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CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

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PUFF AND PUSH.

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It is said that everything is to be had in London. There is truth enough in the observation; indeed, rather too much. The conviction that everything is to be had, whether you are in want of it or not, is forced upon you with a persistence that becomes oppressive; and you find that, owing to everything being so abundantly plentiful, there is one thing which is *not* to be had, do what you will, though you would like it, have it if you could—and that one thing is just one day's exemption from the persecutions of Puff in its myriad shapes and disguises. But it is not to be allowed; all the agencies that will

work at all are pressed into the service of pushing and puffing traffic; and we are fast becoming, from a nation of shopkeepers, a nation in a shop. If you walk abroad, it is between walls swathed in puffs; if you are lucky enough to drive your gig, you have to 'cut in and out' between square vans of crawling puffs; if, alighting, you cast your eyes upon the ground, the pavement is stencilled with puffs; if in an evening stroll you turn your eye towards the sky, from a paper balloon the clouds drop puffs. You get into an omnibus, out of the shower, and find yourself among half a score of others, buried alive in puffs; you give the conductor sixpence, and he gives you three pennies in change, and you are forced to pocket a puff, or perhaps two, stamped indelibly on the copper coin of the realm. You wander out into the country, but the puffs have gone thither before you, turn in what direction you may; and the green covert, the shady lane, the barks of columned beeches and speckled birches, of gnarled oaks and rugged elms—no longer the mysterious haunts of nymphs and dryads, who have been driven far away by the omnivorous demon of the shop—are all invaded by Puff, and subdued to the office of his ministering spirits. Puff, in short, is the monster megatherium of modern society, who runs rampaging about the world, his broad back in the air, and his nose on the ground, playing all sorts of ludicrous antics, doing very little good, beyond filling his own insatiable maw, and nobody knows how much mischief in accomplishing that.

Push is an animal of a different breed, naturally a thorough-going, steady, and fast-trotting hack, who mostly keeps in the Queen's highway, and knows where he is going. Unfortunately, he is given to break into a gallop now and then; and whenever in this vicious mood, is pretty sure to take up with Puff, and the two are apt to make wild work of it when they scamper abroad together. The worst of it is, that nobody knows which is which of these two termagant tramlers: both are thoroughly protean creatures, changing shapes and characters, and assuming a thousand different forms every day; so that it is a task all but impossible to distinguish one from the other. Hence a man may get upon the back of either without well knowing whither he will be carried, or what will be the upshot of his journey.

Dropping our parable, and leaving the supposed animals to run their indefinite career, let us take a brief glance at some of the curiosities of the science of Puffing and Pushing—for both are so blended, that it is impossible to disentangle one from the other—as it is carried on at the present hour in the metropolis.

The business of the shopkeeper, as well as of all others who have goods to sell, is of course to dispose of his wares as rapidly as possible, and in the dearest market. This market he has to create, and he must do it in one of two ways: either he must succeed in persuading the public, by some means or other, that it is to their advantage to deal with him, or he must wait patiently and perseveringly until they have found that out, which they will inevitably do if it is a fact. No shop ever pays its expenses, as a general rule, for the first ten or twenty months, unless it be literally crammed down the public throat by the instrumentality of the press and the boarding; and it is therefore a question, whether it is cheaper to wait for a business to grow up, like a young plant, or to force it into sudden expansion by artificial means. When a business is manageable by one or two hands, the former expedient is the better one, and as such is generally followed, after a little preliminary advertising, to apprise the neighbourhood of its whereabouts. But when the proprietor has an army of assistants to maintain and to salarise, the case is altogether different: the expense of waiting, perhaps for a couple of years, would swallow up a large capital. On this account, he finds it more politic to arrest the general attention by a grand stir in all quarters, and some obtrusive demonstration palpable to all eyes, which shall blazon his name and pretensions through every street and lane of mighty London. Sometimes it is a regiment of foot, with placarded banners; sometimes one of cavalry, with bill-plastered vehicles and bands of music; sometimes it is a phalanx of bottled humanity, crawling about in labelled triangular phials of wood, corked with woful faces; and sometimes it is all these together, and a great deal more besides. By this means, he conquers reputation, as a despot sometimes carries a throne, by a *coup d'état*, and becomes a celebrity at once to the million, among whom his name is infinitely better known than those of the greatest benefactors of mankind. All this might be tolerable enough if it ended here; but, unhappily, it does not. Experiment has shewn that, just as gudgeons will bite at anything when the mud is stirred up at the bottom of their holes, so the ingenuous public will lay out their money with anybody who makes a prodigious noise and clatter about the bargains he has to give. The result of this discovery is, the wholesale daily publication of lies of most enormous calibre, and their circulation, by means which we shall briefly notice, in localities where they are likely to prove most productive.

The advertisement in the daily or weekly papers, the placard on the walls or boardings, the perambulating vans and banner-men, and the doomed hosts of bottle-imps and extinguishers, however successful each may be in attracting the gaze and securing the patronage of the multitude, fail, for the most part, of enlisting the confidence of a certain order of customers, who, having plenty of money to spend, and a considerable share of vanity to work upon, are among the most hopeful fish that fall into the shopkeeper's net. These are the female members of a certain order of families—the amiable and genteel wives and daughters of the commercial aristocracy, and their agents, of this great city. They reside throughout the year in the suburbs: they rarely read the newspapers; it would not be genteel to stand in the streets spelling over the bills on the walls; and the walking and riding equipages of puffing are things decidedly low in their estimation. They must, therefore, be reached by some other means; and these other means are before us as we write, in the shape of a pile of circular-letters in envelopes of all sorts—plain, hot-pressed, and embossed; with addresses—some in manuscript, and others in print—some in a gracefully genteel running-hand, and others decidedly and rather obtrusively official in character, as though emanating from government authorities—each and all, however, containing the bait which the lady-gudgeon is expected to swallow. Before proceeding to open a few of them for the benefit of the reader, we must apprise him of a curious peculiarity which marks their delivery. Whether they come by post, as the major part of them do, not a few of them requiring a double stamp, or whether they are delivered by hand, one thing is remarkable—*they always come in the middle of the day*, between the hours of eleven in the forenoon and five in the afternoon, when, as a matter of course, the master of the house is not in the way. Never, by any accident, does the morning-post, delivered in the suburbs between nine and ten, produce an epistle of this kind. Let us now open a few of them, and learn from their contents what is the shopkeeper's estimate of the gullibility of the merchant's wife, or his daughter, or of the wife or daughter of his managing clerk.

The first that comes to hand is addressed thus: 'No. 2795.—DECLARATIVE NOTICE.—*From the Times, August 15, 1851.*' The contents are a circular, handsomely printed on three crowded sides of royal quarto glazed post, and containing a list of articles for peremptory disposal, under unheard-of advantages, on the premises of Mr Gobblemadam, at No. 541 New Ruin Street. Without disguising anything more than the addresses of these puffing worthies, we shall quote *verbatim* a few paragraphs from their productions. The catalogue of bargains in the one before us comprises almost every species of textile manufacture, as well native as foreign—among which silks, shawls, dresses, furs, and mantles are the most prominent; and amazing bargains they are—witness the following extracts:

'A marvellous variety of fancy silks, cost from 4 to 5 guineas each, will be sold for L.1, 19s. 6d. each.

Robes of damas and broche (foreign), cost 6 guineas, to be sold for 2½ guineas.

Embroidered muslin robes, newest fashion, cost 18s. 9d., to be sold for 9s. 6d.

Worked lace dresses, cost 35s., to be sold at 14s. 9d.

Do. do. cost 28s. 6d., to be sold at 7s. 6d.

Newest dresses, of fashionable materials, worth 35s., to be sold for 9s. 9d.

Splendid Paisley shawls, worth 2½ guineas, for 16s.

Cashmere shawls (perfect gems), cost 4 guineas, to be sold for 35s.'

A long list of similar bargains closes with a declaration that, although these prices are mentioned, a clearance of the premises, rather than a compensation for the value of the goods, is the great object in view; that the articles will be got rid of regardless of price; and that '*the disposal will assume the character of a gratuitous distribution, rather than of an actual sale.*' This is pretty well for the first hap-hazard plunge into the half-bushel piled upon our table. Mr Gobblemadam may go down. Let us see what the next will produce.

The second is addressed thus: '*To be opened within two hours after delivery.*—SPECIAL COMMISSION.—*Final Audit, 30th October 1851.*' The contents are a closely-printed extra-royal folio broadside, issued by the firm of Messrs Shavelass and Swallowher, of Tottering Terrace West. It contains a voluminous list of useful domestic goods, presenting the most enormous bargains, in the way of sheetings, shirtings, flannels, diapers, damasks, dimities, table-cloths, &c. &c. The economical housewife is cautioned by this

generous firm, that to disregard the present opportunity would be the utmost excess of folly, as the whole stock is to be peremptorily sold considerably *under half the cost price*. The following are a few of the items:

'Irish lines, warranted genuine, 9-1/2d. per yard.

Fine cambric handkerchiefs, 2s. 6d. per dozen.

Curtain damask, in all colours, 6-1/2d. per yard.

Swiss curtains, elegantly embroidered, four yards long, for 6s. 9d. a pair—cost 17s. 6d.

Drawing-room curtains, elaborately wrought, at 8s. 6d. a pair—cost 21s.'

The bargains, in short, as Messrs Shavelass and Swallowher observe, are of such an astounding description, as 'to strike all who witness them with wonder, amazement, and surprise;' and 'demand inspection from every lady who desires to unite superiority of taste with genuine quality and economy.'

The next is a remarkably neat envelope, with a handsomely embossed border, bearing the words, 'ON ESPECIAL SERVICE' under the address, and winged with a two-penny stamp. The enclosure is a specimen of fine printing on smooth, thin vellum, in the form of a quarto catalogue, with a deep, black-bordered title-page, emanating from the dreary establishment of Messrs Moan and Groan, of Cypress Row. Here commerce condescends to sympathy, and measures forth to bereaved and afflicted humanity the outward and visible symbols of their hidden griefs. Here, when you enter his gloomy penetralia, and invoke his services, the sable-clad and cadaverous-featured shopman asks you, in a sepulchral voice—we are not writing romance, but simple fact—whether you are to be suited for inextinguishable sorrow, or for mere passing grief; and if you are at all in doubt upon the subject, he can solve the problem for you, if you lend him your confidence for the occasion. He knows from long and melancholy experience the agonising intensity of wo expressed by bombazine, crape, and Paramatta; can tell to a sigh the precise amount of regret that resides in a black bonnet; and can match any degree of internal anguish with its corresponding shade of colour, from the utter desolation and inconsolable wretchedness of dead and dismal black, to the transient sentiment of sorrowful remembrance so appropriately symbolised by the faintest shade of lavender or French gray. Messrs Moan and Groan know well enough, that when the heart is burdened with sorrow, considerations of economy are likely to be banished from the mind as out of place, and disrespectful to the memory of the departed; and, therefore, they do not affront their sorrowing patrons with the sublunary details of pounds, shillings, and pence. They speed on the wings of the post to the house of mourning, with the benevolent purpose of comforting the afflicted household. They are the first, after the stroke of calamity has fallen, to mingle the business of life with its regrets; and to cover the woes of the past with the allowable vanities of the present. Step by step, they lead their melancholy patrons along the meandering margin of their flowing pages—from the very borders of the tomb, through all the intermediate changes by which sorrow publishes to the world its gradual subsidence, and land them at last in the sixteenth page, restored to themselves and to society, in the frontbox of the Opera, glittering in 'splendid head-dresses in pearl,' in 'fashionably elegant turbans,' and in 'dress-caps trimmed with blonde and Brussels lace.' For such benefactors to womankind—the dears—of course no reward can be too great; and, therefore, Messrs Moan and Groan, strong in their modest sense of merit, make no parade of prices. They offer you all that in circumstances of mourning you can possibly want; they scorn to do you the disgrace of imagining that you would drive a bargain on the very brink of the grave; and you are of course obliged to them for the delicacy of their reserve on so commonplace a subject, and you pay their bill in decorous disregard of the amount. It is true, that certain envious rivals have compared them to birds of prey, scenting mortality from afar, and hovering like vultures on the trail of death, in order to profit by his dart; but such 'caparisons,' as Mrs Malaprop says, 'are odorous,' and we will have nothing to do with them.

The next, and the last we shall examine ere Betty claims the whole mass to kindle her fires, is a somewhat bulky envelope, addressed in a neat hand: *To the Lady of the House*. It contains a couple of very voluminous papers, almost as large as the broad page of *The Times*, one of which adverts mysteriously to some appalling calamity, which has resulted in a 'MOST DISASTROUS FAILURE, productive of the most *intense excitement* in the commercial world.' We learn further on, that from various conflicting circumstances, which the writer does not condescend to explain, above L.150,000 worth of property has come into the hands of Messrs Grabble and Grab, of Smash Place, 'which they are resolute in summarily disposing of *on principles commensurate with the*

honourable position they hold in the metropolis.' Then follows a list of tempting bargains, completely filling both the broad sheets. Here are a few samples:

'Costly magnificent long shawls, manufactured at L.6, to be sold for 18s. 6d.

Fur victorines, usually charged 18s. 6d., to sell at 1s. 3d.

2500 shawls (Barège), worth 21s. each, to sell at 5s.

Embroidered satin shawls (magnificent), value 20 guineas each, to be sold for 3 guineas.'

The reader is probably satisfied by this time of the extraordinary cheapness of these inexhaustible wares, which thus go begging for purchasers in the bosoms of families. It is hardly necessary to inform him, that all these enormous pretensions are so many lying delusions, intended only to bring people in crowds to the shop, where they are effectually fleeced by the jackals in attendance. If the lady reader doubt the truth of our assertion, let her go for once to the establishment of Messrs Grabble and Grab last named. An omnibus from any part of the city or suburbs will, as the circular informs you, set you down at the door. Upon entering the shop, you are received by a polite inquiry from the 'walker' as to the purpose of your visit. You must say something in answer to his torrent of civility, and you probably name the thing you want, or at least which you are willing to have at the price named in the sheet transmitted to you through the post. Suppose you utter the word 'shawl.' 'This way, madam,' says he; and forthwith leads you a long dance to the end of the counter, where he consigns you over to the management of a plausible genius invested with the control of the shawl department. You have perhaps the list of prices in your hand, and you point out the article you wish to see. The fellow shews you fifty things for which you have no occasion, in spite of your reiterated request for the article in the list. He states his conviction, in a flattering tone, that *that* article would not become you, and recommends those he offers as incomparably superior. If you insist, which you rarely can, he is at length sorry to inform you that the article is unfortunately just now out of stock, depreciating it at the same time as altogether beneath *your* notice; and in the end succeeds in cramming you with something which you don't want, and for which you pay from 15 to 20 per cent. more than your own draper would have charged you for it.

The above extracts are given in illustration of the last new discovery in the science of puffing—a discovery by which, through the agency of the press, the penny-post, and the last new London Directory, the greatest rogues are enabled to practise upon the simplicity of our better-halves, while we think them secure in the guardianship of home. We imagine that, practically, this science must be now pretty near completion. Earth, air, fire, and water, are all pressed into the service. It has its painters, and poets, and literary staff, from the bard who tunes his harp to the praise of the pantaloons of the great public benefactor Noses, to the immortal professoress of crochet and cross-stitch, who contracts for L.120 a year to puff in 'The Family Fudge' the superexcellent knitting and boar's-head cotton of Messrs Steel and Goldseye. It may be that something more is yet within the reach of human ingenuity. It remains to be seen whether we shall at some future time find puffs in the hearts of lettuces and summer-cabbages, or shell them from our green-peas and Windsor beans. It might be brought about, perhaps, were the market-gardeners enlisted in the cause; the only question is, whether it could be made to pay.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A POLICE-OFFICER.

THE MONOMANIAC.

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The following narrative relates more to medical than to criminal history; but as the affair came in some degree under my notice as a public officer, I have thought it might not be altogether out of place in these slight outlines of police experience. Strange and unaccountable as it may at first appear, its general truth will hardly be questioned by those who have had opportunities of observing the fantastic delusions which haunt and dominate the human brain in certain phases of mental aberration.

On arriving in London, in 1831, I took lodgings at a Mr Renshawe's, in Mile-End Road, not far from the turnpike-gate. My inducement to do so, was partly the cheapness and neatness of the accommodation, partly that the landlord's

maternal uncle, a Mr Oxley, was slightly known to me. Henry Renshawe I knew by reputation only, he having left Yorkshire ten or eleven years before, and even that knowledge was slight and vague. I had heard that a tragical event had cast a deep shadow over his after-life; that he had been for some months the inmate of a private lunatic asylum; and that some persons believed his brain had never thoroughly recovered its originally healthy action. In this opinion, both my wife and myself very soon concurred; and yet I am not sure that we could have given a satisfactory reason for such belief. He was, it is true, usually kind and gentle, even to the verge of simplicity, but his general mode of expressing himself and conducting business was quite coherent and sensible; although, in spite of his resigned cheerfulness of tone and manner, it was at times quite evident, that whatever the mental hurt he had received, it had left a rankling, perhaps remorseful, sting behind. A small, well-executed portrait in his sitting-room suggested a conjecture of the nature of the calamity which had befallen him. It was that of a fair, mild-eyed, very young woman, but of a pensive, almost mournful, cast of features, as if the coming event, briefly recorded in the lower right-hand corner of the painting, had already, during life and health, cast its projecting shadow over her. That brief record was this:—'Laura Hargreaves, born 1804; drowned 1821.' No direct allusion to the picture ever passed his lips, in my hearing, although, from being able to chat together of Yorkshire scenes and times, we speedily became excellent friends. Still, there were not wanting, from time to time, significant indications, though difficult to place in evidence, that the fire of insanity had not been wholly quenched, but still smouldered and glowed beneath the habit-hardened crust which concealed it from the careless or casual observer. Exciting circumstances, not very long after my arrival in the metropolis, unfortunately kindled those brief wild sparkles into a furious and consuming flame.

Mr Renshawe was in fair circumstances—that is, his income, derived from funded property alone, was nearly L.300 a year; but his habits were close, thrifty, almost miserly. His personal appearance was neat and gentlemanly, but he kept no servant. A charwoman came once a day to arrange his chamber, and perform other household work, and he usually dined, very simply, at a coffee-house or tavern. His house, with the exception of a sitting and bed room, was occupied by lodgers; amongst these, was a pale, weakly-looking young man, of the name of Irwin. He was suffering from pulmonary consumption—a disease induced, I was informed, by his careless folly in remaining in his wet clothes after having assisted, during the greater part of the night, at a large fire at a coach-factory. His trade was in gold and silver lace-work—bullion for epaulettes, and so on; and as he had a good connection with several West-end establishments, his business appeared to be a thriving one; so much so, that he usually employed several assistants of both sexes. He occupied the first floor, and a workshop at the end of the garden. His wife, a pretty-featured, well-formed, graceful young woman, of not more than two or three-and-twenty, was, they told me, the daughter of a schoolmaster, and certainly had been gently and carefully nurtured. They had one child, a sprightly, curly-haired, bright-eyed boy, nearly four years old. The wife, Ellen Irwin, was reputed to be a first-rate hand at some of the lighter parts of her husband's business; and her efforts to lighten his toil, and compensate by increased exertion for his daily diminishing capacity for labour, were unwearying and incessant. Never have I seen a more gentle, thoughtful tenderness, than was displayed by that young wife towards her suffering, and sometimes not quite evenly-tempered partner, who, however, let me add, appeared to reciprocate truthfully her affection; all the more so, perhaps, that he knew their time together upon earth was already shrunk to a brief span. In my opinion, Ellen Irwin was a handsome, even an elegant young person: this, however, is in some degree a matter of taste. But no one could deny that the gentle kindness, the beaming compassion, that irradiated her features as she tended the fast-sinking invalid, rendered her at such times absolutely beautiful—*angelised* her, to use an expression of my wife's, with whom she was a prime favourite. I was self-debating for about the twentieth time one evening, where it was I had formerly seen her, with that sad, mournful look of hers; for seen her I was sure I had, and not long since either. It was late; I had just returned home; my wife was in the sick-room, and I had entered it with two or three oranges:—'Oh, now I remember,' I suddenly exclaimed, just above my breath; 'the picture in Mr Renshawe's room! What a remarkable coincidence!'

A low, chuckling laugh, close at my elbow, caused me to turn quickly towards the door. Just within the threshold stood Mr Renshawe, looking like a white stone-image rather than a living man, but for the fierce sparkling of his strangely gleaming eyes, and the mocking, triumphant curl of his lips. 'You, too, have at last observed it, then?' he muttered, faintly echoing the undertone in which I spoke: 'I have known the truth for many weeks.' The manner,

the expression, not the words, quite startled me. At the same moment, a cry of women rang through the room, and I immediately seized Mr Renshawe by the arm, and drew him forcibly away, for there was that in his countenance which should not meet the eyes of a dying man.

'What were you saying? What truth have you known for weeks?' I asked, as soon as we had reached his sitting-room.

Before he could answer, another wailing sound ascended from the sick-room. Lightning leaped from Renshawe's lustrous, dilated eyes, and the exulting laugh again, but louder, burst from his lips: 'Ha! ha!' he fiercely exclaimed. 'I know that cry! It is Death's!—Death's! Thrice-blessed Death, whom I have so often ignorantly cursed! But that,' he added quickly, and peering sharply in my face, 'was when, as you know, people said'—and he ground his teeth with rage—'people said I was crazed—mad!'

'What can you mean by this wild talk, my friend?' I replied in as unconcerned and quieting a tone as I could immediately assume. 'Come, sit down: I was asking the meaning of your strange words below, just now.'

'The meaning of my words? You know as well as I do. Look there!'

'At the painting? Well?'

'You have seen the original,' he went on with the same excited tone and gestures. 'It crossed me like a flash of lightning. Still, it is strange she does not know me. It is sure she does not! But I am changed, no doubt—sadly changed!' he added, dejectedly, as he looked in a mirror.

'Can you mean that I have seen Laura Hargreaves here?' I stammered, thoroughly bewildered. 'She who was drowned ten or eleven years ago?'

'To be sure—to be sure! It was so believed, I admit, by everybody—by myself, and the belief drove me mad! And yet, I now remember, when at times I was calm—when the pale face, blind staring eyes, and dripping hair, ceased for awhile to pursue and haunt me, the low, sweet voice and gentle face came back, and I knew she lived, though all denied it. But look, it is her very image!' he added fiercely, his glaring eyes flashing from the portrait to my face alternately.

'Whose image?'

'Whose image!—Why, Mrs Irwin's, to be sure. You yourself admitted it just now.' I was so confounded, that for several minutes I remained stupidly and silently staring at the man. At length I said: 'Well, there *is* a likeness, though not so great as I imagined'—

'It is false!' he broke in furiously. 'It is her very self.'

[pg 261] 'We'll talk of that to-morrow. You are ill, overexcited, and must go to bed. I hear Dr Garland's voice below: he shall come to you.'

'No—no—no!' he almost screamed. 'Send me no doctors; I hate doctors! But I'll go to bed—since—since *you* wish it; but no doctors! Not for the world!' As he spoke, he shrank coweringly backwards, out of the room; his wavering, unquiet eyes fixed upon mine as long as we remained within view of each other: a moment afterwards, I heard him dart into his chamber, and bolt and double-lock the door.

It was plain that lunacy, but partially subdued, had resumed its former mastery over the unfortunate gentleman. But what an extraordinary delusion! I took a candle, and examined the picture with renewed curiosity. It certainly bore a strong resemblance to Mrs Irwin: the brown, curling hair, the pensive eyes, the pale fairness of complexion, were the same; but it was scarcely more girlish, more youthful, than the young matron was now, and the original, had she lived, would have been by this time approaching to thirty years of age! I went softly down stairs and found, as I feared, that George Irwin was gone. My wife came weeping out of the death-chamber, accompanied by Dr Garland, to whom I forthwith related what had just taken place. He listened with attention and interest; and after some sage observations upon the strange fancies which now and then take possession of the minds of monomaniacs, agreed to see Mr Renshawe at ten the next morning. I was not required upon duty till eleven; and if it were in the physician's opinion desirable, I was to write at once to the patient's uncle, Mr Oxley.

Mr Renshawe was, I heard, stirring before seven o'clock, and the charwoman informed me, that he had taken his breakfast as usual, and appeared to be in

cheerful, almost high spirits. The physician was punctual: I tapped at the sitting-room door, and was desired to come in. Mr Renshawe was seated at a table with some papers before him, evidently determined to appear cool and indifferent. He could not, however, repress a start of surprise, almost of terror, at the sight of the physician, and a paleness, followed by a hectic flush, passed quickly over his countenance. I observed, too, that the portrait was turned with its face towards the wall.

By a strong effort, Mr Renshawe regained his simulated composure, and in reply to Dr Garland's professional inquiry, as to the state of his health, said with a forced laugh: 'My friend, Waters, has, I suppose, been amusing you with the absurd story that made him stare so last night. It is exceedingly droll, I must say, although many persons, otherwise acute enough, cannot, except upon reflection, comprehend a jest. There was John Kemble, the tragedian, for instance, who'—

'Never mind John Kemble, my dear sir,' interrupted Dr Garland. 'Do, pray, tell us the story over again. I love an amusing jest.'

Mr Renshawe hesitated for an instant, and then said with reserve, almost dignity of manner: 'I do not know, sir'—his face, by the way, was determinedly averted from the cool, searching gaze of the physician—'I do not know, sir, that I am obliged to find you in amusement; and as your presence here was not invited, I shall be obliged by your leaving the room as quickly as maybe.'

'Certainly—certainly, sir. I am exceedingly sorry to have intruded, but I am sure you will permit me to have a peep at this wonderful portrait.'

Renshawe sprang impulsively forward to prevent the doctor reaching it. He was too late; and Dr Garland, turning sharply round with the painting in his hand, literally transfixed him in an attitude of surprise and consternation. Like the Ancient Mariner, he held him by his glittering eye, but the spell was not an enduring one. 'Truly,' remarked Dr Garland, as he found the kind of mesmeric influence he had exerted beginning to fail, 'not so *very* bad a chance resemblance; especially about the eyes and mouth'—

'This is very extraordinary conduct,' broke in Mr Renshawe; 'and I must again request that you will both leave the room.'

It was useless to persist, and we almost immediately went away. 'Your impression, Mr Waters,' said the physician as he was leaving the house, 'is, I daresay, the true one; but he is on his guard now, and it will be prudent to wait for a fresh outbreak before acting decisively; more especially as the hallucination appears to be quite a harmless one.'

This was not, I thought, quite so sure, but of course I acquiesced, as in duty bound; and matters went on pretty much as usual for seven or eight weeks, except that Mr Renshawe manifested much aversion towards myself personally, and at last served me with a written notice to quit at the end of the term previously stipulated for. There was still some time to that; and in the meanwhile, I caused a strict watch to be set, as far as was practicable, without exciting observation, upon our landlord's words and acts.

Ellen Irwin's first tumult of grief subsided, the next and pressing question related to her own and infant son's subsistence. An elderly man of the name of Tomlins was engaged as foreman; and it was hoped the business might still be carried on with sufficient profit. Mr Renshawe's manner, though at times indicative of considerable nervous irritability, was kind and respectful to the young widow; and I began to hope that the delusion he had for awhile laboured under had finally passed away.

The hope was a fallacious one. We were sitting at tea on a Sunday evening, when Mrs Irwin, pale and trembling with fright and nervous agitation, came hastily in with her little boy in her hand. I correctly divined what had occurred. In reply to my hurried questioning, the astounded young matron told me in substance, that within the last two or three days Mr Renshawe's strange behaviour and disjointed talk had both bewildered and alarmed her. He vaguely intimated that she, Ellen Irwin, was really Laura somebody else—that she had kept company with him, Mr Renshawe, in Yorkshire, before she knew poor George—with many other strange things he muttered rather than spoke out; and especially that it was owing to her son reminding her continually of his father, that she pretended not to have known Mr Renshawe twelve or thirteen years ago. 'In short,' added the young woman with tears and blushes, 'he is utterly crazed; for he asked me just now to marry him—which I would not do for the Indies—and is gone away in a passion to find a paper that will prove, he says, I am that other Laura something.'

There was something so ludicrous in all this, however vexatious and insulting under the circumstances—the recent death of the husband, and the young widow's unprotected state—that neither of us could forbear laughing at the conclusion of Mrs Irwin's story. It struck me, too, that Renshawe had conceived a real and ardent passion for the very comely and interesting person before us—first prompted, no doubt, by her accidental likeness to the portrait; and that some mental flaw or other caused him to confound her with the Laura who had in early life excited the same emotion in his mind.

Laughable as the matter was in one sense, there was—and the fair widow had noticed as well as myself—a serious, menacing expression in the man's eye not to be trifled with; and at her earnest request, we accompanied her to her own apartment, to which Renshawe had threatened soon to return. We had not been a minute in the room, when his hurried step was heard approaching, and Mrs Waters and I stepped hastily into an adjoining closet, where we could hear and partly see all that passed. Renshawe's speech trembled with fervency and anger as he broke at once into the subject with which his disordered brain was reeling.

'You will not dare to say, will you, that you do not remember this song—that these pencil-marks in the margin were not made by you thirteen years ago?' he menacingly ejaculated.

'I know nothing about the song, Mr Renshawe,' rejoined the young woman with more spirit than she might have exhibited but for my near presence. 'It is really such nonsense. Thirteen years ago, I was only about nine years of age.'

'You persist, then, unfeeling woman, in this cruel deception! After all, too, that I have suffered: the days of gloom, the nights of horror, since that fearful moment when I beheld you dragged, a lifeless corpse, from the water, and they told me you were dead!'

'Dead! Gracious goodness, Mr Renshawe, don't go on in this shocking way! I was never dragged out of a pond, nor supposed to be dead—never! You quite frighten one.'

'Then you and I, your sister, and that thrice-accursed Bedford, did not, on the 7th of August 1821, go for a sail on the piece of water at Lowfield, and the skiff was not, in the deadly, sudden, jealous strife between him and me, accidentally upset? But I know how it is: it is this brat, and the memories he recalls, that'—

Mrs Irwin screamed, and I stepped sharply into the room. The grasp of the lunatic was on the child's throat. I loosed it somewhat roughly, throwing him off with a force that brought him to the ground. He rose quickly, glared at me with tiger-like ferocity, and then darted out of the room. The affair had become serious, and the same night I posted a letter to Yorkshire, informing Mr Oxley of what had occurred, and suggesting the propriety of his immediately coming to London. Measures were also taken for securing Mrs Irwin and her son from molestation.

But the cunning of lunacy is not easily baffled. On returning home the fourth evening after the dispatch of my letter, I found the house and immediate neighbourhood in the wildest confusion. My own wife was in hysterics; Mrs Irwin, I was told by half-a-dozen tongues at once, was dying; and the frightful cause of all was, that little George Irwin, a favourite with everybody, had in some unaccountable manner fallen into the river Lea, and been drowned. This, at least, was the general conviction, although the river had been dragged to no purpose—the poor child's black beaver-hat and feather having been discovered floated to the bank, a considerable way down the stream. The body, it was thought, had been carried out into the Thames by the force of the current.

A terrible suspicion glanced across my mind. 'Where is Mr Renshawe?' I asked. Nobody knew. He had not been seen since five o'clock—about the time, I soon ascertained, that the child was missed. I had the house cleared, as quickly as possible, of the numerous gossips that crowded it, and then sought a conference with Dr Garland, who was with Mrs Irwin. The distracted mother had, I found, been profusely bled and cupped, and it was hoped that brain-fever, which had been apprehended, would not ensue. The physician's suspicions pointed the same way as mine; but he declined committing himself to any advice, and I was left to act according to my own discretion. I was new to such matters at that time—unfortunately so, as it proved, or the affair might have had a less painful issue.

Tomlins and I remained up, waiting for the return of Mr Renshawe; and as the

long, slow hours limped past, the night-silence only broken by the dull moaning, and occasional spasmodic screams of poor Mrs Irwin, I grew very much excited. The prolonged absence of Mr Renshawe confirmed my impressions of his guilt, and I determined to tax him with it, and take him into custody the instant he appeared. It was two in the morning before he did so; and the nervous fumbling, for full ten minutes, with his latch-key, before he could open the door, quite prepared me for the spectral-like aspect he presented on entering. He had met somebody, it afterwards appeared, outside, who had assured him that the mother of the drowned child was either dead or dying. He never drank, I knew, but he staggered as if intoxicated; and after he had with difficulty reached the head of the stairs, in reply to my question as to where he had been, he could only stutter with white trembling lips: 'It—it—cannot be—be true—that Lau—that Mrs Irwin is—dying?'

'Quite true, Mr Renshawe,' I very imprudently replied, and in much too loud a tone, for we were but a few paces from Mrs Irwin's bedroom door. 'And if, as I suspect, the child has been drowned by you, you will have before long two murders on your head.'

A choking, bubbling noise came from the wretched man's throat, and his shaking fingers vainly strove to loosen his neck-tie. At the same moment, I heard a noise, as of struggling, in the bedroom, and the nurse's voice in eager remonstrance. I instantly made a movement towards Mr Renshawe, with a view to loosen his cravat—his features being frightfully convulsed, and to get him out of the way as quickly as possible, for I guessed what was about to happen—when he, mistaking my intention, started back, turned half round, and found himself confronted by Mrs Irwin, her pale features and white night-dress dabbled with blood, in consequence of a partial disturbance of the bandages in struggling with the nurse—a terrifying, ghastly sight even to me; to him utterly overwhelming, and scarcely needing her frenzied execrations on the murderer of her child to deprive him utterly of all remaining sense and strength. He suddenly reeled, threw his arms wildly into the air, and before I could stretch forth my hand to save him, fell heavily backwards from the edge of the steep stairs, where he was standing, to the bottom. Tomlins and I hastened to his assistance, lifted him up, and as we did so, a jet of blood gushed from his mouth; he had likewise received a terrible wound near the right temple, from which the life-stream issued copiously.

We got him to bed: Dr Garland and a neighbouring surgeon were soon with us, and prompt remedies were applied. It was a fruitless labour. Day had scarcely dawned before he heard from the physician's lips that life with him was swiftly ebbing to its close. He was perfectly conscious and collected. Happily there was no stain of murder on his soul: he had merely enticed the child away, and placed him, under an ingenious pretence, with an acquaintance at Camden-Town; and by this time both he and his mother were standing, awe-struck and weeping, by Henry Renshawe's deathbed. He had thrown the child's hat into the river, and his motive in thus acting appeared to have been a double one. In the first place, because he thought the boy's likeness to his father was the chief obstacle to Mrs Irwin's toleration of his addresses; and next, to bribe her into compliance by a promise to restore her son. But he could not be deemed accountable for his actions. 'I think,' he murmured brokenly, 'that the delusion was partly self-cherished, or of the Evil One. I observed the likeness long before, but it was not till the—the husband was dying, that the idea fastened itself upon my aching brain, and grew there. But the world is passing: forgive me—Ellen—Laura'—He was dead!

The inquest on the cause of death returned, of course, that it was 'accidental;' but I long regretted that I had not been less precipitate, though perhaps all was for the best—for the sufferer as well as others. Mr Oxley had died some five weeks previously. This I found from Renshawe's will, where it was recited as a reason that, having no relative alive for whom he cared, his property was bequeathed to Guy's Hospital, charged with L.100 a year to Ellen Irwin, as long as she lived unmarried. The document was perfectly coherent; and although written during the height of his monomania, contained not a word respecting the identity of the youthful widow and the Laura whose sad fate had first unsettled the testator's reason.

THE VINCEJO'S PRIZE.

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[This somewhat curious incident in the under-current of history, is given on the authority of Mr H. G. Austen, of New Square, Lincoln's Inn, to whom the facts were communicated by his father, Sir F. W. Austen, who commanded one of the ships under the orders of Sir George Cockburn on the occasion

It is well known that when the French republican armies were overrunning the north of Italy, and commencing that wholesale system of plunder which was afterwards carried out to such perfection by Napoleon's marshals, the then reigning Duke of Florence offered the magnificent collection of pictures which adorned the Pitti Palace, to the English nation for the comparatively small sum of L.100,000—a sum which, as the late George Robins might have said, with less than his customary exaggeration, was 'hardly the price of the frames, gentlemen.' Mr Pitt seems, unfortunately, to have been less sensible of the value of the collection than scrupulous of asking parliament for the money; and the opportunity was lost of redeeming the national character, by such a set-off against the republican dispersion of the noble collection of Charles I. This circumstance is well known; but it will probably be new to most of our readers to learn, that many of the best pictures which had thus failed to become British property 'by purchase,' narrowly missed becoming such 'by conquest;' and that, in fact, they were for some hours in British custody. Such, however, was the fact, and the following narrative of the circumstance alluded to may perhaps not be considered devoid of interest.

It was in the latter part of the year 1799, that a squadron of British men-of-war was cruising in the Gulf of Genoa. It was known that the French were on the point of evacuating Italy, and these ships had been detached from Lord Keith's fleet, to watch that part of the coast, and to intercept, as far as possible, all communication between the ports of Italy and France. The squadron consisted of four vessels, under the orders of the present admiral of the fleet, Sir George Cockburn, then Captain Cockburn, whose pendant was flying in the *Minerve* frigate. Whilst some of the vessels kept pretty close in, so as to cut off all communications alongshore, others kept a look-out more to seaward, for any vessels that might attempt to make a straight run across the bay. One afternoon, four sails were discovered to seaward running towards the coast of France. The signal to chase was immediately made, and each of the British cruisers started off in pursuit of one of the strangers. Our concern is with the *Vincejo*, a brig of eighteen guns, commanded by Captain Long, which happened, from her position, to be the most advanced in the chase. She was standing off-shore on the larboard tack, with her head to the south-west, when the chase was discovered somewhat to leeward, standing nearly due west, with the wind on her starboard-quarter. The latter was a smart-looking ship of 600 or 700 tons, displaying no colours; though from the course she was steering, and her evident intention to avoid being overhauled, no doubt was entertained that she was an enemy.

Both vessels sailed well; and as the stranger gradually edged away, the *Vincejo* got more and more into her wake. A stern chase is proverbially a long chase; and though it was apparent from the first that the British, though much smaller, was the faster vessel, it was many hours before she was enabled to get within range. About dusk, however, this was effected, and the first shot from the *Vincejo* produced an instantaneous effect on the chase: her head was thrown into the wind, and she appeared at once resigned to her fate. Great, of course, was the anxiety of the captors to learn her character, and comparatively keen the mortification which followed, when, in reply to their hail, the words 'the *Hercules* of Boston, in the United States,' were twanged across the water in unmistakable Yankee tones. Here was 'a lame and impotent conclusion.' England was at peace with the United States; and if the character of the stranger corresponded with her hail, she would prove after all no prize. The captors, however, were of course not to be put off without examination; and a boat was immediately despatched from the *Vincejo* to board, and see what could be made of her. The officer who was sent on board was received by the captain with a good deal of bluster and swagger: he loudly asserted his rights as a neutral, and threatened the vengeance of Congress if they should be infringed. His account of himself was, that he had come out from Boston with a cargo of 'notions,' which he had traded away at Leghorn; and finding some difficulty in getting a return cargo, he had agreed with some invalid French officers to take them home, and he was now bound for the first port in France he could make. This account appeared to be confirmed by his papers, and by the presence on board of several gaunt, sickly-looking figures, who had all the appearance of being military invalids. There were no visible signs of any cargo; and after a somewhat cursory examination, the lieutenant returned to his ship, after telling the skipper, more for the sake of annoyance than from any expectation of its being realised, 'that Captain Long would certainly detain him.'

This threat had the effect of determining the Yankee skipper to proceed on board the *Vincejo*, and try his eloquence on the captain; and in this expedition he was accompanied by some of his passengers. After their several natures

they assailed Captain Long: the Yankee blustered and bullied; the Frenchmen were all suavity and politeness: 'They were quite sure M. le Capitaine was much too generous to take advantage of the chance which had thrown them into his hands—a few poor wounded and disabled invalids on their way home! The English were a brave people, who do not make war on invalids. What object could be gained by making them prisoners? Assuredly, M. le Capitaine would not think of detaining them.' Captain Long was sorely puzzled how to act. It must be owned, that the circumstances were suspicious. Here was a vessel just come from a port in possession of the enemy—for the French still occupied Leghorn—bound avowedly for the enemy's country, and with enemies on board. Were not these grounds enough to detain her? On the other hand, the captain's story might be true: no appearance of any cargo had been discovered; Captain Long doubted whether the presence of the Frenchmen on board would be sufficient to condemn the vessel; and there seemed something pitiful in making them prisoners under such circumstances, even if the laws of war would have sanctioned it. After some deliberation, he took a middle course, and announced that he should keep the American ship by him till daylight, when, if his senior officer should be in sight, he should take her down to him, to be dealt with as Captain Cockburn might decide: if, on the other hand, the *Minerve* should not be in sight, he would, on his own responsibility, allow the *Hercules* to proceed on her voyage. In the meantime, both vessels should return towards the point fixed on by Captain Cockburn as a rendezvous. 'And this,' he observed, 'ought to satisfy all parties, as the *Hercules* would be thereby brought nearer to her destination, which was more than her captain deserved, after the needless chase he had led the *Vincejo*.' This announcement seemed extremely unpalatable to the Yankee captain; and from a very energetic discussion which took place in under-tones between him and his passengers, it was evident they were dissuading him earnestly from some course which he was bent on taking. This was pointed out to Captain Long as an additional circumstance of suspicion, that there was something wrong about the American; and he was strongly urged to detain her, at all events, till he could get the opinion of Captain Cockburn: but he adhered to his decision. 'Ay, ay,' said he to the representations of his first-lieutenant; 'it's all very well for you, gentlemen. You share in the prize-money, but not in the responsibility of our captures; *that* rests upon me. And as I really think there is no ground for detaining the fellow, I'll not do more than I have said.'

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Morning came; and with its first dawn many anxious eyes on board both vessels were scanning the horizon in hope or fear. The vessels had made good much of the distance they had run in the chase, and the bold cliffs of the coast between Genoa and Nice were distinctly visible from the mast-head to the north and west, but no *Minerve* greeted the searching gaze of the *Vincejo*'s look-out. The frigate was nowhere to be seen. The first-lieutenant of the *Vincejo* having communicated this fact to Captain Long, and made one more effort to prevail on him to detain the *Hercules*, till they could rejoin their senior officer, was most reluctantly compelled to give the order for communicating to the captain of that ship that she was free. The American did not wait for a second permission. Sail was made with all speed; and long before the *Vincejo* had reached her rendezvous, her late prize was safe in the harbour at Nice. When Captain Long had reported to Captain Cockburn what had taken place, the latter was by no means disposed to approve of his junior's decision. He thought the circumstance extremely suspicious, and quite sufficient to have justified the detention of the American; and not being under the influence of the gaunt aspects and energetic pleadings of the Frenchmen, he was not inclined to admit the weight of their arguments. 'I think,' said he, 'you might as well have brought her to me: I daresay I could have made something of her.' From the other captains of the squadron, too, Captain Long had to undergo much good-humoured raillery for his tender-heartedness and gullibility; raillery which certainly lost nothing in force, when in a few days the real nature of the adventure became known.

The French having soon afterwards abandoned Leghorn, Captain Cockburn sent one of his squadron into that port for supplies. The intelligence she brought back was truly mortifying. On the arrival of the *Theresa* at Leghorn, it appeared that the *Hercules* was the object of much interest there, and great eagerness had been displayed to learn whether anything was known of her fate. When the facts were communicated, they were received with absolute incredulity. 'Captured, examined, and let go! It was impossible. Nothing to condemn her! Why, she was loaded with booty. The plunder of Italy was on board her. Pictures, church-plate, statues, the *élite* of the spoilers' collections, had been sent off in her. She was actually ballasted with brass guns!' It was too true. Upon further inquiry, it appeared, beyond a doubt, that the vessel which had been so unfortunately dismissed as not worth detaining, had French plunder on board, which, on a moderate estimate, was valued at a

million and a half sterling; and what made it still more vexatious was the discovery, that a detention of the vessel even for a few hours longer, would have led to the disclosure by the captain of the real nature of his venture. He had with difficulty been prevailed on to undertake the transport of the articles in question, and had only at last consented to do so, on an express agreement, that if he should be detained twenty-four hours by a British cruiser, he should be at liberty to make terms for saving his vessel by denouncing the contents of his cargo. No doubt it was his intention to do this at once, against which the Frenchmen had been so earnestly remonstrating; and had Captain Long persevered in detaining him, nothing could have prevented the discovery, even if the American himself had not made the disclosure. A little ebullition of temper was to be expected when the news of what they had missed was circulated among the squadron. The captains' shares might be considered as worth L.40,000 or L.50,000, a sum which it would require considerable philosophy to resign with equanimity. Whether the country could properly have benefited by the capture, may be a question for jurists. It might have been argued, that the captor of stolen goods could not be entitled to retain them against the original owner. It is probable, however, that no very nice inquiry would have been made into the title of the French possessors, and that it would have been considered a case in which, to use the language of Roderick Dhu, it was perfectly justifiable—

'To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend his prey.'

PAINTERS' MONOGRAMS.

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One of the most curious among the studies of a professed connoisseur, is that of the signatures or marks, technically called 'monograms,' by which painters, sculptors, engravers, and other artists, are accustomed to distinguish their works. The dishonesty of the modern picture-market, however, has made it now little more than a curious study. As a practical guide in determining the genuineness of a work, the monogram, from the skill and precision with which fraudulent dealers have learned to counterfeit it in almost all its varieties, has long been far worse than equivocal, and the authorship of a picture must, now-a-days, often be decided on entirely independent grounds. But the history of the subject is, in many respects, extremely curious and interesting, although few have ever thought of bestowing attention upon it, except those whose actual experience as amateurs or collectors has brought it directly under their notice.

The practice of artists signing their works with their name appears to be as old as art itself. The odium excited against Phidias for his alleged impiety in inscribing his name upon the shield of his celebrated statue of Minerva, is a familiar example, which will occur to every reader; and there can be no doubt that the usage was also known to the painters of the classic times. But if we may judge from the Grecian and Roman remains, whether of sculpture, of fresco, of cameo, or of mosaic, which have come down to our times, the precaution of affixing the name was by no means universally, or even commonly adopted; and the monogram, properly so called, appears to have been entirely unknown among them.

It was so also at the first revival of art in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The practice of using a single letter, or a single combination of letters or arbitrary characters, seems to have originated with the mediæval architects and other artists in stone. Neither the painters, nor the engravers, nor the metal-founders, nor the medalists of those ages, availed themselves of this device, nor do we find it at all general among such artists, till the very close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. But, once introduced, it became universal. Every artist of the sixteenth, and of the greater part of the seventeenth century, has his monogram, more or less simple according to the taste or caprice of the designer; and to such a length was the practice carried, that the very excess produced a reaction, and led, for a time, to the abandonment of monograms altogether. With the painters of the eighteenth century, they fell into complete disfavour; and although, in the present century, the revival of ancient forms has led to their re-adoption in the German school, and among the cultivators of Christian art generally, yet many of the first painters of the present day seem to eschew the use of monograms, as savouring of transcendentalism, or of some other of the various affectations, by which modern art is accused of having been disfigured.

Independently altogether of its bearing upon art, the study of monograms has a certain amount of interest. There is a class of adventurers at the present day who make a livelihood from the curiosity or credulity of the public, by professing to decipher the peculiarities of an individual's character, and to read his probable destiny, in any specimen of his handwriting which may be submitted for their inspection. Without carrying the theory to these absurd lengths, it is impossible not to feel some interest about the autograph of any celebrated individual, and some tendency to compare its leading characteristics with our preconceived notions regarding him. A still wider field for speculation than that which grows out of the handwriting, is afforded by a device like the monogram, which, being in a great measure arbitrary, may naturally be expected to exhibit more decidedly the workings of the judgment, the fancy, or perhaps the caprice, of the artist.

The monogram, as we have seen, is a substitute for the full-length signature of the artist—the mode of marking their works originally adopted by the ancients. It is found in an almost infinite number of varieties.

The earliest, as well as the most natural and easy substitute, was a simple contraction of the name—as, 'aug^s ca.,' for Augustinus Caraccius; or JVL. ROM., for Julius Romanus. This contraction, however, cannot properly be called a monogram at all; and the same is to be said of the form of signature adopted by many of the most eminent painters—the simple, unconnected initials of the name. The idea of a monogram supposes that the characters, whatever may be their number considered separately, shall be all connected so as to form one single device.

The first such form which will occur to one's mind is the mere combination of the initial letters of the name—as, for example, AB, or AK, which are the actual monograms of Andrew Both, the celebrated Flemish landscape painter, and of Antony Kölbel, a distinguished Austrian artist of more modern times. In some instances, the monogram is found appended to the full signature of the artist, as in Albert Dürer's beautiful engraving of Adam and Eve, and in other less celebrated works, especially those of the early engravers. It is to be observed, however, that some artists were by no means uniform in the style of monogram which they employed. The device of the same artist often varies, not only in the size and figure of the letters which form it, but sometimes even in the letters themselves. Many artists have employed two, three, four, and even a greater number of devices; and of the celebrated engraver just named, Albert Dürer, we ourselves have seen not less than thirty different modifications of the letters A D, the initials of his name.

[Transcriber's Note: In the first sentence of the previous paragraph, the letters AB and AK are joined together, with the letter A tilted slightly to the right.]

These combinations are seldom so simple and intelligible as in the signature of Andrew Both, referred to above. In most of the earlier monograms, the initial of the family name is smaller than that of the Christian name. It is so in that of Albert Dürer; and it is remarkable that, through all the modifications of his signature which we have been able to discover, this characteristic is maintained—the D being invariably the smaller, and, as it were, the subordinate letter. Very often, one of the letters—generally the initial of the surname—is enclosed within the lines of the other. This peculiarity is also observable in Albert Dürer's signature; and we only know one single instance, among the numberless ones that occur, in which he has not maintained it.

In progress of time, it became fashionable to combine, not the initials merely of the name, but sometimes the most important letters, sometimes even all the letters, of the full name. Many of the monograms thus constructed would prove a puzzle even to the most accomplished decipherer, especially those in which the whole of the letters are not given, but only the most striking of them, and these, as very frequently occurs, not in their natural order. Sometimes the artist combined with the initials of his name that also of his place of birth or residence. It need scarcely be said that, especially in the earlier period, when the place of birth formed almost an invariable adjunct of the name, this practice also existed, even when the signature was given at full length.

A difficulty is sometimes created by the discovery of the letter V—very frequently smaller than the other letters of the monogram—between the initials of the artist's name. It occurs in the signatures of Flemish or German artists, and represents the *van* or *von*, which, in the usage of these countries, was the characteristic of nobility. It is seen in the monogram of Esaias van de Velde, and is introduced rather curiously in that of Adrian van der Venne, who lived through the greater part of the seventeenth century. In this interesting

monogram, the small v is inserted in the head of the large one, so as to form a figure not unlike one of the masonic emblems.

Sometimes the identity of the initial letter of the surname with that of the Christian name gives rise to a curious device in their combination. Thus, the signature of Francis Floris, a German engraver, who died about the middle of the seventeenth century, reverses the former of the two FFs, placing them back to back, with the down stroke common to both letters; while that of Francis Frederic Frank, in which the same letter is three times repeated, drove the ingenuity of the artist to a still more curious combination—the three letters being kept perfectly independent, yet interlaced, or rather overlapped, so that their lines exhibit a figure which has the curious property, like the cabalistic Abracadabra, of presenting the same appearance from whatever point it may be viewed.

Another, and often more puzzling uncertainty, may arise out of the practice of adding to the ordinary letters of the name, the initials F, P, D, or I—representing *fecit*, *pinxit*, *delineavit*, or *invenit*. Without adverting to this circumstance, few would recognise the distinguished name of Anthony van Dyck, in the monogram which he habitually employed, and of which the F seems to form a principal part; or that of our dear old friend, Hans Hemling, in the still more perplexing symbol by which his very best works may be distinguished. But besides the variations of which the letters are susceptible when grouped in this manner, many of the artists have indulged in a variety of strange and puzzling accompaniments.

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A more interesting class of monograms are those which employ symbols instead of letters; or, what is not uncommon, use both letters and symbols in combination. Many of these resemble the illustrated enigmas which have become fashionable in the pictorial journals both of England and of foreign countries, and of which Mr Knight, in the last issue of his *Penny Magazine*, set so beautiful an example in the poetical enigmas of Mr Mackworth Praed. The general character of this class will be sufficiently indicated by the example of the Italian painter, Palma, whose name is translated *palm*, and who used the emblem of a *palm* as well as the initial of his family name; or the still more characteristic one of a painter of Tübingen, Jacob *Züberlein* (*little tub*), who appended to his literal monogram the simple and striking, though not very graceful, emblem of a *tub*.

The several classes which are here slightly indicated, contain under them many subordinate varieties, which it would be tedious to enumerate, and which, indeed, it would be almost impossible to classify. It is a remarkable circumstance, however, in the history of art, that the signatures of the most distinguished painters are precisely those which, for themselves, and for their forms, possess the least interest. With few exceptions, it may be said of the great painters, that they appear to have avoided the affectation of the use of monograms; and certainly that those who did employ them, selected the very simplest and least fantastic forms. The greatest masters of the art—Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian, Guido, Domenichino, Paul Veronese, Rubens, Guercino, Agostino Caracci, and many hardly less distinguished artists—either omitted to sign their pictures at all, or signed their name at full length, sometimes with the addition of their local surname, or employed the initial syllables or letters of their name in the ordinary Roman form, without any attempt at grouping them into a monogram. Even Salvator Rosa, with all the wildness and extravagance of his manner, used an exceedingly simple combination of the initials of his name. The monogram of the great Spanish painter, Bartholomew Esteban [Stephen] Murillo, consists simply of the three initial letters of the name, signed in the common Roman character, and combined with perfect simplicity, except that there is a curious inversion of their order. That of his countryman, Joseph Ribera—better known as *Espagnoletto*—is merely the combination of the same letters, written in a cursive hand; and his signature is even occasionally found at full length, or very slightly abridged.

There is one curious exception to this general preference for simplicity among the masters of the first class—that of the celebrated Anthony Allegri, more commonly known under his surname, Correggio. This eminent painter did not think a pun beneath the dignity of his art, and, accordingly, the device by which he distinguishes his pictures consists of a punning symbol, representing his name. We need hardly explain to our readers that *Correggio* may be read *Cor* (*cuore*) *Reggio* (*Royal Heart*.) The painter has expressed this pun in two different ways: by the figure of a heart, with the word *Reggio* inscribed upon it in Roman letters; and again by the still more punning emblem of a heart surmounted by a crown, or, it should rather be said, of a crowned, and therefore royal, heart. In confirmation, however, of the general tendency to

simplicity which we have observed as prevailing among his great contemporaries, we should add that some of Correggio's pictures are signed with the initial syllables of his name, printed in the ordinary Roman character.

It is perhaps more remarkable, that even among the humorists the same simplicity should have prevailed. Our own Hogarth, both the Tenierses, Hans Holbein, Ostade, even Callot himself, with all his extravagant and capricious fantasies, fall into the general rule; and the lady artists, Diana Chisi, Angelica Kaufmann, and Anna Maria Schurman, may be cited as equally exhibiting the same simplicity. There are some, indeed, in whom this affectation of simplicity goes almost to the length of rudeness. A charming cabinet picture, in the possession of the writer of these pages, by the celebrated Philip Wouvermans, well known for the familiar 'gray horse' which characterises all his pictures, is scratched with a P. W. which would disgrace the lowest form in a charity school. And, with every allowance for haste and indifference, it is impossible not to suspect something like affectation in the rude and sprawling signatures which we sometimes find, not only in ancient, but even in comparatively modern artists.

It would carry us far beyond our allotted limits to pursue further the examination of individual monograms. But there are some in the class of symbolical monograms, already referred to, which we must notice more in detail. Most of the monograms of this class, like that of Correggio, given above, involve a pun, sometimes, indeed, not a very recondite one. Thus the French artist, Jacob *Stella*, who died in 1647, invariably signs his pictures with a *star*—a device which the modern artist, Frederic *Morgenstern*, has applied to himself, representing his own name by the letter M, prefixed to the same symbol.

In the same way, an ancient artist, Lauber (leaf-gatherer), adopted a leaf (in German, *Laub*), as his symbol. Haus Weiner, in allusion to the genial beverage from which his name is derived, marked his works with the sign of a bunch of grapes. David Vinkenbooms (Anglice, tree-finch), a Dutch painter of the sixteenth century, took a 'finch perched upon a branch of a tree' as his pictorial emblem. Birnbaum (pear-tree) employed a similar emblem; while the monogram of Bernard Graat, a Dutch painter, who lived in the end of the seventeenth century, though utterly without significance to an English eye, would at once suggest the name of the painter to his own countrymen: Graat, in Dutch, signifying the spine of a fish, represented in this curious monogram.

The history of another emblem is perhaps still more remarkable. By a singular and perhaps humorously intended coincidence, three German painters, George Hufnagel, Sebastian Scharnagel, and John Nothnagel, have all employed the same homely emblem—a nail; the German name of which, *Nagel*, enters into the composition of all three surnames. Hufnagel (hoof-nail) has signed his pictures with a horse-shoe nail, sometimes crossed, sometimes curiously intertwined with the letters of his Christian name. Scharnagel has combined with a nail the figure of a spade or shovel (*schar*); while Nothnagel distinguishes himself from both by prefixing the letter N to their common emblem.

There is more of delicacy and ingenuity in the device employed by a female wood-engraver in the beginning of the sixteenth century, Isabella Quatrepomme (four-apple.) She was accustomed to sign her works with a neat and spirited sketch of an apple, marked with the numeral IV. This mark is found upon some old French woodcuts still in existence. There was some similar allusion, we have no doubt, concealed in the device of John Maria Pomedello, an Italian engraver of the time of Leo X. and Clement VII.; it has occasioned much speculation to the learned in these matters, but we must confess our inability to decipher all its significance. Nor was the use of these punning emblems confined to masters of the fine arts. Printers, too, frequently introduced them. The symbols of the olive, the sword, the dolphin, &c. so familiar to all bibliographers, had their origin in this fanciful taste; and a more direct example than any—the leading feature of which is a rude image of a spur—is to be found in the imprint of the curious old German books published by Hans Sporer (spur-maker) during the very first years after the introduction of printing into Germany. Editions of books, with this characteristic imprint, still reckon among the choicest gems in a German book-collector's library, of what the amateurs in this department have chosen to call *Incunabeln*.

To those who have given any attention to the deciphering of illustrated enigmas, many of the early monograms might furnish considerable amusement. That of the rather obscure artist, Colioloro, is a perfect counterpart of the most elaborate and fanciful of the modern enigmas. The curious combination, not alone of words, but of single letters, with the

pictorial emblems, is fully as fanciful as any which we remember to have seen, even among those of the Leipsic *Illustrirte Zeitung*, which seems to bestow more attention on the subject than any of its contemporaries.

It must be remembered, that the artist's full name is Artigli Coscia Colioloro. The device begins with a confused heap of birds' claws, paws of animals, &c.; next appears a thigh, cut short above the knee; this is followed by the letter C. Next in order is seen a flask pouring out a stream of oil; the letter l, with a comma above the line, comes next; and the whole is closed by a goodly heap of gold pieces. To an Italian scholar, it is hardly necessary to offer an explanation. The group of emblems at the left hand represents Artigli (limbs); the rude image which succeeds it stands for Coscia (a thigh); the C, followed by the little flask of oil (*olio*), forms Colio; and the l, with the comma, or rather the mark of apostrophe, followed by the heap of gold pieces (*oro*)—making together l'oro, completes the characters of the name—Artigli Coscia Colioloro.

It will not, however, be a matter of surprise, that the key to many of these emblems has, in the course of time, been lost; and that at present a considerable number of this class of monograms are a mystery even to the most learned in the art. Notwithstanding every appliance, the monogrammatists have occasionally been forced to confess themselves in doubt, and sometimes altogether at fault, as to the identification, or even the interpretation, of some of the emblems.

During the latter part of the seventeenth century, and the whole of the eighteenth, the monogram went almost entirely out of fashion. In England, even still, its use is far from being general; and engravings, especially, are now-a-days almost invariably signed with the full name. But foreign artists, and particularly those of the *renaissance*, have revived the old usage. Frederic Overbeck, the great father of the Christian school of art: Cornelius, to whose magnificent conceptions Munich and Berlin owe their most glorious works, both historical and imaginative—as the fresco illustrations of the *Nibelungen Lied*, in the Royal Palace; the 'Last Judgment,' in the Ludwig-Kirche; and the 'History of St Boniface,' in the Bonifaz-Kloster—Storr, the great Austrian master, whose conception of 'Faust,' in the Royal Gallery at Vienna, is in itself a great poem; and the whole Düsseldorf school—have conformed to the ancient type. Even the humorists have made it, in some instances, a vehicle of their humour. Few of those who were wont to enjoy Richard Doyle's inimitable sketches in *Punch*, whose guiding-spirit he used to be, can forget the funny little figure, surmounted by his well-known initials; and the lovers of political caricature must often have smiled over the quizzical-looking gentleman who used to figure at the right-hand corner of HH.'s admirable sketches. But we doubt whether the fashion is destined to be ever fully restored, or whether the monogram is not rather doomed to remain a thing of the past—a subject of speculation for that laborious, though not very practical class,

'Who delve 'mid nooks and sinuosities,
For literary curiosities.'

CLARET AND OLIVES.^[1]

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'Wine and Walnuts' was a good title for a gossiping book; 'Claret and Olives' is a better. It has a more decided flavour, a more elegant bouquet, a more gem-like colour. The other might refer to any denomination of that multitudinous stuff the English drink under the name of wine; or, if it has individuality at all, it relishes curiously of the coarse and heavy produce of Portugal, so beloved of Dr Johnson, and many other grave doctors, down to the last generation. This breathes all over of the sweet South; it babbles of green fields; it is full of gaiety and frolic, of song and laughter, and the sparkle of wit and crystal. The title, we say, is a good title; and the book has an unmistakable claret flavour—the best English claret, that is to say—which unites the strength of Burgundy with the bouquet of Château Margaux. Mr Reach despises a weak thin wine, and, by an idiosyncratical necessity, he has produced a sparkling, racy book. He traces the falling-off in our literature to a change in wine. 'The Elizabethans quaffed sack, or "Gascoyne, or Rochel wyn,"' quoth he; 'and we had the giants of those days. The Charles II. comedy writers worked on claret. Port came into fashion—port sapped our brains—and, instead of Wycherly's *Country Wife*, and Vanbrugh's *Relapse*, we had Mr Morton's *Wild Oats*, and Mr Cherry's *Soldier's Daughter*. It is really much to the credit of Scotland, that she stood stanchly by her old ally, France, and would have nothing to do with that dirty little slice of the worst part of Spain—Portugal, or her brandified potatoes. In the old Scotch houses, a cask of

claret stood in the cellar, on the tap. In the humblest Scotch country tavern, the pewter *tappit hen*, holding some three quarts, "reamed," *Anglicé*, mantled, with claret just drawn from the cask. At length, in an evil hour, Scotland fell—

"Bold and erect the Caledonian stood,
Firm was his mutton, and his claret good;
'Let him drink port!' the English statesman cried;
He drank the poison, and his spirit died!"

This will look like treason to a good many of our readers; but we beg them to reflect, that in preferring claret to port, Mr Reach is, after all, an advocate of temperance; and they may therefore hope, that by degrees his potations will become thinner and thinner, till they at last come down—like Mike Lambourne's intentions—to water, 'nothing save fair water.' Our belief, indeed, is, that the excessive duty placed on French wines is a main cause of intemperance in its modern forms; for the dearth of the article drives people to spirits, and other intoxicating agents. Let the light claret (*vin ordinaire*) of France become a cheap and accessible drink, and we say advisedly that there would soon be a marked improvement in the matter of general sobriety.

As our author proceeds towards the claret district—for the book is in the form of a tour—he chats away very agreeably about everything he sees on the road. We shall not meddle, however, with this part of the volume, otherwise than to notice a peculiarity we have ourselves been frequently struck with—the countryness of small towns in France. There is no aristocracy to be met with there, no higher classes to set the fashion, no professional functionaries to look up to. 'You hardly see an individual who does not appear to have been born and bred upon the spot, and to have no ideas and no desires beyond it. Left entirely to themselves, the people have vegetated in these dull streets from generation to generation, and, though clustered together in a quasi town—perhaps with octroi and mairie, a withered tree of liberty, and billiard-tables by the half-dozen—the population is as essentially rural as though scattered in lone farms, unvisited, except on rent-day, by either landlord or agent.'

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After reaching Bordeaux, the tourist proceeded to the village of Margaux, in the true claret country—a general idea of which he gives by describing it as a debatable ground, stretching between the sterile Landes and the fat, black loam of the banks of the Garonne. The soil is sand, gravel, and shingle, scorched by the sun, and would be incapable of yielding as much nourishment to a patch of oats as is found on 'the bare hillside of some cold, bleak, Highland croft.' On this unpromising ground, grow those grapes which produce the finest wine in the world. As for the vines themselves, they have about as much of the picturesque as our drills of potatoes at home. 'Fancy open and unfenced expanses of stunted-looking, scrubby bushes, seldom rising two feet above the surface, planted in rows upon the summit of deep furrow-ridges, and fastened with great care to low, fence-like lines of espaliers, which run in unbroken ranks from one end of the huge fields to the other. These espaliers or lathes are cuttings of the walnut-trees around; and the tendrils of the vine are attached to the horizontally running stakes with withes, or thongs of bark. It is curious to observe the vigilant pains and attention with which every twig has been supported without being strained, and how things are arranged so as to give every cluster as fair a chance as possible of a goodly allowance of sun.' There are some exceptions to this; but the low regular dwarfs are the great wine-givers. 'Walk and gaze, until you come to the most shabby, stunted, weazened, scrubby, dwarfish, expanse of snobbish bushes, ignominiously bound neck and crop to the espaliers like a man on the rack—these utterly poor, starved, and meagre-looking growths, allowing as they do the gravelly soil to shew in bald patches of gray shingle through the straggling branches—these contemptible-looking shrubs, like paralysed and withered raspberries, it is which produce the most priceless, and the most inimitably flavoured wines.' The grapes are such mean and pitiful grapes as you would look at with contempt in Covent-Garden Market; and the very value of the soil contributes to its appearance of destitution—a rudely-carved stake marking the division of properties where a hedge or ditch would take up too much of the precious ground. The vineyards extend to the roadside, without any protection; and yet every living creature, whether man or animal, eats grapes habitually, morning, noon, and night, and to an excess that is perfectly wonderful.

When the fruit is ripe, the fact is announced to the community 'by authority;' and until the proclamation appears, no man must gather his grapes if they should be dropping from the bushes. The signal, however, is at length given, and the work begins. 'The scene is at once full of beauty, and of tender and even sacred associations. The songs of the vintagers, frequently chorussed from one part of the field to the other, ring blithely into the bright summer

air, peeling out above the rough jokes and hearty peals of laughter shouted hither and thither. All the green jungle is alive with the moving figures of men and women, stooping among the vines, or bearing pails and basketfuls of grapes out to the grass-grown cross-roads, along which the labouring oxen drag the rough vintage-carts, groaning and cracking as they stagger along beneath their weight of purple tubs, heaped high with the tumbling masses of luscious fruit. The congregation of every age and both sexes, and the careless variety of costume, add additional features of picturesqueness to the scene. The white-haired old man labours with shaking hands to fill the basket which his black-eyed imp of a grandchild carries rejoicingly away. Quaint, broad-brimmed straw and felt hats; handkerchiefs twisted like turbans over straggling elf-locks; swarthy skins tanned to an olive-brown; black flashing eyes; and hands and feet stained in the abounding juices of the precious fruit—all these southern peculiarities of costume and appearance supply the vintage with its pleasant characteristics. The clatter of tongues is incessant. A fire of jokes and jeers, of saucy questions and more saucy retorts—of what, in fact, in the humble and unpoetic, but expressive vernacular, is called "chaff"—is kept up with a vigour which seldom flags, except now and then, when the but-end of a song, or the twanging close of a chorus, strikes the general fancy, and procures for the *morceau* a lusty *encore*. Meantime, the master wine-grower moves observingly from rank to rank. No neglected bunch of fruit escapes his watchful eye; no careless vintager shakes the precious berries rudely upon the soil, but he is promptly reminded of his slovenly work. Sometimes the tubs attract the careful superintendent: he turns up the clusters, to ascertain that no leaves nor useless length of tendril are entombed in the juicy masses, and anon directs his steps to the pressing-trough, anxious to find that the lusty treaders are persevering manfully in their long-continued dance.'

The pressure of the grapes is a curious part of the process in an age of mechanical improvement like the present. It is performed by men treading among the fruit with their naked feet. 'The wine-press, or *cuvier de pressoir*, consists, in the majority of cases, of a massive shallow tub, varying in size from four square feet to as many square yards. It is placed either upon wooden trestles, or on a regularly built platform of mason-work, under the huge rafters of a substantial outhouse. Close to it stands a range of great butts, their number more or less, according to the size of the vineyard. The grapes are flung by tub and caskfuls into the *cuvier*. The treaders stamp diligently amid the masses, and the expressed juice pours plentifully out of a hole level with the bottom of the trough into a sieve of iron or wicker-work, which stops the passage of the skins, and from thence drains into tubs below. Suppose, at the moment of our arrival, the *cuvier* for a brief space empty. The treaders—big, perspiring men, in shirts and tucked-up trousers—splattered to the eyes with splashes of purple juice, lean upon their wooden spades, and wipe their foreheads. But their respite is short. The creak of another cart-load of tubs is heard, and immediately the wagon is backed up to the broad open window, or rather hole in the wall, above the trough. A minute suffices to wrench out tub after tub, and to tilt their already half-mashed clusters splash into the reeking *pressoir*. Then to work again. Jumping with a sort of spiteful eagerness into the mountain of yielding, quivering fruit, the treaders sink almost to the knees, stamping, and jumping, and rioting in the masses of grapes, as fountains of juice spurt about their feet, and rush bubbling and gurgling away. Presently, having, as it were, drawn the first sweet blood of the new cargo, the eager trampling subsides into a sort of quiet, measured dance, which the treaders continue, while, with their wooden spades, they turn the pulpy remnants of the fruit hither and thither, so as to expose the half-squeezed berries in every possible way to the muscular action of the incessantly moving feet. All this time, the juice is flowing in a continuous stream into the tubs beneath. When the jet begins to slacken, the heap is well tumbled with the wooden spades, and, as though a new force had been applied, the juice-jet immediately breaks out afresh. It takes, perhaps, half or three quarters of an hour thoroughly to squeeze the contents of a good-sized *cuvier*, sufficiently manned.' In defence of this primitive process, it is alleged that no mechanical wine-press could perform the work with the same perfection as the human foot; and as for the impurities the juice may acquire from any want of cleanliness in the operations, these, and every other atom of foreign matter, are thrown to the surface in the act of fermentation.

The expressed juice is now carried away in tubs, and flung into the fermenting vats. Our author saw the vats in the Château Margaux cellars the day after they had been filled, and heard, deep down, 'perhaps eight feet down in the juice, a seething, gushing sound, as if currents and eddies were beginning to flow, in obedience to the influence of the working spirit; and now and then a hiss and a low bubbling throb, as though of a pot about to boil.' In a little while, it would have been impossible to breathe an atmosphere thus saturated

with carbonic acid gas; and the superintendents can only watch the process of nature by listening outside the door to 'the inarticulate accents and indistinct rumblings' which proclaim a great metempsychosis. 'Is there not something fanciful and poetic in the notion of this change taking place mysteriously in the darkness, when all the doors are locked and barred—for the atmosphere about the vats is death—as if nature would suffer no idle prying into her mystic operations, and as if the grand transmutation and projection from juice to wine had in it something of a secret and solemn and awful nature—fenced round, as it were, and protected from vulgar curiosity by the invisible halo of stifling gas?'

The vintagers naturally claim our attention next. A portion of them are, of course, the peasantry of the village and neighbourhood; but a country like France, swarming with poor who are not mendicants, has of course a floating population, that surges almost instinctively upon every spot where there is pleasant work to do. The vintage not merely affords this work, but being attended with all sorts of jollity, the crowds it collects have a peculiarly vagabond character. You see at a glance that they are there upon a spree, and submit to the labour, not as anything they like, or are accustomed to, but as a mere passport to the fun. They are in France what the Irish harvesters and the Kent hop-pickers are in England, although always preserving the peculiarities, that distinguish the former country, giving even her vagabondage a melodramatic look, just as if they were 'made up' for the occasion. 'The gendarmerie,' says our author, 'have a busy time of it when these gentry are collected in numbers in the district. Poultry disappear with the most miraculous promptitude; small linen articles hung out to dry have no more chance than if Falstaff's regiment were marching by; and garden fruit and vegetables, of course, share the results produced by a rigid application of the maxim, that *la propriété c'est la vol*. Where these people come from is a puzzle. There will be vagrants and strollers among them from all parts of France—from the Pyrenees and the Alps—from the pine-woods of the Landes and the moors of Brittany. They unite in bands of a dozen or a score men and women, appointing a chief, who bargains with the vine-proprietor for the services of the company, and keeps up some degree of order and subordination, principally by means of the unconstitutional application of a good thick stick. I frequently encountered these bands, making their way from one district to another; and better samples of 'the dangerous classes' were never collected. They looked vicious and abandoned, as well as miserably poor. The women, in particular, were as brazen-faced a set of slatterns as could be conceived; and the majority of the men—tattered, strapping-looking fellows, with torn slouched hats and tremendous cudgels—were exactly the sort of persons a nervous gentleman would have scruples about meeting at dusk in a long lane. It is when thus on the tramp that the petty pilfering, and picking and stealing, to which I have alluded to, goes on. When actually at work, they have no time for picking up unconsidered trifles. Sometimes these people pass the night—all together, of course—in outhouses or barns, when the *chef* can strike a good bargain; at other times, they bivouac on the lee-side of a wood or wall, in genuine gipsy fashion. You may often see their watchfires glimmering in the night; and be sure that where you do, there are twisted necks and vacant nests in many a neighbouring henroost.' Mr Reach witnessed an altercation, respecting passage-money, between a party of these wanderers and a ferryman of the Garonne; and it ended in the vintagers refusing to cross the river, rather than submit to the overcharge, as they contended it was, of a sou. 'A bivouac was soon formed. Creeping under the lee of a row of casks, on the shingle of the bare beach, the women were placed leaning against the somewhat hard and large pillows in question; the children were nestled at their feet and in their laps; and the men formed the outermost ranks. A supply of loaves was sent for and obtained. The chief tore the bread up into huge hunks, which he distributed to his dependents; and upon this supper the whole party went coolly to sleep—more coolly, indeed, than agreeably—for a keen north wind was whistling along the sedgy banks of the river, and the red blaze of high-piled fagots was streaming from the houses across the black, cold, turbid waters.'

If our author's picture of the vine is not *couleur de rose*, he is still less complimentary to the olive. Languedoc is the country of the latter luxury; and Languedoc is in the south of France—aptly termed 'the austere south.' 'It is austere, grim, sombre. It never smiles: it is scathed and parched. There is no freshness or rurality in it. It does not seem the country, but a vast yard—shadeless, glaring, drear, and dry. Let us glance from our elevated perch over the district we are traversing. A vast, rolling wilderness of clodded earth, browned and baked by the sun; here and there masses of red rock heaving themselves above the soil like protruding ribs of the earth, and a vast coating of drowsy dust, lying like snow upon the ground. To the left, a long ridge of iron-like mountains—on all sides rolling hills, stern and kneaded, looking as

though frozen. On the slopes and in the plains, endless rows of scrubby, ugly trees, powdered with the universal dust, and looking exactly like mop-sticks. Sprawling and straggling over the soil beneath them, jungles of burnt-up, leafless bushes, tangled, and apparently neglected. The trees are olives and mulberries—the bushes, vines.' This is a picture that will not impress an Englishman with the due sensation of dreariness, unless he recollects that in France there are no enclosures—that the country lies spread out before him, in some parts and seasons, like a richly variegated carpet; in others, like an Arabian desert. The romantic, Eastern, Biblical olive!—what is it? 'The trunk, a weazened, sapless-looking piece of timber, the branches spreading out from it like the top of a mushroom; and the colour, when you can see it for dust, a cold, sombre, grayish green. One olive is as like another as one mop-stick is like another. The tree has no picturesqueness, no variety. It is not high enough to be grand, and not irregular enough to be graceful. Put it beside the birch, the beech, the elm, or the oak, and you will see the poetry of the forest, and its poorest and most meagre prose.'

The mop-stick appearance of the olive is an artificial beauty; to make it look like an umbrella is the *ne plus ultra* of arboriculture. But the present race of olives, twist and torment them as we will, are inferior to those of the times of our grandfather. 'Towards the close of the last century, there was a winter night of intense frost; and when the morning broke, the trees were nearly smitten to the core. That year, there was not an olive gathered in Provence or Languedoc. The next season, some of the stronger and younger trees partially revived, and slips were planted from those to which the axe had been applied; but the entire species of the tree had fallen off—had dwindled, and pined, and become stunted; and the profits of olive cultivation had faded with it.' Olive-gathering, it will be felt, is a slow affair. The getting in this harvest is 'as business-like and unexciting as weeding onions, or digging potatoes. A set of ragged peasants—the country people hereabouts are poorly dressed—were clambering barefoot in the trees, each man with a basket tied before him, and lazily plucking the dull oily fruit. Occasionally, the olive-gatherers had spread a white cloth beneath the tree, and were shaking the very ripe fruit down; but there was neither jollity nor romance about the process. The olive is a tree of association, but that is all. Its culture, its manuring and clipping, and trimming and grafting—the gathering of its fruits, and their squeezing in the mill, when the ponderous stone goes round and round in the glutinous trough, crushing the very essence out of the oily pulps, while the fat oleaginous stream pours lazily into the greasy vessels set to receive it; all this is as prosaic and uninteresting, as if the whole Royal Agricultural Society were presiding in spirit over the operations.'

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Our readers will now see that this is a racy, vigorous book, full of new remark and clever painting; and we recommend them to test the correctness of our opinions, therefore, by having recourse to the volume itself, which is neither large nor expensive.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] *Claret and Olives, from the Garonne to the Rhone; or, Notes, Social, Picturesque, and Legendary, by the Way.* By Angus B. Reach. London: David Bogue. 1852.

THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

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April 1852.

A good many comments and congratulations have passed of late touching the change of system introduced into one of our official strongholds, which dates from the days of the Plantagenets, perhaps earlier; for Sir J. Herschel, as Master of the Mint, has made his first Report to the Lords of the Treasury concerning the money-coining establishment over which he presides, with little ostentation, but much benefit. According to the Order in Council, issued in March of last year, the Mint-Board, the contract with the melter, and the moneyers' privileges, were all abolished, and a new system of business introduced. The melter's arguments in favour of retaining his portion of the establishment were not successful, as it has been found that the melting and refining can be done much cheaper at private works; and the melting department is now separated from the Mint, and leased, it is said, to one of the Rothschilds. Of course, the dispossessed functionaries get compensation and pensions, as also the moneyers' apprentices, who had paid L.1000 to learn the 'art and mystery,' with the prospect of one day becoming members

of the fraternity. The coining is still to be carried on on the premises, as the contracts offered for doing the work out of doors were too high or too incompetent; the 'engraver or die-sinker' is no longer to be permitted to work on his own private account; and, what is still better, when a new medal or new model is wanted, the best artists of the country are to have the opportunity of shewing their skill in the requisite designs; and, last, dealers in bullion will no longer be allowed to refine their gold at the public cost, for all the metal sent in in future 'must not exceed the standard weight.' Thus, a most important reform is accomplished—one that will give general satisfaction, stimulate talent, and save L.11,000 a year to the country, when the L.8000 now paid as pensions reverts to the Treasury.

The Post-office is helping on the work of intercommunication with praiseworthy diligence. Think of now being able to send a pound of 'books, maps, or prints, and any quantity of paper, vellum, or parchment, either printed, written, or plain, or any mixture of the three'—for sixpence, to any part of the United Kingdom! There are many branches of business that will be materially improved by this regulation; and we may hope to see it followed by others not less in accordance with the advancing requirements of the age.

The Nineveh sculptures are now being arranged in the British Museum; one of them weighs fifteen tons, and is an extraordinary specimen of Assyrian art. When in their places, they will be much studied; and, fortunately, more time is to be allowed for this purpose, for the authorities of the Museum have announced, that they will open the doors at nine in the morning, and keep them open till six in the evening, during the best part of the summer. The fate of the Crystal Palace is for the moment a pressing subject of talk. Perhaps the French would buy it, if it be really condemned, for they are already talking of a Great Exposition to be held in 1854, and have come to the conclusion, that twenty-seven months will not be too long to make the preparations: it is expected that all nations will be invited to join. There is to be an exhibition this year also at Breslau, in a building composed in good part of glass, at which Prussia will make a display of her handiwork, and try to get customers for the articles carried home unsold from our spectacle. In more ways than one, the beneficial consequences of the Exhibition of 1851 are shewing themselves. To take but one particular—it has produced a vast amount of literature, and will yet produce more.

Before this appears in print, the new arctic expedition will probably have sailed, to make what we must consider as the final search for Sir John Franklin. This time, Sir Edward Belcher is commander, who, though a rigid disciplinarian, and something beyond, is well known as a most energetic and persevering officer. He is to explore that portion of Wellington Channel discovered by Captain Penny, and to get as far to the north-west as possible—to Behring's Strait, if he can. Whatever else may happen, there are few who will not hope that the mystery respecting the missing explorers, who sailed on their fatal voyage in 1845, may now be cleared up. In order to facilitate Captain Beatson's operations, the Emperor Nicholas has sent instructions to the governors of the Russian trading-ports on the arctic coast, to lend such aid as may be in their power. Thus, good-will is not lacking; indeed, if that could have found the lost adventurers, they would have been discovered long ago.

Some of our engineers and naval men are greatly interested in a subject which has, from time to time, during many years, met with a passing notice—namely, the gradual growth of the banks and shoals in the North Sea from the solid matters carried into it by the rivers of England and Holland. Although slow, the increase is said to be such as to lead to the inference, that this sea will be filled up at some future day. A large chart has just been published, with contour lines of the various banks, to illustrate a treatise on the subject. If these be correct, we have at once valuable data by which to test the question of increase of magnitude. The matter will shortly be discussed by one of our scientific societies. Meantime, the reclamation of a new county from the sea is going on on the Lincolnshire coast; and there appears to be a prospect of a similar work being undertaken on the western shore—at Liverpool. Mr G. Rennie has prepared a plan for a breakwater five miles long, to be constructed at the mouth of the Mersey, stretching out from Black Rock Point. If carried into execution, it will reclaim a vast extent of sandbanks lying within it, and greatly improve the navigable channel of the river. A proposal has been made to apply sewage manure to the reclaimed land, in such ways as will constitute a satisfactory trial of this means of fertilisation; and also to reserve suitable portions as sites for building societies. Such a project as this would be worthy of the enterprise of Liverpool; but it would be well for the promoters to bear in mind a fact which has lately been urged, that by encroaching on the space of an estuary, you prevent the inflow of the tide,

and consequently diminish or weaken the outflow, whereby the whole harbour becomes shallower, and the bar at the mouth augments in bulk.

Although there is nothing extraordinary to talk about in the way of scientific discovery at present, workers in science are not idle, and are steadily pursuing their investigations. Faraday has added another chapter to his 'Experimental Researches in Electricity;' Mr Grove has contributed somewhat to our knowledge of the 'Polarity of Gases;' a paper by Mr Wharton Jones, entitled 'Discovery that the Veins of the Bat's Wing (which are furnished with Valves) are endowed with Rhythmic Contractility, and that the Onward Flow of Blood is accelerated by each Contraction,' is considered to be decisive of a question of some importance in physiology—namely, that the circulation of the blood in the wings is independent of the motion of the heart. Mr Huxley's paper in the Philosophical Transactions is also a remarkable one—one of those which really constitute progress. Although it is not easy to give a popular exposition of it, I may tell you that it discusses the subject of 'alternate generation;' a favourite one, as you will remember, with several naturalists, according to whom, certain of the *Medusæ* are of one sex at one period of their lives, and of the other sex at another. But Mr Huxley shews, by observation and experiment on *Salpa* and *Pyrosoma*, that each has independent powers of reproduction, and his facts are conclusive against the theory of 'alternation of generations.' The two generations, as now appears, are not of distinct individuals, but are both required to make a complete individual. This paper will be sure to provoke criticism, and perhaps excite further research. Mr Hopkins has been enlightening the Geological Society 'On the Causes of the Changes of Climate at Different Geological Periods;' and assigns as one of the causes, the flowing of the gulf-stream in a different direction formerly to that which it follows at present, whereby the northern ice was brought down in great masses to form our glacial period.

Some of our *savans* are interested in Professor Simpson's communication to your Edinburgh Botanical Society, concerning his experiments on Alpine plants kept covered with snow by artificial means in an ice-house for several months. He finds that plants and seeds so treated sprout and germinate rapidly when exposed to the warm air of spring and summer. It appears also that chrysales similarly treated become moths in about one-tenth of the time required under ordinary circumstances; from which facts, and the celerity of vegetation in Canada and the arctic regions, Professor Simpson infers that, if we in this country were to keep our grain in ice-houses during the winter, we should get quicker and better crops, and avoid the ill consequences which sometimes attend sowing in autumn, or too early in spring. The subject is novel as well as interesting, to say nothing of its bearing on agriculture, and we shall be glad to see the promised results of further inquiry.

There are one or two other Scottish matters which may be mentioned. One is the discovery by Dr Penny of Glasgow, of potash salts in considerable quantity in the soot from blast-furnaces. In our iron districts, and among our iron merchants, it is undergoing that sort of discussion which savours of profit. Potash salts are so valuable, that if the discovery can be reduced to economical practice, there is no doubt that the hitherto wasted and unrecognised substance will be turned to good account. The other is the 'Platometer,' invented by Mr Sang of Kirkcaldy, described as a 'self-acting calculator of surface;' in other words, by using this contrivance, you may get the 'square measure included within any boundary-line around which a pen attached to the instrument may be carried'—in the plan of an estate, or a map, for example, where the plots of ground are often extremely irregular in form, and difficult to measure, without much complicated calculation. When Arthur Young wished to ascertain the relative proportions of cultivated and uncultivated land in France, he cut up a map of the country, and weighed them one against the other; but the platometer would have helped him to a more satisfactory conclusion. The mode by which it effects its purpose is very simple, 'the essential parts being merely two axles, one of them carrying a cone, by which the computations are silently performed as the pen proceeds on its journey; and the other a small wheel, having numbers on it which tell the result in square measure.' The contents are given with considerable rapidity, and, it is said, with more exactitude than by any other process: the instrument, therefore, is practically useful as well as curious.

Among matters connected with the Académie, Prince Demidoff has asked for instructions as to how he may best serve the cause of science during a journey which he proposes to undertake into Siberia, accompanied by a scientific staff. The prince, who is proprietor of the richest malachite mines in Russia, has already made similar explorations in other parts of Europe, and published the results at his own cost, superbly illustrated, and has presented copies of the works to most of the scientific societies. He could not have better advisers

for the purpose contemplated, than he will find among those to whom he has applied. Then a M. Rochas informs the Académie, that a photographic image on a metal-plate, transferred immediately to albumenised glass, may be reproduced and multiplied on paper in any number. Daguerreotypes of waves beating on the sea-shore have been exhibited, which were taken on glass thus prepared in a very minute fraction of a second. Add to this, a plan for a double line of submarine railway from Calais to Dover; a statement from M. Gaietta, that the aurora borealis is nothing more than spontaneously inflamed carburet of hydrogen; and a report from a learned anatomist, on the use, instead of the knife in amputation, of a platinum wire heated red-hot by a battery—and you may form a notion of the variety of communications that comes before the French *savans*. M. Peligot furnishes some details respecting silk-worms. He shews that in every 100 parts of mulberry leaves, as supplied, the result is from 8 to 9 of worms, 36 to 40 of egested matters, and 45 to 46 of dry litter and waste. That the sixth part only of what the worms consume tends to their nourishment, the remainder goes in respiration and dejection; and that, with the data now obtained, it is possible to calculate the maximum weight of cocoons from a given weight of leaves—it being from 60 to 70 in 1000. He shews further, that in years when leaves are scarce, the loss to the proprietors need not be total, for it is possible to keep the worms on short allowance, and collect their produce, though not so largely as when no privation exists. And what is singular, that the weight of silk is not in proportion to the weight of the worm or moth; heavy and light cocoons contain the same quantity of silk, the difference arises only from the different weight of the worms. Hence M. Peligot considers, that it would be well to destroy the females when first hatched—of course with a reserve for breeding—and keep only the males, which eat less, and give an equal quantity of silk. But as yet the sexes cannot be distinguished, while in the worm state.

You are aware that one of the most interesting geological problems of our day is, that of the rise and fall of the land in Sweden: a good deal has been said on both sides. The Academy of Sciences at Stockholm has, however, taken measures to settle the question. It has chosen sixteen stations, chiefly between Haparanda and Strömstad, where daily observations are made and recorded on the height of the sea. This is the great point to be determined; hitherto, it has been left too much to chance, or to the attention of casual travellers. In connection with it, the rate of elevation would be ascertained, whether it is everywhere the same, and continuous or intermittent. It has been stated, that at Stockholm the rise was four feet in 100 years, and greater still in the Gulf of Bothnia; but Mr Erdmann of Stockholm, in a memoir on the subject, shews reason to doubt the fact. The house in which he resides, standing near the port, was built at the beginning of the seventeenth century; when the water of the adjacent sea is raised two feet above the ordinary level, which happens but rarely, his cellar is always flooded. Therefore, assuming the rise of the land at four feet in the century, it follows, with only half that height, that when the house was built, the floor of the cellar was constantly under water, which is hardly likely to have been the case. He mentions also the observations made at the sluices of the Mælar Lake, from which a rise of one foot in a century had been inferred, but states that a defect in the measuring-scale completely invalidates the results. In addition to what the Academy are doing, he has had a reference-mark cut on the face of the steep rock of the citadel, so that, in the course of a few years, we shall be in a position to judge in how far the theory of elevation and subsidence of land in Sweden is borne out by the facts.

This reminds one that coral-reefs have been much talked about of late: the opinion is, that they grow in height about an inch and a quarter yearly. Means have also been taken to decide this question. When the American Exploring Expedition lay at Tahiti, Captain Wilkes had a stone-slab fixed on Point Venus, and the distance from it to the Dolphin Shoal below carefully ascertained, so that future measurements will test the theory.

Mr Wells, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, shews that there are causes, besides those usually assigned, which will produce stratification, or those interruptions which occur in deposits. He was engaged in examination of soils; and washed earth through a filter, at times so slowly as to occupy fourteen days in the process, and dried the sediment at a temperature of 250 degrees. This, when dry, he found to be perfectly stratified in divisional planes; sometimes accordant, at others irregular, and shewing difference of material—namely, silica and alumina:

'The strata so produced,' he says, 'were in some instances exceedingly perfect and beautiful, not altogether horizontal, but slightly curved, and in some degree conforming to the shape of the funnel. The production of laminæ was also noticed, especially by the cleavage of the strata produced into thin,

delicate, parallel plates, when moistened with water. These arrangements, it is evident, were not caused by any interruption or renewal of the matter deposited, or by any change in the quality of the particles deposited, but from two other causes entirely distinct, and which I conceive to be these—first, from a tendency in earthy matter, subjected to the filtering, soaking, and washing of water for a considerable period, to arrange itself according to its degree of fineness, or, perhaps, according to the specific gravity of the particles, and thus form strata; and, secondly, from a tendency in earthy matter, consolidated both by water and subsequent exsiccation, to divide, independently of the fineness or quality of its component particles, into strata or laminæ.'

Whether Mr Wells be right in his conclusions, remains to be proved; geologists will not fail to examine into his proofs. They may, however, remember, that Agassiz has remarked, that saw-dust through which water has been filtered, will 'assume a regular stratified appearance;' and that, in beds of clay and clay-slate, the deposits are such as to justify these conclusions.

The *Felix Meritis* Society at Amsterdam propose to give their gold medal, or twenty gold ducats (L.10), for the best answer to the questions—'What are the re-agents the most proper to demonstrate, in a sure and easy way, the presence of ozone, and to determine its quantity? Does ozone always exist in the atmosphere, and under what circumstances, regard being had to the seasons and hour of the day, is it found to increase or diminish? From what properties can it be inferred that ozone is favourable or hurtful to the animal economy, and what has experiment made known in this respect, particularly in the appearance or disappearance of epidemic diseases?'

The treatises are to be distinguished by a device, not by the author's signature: they may be written in English, French, Dutch, or German, and are to be sent addressed—*Felix Meritis*, Amsterdam, before May 1, 1853. The Society reserve to themselves the right of publishing the successful paper at their own cost.

SONNET:

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ON OVERHEARING A LITTLE CHILD (A VISITOR) SAYING
'MAMMA' IN THE NEXT ROOM.

Hark! through the wall it comes! and to my ear
It sounds the sweetest of all silvery tones,
So soft, yet syllabled distinct and clear,
'Mamma!'—and happy she the name who owns!
Nor would I all suppress this starting tear,
Which blinds me, while, that infant's voice I hear!
Say it again, fair child; I like it well,
Although I sit alone, within my room,
Like hermit-hearted man within his cell.
It wakens Reminiscence, like a bell;
And summons up a vanished Form most dear,
Which, long years since, I laid within the tomb!
Strange, that a simple sound should reach so deep,
And flood my heart with thoughts, and make me
weep!

P.

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