he would finish the work in his name, and take care of his young brothers till they were old enough to be expert and prudent printers; so the old man died in peace.

Gottleib was the glory of his craft, and the praise of all Augsburg. Throughout Germany there was not a more skilful printer, nor in the city a more wise and virtuous youth. Old men asked his help in their difficulties, the young chose him as umpire in their disputes. He was charitable to the poor, a peacemaker among his neighbours, and a faithful and kindly guardian to his young brothers. Carefully he instructed them in all the mysteries of their art, though it lengthened his own labour by many a toilsome hour. Patiently he bore with the waywardness and inexperience of their youth. At hearth, and board, and labour, Gottleib was their blithe companion; in hard work, their help; in times of trouble, their comforter; and when disputes came between them, he was the ready arbitrator, on whose justice both could rely. At the church, they sat one on either side of him; on festival and holiday, they walked out with each an arm of Gottleib, and the burgomaster's son was not more confident in his father. Thus they lived and laboured cheerfully together, in the old house their father left them, for five years. The complete edition of the Latin Fathers went forward, and the boys grew to man's estate, till Gottleib was no longer the tallest of the three. Neighbours remarked, too, that he looked no longer the strongest. His once ruddy cheek at times grew pale and wan; still, there was no complaint of sickness in the house, and the edition was completed. All men praised, and some printers envied the work, though it was finished in the name of their dead father.

One evening, Gottleib rejoiced over it greatly, saying his promise was fulfilled, and Christopher and Hubert were now as good printers as himself: he bade them a kindly and glad good-night, and the young brothers talked long together, for Gottleib slept alone; but in the morning he did not come as usual to call them, and when they went to wake him, their brother was kneeling at his bedside, with his hands clasped as if in prayer—an earlier summons had reached him, and the great soul was gone!

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Honour and profit followed the work they had printed with him. Their craft grew proud of them, and friends began to say they might be burgomasters in time; but the light of their days had gone down with Gottleib. The old house had grown so dreary without him, that they could not live in it. Every street and corner of the city brought their loss to mind; and hearing that there was peace and room for printers in their father's country, the young men sold their German dwelling to a wealthy burgher, collected their money, chattels, and types, and came with them to London. Paternoster Row was even in those days the resort of traders in books; and happening to see the antiquated house in Amen-Corner, the strangers thought it had a pleasant likeness to their old home; so they purchased it at the expense of nearly all they possessed, except their printing-press, with which they established themselves there, determined never to part, but live together in the country of their fathers.

Hard by there lived a widow of German parentage, whose husband had been a printer; but he and his seven children were all dead. Gunhilde, for such was her name, was old, poor, and lonely, and she became their housekeeper. Years of resolute toil and prudent frugality passed over the brothers, till they were no longer strangers in old London, nor inconsiderable among the inhabitants of the Row. Their press had done its part in the work of the times. They had printed the 'Book of Sports' and the 'Westminster Confession;' broadside ballads concerning Robin Hood and Maid Marian; and heavy folios on Free-will and Predestination. Christopher and Hubert had increased in substance also to a degree never dreamed of in their German home. The dealers in books began to talk of them as somewhat notable men; but cares and causes of division had come with property and importance. In some respects, the brothers were of the same temper: both were earnest, brave, and high-spirited—strong to will, and steady to work. They had been faithful friends and loving brethren through many a change and trial; but there was a grievous fault in both. Each was given to exact from the other's friendship, though in a different fashion; for Christopher expected too much of inward affection, and Hubert had too much respect to outward observances. Alike, on the ground of resemblance and of difference, sprang up the roots of bitterness which troubled their days. At first, their strangership, their strivings to live and thrive in the English land, and, above all, the memory and loving counsels of their lost Gottleib, had bound them heart and hand together; but as the years of manhood hardened heart and mind, as increasing gains brought leisure and anxious looks on life, differences of opinion, of tastes, and of inclinations, gradually crept in between them, and their elder brother waned away from their remembrance, far off among the scenes and familiars of youth.

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Time brought further occasion of discord: the house of an English bookseller at the foot of the Row had grown more attractive than his own to Hubert, because of a certain Mistress Margaret who lived there with her father. The bookseller was old, narrow-minded, and stiff for presbytery; he approved of no people but Englishmen, and had a special prejudice against German Lutherans. His daughter believed firmly in his wisdom, and had been from infancy the old man's darling. She was fair, good, and clever; but the girl had a wayward pride, and a wit that was too ready for her judgment. Nevertheless, Hubert had found favour in her eyes as well as in those of her father, perhaps because he endeavoured earnestly to win it; while Christopher was composing tender verses, addressed to a young and very pious Catholic widow in the neighbourhood, who held fast her then persecuted faith.

The bookseller hesitated on giving his daughter to a Lutheran, and the widow remained undecided; but under their influence, Christopher and Hubert learned to contemn each other's choice, and dispute over creeds which neither acknowledged. Thus the controversies of the age, with all their bigotry and uncharitableness, found entrance to their home. Christopher lost no opportunity of throwing scorn on the Puritans, on account of the bookseller; and Hubert never spared to testify against Popish errors, by way of reflection on the widow. The loving brotherhood, which had been to them a rampart against the world's sins and follies, was broken down, and all manner of petty jealousies, vanities, and mistakes, flowed in to swell the flood of strife. There had been fierce debates and bitter words between them, wrath that overcame the friendship of years, hard misjudging of each other's motives, and mighty magnifying of small offences. One evening they sat in sullen pride and anger by the fire. It was the same hearth at which for ten years they had met when the work of the day was done. Their early difficulties in the great, strange city had been debated there. The gains of their prosperous days had been reckoned, their risks and speculations discussed, but now their seats were pushed to the most distant corners, and between them stood a table covered with papers and account-books; for they had at last determined to divide their possessions to the uttermost farthing, and part company for ever. With merchant-like exactness, every tittle was reckoned up and shared. The old house was to be sold to a Jew for a sum already agreed on, and one item only remained which they could not divide, an heirloom's value being fixed upon it. That was the Coverdale Bible with which their grandfather had fled to Germany.

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Neither would consent to take the book, or receive anything in its stead, for a savage pride was in their hearts; and there lay the large worn folio, with its brazen clasps, between them. The day's work had been hard, for though comparatively rich, Christopher and Hubert were laborious men from habit, and the elder at length leaned his head on the table to rest a moment, and think what could be done. Hubert also leaned his brow on his hand, and it might be the sight of that old volume, in spite of themselves, brought faraway memories crowding back on both. They thought of the German city where they had been born; of their long-dead father; and, last of all, of Gottleib. They knew the grass was long upon his German grave; but suddenly, as wild and vague regrets for all that had come and gone began to rise upon them, the door of their room was opened, and there entered a stranger of most noble presence and aspect, who, without a word, drew back the table and seated himself between them.

The brothers were astonished; but when he said in their own German tongue: 'Friends, why do you muse so silently?' his voice sounded in their ears like the church-bells of Augsburg.

'We have cause for silence and musing, friend,' said Christopher.

'And what is your business with us?' demanded the fiery Hubert.

'I have come,' said the stranger, 'to shew you a rare and curious sight which lies in your very neighbourhood, though you never saw it, not having yet reached the ground from which it is rightly seen.'

'We have no time for sights at this late hour,' cried Hubert.

'Our accounts and goods occupy us now, but we will go to-morrow,' said Christopher.

'Nay, friends,' said the stranger, taking a hand of each, 'it were well that you should see it soon. All who earnestly look upon that sight, are somewhat instructed to their private benefit; and it may be that you also will learn something touching the use of these,' he added, pointing to the open account-books and the clasped Bible.

Christopher and Hubert felt persuaded to accompany him: he led them, it seemed but a few steps from their own door, through a dark and narrow lane, in which the busy men had never been; but there streets and houses abruptly terminated, and they stood by the side of a broad and thronged highway. A road like that the brothers had never seen in all their journeys. It ran due east and west, from the rising to the setting sun; but far to the eastward, a mist, like the smoke of congregated houses, shut out the view; and on the west, a fog more dense than that of autumn or mid-winter closed the prospect. The space between was thronged with travellers, who emerged from the eastern mist, and were manifestly going to the other.

A light shone on them, but it was gray and uncertain, like that of twilight. Sometimes the sun, sometimes the stars shone through, and strange clouds and meteors passed across the sky.

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‘What way is this,’ thought the brothers, ’which lies so near our own dwelling, and yet has neither night nor day?’ But as their eyes grew accustomed to the light, they perceived that the travellers on that road were of all ages—man, woman, and child. Yet each journeyed in a track cut for himself in the soil, from which it appeared none could stray. Some of these tracks were wide, and others narrow; some had numerous windings, and some were but slightly curved; many were rough and stony, others of the bare earth, with brambles growing thick at their edges; and some were half covered with grass and wild-flowers. Christopher and Hubert, however, observed that none of them were perfectly smooth or straight; that dust and rubbish were plentiful in them all; and that every track on that highway crossed some other. The travellers, too, differed wonderfully in their manner of journeying. Some moved like mourners at a funeral; some like runners to a goal. There were those who went steadily forward, with the pace of soldiers on a march; others, who seemed in great fear, looking perpetually behind or before them; and very few who walked at their ease.

As the brothers marvelled at this diversity, they discovered that there was none of all the travellers without a burden, and in that matter there appeared no less variety. Bundles of every shape and size were on their shoulders: some looked huge, and were tied up in sackcloth; others were covered with rich cloth, and bound with silken cords. Some bore theirs concealed under long mantles; but Christopher thought it was mostly weights of iron or lead they carried. Further particulars astonished the brothers still more. The greater part appeared to have a strange propensity for increasing the difficulties of their way, by walking in whatever manner was least practicable. Many augmented the burdens, under which they already staggered, with dust and rubbish, which they collected from all sides; and far more were endeavouring to pile up the scattered stones and thorns on their equally burdened neighbours. All this time, the air was filled with a clamour of complaints, generally referring to their tracks and burdens; and Christopher and Hubert remarked with amazement, that it was by no means those who had the roughest track, or the heaviest bale to carry, that travelled most laboriously, or seemed least content with the journey.

No traveller, indeed, appeared satisfied, and whenever their tracks crossed, the unruly creatures were sure to jostle each other; but let the accident happen as it would, every man laid the blame loudly on his neighbour. They had also innumerable disputes concerning the clouds and meteors of the sky; regarding the dust under their feet; and more especially touching some glimpses of an azure heaven, which they caught at times through the western mist. On that subject, the fierceness of their debates was marvellous, and the clamour occasionally became deafening; but the brothers observed that the noisiest traveller generally came quietly out of the one mist, and disappeared with as little tumult in the other.

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‘What think ye of these people?’ said the stranger, when Christopher and Hubert had gazed and wondered long.

‘They are mad!’ said Christopher, ’to give and take such trouble for no end.’

‘What grievous disturbance they make about so short a journey!’ cried Hubert. ‘Good stranger, tell us of what Bedlam are they?’

‘They belong to all the madhouses of the world,’ said the stranger.

’But why are they here?—where are they going?—and what lies beyond these mists?’ cried the brothers in a breath.

‘Dear brothers, who were so true and loving of old,’ said the stranger, ’concerning this matter, believe that you will learn hereafter; for the present, know that this which ye have seen is the great and busy road of life; but strive to become more wise and prudent travellers, and see that ye fall not out by the way.’

As he ceased, a gleam of sunshine broke through the twilight, and fell full upon him. In its brightness, the noble aspect did not alter, but grew more familiar to their eyes; and Christopher and Hubert knew at the same moment that he was none other than their brother Gottleib. Both sprang to embrace him, but the way, the travellers, and Gottleib, vanished from them. They looked into each other’s faces by the early sunlight which streamed through the closed shutters of their room, and gleamed on the brazen clasps of the Coverdale Bible, still lying between them on the table where they had fallen asleep.

Such is the account of the affair given by themselves; although more, it is believed, to suit the taste and belief of the time they lived in than their own. The two brothers had passed many hours silent and in the dark; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the visionary world, into which they had unconsciously slipped, presented to both such phenomena—founded on the meditations and recollections in which both had been immersed—as were easily rendered in the exoteric types of romance. The brothers talked long over the vision, and could scarcely satisfy even themselves that it was indeed a dream; but they agreed on its use of wisdom and warning, and disputed no more. The old house was not sold, nor the types divided. It is even affirmed that the bookseller’s daughter and the Catholic widow lived there as right friendly sisters-in-law; and after many a broadside and folio page, the press they had worked for so many years at length struck off the tale we have just related—the German brothers supposing that some honest men in England might profit, as they had done, by a look upon Life’s Highway.

DUST-SHOWERS AND RED-RAIN.

Recent scientific investigations in Europe and America have thrown some interesting light on the nature of these very curious phenomena. The results arrived at may be brought familiarly before our readers.

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Mr Charles Darwin, in the narrative of his voyage in the *Beagle*, states that while he was at St Jago, one of the Cape de Verd islands, in January 1832: 'The atmosphere was generally very hazy; this appears chiefly due to an impalpable dust, which is constantly falling, even on vessels far out at sea. The dust,' he goes on to say, 'is of a brown colour, and under the blow-pipe, easily fuses into a black enamel. It is produced, as I believe, from the wear and tear of volcanic rocks, and must come from the coast of Africa.' The same opinion was held by scientific men generally, as well of the dust met with in the North Atlantic, as of that which sometimes falls on the islands and shores of the Mediterranean: Africa was supposed to be the original source of the air-borne particles. Some of the dust, however, having been sent to Ehrenberg of Berlin, that celebrated *savant*, after a microscopical examination, laid an account of his inquiry before the Akademie der Wissenschaften, in May 1844, in which he shewed that the dust, so far from being inorganic, contained numerous specimens of a species of flint-shelled animalcules, or infusoria, known as polygastrica, and minute portions of terrestrial plants. The investigation led him to certain conclusions: '1. That meteoric dust-rain is of terrestrial origin. 2. That the same is not a rain of volcanic ashes. 3. That it is necessarily a dust carried up to a great height by a strong current of air or whirlwind from a dried-up swamp-region. 4. That the dust neither demonstrably nor necessarily comes from Africa, notwithstanding that the wind may blow from thence as the nearest land when the dust falls, because there are in it no forms whatsoever exclusively native to Africa.' These were remarkable facts, but warranted by the evidence: one, if not more, of the animalcules was proved to be peculiar to America, and that country was naturally inferred to be the quarter from which they had been derived.

The inquiry once begun was followed up; other specimens of dust were submitted to the same critical test, and found generally to contain a much greater number and variety of infusoria than the first—mostly fresh-water forms, but with a few of marine origin; whence the conclusion, that they had been brought from a coast-region; and especially remarkable was the fact, that among all the forms there was not one peculiar to the African continent. One example was known to belong to the Isle of France, the others were chiefly South American. After an examination of six specimens, obtained at different intervals, Ehrenberg discovered that they contained four organisms in common. 'I now consider myself,' he observes, 'justified in the conclusion, that all the Atlantic dust may come only from one and the same source, notwithstanding its extent and annual amount. The constant yellow and reddish colour of the dust, produced by ferruginous matter, its falling with the trade-winds and not with the harmattan, increase the interest of the phenomena.'

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It had always been supposed, that the dust which traversed the Mediterranean was borne from the Great Sahara; but in a quantity collected on board the ship *Revenge*, at Malta, an infusoria peculiar to Chili was met with, which, with other characteristics, proved the dust to be the same as that observed on the Atlantic. Their colour, too, was identical; while the Sahara is a 'dazzling white sand:' hence the dust brought across the Mediterranean by the sirocco was not peculiar to Africa. The conclusion here arrived at was still further verified by another sirocco-storm in May 1846, which extended to Genoa, and bore with it a dust that 'covered the roofs of the city in great abundance.' This, as was clearly ascertained, contained formations identical with those which had been collected off the Cape de Verd; and it was shewn that the dust-showers of the Atlantic, and those of Malta and Genoa, were 'always of a yellow ochre-like colour—not gray, like those of the kamsin, in North Africa.' The peculiar colour of the dust was found to be caused by iron-oxide; and from one-sixth to one-third of the whole proved to consist 'of determinable organic parts.' In the following year, 1847, Ehrenberg had another opportunity of testing his conclusions, in specimens of dust which had fallen in Italy and Sicily in 1802 and 1813; the same result came out on examination; 'several species peculiar to South America, and none peculiar to Africa.'

Thus, omitting the two last-mentioned instances, there had been five marked falls of dust between 1830 and 1846; how many others passed without notice, it would now be impossible to ascertain. The showers sometimes occur at a distance of 800 miles from the coast of Africa, and this region lies between the parallels of 17 and 25 degrees north latitude, and whence, as we have seen, they extend to the northern shores of the Mediterranean. In the dust collected from these various falls, there have been found altogether nineteen species of infusoria; of which eight were polythalamia, seven polygastrica, and two phytolitharia, these chiefly constituting the flint-earth portion of the dust. The iron was composed of the gaillonilla, and 'the carbonic chalk earth corresponded tolerably well to the smaller number of polythalamia.' The uniform character of the specimens obtained at intervals over so long a course of years is especially remarkable.

To turn, now, for a few moments to the second phenomenon indicated in our title. In October 1846, a fearful and furious hurricane visited Lyon and the district between that city and Grenoble, during which occurred a fall of blood-rain. A number of drops were caught and preserved, and when the moisture had evaporated, there was seen the same kind of dust—of yellowish-brown or red colour—as that which had fallen in a dry state on the occasions already referred to. The strictest pains were taken to ascertain that it was not the common dust swept from

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roads during a gale of wind; and when placed under the microscope, it exhibited a greater proportion of fresh-water and marine formations than the former instances. Phytolitharia were numerous, as also ‘neatly-lobed vegetable scales;’ which, as Ehrenberg observes, is sufficient to disprove the assertion, that the substance is formed in the atmosphere itself, and is not of European origin. For the first time, a living organism was met with—the ’*Eunotia amphyoxis*, with its ovaries green, and therefore capable of life.’ Here was a solution of the mystery: the dust, mingling with the drops of water falling from the clouds, produced the red rain. Its appearance is that of reddened water, and it cannot be called blood-like without exaggeration.

Again, in March 1847, a coloured snow fell in the Tyrol, presenting a most singular appearance, and, when dried, leaving behind a brick-coloured dust. Most of the organised forms therein contained were European and American, with a few African; and again the microscope shewed it to be similar to the dust before examined, leaving no room to suppose it of local origin. ’The predominating forms, numerically, of one kind of dust, are also the predominating forms in all the rest,’ as Ehrenberg observes; and says further: ’Impossible as it is to conceive of all the storms now compared from 1830 to 1847, as having a continuous genetic connection, it is equally impossible also to imagine the masses of dust transported by them, with such a degree of similarity, *not to have a genetic connection*.... The great geographic extent of the phenomenon of a reddish dust nearly filling the atmosphere, and itself filled with organisms so similar, many of which are characteristic of South America, not only admits of, but demands a more earnest attention to the probable cyclical relations in the upper and lower atmosphere, whereby very great masses of fixed terrestrial matter, earths and metals, and especially flint-earths, chalk, iron, and coal, apparently heterogeneous, and yet related by certain peculiarities, are held swimming in the atmosphere, now like clouds thinly spread by whirlwinds or electricity over a broad space, and now condensed, and, like the dust of the fir-blossoms, falling in showers in every direction.’

Ehrenberg, then, states his views as to the cause of the phenomenon. ’Although far from attaching undue weight to a hypothesis, I cannot but consider it a matter of duty to seek for a connection in the facts, and feel myself constrained—on account of the above-mentioned particulars, and in so far as they justify a conclusion—to suppose an atmospheric current, connecting America and Africa with the region of the trade-winds, and sometimes, particularly about the 15th and 16th of May, turning towards Europe, and bringing with it this very peculiar, and apparently not African dust, in countless measure. If instead of attacking hypothesis by hypothesis, we strive with united effort to multiply scientific observations, we may then hope for a progressive explanation of these mysterious relations, so especially worthy of study.’

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Some progress has already been made by a transatlantic investigator in the explanation so much desired by the distinguished naturalist. Lieutenant Maury, of Washington—an outline of whose views regarding the winds was given in No. 412 of this Journal—finds in Ehrenberg's researches a beautiful and interesting confirmation of his own theory; namely, that the trade-winds of either hemisphere cross the belt of equatorial calms. Observations at the Peak of Teneriffe have proved that, while the trade-wind is sweeping along the surface of the ocean in one direction, a current in the higher regions of the atmosphere is blowing in the reverse direction. According to Lieutenant Maury, a perpetual upper current prevails from South America to North Africa, the volume being equal to that which flows southward by the north-east trade-wind. This wind, it should be remembered, does not touch the African continent, but the limits of its northern border are variable; whence the fact, that the falls of dust vary between 17 and 25 degrees of north latitude, as before stated. As the belt of calms shifts its position, so will there be a variation in the locality of the descending atmospheric current.

The dust-showers take place most frequently in spring and autumn; that is, 'after the equinoxes, but at intervals varying from thirty to fifty days;' the cause being, that the equatorial calms, at the time of the vernal equinox, extend to four degrees on either side the equator; and as the rainy season then prevails between those limits, no dust can consequently be taken up in those latitudes. But the same period is the dry season in the valley of the lower Orinoco, and the surface of that extensive region is in a favourable condition to give off dust; and at the time of the autumnal equinox, another part of the great Amazonian basin is parched with drought, on which Lieutenant Maury observes: 'May not, therefore, the whirlwinds which accompany the vernal equinox sweep over the lifeless plains of the lower Orinoco, take up the "rain-dust," which descends in the northern hemisphere in April and May—and may it not be the atmospherical disturbances which accompany the autumnal equinox, that take up the microscopic organisms from the upper Orinoco and the great Amazonian basin for the showers of October?' Humboldt gives a striking picture of the region in question, and, if the phrase may be permitted, of its dust-producing capabilities; so that the origin of this light powder, as regards one locality, may be said to be placed beyond a doubt.

As yet, the reason why the dust falls, as it were, concretely, and not generally diffused through the atmosphere, is not known; it is one of the obscure points waiting further investigation. Why it should travel so far to fall in a particular spot is, in the present state of our knowledge, not easy to explain. The coarsest dust is generally the first to fall; and it seems clear, that the descent occurs when and where the conditions are favourable. Lieutenant Maury considers, 'that certain electrical conditions are necessary to a shower of dust as well as to a thunder-storm;' and that, in the periodical intervals, we may get a clue to the rate of motion of the upper aerial currents, which appear to be 'remarkable for their general regularity, their general direction, and sharpness of limits.'

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It is scarcely possible not to feel that the investigations here briefly sketched, possess unusual interest. As Ehrenberg says, the subject is one 'of vast, manifold, and rapidly-increasing importance, and is but the beginning of a future great department of knowledge.' Now that it has been published in a connected form, and the attention of scientific observers directed to it, we may hope soon to hear of corroborative evidence from all parts of the world. We may mention, as bearing on the question, that sand-showers are not unfrequent in China. Dr M'Gowan of Ningpo, in a communication to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, states, that at the beginning of 1851, three showers occurred within five weeks; the last, which commenced on the 26th March, and continued four days, being the heaviest. The wind during the time varied from north-east to north-west, the breeze interrupted by occasional calms. No rain had fallen for six weeks; and though, as the doctor observes, 'neither cloud, fog, nor mist obscured the heavens, yet the sun and moon were scarcely visible; the orb of day appeared as if viewed through a smoked glass, the whole sky presenting a uniform rusty hue. At times, this sameness was disturbed, exhibiting between the spectator and the sun the appearance of a water-spout, owing to the gyratory motions of the impalpable mineral. The sand penetrated the most secluded apartments; furniture wiped in the morning, would be so covered with it in the afternoon, that one could write on it legibly. In the streets, it was annoying—entering the eyes, nostrils, and mouth, and grating under the teeth. My ophthalmic patients generally suffered a relapse, and an unusual number of new cases soon after presented themselves. Were such heavy sand-storms of frequent occurrence, diseases of the visual organs would prevail to a destructive extent.'

These showers sometimes spread over several provinces at once, and far out to sea. The Chinese call them yellow-sand. Their source is the great desert of Gobi, or Sand-Ocean, more than 2000 miles long, and from 300 to 400 broad, in the interior of Asia. Dr M'Gowan states, that the fall amounted to ten grains per square foot, but without specifying whether this quantity includes the whole duration of the shower. During calms, it remains suspended. The dust thus raised from the Mongolian steppes gives the peculiar tinge to the Yellow Sea.

Notwithstanding the annoyance of these dust-showers, they have a valuable compensation. The Chinese, whose closeness of observation in agricultural matters is well known, assert that they are always followed by a fruitful season—not, it is true, as cause, but as effect. The explanation is, that the soil of the provinces most subject to the visitation, being of a compact character, is loosened and lightened by the sand borne on the wind from the Tatarian plains, and at the same time, the lighter fertilising matters carried away by the great rivers are replaced; and thus, that which at first sight appears an unmitigated evil, becomes the cause of good harvests, for they invariably follow a fall of sand.

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THE CITY INQUEST FOR THE POOR.

I keep a shop in the City, and open it every morning as Bow Church bells are ringing out eight o'clock. I pay a very heavy rent, as well as Queen's taxes and poor's-rates; and I could do neither, to say nothing of maintaining my family, if I did not mind my business, and work hard. But by the help of constant attention and industry, I am happy to say, I am able to make my shop keep me and my family too, which it does comfortably, and lifts me, in some sort, above the world, and enables me to bear the character, which I should always like to retain, of a respectable man.

We dwellers in London City proper are supposed to entertain a very high regard for respectability, and so we do; and I am going now to detail the operations of what, I suppose, must be called an institution altogether peculiar to the City, of which the world out of the City knows very little, and which has been in being I don't know how many centuries—before there were any poor-laws, or any 'good Queen Bess;' and which must have been a respectable affair—if I am any judge of what that means—from the very first, whenever that was. It is a good thing to relieve necessity in any shape, and a better thing to help it to help itself; but to dispense charity without doing a mischief in some way or other, either by rewarding imposture, encouraging idleness, or repressing the springs of self-reliance or self-exertion, is about the hardest business I have ever had to do with, and I have had some knotty affairs to get through in my time. Now, the various wards of the City do every year, I think, manage this difficult matter very carefully and efficiently, though not without a good deal of trouble; and as I think their mode of doing it sets a good example, I have made up my mind to let the public know something about the Inquest for the Poor, which comes off in December every year. I believe it will be a novelty to most people out of the City limits, and to not a few within them as well. What I know about it, I have derived from experience: that, indeed, is all I have to relate; and when I have told my tale, the reader will be as wise as I am, in this respect at least.

About the middle of last December, I received a citation to attend a wardmote, to be held in the schoolroom of my parish. I was in expectation of this summons, as, the parishioners being called upon in rotation, I knew that my turn would come on upon this occasion. The number of tradesmen, who must be all of respectable character, summoned to the first meeting, is always greater than the number required to serve on the inquest, because many find it very inconvenient, and others find it impossible, to give their services. Valid excuses are admitted in plea against the performance of the duty; but a frivolous excuse is not allowed; and a tradesman, whose turn it is to serve, if he can prefer no good reason for not serving, must serve or pay the fine. Six guineas is the heavy penalty inflicted upon a recusant who declines service altogether. This preliminary meeting is called merely to insure a sufficient company to be in attendance in the vestry of —— Church, at the general wardmote held on St Thomas's Day.

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After an early breakfast on the morning of the day above named, I repaired to the vestry, which was very fully attended, and where, in the course of the forenoon, the common-councilmen for the ward were elected for the ensuing year, and, their election settled, were all duly admonished respecting their duties by the chairman. Then, from the number of respectable tradesmen in attendance, myself and eleven others were elected to prosecute the inquest for that year on behalf of the poor; and we in our turn were admonished by the same authority, that we were not to compass any treason, nor to conspire against Her Majesty the Queen—than which, I am very sure, nothing could have been further from our thoughts. The inquest being thus incorporated, we proceeded to elect a foreman and a treasurer, and to decree fines for non-attendance. The fines were appropriated to the payment of expenses, no part of the money collected being available for any other purpose than that of charity. The collection commenced by a contribution from each member of the inquest, each giving liberally, and setting a generous example. All these necessary preliminaries being settled, every man of us got into a handsome cloak, trimmed with fur, hired for the occasion, at a cost of five shillings per head, and, with the beadle of the ward blazing in scarlet and gold, pacing majestically beneath a three-cornered hat, and pushing a ponderous gold mace in advance, we were marched off to Guildhall, to pass muster before Gog and Magog, and to be presented to his worship the lord mayor. His lordship, who was surrounded by a staff of officials in gorgeous liveries, was very glad to see us: indeed he told us so—-said that he was extremely gratified at receiving so highly respectable a company, and expressed more than once his satisfaction at finding that we were so ready to act in the cause of charity as to sacrifice our valuable time, and unite together for the succour of the distressed. He addressed us, in fact, for nearly a minute and a half; after which, as time was pressing, and others were waiting to be presented, we were signaled forward to a side-door, and made a very sudden exit into the street, whence we marched back to the vestry to disrobe, with the exception of some few of our number, who knowing that the business of the charity was done for the day, abandoned their cloaks to the care of the owner, who contrives generally to be in attendance at this critical moment, and proceeded to look after their own private affairs. We all met, however, in the evening, and partook of a substantial dinner, to which, according to a custom which has prevailed from time immemorial, the church-wardens of the parish and the foreman and treasurer of the inquest of the preceding year were invited. The dinner went off, as a dinner should do, with perfect harmony and good-feeling; and some very excellent speeches were made on the subject of the inquest—its undeniable efficacy and utility, and its great antiquity. We broke up at a sober hour, each member being charged to present himself at the vestry at nine in the morning on that day week, under the penalty of half-a-guinea.

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It would have suited my interests very well, when the day came round, to have forfeited my half-guinea, and have attended exclusively to my own business; but judging it more to my credit to go through with the work I had undertaken, I was at my post, together with several of my colleagues, before the hour had struck. Some of our members did not come at all the first day, but sent their half-guineas; others, having to come in from the suburbs before omnibus-time, arrived too late, and were fined in smaller sums for the breach of punctuality. Our party being at length complete, to the number of ten, we indue our cloaks, and, pioneered by the ward-beadle with his ponderous mace, we sally forth to feel the charitable pulse of several parishes. Ten good men and true, swathed to the chin in voluminous folds of broad-cloth fringed with fur, and headed by the ample proportions of the mace-bearer in scarlet and cloth of gold; our apparition, and our mission too, were plainly a mystery to the major part of the population, who, seeing us but once a year, and then but momentarily, as the procession emerges suddenly from one door to plunge into another, do not very well know what to make of it. 'Is that there a buryin' or a marryin'?' 'What's that lot o' fellows after?' 'What's up now, Jem?'—such are a few of the inquiries which from time to time testified the astonishment of the uninitiated; to all of which our imperturbable leader opposed a face as impenetrable as that of the sphinx of the desert. We should have been sadly at a loss, by the way, without him. He knew every soul in the whole ward who would come down to the extent of a sixpence for the sake of the poor; and he led his small phalanx boldly to the charge through all impediments. Under his guidance, we did what certainly we should never have attempted without it. We stormed the stout citadels of the merchants, and carried their strongholds up as high as the third and fourth floors, and captured many a poor man's dinner from the very jaws of the cash-box. We dived into cellars, and crouched and crept into subterranean dens. We threaded muddy lanes, and wandered among bewildering wharfs, and mounted lofts and sheds, and squeezed ourselves into all sorts of out-of-the-way slums. We climbed ladders leading up into creaking timber galleries, and got into regions of old planks and cobwebs, dim with dust and odorous with ancient smells. We assailed the scholar at his studies, and the craftsman at his labour, and from all and each we met with a courteous reception, and gathered the sinews of benevolence. The dispositions of men vary in few things more than in their several modes of conferring a favour. Some of our most liberal donors thoughtfully sent their bank-notes to the vestry, to save us the trouble of waiting upon them; others, on the contrary, levied the full value of their gifts, by keeping us wearily waiting before we got them. A barber, whom we found at his block busily weaving

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a wig, and whose diminutive crib would not contain half our company, apologised because it was not in his power to do much for us, and then diffidently tendered a guinea. A portly dealer in feminine luxuries talked largely of the claims of our indigent brethren, and the sacred obligations of charity, and wound up his sonorous homily with the climax of half-a-crown. We found one burly gentleman, buried up to the elbows in red-tape and legal documents, who professed a perfect horror, a rooted antipathy, to the poor in every shape, and who had a decided conviction that poverty was a nuisance which ought to be put down. When he had said all this, and a great deal more, he very consistently lent a hand towards abating the nuisance, by presenting us with a contribution of double his usual annual subscription. When we had got out of earshot, our experienced chaperon remarked to me: 'When I hered him agoin' on so, I knowed he was agoin' to come down 'ansome. He's a wery nice genelman, what enjoys a grumble, and don't mind paying for it!'

Our domiciliary visits occupied between three and four days, and the rain fell in torrents during the whole time. We were wet through in spite of the cloaks we wore, but canvassed the whole district successfully notwithstanding, and probably collected every shilling that was to be got. Our guide had so often felt the pulse of the whole ward in this way, that he never suffered us to waste our time or our demands upon those whom he knew to be impracticable; and thus we got through the business much more quickly, as well as more prosperously, than we could possibly have done had we been left to our own resources. The result of our united labours was a purse of nearly L.200; and now came the more pleasant part of our duty—the distribution of alms, at a season when poverty is most severely felt, to the most deserving of the most needy.

The distribution took place a few days after the collection was finished. In the interim, blank tickets had been distributed to such of the donors as chose to receive them, upon which they inscribed the names of the poor persons whom they recommended for relief. The vestry where we were elected was the scene of the distribution. The body of the church was allotted for the accommodation of the poor ticket-holders, who formed a numerous and very motley crowd, and who were called in to receive their dole in rotation, by the ward-beadle, from a list which he had prepared. I suspect, however, that the system of rotation was not very rigidly observed, inasmuch as half-a-dozen women, with squalling children in their arms, were among the very first who were called in and dealt with, by which means something like peace and quietness were obtained while the claims of the crowd of the remaining applicants were severally considered. What followed was a very different affair from that which transpires weekly at the parish pay-table. I have been church-warden, overseer, and guardian of

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various parishes in my time, and I have seen the poor in all conditions and under all circumstances, and I thought I knew them well enough; but I derived a new lesson now, and learned that it is possible for humanity to undergo the direst misfortunes without losing heart and hope—to drain the cup of misery to the dregs without becoming utterly selfish—and to be long immersed in the lowest depths of necessity, and yet be human still. I shall describe one or two of these hapless claimants upon the benevolence of their wealthy fellow-citizens, premising that a few of them only are the recipients of parish pay. They see no disgrace, perhaps, in participating in a voluntary alms, because it is voluntary, and, as such, cannot be regarded as the peculiar property of that numerous class who assert and maintain a life-interest in compulsory funds legally levied for their support.

One of the first who seemed to attract general sympathy was an old, old man, trembling on the very verge of the grave, who had outlived almost every faculty of mind and body. He could walk only by instinct, advancing his foot mechanically, to save himself from falling, when he was pushed gently forwards. When standing, he could not seat himself—and when sitting, he could not get up without help. In whatever posture he was placed, there he remained. Altogether insensible to question and remark, he looked wildly round upon us, and smiled, and winked with both eyes. These were his sole remaining capabilities—to wink, and to look agreeable. He had been recommended as an object worthy of charity by a liberal donor, and he was brought in person to justify the recommendation. He was clean, and neat, and tidily dressed, but evidently in a state of perfect unconsciousness of everything around him. He had lived once, but it was in times long past and gone: you might guess him to be what age you chose, but you could hardly think him older than he was; time, who had stolen his faculties, had forgotten to wreck the casket that contained them: the spirit of life had left its tenement, and by some strange mistake, the animated machine had gone on without it. My neighbour, the watchmaker, compared him to a clock with the striking-train run down, and the works rusty beyond repair. He could not thank us for the alms we gave him, but he did all he could—he winked, and smiled, and tried to make a bow, but failed in the attempt, and resigned himself cheerfully to the care of his friends, who carried him off.

Another quiet applicant was a lady, whose natural-born gentility poverty might obscure but could not conceal. Years of want and struggling deprivation had dimmed her charms; but they had neither bowed nor bent her stately form, nor quenched the inherent virtue of self-respect, nor deprived her of the correct and appropriate diction, and the winning and courteous expression which once graced a drawing-room. She was introduced to us by the beadle as Lady W——;

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and although draped in very humble and well-worn apparel, she looked what she was —a gentlewoman in every sense of the word; though beyond an empty title, she possessed hardly anything in the world. She answered our inquiries with a natural courtesy, which at least some of us felt to be a condescension. 'Gentlemen,' she said, 'it is true, as your attendant states, that I am a lady. In my youth, I married a titled man. I make no boast of that—it was, indeed, my misfortune. I was brought up and educated to occupy a station inferior to few: I filled that station for many years; it is not for me to say how appropriately; and though calamity has overtaken me now, and I have been familiar with necessity for so long a time, yet I feel that I am a lady still. I may be reproached with poverty, and that I can bear; but I trust I shall never be justly reproached with having fallen to the level of my circumstances. I am grateful to you for the assistance you so kindly render me; and I can express that sentiment, and feel it deeply, too, without humiliation, because the aid you supply is as voluntary on your part as its acceptance is necessary on mine.' When our foreman had instinctively wrapped the donation awarded to her in a quarter sheet of letter-paper, and presented her with it, she bent with a dignified obeisance, and silently withdrew.

A third applicant, worthy of a passing notice, was a lady of a very different stamp. Who or what she had been in former years, I could not ascertain, but she appeared before us in the character of a middle-aged mince-pie monomaniac, and jam-tart amateur. The poor harmless creature was clad in the veriest shreds of dusky feminine attire, which barely shielded her limbs from the inclemency of the weather. She had a notion that she, too, was a lady, and that, being a lady, she was bound to live by the consumption of pastry, and nothing else. We were admonished by our custodian that whatever amount we awarded her, whether it were much or little, would be forthwith consigned to the confectioner, in exchange for mince-pies and tarts of the very best quality; and I regret to say, that this announcement had the effect of reducing considerably the sum she derived from the charity of the ward, and effectually preventing the consummation of any very formidable debauch with her favourite viands. But the poor simpleton was as merry as she was innocent and harmless; and all unsuspicious of the latent grudge which had lessened her gratuity, tripped hastily off, to enjoy at least one delicious repast.

After we had sat some hours, a very distressing case was brought forward. A poor woman, the wife of a working-man, and the mother of a young family, had been deserted by her husband, who had left her, besides her own children, the charge of his bedridden parents. Under this accumulation of burdens, she had been heroically struggling for some months, in the vain attempt, by her single energies, to ward off the approach of want, and to act at the same time the part of nurse to the old couple. She had succeeded in a great measure, and modestly sought but a little help to enable her to persevere in her arduous undertaking.

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Then came an old man, verging on fourscore, the very *beau ideal* of the merchant's serving-man of the last century. He had once been comparatively prosperous, but, judging from his cheerful face, perhaps hardly ever happier than he was now. For fifty years of his life, he had been *custos* and confidential house keeper to a well-known firm, which, after four or five generations of unvarying prosperity, had sunk in the panic of 1846 into the gulf of bankruptcy. In the general wreck that followed, old Benjamin was forgotten, or remembered only with a pang of unavailing regret. He found a refuge, however, in some small garret, where he contrives to preserve his cheerfulness and his pigtail, the only outward and visible sign of his former respectability, and where he acts as master of the ceremonies to a clique of ancient ladies, his fellow-lodgers, to whom he is at once the guardian and the beau of the fourth floor. When he had received his own little modicum of benevolence, he pleaded hard for the immediate settlement of the claim of one of his fair *coterie*, a widow of fourscore and five; and finding that his request could not be complied with, but that she must be left till her turn came, he retired to a corner of the room, and waited a full hour and more, until her business was settled, when he bowed ceremoniously, till his pigtail pointed to the zenith, and tendering his arm, escorted her home with all the vivacity and politeness of the days of hoops and high-heeled shoes. I have scarcely yet found out the reason why it was that the spectacle of this happy, kind old soul, made me feel a little, only a little, ashamed of myself.

This cosy old couple had hardly tripped out of sight, when our prosy synod was honoured by the advent of a real and extraordinary phenomenon. This was nothing less than a half-crazy poetess, who prided herself on speaking in rhyme—and such rhyme, amusing from its very badness. On she was going at a great rate, when she was called to order in a manner which admitted of no demur.

'Mrs Margaret Maggs!' roared the beadle; and the tenth Muse, brought to a sudden stand-still, ceased her oracular utterances, and, grasping her modicum of shining silver, vanished from the presence.

The distribution lasted the whole of the day; and it was a weary day for some of the poor applicants, whose turn came last, and who almost fainted for want of refreshment. But all who deserved it, went home effectually relieved and gladdened; and many who did not, got a lesson upon the occasion, and learned that Charity is not always as blind as she is supposed to be. The whole of the money collected is not distributed at once. About a third part of the amount is reserved until the approach of the next ensuing winter, when a second distribution takes place, generally to the same applicants.

I have heard it insinuated before now, that City functionaries of all sorts are prone to take too good care of themselves, whenever they meet to consider the wants of the poor. I may perhaps be allowed to say, that when we have a feast, we pay for it; and that not one farthing of any collection made in the City for the poor was ever, to my

knowledge, appropriated to any other purpose. As a respectable man, I, for one, would never countenance any intromission of that kind.

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OCCASIONAL NOTES.

LONDON CAB REFORM.

If John Bull were not, with all his grumbling, one of the most patient animals in existence, he could never have endured so long the cabs which he has to employ for the conveyance of his person through the streets of his metropolis. They are very poorly furnished and nasty, far below similar conveyances in any continental city with which we are acquainted. Greater fault still is to be found with the drivers, a large proportion of whom are so prone to overreach, that it is hardly possible to settle for their fares without a squabble. Our experience leads us to say, that at an average a stranger pays 30 per cent. above the proper sum, besides having his temper in almost every instance ruffled to some extent by the sense of having no adequate protection from the rudeness of this class of men. For a lady, there seems to be no chance of escape but by the alternative of some enormous overcharge. Altogether, this department of public economy in London is in a most unsatisfactory state. Most people avoid using these street vehicles whenever they can, and this is especially true of strangers. We can state as a fact, that a provincial gentleman of our acquaintance is accustomed to take the inconvenience of the cab-system into account in deliberating whether he shall have a month of London life or not. It is one of the repelling considerations, to a degree that the Londoners themselves are not aware of.

In an age of such exquisite contrivance and precision in mechanical and commercial matters, it might have been anticipated that the bad system of London cabs could not long survive. All dishonest businesses write their own doom. Those only thrive which sincerely seek the good of the public. Accordingly, it is not surprising, at a time when one-and-a-half per cent. is a fact in banking, to find two large and powerful companies getting up to supersede the bad, old, dear, cheating cabs with a new and civilised set. It is proposed by one of these bodies to 'provide for the public a superior class of carriages, horses, and drivers, at reduced and definite fares; to afford the utmost possible security for property, and especially prompt and easy redress of complaints.' With better vehicles at three-fourths of the present charges—namely, 6d. a mile—and these to be settled for in a manner which will preclude disputes, this company deserves, and will be sure to obtain, the public patronage. One good feature of the proposed arrangements will, we think, be highly satisfactory: the company will form a sufficient magistracy in itself to give quick and easy redress in the case of any wrong. But, indeed, from the precautions taken as to the employment of drivers, and the hold which the company will have over them, through the medium of guarantee and their own deposits in a benefit-fund, it seems to us that the good conduct of the men towards their 'fares' must be effectually secured. The other company proposes to have two classes of vehicles—one at 8d. and the other at 4d. a mile; and it contemplates the use of a mechanism for indicating the distance passed over. We most earnestly hope that both

companies will succeed in establishing themselves and carrying an improvement so important to the public into effect.

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COLONIAL PENNY-POSTAGE.

'I shall write to every one in turn, but it is expensive sending to many at once,' says one of the poor needlewomen, whom Mr Sydney Herbert's Female Emigration Fund has enabled to obtain a comfortable home at Adelaide. Well might she complain of the expense. When at home, she could send a letter to the most distant corner of the United Kingdom for a penny. In Australia, she finds that the cost of sending a letter to her mother in London is a shilling. It is strange that the colonists do not make an outcry about so extravagant a charge. Of all the anomalies in English legislation, our colonial postage-system is certainly one of the most glaring; and yet, in the midst of so much effort for emigration and colonisation, hardly any one seems to be aware of it. The people of England, Ireland, and Scotland have, for the last twelve years, enjoyed the incalculable benefits of Penny-Postage, but they have never thought of extending its blessings to their fellow-countrymen, scattered abroad among our various colonies over the whole surface of the globe.

Under the old dear system, the cost of sending a letter home from any of the colonies was not felt so much as it is now. The emigrant, before he left home, had always been accustomed to pay from 9d. to 1s. 2d. for letters from distant parts of the United Kingdom, and he could not complain at finding the postage from Canada or Australia to the mother-country only a little dearer. But the case has been entirely changed since Rowland Hill's plan came into operation. What seemed a moderate rate before that great improvement took place, is now an exorbitant charge, which no working-man will pay very frequently. In this, as in most other affairs, it is not the actual but the comparative cost of the article which makes it seem dear. To a person who has recently left his native land, and who is probably still suffering from homesickness, a letter from any beloved friend or relative is worth far more than many shillings; indeed, the value cannot be estimated in sterling coin. But, unfortunately, the first mode in which the emigrant discovers that the social luxury of correspondence has advanced 1100 per cent. in price, is not in the tempting shape of a letter from home. He must first write to his friends before he can expect them to write to him, and that is a task which nine persons out of ten, on the most charitable calculation, are very strongly tempted to procrastinate, from day to day, even without any pecuniary obstacle. But how much stronger the temptation to put off the writing of 'that letter' from day to day for weeks, and at last for months, when the poor emigrant, still struggling with difficulties, finds that, instead of only a penny for each letter, he must now pay a shilling? What wonder though many thousands, who have left friends and relatives behind them, all anxiously on the outlook for some tidings of their welfare, should defer the task of writing home for a month or two, finding it so dear; and, having got over the first few months, gradually become careless, and never write home at all? There are few people who have not known many instances of this kind; and we have little doubt that it is owing mainly to this cause that they have given up all correspondence with the old country.

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It is strange that Mr Sydney Herbert, Mrs Chisholm, and the rest of those honourable men and women who have taken so much pains to promote emigration, should not have seen the importance of obtaining colonial postage reform. Mr Gibbon Wakefield, in his *England and America*, published nearly twenty years ago, lays much stress upon the impulse which healthy emigration to our colonies would derive from any measure which should enable the poorer class of emigrants to write home more frequently. As a proof of this, he remarks, that the great emigration from England which had recently taken place—an increase of about 200 per cent. over former years—had been mainly caused by the publication of letters from poor emigrants to their friends at home. With a view to encourage such correspondence, he suggests that, for some years after their arrival in a colony, poor emigrants should be allowed the privilege of sending their letters free of postage. Thanks to Rowland Hill, we have learned that letters can be carried at so very small a cost, that even the poor can afford to pay the sum charged by the post-office authorities in this country; and it requires little more than a stroke of the colonial secretary's pen to extend the same invaluable privilege to the thousands of emigrants who leave this country every month for some one or other of our numerous colonies. What Mr Gibbon Wakefield says of the free-postage plan of that time, would apply with nearly equal force to the proposed Colonial Penny-Postage:—'In this way, not only would the necessary evil of going to a colony be diminished—that is, the emigrants would depart with the pleasant assurance of being able to communicate with their friends at home—but the poorer classes in the mother-country would always hear the truth as to the prospects of emigrants; and not only the truth, but truth in which they would not suspect any falsehood.' He goes on to say, that the statements published about that time, by an emigration-board sitting in Downing Street, shewing what high wages were obtainable in the colonies, 'though perfectly true, have not been received with implicit faith by the harassed, and therefore suspicious class to whom they were addressed; nor would any statements made by the government ever obtain so much credit as letters from the emigrants themselves.' All who have ever paid any attention to the subject of emigration, and who have mixed familiarly among the poorer classes, will agree with Mr Wakefield. All the government returns that ever were made, backed by ever so many extracts from colonial newspapers, about the high rate of wages, and the cheapness of provisions, will not make half the impression upon a poor man which a single letter from an emigrant brother, a son, or a trustworthy friend, will produce.

We should be glad to see the country rouse itself on this important question, regarding which numerous meetings have already been held.

SURVEYING VOYAGE OF THE RATTLESNAKE.

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Since war went out of fashion, many officers of the British navy have been employed in exploring seas, and surveying coasts, in different parts of the world, for the laudable purpose of facilitating navigation; and there would be little harm in supposing, that there might be as much glory in verifying the position and extent of a shoal or sunken rock, as in capturing an enemy's frigate. At all events, these surveying voyages furnish useful occupation, not unattended with danger; and they involve the necessity for a good deal of hard work, of a dry and technical character, three years being the time usually allotted to a cruise. Australia, owing to the dangerous character of its northern and eastern shores, has been the scene of numerous surveys, among the latest of which was that by Captain Blackwood in the *Fly*. One important result of this survey was the finding of a passage through the great Barrier Reef for vessels navigating Torres Strait; but as more than one passage was considered essential to the safety of a route so much frequented, the *Rattlesnake* was commissioned, in September 1846, for a further survey, to be carried on in what is called the Coral Sea, having New Guinea, the Louisiade Archipelago, and the continent of Australia, as its boundaries.[3]

After some months spent in preliminary examination of different parts of the Australian shores and seas, the *Rattlesnake* sailed from Sydney, at the end of April 1848, for the main object of her cruise. She had the *Bramble*, a small schooner, as tender, and was accompanied by the *Tam o' Shanter*, a vessel chartered for the conveyance of Mr Kennedy's expedition, which was to land at Rockingham Bay, 1200 miles to the northward, 'and explore the country to the eastward of the dividing range, running along the north-east coast of Australia, at a variable distance from the shore, and terminating at Cape York.' Having assisted in landing this party, and arranged to meet them at the head of Princess Charlotte's Bay, on their toilsome, and, as it proved, disastrous overland journey, the ships pursued their route, and soon commenced a series of triangulations, which were continued without a break for more than 600 miles. The *Bramble* waited ten days at the appointed rendezvous without seeing anything of the overland expedition, which, as it afterwards appeared, did not reach the same latitude until two months later, and then at a considerable distance from the coast.

In October, the vessels were at Cape York, waiting for Mr Kennedy, and receiving supplies from a storeship despatched from Sydney, and letters from the 'post-office' on Booby Island. In his capacity as naturalist and ethnologist, Mr Macgillivray made frequent excursions, collecting plants and animals, and words for a vocabulary. The natives are described as inordinately fond of smoking whenever they can get *choka*, as they call tobacco. 'The pipe—which is a piece of bamboo as thick as the arm, and two

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or three feet long—is first filled with tobacco-smoke, and then handed round the company, seated on the ground in a ring; each takes a long inhalation, and passes the pipe to his neighbour, slowly allowing the smoke to exhale. On several occasions at Cape York,' continues the author, 'I have seen a native so affected by a single inhalation, as to be rendered nearly senseless, with the perspiration bursting out at every pore, and require a draught of water to restore him; and although myself a smoker, yet, on the only occasion when I tried this mode of using tobacco, the sensations of nausea and faintness were produced.' There is something new in the idea of taking whiffs of ready-made smoke, which might perhaps be turned to account by enterprising purveyors of social enjoyments on this side of the world.

After the abortive attempt to establish the colony of 'North Australia' at Port Curtis, at a cost of L.15,000, and the abandonment of Port Essington, it is not uninteresting to learn that Cape York presents many natural capabilities for a settlement. There is a good harbour, safe anchorage, abundance of fresh water all the year round, and a moderate extent of cultivable land, all of which will help to constitute it a desirable coaling station for the contemplated line of steamers from Sydney to Singapore and India. The Port-Essington experiment was so complete a failure, that after trying for eleven years, the colonists were 'not even able to keep themselves in fresh vegetables.' Fortunately, but little encouragement was ever offered to permanent settlers, or the disappointments caused by an unproductive soil and unhealthy climate would have been greatly multiplied. A singular example of the *lex talionis* occurred among the natives at this place. One of them having been severely wounded in punishment for an offence, the penalty was considered too severe, and 'it was finally determined that, upon Munjerrijo's recovery, the two natives who had wounded him should offer their heads to him to be struck with a club—the usual way, it would appear, of settling such matters.'

Here we find, too, another of those instances of intelligence in a native, the more extraordinary when contrasted with the low mental condition of the aborigines in general. Sir Thomas Mitchell, and other Australian travellers, have spoken of their acutely-endowed guides in terms almost of affection; and Mr Macgillivray relates that, during his stay at Port Essington, a native named Neinmal became greatly attached to him. 'One day,' he continues, 'while detained by rainy weather at my camp, I was busy in skinning a fish; Neinmal watched me attentively for some time, and then withdrew, but returned in half an hour afterwards with the skin of another fish in his hand, prepared by himself, and so well done, too, that it was added to the collection. He went with us to Singapore, Java, and Sydney, and, from his great good-humour, became a favourite with all on board—picking

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up the English language with facility, and readily conforming himself to our customs and the discipline of the ship. He was very cleanly in his personal habits, and paid much attention to his dress, which was always kept neat and tidy. I was often much amused and surprised by the oddity and justness of his remarks upon the many strange sights which a voyage of this kind brought before him.' The *Nemesis* steamer underweigh puzzled him at first; he then thought it was 'all same big cart, only got him shingles (wooden roofing-tiles, so called) on wheels!' Neinmal spoke of his countrymen as 'big fools,' and held white men in such estimation, that he volunteered for a voyage to England; but having been prevented, returned to Port Essington, where he learned to read and write. His superiority rendered him obnoxious to the older members of his family; and one day, while on a visit to his tribe, 'he was roused from sleep to find himself surrounded by a host of savages thirsting for his blood. They told him to rise, but he merely raised himself upon his elbow, and said: "If you want to kill me, do so where I am; I won't get up. Give me a spear and club, and I'll fight you all one by one!" He had scarcely spoken, when he was speared from behind; spear after spear followed, and as he lay writhing on the ground, his savage murderers literally dashed him to pieces with their clubs.'

In June 1849, the *Rattlesnake* and *Bramble* were at work in the Louisiade Archipelago, finding out the safest channels and anchorages among its numerous rocks, shoals, and reefs. The natives of some of the islands had never seen Europeans before, yet seemed little inclined to acknowledge the superiority of their visitors. They manifested but little alarm on witnessing the effects of firearms; and on one occasion attacked two of the ship's boats with a courage and self-reliance extraordinary under the circumstances. In general characteristics, they resemble the Torres Strait islanders: some of them friz their hair up into a mop two feet in diameter, wear a comb nearly a yard long, and bunches of dogs' teeth hanging behind, by way of ornament, and take no little pride in adorning their persons with paint and tattoo-marks, and flowers and plants of strong odour. Bracelets of various kinds are a favourite decoration, and among these the most curious 'is that made of a human lower jaw, with one or more collar-bones closing the upper side, crossing from one angle to the other. Whether these are the jaws of former friends or enemies,' says Mr Macgillivray, 'we had no means of ascertaining; no great value appeared to be attached to them; and it was observed, as a curious circumstance, that none of these jaws had the teeth discoloured by the practice of betel-chewing.'

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A supply of yams being wanted, the cutter was sent one day at the beginning of July to open a trade, if possible, with the natives of Brierly Island, on which occasion 'Mr Brady took charge of the bartering, and drawing a number of lines upon the sandy beach, explained that when each was covered with a yam, he would give an axe in return. At first, some little difficulty occurred, as the yams were brought down very slowly—two or three at a time; but at length the first batch was completed, and the axe handed over. The man who got it had been trembling with anxiety for some time back, holding Mr Brady by the arm, and watching the promised axe with eager eye. When he obtained possession of it, he became quite wild with joy, laughing and screaming, and flourishing the axe over his head. After this commencement, the bartering went on briskly, amidst a great deal of uproar—the men passing between the village and the beach at full speed, with basketfuls of yams, and too intent on getting the *kiram kelumai* (iron axes) to think of anything else.' In this way, 368 pounds of yams were collected, at a cost of about a half-penny per pound.

Among contrivances for procuring food, the natives of some of the islands train the sucking-fish (*Echeneis remora*) for the chase in the water, as dogs are trained to hunt on land. A line is made fast to the creature's tail; it is then started in pursuit of prey, and as soon as it has attached itself to a turtle, or any other 'game,' the line is hauled in, and the prize secured. While the *Rattlesnake* lay at anchor, a number of sucking-fishes took up their quarters under her bottom, and whenever the sailors dropped a bait overboard, it was always seized by one of the *remorae*, greatly to the annoyance of the anglers on deck. 'Being quite a nuisance,' writes Mr Macgillivray, 'and useless as food, Jack often treated them as he would a shark, by "spritsail-yarding," or some still less refined mode of torture. One day, some of us, while walking the poop, had our attention directed to a sucking-fish, about two and a half feet in length, which had been made fast by the tail to a billet of wood, by a fathom or so of spun-yarn, and turned adrift. An immense striped shark, apparently about fourteen feet in length, which had been cruising about the ship all the morning, sailed slowly up, and turning slightly on one side, attempted to seize the seemingly helpless fish; but the sucker, with great dexterity, made himself fast in a moment to the shark's back. Off darted the monster at full speed—the sucker holding on as fast as a limpet to a rock, and the billet towing astern. He then rolled over and over, tumbling about, when, wearied with his efforts, he lay quiet for a little. Seeing the float, the shark got it into his mouth, and disengaging the sucker by a tug on the line, made a bolt at the fish; but his puny antagonist was again too quick, and fixing himself close behind the dorsal fin, defied the efforts of the shark to disengage him, although he rolled over and over, lashing the water with his tail until it foamed all round.' After such a spirited combat, it is somewhat tantalising to read, that the final result could not clearly be made out; it is scarcely possible, however, not to wish success to the remora.

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On the 18th August, a party landed on the coast of New Guinea, and paid a friendly visit to some of the Papuans who had been off to the ship, and found them less fierce and distrustful than those of the islands. Some of them thought the muskets were water-vessels, and others were afraid of a knife: it was too sharp. They are excellent mimics; and one of them imitated the English drummer so cleverly on an old tin-can, as to excite roars of laughter among all who witnessed the performance. Some of their dances are extraordinary, more resembling a fencing-match than movements of the light fantastic toe; and the following description of a dance after nightfall is curious:—'On seeing a number of lights along the beach, we at first thought they proceeded from a fishing-party, but on looking through a night-glass, the group was seen to consist of above a dozen people, each carrying a blazing torch, and going through the movements of a dance. At one time, they extended rapidly into line; at another, closed, dividing into two parties, advancing and retreating, crossing and recrossing, and mixing up with each other. This continued for half an hour; and having apparently been got up for our amusement, a rocket was sent up for theirs, and a blue-light burned; but the dancing had ceased, and the lights disappeared.'

On the 1st October, the *Rattlesnake* was again at Cape York. About the middle of the month, an incident occurred which relieved the dulness of a period of inactivity—the discovery and rescue of a white woman, who had been for some time a prisoner among the natives. We shall abridge Mr Macgillivray's narrative of her story. Her name is Barbara Thomson; she was born at Aberdeen, and emigrated to New South Wales with her parents. About four and a half years prior to the event, she had accompanied her husband in a small cutter, to try to save some part of the cargo of a whaler that had been wrecked on the Bampton shoal. The pilot missed his route, two of the crew were drowned by accident, another was left on a desert island, and at last the little vessel, caught by a gale in Torres Strait, struck upon a reef on Prince of Wales Island. The only two men left on board were drowned in attempting to swim to shore; but the woman was saved by a party of natives, one of whom, Boroto by name, forced her to live with him as his wife, in which position she for a time was exposed to much cruelty, owing to the jealousy of the women of the tribe. She eventually was saved from persecution by a singular belief prevalent among the natives—that white people are the ghosts of departed aborigines—one of the principal among the blacks having persuaded himself that he had found in her his long-lost daughter, after whom Barbara was named Giom. The head-quarters of the tribe were on an island, and the captive frequently saw vessels pass on their way to Torres Strait, but without any opportunity of making her case known. She had heard of the first arrival of the *Rattlesnake*

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and tender at Cape York; and on the last visit, had induced the blacks to escort her to within a short distance of the anchorage, they believing that she only wished to shake hands with her countrymen, and would soon return, laden with knives, axes, and tobacco. Although lame, she hurried on, fearing that her conductors might change their mind, and made towards some of the ship's company, who were on shore shooting. Except a fringe of leaves, she was quite naked, and her appearance was so dirty and miserable, that they took her for a *gin*, or native woman, and paid no attention to her, when she called out: 'I am a white woman; why do you leave me?' She was immediately taken on board the ship, and but just in time to escape from a small party of the tribe, who had followed to detain her.

Mr Macgillivray continues: 'Upon being asked by Captain Stanley, whether she really preferred remaining with us to accompanying the natives back to their island, as she would be allowed her free choice in the matter, she was so much agitated as to find difficulty in expressing her thankfulness, making use of scraps of English alternately with the Kowrarega language, and then, suddenly awakening to the recollection that she was not understood, the poor creature blushed all over, and with downcast eyes beat her forehead with her hand, as if to assist in collecting her scattered thoughts. At length, after a pause, she found words to say: "Sir, I am a Christian, and would rather go back to my own friends." At the same tune, it was remarked by every one that she had not lost the feelings of womanly modesty; even after having lived so long among naked blacks, she seemed acutely to feel the singularity of her position, dressed only in a couple of shirts, in the midst of a crowd of her own countrymen.'

In accordance with her wish, Mrs Thomson was kept on board, and had a cabin given up to her own use; good living and medical attendance soon cured the soreness of her tanned and blistered skin, and the ophthalmia, which had deprived her of the sight of one eye. The black Boroto grew desperate when he found that she would not return to him, and threatened to cut off her head to satisfy his vengeance—a catastrophe which the rescued woman avoided by not going on shore; and she was eventually handed over, in good condition, to her parents on the return of the vessel to Sydney, at the beginning of 1850.

Shortly afterwards, to the great sorrow of all on board, Captain Stanley died, at the early age of thirty-eight. He had brought his scientific labours to a successful close, and might have looked forward to a brief period of honourable repose; but the fatigue and anxiety of a laborious survey in a hot climate, and the news of the decease of his father, the late Bishop of Norwich, depressed him beyond the power of recovery. This was not the only melancholy incident connected with the *Rattlesnake's* voyage. Mr Kennedy's expedition had proved a most disastrous failure.

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The party, as we have seen, had landed in Rockingham Bay, and commenced their journey northwards, with a well-appointed caravan of carts, horses, and men, all in high spirits. But more than a month elapsed before they could extricate themselves from the swamps and scrub which cover that part of the country; and at the beginning of November, five months later, they had not advanced more than 400 miles in a direct line: nineteen of the horses were dead, and the stock of provisions nearly exhausted. Mr Kennedy then determined on pushing forwards, with a light party, for Cape York, 150 miles distant, whence relief was to be sent to the eight individuals who were left behind, nearly worn out with fatigue and exhaustion. This party consisted of the leader; Jackey Jackey, a faithful and intelligent native; and three of the strongest of the men. One of the latter accidentally shot himself, and the other two became so weak, that they also were left at an encampment, with as large a supply of provisions as could be spared. After incredible hardships, Mr Kennedy and his companion reached Escape River, twenty miles from Cape York, where they were attacked by a party of natives, while entangled in a scrub, and the gallant leader of the expedition fell a victim to their ferocity. Three spears had entered his body, and Jackey Jackey, in simple but touching words, describes his last moments. 'Mr Kennedy,' he asked, after having carried the wounded man out of sight of the natives, 'are you going to leave me?' 'Yes, my boy, I am going to leave you,' was the reply of the dying man. 'I am very bad, Jackey. You take the books, Jackey, to the captain; but not the big ones: the governor will give anything for them.' 'I then tied up the papers. He then said: "Jackey, give me paper, and I will write." I gave him paper and pencil, and he tried to write; and he then fell back and died, and I caught him as he fell back, and held him, and I then turned round myself, and cried. I was crying a good while, until I got well; that was about an hour, and then I buried him, I dug up the ground with a tomahawk, and covered him over with logs, then grass, and my shirt and trousers. That night I left him, near dark.'

Jackey contrived to evade the pursuers, and a week afterwards got on board the schooner, which was lying in Port Albany, Cape York, waiting the arrival of Mr Kennedy's expedition. On learning the fatal result, the captain sailed, in the hope of saving the men who had been left behind. Of the two who had belonged to the advanced party, nothing was discovered except some articles of clothing, and it was believed they had perished. Of the eight first left near Weymouth Bay, two were still alive, but in the last stage of exhaustion, having endured privations and hardships almost without a parallel.

The brig *Freak* was subsequently despatched from Sydney, for the purpose of securing any papers or documents, or the mortal remains of any of the unfortunate expedition. Jackey Jackey was on board, and by means of his remarkable sagacity, led the way to the respective camps. The bones of two of the men were found; also some of Mr Kennedy's instruments, portions of his clothing, and his manuscript journal, which had been hidden in the hollow of a tree; but after a minute search for the place where his body had been buried, it could not be discovered.

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We might extend this painful narrative did our space permit; but we must now close, with a recommendation of the book under notice to those who are interested in the progress of natural or geographical discovery.

FOOTNOTES:

[3] Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake, commanded by the late Captain Owen Stanley, during the years 1846-50, including Discoveries and Surveys in New Guinea, the Louisiade Archipelago, &c. &c. By John Macgillivray, F.R.G.S., Naturalist to the Expedition. London: Boone. 2 vols. 8vo.

A CELEBRATED FRENCH CLOCKMAKER.

The superiority of French clocks and watches has been achieved only by the laborious efforts of many ingenious artisans. Of one of these, to whom France owes no little of its celebrity in this branch of art, we propose to speak. Breguet was the name of this remarkable individual. He was a native of Neuchatel, in Switzerland, and thence he was removed, while young, to Versailles, for the purpose of learning his business as a horologist. His parents being poor, he found it necessary to rely on his own energy for advancement in life.

At Versailles, he served a regular apprenticeship, during which his diligence in improving himself was almost beyond example. He became greatly attached to his profession; and soon, by studious perseverance, his talents were developed by real knowledge. At length the term of apprenticeship expired, and as the master was expressing to the pupil the satisfaction which his good conduct and diligence had given him, he was struck with astonishment when he replied: 'Master, I have a favour to ask of you. I feel that I have not always as I ought employed my time, which was to have indemnified you for the cares and lessons you have spent on me. I beg of you, then, to permit me to continue with you three months longer without salary.' This request confirmed the attachment of the master to his pupil. But scarcely was the apprenticeship of the latter over, when he lost his mother and his stepfather, and found himself alone in the world with an elder sister—being thus left to provide, by his own industry, for the maintenance of two persons. Nevertheless, he ardently desired to complete his necessary studies, for he felt that the knowledge of mathematics was absolutely indispensable to his attaining perfection in his art. This determined purpose conquered every obstacle. Not only did he labour perseveringly for his sister and himself, but also found means to attend regularly a course of public lectures which the Abbe Marie was then giving at the College Mazarin. The professor, having remarked the unwearied assiduity of the young clockmaker, made a friend of him, and delighted in considering him as his beloved pupil. This friendship, founded on the truest esteem and the most affectionate gratitude, contributed wondrously to the progress of the student.

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The great metamorphosis which was effected so suddenly in the young clockmaker was very remarkable. There is something very encouraging in his example, affording as it does a proof of the power of the man who arms himself with a determined purpose. At first, the struggle with difficulties appears hard, painful, almost impossible; but only let there be a little perseverance, the obstacles vanish one after the other, the way is made plain: instead of the thorns which seem to choke it, verdant laurels suddenly spring up, the reward of constant and unwearied labour. Thus it was with our studious apprentice. His ideas soon expand; his work acquires more precision; a new and a more extended horizon opens before him. From a skilful workman, it is not long before he becomes an accomplished artist. Yet a few years, and the name of Breguet is celebrated.

At the epoch of the first troubles of the Revolution of 1789, Breguet had already founded the establishment which has since produced so many master-pieces of mechanism. The most honourable, the most flattering reputation was his. One anecdote will serve to prove the high repute in which he was held, even out of France. One day a watch, to the construction of which he had given his whole attention, happened to fall into the hands of Arnold, the celebrated English watchmaker. He examined it with interest, and surveyed with admiration the simplicity of its mechanism, the perfection of the workmanship. He could scarcely be persuaded that a specimen thus executed could be the work of French industry. Yielding to the love of his art, he immediately set out for Paris, without any other object than simply to become acquainted with the French artist. On arriving in Paris, he went immediately to see Breguet, and soon these two men were acquainted with each other. They seem, indeed, to have formed a mutual friendship. In order that Breguet might give Arnold the highest token of his esteem and affection, he requested him to take his son with him to be taught his profession, and this was acceded to.

The Revolution destroyed the first establishment of Breguet, and finally forced the great artist to seek an asylum on a foreign shore. There generous assistance enabled him, with his son, to continue his ingenious experiments in his art. At length, having returned to Paris after two years' absence, he opened a new establishment, which continued to flourish till 1823, when France lost this man, the pride and boast of its industrial class. Breguet was member of the Institute, was clockmaker to the navy, and member of the Bureau of Longitude. He was indeed the most celebrated clockmaker of the age; he had brought to perfection every branch of his art. Nothing could surpass the delicacy and ingenuity of his free escapement with a maintaining power. To him we owe another escapement called 'natural,' in which there is no spring, and oil is not needed; but another, and still more perfect one, is the double escapement, where the precision of the contacts renders the use of oil equally unnecessary, and in which the waste of power in the pendulum is repaired at each vibration.

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The sea-watches or chronometers of Breguet are famous throughout the world. It is well known that these watches are every moment subject to change of position, from the rolling and pitching of the vessel. Breguet conceived the bold thought of enclosing the whole mechanism of the escapement and the spring in a circular envelope, making a complete revolution every two minutes. The inequality of position is thus, as it were, equalised on that short lapse of time; the mechanism itself producing compensation, whether the chronometer is subjected to any continuous movement, or kept steady in an inclined or upright position. Breguet did still more: he found means to preserve the regularity of his chronometers even in case of their getting any sudden shock or fall, and this he did by the parachute. Sir Thomas Brisbane put one of them to the proof, carrying it about with him on horseback, and on long journeys and voyages; in sixteen months, the greatest daily loss was only a second and a half—that is, the 57,600th part of a daily revolution.

Such is the encouraging example of Breguet, who was at first only a workman. And to this he owes his being the best judge of good workmen, as he was the best friend to them. He sought out such everywhere, even in other countries; gave them the instruction of a master of the art; and treated them with the kindness of a father. They were indebted to him for their prosperity, and he owed to them the increase of fortune and of fame. He well understood the advantages of a judicious division of labour, according to the several capabilities of artisans. By this means, he was able to meet the demand for pieces of his workmanship, not less remarkable for elegance and beauty than for extreme accuracy. It may indeed be said, that Breguet's efforts gave a character to French horology that it has never lost. So much may one man do in his day and generation to give an impetus to an important branch of national industry.

SAINT ELIZABETH OF BOHEMIA.

'Would that we two were lying
Beneath the church-yard sod,
With our limbs at rest in the green earth's breast,
And our souls at home with God!'[4]

I never lay me down to sleep at night
But in my heart I sing that little song:
The angels hear it, as, a pitying throng,
They touch my burning lids with fingers bright,
Like moonbeams—pale, impalpable, and light.
And when my daily pious tasks are done,
And all my patient prayers said one by one,
God hears it. Seems it sinful in His sight
That round my slow burnt-offering of quenched will,
One quivering human sigh creeps windlike still?

That when my orisons in silence fail,
Lingers one tremulous note of human wail?
Dear lord—spouse—hero—martyr—saint! erelong
I think God will forgive my singing that poor song.

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A year ago, I bade my little son
  Bear on a pilgrimage a sacred load
  Of alms; he cried out, fainting on the road,
'Mother, O mother, would that this were done!'
Him I reproved with tears, and said: 'Go on,
  Nor feebly sink ere half thy task be o'er.'
  Would not God say to me the same, and more?
I will not sing that song. Thou, dearest one,
Husband—no, *brother*—stretch thy steadfast hand
Across the void! Mine grasps it. Now I stand,
My woman-weakness nerved to strength divine.
We'll quaff life's aloe-cup as though 'twere wine,
Each to the other; journeying on apart,
Till at heaven's golden doors we two leap heart to heart.

FOOTNOTES:

[4] From Kingsley's *Saint's Tragedy*. Elizabeth, Princess of Bohemia, the most sincere among the mistaken devotee saints of the middle ages, renounced her royal state, her husband and children, and spent her life in the sternest asceticism, and in the most self-denying acts of charity.

A MAN-OF-WAR, OR A MAN OF PEACE.

It will probably be remembered that, a few years ago, a great excitement was caused by the discovery of vast deposits of guano upon the island of Ichaboe, situated on the west coast of Africa. The remarkable fertilising qualities of guano gave it great value as an article of commerce, and a large number of vessels were despatched from various ports to take in cargoes at the island. It was computed that at one time not less than 500 vessels were lying off Ichaboe, and as there was no settled authority to regulate the trade of the place, a scene of indescribable confusion and tumult soon presented itself. The crews of several of the ships having established themselves upon the table-land at the top of the island (the island being little more than a huge rock, rising with almost perpendicular cliffs from the ocean), a dispute arose between them and their captains, which soon proceeded to open mutiny on the part of the men. The only access to their position being by long ladders, the men set their masters at defiance, and held possession of their stronghold, which was inaccessible, except by permission of the mutineers. The captains despatched a vessel to the Cape of Good Hope, for the purpose of laying a complaint before the governor, and soliciting his aid. The governor was about to despatch a man-of-war—the only remedy that is generally thought of in such cases—when a good, devoted man, a missionary at Cape Town, named Bertram, hearing of the affair, represented to the governor his earnest desire to spare the effusion

of blood, and his conviction that, if he were allowed to proceed to the island, he could bring the quarrel to an amicable settlement. Mr Bertram obtained the consent of the authorities, and the order for the

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sailing of the man-of-war was suspended. He proceeded to Ichaboe, and being rowed ashore, began to ascend one of the lofty ladders. Two seamen, well armed, who had guard above, shouted to know who he was and what he wanted. 'A friend, who wants to speak to you,' was the reply. The guards seeing a single man, unarmed, climbing fearlessly towards them, permitted him to ascend. He called the men round him, spoke kindly but faithfully to them, heard their complaints, and undertook to negotiate for them. He did this with so much tact and judgment, that a reconciliation was soon effected, and harmony restored between the captains and their crews. Mr Bertram remained ten days with the men on the summit of the island, employing the time to the best advantage in preaching and teaching amongst them. It was only on the plea of urgent duty that the men would permit him to leave them. They clustered round him, as he was about to descend from amongst them for the last time; each was eager to wring him by the hand, and tears rolled down many a weather-beaten cheek as he bade them a last adieu. 'God bless you, sir!' they exclaimed; 'you have been our true friend; would that you could stay amongst us, for we feel that you have done us good.' It will be well for nations when they have more faith in the power of a man of peace, and less in that of a man-of-war.—*Bond of Brotherhood*.

NOTE TO INTENDING EMIGRANTS.

In reply to numerous correspondents who make inquiry respecting the most suitable fields for emigration, we have again to intimate, that we cannot assume the responsibility of privately advising individuals on the important step of emigrating to one place in preference to another. Every one is best acquainted with his own desires, abilities, and necessities, and should, with the general assistance of public opinion and the press, be able to make up his mind whether he should or should not emigrate, or what distant land will be to him most answerable and agreeable. With the view of doing all in our power to assist in forming this resolution, we have lately had prepared, under our own inspection, a series of cheap and accessible Manuals on the subject of Emigration; containing, we believe, all desirable information for those who are disposed to emigrate; and a perusal of which may possibly obviate the necessity of seeking private counsel on any point. The Manuals may be had from any of the ordinary agents for supplying this Journal; they separately refer to AUSTRALIA, AMERICA, NEW ZEALAND, the CAPE, and PORT NATAL; and in addition, there is one devoted to general considerations and directions. The whole, however, may be obtained bound in a single volume.

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