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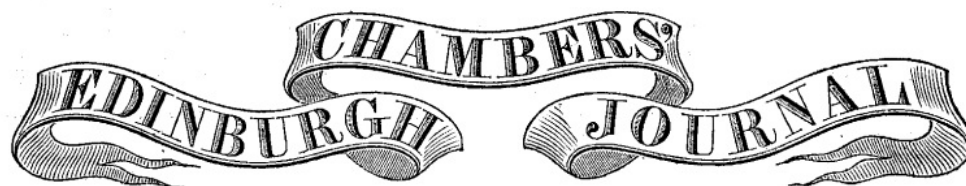
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CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

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THE DINGY HOUSE.

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LONDON is like a large company, where it is necessary for the master or mistress of the house to introduce a great many people to each other. Everybody in that overgrown metropolis has things within a few doors of his residence, which, if they were suddenly described to him, he would hear of with deep interest or extreme astonishment. There is a plain back street near

the Haymarket, bearing the title of Great Windmill Street, in which there is a large, dingy-looking house standing somewhat detached, and not appearing to be in the hands of ordinary tenants. Very near this, is a distinguished haunt of gaiety, very well whitened, and looking very smart, but which would be no index to the character or purposes of the dingy mansion. A group of dirty children will be found disporting at marbles or pitch-and-toss on the paved recess in front; but neither would that scene be found in any kind of harmony with the house itself. It is evidently a house with a mystery.

Very few people would be found in the course of a day to pass out of or into that house. A blind would seldom be raised. A fashionable carriage would not once in a twelvemonth be seen rolling up to the gloomy portals. Supposing, however, that any one were to be so curious as to watch the house for an afternoon, he would probably see two women in extraordinary dresses come up to the door, apparently laden with some heavy packages, shrouded under their wide black cloaks. He would see the door opened with some caution, and the two women would then walk in, and be seen no more for that day. He might speculate for hours about the business in which these women had been engaged, but in vain. He might make inquiries in the neighbourhood, but probably with as little result; for, in London, it must be an extraordinary family indeed which provokes any inquiry among neighbours, and most undoubtedly the inmates of the mansion would never think of proclaiming what they were, or how they lived.

Having perhaps by this time excited some curiosity, we must endeavour to satisfy it. We happened by mere chance, when spending an evening with a friend in a distant part of the town, to hear of this house and its tenants; and the doings and character of its inmates struck our mind as something so extraordinary, and in some respects so beautiful, that we resolved, if possible, to pay it a visit. We did so a few days thereafter, under the conduct of a young friend, who kindly undertook to smooth away all difficulties in the way of our reception. We can, therefore, give some account of the dingy house, with a tolerable assurance that, strange as the matter may appear, it is no more than true.

This dingy house is possessed by ten women, chiefly natives of France, who form a branch of a religious society of recent origin in that country, entitled, *Les Petites Sœurs des Pauvres* (*Little Sisterhood for the Poor*). They have been in this house only for a few months, but are already fully engaged in the business to which they have devoted themselves—which is the care and nurture of infirm and destitute old women. The extraordinary thing is that the Sisters, though most of them are in their education and previous habits *ladies*, literally go about begging for the means of maintaining these poor people. Everything is done, indeed, by begging; for on entering the sisterhood they renounce all earthly possessions. They have begged the means of furnishing their house, and paying their rent, which is not an inconsiderable sum; they daily beg for the food, clothes, and cordials required for themselves and the objects of their charity. What is even more singular, these ladies in all respects *serve* the old women, wash for them, cook for them, act as their nurses. They treat themselves less kindly, for out of the broken victuals on which exclusively the house is supported, the old women always get the first selection, and the ladies only the remaining scraps. It is altogether the most striking example of self-denial and self-devotion which has ever happened to fall under our attention in this country.

We were received in a faded old dining-room, by a Sister whose age surprised us, for she did not appear to be above five-and-twenty. Her dress consisted of coarse black serge, and a linen cap, such as is worn by poor old women in the country. She was evidently a well-educated and refined English lady, who, under a different impulse, might have very probably been indulging at this moment in the gaieties of Almacks. With great courtesy, but without for a moment departing from the serious manner in which she had first addressed us, she conducted us through the house, and explained its various arrangements. We were first shewn into a large hall in the rear, where we found about thirty little beds, only a few of which were occupied, the greater number of the inmates being able to sit up and move about the house. Nothing could exceed the homeliness of the furniture, though everything was remarkably clean. In another dormitory up stairs, we found ten or twelve bedrid women, one of them within a few months of completing the hundredth year of her age, but able to converse. Another was a comparatively young woman, who had three months ago had a limb amputated. A Sister, in her plain dark dress, stood in this room, ready to attend any of the poor women. We were next conducted to a large room, where a number of the inmates were at dinner. They rose modestly at our entrance, and we had some difficulty in inducing them to resume their seats. We were curious to see the

viands, knowing that they were composed solely of the crumbs from the rich man's table, and having some idea, that as most of the Sisters were French, there might be some skill shewn in putting these morsels into new and palatable forms. We did not, however, find that the dishes were superior to what might have been expected in a workhouse. The principal article was a pudding, composed of pounded scraps and crusts of bread, and bearing much the appearance of the oatmeal porridge of Scotland. Ladies attend the old women at table, acting entirely as servants do in a gentleman's dining-room, though only in the limited extent to which such services are required at a meal so simple. It is only after this meal is concluded, that the ladies sit down to their own equally frugal fare. We were curious to know if they indulge in tea, considering this as a sort of crucial test of their self-denying principles. We were informed that the article is not bought for them, on account of its being so expensive. Used tea-leaves are obtained from the tables of certain families of rank, and are found to be of service for the comfort of the more infirm women. After the inmates are served, if any tea be left, it is taken by the ladies.

We next descended to the kitchen, and there found a young woman at work as a cook, not a Sister, but one who may be so ere long, if she passes her novitiate successfully. The magazine of crusts and lumps of bread, of broken meat and cold soups, coffee and tea, which we saw here, was a curious sight. We were also shewn the pails and baskets in which the Sisters collect these viands. Two go forth every morning, and make a round of several hours amongst houses where they are permitted to apply. Meat goes into one compartment, bread into another. A pail of two divisions keeps a variety of things distinct from each other. Demurely pass the dark pair along the crowded thoroughfares of the metropolis, objects of momentary curiosity to many that pass them, but never pausing for a moment on their charitable mission. The only approach to a smile on our conductress's face, was when she related to us how, on their return one afternoon, a poor woman who had lost a child, traced them to the door, and made a disturbance there, under a belief that the cloak of one of them, instead of covering a collection of broken meat, concealed her infant.

We were curious to trace the feelings which actuated these ladies in devoting themselves to duties so apt to be repulsive to their class. Viewing the whole matter with a regard to its humane results, we did not doubt that benevolence was the impulse most concerned, directly or indirectly, though we of course knew that a religious sanction was essential to the scheme. In a conversation, however, with our conductress, we could not bring her to admit that mere humanity had anything to do with it. The basis on which they proceed is simply that text in which Christ expresses his appreciation of those who give a cup of cold water in his name. It is professedly nothing more than an example of those charitable societies which arise in connection with the Catholic faith, and in obedience to its principles, and which require that entire renunciation of the world which to a Protestant mind appears so objectionable. We have little doubt, nevertheless, that a certain amount of benevolence is a necessary, though it may not be a directly acknowledged pre-requisite for the profession; for it is admitted that some novices find that they have not the *vocation*, and abandon the attempt; while others, by the grace of God, are enabled to go on. We cannot regard this idea of 'vocation' as something entirely apart from the inherent feelings.

So far as we could understand, the Sisters regard more expressly the value of the act of obedience to the injunction of Christ, than the feeling from which, we would say, the injunction sprang—an error, as we most humbly think, though one of a kind which we do not feel called upon to discuss in the presence of results so much in accordance with our own best feelings. We would only say, that there is something disappointing in finding how much the whole procedure is beheld by these self-devoting women, as reflecting on their own destinies. It appears that their patients often grumble both at the food and the attendance which they receive. The Sisters say, they like to meet an ungrateful old woman, as it tries their humility and forbearance: it makes the greater merit towards an end in which they themselves are concerned. Now, we would put all this aside, and think only of the divinely recommended sentiment of the text, as calculated in some degree to make our life on earth an approach to that of its author. It is really hypercritical, however, even to intimate these dissenting remarks, especially when our main end is, after all, merely to bring the public into knowledge of an extraordinary phenomenon in human conduct, going on in an age which seems generally of so opposite a character.

The Society of Les Petites Sœurs is, it appears, a new one, having originated only a few years ago in the exertions of an old female servant, who, having

saved a little money, thought it could not be better employed than in succouring the aged and infirm of her own sex. Her idea was taken up by others of her own order, as well as by women of superior grade. The society was formed, and establishments were quickly set up in various parts of France. It was only in 1851 that a detachment of the sisterhood came to England, and settled themselves in Great Windmill Street, where, whatever be their motives, it must be admitted they contribute in no slight degree to the alleviation of that vast mass of misery which seems an inseparable element of large cities. They had, at the time of our visit, forty-seven old persons under their care.

At a subsequent period of the same day, we visited an establishment somewhat similar at Hammersmith—at least similar in the repulsive character of the duties, though externally much more elegant. It is housed in a range of good buildings secluded in a garden, and is devoted to the reception of unfortunate young women who, under penitent feelings, wish to be restored to respectable society. The Sisterhood of the Good Shepherd, as they are called, entertain in this house nearly 100 such women, who, while undergoing the process of religious and moral regeneration, employ themselves in washing, so as to contribute to their own support. We saw the whole engaged in their humble employment, excepting a few who were under training in a school. At all times, in their bedrooms, at their meals, in their work-rooms, in their play-ground, they are under the immediate eye of some of the Sisters; but the general treatment includes as much kindness as is consistent with the object held in view. One trait of this kindness struck us as involving a remarkable delicacy: there is never, from first to last, one word of reference made to their former life. They are accepted as so many children coming to school for the first time. Even their names are sunk out of sight, and new ones applied. The Sisters speak of them as 'the children.' We learned that Protestant women are welcomed, but are expected not to stand out in inconvenient dissent from the ordinary rules of the house. We walked into the garden under the care of the mother-superior, and saw their little burial-ground, marked with low wooden crosses inscribed to Laura, to Perpetua, to Mary of the Seven Dolours, and other such names, indicating so many unfortunates who had here found a rest from their troubles. We likewise visited the chapel, the body of which is arranged for the use of the sisterhood; while a wing running off at the side of the altar, and concealed from view, is provided with seats for the penitents. The whole establishment is characterised by remarkably good taste. There is here a more cheerful tone than in the Great Windmill Street institution. The Sisters spoke, as usual, of being entirely happy—that unaccountable phenomenon to a Protestant mind.

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We do not need to inform the reader, that conventual establishments are not now so thin-sown in England as they were a few years ago, or that they occasionally draw into their circle individuals who started in life with very different prospects before them. The whole subject is one worthy of some inquiry, as a feature of our social state, by no means devoid of political importance; and it is for this very reason that we draw attention to the subject. Instead of contemptuously ignoring such things, let them, we say, be made known and investigated in a calm and philosophical spirit. It is for want of a steady comprehension of facts of the kind here adverted to, that an illusion is kept up respecting our existing social condition. It is heedlessly said, and every one repeats the error, that the age is a hard, mechanical one, which shines only in splendid materialities; but is it compatible with this notion, that there is ten times more earnest religious feeling of one kind and another than there was thirty years ago; that antiquities, mediæval literature and architecture, are studied with a zeal hitherto unknown; and that such mystical writers as Carlyle, Tennyson, and Browning, carry off the palm from all the calm-blooded old-school men of letters? We rather think it is the most romantic, supra-material age that has yet been seen. The resurrection of conventual life, in some instances Catholic, in others Protestant, appears to us as one of the facts of this unexpected reaction, which doubtless will run its course, and then give place to something else, though not, we trust, till out of its commixture of good and evil some novelty hopeful for humanity has sprung.

THE LATE EMPEROR OF CHINA.

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THE announcement of a work by the late Dr Gutzlaff, entitled the *Life of Taou-Kwang, late Emperor of China, with Memoirs of the Court of Peking*,^[1] excited a good deal of expectation; but for our own part, now that the book is published, we must confess our disappointment on finding it not a well-

constructed memoir, but a volume bearing the appearance of a collection of materials put together just as they came to hand, with a view to re-arrangement. Declining health probably prevented the author from perfecting his plan, and hurried his pages to the press; death has now removed him from his labours. But a collection of authentic historic facts is valuable, however loosely embodied; and few writers have enjoyed such favourable opportunities as Dr Gutzlaff for obtaining them.

Referring first to the personal history of Taou-Kwang, we find that his education was more Tatar than Chinese. He was one of the numerous grandchildren of the imperial house of Keelung, but without any expectation of filling the throne, as both his mother and paternal grandmother were inferior members of the imperial harem. The discipline under which the royal family was trained, was of the strictest kind. Each of the male children, on completing his sixth year, was placed with the rest under a course of education superintended by the state. Though eminent doctors were engaged to instruct them in Chinese literature, yet archery and horsemanship were considered higher accomplishments, and the most expert masters from Mongolia and Manchooria trained them in these exercises. They were treated as mere schoolboys, were allotted a very small income for their maintenance, were closely confined to the apartments assigned to them, kept in entire ignorance of passing events, and allowed little intercourse with the court—none with the people. Not till each had passed his twentieth year, was there any relaxation of this discipline. Taou-Kwang was about this age when his father ascended the throne, in consequence of the somewhat capricious appointment of Keelung, who abdicated, and soon after died. The new emperor surrounded himself with buffoons, playactors, and boon-companions. The debaucheries, jealousies, and cruelties of his reign, remind us of what we have half sceptically read of Nero and Caligula. But Taou-Kwang kept aloof alike from the frivolities and the intrigues of his father's court: he seemed to have no desire ungratified so long as he had his bow and arrows, his horse and matchlock; and even after he was unexpectedly nominated heir to the throne, in consequence of having personally defended his father from a band of assassins, his new expectations made no difference in his frugal and modest way of life. The emperor at length died; it did not clearly appear by what means, and it would perhaps have been troublesome to inquire: the empress-dowager waived the claims of her son; and Taou-Kwang ascended the throne without bloodshed. The luxury of the preceding reign now gave place to sobriety and economy; though the usual ceremonies of the court were strictly observed, they were conducted in the least expensive manner; and the ruling passion of the monarch soon appeared to be avarice.

Taou-Kwang had no taste either for literature or the arts; and he jumbled together in one large magazine the beautiful pictures, clocks, and musical instruments accumulated by his ancestors. To explain and repair these, there had always been Europeans, chiefly Portuguese, in attendance; and to some of these we have been indebted in times past for memoirs of the court of Peking; but Taou-Kwang dismissed the last of them. It is believed that an undefined dread of Western power had much to do with this distaste for the products of its ingenuity.

The only orgies which the emperor seemed desirous of maintaining, were feasts for the promotion of Manchoo union; on which occasions, the Manchoo assembled to eat meat without rice—in order to maintain the recollection of their Nimrodic origin—and to drink an intoxicating liquor made of mare's milk. He had a favourite sequestered abode at no great distance from the capital, where he had allowed the vegetation to run wild and rank, in order to make it a rural retreat, instead of an imperial park. All business was excluded from the precincts, and here the emperor spent much of his time, wandering solitarily on foot among the trees, amusing himself with the friends of his youth, or sailing, with some of the ladies of his family, along the mimic rivers.

According to traditional usage, the monarch must perform a pilgrimage to the tombs of his ancestors. The astronomical, or rather astrological board having ascertained the month, the day, the hour, even the minute, when the stars would prove propitious, the cavalcade set out. The princes of the blood, the ladies of the palace, and the favourite ministers of the court, formed part of the train, which was attended by at least 2000 camels. But even an emperor cannot travel through waste and desert lands without inconvenience; and though great preparations had been made beforehand in erecting temporary dwellings where no villages were to be found, yet his Celestial majesty, with his court, had often to bivouac under tents in the open air. The people crowded in thousands to see their sovereign—a liberty which, it is well known, may not be used in Peking, where every one must hasten to hide his head as from the fabled Gorgon. The ancestral tombs at Mookden, where the imperial

manes repose under care of a large garrison, were at length reached. And now Taou-Kwang became a family man, abandoning the forms of state and the pomp of empire, and mingling in familiar intercourse with his relatives and attendants. Such particulars prove that we must receive at very considerable discount the descriptions hitherto published concerning the extreme sacredness of the emperor's person, the monotonous routine of ceremony to which he is condemned, and the impossibility of his 'indulging in the least relaxation from the fatiguing support of his dignity.' Turn we now to public events.

By a series of unexpected conquests, the three largest empires in the world have been gradually approaching each other's frontiers in Asia. England, from the distant West, has formed military establishments bordering on Thibet; China, from the remote East, has come to take that country under its dominion; while Russia, the colossus of Europe, has traversed the ice-fields of Siberia, and furnished an extensive northern frontier to Mongolia and Manchooria, the Tatar dominions of China. These powers, by their combined influence, keep within bounds the lawless hordes of Asia, by whose frequent irruptions in past ages vast regions of more civilised territory were overwhelmed, and whole nations extirpated. The empire that effects most in this way is China, and that with the smallest amount of means. Its frontier army is indeed but a burlesque compared with the well-appointed warriors of England and Russia; yet the Usbecks, Calmuks, and Kinghis are kept in subjection. The volume before us gives some insight into the mode in which this is accomplished.

A formidable insurrection, excited partly by religious enthusiasm, broke out in the western parts of Chinese Tataria in 1826. An able leader was found in Tehangir, a descendant of one of the former princes. He proclaimed himself the deliverer of the faithful from the infidel yoke, drew multitudes to his standard, and proceeded victoriously from city to city. The imperial army sent to quell this insurrection cost on an average L.23,000 of our money per day; and though victories were, as usual, reported, there was no appearance of the war coming to a termination. What prowess could not effect was accomplished by bribery. The Mohammedans were themselves divided into rival factions; and the Karatak ('black caps') were induced by Chinese diplomacy to turn against the Altktak ('white caps'), to whom Tehangir belonged. He was betrayed, taken to Peking, and cut to pieces in presence of the emperor; after which, nearly the whole of Turkistan was laid waste by fire and sword. After twenty more of the rebels had been decapitated, the emperor enacted new laws for the country, with the view of attaching the people to himself by the mildness of his rule. The black caps were promoted either to offices of trust in their own country, or to places of distinction in the Chinese army. When Turkistan again became the seat of trouble in 1830, the emperor at once sent 4000 camels with 2,000,000 taëls of silver (about L.700,000) to settle matters, which was considered much wiser than to engage in a long and expensive war. A similar policy was pursued in 1847, when a formidable rising occurred, during which Kashgar was taken, and the Manchoo forces routed. The Mohammedan leaders agreed to accept the emperor's bounty; and on condition of all lives being spared, the imperial troops were allowed to recapture Kashgar as by military force. A splendid victory was of course announced in the *Peking Gazette*; and in the subsequent distribution of rewards, the diplomatist was raised ten steps above the general.

It is commonly believed that the Celestial Empire dwells in perpetual peace within itself, as the fruit of that universal spirit of subordination and filial obedience which is the great object of all its institutions. Nothing, however, can be more erroneous. Not only do the restless Tatars frequently break into revolt, but in China itself, the extortions of the mandarins, or the occurrence of famine, frequently excites a village, a city, or even a large district to rebellion; and there are cases of an infuriated population actually broiling their magistrates over a slow fire. The usual policy of Taou-Kwang in all such cases was to send an army, but at the same time to set the leaders at loggerheads by administering suitable bribes, and inducing them to betray each other. In this manner, a civil war can be brought to a speedy conclusion; and then the cruelty of the victorious government knows no bounds. 'The treatment of political prisoners,' says our author, 'is really so shocking as to be incredible, if one had not been an eye-witness of these inhuman deeds.'

The volume affords us some amusing particulars connected with the collision with England. When the British fleet was expected in the Chinese waters, the imperial orders were, to 'listen to no proposals, but fire on the ships, and annihilate them at once.' To the great emperor, it would have appeared quite ridiculous to condescend to negotiation with so inferior a power as Britain: he

had given his orders; these must be obeyed; and his minister had himself written a letter to Queen Victoria, that she might not plead ignorance of the high behests of his Celestial majesty. It was not till the fleet appeared at the mouth of the Pei-Ho, and the capital was in danger, that Taou-Kwang deigned to seek an accommodation by means of his smooth-tongued minister Keshen, who negotiated an armistice, promising that all wrongs would be redressed by a commission appointed to meet the British representatives at Canton. But as soon as the fleet turned southward, the danger was considered visionary; and again the cry arose to punish the insolence of the Western barbarians, as the English were politely designated. The empress-dowager, who was never before known to meddle with state affairs, told her son that 'the English and Chinese could not co-exist under the canopy of heaven; that the Celestial Empire must assert its superiority over these barbarian robbers; and that unless he waged war to their utter extermination, his ancestors would never acknowledge him in Hades.' Keshen was now denounced as a traitor to his country for having come to any terms; he was sentenced to death; and though his execution was deferred, yet his whole property, amounting in silver alone to the value of three millions sterling, was confiscated; his very wives were sold by auction; and he who had been one of the richest men in the empire, had not the means of buying himself a jacket.

Elepoo, the imperial commissioner at Ning-poo, opposite Chusan, was also denounced. His crime was, that he had, according to the terms of the truce, surrendered the English prisoners, notwithstanding the counter-orders he had received to send them to Peking as trophies of victory, to be cut to pieces according to custom. Among them was a captain's wife, who had been wrecked, and had thus fallen into his power. A happy thought struck some of the mandarins—that she might be passed off as the sister of the barbarian Queen. She was accordingly put into a cage, and carried about for exhibition; but Elepoo delivered her from the excruciating death she would have suffered as Queen Victoria's sister, and restored her to her countrymen. The whole cabinet was indignant; he was summoned to appear immediately before his exasperated sovereign, and sentenced to transportation to the deserts of Manchooria.

When it came to fighting in earnest, and there was for the Chinese, as we know, nothing but utter defeat, still there was no report sent to court but of victory. But as million after million of taëls vanished, and grandee after grandee disappeared, the emperor was obliged to be informed of the real state of affairs, and his wrath knew no bounds. In vain he threatened utter destruction to the barbarians, if they did not instantly leave the coasts; in vain called on the people to arm themselves *en masse*, and protect their lives and property: no one stirred, and the emperor resorted to new counsellors for new plans of defence. It was now gravely proposed, to build a fleet three times as powerful as that of the British, and station it near Singapore and Anjeer, to intercept the British vessels ere they reached China, and annihilate their fleet piecemeal. The forests were to be felled to supply materials: the only thing wanting was some English men-of-war, to serve as models. Again, Hou-chunn, the Marshal Ney of China, was ready to face the whole British fleet if he had but a steamer to carry 6000 men, half divers, half gunners; the divers would jump into the water, and sink the English ships by boring large holes in them, while the gunners would keep up an incessant fire. Striking as this plan appeared, the emperor doubted its practicability. Imitation steamships had been attempted already; but though they looked quite like the foreign ones, they would not move: the paddles had to be turned like a treadmill. Another great suggestion, was to march 300,000 men right through the Russian territories to London, and put a stop to all further operations by crushing the English at home!

Meanwhile, the British arms prevailed; and when the fleet reached the first bend in the Yang-tse-kiang, there happened a solar eclipse; it was impossible not to see that the sun of China had set for ever!

When Taou-Kwang found that the danger actually threatened his throne and his person, he hastily packed up his effects, and prepared to fly to some of the interior provinces; but being assured that peace might yet be obtained, he gave *carte blanche* for its conclusion. 'One can form no adequate idea,' says Dr Gutzlaff, 'of the utter amazement of the Chinese on perceiving that the "son of heaven" was not invincible; and that he was even fallible; a revulsion of feeling took place, such as had never been known before; and the political supremacy which China had so proudly asserted, was humbled in the dust.'

As soon as peace was concluded, the first care of Taou-Kwang was to punish the champions who had clamoured for war, but proved cowards in the fight. Some had already died of grief, some had committed suicide, and others had

fled. But those who remained within the monarch's grasp, besides many civil and military officers who had been compelled to surrender their cities, were treated with merciless severity. Keshen's extreme sentence was reversed, and he was made pipe-bearer to the emperor.

A new era had now commenced. It had been proved to a demonstration, that the mandarins were common mortals, and that the great emperor did not sway the whole world. Democratic assemblies rose in every part of the land; the people must be consulted where their happiness was concerned; the citizens and peasants turned politicians; and if in any case remonstrance failed, they proceeded, *en masse*, to the government offices, and carried by force what was denied to courtesy. The emperor learning these movements, instantly took the popular side; laid all the blame on the mandarins, and superseded those who had given offence. The taxes which had been refused, he remitted as an act of sovereign favour; and the laws were relaxed—often to the injury of well-disposed citizens. The people were again and again termed the dear children of the emperor, and every member of the cabinet found his best interest in advocating popular measures.

The rest of Taou-Kwang's reign was spent chiefly in endeavours to improve his naval and military forces, and in fruitless struggles to replenish the exhausted treasury of the state. His own, meanwhile, was full to overflowing, having received immense accessions from the confiscated property of his unsuccessful generals and degraded ministers. He died on the 25th of February 1850, aged sixty-nine. In his will, there appears the following notice of the English war: 'The little fools beyond the Western Ocean were chastised and quelled by our troops, and peace was soon made; but we presumed not to vaunt our martial powers.'

FOOTNOTES:

[1] London: Smith, Elder, & Co.: 1852.

A GLIMPSE OF BALLYVOURNEY.

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AMONG the various plans that have been suggested for ameliorating the condition of Ireland, and improving the moral and social status of her people, I know of few better calculated to produce these beneficial results than that of opening good lines of road through wild and uncultivated districts, and by this means facilitating the intercourse between the inhabitants of almost unknown regions and those of more advanced and enlightened districts. Where this has been done, in conjunction with other local improvements, a moral regeneration has taken place that could scarcely be credited by those who have not witnessed the effect. In proof of what I say, I will endeavour to give a short account of a journey I made last summer from Cork to the far-famed Lakes of Killarney. I had performed the same journey several years before; but I now travelled, after passing Macroom, by a road that had been made since my last visit, through Ballyvourney, a wild and mountainous district, formerly impassable. The territorial improvements there are now matter of history, it having been proved before the Commissioners of Land Inquiry, that land, valued at 3s. 9d. per acre, had been made permanently worth L.4 per acre by a small outlay, which, with all expenses, rent, and interest of money, was repaid in three years.

The land had been deep turf (peat), and all but useless for agricultural purposes. By drainage, cultivation, and irrigation, however, it was made to produce the finest meadow grass, sold annually by public auction for from L.4 to L.6 per acre; and sometimes it yielded a second, and even a third crop. The great secret of this improvement was, that the then proprietor gave his steward, who was likewise his relation, a permanent interest in his outlay, by letting him the land on lease for ever. In consequence of his doing so, the very worst land, judging by the surface, has been made equal in value to town fields; and in the progress of this work, the wildest race perhaps in the world, have now become a civilised and industrious people. Mr C— has sold his interest in the improvements for L.10,000, calculated, on the average profit of past years, at twenty years' purchase.

When he first undertook the work, he had every difficulty to contend with: the people were unused to labour, and so wild and savage, that no stranger dared to settle among them. I was told that when the first land-steward was seen at the chapel in a dress which denoted him to be a stranger, he heard a man behind him telling another in Irish—which he supposed to be unknown to the

stranger—the part of his neck in which he would plant a deadly wound before he got home. The steward fortunately understood the native tongue, and quitting the chapel before the service was over, he fled from the dangerous place.

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The present civilisation and industrious habits of the people, compared with their barbarism thirty years ago, shews that the Irish character, when properly directed, is as capable of advancement as any other in the world. There was at that time no road into or out of Ballyvourney: it was in this respect like the Happy Valley. The passes are yet in existence, and are fearful to look at, where a gentleman from Kenmare, on his journeys to Cork, used to bring his chariot, accompanied by a number of footmen, and unharnessing the horses, let it down by ropes from the top of the precipice. There is another spot of the kind on the road from Killarney to Cahersiveen and Valentia, where on the side of the Hill of Droum, nearly precipitous from the sea, is the track-mark of the carriage-road, if such it can be called, where the vehicle used to be supported and dragged by men. A new road has since been made there: the Atlantic Ocean is so directly beneath, that a passenger may drop a stone into it as he drives along; while Droum Hill stands perpendicularly above him. It is a most magnificent scene; terminating with the ruins of Daniel O'Connell's birthplace. Visitors to Ireland usually conclude their journey at Killarney; but if they would continue their route to Caragh Lake, Blackstone, Lady Headley's improvements, and go on through the Pass of Droum to Valentia and Cahersiveen, they would discover that Killarney is only the opening to a scene of grandeur and sublimity.

Mr C— found Ballyvourney in the inaccessible state I have described. The people held every year, on Whitsunday, a royal faction-fight; and for this, preparation was made almost every Sunday in the year. They fought with deadly weapons, sticks loaded with lead, and stones. Pensioners, who were accustomed to firearms, were hired for the occasion; but the weapon chiefly used was a short scythe, and men may still be found bearing its mark in contracted legs and arms: one man having Tim Halisy, his mark; another, Paddy Murphy, his mark, indelibly inscribed on his body. They had little or no agriculture—no wheeled cart, and scarcely even a spade. A crop of oats was a curiosity; and when there was such a thing, the only mode of conveying it to market was on a horse's back. Their agricultural operations were confined to feeding cattle, and they depended on their milk and butter for paying their rent, and purchasing the necessaries of life. Their mode of carrying butter to Cork was curious. I have often seen crowds of thirty, forty, or fifty men, seated on little ill-formed horses, which had two panniers swinging on the back, containing frequently only a single firkin of butter in one, and a stone in the other, the man being seated between. They fed their horses on the roadside, never entering an inn-yard; and they generally travelled by night. No one would trust another with his property; and on their journey of forty Irish miles, they expended no money. The scythe was their farming-implement to cut such coarse hay as grew in the bottoms near rivers. On Whitsunday, whoever could keep possession of a large stone called *Carrigun na Killeagh*, was champion for the year, and the party to which he belonged was triumphant until the next annual battle. On one occasion, the battle was almost ended, the champion was possessor of the stone for nearly the prescribed time; he gave one cheer of victory, then another, and was about to give the crowning cheer, when a signal was made to a pensioner, who had been hired for the purpose, and placed in ambush. He fired, and the ball pierced the conqueror's neck, without mortally wounding him. The man fell, and while on the ground, was seen pulling the moss and grass around him, and stuffing them into the wound, to prevent the flow of blood, that he might again mount the rock of victory. The next day he was seen out of doors by the doctor, for whom his wife had secretly sent; and after much entreaty, his determination not to allow the opposite party to know that he had been seriously hurt was overcome, and he permitted the doctor to examine the wound, and replace the styptics of his own providing with more scientific remedies.

Another story of the barbarism of the people was told me on my journey. A farmer's cow had momentarily trespassed on another man's land, one of a hostile faction. The farmer offered to pay for the damage, but the reply he received was a shot which killed him on the spot. His brother, who saw the catastrophe, ran to raise the victim; but the man had already reloaded his gun, and shot the brother dead. A third brother, having seen the two fall, ran to the succour so quickly, that the murderer had not time to complete the reloading of his gun; and as a crowd was collecting, he ran off. Mr C— used every exertion to have him taken, and for three years was unsuccessful; until obtaining the aid of a neighbour, a petty chieftain of a hostile clan, he at last succeeded. On the trial, one of the men who had witnessed the murders, and

whom Mr C—— called to swear informations, denied the guilt of the accused, swore an *alibi*, and declared that he had on the day in question sold him a cow at a fair twenty miles distant. He was, however, convicted, and hanged on the spot where the murders were committed. By punishments of various kinds—transporting the most hardened, and sending others to the treadmill—the people were at length brought into some sort of order.

Tim Halisy was Mr C——'s right-hand man—his manager, sub-agent, &c.: he was rich in cows and sheep; and though rather advanced in life, he married a very young girl, who had a fortune of forty cows. By degrees, Tim grew careless, lost his office, and resolved henceforth to enjoy a life of luxury. His habits became deteriorated; and during the latter years of his life, a gallon of whisky was sent for daily to the public-house; and this was put into the milk-pails, and the cows milked into it. Upon this sustenance, Tim and his wife lived; they spent the whole day at home drinking, and were not known to use bread or animal food. As may be supposed, the cows soon came to the market one by one; and Tim and his wife, after years of misery, died in great indigence.

In the year 1822, Mr C—— commenced his local improvements. The first thing he did was to obtain the opening of a new line of road from Macroom to Killarney, and another to Kenmare. In the various works connected with these, the people first learned the use of the spade and shovel, and became inured to a continued day's work. There was now a possibility of carrying corn to market if grown, or of bringing it into the parish; and Mr C—— built a mill for grinding it. He also built an inn, and induced a coach-proprietor to run his coach from Cork to Killarney through Ballyvourney, it being a better line in distance, level, picturesque, and beautiful—far surpassing in every respect the old road by Millstreet. He gave sixty acres of land for a clergyman's glebe, built a house for him, and undertook—long previous to the late laws—the payment of the incumbent. The Board of First Fruits built a church, but were obliged during the work to have the protection of the military. In a very extensive culture of turnip and corn crops; in drainage on a large scale; in the building of capacious farm-offices; in planting the land not of an arable quality; and latterly, in the thinning of these plantations—all under the direction of a Scotch steward—almost unlimited employment was given; in addition to which, the establishment of a dispensary, the constant residence of a valuable clergyman, a station for police, and the intercourse carried on by the daily running of two public vehicles, have combined to render the inhabitants of Ballyvourney as industrious and civilised as those in any part of the British islands. They have become a quiet and peaceable race; a riot is never heard of among them; and the Stone of Victory has long been covered with lichen, moss, and grass. The people annually assemble at the Holy Well, and go their rounds at the station; and the little image of St Gobnet, in the walls of an old church, is still looked on with adoration, and handkerchiefs thrown up to touch it, that they may bring healing virtue to the sick. The rector's residence is closely adjacent to the Holy Well, the station, and the image of St Gobnet, and the stone of victory within a few feet of his hall door. Yet he can go to bed at night without a lock to a door, or a bar to a window. Women and girls may be found in abundance who can thin and hoe turnips in the best manner. As good ploughmen and agriculturists in the various departments may now be had in Ballyvourney as in most places. All faction-fights are at an end; and although, little more than twenty years ago, these were the weekly Sabbath occupation, they are now like an item of an old almanac. By employing similar means, might not other parts of this naturally fine country be equally improved, and made the abode of a thriving and contented people?

THE DAUGHTER OF THE BARDI.

A TRUE OLD TALE.

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THE Via dei Bardi is one of the most ancient streets of Florence. Long, dark, and narrow, it reaches from the extremity of the Ponte Rubaconte to the right of the Ponte Vecchio. Its old houses look decayed and squalid now; but in former days they were magnificent and orderly, full of all the state of those times, being the residences of many of the Florentine nobility. How many struggles of faction, how many scenes of civil war, have these old houses witnessed! for in the period of their splendour, Florence was torn by intestine feuds; from generation to generation, Guelfs and Ghibelines, Bianchi and Neri, handed down their bitter quarrels, private and personal animosity mingling with public or party spirit, and ending in many a dark and violent

deed. These combatants are all sleeping now: the patriot, the banished citizen, the timid, the cruel—all, all are gone, and have left us only tales to read, or lessons to learn, if we can but use them. But we are not skilled to teach a lesson; we would rather tell a legend of those times, recalled to mind, especially at present, because it has been chosen as the subject of a fine picture recently finished by a Florentine artist, Benedetto Servolino.

In the Via dei Bardi stood, probably still stands, the house inhabited by the chief of the great and noble family from whom it takes its name—we write of the period of the fiercest struggles between the Guelfs and Ghibelines; and the Bardi were powerful partisans of the latter party. In that house dwelt a young girl of uncommon beauty, and yet more uncommon character. An old writer thus describes her: 'To look on her was enchantment; her eyes called you to love her; her smile was like heaven; if you heard her speak, you were conquered. Her whole person was a miracle of beauty, and her deportment had a certain maidenly pride, springing from a pure heart and conscious integrity.'

From the troubled scenes she had witnessed, her mind had acquired composure and courage unusual with her sex, and it was of that high stamp that is prone to admire with enthusiasm all generous and self-devoting deeds. Such a being, however apt to inspire love, was not likely to be easily won; accordingly, the crowd of lovers who at first surrounded Dianora gradually dropped off, for they gained no favour. All were received with the same bright and beautiful smile, and a gay, charming grace, which flattered no man's vanity; so they carried their homage to other shrines where it might be more prized, though by an inferior idol. And what felt Dianora when her votaries left her? We are not told; but not long after, you might see, if you walked along the street of the Bardi towards evening, a beautiful woman sitting near a balcony: a frame of embroidery is before her; but her eyes are oftener turned to the street than to the lilies she is working. It is Dianora. But surely it is not idle curiosity that bends her noble brow so often this way, and beams in her bright, speaking eyes, and sweet, kind smile. On whom is it turned, and why does her cheek flush so quickly? A youth of graceful and manly appearance is passing her window; his name is Hyppolito: he has long cherished the image of Dianora as Dante did that of his Beatrice. In loving her, he loved more ardently everything that is good and noble in the world; he shunned folly and idleness, and strove to make himself worthy of what he believed Dianora to be. At length, one of Cupid's emissaries—whether nurse or friend the chronicle does not tell—aided Hyppolito in meeting Dianora. One meeting succeeded another, till she gave him her heart, as such a true, young heart is given, with entire confidence, and a strength of feeling peculiar to herself. But what could they hope? Hyppolito's family were of the opposite party, and they knew it was vain to expect from them even a patient bearing; nor were the Bardi behind in proper feelings of hatred. What was to be done? There was but one Dianora—but one Hyppolito in the world; so have many wise young people thought of each other both before and since the days of the Ghibelines; but these two might be excused for thinking so, for many who saw them were of the same opinion. To part—what was the world to them if they were parted? Their station, their years, their tastes—so removed from noisy and frivolous pleasures—their virtuous characters, seemed to point out that they were born for each other. What divided them? One only point—the adverse political feelings of their families. Shall they sacrifice themselves to these? No. Thus reasoned Hyppolito; but we think the chronicles exaggerate the virtues of Dianora's character; for how many a girl unchronicled by fame has, before the still tribunal of her own sense of duty to God and her parents, sacrificed her dearest hopes rather than offend them; and this, with all her heroism, Dianora did not, but gave up all these dear early claims for her new love.

Delays were needless, for time could do nothing to smooth their path; so it was determined that Hyppolito should bring a ladder to Dianora's window, and, aided by their friend, they should find their way to a priest prepared to give them his blessing. The night appointed came—still and beautiful as heart could wish; the stars sparkling in the deep blue sky, bright as they may now be seen in that fair clime. Hyppolito has reached the house; he has fixed the ladder of ropes; there is no moon to betray him; in a minute, his light step will have reached the balcony. But there is a noise in the street, and lights approaching; the night-guard is passing; they have seen the ladder, for the street is narrow. Hyppolito is down, and tries to escape—in vain. They seize and drag him to prison. What was he doing there? What can he reply? That he meant to enter the house, to carry something from it, or commit some bad deed, cannot be denied. He will not betray Dianora; it would only be to separate them for ever, and leave her with a stained name. He yields to his fate; the proofs are irresistible, and, by the severe law of Florence at that

period, Hyppolito must die. All Florence is in amazement. So estimable a youth, to all outward appearance, to be in reality addicted to the basest crimes! Who could have believed it? But he confesses; there is no room for doubt. Pardon is implored by his afflicted friends; but no pardon can be granted for so flagrant a crime.

Hyppolito had one consolation—his father never doubted him; if he had, one glance of his son's clear though sad eye, and candid, open brow, would have reassured him. He saw there was a mystery, but he was sure it involved no guilt on Hyppolito's part. Hyppolito also believed that his good name would one day be cleared, and that his noble Dianora would in due time remove the stain that clouded it. He consented to die, rather than live separated from her. Yet poor Hyppolito was sorry to leave the world so young; and sadly, though calmly, he arranged his small possessions, for the benefit of those he loved, and of the poor, to whom he had always been a friend.

He slept quietly the night preceding the time fixed for his execution, and was early ready to take his place in the sad procession. Did no thought cross Hyppolito's clear mind, that he was throwing away, in weak passion, a life given to him by God for noble ends? We know not; but there he was—calm, firm, and serious. His only request was, that the procession might pass through the street of the Bardi, which some thought was a sign of penitence, an act of humiliation. The sad train moves on. An old man sitting at a door rises, strains his eyes to catch a last glimpse of Hyppolito, and then covers them in anguish, and sinks down again. This is an old man he had saved from misery and death. Two youths, hand in hand, are gazing with sad faces, and tears run down their cheeks. They are orphans: he had clothed and fed them. Hyppolito sees them, and even in that moment remembers it is he who deprives them of a protector: but it is too late to think now; for he is approaching the scene of his fault and the place of his punishment, and other feelings swell in his heart. His brows are contracted; his eyes bent on the house of the Bardi, as if they would pierce the stones of its walls; and now they are cast down, as though he would raise them no more on earth. But he starts, for he hears a loud shriek, a rushing, and an opening of the crowd: they seem to be awed by something that approaches. It is a woman, whose violent gestures defy opposition; she looks like a maniac just escaped from her keepers; she has reached Hyppolito; his fettered arms move as if they would receive her, but in vain. She turns to the crowd, and some among them recognise the modest and beautiful daughter of Bardi. She calls out: 'He is innocent of every crime but having loved me. To save me from shame, he has borne all this disgrace. And he is going to death; but you cannot kill him now. I tell you he is guiltless; and if he dies, I die with him.'

The people stand amazed. At last there is a shout: 'It must be true! he is innocent!' The execution is stopped till the truth is ascertained, and Dianora's statement is fully confirmed. And who shall paint the return from death to life of poor Hyppolito? and to such a life! for blazoned as the story of her love had been, Dianora's parents, considering also her firm character, subjected even the spirit of party to the voice of affection and reason; and Hyppolito's family, softened by sorrow, gladly embraced their Ghibeline daughter. Whether in after-life Hyppolito and Dianora were distinguished by the qualities they had shewn in youth, and whether the promise of affection was realised by time and intimate acquaintance, no chronicle remains to tell. This short glimpse of both is all that is snatched from oblivion—this alone stands out in bright relief, to shew us they once were; the rest is lost in the darkness of time.

The moment chosen by the artist is when Dianora rushes from her house into the midst of the crowd, and reaches Hyppolito, surrounded by priests and soldiers. It is easy to see to what a varied expression of passion and action this point of the story gives rise.

A CURIOSITY IN NATURAL HISTORY.

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THE crustacean class of animals, of which the lobster, crab, and shrimp are familiar examples, have this peculiarity of structure—that their soft bodies are enclosed within a coat-of-mail formed of carbonate and phosphate of lime. In fact, they carry their skeleton outside their bodies, both for defence of the vital parts within, and for the attachment of the muscles which move their limbs, and every part of their frame. No warrior of old was ever more completely enveloped in his hard coat-of-mail, with its jointed greaves and overlapping scales, than is the lobster in its crustaceous covering; with this exception, that the warrior could at pleasure unbuckle himself from his

armour, whereas the body and limbs of the crustacea are completely incased in hollow cylinders, firmly and accurately jointed, from which there is no such ready release. Now, as this shelly integument envelops them from their earliest youth, and as it does not expand and grow, the natural growth of the soft body beneath would be entirely prevented did not nature supply a remedy of a very curious kind—the exuviation, or periodical throwing off of the external crust, and the formation of a larger shell-covering fitted for the increasing growth of the animal. This is a circumstance which has long been familiar to naturalists, and indeed the most ordinary observer must have often remarked in the crabs and lobsters brought to table, appearances indicative of their change of external coverings. In the back of the edible crab, may often be noticed a red membrane lining the inner side of the shell, but so loose as to be readily detached. Along the greater part of its course this membrane has already assumed a half-crustaceous consistence, and is just the preparatory process to the old shell being thrown off by the animal. There is another curious circumstance which has also been long known—that crabs and lobsters can renew lost limbs. Some misconception, however, had existed regarding the manner in which this was effected, until the observations of the late Sir John Dalyell have thrown more accurate light on the subject.

This most amiable and eminent zoologist, who was lost to science last year, afforded a pleasing illustration of the solace and delight which the pursuit of the study of nature yields to the diligent inquirer into her mysteries. With a feeble constitution and frame of body, which precluded his mingling in the more active pursuits of everyday life, this sedentary philosopher collected around him examples of minute and curious being from the depths of the ocean, from lake and river, and for many long years found the delight of his leisure hours in watching the habits of the animals, and in discovering and describing many singular circumstances in the constitution of their bodies, and the peculiar adaptations of their structure and instincts to their modes of existence. One of his last communications to the public, imparted with all the modesty and simplicity of true genius, at the last meeting of the British Association in Edinburgh, was on this subject of the exuviation of the crustacea.^[2]

It appears from Sir John's observations that crustaceans begin to throw off their shells at a very early period of their life, even in that embryo state in which they first appear after having left the egg, and before they have yet assumed the real form of their mature state. During every successive exuviation in this embryo state, they assume more and more of their perfect and established form. While the crab is young and rapidly growing, frequent exuviations take place at short intervals, from three to five times in the course of one year. Previous to the change, the animal almost ceases to feed, and becomes rather inactive; the proper time having at length arrived, exuviation is effected in the course of a few hours, body and limbs being alike relieved from their hard covering. Until the new shell acquires firmness and strength, the creature is very shy, and in the state of nature, retires into cavities below rocks or heaps of protecting sea-weed. Sir John had kept for some time one of our smaller species of shore-crabs (*Carcinus monas*), of medium size, of a brown colour, with one white limb. One summer evening it was put outside the window in a capacious glass-vessel of sea-water. In the morning a form exactly resembling its own, only somewhat larger, lay in the vessel. This was the same animal, which had performed exuviation, and extricated itself from the old shell during the night. The resemblance between both forms was complete—everything was the same, even the white limb was seen in both. Another specimen kept was of smaller size, the opposite extremities of the limbs being only thirteen lines asunder; its colour was green, with three white patches on the back. In the course of little more than a year five exuviations took place at irregular intervals, the new shell and animal becoming larger each time. The third shell came on uniformly green, the white spots being entirely obliterated. On the fourth exuviation, the limbs expanded two inches and a half. From the long slender form of the limbs of crustacea, they are very liable to mutilation. Crabs are also a very pugnacious family, and in their battles limbs are often snapped off. These mutilations, however, are readily repaired; although, contrary to what was the common belief, the restoration takes place only at the next regular period of exuviation.

The full-grown common crab (*Cancer pagurus*) is of a reddish-brown colour, the claws tipped black; but some of the young are naturally of the purest white, which remains long unsullied. This does not arise from confinement, which, according to Sir John, has no influence on colour. 'A young white specimen of the common crab was subjected to observation on 29th September. The body might have been circumscribed in a circle three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and the extended limbs by one-and-a-half inch in diameter. Its first exuviation ensued on 8th November, the second on the

30th of April following, and the shell then produced subsisted till 12th September, when another exuviation took place, introducing a new shell of such transparent white that the interior almost shone through it. All the shells were white, and increased somewhat in size successively. This last shell of 12th September subsisted until 29th March, being 197 days, when it was thrown off during another exuviation.'

But what was remarkable, the animal now had only the two large claws, the other eight limbs were deficient. 'Resting on its breast as it was, I did not at first discover the fact, that the creature presented a strange and very uncouth aspect. However, it fed readily, and proved very tame, though helpless; often falling on its back, and not being able to recover itself from the deficiency of its limbs. I preserved this mutilated object with uncommon care, watching it almost incessantly day and night: expecting another exuviation which might be attended with interesting consequences, I felt much anxiety for its survivance. My solicitude was not vain. After the defective shell had subsisted eighty-six days, its tenant meantime feeding readily, the desired event took place in a new exuviation on 23d June. On this occasion a new animal came forth, and in the highest perfection, quite entire and symmetrical, with all the ten limbs peculiar to its race, and of the purest and most beautiful white. I could not contemplate such a specimen of nature's energies restoring perfection, and through a process so extraordinary, without admiration. Something yet remained to be established: was this perfection permanent, or was it only temporary? Like its precursor, this specimen was quite tame, healthy, and vigorous. In 102 days it underwent exuviation, when it appeared again, perfect as before, with a shell of snowy white, and a little red speckling on the limbs. Finally, its shell having subsisted 189 days, was succeeded by another of equal beauty and perfection, the speckling on the legs somewhat increased. As all the shells had gradually augmented, so was this larger than the others. The extended limbs would have occupied a circle of four inches diameter. About a month after this exuviation the animal perished accidentally, having been two years and eight months under examination. It was an interesting specimen, extremely tame and tranquil, always coming to the side of the vessel as I approached, and holding up its little claws as if supplicating food.'

The shrimp when in confinement becomes very tame, and readily exuviates. The process is frequent, the integument separates entire, and is almost colourless. In female crustaceans the roe is placed outside the shell to which it adheres. During the period of such adherence, the female crab, so far as observation goes, does not change its shell—a marked provision of nature to preserve the spawn.

We may remark that other classes of animals exuviate in a similar manner to the crustaceans. Thus serpents throw off in entire masses their scaly coverings, even a slough from the eyes; and various insects in their larva state are continually throwing off and renewing their skins.

FOOTNOTES:

[2] Report of British Association, 1851. Pp. 120-122.

THE AYAH.

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OWING to our constant intercourse with India, there are few among us who are unacquainted with the word ayah. Some who live in London or its neighbourhood may perhaps have occasionally met with one of these sable guardian spirits, conducting one or more pale, precocious-looking little children to their British friends; or they may even have fallen in with a group of the tribe in Kensington Gardens, or other public promenades, escorting their little *bábás*, and herding together, like birds of a feather, attracted by the bonds and recollections of colour, climate, caste, and language.

Ayah, in the mouth of a lisping baby, is one of the prettiest words of the East, and is learned as soon as papa and mamma, being equally easy of articulation. The origin of the word is probably either Portuguese or Spanish (*aya*), although it has now become common to all classes, Christians, Mohammedans, and Hindoos alike. The Hindostanee word for nurse is *māmā-jee*, or *daee*; the Bengalee, *doodoo*, or *dye*.

The ayah is frequently a fixture of long standing in a family, descending from mother to daughter; and when this is the case, she is no doubt a valuable

possession, and is consulted in all the momentous matters connected with the nursery. However, at the birth of the first baby, she is of course spick-and-span new; and in comes the dusky stranger, all pride and expectation, all hope and joy. It is fortunate that there is no difference in young babies—that the one is as ugly a little thing as the other—and so she is not disappointed: on the contrary, she sees with one glance of her dark glittering eyes, which have their source of sensation in her woman's heart, a thousand charms that distinguish *her* bâbâ from all the other babies in the universe. With something akin to a mother's feelings, she takes the infant in her arms, which seems incontinent to become a part of herself, lying all day on her knees, and sleeping all night in her bosom; and from that moment the nurse, the child, and the paun-box are always together.

As the ayah is exclusively attached to the nursery, and has nothing to do with household affairs or the laying out of money, she is generally a favourite with the other servants, who seem to look upon her as holding an intermediate station between them and the mistress. Should any of them require leave of absence, for the purpose of attending a funeral or a wedding, he applies first to the ayah; or if a little tea is wanted for a sick wife or mother, through her also he obtains the simple, though to him expensive, restorative. If a pedler comes to the door with his box and bundles, he looks up, and spying the ayah in the veranda or at the window, he calls out: 'Is anything wanted for Mem-Sahib or the bâbâs? Tell the lady I have beautiful things to shew.' Away trips the ayah to her mistress, and good-naturedly, or perhaps—no, it *shall* be good-naturedly—lays the discovery before her that some trifle is wanted. The man is called in, and succeeds in disposing of some of his wares, ribbons, laces, or silks; and the ayah, besides having obliged the lady and the pedler, enjoys a small modicum of satisfaction herself—who would grudge it?—in pocketing the *dustôree*—a discount of two pice, or half an anna on each rupee.

There are ayahs of various castes. The Portuguese ayahs (Roman Catholic Christians, born in the country) are no doubt the most intelligent and useful; but they are more expensive than the Mussulman and Lall Beggies, and are therefore not so frequently employed: indeed, it is only in the neighbourhood of Calcutta that they are procurable at all. As the Hindostanee women neither knit nor sew, they seem to devote their energies exclusively to their infant charge. The bâbâ is their work and their play, the exercise of their thoughts, the substance of their dreams. He is the only book they read; and the only expansion their minds know is from the unfolding of the pages of his character. They are proud of that bâbâ, and proud of themselves for being his. What a sight it is, the ayah coming in at the dessert, in her rustling silks and transparent muslins—so stately in her humility, so smilingly self-satisfied—surrounded by the children, and holding in her dark, smooth, jewelled arms the son and heir of the family, whom she presents to papa to get a bit of cake or sweetmeat!

This is a grand moment for the ayah. Are not the children *hers*? Have they not lain upon her bosom all their little lives? And have not the charms which she detected with the first glance of her glittering eye, been developed under her care into the marvels now before the company? But the more tranquil and permanent happiness of the ayah is enjoyed while she is watching alone the opening of her buds of beauty, and steeping their slumbering senses in the sweet wild music of her country. I still sometimes hear in fancy her cradle-song humming in my own Old Indian ear as I am falling asleep—although many a long year has passed since I heard it in reality, and many a long league is now between me and the land of the dear, good, black, comical, kindly ayah. Let me try whether I cannot render it, even loosely, in our own strong Anglo-Saxon tongue, from the musical, melting Hindostanee:—

Sleep on, sleep on, my bâbâ dear!
 Thy faithful slave is watching near.
 The cradle wherein my babe I fondle,
 Is made of the rare and bright-red sandal;^[3]
 And the string with which I am rocking my lord,
 Is a gay and glittering silken cord.

Sleep on, sleep on, my bâbâ dear!
 Thy faithful slave is watching near.
 Thy father, my dear, is the jemadar
 Of a province which stretches wide and far;
 And his brother, my child, is a moonsif great,
 Who ruleth o'er many a ryot's fate.

Sleep on, sleep on, my bâbâ dear!
 Thy faithful slave is watching near.

Thy mother of hearts is the powerful queen,
The loveliest lady that ever was seen;
And there ne'er was slave more faithful, I trow,
Than she who is rocking thy cradle now.

I have said that our ayah sometimes comes home with her charges—comes to our home from her own. It is a bad exchange. She awakes slowly from her dream, as she sees the rosy cheeks, full pouting lips, and round wondering eyes, that are turned upon the dark stranger and her pale, thin, little ones. The comparison is painful; these cherub children have no sympathy with the lonely Hindoo; and the servants of the house, although awed at first by her foreign aspect, and calm, stately air, have no permanent respect for one who ranks neither with their superiors nor with themselves. The climate, too, is as chilling as the manners around her; her heretofore *bâbâs* are lords to nobody but herself; and so, with one thing and another, she grows home-sick, her heart yearns for her own sunny land, and she is glad—sorrowfully glad—when at last the announcement is made, that an ayah wants to go back to India with a family.

And in India once more, what then? Why then, the great ocean is between her and her fledged nurslings, and she looks round for some new objects of love and devotion. These she probably finds in another home, another mistress, another *bâbâ*; her heart begins its course anew; and the ayah lives a second life in the young lives of her children. No joyless existence is hers, no cares without ample compensations; but yet when I see in my own country one of these solitary, strangely-attired, dark-skinned women, I feel attracted towards her by an almost tearful sympathy, and have ever a kind look and a warm, gentle word for the poor ayah.

FOOTNOTES:

[3] The red sandal-wood is more rare and valuable than the yellow.

SMALL INVESTMENTS.

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THE investment of small savings in land with a view to spade-husbandry, was a few years ago brought prominently before the working-classes. We took occasion, at the time, to warn the humbler classes generally against projects of this kind, but without any beneficial effect. Land-schemes, as they were called, were puffed into popularity, and all our advices and remonstrances on the subject were rejected with disdain. Universal ruin has followed these schemes, and the unfortunate dupes are left to mourn their loss. Nothing is more specious than a plan of earning an independent livelihood by cultivating a few acres of land; but, practically, it is open to some serious drawbacks. First, the cultivator requires to be skilled in husbandry, and of a bodily frame to endure the fatigue of constant out-door labour. Second, his land must be tolerably good, and situated under a good climate. Third, the land must be close to a market, otherwise the produce cannot be disposed of. The cultivation of a small bit of land is in reality a kind of gardening. No horse-labour can be employed; all is to be done by the spade. It may be possible, therefore, to make a livelihood near a large town, where anything that is produced—milk and butter included—will find a ready market at no cost of transport; but in other circumstances the thing is almost hopeless. It is a notorious fact, that the most wretched of the rural population of this country are small cultivators, even if the land costs next to nothing. We are aware that the small-farm system is more successful in Belgium and Lombardy. On the reasons for this, it is here needless to enter. We take the examples offered in Great Britain, where it has never come up to the expectations of philanthropists.

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The purchase of forty-shilling freeholds has lately been put forward as a method of investing money by the working-classes. It is beyond our province to speak of the political aims of this form of investment. We can recognise a certain good in giving to a working-man the feeling, that he is the proprietor of a house or small portion of land yielding (along with the franchise in England) a rent of forty shillings per annum; but, at the same time, we recognise a corresponding evil, and we should be shrinking from our duty if we did not mention it in distinct terms. In those localities where operatives and others can reckon on constant remunerative employment, it may prove a real service in many ways for them to buy a house instead of renting one; indeed, we should highly recommend them to become the proprietors of the dwellings which they occupy. But in places where workmen possess no such

assurance or reasonable prospect of employment, we would as earnestly dissuade them from taking a step of this kind. The capital of a working-man—that on which he must place his dependence—is his labour; and this labour he ought to be in a position to dispose of to the best advantage. On this account, he requires, as a general rule, to hold himself in readiness to go wherever his labour is in demand. Of all men, he has the most cause to be a citizen of the world. He may find it his interest to remove to localities hundreds of miles off; and therefore the fewer obstructions to his movements, the better. Heritable property is a fixture. A man cannot take it with him, and the sale of it, even when time is permitted to seek out a purchaser, is attended with expense and difficulty. No doubt the transfer of such property might and ought to be vastly lowered in cost; but not until this is done, will it be time for the more movable part of the working-classes to consider the propriety of saddling themselves with the ownership of lands and houses. Such, at least, is our opinion, after much consideration of the subject. So many melancholy instances have we seen of working-men being ruined by the want of power or will to leave small heritable possessions in country towns, where employment deserted them, that we entertain a strong feeling against this class of persons investing their earnings in fixed property.

Upon the whole, the best thing the humbler classes can do with small savings, is to let them accumulate as movable capital. They should perceive that, generally speaking, a little money has few advantageous outlets. It is only after its increase to a tolerable sum, that it can command a good investment. A short time ago, we adverted to the vast benefits that would accrue to the working-classes, by legalising partnerships in commandite; for this would allow the clubbing of means for trading purposes without chance of total loss. Another thing for improving the resources of such classes, would be the issue of small debentures on land, railways, and other kinds of property; these debentures to be registered in such a manner as would admit of legal recourse without the tedious and expensive forms now required to enforce their liquidation. These, then, are things to be struggled for by the humbler orders, indeed by many who ostensibly belong to classes higher in social standing.

PLEASURES OF LITERATURE.

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It may be remembered, that somewhat more than two years ago, Mr Willmott's *Journal of Summer-time in the Country* was noticed in these pages. Those who, through that or any other introduction, have since become acquainted with that exquisite little volume, will be glad to meet the author again, in the not less charming work which he has recently put forth, on the *Pleasures, Objects, and Advantages of Literature*.^[4] The theme itself must be naturally attractive to all book-loving people; and we are prepared to say, that it is treated with felicity and discrimination. We do not aver that we always concur in the writer's judgments, or hold precisely his views of criticism; but we are, upon the whole, very decidedly impressed with the general force and truth of his Discourse, with the gracefulness of his allusions and illustrations, his elegant and pointed style, and the bland and genial temper in which he writes. The work consists of a series of short chapters on books, authors, the circumstances in which they wrote, the moods in which they should be read to be appreciated, the nature and specific qualities of taste, poetry, fiction, the drama, history, and philosophy. The author's turn of mind is chiefly retrospective: he writes more in the spirit of the last age than of the present. Indeed, he seems too much inclined to ignore the value of our later literature; almost the only modern authors whom he quotes are Hallam, Charles Lamb, and Southey; and it is evident, both from the style and matter of the work, that the range of his reading has been most extensive in what he terms the 'classical criticism and biography of the eighteenth century.' This, however, we note only in passing, and not at all in the way of condemnation; further than as it may indicate the limitations to be expected in his tone of thought and sentiment.

Mr Willmott, indeed, speaks disparagingly of some of the severer studies—especially of logic and mathematics; declaring that they 'can only be useful to a full mind,' and that, 'if they find it empty, they leave it in the same state.' Of course, he may be allowed to have his opinion on such a matter; but we presume it will not be very generally adopted. We agree with him that, 'in moral impression they are powerless;' yet we are bound to bear in mind that their *aim* is not a moral one; and we, furthermore, believe that, within their own scope and province, they *may* at least be serviceable in training and developing the understanding. Not to dwell longer on this little eccentricity of

opinion, which is simply one of idiosyncrasy, let us follow the author into some of the more congenial sections of his dissertation. The following passage, on 'The three essential qualities of an author,' seems not unsuitable for quotation:—

'Sir Philip Sidney said, that the most flying wits must have three wings—art, meditation, exercise. Genius is in the instinct of flight. A boy came to Mozart, wishing to compose something, and inquiring the way to begin. Mozart told him to wait. "You composed much earlier?" "But asked nothing about it," replied the musician. Cowper expressed the same sentiment to a friend: "Nature gives men a bias to their respective pursuits, and that strong propensity, I suppose, is what we mean by genius." M. Angelo is hindered in his childish studies of art; Raffaelle grows up with pencil and colours for playthings: one neglects school to copy drawings, which he dared not bring home; the father of the other takes a journey to find his son a worthier teacher. M. Angelo forces his way; Raffaelle is guided into it. But each looks for it with longing eyes. In some way or other, the man is tracked in the little footsteps of the child. Dryden marks the three steps of progress:—

"What the child admired,
The youth *endeavoured*, and the man ACQUIRED."

'Dryden was an example of his own theory. He read Polybius, with a notion of his historic exactness, before he was ten years old. Witnesses rise over the whole field of learning. Pope, at twelve, feasted his eyes in the picture-galleries of Spenser. Murillo filled the margin of his school-books with drawings. Le Brun, in the beginning of childhood, drew with a piece of charcoal on the walls of the house. The young Ariosto quietly watched the fierce gestures of his father, forgetting his displeasure in the joy of copying from life, into a comedy he was writing, the manner and speech of an old man enraged with his son.

'Cowley, in the history of his own mind, shews the influence of boyish fancies upon later life. He compares them to letters cut in the bark of a young tree, which grow and widen with it. We are not surprised to hear from a school-fellow of the Chancellor Somers, that he was a weakly boy, who always had a book in his hand, and never looked up at the play of his companions; to learn from his affectionate biographer, that Hammond at Eton sought opportunities of stealing away to say his prayers; to read that Tournefort forsook his college class, that he might search for plants in the neighbouring fields; or that Smeaton, in petticoats, was discovered on the top of his father's barn, in the act of fixing the model of a windmill which he had constructed. These early traits of character are such as we expect to find in the cultivated lawyer, who turned the eyes of his age upon Milton; in the Christian, whose life was one varied strain of devout praise; in the naturalist, who enriched science by his discoveries; and in the engineer, who built the Eddystone Lighthouse.'

This accords very well with a notion of our own. We hold that men have a tendency to follow what they are by nature best qualified to succeed in; and that the fact ought to be regarded in the education of the individual. Education should include the study and trial of aptitudes, so that each may be directed to his appropriate vocation. It is true, there are sometimes such things as 'false tendencies' to be encountered; but these, as Goethe has shewn, may be readily detected, inasmuch as they are plainly 'unproductive;' that is to say, the thing aimed after does not come out as a recognisable success. False tendencies are more easily perceived in others than in ourselves—especially when ambition, interest, or vanity is involved in the consideration; and on this account the difficulty, perhaps, might not be insurmountable, if the charge of it could be committed to a really judicious educator. But to say anything further on the subject would be out of place at present; and, accordingly, we return to what is more immediately before us.

'The instinct of flight,' continues our author, 'is combined with the instinct of labour. Genius lights its own fire; but it is constantly collecting materials to keep alive the flame. When a new publication was suggested to Addison, after the completion of the *Guardian*, he answered: "I must now take some time, *pour me délasser*, and lay in fuel for a future work." The strongest blaze soon goes out when a man always blows and never feeds it. Johnson declined an introduction to a popular author with the remark, that he did not desire to converse with a person who had written more than he had read.

'It is interesting to follow great authors or painters in their careful training and accomplishing of the mind. The long morning of life is spent in making the weapons and the armour which manhood and age are to polish and prove. Usher, when nearly twenty years old, formed the daring resolution of reading all the Greek and Latin fathers, and with the dawn of his thirty-ninth year he

completed the task. Hammond, at Oxford, gave thirteen hours of the day to philosophy and classical literature, wrote commentaries on all, and compiled indexes for his own use.

'With these calls to industry in our ears, we are not to be deaf to the deep saying of Lord Brooke, the friend of Sidney, that some men overbuild their nature with books. The motion of our thoughts is impeded by too heavy a burden; and the mind, like the body, is strengthened more by the warmth of exercise than of clothes. When Buffon and Hogarth pronounced genius to be nothing but labour and patience, they forgot history and themselves. The instinct must be in the mind, and the fire be ready to fall. Toil alone would not have produced the *Paradise Lost* or the *Principia*. The born dwarf never grows to the middle size. Rousseau tells a story of a painter's servant, who resolved to be the rival or the conqueror of his master. He abandoned his livery to live by his pencil; but instead of the Louvre, he stopped at a sign-post. Mere learning is only a compiler, and does with the pen what the compositor does with the type: each sets up a book with the hand. Stone-masons collected the dome of St Paul's, but Wren hung it in air.'

There is, perhaps, nothing very profound or original in this, but it is all very sensible and pleasant. Something of novelty, however, will be observed in the extract which follows next, on 'The Influence of Air and Situation on the Thoughts.' The consideration, at anyrate, is curious, both under its physiological and metaphysical aspect.

'It has been a subject of ingenious speculation if country or weather may be said to cherish or check intellectual growth. Jeremy Collier considered that the understanding needs a kind climate for its health, and that a reader of nice observation might ascertain from the book in what latitude, season, or circumstances, it had been written. The opponents are powerful. Reynolds ridiculed the notion of thoughts shooting forth with greater vigour at the summer solstice or the equinox; Johnson called it a fantastic foppery.

'The atmospheric theory is as old as Homer. Its laureate is Montesquieu. The more northerly you go, he said, the sterner the man grows. You must scorch a Muscovite to make him feel. Gray was a convert. One of the prose hints for his noble fragment of a didactic poem runs thus: "It is the proper work of education and government united, to redress the faults that arise from the soil and air." Berkeley entertained the same feeling. Writing to Pope from Leghorn, and alluding to some half-formed design he had heard him mention of visiting Italy, he continues: "What might we not expect from a muse that sings so well in the bleak climate of England, if she felt the same warm sun, and breathed the same air with Virgil and Horace?"

'When Dyer attributes the faults of his *Fleece* to the Lincolnshire fens, he only awakes a smile. Keats wrote his Ode to a Nightingale—a poem full of the sweet south—at the foot of Highgate Hill. But we have the remark of Dryden—probably the result of his own experience—that a cloudy day is able to alter the thoughts of a man; and, generally, the air we breathe, and the objects we see, have a secret influence upon our imagination. Burke was certain that Milton composed *Il Penseroso* in the long, resounding aisle of a mouldering cloister, or ivied abbey. He beheld its solemn gloom in the verse. The fine nerves of the mind are braced, and the strings of the harp are tuned, by different kinds of temperature. "I think," Warburton remarked to Hurd, "you have often heard me say, that my delicious season is the autumn—the season which gives most life and vigour to my intellectual faculties. The light mists, or, as Milton calls them, the steams that rise from the fields in one of these mornings, give the same relief to the views that the blue of the plum gives to the appetite."

'Mozart composed, whenever he had the opportunity, in the soft air of fine weather. His *Don Giovanni* and the *Requiem* were written in a bowling-green and a garden. Chatterton found a full moon favourable to poetic invention, and he often sat up all night to enjoy its solemn shining. Winter-time was most agreeable to Crabbe. He delighted in a heavy fall of snow; and it was during a severe storm which blocked him within doors, that he portrayed the strange miseries of Sir Eustace Grey.'

There may be something in this supposed influence of temperature and seasons; but there certainly is no general law observable in the matter. Shakspeare asks—

'Oh who can take a fire in his hand
By thinking of the frosty Caucasus?
Or wallow naked in December's snows
By bare remembrance of the summer's heat?'

He might have been answered by Moore, who shut himself up in the wintry wilds of Derbyshire to write *Lalla Rookh*—a poem breathing of the perfumes, and glowing in the sunlight of the golden East; and by Scott, who, in Jermyn Street, St James's, with miles of brick houses round him, produced his famous introductions to *Marmion*, some of which may rank with the finest descriptions of natural scenery in the language. But the way in which people are influenced seems utterly capricious. We know a writer who is always unfavourably affected by a dull, still atmosphere, and whose faculties are as invariably exhilarated by a high wind. Cloudy weather does not influence him disagreeably if it be stormy, but calm, leaden November glooms oppress him with a feeling bordering upon stupor. These are altogether unproductive days with him. If authors, however, are subject in their moods to atmospheric and other circumstantial influences, it may be expected that readers also are to some extent possessed of a like tendency. Mr Willmott has, accordingly, a suitable suggestive word or two to guide them in their reading. He says:—

'A classification of authors to suit all hours and weathers might be amusing. Ariosto spans a wet afternoon like a rainbow. North winds and sleet agree with Junius. The visionary tombs of Dante glimmer into awfuller perspective by moonlight. Crabbe is never so pleasing as on the hot shingle, when we look up from his verses at the sleepy sea, and count the

"Crimson weeds, which spreading slow,
Or lie like pictures on the sand below:
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon."

'Some books come in with lamps and curtains, and fresh logs. An evening in late autumn, when there is no moon, and the boughs toss like foam raking its way back down a pebbly shore, is just the time for *Undine*. A voyage is read with deepest interest in winter, while the hail dashes against the window. Southey speaks of this delight—

"'Tis pleasant by the cheerful hearth to hear
Of tempests and the dangers of the deep,
And pause at times and feel that we are safe;
And with an eager and suspended soul,
Woo terror to delight us."

'The sobs of the storm are musical chimes for a ghost-story, or one of those fearful tales with which the blind fiddler in *Redgauntlet* made "the auld carlines shake on the settle, and the bits of bairns skirl on their minnies out frae their beds."

'Shakspeare is always most welcome at the chimney-corner; so is Goldsmith: who does not wish Dr Primrose to call in the evening, and Olivia to preside at the urn? Elia affirms, that there is no such thing as reading or writing, but by a candle; he is confident that Milton composed the morning hymn of Eden with a clear fire burning in the room; and in Taylor's gorgeous description of sunrise, he found the smell of the lamp quite overpowering.... But Elia,' he says further on, 'carried his fireside theory too far. Some people have tried "the affectation of a book at noonday in gardens and sultry harbours," without finding their task of love to be unlearn't. Indeed, many books belong to sunshine, and should be read out of doors. Clover, violets, and hedge-roses, breathe from their leaves; they are most lovable in cool lanes, along field-paths, or upon stiles overhung by hawthorn; while the black-bird pipes, and the nightingale bathes its brown feathers in the twilight copse.

'The sensation is heightened when an author is read amid the scenery or the manners which he describes—as Barrow studied the sermons of Chrysostom in his own see of Constantinople. What daisies sprinkle the walks of Cowper, if we take his *Task* for a companion through the lanes of Weston! Under the thick hedges of Horton, darkening either bank of the field in the September moonlight, *Il Penseroso* is still more pensive. And whoever would feel at his heart the deep pathos of Collins's lamentation for Thomson, must murmur it to himself, as he glides upon the stealing wave, by the breezy lawns and elms of Richmond.'

Our author has some judicious remarks on 'Criticism, its Curiosities and Researches,' and is himself a critic of refined and delicate appreciation. We certainly do not agree with him in thinking that the literature of the last century is superior to that of the present; but we can nevertheless admit that many of his favourite writers are deserving of a higher and more reverent regard than is now generally awarded them. We would quarrel with no man about his preferences; still, we cannot hold Mr Willmott justified in such sweeping condemnation of our current literature as he appears disposed to

pass upon it. It would seem, indeed, that in his disgust at 'the corrupted streams of popular entertainment,' he has not cared to make himself acquainted with the best of our modern writers. Of these he seems—if we may judge from his total oversight of them—to have hardly a knowledge of the names. 'He lives,' as he admits, 'among the society of an elder age.' Here, however, he numbers 'tasteful learning with the chiefest blessings of his home.' If he had lived in the last century, he would probably have gone back for his idols to an earlier one; and yet his remarks on taste and criticism are of a catholic nature, although his just application of their canons have this chronological boundary. We have no room, however, for his disquisition on these elegant subjects; neither can we follow our accomplished clergyman into his disquisitions on fiction, history, biography, philosophy, and its pleasures, nor the 'domestic interiors' of taste and learning. We had intended to quote some fine sentences on the consolations of poetry, but find we have not room for them. The reader will do well to get the book, and read them there. It is a work altogether well worth reading. Nay, it will bear reading many times, and even become pleasanter as one's acquaintance with it increases. Indeed, it is not at all the kind of book to be run through rapidly, and so disposed of; the thought and observation in it are closely packed and methodised; and if you wish to derive any benefit, or even pleasure from the perusal, you will need to read deliberately. We should say the author thoroughly *enjoyed* his work while he was engaged in it; but the workmanship exhibits everywhere the greatest care and patience. The same habit of mind employed in writing it will be required in the reading. We may describe the book as being a graceful, suggestive review of literature, considered with regard to its enjoyments. Refined, scholarly, tolerant, and judicious in all his tastes and sympathies, the author's influence upon other minds cannot be otherwise than wholesome, elevating, and benignant.

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FOOTNOTES:

- [4] *Pleasures, Objects, and Advantages of Literature*. A Discourse, by the Rev. Robert Aris Willmott, Incumbent of Bear Wood, Berks. Bosworth: London.

THE MISSING SHIP.

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ALEXIS HIMKOF had just taken an affectionate leave of his wife, and stood looking after her, on the deck of the vessel to which he had been appointed mate, and which had been fitted up for the whale-fishery near Spitzbergen, by a merchant of the name of Jeremiah Oxladmkof, of Mesen, a town in the province of Jesovia, in the government of Archangel. She sailed in 1743 on her first voyage. We can conceive how lonely the home of Alexis must have been without him. We may be sure that his wife's last prayer at night was offered up for his safety. We constantly hear it said, in stormy weather: 'God help those who are at sea!' 'God help those who have friends at sea!' might be added to the petition; for there are hearts which quail at every gust of wind—there are thick-coming fancies, which can conjure up tempest-tossed vessels, sweeping gales, and raging billows; and yet the ship may at that very moment be in calm waters, or sailing with a prosperous breeze.

The time came that there might be some account of Himkof—then, that the vessel might be back; but no news or vessel came. Month after month passed on, and still it came not; and then years went by, and still there was no ship: whenever a sail was seen in the distance, the poor wife would hasten to the shore; but still the ship she looked for never came. With a sinking heart, she would retrace her steps homewards; but still she came again and again, so true it is that affection and hope are the last earthly companions that part company. The neighbours would look at her as she passed along, and shake their heads in pity.

The vessel, which had fourteen hands on board, had sailed on with a fair wind for eight days. On the ninth it veered, and instead of reaching the west of Spitzbergen, the place of rendezvous for the vessels employed annually in the whale-fishery, it was driven eastward of those islands. A few days brought her near one of them, known as East Spitzbergen. When within about two English miles, she was hemmed in by ice, and in extreme danger. In this dreadful emergency, the crew consulted on what was best to be done. Himkof mentioned that he had been told, some time before, that some men from Mesen, having decided on wintering on the island, had provided themselves with timber for building a hut, which they accordingly erected at some distance from the shore. Being quite aware, that if they remained in their

present situation, they must inevitably perish, they determined to search for the hut, and to winter there, if so fortunate as to find it. Himkof, with three others, were selected to make the search. They were provided with a musket, twelve charges of powder, a dozen balls, an axe, a small kettle, a knife, a tinder-box and tinder, a wooden pipe for each, some tobacco, and a bag with twenty pounds of flour. This was as much as they could carry with safety, as they had to make their way for two miles over loose ridges of ice, which would be still more difficult and dangerous if they were overloaded, and it required the utmost caution to avoid falling between these ridges, which had been raised by the waves and driven together by the winds. The footing once lost, inevitable destruction must follow. They had not proceeded above an English mile, when, to their great delight, they descried the hut, at a distance of about a mile and a half from the shore. Its length was thirty-six feet, and its breadth and height eighteen. It consisted of two rooms. The antechamber was about twelve feet broad, and had two doors—one to exclude the outer air, the other by which it communicated with the inner room, in which there was an earthen stove, such as is commonly used in Russia. A very slight inspection sufficed to shew that the hut had sustained great injury from the weather; but to have found it in any condition was a subject of great joy, and they availed themselves of its shelter for the night.

Eager to communicate the good news to their companions, they set out early the next morning; and as they went on, they chatted cheerfully about the stores of ammunition and provisions, and various requisites which could be conveyed from the ship, to be stored in the hut for winter use. They pursued their way in the highest spirits, picturing to themselves the delight which they were about to give to their companions. When they arrived on the shore, not a vestige of the ship was to be seen; no track through the waters marked her path; all was still and silent, desolate and bleak: no familiar face was seen; not one of their comrades was left to tell the hapless tale! They stood aghast, looking in mute despair upon the sea. The ice by which the vessel had been hemmed in had totally disappeared. The violent storm of the night before, they concluded, might have been the cause of this fatal disaster; the ice might have been disturbed by the agitation of the waves, and beaten violently against the ship, till she was shattered to pieces; or she might, perhaps, have been carried on by the current into the ocean, and there lost. However it might have been, they were never to see her again. What a difference a few short moments had made in their feelings and in their fate! They thought to have re-entered the hut with glad companions; they returned to it the sole inhabitants of that desolate region, disconsolate, and utterly hopeless of ever leaving it. When they could collect their thoughts, they were anxiously turned to the preservation of their lives, for which it was necessary to provide some kind of sustenance. The island abounded with reindeer, and they brought down one with every charge of their powder. They set about devising means to repair the hut, which, from the cracks and crevices produced by the weather, let in the piercingly cold air in various directions. No wood, or even shrub, grew on that sterile ground. Nothing could be more dreary than the prospect—a bleak waste without vegetation; the high mountains with their rock and crags; the everlasting ice and the vast masses of snow. The very sublimity of the scene was awfully impressed with all the marks of stern desolation and solitude. As in that cold climate wood is not liable to decay, they joined the boards of which the hut was constructed, with the help of their axe, very tolerably, filling up the crevices with moss, which grows in abundance all over the island. The poor men, like all of their country, were expert carpenters, for it is customary with them to build their own houses. No want could have been more dreadful than that of wood, for without firing, they could never bear up against the intense cold.

As they strayed along the beach, they found, to their joy, a quantity of wood which had been carried in by the tide. What they first got in this way were parts of the wreck of vessels, and afterwards trees, which had been uprooted by the overflowing of rivers, and borne by the waves into the ocean; but what proved a treasure to the poor castaways, were some boards which they discovered on the beach, with a long iron hook, some nails of five or six inches long, and thick in proportion, and other pieces of iron fastened in them—the sad memorials of some shattered vessel. Kind Providence seemed to have directed their steps where help was to be found. Just at the time when their provisions had nearly failed, and when they were without the means of replenishing their store, they perceived, not far from the boards, the root of a fir-tree, which had almost taken the form of a bow. With the help of their knife, they soon brought it into more regular shape, but they were unprovided with a string and with arrows. They determined, in the first instance, to make two lances, to guard themselves against the formidable attacks of the ferocious white bear; but without a hammer, it was impossible to form their heads, or those of the arrows. However, by heating the iron hook, and

widening a hole which it happened to have in the centre, with the help of one of the large nails, they inserted the handle, and a round button at one end of the hook, made the face of the hammer. A large pebble served for an anvil, and a pair of reindeer's horns were the tongs. Such were the tools with which they fashioned the heads for two spears, which they polished and sharpened on stones, and then tied them fast with strips of reindeer-skin to thick sticks, with which they were supplied from the branches of trees which had been wafted on shore. Thus armed, they attacked a white bear, and after a desperate struggle, they succeeded in killing him. They made use of the flesh for food, which they described as being like beef; by separating the tendons, they were supplied with filaments as fine as they pleased, which enabled them to string their bow. Their next work was to form pieces of iron into heads for their arrows, like the spears which they had already manufactured. They polished and sharpened them in the same way, and made them fast to pieces of the fir with the sinews of the white bear; feathers of sea-fowl being tied with the filaments. They were now equipped with a complete bow and arrows, which proved a most serviceable acquisition, and furnished them from time to time with reindeer to the amount of 250, besides vast numbers of the blue and white foxes; providing them not only with food, but with clothing, as their skins were a great defence from the coldness of the climate.

They destroyed no more than ten white bears; these animals defended themselves with prodigious strength and fury. The first was attacked by the sailors; the other nine were the assailants. Some of them were so daring as to walk into the hut in search of their prey. Those among them who were the least voracious were easily driven away, but the more ravenous were not to be deterred; and it was not without encountering the most imminent danger that the men escaped in the dreadful conflicts. But they were in continual fear of being devoured, as these ferocious animals repeated their visits to the hut, and renewed their attacks continually. When they succeeded in slaying one, they made use of its flesh as food, which, with that of the reindeer and the blue and white foxes, were the only kind they could have in that bleak region.

The want of the necessary conveniences obliged them for some time to make use of their food without cooking. They had nothing in the way of bread or salt. The stove within was set up after the Russian fashion, and could boil nothing. The cold was so intense, that all the wood they had was reserved for the stove; they had none to spare for making a fire outside, from which they would have had but little heat, and where they would run the risk of being attacked by the white bear. Besides, the masses of snow which fell during the winter months, and the heavy rains, would have made it quite impossible, for great part of the year, to have kept a fire burning in the open air. They, however, thought of a plan by which they were enabled to prepare some of their food. In the summer months, they exposed part of their animal food in the sun, and then hung it in the upper part of the hut, where it became thoroughly dried by the smoke. This food they used as bread, with that which they were obliged to eat half raw. By this means they were able to keep up a constant supply of provisions. They had water in the summer from the rills which fell from the rocks, and in winter, they were supplied from the snows and thawed ice. Their only utensil for holding water, and substitute for a drinking-cup, was their small kettle.

Half of the flour had been consumed by the men with their meat; the remaining portion was preserved for a different purpose. The dread of their fire going out, and of the difficulty which they should find in lighting another, without match or tinder, set their wits to work to find means to avert so great a misfortune. They obtained from the middle of the island a particular kind of slimy clay, which they had observed, and of which they modelled a sort of lamp, and filled it with the fat of the reindeer. They contrived a wick with a piece of twisted linen. When they flattered themselves that their object was accomplished, they met with a great disappointment, for the melting grease ran through the lamp. To make a new one, and to fill up the pores of the material of which it was made, was now their care. When formed, they dried it in the air, and then heated it red-hot, in which state they immersed it in their kettle, in a preparation of flour, which had been boiled down to the consistence of starch. They now tested it by filling it with melted fat, and to their infinite delight, they found that they had succeeded in fashioning one that did not leak. To make it still more secure, they covered the outside with linen dipped in the starch.

In managing to have light during the dreary months of darkness, they had attained a great object, which had been doubly desirable on account of him who was languishing in sickness. That they might not be wholly dependent on one lamp, of which some accident might deprive them, they made another. In collecting such wood as had been cast on shore for fuel, they had fortunately

found some cordage and a little oakum (the sort of hemp used for calking ships), which they turned to great account as wicks for their lamps. When this store was consumed, they had recourse to their shirts and drawers—a part of dress worn by almost all Russian peasants—to supply the want. Like the sacred fire, these lamps were never suffered to go out. As they were formed soon after their arrival, they were kept burning without intermission for the years they passed in their comfortless abode.

The sacrifice made of their shirts and drawers exposed them more to the intense cold. Their shoes, boots, and other parts of their dress, were worn out. In this emergency, it was necessary to form some plan for defending themselves from the inclemency of the climate. The skins of the reindeer and foxes, which they had converted into bedding, now afforded the materials for clothing. They were submerged in fresh water for several days, till the hair was so loosened that it was easily removed; the leather was then rubbed with their hands till nearly dry, then melted reindeer fat was spread over it, and then it was again rubbed. It thus became soft, and fit for the use to which it was to be put. Some of the skins which they wished to reserve for furs did not undergo exactly the same process, but were merely left in water for one day, and were then prepared in the same manner, without removing the hair. Though now furnished with the materials for clothing, they were without the implements necessary for making them into articles of dress. They had neither awls for making shoes and boots, nor needles for sewing their clothes. Their ingenuity was, therefore, again put to the test, and was not slow in making up the deficiency. They contrived to make both very well, out of the bits of iron which they had collected from time to time. One of their most difficult tasks, was to make eyes to their needles; but this they accomplished with the help of their knife; for having ground it to a very sharp point, and heated a kind of wire, forged for the purpose, red-hot, they pierced a hole through one end, and by whetting and smoothing it on stones, brought the other to a point. These needles were astonishingly well formed, nothing being amiss with them but the roughness of the eye, by which the thread was sometimes cut. It was indeed surprising that they were so well made, considering the rude instruments with which they were fashioned. Having no scissors, they were obliged to cut out their clothes with the knife; and though this was their first attempt at the trade of shoemaker or tailor, yet they contrived to cut out the articles which they required with as much precision as if they had served a regular apprenticeship to the business. The sinews of the reindeer and bears answered for thread. They set earnestly to their work. For summer wear, they made a sort of jacket and trousers of the prepared skins; for winter, long fur-gowns, with hoods, made after the fashion of those worn by the Laplanders.

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The constant employment which their necessities required, and the various difficulties which they had to overcome by ingenious contrivance, so far from having been a misfortune, may be considered as having been the means of preserving these poor men from sinking under their unhappy circumstances. But accordingly as their ingenuity had supplied their wants, and their minds became more disengaged from expedients, their melancholy increased, and they looked round despondingly on the sterile and desolate region where, they felt, they were to spend the rest of their days, far away from the hearths of home, and from early friends and companions. Even the probability of that little circle being lessened, and, it might be, reduced to one solitary being, was a dreadful thought: each felt that this might be his own fate. Then the fear of all means of sustenance failing, and the assaults of wild beasts, were dangers too glaring to be forgotten. Alexis Himkof, who had left a wife and three children, suffered perhaps the most from heart-yearnings after home.

They had already lost one of their companions from the effects of scurvy; and now, when six dreary years had nearly passed, another was taken from among them. It chanced on the 15th of August 1749, while they were lamenting their poor companion, that they descried a vessel. Who can describe the tumults of their feelings, the fluttering of their hearts? Their fate hung upon a chance. Oh, if she would come to relieve them! oh, if they could pass once more those rude barriers of ice, and cut through those interminable waves again! But she might pass on, and leave them to a fate rendered still more miserable by the fallacious gleam of hope. With trembling haste they ran hither and thither, and almost flew to light the signal-fires of distress along the hills, and now to the beach, to wave the rude flag, formed of a reindeer's skin fastened to a pole. What agitating hopes and fears were crowded into that space of time, as the vessel made her way through the waters! The signals of distress were seen—were heeded! She comes! she comes! and now she anchors near the shore. What a day of joy and thankfulness! But the delight of the poor mariners may be more easily conceived than described. Their bargain with the master of the ship—a Russian vessel—was soon made: they were to work

for him on the voyage, and they agreed to pay eighty rubles on landing. He took them on board with all their possessions, consisting of two thousand pounds of the lard of the reindeer in the hides of those animals, and of the white and blue foxes, and the skins of the ten white bears that they had destroyed. They also took with them their bow and arrows, and all the implements which they had manufactured. These were deposited in a bone box, made with great ingenuity, with no tool but their knife. We have in these men a very remarkable example of the energy which can sustain in the most trying circumstances, and the ingenious skill which can furnish expedients, even in a region so destitute of resources. It may well teach us to trust in that good Providence which is indeed a present help in trouble.

They reached Archangel on the 28th of September 1749. What happy meetings may have been anticipated!—what calamities may have been dreaded during that voyage!—How may it have fared with those who were left? Will they all be there, to greet with a joyful welcome? What if Alexis' wife, worn out by suspense and anxiety, should have sunk into an early grave?—or if one among their children should have died?—or if the three should all have been swept away? The approaching sail had been seen; and the one who for years had clung to a forlorn-hope, was again at the water's edge. Alexis stood on the deck. Affection is quick-sighted; he was instantly seen and known by his wife! All was forgotten—all but that he was there. The distance between them, the waves that separated them, were unheeded! Uttering a wild cry of joy, she rushed forward to clasp him in her arms. She sprang into the water—a little time, and she was extricated. She was insensible when taken up. When she came to herself, she was in her husband's arms!—their children were about them! What tears of joy were shed!—what prayers of thankfulness were offered up!

The foregoing narrative, true in every respect, is drawn up by us from documents issued under the authority of the Russian government. It shews, in a convincing manner, that subsistence is by no means impossible for sailors wrecked and icebound within the polar regions.

WILD ANIMALS IN CONFINEMENT.

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Were it not that custom reconciles us to everything, a Christian community would surely be shocked by the report, and still more by the sight, of the sacrifice of innocent and helpless creatures—pigeons and rabbits, for instance—to the horrible instincts of snakes, who will not eat anything but what is alive. An account was recently given of a night-visit to the place of confinement of these disgusting reptiles, in which the evident horror of their intended victims, confined in the same cages, was distinctly mentioned. The gratification of mere curiosity does not justify the infliction of such torture on the lower animals. Surely the sight of a stuffed boa-constrictor ought to content a reasonable curiosity. Imagine what would be felt if a child were subjected to such a fate, or what could be answered if the present victims could tell their agonies as well as feel them! Byron speaks of the barbarians who, in the wantonness of power, were 'butchered to make a Roman holiday;' and verily the horrors exhibited in our public gardens and menageries are something akin to the fights of gladiators; it is the infliction of misery for mere sport. With reference also to lions, tigers, and other ferocious animals kept in cages—if retained at all, the space allotted them ought to be much larger than it is, so as to allow them full room for healthful exercise. At present, they must be wretched; and considering also the quantity of food they consume, which might be converted to useful purposes—though this is taking a lower view of the matter—it is at least desirable that the number should be much smaller, and a much greater space allowed them to exhibit their natural vivacity. These remarks do not, of course, apply to fowls and other animals who are allowed a sufficient share of liberty to exist in comfort, and to whom it is not necessary to sacrifice the existence of other creatures.—*Ogden's Friendly Observer.*

[We entirely agree in reprobating the practice of placing live rabbits and other creatures within the cages of boa-constrictors. A recollection of a poor little rabbit cowering in the corner of one of these cages, as if aware of its approaching fate, has haunted us for years. No purpose of science can be answered by this constantly recurring barbarity. Zoological Societies should be careful not to run any risk of counteracting by such spectacles the elevated feelings they are so well calculated to foster.—*Ed. C. E. J.*]

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